



Ministry of Justice

FAMILY PROCEDURE RULE COMMITTEE

At 11:00 a.m. – 12:50 pm on Monday 13 April 2026,
Hybrid, in person at Royal Courts of Justice and online via Teams

Present:

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| • Sir Andrew McFarlane | President of the Family Division |
| • Mr Justice Keehan | High Court Judge (Chair) |
| • Mr Justice Peel | High Court Judge |
| • Her Honour Judge Suh | Circuit Judge |
| • District Judge Foss | District Judge (County) |
| • Poonam Bhari | Barrister |
| • Jennifer Kingsley JP | Magistrate |
| • Shabana Jaffar | Cafcass |
| • District Judge Cassidy | District Judge |
| • Helen Sewell | Legal Advisor |
| • Rhys Taylor | Barrister |
| • Lord Justice Baker | Court of Appeal Judge |
| • District Judge Nelson | District Judge (Magistrates) |
| • His Honour Judge Humphreys | Circuit Judge - Judicial Member for Wales |
| • Laura Coyle | Solicitor |
| • Sophie Crowley | Cafcass Cymru |
| • Graeme Fraser | Solicitor |
| • Vicki Mulligan | Lay Person |

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND APOLOGIES

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the Family Procedure Rule Committee meeting. Apologies were received from Mrs Justice Knowles.
 - 1.1 The Chair noted the appointment of Sophie Crowley as the representative for Cafcass Cymru and the Welsh Government for a three-year term.
 - 1.2 The Chair recognised the work of the President of the Family Division ('the President') who attended his final Committee meeting before his retirement.
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MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

2. The Committee approved the minutes from the 2 March 2026 meeting.

Action Point [1]: Secretariat to amend the link in 5.1 to reflect the link the correct link to the new family court appeal guidance to <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/appeal-a-decision-in-a-family-law-case>.

Action Point [2]: Secretariat to arrange for the March 2026 minutes to be published on the relevant FPRC webpage.

ACTIONS LOG

3. The Committee noted that 20 actions points were recorded from the 2 March 2026 Committee meeting with 15 of those having been actioned and marked as completed.
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MATTERS ARISING

- 4.1 MoJ Tabled a paper which contained updates on the following:

- Web inaccuracies

- 4.2 Officials updated the Committee on a number of inaccuracies identified on the Family Procedure Rules website affecting Practice Directions 30A, 6D, 27A, 36ZH and 36ZA. These included formatting, transcription and layout errors, and the continued publication of a Practice Direction that had expired.

- 4.3 The Committee was informed that the Web Team has corrected the identified issues, including removing expired Practice Direction 36ZA from the website and updating index entries as required.

- Practice Direction Update No1. of 2026

- 4.4 Following the March 2026 meeting, officials prepared a final version of Practice Direction Update No.1 of 2026 ('the Update') to reflect the Committee's decisions, which was signed by both the President on 18 March 2026 and the Minister on 24 March 2026.

- 4.5 The Update made several amendments to the following PDs:

- PD36G - (Pilot Scheme, Procedure for Using an Online System to Generate Applications in Certain Private Law Proceedings Relating to Children): end date of pilot extended
- PD36Z - (Pilot Scheme: Private Law Reform: Investigative Approach): .
- PD36ZD - (Pilot Scheme: Online System for Certain Private Law Proceedings Relating to Children, Certain Protective Orders and Certain Appeals): end date of pilot extended.
- PD27A - (Family Proceedings: Court Bundles): amendments to clarify the intended position on drafting of preliminary documents, and to make various tidying amendments.
- PD36ZH - (Pilot Scheme: Express Financial Remedy Procedure): end date extended.
- PD36ZI - (Pilot Scheme: Notification to the Police When Certain Orders Are Made Under Part 4 of The Family Law Act 1996): amendment in relation to details to be shared with the police.
- PD36V - (Pilot Scheme: Family Mediation Voucher Scheme): end date of pilot extended.

4.6 The Update has been published on the What's New page for the FPR on GOV.UK with relevant commencement dates.

- Practice Direction Update No.2 of 2026

4.7 Officials prepared Practice Direction Update No. 2 of 2026 ("Update No. 2") to correct an omission in Practice Direction Update No. 1 of 2026, which amended PD36Z (Pilot Scheme: Private Law Reform: Investigative Approach) to extend the end date to 31 March 2027, but an incorrect cross-reference meant that mistakenly it did not extend the end date for the Hampshire and Isle of Wight DFJ area.

