



THE ADMINISTRATIVE COURT NORTH

Combined User Group Meeting
Administrative Court (North East) Leeds ('ACL') and Administrative Court (North)
Manchester ('ACM') 22/01/2025 at 4:45 pm by MS Teams

Minutes

In attendance

Mrs Justice Hill (Liaison Judge) ["HH"]
Lucy Howard-Garland (Clerk to Mrs Justice Hill)

Julie Bagnall (Delivery Manager, ACM)
Neshwar Khan (Lawyer, ACM) ["NK"]
Sabina Kuraishe (Team Leader, ACM) ["SK"]

Gemma Downing (Section Manager, ACL)
Martin Lee (ACO) (Lawyer, ACL)
Dominique Cole (Listing Officer, ACL)

Michael Blackwood (Crown Prosecution Service)
Abigail Briggs (Bhatia Best)
Karen Blackmore (Leeds City Council)
Mathieu Culverhouse (Irwin Mitchell)
Scott Laing (Bhatia Best)
Keziah Pearson (Social Work England) ["KP"]
David Dolan (General Medical Council) ["DD"]
Killian Garvey (Kings Chambers) ["KG"]
Stephanie Hill (Leigh Day)
John Hunter (Kings Chambers)
Darren Lightfoot (General Medical Council)
Keziah Pearson (Capsticks)
Gary Smith (Kings Chambers)
Jasvinder Young (Government Legal Department)

(1): Introduction by Mrs Justice Hill

1. HH introduced herself as the new Administrative Court Liaison Judge for the North and North-East, as successor to Mr Justice Fordham, who she thanked for such a comprehensive handover. The Judge explained that she practised at the Bar primarily in human rights, discrimination, police/prison law and public inquiries/inquests. She had been an Assistant Coroner and Deputy King's Bench Division Master before becoming a High Court Judge. The Judge's clerk is Lucy Howard-Garland who can be

contacted if anyone needs to raise a concern, make a suggestion or bring anything else to the Judge's attention.

2. HH introduced the Administrative Court teams from both Leeds and Manchester. In particular NK and SK were welcomed as new additions to the Manchester team since the last User Group Meeting. NK will work part-time, on Thursdays and Fridays, for Manchester ACO.

(2): Matters arising from Minutes of meeting 29 July 2024: [here](#)

3. The minutes were approved: there were no matters arising. HH advised that minutes from this meeting and future meetings will be published following the process set up by Mr Justice Fordham.

(3): New practice of anonymisation

4. HH advised that a new system for allocating a cipher (a set of 3 letters) to identify anonymous parties was being introduced in London. This involved court staff assigning the cipher rather than the parties. The system was being introduced due to the large number of cases with similar ciphers (e.g. AAA, BBB). Further, there is an enhanced risk of 'jigsaw identification' when a party's own initials are used.
5. ML confirmed that it was not likely that the same system would be adopted on the N/NE Circuits due to staff resources, because there are fewer cases, and the case number already identifies the court location ('LDS' or 'MAN') to distinguish it from cases in London etc.
6. HH suggested that parties suggest their own three initials for ciphers if seeking anonymity and to avoid using real initials. They should be aware that their suggestions may be changed if the initials selected were already assigned elsewhere.

(4): Discussion topics raised by users

Planning Court cases in the Regions

7. KG asked about the handling of planning cases in the regions. ML explained that for all planning matters an initial short note was prepared for submission to the Planning Liaison Judge ("PLJ", now Mr Justice Mould) and added to a shared "In Take" list that all the offices added to. The lists were sent fortnightly to the PLJ who would give directions as to classification ("significant" or not) and/or the type of Judge who should hear the case / consider permission (if applicable) etc. Parties are welcome to make submissions as to classification and should do so at the earliest opportunity.
8. In terms of Judges in the planning there was a small list of "Super Planners" who hear the most significant or difficult cases: High Court Judges with a planning ticket who might be allocated 'significant' cases: a number of planning practitioner deputy Judges who are recorded as able to undertake 'significant' cases and finally other full-time judges and deputy judges with a planning ticket who would normally only consider 'non-significant' cases.

Social Work England ("SWE") applications

9. KP advised that following a meeting with HHJ Belcher in ACL some time ago, SWE would be making changes to the presentation of cases for interim order extension

applications. In future the bundle would contain some generic details about the process but then have separate sections containing the factual details of the case.

General Medical Council (“GMC”) applications

10. DD provided an update in relation to how GMC were approaching its requests for an order to be made under CPR 5.4C in Interim Order extension cases following the recent judgment of HHJ Pearce, sitting as a Judge of the High Court, in *GMC v Hughes* [2024] EWHC 392 (Admin). The GMC proposals were largely the same as that adopted by SWE.

(5): Date and format of next meeting

11. HH advised that it was likely that there would be a meeting every term or as and when required. The format was likely to remain the same (remote attendance) and may be held jointly or separately if the need arises. All present were content with this course.