

**Notes of Meeting of Legal Aid Special Interest Group Committee held on  
Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016 – 11am to 1.10 pm**

Present: Paul Seddon  
Rachel Perkins  
Linda Kann  
Samantha Bagnall  
Charlotte Flanders  
Bob Baker

**Agenda**

- 1 – Appointment of Chair and Secretary positions
- 2 – Breakout session at National Conference
- 3 – Next meeting
- 4 – AOB

After sorting out initial difficulties getting all committee members online, Paul welcomed the new Committee members Bob and Charlotte. He also explained the position regarding committee members attending LAG conferences FOC and allowance for a maximum of 2 committee members to attend National Conference funded by the ACL.

PS then stated he wished to record the meeting. This was solely for the purpose of aiding the Minutes, the recording was not to be transcribed and once minutes were agreed, the recording would be deleted.

**1. Appointment of Chair and Secretary positions**

It was proposed by all committee members that Paul would remain as Chair and PS confirmed that he was happy to continue with the position. PS then proposed that RP remain committee secretary and again this was agreed by all committee members.

With regards to other roles and responsibilities, PS confirmed that these would be allocated at the next meeting which would also be attended by Maurice and Claire Green.

**2. Breakout session at National Conference**

A discussion took place as to whether a CCMS update was required. A discussion took place regarding committee members' recent experiences of CCMS and it was agreed that it would be helpful to discuss this further at the breakout session with all members. This should include software providers/issues and the claim upload/brainstorming.

PS said the current biggest issue with CCMS is that there is only one software provider that's been able to work well enough with the LAA to produce a claim upload, a facility that the LAA default to when they cannot satisfactorily answer issues with CCMS billing. (Either it's an interface on which claim upload is an option for which is paid for privately, or it is not, and at the moment there is only one product available to external costs professionals. This raises issues as to market competitiveness, which has been an ongoing issue for the last year.

LK suggested that the matter be reported to the Competition Commission\*, but PS raised the question as to who would be reported. It is not the fault of Costsmaster that the LAA are failing to liaise adequately with other software providers: that exploring whether to refer the situation to the CMA may be an idea in the future but it may be too late for many LAG members.

**\*Post Meeting Note: this is now the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)**

RP confirmed that she is aware that Berryhall are attempting to test the claim upload, and CF also advised that her provider was also attempting to test, and raised the point that her provider has experienced considerable problems with the LAA being able to provide adequate testing. Both RP and PS confirmed that this was feedback they had received from other providers (including Costsmaster).

It was then suggested that there be a survey of all LAG members (via SurveyMonkey) to try and discover who were the main software providers. Then the LAG can try and assist say the top 5 providers, especially those who are trying to test the claim upload and also put pressure on the LAA to progress this.

PS requested that CF draft the survey, and she agreed to do so. An initial list of known providers was drawn up to assist with this. An "other" option would also be included together with any other questions re the claim upload. **[Action 1 – Apr 16].**

Items for inclusion at the breakout session were agreed as follows:

- CCMS brainstorming/discussion/software providers/claim upload/survey results
- Pre payment audits
- A rerun of questions/answers from Stephen Barker at the MK conference (to include a general Q&A – LK to look at some on the forum)
- General update/POPS

PS agreed to upload the Schedule for the National Conference so the timings of the breakout session could be agreed – time allowed 3 hours **[Action 2 – ASAP]**

At this point RP raised whether the LAG would be having a breakout session at the Manchester conference on 28<sup>th</sup> October, or whether the LAG would be having a stand alone conference, at some point in Manchester/another northern city. PS wishes this to be discussed at the next committee meeting.

PS also advised that he needed to chase Steve Starkey as to the LAA's intentions regarding the withdrawn Claim 1c form **[Action 3 – Apr 16]**

PS also advised that CF had agreed to deal with response regarding the LAA's guidance on Court assessed Bills/Audits. **[Action 4 – Apr 16]**

Next committee meeting including Maurice and Claire Green

Lengthy discussions took place regarding availability, and it was agreed that the meeting would take place via videolink on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> April at 10:30-1:30. Backup dates were agreed of Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> April (although LK would be unable to attend) or Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May during the morning.

Items to be included in the agenda agreed as follows:

- Roles and responsibilities
- Constitution and Maurice's wish for a 3-year plan
- 2016/17 LAG conferences
- Financial position of LAG
- Bach review
- Dates for remaining committee meetings 2016/17 to tie in with ACL council meetings
- FOI request (SB/CG)
- Website

**[Action 5 – Apr 16]**

### **3. AOB**

SB to chase CG re enquiries of FOI request **[Action 6 – Apr 16]**

Website **[Action 7 – Apr 16]**

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

NB = Next committee meeting Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2016 at 10.30am via videolink

Actions from this meeting		Owner	By when
AP1 [Apr]	Draft survey re software providers used	C Flanders	Apr
AP2 [Apr]	Upload of conference schedule to agree breakout session timings	P Seddon	ASAP
AP3 [Apr]	Chase Steve Starkey regarding current position of Claim 1c	P Seddon	ASAP
AP4 [Apr]	Response to LAA's guidance on Court assessed Bills/ audits	C Flanders	Apr
AP5 [Apr]	Agenda for meeting on 12 <sup>th</sup> April		ASAP
AP6 [Apr]	Enquiries re FOI request	S Bagnall	ASAP
AP7 [Apr]	Update on website	S Bagnall	January