

**TRAINING NOTES SECTION 2**March 2016

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**ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS****ALLOCATING WORK**

- 2.1 The allocation of rights of way work (or 'charting' as it is known) is a strategic process which takes account of individual Inspector's development, the type of case and the issues involved, and of course economics. Inspectors are normally expected to accept the cases allocated to them. Where work is declined we will usually ask for reasons.
- 2.2 Once a case has been allocated it is charted for the estimated time and the relevant Inspector "blocked off" for the appropriate period. There is an allocation table (Annex 2.1) for various types of casework – showing the amount of preparation, 'sitting' and reporting time usually allowed for cases according to type. Such tables can, of course, only reflect the average time taken but Inspectors are expected to work on a 'swings-and-roundabouts' basis where Inspectors should be philosophical if a particularly difficult case takes longer than the allocated time because another case would have been completed in less than the allocated time. Unusually difficult cases may, of course, justify an individual assessment of time needed. Such adjustments can be discussed and agreed with the Sub-Group Leader or Assistant Director as necessary.
- 2.3 The current PINS target for rights of way casework is for completed decisions to be submitted to the office within three weeks of a site visit and four weeks after the closing date of any hearing or inquiry. Exceptions may apply for longer inquiries where a bespoke timetable may need to be agreed normally following discussions between your Sub-Group leader and Charting Officer.

**Precluded Areas**

- 2.4 A matter of vital concern regarding the allocation of cases to Inspectors are "Precluded Areas" which means you will not be allocated cases near where you live (or have lived recently), or in areas with which, for

example you have had long association through work. Outside interests which conflict with your capacity to appear impartial will also preclude you from dealing with certain cases. Precluded areas are identified within the individual Inspector's chart and details should be provided by each Inspector. Any changes should be recorded and submitted on a Staff Changes Form.

## **Grading**

- 2.5 Casework is allocated on a band scale (1 to 3) to indicate the degree of difficulty/complexity of the case deduced from the information on the file in the office. The case grade is established with the completion of an allocation matrix relevant to the casework type (see Annex 2.1). Inspectors are graded on experience and expertise to reflect their ability to handle casework at the relative allocation levels.
- 2.6 There is no automatic progression between the three bands or automatic or time served pay progression. Progression from minimum to maximum pay points within each band will be subject to performance (at this time Performance Management Rating), affordability and approval of the PINS pay remit. Pay progression is no longer a contractual entitlement. Movement between Band (promotion) will take place based on merit and through fair and open selection process and will be subject to a business need.

## **Absences from Work**

- 2.7 It is vital that the unavailability of Inspectors for work is communicated as far in advance as possible. All leave should be booked, and sick leave notified, via the Human Resources Interactive (HRI) system. All leave booked will be notified to the ROW Charting Officer. It is good practice to discuss proposed periods of annual leave with the Charting Officer and, if necessary, your Sub-Group Leader. You should give at least six weeks notice of periods of annual leave for more than a couple of days as this may affect your programme on the Chart and the time available to you for reporting.

## **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- 2.8 PINS operates a performance management system, the purpose of which is to direct the activities of staff by agreeing clear objectives related to the wider PINS business plan, review performance regularly and discuss it openly, give praise where it is due, improve performance where necessary and help people develop themselves through their career in the Inspectorate.

- 2.9 Appraisals are normally carried out after the first eight months and thereafter each year. Details of the Performance Management Review (PMR) can be found on PINSnet. There are also half-year reviews between each PMR, which are usually less formal than the PMR.

## WORKING FROM HOME

- 2.10 Working at home is a new experience for many, which can take some time to adjust to. You will be freed from the constant call of the telephone, office meetings and well-meaning (but irritating) interruptions from colleagues wanting to chat. However, you will not have the imposed discipline of having to get up and travel to work at a regular time, you do not have to finish work because the office is closing and you will not have colleagues to turn to discuss professional or technical issues – or even to bemoan the latest football scores. That is, it is likely to represent a whole new way of life which requires a degree of self-discipline either to get started or to stop - or both.
- 2.11 Ideally, you should have a quiet, spacious and comfortable room in which to work with good natural light. Remember, this will be your working environment now and you should provide yourself with surroundings which are as comfortable as those you would expect in an office building. Ensure you have a sturdy desk and good desk lighting and adequate storage / shelving. Make appropriate adjustments to your chair in order to get comfortable for you will be spending a lot of time in it! Organise your reference documents and stationery in a handy manner so you do not have to waste time looking for material. The Planning Inspectorate will provide a range of office furniture etc., on application to the Admin Support in Temple Quay House.
- 2.12 You will need somewhere to lay out maps and plans – your desk will not always be big enough. You may be using a spare bedroom, or even your own – the bed is very useful for laying out documents. Whether you use a bed or another table, it will probably be to one side or another or behind you (a third option is a large piece of softboard, which can double for notices and papers, though this is in addition rather than instead). You will need to be able to turn easily and quickly through 45 or 90 degrees; such movements may not be good for your back. Make sure your arrangement of desks is ergonomically appropriate. PINS will help you with an ergonomic assessment of your working area, and offer suggestions as to how you might make things better for yourself.
- 2.13 PINS recommends that you organise an 'L' shaped arrangement of desks, with one or two pedestals below with drawers for stationery, files and other items which you should have close to hand. Alternatively, curved or 'cockpit' style desks are now available (examples are available on PINSnet). One of the arms of the 'L' should be set out with your IT