4.8 Update No. 2 was signed by the President of the Family Division on 31 March 2026 and approved by the Minister on 2 April 2026.

4.9 The Update has been published on the What's New page for the FPR on GOV.UK and came into force on 3 April 2026.

- FPRC Annual Report

4.10 At the March 2026 meeting, the Committee made a small number of factual and presentational comments on the draft Annual Report. Following Committee approval, the Annual Report was reviewed and cleared by the President and was published on 9 April 2026 on GOV.UK.

4.11 The Annual Report summarised activity during April 2024–March 2025. The Secretariat will shortly begin work on drafting the 2025–2026 Annual Report, in line with the reinstated annual reporting cycle.

- 4.12 Officials will bring an update to the Committee in spring/summer 2026 on plans for the preparation of the 2025/26 Annual Report, setting out the proposed structure, key areas of focus for views and comments subject to Secretariat capacity and resourcing.
- 4.13 A full draft of the 2025–2026 Annual Report will be shared for Committee review later in the year, ahead of submission to the President.
- Justices' Legal Advisers' Powers (Public Law)
- 4.14 At the March meeting, the Committee agreed that PD2C be amended so Justices' Legal Advisers (JLAs) can (in specified circumstances to be agreed) amend case timetables in public law proceedings. The amendment will reduce delays caused by the need to reallocate cases on the public law portal to a judge for what are relatively straightforward decisions. Similar amendments to JLAs' powers have already been made in private law proceedings.
- 4.15 The matter was triaged at Level 3. The Committee requested that the amendment be included in Practice Direction Update No. 1 of 2026, if time allowed.
- 4.16 There was not sufficient time or resource to include this issue in Practice Direction Update No.1 of 2026. Any necessary amendments would have need to have been agreed and made by 16 March in order to achieve this.
- 4.17 Policy and legal officials have liaised with HHJ Suh on what issues are to be addressed and have met with JLAs to ascertain which powers of the court it is intended they should be able to exercise. Officials will now need to draft proposed amendments to PD2C to seek to capture the exact circumstances (and no others).
- 4.18 Officials will return to the Committee at a later date when resources have allowed for the matter to progress further.
- 4.19 MoJ Legal confirmed the intention is for draft amendments to be presented to the May or June 2026 meeting, resources permitting.

Action Point [3]: Officials to draft proposed amendments to PD2C setting out the specific circumstances in which Justices' Legal Advisers may amend case timetables in public law proceedings and to return to the Committee with draft proposals at the May or June 2026 meeting, resources permitting.

- Implications of Re S
- 4.20 Officials noted that they intend to bring a triaging form to the May Committee meeting in relation to the indication in Re S (Care and Placement: Schedule of Findings of Fact) [2026] EWCA Civ 85 that consideration should be given by the Committee to formalising the practice of including schedules of findings of fact in orders in public law proceedings.
- 4.21 Mr Justice Peel noted that the Standard Orders are also being amended to reflect the judgment.

4.22 The Committee noted that any agreed threshold criteria should also be annexed to orders.

Action Point [4]: Officials to prepare and bring a triaging paper to a future Committee meeting on whether the practice identified in *Re S* should be formalised through rule or practice direction changes.

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

TRANSPARENCY: REPORTING IN FINANCIAL REMEDY PROCEEDINGS

5.1 Officials updated the Committee on the delivery timeline for making a new “hook rule” and new Practice Direction provision for the Transparency Reporting Pilot for Financial Remedy Proceedings following the launch of the consultation on disclosing information from financial remedy and children proceedings.

5.2 Officials reported that, after engagement with named judicial officeholders and the Committee’s Information Sharing and Transparency Working Group, the consultation had been launched on 16 March and would run until 27 April 2026.

5.3 Officials sought comments from the Committee on the proposed new “hook rule” included in the paper submitted to the meeting, and their agreement on the planned delivery timeline, including the proposal to include the hook rule in the July 2026 amending SI with Practice Direction drafting to follow at a later stage.

5.4 Officials noted that they will return to the Committee in July 2026 to share the consultation summary report and findings.

