



THE ADMINISTRATIVE COURT NORTH

Combined User Group Meeting
Administrative Court (North East) Leeds ('ACL') and Administrative Court (North)
Manchester ('ACM') 08/06/2026 at 4:30 pm by MS Teams

Minutes

In attendance

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

Laura McMullan (Lawyer, ACM)
Julie Bagnall (Delivery Manager, ACM)
Shava Gibbs (ACM)
Celestino Dos-Santos (ACM)
Sabina Kuraishe (ACM)
Christopher Riesco (ACM)

Martin Lee (Lawyer, ACL) ["ML"]
Dominique Cole (ACL)
Liam Barrett (ACL) ["LB"]

Mathieu Culverhouse (Irwin Mitchell)
Michael Blackwood (CPS)
Karen Blackmore (Leeds City Council) ["KB"]
Keziah Pearson (Capsticks) ["KP"]
Rebecca Chapman (Irwin Mitchell) ["RC"]

(1): Introduction by Mrs Justice Hill

1. HH welcomed all present.

(2): Matters arising from Minutes of meeting 16 February 2026 found here

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

(3): Discussion

Court performance in ACL

3. KB asked whether ACL publishes data on its performance. HH confirmed her understanding and that of ML is that although the data is not formally published, the information has historically been shared on an informal basis in User Group Meetings.

4. HH commended ACL for exceeding the target of ensuring 60% of cases progress to a substantive hearing within 9 months: in the quarter ending 31 May 2026, 83% of cases were in this category, with the data for ACM also being strong at 75%.
5. However, ACL, in common with other regional courts, is struggling to meet the target of 80% of renewed application for permission hearings being listed within 2 months of the application to renew, but the actual numbers of renewals is relatively small. The difficulties are sometimes caused by the fact that some of these hearings need to be reserved to a full-time High Court Judge and there is only such a Judge sitting in the ACL for around 5 weeks of each term.
6. ACL has also been struggling to meet the target of 60% of paper applications (eg for permission) being determined within 3 months, but the latest figures are moving in the right direction: 30% of paper applications are now dealt with in this timescale (an increase from 13%).
7. The staff at ACL are working hard to improve performance.
8. The appointment of several new s.9(4) Deputy High Court Judges, some of whom have expressed a willingness to sit in ACN, should also assist.

Utilisation of Artificial Intelligence by Litigants in Persons

9. As noted in the last User Group Meeting, the rapidly increasing use of AI in statements of case and submissions, especially by Litigants in Person, is placing increasing pressure on court lawyers, staff and Judges.
10. HH gave as an example a Deputy High Court Judge who had sat for a fortnight in London and in Manchester, who had dealt with 40 cases, where there was not a single represented Claimant. AI had clearly been used in many if not all the cases.

Social Work England (“SWE”) appeals

11. KP explained that SWE are responsible for updating the register in a timely manner and so need to know within a relatively pressing timescale whether an appeal against a decision to extend an interim order has been lodged. KP asked whether there was anything that could be done to improve the time taken by ACL to respond to queries of this kind. LB agreed to have a further discussion with the staff about this and explore, for example, the use of “rules” for the inbox and dealing with these queries in regular batches.

Urgent communication with ACL

12. RC queried the best approach for contacting ACL with urgent materials in the run up to a hearing. ML confirmed that the best way is for representatives to email the materials to the court and then follow up with a phone call to alert the staff to the urgency.
13. HH stressed that if the matter is before a High Court Judge, their clerk should be able to assist, as they are responsible for getting materials to the Judge efficiently.

(4): Date and format of next meeting

14. This will be arranged in the same format for next meeting. Users should nevertheless feel free to contact the court managers or HH via her clerk if any issues arise in the meantime.