equipment, with the other used as a writing surface and to spread books and documents etc. To make best use of the working surface you might like to use an adjustable document holder or stand - as used by copy typists. You will also need a 2-drawer filing cabinet to store away files and other documents. PINS will supply you with a Damovo telephone which works via a broadband connection.

## IT EQUIPMENT

- 2.14 Salaried Inspectors are supplied with IT equipment, including a computer, screen, keyboard, mouse and a printer / scanner / photocopier. You will receive training on the use of PINS' IT equipment, depending on your current level of ability and the business needs of the organisation. The computer will be loaded with the necessary software such as Word, Excel and PowerPoint. The connection to the office will give you access to the PINSnet (internal information resource) and the Internet. Existing Inspectors will be required to make their own arrangements for their telephone line and broadband services but the costs incurred in providing these services will be reimbursed by PINS. New Inspectors will need to provide and pay for their own telephone line and broadband connection. The telephone/broadband connection is necessary to provide a link between your IT equipment and the office.
- 2.15 PINS' policy on the use of IT equipment is that you may use it for your own social or domestic purposes (within reason) but you must not load any software which has not been authorised by PINS. You should also provide your own stationery etc., if you make more than occasional personal use of the equipment. You may also use the connection to the Internet within reason, but restrictions are placed on the sites you can visit: the system is policed by software which looks for 'key' words and logs access to inappropriate sites. The policy on acceptable use can be found at [http://pinsnet.pins.local/information/corporate\\_information/security/policy/acceptable\\_use\\_policy.htm](http://pinsnet.pins.local/information/corporate_information/security/policy/acceptable_use_policy.htm)  
All employees are expected to confirm their agreement to the content of the Personal Commitment Statement in order to continue using the PINS Network. You should not use your PINS refunded broadband service for your own domestic needs such as to provide internet access for your personal equipment.
- 2.16 You should be aware of the dangers of RSI – Repetitive Strain Injury. A comfortable chair, a wrist rest for the keyboard and regular exercise will all help to avoid the symptoms. Again, advice is available from PINS on how to maintain a healthy posture and what sort of exercise regime might help you avoid strain, tiredness or other posture-related health problems.

## OTHER EQUIPMENT

- 2.17 PINS will provide basic stationery and equipment considered necessary for you to carry out your duties efficiently and safely. However, there are other items which you might find useful, which you will have to provide for yourself.

**Ruler and Protractor.** It is useful to have 2 long scale rulers (33cm) for home, plus a smaller one (17cm) and a tape measure for site visits. A protractor is not essential but is useful for checking grid references easily and quickly as it has the appropriate scales.

**Magnifying Glass.** This is essential for Wildlife and Countryside Act Orders where you are likely to have to study old maps and documents. Seldom is one provided.

**Telescopic Pointer.** Very useful when looking at maps on the documents table – it enables you to stand back to point out your questions on the map without “huddling”. Also Archivists do not like fingers on old maps!

**Hole Punch.** An essential item. PINS can provide you with a 2-hole punch which will deal with 8-10 pages, and a single hole punch for documents held on a Treasury tag system. However, you might like to provide yourself with a heavyweight punch, capable of punching holes through 30 or so sheets (e.g. *Rexel Maxi*). You need this when there are several witnesses with proofs of evidence, which you need to file in numeral order in a Lever Arch File.

**Maps.** In theory the case file should contain all the maps you require to get to the location of the Order, but they seldom do. Maps can be borrowed from the Temple Quay House Library. You might find it useful to build up your own library of 50,000 OS maps by buying what you need for each inquiry. However, because the maps and town plans can be obtained on loan from TQH you cannot claim reimbursement on your T&S if you buy maps of your own. (There are also several useful websites which can give you good maps e.g. [magic.defra.gov.uk](http://magic.defra.gov.uk))

**Pocket Dictaphone.** These are most useful for site visits - speaking your observations in to one of these will probably mean you are able to write up your site visit without actually using it, providing you do it that same evening.

