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Ministry of Justice

FAMILY PROCEDURE RULE COMMITTEE

At 11:00 a.m. – 13:00 pm on Monday 11 May 2026,

Hybrid, in person at Royal Courts of Justice and online via Teams

Present:

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| • Sir Stephen Cobb | 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 |
| • 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 |

Guest

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| • Mr Justice Nicklin | High Court Judge |
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ANNOUNCEMENTS AND APOLOGIES

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies from Rhys Taylor, Vicki Mulligan and Mrs Justice Knowles.
 - 1.2 The Chair welcomed Sir Stephen Cobb to his first Committee meeting as the President of the Family Division ('the President').
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MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- 2.1 The Committee considered the minutes of the April 2026 meeting. Lord Justice Baker noted a minor clarification in relation to the attribution of a comment at paragraph 8.4 of the minutes, which had been attributed to "another member" but was said by him so he requested an amendment to reflect this.
- 2.2 Subject to this amendment, the Committee approved the minutes and the priorities table from the 13 April 2026 meeting.

Action Point [1]: Secretariat to amend paragraph 8.4 to replace "another member" with Lord Justice Baker.

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

ACTIONS LOG

- 3 The Committee noted that 24 actions points were recorded from the 13 April 2026 Committee meeting with 12 of those having been actioned and marked as completed.
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MATTERS ARISING

- 4.1 The Secretariat tabled a paper which contained updates on the following:

Service forms C9, FP6, FL415 and C7

- 4.2 In February 2026, the Forms Working Group agreed amendments to the service forms C9, FP6, FL415 and C7. Officials have worked with HMCTS Forms and Content Design colleagues to implement amendments. Updated English language versions of Forms C9, FP6 and FL415 have now been published, with Welsh language versions to be published in due course. Officials have agreed a grace period of at least six months during which previous versions of the forms will continue to be accepted, to allow time for the Manage Cases system to be updated.

- 4.3 Officials will engage with the new President in relation to the timing of changes to Form C7.

Register of Members' Interests

- 4.4 The Secretariat updated the Committee that it is awaiting completed declarations from a small number of Committee members and will provide a further update once all responses have been received.

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Family Justice and AI

- 4.5 At the March 2026 meeting, the then President asked officials to consider whether a new FPRC sub-group should be established to consider whether changes to Rules or Practice Directions are required in response to the increasing use of AI within the family justice system.
- 4.6 Officials informed the Committee that Mr Justice McKendrick has established a steering group on AI and Family Justice. The group has commissioned several reports on AI-related issues, which are currently in development.
- 4.7 Officials will engage further with Mr Justice McKendrick to better understand the work of the steering group and what work may be required from the Committee.
- 4.8 The Committee also noted that the Civil Justice Council has recently consulted on whether rules are required to govern the use of AI by legal representatives in the preparation of court documents. and had established a sub-group to consider these issues.
- 4.9 Officials proposed bringing a further paper to the Committee's July meeting setting out concerns raised by the judiciary and practitioners, developments in other jurisdictions, and potential options for the Committee's consideration.

Action Point [3]: Officials to bring a paper to the July 2026 meeting on AI in the family justice system, including cross-jurisdictional developments and options for further FPRC work.

Action Point [4]: Officials to liaise with the AI group chaired by Mr Justice McKendrick.

- 4.10 Graeme Fraser (GF) raised concerns regarding whether warnings should be placed on orders in relation to the use of AI. Members agreed that confidentiality warnings within the family justice system were fundamental and should remain a priority in any future consideration of AI-related guidance. There was particular concern around the use of AI tools by litigants in person, often without awareness of confidentiality or accuracy issues.
- 4.11 The Committee emphasised the importance of being fully aligned with the civil and tribunal jurisdictions and that consistent guidance should address jurisdiction-specific sensitivities where necessary.

Unregulated experts in financial remedy cases (Pensions)

- 4.12 Officials reminded the Committee that, at its April 2026 meeting, it had agreed that Mr Justice Peel, Rhys Taylor and Graeme Fraser would consider who should be consulted regarding the potential need for rule changes relating to the use of unregulated pension experts in financial remedy proceedings.

