

**Minutes of Meeting of Legal Aid Special Interest Group Committee held on
Tuesday 19th January 2021 at 8pm**

Present: Bob Baker
Paul Seddon
Rachel Perkins
Charlotte Flanders
Steve Jepson

Apologies: Fran Rigo

1. Approval of October Minutes/outstanding Action Points

Minutes were agreed. Actions points were discussed.

2. Nominations/Elections

Deadline for nominations is tomorrow. BB will email DP to find out whether an election is required **[AP1]**.

3. CCCG update by BB

BB confirm he had received the agenda. He reported on a telephone discussion he had had with Mark Crosskill regarding the ICO applications. He confirmed that 57 applications had been received, of which 5 were costs lawyers. BB advised that there were 87 LAG members and therefore MC was happy with the 5 applications received. Indeed, it was a higher %age uptake than the other professions. ICOs are able to serve 2x 5-year terms – either consecutively or separately and the number had dropped as a number of previous ICOs had served their two terms and were unable to reapply.

BB advised that the SPG meeting involved discussions regarding complaints about safety in Courts, the LAA contingency plans in place until 31st March and the LAA's electronic submission of paper claims. He also advised that the LAPG were making an application regarding POAs of Inquest Legal Helps.

4. Abolition of Court Assessment

BB advised that this was to be discussed at the CCCG tomorrow. It was understood that the consultation would run from the end of January, for 8 weeks.

Discussion took place regarding committee members experiences with the LAA assessing these matters re format and enhancement allowance.

PS highlighted that the new guidance seemed to only allow for de novo Court assessments of matters which had been assessed by the LAA from 17th August 2020 to 15th January 2021.

BB suggested the committee revisit our response once the consultation was received, with a view to putting in an amended response by the deadline. The committee would have the benefit of being able to include what had actually happened during the period of LAA assessments (in particular the reduction of enhancements) instead of responding on what they estimate would happen. **[AP2]**.

BB confirmed advice he was giving his clients regarding which avenue to use until a further decision was made.

CF suggested a SurveyMonkey survey to members about their experiences, and SJ agreed to speak to KA about organising this **[AP3]**. Committee to formulate questions, especially regarding allowance of enhancements **[AP4]**. Committee agreed a special meeting would be required to deal with the consultation response.

5. Online seminars 2021

Agreement reached to ask the LAA (SB/RD) whether they were able to attend and speak [AP5]. However, it is expected that they will decline whilst the consultation process is live.

Discussion took place regarding other suggested speakers, including Kirsty Allison re electronic bills.

RP advised that LAPG were running a week of seminars w/c 22 Feb. CF suggested that LAG members be reminded that LAG members get member price for LAPG seminars, as the LAG are affiliate members of the LAPG (and vice versa) [AP6].

SJ agreed to request list of LAG member names (only) from DP [AP7].

6. AOB

CF agreed to offer to job share with FR the PET VHCC position [AP8].

RP advised of difficulties regarding failure to provide costs information from previous providers on transferred certificates, and discussion took place in this regard.

Next committee meeting - TBA

AP1	Email to DP re nominations/election	BB
AP2	Response to LAA consultation	All
AP3	Approach KA re SurveyMonkey	SJ
AP4	Prepare SurveyMonkey questions	All
AP5	Approach SB/RD re online seminar	BB
AP6	Email to LAG re LAPG member rates for seminars	BB
AP7	Request LAG member name list	SJ
AP8	Offer to job share PET with FR	CF