



Ministry  
of Justice

# Legal Support Advisory Group meeting Friday 16 July 2021

## Public note of meeting

### Members present:

Fiona Rutherford (MoJ Access to Justice, Chair); Christina Blacklaws (Lawtech UK); Richard Miller (The Law Society); Chris Minnoch (Legal Aid Practitioners' Group); Natalie Byrom (Legal Education Foundation); Julie Bishop (Law Centres Network) and Stacey Lamb (Access to Justice Foundation).

### Apologies:

Apologies were received from Lindsey Poole (Advice Services Alliance); Phil Robertson (The Bar Council); Clare Carter (The Access to Justice Foundation); Stephen Lodge (Equality and Human Rights Commission); Stephanie Boyce (The Law Society).

### Additional Attendees:

Other attendees: MoJ Legal Support Policy Team; MoJ Legal Aid Policy Team, MoJ Analytical Services, MoJ Digital.

## 1. Welcome & introductions

Fiona welcomed attendees and explained Lord Wolfson would be attending for part of this meeting.

## 2. Update on minutes, and actions, from last meeting

The previous minutes were agreed. MoJ went through the actions from the last meeting, all of which were either completed or covered by agenda items. The group agreed that, ideally, the information on the content of the meetings should be published following a suggestion from Richard Miller so that they were publicly available.

**Action: MoJ to investigate publishing information on the content of the meetings.**

## 3. Spending Review Priorities

MoJ provided an update on the latest position on the anticipated Spending Review exercise and mentioned that the Outcome Delivery Plan<sup>1</sup> for MoJ was published on 15 July, showing priority outcomes and strategic enablers and how they would be achieved.

More than two years since the Legal Support Action Plan was published, the principles underpinning it stood firm. However, it was right that the policy area matured and the vision be refined in light of aspects already delivered and the changed circumstances of the pandemic.

## 4. Co-Located hubs

MoJ talked through two distinct projects that would run concurrently but were not dependent on each other and that this was an opportunity for members to help develop this area before it formally goes to Ministers.

## 5. Lord Wolfson

Lord Wolfson thanked members of the LSAG for their involvement in the portfolio and stressed how important he thought the work was and that he was keen for the work of the group to continue. Access to justice meant receiving timely, proportionate support so that users could vindicate their legal rights. We need to look at user's needs holistically to help them get the best solution across a range of issues. Criminal and immigration concerns aside, social welfare, employment and family seemed to lie at the heart of the vast majority of problems in the legal system.

Visits to those who provide services had proven valuable to see how support works on the ground.

**Action: Members to contact MoJ with concerns or proposals about legal support**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministry-of-justice-outcome-delivery-plan>

## 6. Early Legal Support Project

MoJ talked through the latest developments on the early legal support project exploring digital interventions. The user journey being considered with this work looked at the different stages where people could resolve issues early on via self-serving, those who needed advice and empowering those people after the advice.

**Action: MoJ to send advice sector survey to LSAG members working in the legal support sector**

## 7. Any other business (AOB)

None.

### Next LSAG meeting

The provisional date of the next meeting was 20 October.

Action	Owner(s)	Deadline
MoJ to investigate publishing information on the content of the meetings	MoJ	Next meeting
Members to contact MoJ with concerns or proposals about legal support	All	Next meeting
MoJ to send advice sector survey to LSAG members working in the legal support sector	MoJ	Next meeting