5.5 The Committee confirmed it was content with the proposed changes and timings.

5.6 Mr Justice Peel flagged that in a Court of Appeal judgment, Lord Justice Males had expressed concerns about the terminology “transparency orders”, suggesting they were the opposite of transparent and noting that alternative labels such as anonymity orders or reporting restriction orders had been used in discussion elsewhere. Mr Justice Peel suggested the Committee might consider whether “transparency order” remained the right description for orders made in children and financial remedy proceedings.

Action Point [5]: MoJ Policy to give initial consideration whether the term “transparency order” remains the appropriate description for orders made in children and financial remedy proceedings, noting comments made by Lord Justice Males in a Court of Appeal case.

UNREGULATED EXPERTS

6.1 Officials updated the Committee on the work undertaken by officials and the Domestic Abuse Working Group (‘the Group’) to develop changes aimed at prohibiting the instruction of unregulated experts

- 6.2 Officials explained that consultation feedback had prompted consideration of how forensic experts should be reflected in the changes. The Group's decision was that rather than attempting to make the rule apply to forensic experts, they would be exempted and a new definition of 'technical expert' be introduced to provide for this. Officials then sought the Committee's view on whether members were content with the proposed changes noted that officials would work up full changes for inclusion in the next statutory instrument, expected in July, alongside the corresponding practice direction changes.
- 6.3 Vicki Mulligan asked whether the proposals would be problematic for FDAC teams providing expertise to the court. Discussion clarified that FDAC team involvement was not generally captured as "expert reports" under Part 25.
- 6.4 Rhys Taylor queried the thinking behind exclusion of financial remedy proceedings and stated that there were problems in financial remedy proceedings with unregulated experts, particularly pensions experts.
- 6.5 The Chair drew a distinction between children proceedings, where it could be clearer to identify regulated and unregulated experts (with exceptions for technical disciplines), and financial remedy proceedings, where the concern often related to the quality of the expert work as much as the existence of regulation, making the question more complex.
- 6.6 Members also discussed crossover cases in which there were parallel children and financial remedy proceedings and where experts might be regulated in one context but not the other.
- 6.7 Members agreed to proceed with the rule change focussed on children proceedings and to set up separate consideration of experts in financial remedy proceedings.
- 6.8 The Chair asked Mr Justice Peel, Graeme Fraser and Rhys Taylor to consider who should be consulted if considering any extension of this rule change to financial remedy proceedings and requested that the matter be put on the agenda for the next meeting so that the Committee could consider where matters stood and any next steps.

Action Point [6]: Mr Justice Peel, Graeme Fraser and Rhys Taylor to identify relevant consultees on the potential need for rule change in financial remedy and to return to the Committee at the May 2026 meeting with an update and proposed next steps.

CHILD FOCUSED COURTS (FORMERLY KNOWN AS PATHFINDER)

- 7.1 The Committee was asked to consider a number of amendments to PD12B (Pilot), which is annexed to PD36Z, to align the PD with agreed operational practice.
- 7.2 Officials noted they intend to include the agreed amendments to PD12B (Pilot) in Practice Direction Update No. 3 of 2026, which it is planned to submit to the President and then the Minister later in April or in May.
- 7.3 Officials noted that they will return to the Committee with future amendments, including the addition of the new court areas due to start the model later this year, following an assessment of readiness.

7.4 Her Honour Judge Suh voiced her concern that the proposed changes risked lessening effectiveness in practice and raised several specific points:

- The provision at paragraph 8.10, which had previously envisaged a case progression officer telephoning parties, was now limited to unrepresented parties only.
- New drafting states the court “shall not” order an urgent child impact report. It was suggested that an absolute prohibition could remove a useful option in the small number of cases where addressing a key issue at an early stage could be effective.
- Paragraph 9.10(a), does not include a definition of an “open and active statutory social work case”. Grey areas were highlighted in relation to early help, child in need cases and other forms of fringe involvement, and clarification was sought as to where the dividing line would be drawn.
- Under Paragraph 23.3, safeguarding checks can be carried out by the local authority, but it is not clear whether they would have access to the same information as Cafcass, including PNC checks and records of prior Cafcass involvement.
- Paragraph 9.10(a) created concerns about the court’s inability to order urgent reports. Concerns were also raised about potential grey areas in the division of responsibilities between the local authority and Cafcass, and the need to ensure that, where local authorities are carrying out safeguarding checks, they have access to all the information that Cafcass would ordinarily hold.
- Members expressed concern that the proposed changes to Paragraph 23.3, whereby Cafcass and social work agencies would no longer attend hearings by default.
- Reference was made to the paragraph on section 16A risk assessments, which brings in the local authority, noting that under the statutory framework it is Cafcass/ Cafcass Cymru that holds responsibility for decision-making in relation to when to make such assessments.

