



## **Civil Contracts Consultative Group (CCCG) Minutes**

**11 May 2015  
V2**

Date:	Monday, 11 May 2015		
Where	The Law Society, 113		
Chair:	Richard Miller TLS		
Attendees:	Alison Harvey - ILPA Annabel Butler - ILPA Avrom Sherr - IALS Carol Storer - LAPG Cordelia Hamed - LAA David Holmes - MoJ Gillian Hothersall - LAA (minutes)	Jackie White - ASA/Shelter James Hood - LAA Jan Luba – BC Jayne Nevitt - LAA Joe Risk - LAA Jon Cable - LAA Joy Merriam - TLS Julie Demeritt -BC	Nicola Jones-King - ALC Paul Seddon - ACL Richard Busby - Resolution Sara Stephens - HLP Steve Starkey - LAA
Apologies:	Hilda Massey - MoJ Ian Bugg - BC John Sirodcar - LAA Kathy Hartup - LAA	Kerry Wood - LAA Malcolm Bryant - LAA Nick Lewis - MHLA	Matthew Cunningham - ASA Rachel Rogers - Resolution David Emmerson - Resolution

1. **Minutes** from March were approved.

### 1.1 Review of actions

**Action 2 [Jan]** the LAA Management Information analysts provided the headline figures for escaped cases in 2011/12 as requested. Steve Starkey explained that about 69% of providers submit, and the number of nil assessed cases is relatively low. J Luba asked what had happened regarding a potential review of what data is published and when. J Hood to confirm details.

#### #Action 1 [May]

**Action 3 [Jan]** Resolution had asked for the number of domestic violence and child abuse cases that had been refused legal aid funding to be broken down by reason for refusal, and this table was provided. Several members requested a narrative with analysis of the table for discussion at the next meeting. A Sherr suggested considering potential reasons for the change in the last two years. J Hood to arrange for the narrative to be circulated two weeks before the July meeting and put on July agenda. **#Action 2 [May]**

**Action 6 [Mar]** K Wood to circulate a lessons learned paper based on the Mediation contract that went live on 01/02/2015 – this is in progress and should be available in the next two weeks. Keep action open. **#Action 3 [May]**

**Action 7 [Mar]** J Hood to report to next meeting on the plan for updating Peer Review guidance. **#Action 4 [May]**

**Action 8 [Mar]** P Seddon to send examples of bills that had been assessed incorrectly to J Nevitt. This is in hand. **#Action 5 [May]**

**Action 9/10 [Mar]** were closed; however, R Miller queried whether there was any information available on the LAA approach to audits. J Hood to discuss with J Cable and respond before the next meeting. **#Action 6 [May]**

## 2. LAA update

**1.2 Operations update:** S Starkey outlined the update. J Merriam queried whether there was an equivalent of the 'fixer service' for applications, and S Starkey confirmed that the provider should raise issues with their Contract Manager. J Merriam also mentioned technical issues which were not receiving a response, and J Risk said he would take this comment back to the CCMS team.

S Starkey also mentioned a pilot using an Excel spreadsheet version of forms, and several members thought this could be helpful.

C Storer queried whether this information was on the website or publicised in the LAA Bulletin. J Hood to address as part of **Action 1**.

S Starkey to ensure operations update refers to 'priority return' rather than 'priority reject' in order to clarify that these are different from rejects. **#Action 7 [May]**

J Luba queried what could be done to bring down FGF rejects. S Starkey to share top 10 list of reasons for rejects for all fee schemes. **#Action 8 [May]**

**2.1 Client and Cost Management System (CCMS)** J Risk gave an update on the programme. The LAA has now received nearly 40,000 applications on CCMS from 1,050 providers that are using the system to manage cases. This represents 64% of the firms who will eventually use the system. Just over 50% of new applications are now being submitted to the LAA on CCMS and this figure continues to increase week on week. The week before last saw the record number of applications submitted: 1,141.

Contract managers are continuing to work closely with their firms as they start to use the system and the LAA are increasing the range of training and support materials that are available.

J Risk explained that one of the key focuses will be enhancing the system in the lead up to 1st October and beyond. The LAA has held the initial enhancement focus group meetings with its three user groups: providers, chambers, billing. Feedback has been used to help shape the priority changes and these are being factored into the enhancements that are currently being looked at.

Following the feedback, an enhancement has been implemented for chambers users which was identified by the group as one of the top priorities. This enhancement was to alphabetise the list of advocates for chambers administrators to allow them to more easily navigate between advocates on CCMS.

The team are also working on the following enhancements which the LAA aims to release over the coming months (release dates are to be confirmed):

For chambers, the LAA are working on developing a single Chambers Remittance advice that will allow administrators at chambers level to download one document which will include all remittance advices for civil advocates. For Providers (including those who complete billing work), the team are developing improvements to evidence requests for POA. This will make it easier for users to identify to which POA the evidence requests relate. The team are also working to improve the bill summary in order to display the information in a more logical order.

One of the key areas of change are those relating to amendments which were identified by provider, chambers and LAA staff.

