



The Law Society



Legal Aid
Agency

Crime Contract Consultative Group (CCCG) meeting

Minutes

3 September 2019

V1.0

When:	Tuesday 3 September 2019 15:00 – 17:00		
Where:	Petty France		
Chair Minutes	David Thomas - LAA Lisa Obadan – LAA		
Attendees	Adrian Vincent – BC Alice Mutasa – TLS Andrew Cosma – MMS Avrom Sherr – IALS David Thomas – LAA Elaine Annable – LAA Elliot Miller – LAA	Hannah Payne - (Ops Manager for HGS UK) Ian Kelcey – CLC James MacMillan – MoJ Jay Patel - (Ops Manager for HGS UK) Karl Ford - LAA Matt Doddridge – LAA Melissa Thompson – LAA Nick Ford – LAA Nicole Mason - LAA	Neil Lewis – LAA Roger Ralph – CILEx Russell Barnes - LAA Stuart McMillan - BC
Apologies	Sumaiyah Javed - LS		

1. **Minutes** from May were approved. Actions were discussed as follows.

Actions from the last meeting and decisions from this meeting			
AP1 [May]	Representative bodies to ask their members for three or four commonly occurring instances where LAA reduce claims.	All	2 July
	Representative bodies to log and send examples where LAA have cut down costs to LO for collation. #AP1 [Sep]		
AP2 [May]	M Doddridge to ensure the list of which courts are in which areas is added to claim guidance. M Doddridge to arrange for LAA to publish a finalised list of codes on gov.uk with an email address to submit corrections to.	M Doddridge	2 July
	M Doddridge to resend the link for list of scheme codes #AP2 [Sep]		
AP3 [May]	E Miller to report back on access to CCDS for peer reviews	E Miller	Closed
	Closed - a meeting has been booked in Sep to discuss this		
AP4 [May]	G Hardy and R Bhasin to liaise re issue of police station closures	G Hardy R Bhasin	Closed
	Closed		
AP5 [May]	V Burgin and E Annable to provide draft of guidance on forensic reporting to CCG for discussion	V Burgin E Annable	3 Sep
	To keep open #AP3 [Sep]		
AP6 [May]	J MacMillan to liaise with the CPS re fees for experts and report back All to email comments or suggestions for further discussion on expert fees to V Burgin (email address available from E Annable if required)	J MacMillan All	2 July
	J MacMillan to send round the link for guidance rates #AP4 [Sep]		
AP7 [May]	A Cosma to send details of issue re claiming for mileage by firm to N Poulter who will investigate R Bhasin to send details of issue re electronic images to N Poulter who will investigate	A Cosma N Poulter R Bhasin N Poulter	2 July
	M Thompson to get an update in the absence of N Poulter #AP5 [Sep]		
AP8 [May]	P Enright to make draft guidance on novations available to CCG for comment	P Enright	2 July
	To follow up with P Enright		
AP9 [May]	I Kelcey to flag up at Better Case Management meetings the issue of CPS sending unencrypted disks	I Kelcey	2 July

	D Thomas to investigate whether the cost of couriers for unencrypted discs could be considered a legitimate disbursement	D Thomas	
	Both points remain open		
AP10 [May]	All invited to comment on closure of youth courts for discussion at next meeting- email G Hardy	All	2 July
	To keep open for the next meeting		
AP11 [May]	All invited to comment on potential format of 'forward look' document and items to include	All	2 July
	To keep open and discuss at a later date		
AP12 [May]	All invited to send any comments on the guidance re the two duty solicitor issues to G Hardy as soon as possible	All	Closed
	Documents to be published in CBAM once finalised. Closed		
AP13 [May]	E Miller to circulate details re participation in Better Case Management working group.	E Miller	Closed
	Details have been circulated. Closed		

2. DSCC performance

D Thomas acknowledged the performance had not been good enough following the transition from one provider to another. Lessons have been learned from the DSCC transition and will be applied to the upcoming CLA transition.

