



THE ADMINISTRATIVE COURT IN LEEDS

User Group Meeting (UGM)

Tuesday 17/05/2022 4:45pm by MS Teams

Minutes

In attendance:

Mr Justice Fordham (Liaison Judge) [MF]	Keziah Pearson (Capsticks) [KP]
Dominique Cole (ACL) [DC]	Charlotte Davies (Capsticks) [CD]
Noeleen Connelly (ACL) [NC]	Zaira Nunes (Bhatia Best) [ZN]
Martin Lee (ACL) [ML]	A Gill (Kings Chambers) [AG]
Jessica Turner [HMCTS] [JT]	Shahnaz Zaidi (GLD) [SZ]
Karen Blackmore (Leeds CC) [KB]	Matthew Hunt (GLD) [MH]
C Bell [Kings Chambers] [CB]	A Nightingale (Gdn Ct N Chambers) [AN]
Michael Blackwood (CPS) [MB]	Tasaddat Hussain (Gdn Ct N Chambers) [TH]

1. Introductions

- (a) Mr Justice Fordham – Liaison Judge: The Judge thanked users for their attendance at the first user group meeting that has been held in a number of years for Leeds and expressed the hope that they would be held much more regularly in future, possibly with another meeting before the end of the summer term. The Judge explained he had taken up the role of Queens Bench Liaison Judge in January 2022 covering both the North Eastern region (Leeds) and Northern region (Manchester) and he hoped that the meetings would be relatively informal. The initial intention was that separate meetings are held for each region, but it may be that, in time, a single meeting might be held covering both regions. It was intended that minutes of the meeting would be published.
- (b) Noeleen Conneely – Team Leader: Miss Conneely explained that she had taken over as the Team Leader for the Administrative Court in June 2021 and was responsible for supporting the team and resources and trying to ensure things keep going.
- (c) Martin Lee – Court Lawyer: Mr Lee explained he had been the lawyer in the Leeds office from the start of the regional courts in April 2009. He has spent his entire legal career as an employed barrister, first in the magistrates’ court service (almost exclusively in West Yorkshire) before becoming part of the RCJ team but based in Leeds when the regional offices opened. He explained he would, from time to time, assist with cases from other regions (and even the RCJ) and was also engaged in making “Minded to Transfer Orders” [MTTO] aimed at transferring cases from London to the regional offices in an attempt to both reduce the burden on the RCJ and ensure that the regions continue to have some control over regional matters when

appropriate. Where any party opposed a transfer, they have 7 days to respond and then the liaison Judge would make a determination on venue.

2. Questions / Comments submitted in advance

No items had been submitted in advance.

3. Discussion Topics

- (a) User Experience of ACL: general cases. MB (CPS) reported that he found the Leeds office was receptive and responsive but was aware that sometimes cases take too long to get listed, particularly where a Divisional court was needed.

KP (Capsticks) reported that work for Social Work England by the firm in Leeds was operating very well and compared favourably with other courts where the firm undertook similar work for other regulators. In particular, it was noted there was a good level of service and personal contacts that meant listing was flexible for both the court and the solicitors. It was also felt that many of the social workers also greatly appreciated the option of being able to attend a hearing remotely without the need for travel to a court house for what could be a fairly short hearing.

- (b) User Experience of ACL: planning cases. MH (GLD) gave some very positive feedback for the team saying he was always pleased to be able to get a response whether by phone or by email in relation to planning cases albeit that sometimes there could be a wait for planning judges to be assigned to hearings.

On the question of MTTOs MH said GLD was also keen to spread the work to the regional offices but asked that they were made as early as possible because, it might be appropriate to instruct regional counsel in those cases, again making best use of resources. MF indicated that he would try to make provision for an early venue decision to be possible on request by a party in response to an MTTO.

MH also queried what the approach to remote hearings was in the regions. MF responded to say that directions had recently been issued for the regional offices and these were available on line. The expectation was that there be a return to face to face hearings in the majority of cases but with the possibility of an application being made for a remote hearing in shorter cases where necessary. The main exception was in respect of regulatory bodies applications to extend interim orders which would continue to be held remotely (unless a party specifically requested a hearing).

4. Any Other Business

MF advised that the s.9 Judges who sit in the ACL would probably be invited to attend future meetings. He advised that details of the judicial careers to date of some of the Judges had already appeared on the judiciary website and the rest would follow in due course.

It was a key objective that those Judges had the necessary experience of cases and were encouraged to use their specialisms, including, where possible, in a Divisional Court.

From the ACL point of view, the objective remained to ensure cases are dealt with speedily and, with that in mind, any suggestions for how things might be further improved are welcomed.

MF also advised there was to be an event held remotely by the Northern Administrative Law Association [NALA] on 13/04/2022 which would include some helpful “do’s and don’t’s” for the

Administrative Court and users may wish to attend the event [details would be circulated when they became available]

5. Date of Next Meeting

The date for the next meeting would be notified by email and it was likely that the meeting would again be held via MS Teams.

Minutes: Martin Lee
(approved by Fordham J)

ANNEX: Agenda

Administrative Court (North-Eastern) Leeds (ACL)

User Group Meeting (UGM)

Tuesday 17/05/2022 4.45pm-5.30pm

by MS Teams

AGENDA

1. Introductions and overviews by:
 - a) Mr Justice Fordham – Liaison Judge
 - b) Noeleen Conneely – ACO Team Leader
 - c) Martin Lee – ACO Lawyer
2. Questions and comments submitted beforehand
3. Discussion topics:
 - a) User experience of ACL: general
 - b) User experience of ACL: planning
 - c) Questions, comments, ideas
4. AOB
5. Date of next ACL:UGM

Notes:

- The ACL team is: Martin Lee (Lawyer), Noeleen Conneely (Team Leader), Dominique Cole (Team Members). The ACL email address is:
leeds@administrativecourtoffice.justice.gov.uk
- The Judges who regularly sit in the ACL are: HHJ Penelope Belcher; HHJ Malcolm Davis-White QC; HHJ Mark Gosnell; HHJ Siobhan Kelly; HHJ Jonathan Klein; HHJ Claire Jackson ; HHJ Andrew Saffman and HHJ Philip Kramer
- The Liaison Judge (Fordham J) is currently next scheduled to be at Leeds ACL 04.10.22-21.10.22 and is contactable via Jessica.Turner1@justice.gov.uk
- Materials for information (with hyperlinks):
 - i) Mode of hearing: 21/04/2022 [Administrative Court Listing Notice](#)
 - ii) Venue determinations: [Fortt v FSCS \[2022\] EWHC 152 \(Admin\) Khyam](#) [2022] EWHC 993 Admin)
 - iii) Planning Court: new [Practice Direction 54D](#)