7.5 .On the points raised by the Committee:

- Officials confirmed that where the local authority became lead agency, while local authorities did not have PNC access, there were local protocols in place with police forces.
- Officials accepted the point about grey areas beyond Section 17 and 47 Children Act 1989 and acknowledged further engagement was needed with ADCS to define consistent thresholds, noting differing thresholds and approaches and identifying early help and children with disabilities teams as relevant examples.
- On the question of not ordering urgent child impact reports, Officials explained that the intention was to prevent “safeguarding checks only” child impact reports and that where urgent checks were required, this were ordered albeit practice varied by area.
- Officials also addressed the case progression officer role and explained that as the model transitions to business as usual, HMCTS administrative staff were undertaking comparable functions, and that written communication is also provided to parties, acknowledging positive feedback on the telephone call in particular.
- Officials confirmed that the drafting in relation to s16A risk assessments would need amending.

- 7.6 Graeme Fraser noted concerns about Cafcass refusing attendance except at final hearings, in apparent disregard of orders, and emphasised the value of attendance in appropriate cases.
- 7.7 HHJ Humphries described that gatekeepers became experienced and that gatekeeping orders could be detailed, with gatekeepers making decisions about when attendance was likely necessary. It was stated that where necessary, orders for attendance were made, but that in the majority of cases non-attendance was appropriate
- 7.8 Jenny Kinglsey raised minor drafting points, including that use of the term “legal adviser” could be confusing and that references should be aligned and clearly labelled, including where “justices’ legal adviser” is intended. Helen Sewell noted that the document notes both ‘Legal Adviser’ and ‘Justice’s Legal Adviser’ and that the second might be better, so may address Jennifer Kingsley’s issue if needed. It was agreed that consistent terminology should be used throughout the PD.
- 7.9 Shabana Jaffar noted that proformas had been prepared for information sharing and that the point raised regarding s16A risk assessments should be considered.
- 7.10 Judge Foss raised a concern around urgent hearings, which can feature a letter from the local authority, which will set out the involvement with the family – wanted to confirm some information of this type can get to the court in these instances. HHJ Humphries confirmed that there was discretion for this to happen. HHJ Suh noted there is a proforma for the local authority to set out their involvement (48-hour deadline).
- 7.11 His Honour Judge Humphries noted that there is provision for the parties to make applications to vary any decision for Cafcass not to attend a hearing.
- 7.12 The Committee approved the proposed PD amendments, subject to the issues raised by HHJ Suh, with the intention that the outstanding points be resolved outside committee through further discussion between officials and relevant members. The Chair stated that if agreement was reached, the Secretariat could circulate an email for out of committee sign off; otherwise, the issues would be dealt with at the May meeting.

Action Point [7]: Officials to work with relevant members to resolve outstanding drafting issues (including section 16A) outside Committee, with a view to reaching agreement ahead of the May meeting.

Action Point [8]: Subject to agreement being reached, the Secretariat to circulate the revised drafting to Committee members for out-of-committee agreement by email; otherwise, to ensure the matter is listed for consideration at the May meeting.

QLR STATUTORY GUIDANCE

- 8.1 The Committee was updated on the proposed revisions to the statutory guidance for the QLR scheme, following the March 2026 discussion and the President’s request for a comprehensive review.
- 8.2 Officials noted the proposed changes cover eligibility and registration (including experience of cross-examination), training requirements, payment claims, and new provisions on conflicts of interest and grounds for removal from the QLR register.
- 8.3 Officials sought the Committee’s views on proposals to insert grounds for removal from the QLR register. Officials cited proposed grounds including absence of a valid practising certificate, and concerns raised by justice sector bodies such as the Ministry of Justice,

the Legal Aid Agency or HMCTS, or concerns raised by the judiciary. Officials gave specific examples being considered, including removal for three or more instances of non-attendance or cancellation with less than three days' notice, and removal for being late three or more times within a 12-month period.

