

**Notes of Meeting of Legal Aid Special Interest Group Committee held on
Thursday 25th June 2015 1.15pm to 2.20pm**

Present: Paul Seddon
Rachel Perkins
Linda Kann
Apologies: Samantha Bagnall
Jonathan Brennan

Agenda

Roundup of visit to LAA 18th June
LAG breakout session in Manchester 25th September
CCFS webinar and new CCFS
Review of income/expenditure
Website

1. Roundup of visit to LAA Jarrow on 18th June

PS advised that PS and RP attended Jarrow on 18th June. He advised that unfortunately SB and JB were unable to attend at last minute due to personal circumstances. LK had already advised she was unable to attend.

The morning was spent quickly looking round all sections of LAA, ie Central Postal Hub, National Filing Centre, Customer Services, Counsel FAS & Controlled Work Escape cases, and the Civil Billing Assessment Team. We attended the Billing Teams briefing session where suggestions were made for both us and the team as to how matters could be progressed quicker. Session then continued with members of the teams from VHCC, CCMS and CCBIG/Electronic Handbook. We were also taken through a presentation by Steve Starkey (Head of Operations) and the Core Testing Team.

The discussion sidlined into PS advising of his response from Cat Little to his CCMS report and the current position regarding a meeting between the LAA, Resolution, LAPG and the Law Society, to which PS was not invited!

Returning to the LAA visit, PS advised that a constructive discussion took place between PS, RP and SBarker who a senior caseworker in the Civil Assessment team and main liaison with the CCMS team as to how this was moving forward. PS secured the attendance of SBarker to give a presentation at the LAG breakout session in September (see below).

Further a constructive discussion also took place with Lou of the CCBIG/Electronic Handbook wherein a suggestion was made that any revisions to the handbook/checklists should be notified to providers/costs professionals in the Legal Aid bulletin/Advocates bulletin emails. Hopefully this was taken on board. Also the LAA agreed to try and provide PS with a draft of any amendments to the electronic handbook prior to this being finalised. PS advised that he would be sending them a letter with regards to the amendment in the electronic handbook as to work included under FAS.

All in all it was felt that the visit was a productive one and will hopefully lead to better relations between the ACL LAG and the LAA.

Linda agreed to do a writeup of the visit (from the minutes) for the Costs Lawyer mag.

2. LAG breakout session at Manchester conference 25th September

PS advised that during the visit to Jarrow, a request had been made for Stephen Barker of the CCMS billing team to give a presentation at the breakout session, and this has been approved by Steve Starkey. It was evident from discussions with SBarker about CCMS that he brought knowledge (i.e. that of the billing process) that has been sorely lacking from ACL members' experience of CCMS training so far. The training has been given by CCMS training members who are not briefed in billing procedure. PS made it clear that this was why his attendance at Manchester conference was requested – the LAA commented that CCMS Masterclasses had initially been popular but that the take up had then bombed, and PS explained that this was because they had proved to be useless due to the woeful knowledge of those providing them.

Although the request was initially granted (we recall) for SB to attend for 1 hour, it was felt that this would not be enough time and a request would be made for him to attend for 2½ hours – 1½ hours for presentation followed by 1 hour Q&A.

- PS to email Diane/Sue to get timetable for Manchester conference to confirm times of breakout session.
- PS to email SS/SB at LAA to confirm his attendance (and for the extended session)
- PS to also send a round robin email to all LAG members before the summer holidays to advertise the attendance of SB at the breakout session to try and get as many people as possible to attend. NB: attendees should be pre-warned of the Q&A session and to bring questions with them on the day.

At this juncture, PS advised that SBarker had agreed to give a demonstration to committee members ONLY of CCMS (including from the LAA's end) if PS could provide CCMS reference with enough data. PS to follow this up.

3. CCFS

PS confirmed that the launch date has now been delayed until 1st September 2015. An email was circulated shortly before the committee meeting regarding the meeting last week in relation to CCFS, which PS was unable to attend due to being on a train to Jarrow! The email provides the latest versions of the three guidances, but does not include the latest version of the CCFS form, and PS is to look into this.

Item 3 on that email referred to the first run through of the new CCFS webex, which took place on 18th June (whilst PS and RP at Jarrow). PS confirmed that SB's colleague had attended on our behalf and would be chasing up the outcome of that.

PS confirmed he would be attending the next face to face meeting on 7th July and would report thereafter.

4. Review on income/expenditure

No discussion could take place on this item. No accounts have been provided from the ACL Council yet. Therefore JB is still unable to move this forward and we are still operating without a budget with which to measure over or underspend against.

5. Website

Again no discussion could take place on this due to lack of information from ACL Council. It appears that we are waiting to plan our section upon the 'go live' of the new site which there is no more news on.

6. AOB

Although not discussed, Paul's diary is as follows for the next few weeks.

SPG meeting Monday 29th June

CCFS meeting Tuesday 7th July

ACL council meeting (for info only) Friday 10th July

CCCG meeting Monday 22nd July

Please note - The next committee meeting is due to take place very early September 2015.

NB - An agenda needs to be circulated before each committee meeting.