Representative bodies expressed their frustration that communication of the upcoming change had been poor, with no warning given, and that if warning is given in advance of transitions, then representative bodies can help to address problems.

Rep bodies expressed two points arising from this issue which were: 1) communication and 2) how to get the process moving quickly and appropriately.

Lessons learned from when the last change of contract took place were discussed. It was noted that lessons had been learned (including longer transition period) but clearly further areas to improve on for next time. Rep bodies suggested that a long running period for a changeover between contractors, would be better (noting that it was a longer period than last time).

DT and Hannah Payne (HP) talked through the DSCC performance slides and recognised the frustration Solicitors and clients have felt.

Commercial Context

H Payne explained there was a change in contractor because the contract was coming to an end. HGS were awarded the contract after a tender process and this was awarded in March 2019.

H Payne confirmed the contract was not awarded on lowest price alone and the contract was awarded after a fair competition.

HGS presentation

Representative bodies had the opportunity to ask direct questions to Jay Patel (Ops Manager for HGS UK) who confirmed it was imperative to provide the service bodies are looking for.

He explained the structure, the staffing levels and the training received, and the steps being taken to improve performance. He confirmed their commitment to get the service back on track.

Training

The training provided was discussed, and whether the level of understanding of the legal issues involved was sufficient. It was suggested that training be increased to ensure a greater degree of knowledge of the legal context.

IT

Performance issues arose due to move of IT system from Capita to HGS last week and although manual process in place but caused delay to deployment despite additional resources.

HGS and LAA to conduct an urgent review of the manual process which is relied on if the IT system goes down and they are keen to have a robust and improved process in place to provide the service.

HGS to undertake a review of the manual contingency process **#AP6 [SEP]**

Admin

Representative bodies asked about backlogs on the system and whether a review is to be kept on how DSCC is performing on the admin. It was confirmed that this was monitored, and resource focus would be moved to keep backlogs low.

Website

Representative bodies discussed the DSCC website and revealed it to be slow and old-fashioned, with difficulty in navigating to reports and also issues with duplicate DSCC numbers. They asked if any plans to upgrade it. It was confirmed that there is no immediate plan to upgrade yet.

Representative bodies mentioned challenges with accessing the website through Google and you have to manually type in the address. HP confirmed it has to be accessed by the 'https' URL and you can bookmark the new link.

H Payne to send link for new URL to the DSCC website **#AP7 [SEP]**

Quality

To improve quality of performance delivered, HGS have trainers shadowing the new call agents, to identify common issues and address these in action plans. They are also building agent knowledge through experience, and monitoring quality of agents in regard to performance and accuracy.

HGS are creating a new email address for complaints. Rep bodies offered to speak to agents and provide training/ share knowledge on legal issues and police processes and also arrange for some custody staff to meet with HGS staff and help in their understanding.

Representative bodies to identify people keen to visit the call centres to view the site and share their knowledge **#AP8 [SEP]**

3. Operational update

No concerns. Paper circulated with minutes.

4. Handling Removal Media update

Take comments by email – email your comments to Eloise Wood to collate

5. Count Formula Explanation required – query via The Law Society

Representative bodies were confused as to what the count formula is and expressed concern that this was implemented reduce page count. The level of consultation on this formula with the profession was discussed as needing further review, and background information was requested on how this came about.

M Thompson explained that this has been in operation for a while, and that the formula was used because under the guidance, blank pages are not allowed. When looking at Excel spreadsheet and received in print preview format, there will be blank pages within the total displays and so, they use count blank formula to quantify number of blank cells within the spreadsheet and use the percentage of blank cells to work out the actual number of pages that have values in the spreadsheet.

Representative bodies expressed concern that it could possibly compress the evidence data.

D Thomas confirmed it warranted more discussion than time allowed during this meeting and should be on the agenda for the next meeting and then move to a working group if needed.

6. AOB

Reconvene in Oct to discuss:

EU

Criminal Legal Aid Review

DSCC performance

Agenda item for Extension 2017 Standard Crime Contract.

Operational update – if needed

Send few dates by email to A Mutasa

Actions from this meeting			
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