- 8.4 Officials also referenced removal where a formal finding or sanction prohibited legal aid work, including counter fraud allegations.
- 8.5 Officials then addressed conflicts of interest, stating that where a QLR had a conflict (such as acting as a party's criminal representative) they should not act as QLR in that case. Officials also raised the possibility of broader grounds based on below par conduct in court but explained that it is difficult to define such grounds tightly in statutory guidance, and that the proposals therefore focused on more tangible criteria.
- 8.6 Officials also described consideration of an appeals process, noting difficulty in establishing a truly independent appeal, with a provisional approach being that QLRs would appeal to HMCTS with evidence.
- 8.7 Rhys Taylor asked whether HMCTS currently recorded lateness and non attendance, and whether there would be a system to track patterns across different courts. Officials responded that HMCTS would seek to ask courts to keep track of attendance and conduct, but that resourcing might require revisiting. The Chair then pressed specifically on national consistency, raising the concern that there needs to be a centralised record. Officials clarified that there would be a central record administered by the relevant team.
- 8.8 Rhys Taylor raised the challenge is that in many cases the real issue was that QLRs were simply not good enough, including issues of communication, but the member noted risks in using language competence as a criterion given equality and diversity concerns and the risk of accusations of discriminatory behaviour by a judge. Officials acknowledged the sensitivity and agreed careful thought would be needed.
- 8.9 HHJ Suh raised payment issues and suggested delays often arose from late approval of orders and recitals, implying the remedy lay with court administration rather than simply requiring timely claims from QLRs.
- 8.10 Jennifer Kingsley asked who would do the reporting when QLRs did not attend or were not prepared and suggested that there should be an automatic and simple reporting system, such as a form completed by a legal adviser, to ensure issues were captured nationally. The Chair indicated the sensitivity of judicial involvement and the risks of a minefield if judges were drawn into appeals, suggesting that as admission to the register was administrative, removal should likewise be handled administratively, and that judicial involvement would be unwise.
- 8.11 Officials explained that the central family team for HMCTS administered the QLR scheme, registered QLRs, notified courts when new QLRs were added or removed, and would introduce a system asking courts to send details of late attendance or complaints from the judiciary. Officials explained that the team would be dependent on the judiciary to provide details where there were concerns about how a QLR was operating in court. Officials also noted that if removal from the register increased complaint handling burdens, HMCTS might need to return to the Committee if it became too resource intensive.
- 8.12 Graeme Fraser questioned whether there was a publicly accessible register of QLRs. He also noted that cases could start with representation but, as proceedings progressed

to fact finding, parties might no longer be able to afford solicitors and counsel. It was stated that, in practice, parties sometimes sought public access or direct access to counsel, and that broader information to parties about those routes might help reduce strain. It was also recognised that some parties could not afford even direct access representation, leaving QLRs as the route back to the system.

- 8.13 Members also expressed support for the proposed non-attendance and late cancellation provisions, noting that last minute cancellation appeared in some cases to be motivated by QLRs taking other better paid work. Members noted that quality issues were rooted in training and entry standards. The Committee noted the Law Society training had still not been finalised and discussed whether training could be offered through other routes, with reference to Family Law Bar Association (FLBA) training provision and the limits of FLBA capacity.
- 8.14 HHJ Humphreys expressed concern about expecting judges to undertake appraisals of advocacy performance and noted that poor advocacy existed across the professions, and that judges did not regulate advocates generally. Lord Justice Baker suggested the scheme risked dealing with the wrong problem by trying to remove people after appointment, arguing instead for tightening appointments through mandatory training and references, akin to other appointment schemes. Officials confirmed that the difficulty is that QLR numbers are still low and so if we required mandatory training numbers could fall. Lord Justice Baker warned of the risk of judicial review without robust appeal arrangements.
- 8.15 Mr Justice Peel suggested that some of the behaviours described, such as failing to attend, might constitute breaches of professional codes of conduct and could be dealt with through existing regulatory processes such as referral to the relevant professional regulator, rather than building a separate disciplinary mechanism.
- 8.16 The President raised a separate point concerning an external association (*The Association of Qualified Legal Representatives (AQLR)*) that had suggested it was operating an accreditation scheme for QLRs and noted confusion arising from its website and messaging. Officials confirmed that the association was not an accredited body and that any prior claims of statutory responsibility had been removed following engagement. Officials undertook to ensure the association did not portray itself as having a status it did not have.