**Mobile Phone.** Strongly recommended. Very useful in that remote village hall when there is a crisis and you need advice (claim cost of

call back on expenses), or deep in the woods on a late site visit and you are not going to be home until late. *(Yet ironically mobile phone reception can be worst in the more remote locations – where you need it most!)* Also useful in the hotel as the rates of a mobile are often less than the hotel phone charges.

**Personal Gear.** PINS will provide you with some protective clothing – e.g. wellington boots, waterproof jacket and trousers, yellow reflective jacket and tabard and a hard hat (when required). You may consider alternative outdoor wear more comfortable or stylish!

- 2.18 Many rights of way inquiries are held in local village halls, where facilities are not particularly good and the chairs can be quite uncomfortable after the first hour or so. In which case, keeping a cushion in your box of equipment can be a good idea. Also, you might like to equip yourself with a modesty cloth for your working table. This will help to create a greater sense of 'presence' if you are only provided with a trestle table. It may also help cut out some of the draughts. *(Ladies might also prefer to wear a trouser suit rather than skirts).*
- 2.19 You may, of course, find the need for other items of equipment. It would be useful to discuss with more experienced Inspectors what they have found to be essential items to keep in their case or on their desk.

## WORKING EFFECTIVELY

- 2.20 Most people find it helpful to have a regular routine both daily and weekly when carrying out large numbers of small cases. Set reasonable and achievable targets daily.
- 2.21 Try to get the decision as near right as possible first time, relying largely on the notes you have taken during preparation. When finally checking your work before submitting it to the office, try to read the order decision (OD) as a disinterested third party or a losing party. Is it clear and comprehensible? Does it cover all the losing party's main points? Is it accurate in all respects? Read the decision out loud to achieve greater focus and hence accuracy. When submitted, the decision should be free of typing, spelling and grammatical errors. Effective proof reading of your decisions is very important.
- 2.22 Quality should not suffer by trying to get work into the office before you are happy that it meets the requirements of accuracy and reliability. However you should make every effort to meet the target times for

returning your decisions, as both quality and timeliness are the measures by which the Inspectorate as a whole is judged.

- 2.23 Your decisions, depending on your grade and that of the case, will be read until you have achieved the appropriate grade, when your decisions at that grade can be issued without checking. The reader will discuss any necessary amendments with you. Remember that the decision is yours and any amendments must be agreed by you and you must carry them out. You should treat amendments as a priority and aim to return a revised decision to the office within 10 days. If the Procedure Group notices a mistake in your decision when they are preparing to issue it, they will ask you to make the necessary amendments, which should be dealt with promptly, as they hold up the issue of the decision.
- 2.24 Always correct your copy of the decision and keep it until the issued decision is returned to you. Do not write on any file document other than to initial it.
- 2.25 Arrange your work programme, your working routines and your working environment in a way that avoids stress. Keep in contact with your Mentor to discuss any difficulties you may encounter or any problems with cases.
- 2.26 If you are ill, you should inform your Line Manager. If you are going to be unable to attend a site visit or inquiry it is essential that the Procedure Team is informed immediately – if possible, you should speak to the section manager [REDACTED]. Arrangements will be made for the parties to be informed.
- 2.27 Never work in an area or in circumstances in which you feel your fairness, openness or impartiality would, or would appear to be, prejudiced. Your precluded areas are determined initially when you join and recorded as part of your personal details. Should you feel that they need changing later, discuss with your Sub-Group Leader.

## COMMUNICATIONS

- 2.28 You are responsible for keeping in touch with your Sub-Group Leader and the office on all matters connected with your work programme. You will also find it useful to keep in regular contact with the ROW Procedure Team, who can help you with many enquiries (see Annex 1.1(B) and 1.1(C) for contact details). Use the telephone and e-mail to keep in touch – whichever is more appropriate to the point you wish to pursue. You will be issued with a Damovo telephone which works through the broadband connection. Where there is insufficient bandwidth then it may

be necessary to use a normal landline. Alternatively existing Inspectors may ask to be supplied with a mobile phone. The e-mail connection is via the GSI (Government Secure Intranet) – which is protected by “fire walls”, and thus should be safe from being intruded upon by ‘outsiders’. However, a degree of caution is always wise, and do not abuse the system.