In addition to these enhancements the LAA are planning to make in the coming weeks, we are also working on a longer term enhancement for CCMS which will involve an overall upgrade to the Provider User Interface. This will enable the implementation of a number of key areas of feedback including: improved navigation, fewer screens and a better user experience.

There was prolonged discussion about the difficulties some providers are experiencing when they use CCMS and representative bodies' significant concerns that CCMS would not be working sufficiently well by 1 October. Several members requested details of providers who are using the system successfully. J Risk to explore how details of firms could be shared with rep bodies. **#Action 9 [May]**

J Risk to confirm by next meeting which enhancements will be in place before 1 October; and also to confirm a date by which a decision will be made on whether to go ahead with mandating on 1 October. **#Action 10 [May]**

P Seddon mentioned an issue with a pilot provider wishing to produce court bills. J Risk to investigate this issue with the provider concerned. **#Action 11 [May]**

***Post-meeting note: the LAA issued an update about planned enhancements to CCMS on 28 May 2015. The LAA also announced on 12 June that the date for making use of CCMS mandatory will be pushed back to 1 February 2016.***

## **2.2 Commissioning Update** Cordelia Hamed updated CCG as follows:

The LAA is proceeding with tendering activities in line with headline intentions. Once the new ministerial team is in place and we are able to get clearance we will proceed with the following activities:

### AAP, Clinical Negligence, Public Law:

The LAA will notify providers about the outcome of the recent tenders in June 2015.

### Immigration Removal Centres (IRCs)

The LAA intends to tender for new IRC contracts in 2015. Contracts will be extended by 6 months to allow time to develop tender process. C Hamed to clarify how representative bodies can be involved in discussions on IRC contracts. **#Action 12 [May]**

### Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme

In response to a query from J Luba, it was confirmed that the housing possession scheme is proceed

## **Issues raised by the representative bodies**

- 2.3 Civil tax bills** J Cable outlined the background to the issues raised in P Seddon's report. As part of their scrutiny of LAA's 2013/14 accounts, NAO made a formal point recommending a separate review of civil tax bills. It is noted that the level of discrepancy in these is significantly higher than elsewhere. P Seddon requested clarification of what NAO's concern was. J Cable to check wording of management letter and respond. **#Action 13 [May]**

It was clarified that overpayments can be recouped but LAA have not recouped claims which the judiciary have passed.

It was agreed that J Cable would contact P Seddon regarding what is sufficient evidence to validate non-regulatory component. J Cable to report back at next meeting. **#Action 14 [May]**

C Storer requested that the working party meetings to discuss issues and share good practice should be reinstated. J Cable to consider reinstating this meeting. **#Action 15 [May]**

### 3. AOB

**4.1 Guidance on exceptional cases:** Simon Cliff was unable to attend but had asked A Harvey to raise the issue of revised guidance and refusals to exceptional case funding requests. J Hood explained that it was not appropriate for the LAA to comment given the ongoing litigation on this matter.

**4.2 Civil Finance electronic handbook:** P Seddon said that the handbook had been changed and notification had not been given. S Starkey to investigate. **#Action 16 [May]**

Actions from this meeting		Owner	By when
AP1[May]	J Hood to confirm outcome of review on what to publish and when.	J Hood	22 July
AP2 [May]	Provide narrative explaining number of domestic violence and child abuse cases that had been refused legal aid funding broken down by reason for refusal.	E Druker	Closed
AP3 [May]	Circulate a lessons learned paper based on the Mediation contract that went live on 01/02/2015	K Wood	Closed
AP4 [May]	J Hood to report to next meeting on the plan for updating Peer Review guidance.	J Hood	22 July
AP5 [May]	Send examples of bills that had been assessed incorrectly to J Nevitt	P Seddon	26 May
AP6 [May]	J Hood to discuss with J Cable what information is available on the LAA approach to audits	J Hood	Closed
AP7 [May]	S Starkey to ensure operations update refers to 'priority return' rather than 'priority reject' in order to clarify that these are different from rejects.	S Starkey	Closed
AP8 [May]	S Starkey to share top 10 list of reasons for rejects for all fee schemes.	S Starkey	Closed
AP9 [May]	J Risk to explore opportunities to hear from providers who are making the system work successfully, to share good practice.	J Risk	22 July
AP10 [May]	J Risk to confirm by next meeting which enhancements will be in place before 1 October; and also to confirm a date by which a decision will be made on whether to go ahead with mandating on 1 October.	J Risk	22 July
AP11 [May]	J Risk to investigate issue regarding court bills with the provider concerned.	J Risk	22 July

AP12 [May]	C Hamed to clarify protocol on which representative bodies can be involved in discussions on IRC contracts	C Hamed	Closed-meeting took place on 16/06/15
AP13 [May]	J Cable to check wording of NAO management letter regarding civil tax bills and respond to CCCG.	J Cable	22 July
AP14 [May]	J Cable to contact P Seddon regarding what is sufficient evidence to validate non-regulatory component, and report back at next meeting	J Cable	22 July
AP15 [May]	J Cable to consider reinstating working party meetings.	J Cable	22 July
AP16 [May]	S Starkey to investigate issue regarding changes to the electronic handbook.	S Starkey	22 July