



PRESIDENT OF THE
FAMILY DIVISION

Transparency Implementation Group

Notes of Media Engagement Meeting

Tuesday 15 November 2022

Attendees

The President of the Family Division (Chair)

Olivia Kirkbride (Secretary) (Serjeants' Inn Chambers)

HHJ Philip Harris-Jenkins (Circuit Judge)

Angela Frazer-Wicks (Parent with lived experience)

HHJ Jessica Pemberton (Circuit Judge)

Femi Ogunlende (Barrister, No.5 Chambers)

Melanie Carew (Cafcass)

Sian Harrison (Law Service Editor, PA Media)

Olivia Heath (Ministry of Justice)

Kim Webb (Secretariat)

Apologies

HHJ Michelle Corbett (Circuit Judge)

Claire Powell (HMCTS)

Emma Petty (HMCTS)

Lucy Reed (Chair of The Transparency Project, Barrister & Blogger)

Guy Vassall-Adams (Barrister, Matrix Chambers)

Amy Orgill (Department of Education)

Katy Block (The Association of Directors of Children's Services)

1. Document reflecting purpose, aims of the wider media group

The group discussed the guidance drafted by Olivia Kirkbride, which aims to reflect the purpose, aims and parameters of the national media group. The guidance was drafted to address the three main concerns raised in the meeting with media reps held on 28 June 22. This included media reps' concerns over attending a hearing before a judge who may also be a member of the national media group, anonymisation (which will be covered more substantively by the pilots group), and setting out the scope of the national group, being to discuss broad process and operation of the Family Court as opposed to specific cases.

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The following points were discussed and agreed:

- A date for the wider national group should be set up for late January/early February 23. **Action: Secretariat to set up**
- The agenda will include an item on identifying topics for discussion for future meetings.
- The invite for the first national meeting will be sent to the initial list of media reps developed by Sian Harrison. Following the initial meeting, journalists will be able to choose whether to attend future meetings based on what is on the agenda.
- There will be an internal steering group, including members of the judiciary and a core group of media reps, who will attend each and every time.
- The wider group should include some DJs and if possible, a legal advisor, however it was felt that the inclusion of DJs was more relevant.
- One of the practitioner groups be invited to attend and feedback to the other three.

The President thanked Olivia for all her work on drawing up the guidance.

2. How local courts will engage with local media?

Olivia Kirkbride offered to draw up some guidance in consultation with a small working group to provide advice to local courts on how they should engage with local media. The following members agreed to be part of that working group:

HHJ Jessica Pemberton
Femi Ogunlende
Sian Harrison
Melanie Carew
Angela Frazer-Wicks

HHJ Harris-Jenkins advised that any document for Wales would need to be translated into Welsh.

The aim is for that group to get going with a view to coming back to the larger group in the spring. The President would like to have a document ready for early April to allow for something to be presented to the judges at the annual conference being held in May 23.

3. Date of next meeting

The group will aim to meet in February 23. The next meeting should fall after the wider national group and the small local sub-group has met up.