Action Point [9]: Officials to reflect on the Committee's steer on QLR entry standards, training and references and to revise the proposed statutory guidance accordingly.

Action Point [10]: Officials, working with HMCTS, to further consider proposals on removal from the QLR register, including reporting and appeals.

Action Point [11]: Officials to engage further with relevant professional bodies, including the Law Society, on training provision, and to ensure that external bodies such as the AQLR do not represent themselves as having formal accreditation status.

Action Point [12]: Officials to return to the Committee with an update and revised proposals reflecting the discussion.

POLICE DISCLOSURE ORDERS – 2024 PROTOCOL

9.1 The Committee was updated on progress since February 2026 in relation to the Annex 5 template police disclosure order under the Disclosure of Information between Family and Criminal Agencies and Jurisdictions: 2024 Protocol (“the 2024 Protocol”).

9.2 Officials explained that, following further engagement with representatives of the police, members of the Committee and the Standard Orders Group, a revised Annex 5 draft had been agreed by all parties.

9.3 The Committee confirmed that it was content with the revised Annex 5 draft dated 24 March 2026.

9.4 Officials noted that Mrs Justice Knowles had previously contributed to this work and that the revised Annex 5 draft would be shared with her on her return from annual leave on 20 April 2026 for her views.

Action Point [13]: Officials to share the Annex 5 template (dated 24 March 2026) with Mrs Justice Knowles on 20 April 2026 for her views and, following that engagement, to share the draft with the police representative as appropriate.

9.5 The Committee also considered the draft handling instructions associated with the 2024 Protocol, which had not previously been brought to the Committee.

9.6 HHJ Suh raised concerns regarding the handling instructions, in particular:

- the reference to a “tape transcription panel”, which was unclear;
- the apparent omission of key family justice recipients who may require access to police disclosure, including Cafcass, the National Youth Advocacy Service, witnesses, qualified legal representatives, and potentially litigants in person; and
- the lack of clarity as to whether parties, including litigants in person, were required to sign the handling instructions.

9.7 The Chair agreed that these issues indicated that the handling instructions required clarification before the Committee could decide whether to endorse them.

Action Point [14]: Officials to liaise with police representatives to seek clarification and, where appropriate, amendment of the draft handling instructions (including the issues raised by the Committee), and to return the handling instructions to the Committee for consideration before any decision on endorsement.

Action Point [15]: Officials to return the handling instructions to the Committee once clarification has been received, for a decision on whether the Committee is content to endorse them.

9.8 Mr Justice Peel asked when the revised Annex 5 order should now be incorporated into the compendium of standard orders. It was noted that, while the 2024 Protocol had already been issued, there was not yet clarity on the timetable for incorporating the amended Annex 5 into the 2024 Protocol.

9.9 The Committee agreed that the revised Annex 5 order should not be incorporated into the compendium of standard orders until it has been incorporated into the 2024 Protocol. Members noted that ultimate approval of the incorporation into standard orders would sit with the President.

Action Point [16]: Officials to notify the Committee when the amended Annex 5 has been incorporated into the 2024 Protocol, at which point the Annex should be incorporated into the compendium of standard orders, subject to the President’s approval.

JADE’S LAW

- 10.1 Officials updated the Committee on their work with the Group to consider whether changes to the Rules and their associated PDs will be required to support the implementation of Jade’s Law.
- 10.2 Officials described early thinking on consultation and engagement, noting the need to balance the limited nature of expected rule changes against appropriate stakeholder involvement. Officials proposed a targeted stakeholder consultation rather than a general public consultation and invited the Committee’s views on this approach (to be confirmed once rules finalised). The Chair tested the Committee’s agreement and recorded that members were content with a stakeholder focused approach.
- 10.3 The Chair then tested whether the Committee was content with the list of stakeholders in the paper and invited additions. Members suggested adding:
- Resident judges (reflecting that Crown Court judges would make the relevant orders),
 - Women’s Aid,
 - the Law Society,
 - the Domestic Abuse Commissioner’s Office, and
 - The Lead Magistrate.

Action Point: [17]: Officials to update the consultation stakeholder list to include resident judges, Women’s Aid, the Law Society, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner’s Office, and appropriate magistracy leads.

