



# Media Pilot Sub-group meeting: minutes

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**Date** 26 March 2024: 4.30pm – 5.30pm (via MS Teams)  
**Author:** PFD Office  
**Attendees:** Mrs Justice Lieven, HHJ Adem Muzaffer, DJ Joanna Geddes, Jack Harrison, Charles Hale KC, Guy Vassall-Adams KC, Andrew Wood JP, Julie Doughty, Sian Harrison, Olive Craig, Lisa Harker, MoJ Legal, HMCTS Operational, PFD Office.  
**Apologies:** HHJ Nancy Hillier, HHJ Claire Murden, Julia Steels JP, Lucy Reed KC, Jack McCabe, Angela Frazer-Wicks, HMCTS Legal, MoJ Policy.

## 1. Progress of the Pilot

- 1.1 Mrs Justice Lieven said that no issues had arisen since the pilot's expansion, however very little reporting had taken place: this was felt to be due to difficulties in finding out what cases were about and parents not knowing that they could communicate with the media.
- 1.2 Olive Craig said that Louise Tickle was holding an event with journalists and group of lawyers on 27 March, to discuss reporting in the Family Court: she would report back to the group.
- 1.3 Julie Doughty confirmed that Paul Magrath had done some legal blogging from the East London Family Court. She felt that, once private law cases in the London courts came within the pilot, parents were likely to contact journalists.

**Action: a media engagement meeting would be arranged (involving group members and journalists), in April, to discuss how to encourage more reporting.**

**Action: Olive Craig to report back to the group on the 27 March event.**

## 2. Evaluation of the pilot

- 2.1 The final evaluation report had been produced by the National Centre for Social Research and would be published before Easter; it had not highlighted any issues or concerns.

## 3. Involving young people in the pilot

**Action: a meeting would be arranged to discuss how to involve young people in the pilot.**

## 4. Final implementation

- 4.1 MoJ Legal had circulated a paper to group members following a meeting with Mrs Justice Lieven and Jack Harrison. The proposal was to insert an enabling Rule (into the Family Procedure Rules) which would link to a new Practice Direction – this would set out provisions about when the court could give permission to communicate information from proceedings. MoJ Legal sought the group’s agreement to this proposal: the aim was to put it to the Family Procedure Rule Committee so that a new Rule and Practice Direction would be in place by the end of the year (subject to Parliamentary time). Proposals for the national rollout of the use of Transparency Orders remained subject to consideration by MoJ Policy and HMCTS.
- 4.2 It was queried whether a Rule could be introduced whereby the media could report regardless of whether they had made an application for a transparency order. This would require further discussion, however it was felt that this might increase the workload of the Judiciary and HMCTS, and would need to take into account factors such as criminal proceedings, the likelihood of identification within small communities etc.
- 4.3 Another issue that was raised was whether, in Financial Remedies cases, there might be a challenge to a Practice Direction/Family Procedure Rule on the basis that this might conflict with current law and/or statute. MoJ Legal confirmed that the Rule and Practice Direction would only apply in proceedings to which Parts 12 and 14 of the Family Procedure Rules applied, i.e. proceedings relating to children.

**Action: Charles Hale KC to e-mail Mrs Justice Lieven with his views on whether there may be potential conflict between the Practice Direction/Family Procedure proposal and the practice in Financial Remedies cases.**

**Action: Mrs Justice Lieven to inform the President of the Family Division about the proposal to introduce a new provision in the Family Procedure Rules 2010, and a new supporting Practice Direction.**

## 5. Any other business

**Action: Jack Harrison to amend the current Guidance and then e-mail it to the group members who had provided feedback, for their consideration.**