

Draft article for Costs Lawyer

The 'steering committee' of the Legal Aid Group met on 10th January 2013 at Milton Keynes to decide on constitution, aims and objectives and the way forward.

The meeting was led by Murray Heining, whom it was agreed would chair the group (with Kim Fensom as secretary). Also in attendance were Sue Nash, Amanda Barnett, Paul Seddon and Tracey Jack (via Skype). There was an apology from Linda Kann who was unable to attend. Council member Mark Byrne, who has been assigned to the group, was available by telephone.

On Sue Nash's proposal the name of the group was agreed as the ACL Legal Aid Special Interest Group. Murray agreed to prepare a constitution for the Group for approval by the Council. It is proposed that the objectives of the Group are:

1. To represent, support and develop the interests of costs lawyers (and trainees) practising in the area of legal aid within the Association of Costs Lawyers;
2. To enable other professional bodies and the media to consult the group on matters of relevant professional and public interest, and
3. To provide support including conferences, courses, advice, publications and any other relevant activity of legal aid costs lawyers to help them to operate successfully.

It was agreed that membership would be restricted to costs lawyers with a Practising Certificate and trainee costs lawyers. Seminars

A first seminar is planned to take place as soon as possible, but because the materials have to be approved by CLSB and would include outside speakers, this would realistically be at the end of March. The likely venue is London. It will give an overview, cover the changes coming in April 2013, on-line billing and what can be claimed.

It was reported that the ACL Forum Legal Aid Section is running well with answers being provided by Murray Heining, Paul Seddon and Tracey Jack. Paul Seddon advocated the forum as the best method for answering queries and asked that no one should be afraid to provide answers – no one was the fount of all wisdom. Murray agreed to put relevant legal aid information (the LSC website having been changed and much now being missing) on the forum as attachments.