10.4 Members were content with a six-week consultation period.

10.5 Officials stated they will return to the Committee in the May meeting with an update.

OPRC - CIVIL MONEY AND DAMAGES CLAIMS WORKING GROUP

- 11.1 The Committee was invited to nominate a representative to join the Civil Money & Damages Claims Working Group, which sits under the Online Procedure Rule Committee (OPRC).
- 11.2 Officials noted that the Working Group (the Group’) will oversee the transition of Online Civil Money Claims and the Damages Claims Portal provisions into the Online Procedure Rules, including considering the future of existing practice directions.
- 11.3 The Committee were informed that Group meets monthly, with occasional business by correspondence, and includes representation from the judiciary, HMCTS, MoJ, external partners and other Rule Committees.
- 11.4 Officials noted that FPRC participation would support a coherent cross-jurisdictional approach as online rules develop across civil, family and tribunals jurisdictions.
- 11.5 Poonam Bhari volunteered to be a representative, on behalf of the Committee.

Action Point [18]: Secretariat to notify the OPRC of Poonam Bhari's nomination as the FPRC representative on the Civil Money & Damages Claims Working Group.

SECRETARIAT ITEMS

PRIORITIES TABLE

12.1 The Committee confirmed that they were content for the following workstreams to be removed from the Priorities Table given there is no ongoing activity such that the Committee considered the workstreams to be closed:

- "Modernisation of PD27A" given the new PD27A has come into force, guidance was published in March 2026 and amendments to PD27A have been included in Practice Direction Update No.1 of 2026.
- "Permission to Appeal" and "Service at Refuges Rule and PD Changes" as these workstreams have also concluded.

12.2 The Committee confirmed that it is content for the Priorities Table to be published.

Action Point [19]: Secretariat to arrange for the updated March Priorities Table to be published on the relevant FPRC webpage.

Action Point [20]: Secretariat to remove the following work streams from the Priorities Table:

- Modernisation of PD27A
- Permission to Appeal
- Service at Refuges Rule and PD Changes

REGISTER OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

13.1 The Secretariat proposed to update the Register of Members' Interests ('the Register'), which has not been circulated since 2021-2022. The Secretariat confirmed that a refreshed Members' Interests Form would be issued on 15 April 2026 to collect updated declarations for the **April 2024–March 2025** reporting period.

13.2 The Committee agreed the proposed approach for restating and publishing the Register, including the completion, signature and return of the refreshed Members' Interests Form by 22 April 2026.

Action Point [21]: Secretariat to issue the refreshed Members' Interests Form on 15 April 2026 to all Committee members who sat during the April 2024–March 2025 reporting period.

Action Point [22]: Committee members who sat during the April 2024–March 2025 reporting period to complete, sign and return the refreshed Members' Interests Form to the Secretariat by 22 April 2026.

13.3 The Secretariat noted that, subject to capacity, it will return to the Committee via Matters Arising at a future meeting to note the updated Register once it has been finalised and published online.

13.4 The Secretariat further noted that, as the Register will be published alongside the 2024–2025 Annual Report, completion of the Members’ Interests Form will be limited to those who were members of the Committee during that reporting period. Members appointed after 31 March 2025 will be asked to provide declarations for the subsequent reporting year.

Action Point [23]: Secretariat to collate responses and finalise the updated Register of Members’ Interests for publication alongside the 2024–2025 Annual Report, subject to capacity and approvals.

Action Point [24]: Subject to capacity, Secretariat to bring the finalised and published Register of Members’ Interests back to the Committee to note via Matters Arising at the next appropriate meeting.

OTHER PROCEDURE RULE COMMITTEES

14. The Chair stated that there were no updates from other procedural rule committees, including Criminal Procedure and Civil Procedure Rule Committees.

FPRC WORKING GROUPS

Children’s Working Group

15. Following the March 2026 meeting, it was noted that District Judge Foss’s membership of the Children’s Working Group had been omitted from the membership list. The Secretariat has amended the Children’s Working Group membership accordingly.

DRAFT APRIL 2026 AGENDA

16. The agenda will be updated to reflect developments in this meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 11 May 2026

The next meeting will be held on Monday 11 May 2026 and will be a hybrid meeting both at the Royal Courts of Justice and via MS Teams.

FPRC Secretariat

April 2026

FPRCSecretariat@justice.gov.uk