

Legal Support Strategy Delivery Group

15 January 2025

Note of meeting

Members present

Cathryn Hannah (CH) – MoJ Legal Support Deputy Director (Chair); Liz Bayram (LB) - AdviceUK ; Julie Bishop(JB) - Law Centres Network; Natalie Byrom (NB) - Independent Policy Researcher; Lucy Dennett (LD) - The Law Society; Professor Dame Hazel Genn (HG) – UCL; Sir Robin Knowles (RK) – Legal and Advice Sector Roundtable; Phil Jew (PJ) - Advice Services Alliance; Stephen Mayson (SM) - UCL Researcher; Ali McGinley (AM) - Legal Education Foundation; Chris Minnoch (CMi) - Legal Aid Practitioners Group; Dame Clare Moriarty (CMo) - Citizens Advice; Ash Patel (AP) - Nuffield Foundation; Phil Robertson (PR) - Bar Council; Fiona Rutherford (FR) – JUSTICE; Carol Storer (CS) – Legal and Advice Sector Roundtable; Welsh Government

Apologies:

Clare Carter – Access to Justice Foundation

Additional attendees

Minister Sarah Sackman (MSS)

MoJ Legal Support Policy Team (LS)

MoJ Legal Aid Strategy Team

MoJ Directors for Legal Aid, Legal Support and Dispute Resolution Policy

Welcome

1. CH welcomed attendees and noted the apologies.

Ministerial introductions

2. CH introduced MSS to the group as the Minister responsible for legal support policy.
3. MSS welcomed attendees and expressed her passion for legal support. She wants to put legal support on a stable footing and believes that prevention is better than cure in the context of legal problems.
4. MSS spoke about the importance of legal support, including reflecting on her own experiences working in the sector. MSS emphasised the positive impact that early intervention can have and set out her vision for the future of legal

support and how this group could be a part of helping to deliver that in collaboration with Government.

5. Attendees discussed the purpose and scope of the group, with particular focus on the importance of using the right terminology when talking about legal support needs. There was general agreement that support needs to be provided in a holistic manner, with the MoJ working in collaboration with the sector to identify opportunities for Government to make positive changes over the course of this parliament.
6. MSS thanked for the LSSDG for their contribution and outlined that she is looking forward to seeing the output of the group. MSS then left the meeting.

Terms of reference, purpose and workplan for the group

7. Attendees were asked to review and provide written comments on the Terms of Reference and proposed themes that the strategy needs to focus upon after the meeting.
8. Whilst attendees acknowledged that detailed discussions on legal aid policy are out of scope of this Group, there was an agreement that the Group needs to recognise and consider how legal support interacts with legal aid policy, as legal aid is an important component of the legal support ecosystem. It was agreed this would be reflected in the Terms of Reference.

ACTION: LSSDG Members to review Terms of Reference and workplan themes and feedback any comments.

Outcomes Framework - An approach to developing a shared outcomes framework for the advice sector

9. LS introduced a paper on a draft outcomes framework for legal support and welcomed the views of the LSSDG members. LS noted this work was in its early stages, but the aim is co-develop a framework of agreed shared outcomes for the provision of legal support, with a view to aligning funders and organisations to the same aims, increasing consistency in data collection practices across the free legal advice sector and strengthening the collective evidence base.
10. LSSDG members provided feedback and discussed the paper. Discussion focused on the importance of this work and the need to clearly define outcomes and ensure they are measurable.
11. LSSDG members acknowledged that there will be practical and conceptual challenges to overcome. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to learn from similar and previous work done in this space to develop outcomes and improve data collection.

12. LS confirmed that MoJ will continue working with the sector as they develop this programme of work and thanked the group for their initial contributions.

ACTION: LSSDG Members to follow up with any further feedback on the outcomes framework and the questions posed in the slides.

ACTION: LS policy to follow up with NB on previous work she has done on outcomes.

‘Justice Insights’ - A data and policy initiative to inform and improve policymaking, and people’s experience of the justice system

13. FR and NB outlined the ‘Justice Insights’ initiative, which is designed to improve data collection and use across the justice system at both local and national levels, with the view to enabling a people centred justice system and effective data management. NB ran through examples of initiatives that had combined local and national data to help effectively inform policy making. They identified that the legal support lens was missing from these initiatives.
14. There was enthusiasm for these initiatives and the benefits they present. There was agreement that there is a lot of potential for this work to feed into the work on developing the outcomes framework.

ACTION: LS to meet with NB to discuss Justice Insights and the Outcomes Framework.

Any other business (AOB)

15. N/A

Action	Owner(s)	Deadline
LD to share Law Society paper with the group and MoJ when published.	The Law Society	Tbc.
Review and provide any comments on the i) Shared Vision and ii) Terms of Reference.	All	31 Jan 2025
Review the Outcomes Framework draft paper and provide comments.	All	31 Jan 2025
FR, NB, and LS to discuss Justice Insights work in the context of the Outcomes Framework outside of this group.	LS	Feb 2025
LS policy team to provide draft 5-year plan for the next meeting of this group.	LS	March 2025