



THE ADMINISTRATIVE COURT NORTH

**Combined User Group Meeting**  
**Administrative Court (North East) Leeds ('ACL') and Administrative Court (North)**  
**Manchester ('ACM') 16/02/2026 at 4:30 pm by MS Teams**

**Minutes**

**In attendance**

Mrs Justice Hill (Liaison Judge) ["HH"]  
Shahida Islam (Clerk to Mrs Justice Hill)

Julie Bagnall (Delivery Manager, ACM) ["JB"]  
Shava Gibbs (ACM) ["SG"]  
Celestino Dos-Santos (ACM) ["CS"]  
Sabina Kuraishe (ACM)

Martin Lee (Lawyer, ACL) ["ML"]

Dominique Cole (ACL)  
Noeleen Conneely (ACL) ["NC"]  
Liam Barrett (ACL)  
Nicholas Mwappe (ACL)

Leigh McGeeney (GLD)  
Mathieu Culverhouse (Irwin Mitchell)  
Michael Blackwood (CPS)  
Karen Blackmore (Leeds City Council)

Apologies:  
Laura McMullan (Lawyer, ACM)

**(1): Introduction by Mrs Justice Hill**

1. HH welcomed all present, including Liam Barrett, who will be a new addition to the ACL team, covering for Noeleen Conneely who goes on maternity leave shortly.

**(2): Matters arising from Minutes of meeting 8 October 2025 found [here](#)**

2. The minutes were approved: there were no matters arising.

**(3): Discussion**

***Resources at ACL***

3. The ACL team confirmed that they have been allocated more staff resources, which is helping lower the backlog and control the inbox.

### ***The increased used of Artificial Intelligence***

4. ML raised how the rapidly increasing use of AI in statements of case and submissions, especially by Litigants in Person, is adding to the time taken by court lawyers to prepare cases and for Judges to determine them. There is a struggle to balance the “ordinary” cases and the more complicated cases where Litigants in Person are using AI.
5. HH explained how staff at ACM have also reported an increase in the number of cases being issued by Litigants in Person; and staff at both courts have described Litigants in Person using AI in their communications with the court, making them longer and more difficult to deal with.
6. This combination of factors is therefore adding to the pressures on court lawyers, staff and Judges.

### ***Use of CE-file and email***

7. CS explained that some parties in ACM are not using CE-file; and some are submitting documents on CE-file while also using the shared inbox. This creates extra work for the staff in navigating what documents need to be shared with the Judge.
8. NC confirmed that this also happened at ACL. She explained that using CE-file is advantageous for the user compared to email as the size limit is much larger on the document(s) that can be uploaded compared to an attachment with an email. SG added that the user will also get immediate confirmation that the document has been received by the court, which does not happen with email.
9. HH asked the users present whether they had had any issues with using CE-file and none were raised.
10. It was agreed that users would be encouraged to use CE-file only, rather than the inbox, as much as possible at ACM and ACL, albeit that as JB observed, this is not mandatory in the Administrative Court.

### ***Common procedural issues***

11. CS explained that a recurring issue is the late submission of Skeleton Arguments and other documents, which makes it difficult for staff to ensure the Judge has everything required. While staff will do their best, ultimately parties filing documents late face the risk that the Judge will not have seen the document; or will decline to take it into account.
12. CS explained that the court often receives phone calls querying which courtroom a case is being heard in and which Judge has been assigned to the case. Court emails about listing always remind users that this information is published daily on the cause list.
13. SG raised an issue with counsel or their clerks often calling the court to ask if a hearing in the Administrative Court is robed, which often takes up additional staff time at the

end of the day. Users are reminded of the guidance that hearings in the Administrative Court are always robed; see here:

[https://www.barcouncilethics.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Bar-Council\\_Court-Dress-Guide\\_Final\\_July-2025.pdf](https://www.barcouncilethics.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Bar-Council_Court-Dress-Guide_Final_July-2025.pdf).

**(5): Date and format of next meeting**

14. This will be arranged at some point in the Easter/Trinity term. Users should nevertheless feel free to contact the court managers or HH via her clerk if any issues arise in the meantime.