



HM Courts & Tribunals Service

HM Courts and Tribunals Service Board meeting – 2 April 2020

Present HMCTS Members:

Tim Parker	Independent Chairman
Victoria Cochrane	Senior Independent Non-Executive Member and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Chair
Ian Playford	Non-Executive Member
Lakh Jemmett	Non-Executive Member
Susan Acland-Hood	Chief Executive, HM Courts & Tribunals Service
Kevin Sadler	Deputy Chief Executive & Operations Director
Andrew Baigent	Chief Finance Officer
Sir Ernest Ryder	Senior President of Tribunals (SPT)
Lady Justice Kate Thirlwall	Senior Presiding Judge (SPJ)
District Judge Tim Jenkins	Judicial Board member
Annabel Burns	Ministry of Justice, Director, Judicial and Legal Services Policy

Presenters and additional attendees:

Marie-Claire Uhart	Transition Director
Jan Gower	Non-Executive HMCTS Change Portfolio Board member/Critical Friend
Paul Harris	Director, Courts and Tribunals Operations
Louise Alexander	Director, HR
Neal Barcoe	Deputy Director, Family Justice Policy Division (MoJ)
Adam Lennon	Deputy Director and Service Owner – Family
Teresa Williams	Director of Strategy - Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)
Model Office Programme Manager	CAFCASS
Clare Farren	Deputy Director, Judicial Private Offices
HMCTS Board Secretary	
Head of HMCTS Corporate Governance and Board Secretariat	

Welcome and Introductions

Tim Parker welcomed attendees to the meeting.

Minutes and actions

The minutes from 5 March 2020 were approved and updates on actions were noted.

Performance – HMCTS Response to COVID-19

The Executive Board members provided the Board with an update on performance and HMCTS's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the steps taken to ensure the safety of staff, judges and all users, including in relation to the Gold Command structure that had been stood up in response to the crisis.

Collaborative work had taken place with Heads of Division and other senior judges to identify priority work and HMCTS operations had now been consolidated to a smaller network of courts. Significant progress had been made in relation to the use of remote hearings with thousands of audio and video hearings taking place daily.

There was a discussion around the comparative levels of staff absence rates between HMCTS and other organisations, and the Board was updated on plans to support staff to continue to work during the crisis.

The Board was informed that the MoJ IT infrastructure was so far standing up to the increased demands placed upon it as a result of increased remote-working. The Board recognised the MoJ digital teams for their efforts in unlocking current internal video conferencing technology to those outside the organisation which enabled hearings to be conducted through this technology.

Board members placed on record their sincere thanks to HMCTS staff and the judiciary for their considerable efforts during the crisis so far.

2020-21 Financial Allocation and Programme Business Case 6

An update was provided on the 2020-21 Allocation and HMCTS Reform Programme Business Case 6 (PBC6) processes following the emergence of the COVID-19 crisis.

Both the formal concordat process and the PBC6 process had been postponed until the autumn, but it was confirmed that working budgets had been issued to budget holders to allow for spending at the level of the provisional allocation. Additional expenditure on COVID-19 would be captured so that this could be clearly identified.

Private Family Law: Demand Management

The Board was provided with an update of the changing position as a result of COVID-19. There were three stages to the proposed approach in response to the pandemic: to maximise capacity; to develop the pathway to recovery; and to establish the new 'normal' based on future demand and shaped by lessons that had been learned.

The Board provided feedback, which included its recommendation to pilot new processes, such as triage at an early stage.