## RETURNING FILES

Generally you should return files containing sealed orders using a signed for service such as ‘signed for’ or Parcelforce 24 or 48. Be sure to retain any receipts so that costs may be reimbursed. Where there are large or bulky documents involved you can make arrangements with Parcelforce (through the Parcelforce contract) to have them collected and delivered to the office. Details of how to set up an account can be found on PINSnet at

## TRAVEL

- 2.30 All PINS hotel, rail, air and ferries must be self-booked by users using Redfern’s online booking system (tRIPS). The basic principle in organising your travel arrangements is that the journey should be planned at the least cost to the public purse subject to the exercise of reasonable discretion and the Government’s Green Transport policy. The Travel and Subsistence Policy gives comprehensive advice on this topic including frequently asked questions and answers (available via the HR Home Page on PINSnet). You may use standard class rail travel, your own car claiming mileage allowance, or a hire car claiming the cost of fuel used and paid for. The use of taxis may be justified in some circumstances, such as when you have heavy bags, or public transport is simply not convenient or it will not get you there on time.

## CAR HIRE

The Planning Inspectorate has a contract for car hire with Enterprise Rent-a-Car. All car hire should be made through the contract. Information on how to arrange for the hire of a car is available on PINSnet at -



## HOTELS

When you need to stay away from home all arrangements should be made via the Government wide contract currently held by Redfern Travel. All PINS hotel, rail, air and ferries must be self-booked by users using Redfern's online booking system (tRIPS). The cost of accommodation and breakfast booked through Redfern will be invoiced centrally. Any other expenses will need to be paid for on departure and claimed back through T&S, as appropriate. Users will be responsible for making any necessary amendments or cancellations if necessary. Further information is available on PINSnet -

## INSPECTORS' EXPENSES

- 2.33 Expenses may be claimed for all expenditure incurred in carrying out casework, for example, travel expenses, meals, hotel charges in accordance with the Travel & Subsistence (T&S) code which can be accessed on PINSnet. Claims should be made through the SAP System. It is not necessary to submit receipts but these should be retained for three years for audit purposes.
- 2.34 Salaried staff are supplied with stationery and other office requisites (paper, pens, envelopes, computer consumables etc.) by Admin Support. Accordingly, claims for such items purchased by you may not be paid. Maps, town plans etc., are available on loan from the PINS Library and consequently, if you purchase your own, claims for reimbursement of these also may be discounted. Non-Salaried Inspectors are only supplied with limited stationery items necessary to carry out their duties for PINS, such as envelopes.

## STATIONERY

- 2.35 Stationery can be ordered from Admin Support using the stationery request form via the PINS Intranet. Whenever possible, you are asked to place orders which will keep you going for about 2 months at a time.

## MOVEMENT AND WORK RECORD

- 2.36 Each week salaried Inspectors should complete the electronic Movement and Work Record (MWR), accessed via the Chart page on PINSnet.

## **PRE DECISION QUERIES**

- 2.37 If you require additional information after carrying out a site visit, inquiry or hearing, then office support staff will write to the parties on your behalf. In order to do this, they may ask you to send them the file, with precise details of what information is required. They will set a deadline for response, and return the file to you once replies are received. If information is missing you should contact the appropriate case officer. You do not need to send the file unless specifically asked for; they have records of all cases and access to computer systems.
- 2.38 It should rarely be necessary to seek additional information. Consider carefully whether any further information is really necessary. Will it influence your decision? Remember that the decision will inevitably be delayed. If you feel that more information is required whilst in training, discuss with your Sub-Group or the ROW Procedure Team.

## **COMPLAINTS**

- 2.39 If a complaint is received the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) will send a copy to you so that you can see what has been said and give your version of what is alleged to have happened before they reply. QAU, in consultation with your Sub-Group Leader will decide whether the point is a justified complaint, advise the Inspector and send the Inspector a copy of the reply. The deadline for replying to all complaints is within 3 weeks of receipt in PINS, so you must provide any comments promptly. This is particularly important if the complaint is made in the High Court challenge period - that is, within 6 weeks of the date of notice of confirmation of the Order or three months from the issue of the Order Decision where the Order is not confirmed.

## **QAU RANDOM MONITORING**

- 2.40 QAU look at a proportion of issued decisions, excluding cases where there has already been a complaint or challenge. If QAU find any problem with the decision, the file is referred to the Assistant Director to consider whether QAU's criticism is valid. If it is, the Inspector is informed. These do not count in the Inspectorate's 1% ceiling for justified complaints / successful High Court Challenges.