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- 4.13 Mr Justice Peel updated members on the matter and his discussions with His Honour Judge Hess. Mr Justice Peel noted the view that there is neither a clear need nor sufficient appetite to take this matter forward.
- 4.14 The Committee agreed that no further action should be taken and that the matter should be closed.

Information Sharing and Transparency Group

- 4.15 The Information Sharing and Transparency Working Group ('ISTWG') has met three times and agreed a workplan covering three strands:

- disclosure of information from private children proceedings for safeguarding purposes outside proceedings;
- disclosure to support the welfare of the child subject to proceedings; and
- disclosure to support greater public transparency.

4.16 At its second meeting, the ISTWG agreed that broader changes to the Family Procedure Rules (FPR) under work strands 1 and 2 should be prioritised to ensure consistency and avoid a piecemeal approach. Officials noted they will continue to develop proposals under these work strands, including potential draft rule or Practice Direction amendments, for discussion with the ISTWG in early summer.

4.17 Officials noted that the Committee will receive a further update on the financial remedies transparency order pilot work at the June meeting.

Action Point [5]: Officials to bring a paper to the June 2026 meeting an update on the financial remedies transparency order pilot and analysis of consultation responses.

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

THE OPEN JUSTICE AND TRANSPARENCY BOARD

- 5.1 Mr Justice Nicklin outlined the work of the Board, explaining that its focus was on ensuring that, wherever possible, parties and the public are told as much as can properly be said about what is happening in proceedings, consistent with existing safeguards.
- 5.2 The President of the Family Division noted the importance of alignment with developments in the civil and tribunal jurisdictions and asked how far that work had progressed. Mr Justice Nicklin confirmed that both jurisdictions had indicated an intention to establish working groups to consider these issues.
- 5.3 Members suggested that the Information Sharing and Transparency Working Group (ISTWG) would be well placed to take this workstream forward on behalf of the Committee, including consideration of whether any amendment to the overriding objective in the Family Procedure Rules 2010 would be appropriate. HHJ Suh asked for

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a steer on how engagement between the respective rules committees should be structured. Members agreed that the ISTWG would be the appropriate forum to take this work forward on behalf of the Committee, including consideration of whether and how open justice and transparency might be reflected within the overriding objective, and to liaise as necessary with the civil and tribunal jurisdictions.

5.4 Mr Justice Nicklin invited the Chair of the Committee (Mr Justice Keehan) to join the Board as a member of the Board which he accepted.

Action Point [6]: Information Sharing and Transparency Group to consider whether and how open justice might be reflected in the overriding objective and to report back.

Action Point [7]: Secretariat to identify and obtain appropriate contact points to support engagement between the family, civil, the Criminal Court of Protection and tribunal rules committees on open justice and transparency.

Action Point [8]: HHJ Suh to act as a point of contact from the family jurisdiction for this work.

JADE'S LAW

6.1 Officials provided the Committee with a draft stakeholder consultation relating to proposed amendments to the Family Procedure Rules ('FPR') and its associated practice directions ('PDs') to support the implementation of section 18 of the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024.

6.2 Officials noted that the Committee agreed in principle to consult on the proposals at the April 2026 meeting, and to do so on a targeted stakeholder basis. The draft changes have been considered by the Domestic Abuse Working Group ('the Group'), whose discussion and feedback have informed the draft. The proposed amendments relate to FPR Part 12 and to PD 3A, 5A, 12B, 12B(Pilot) and PD12J.

6.3 Officials sought the following from the Committee:

- Confirmation that the Committee is content with the consultation paper as drafted.
- Confirmation that the consultation may now be issued to stakeholders, in line with the Committee's April 2026 steer, and that it should run for six weeks from 12 May to 22 June 2026.

6.4 6.5 Officials advised that they intended to return to the Committee in July 2026 with a summary of consultation responses and any proposed refinements to the draft FPR and PD amendments arising from the feedback received.

6.5 Helen Sewell raised points on the list of consultees, and it was agreed that the Justices' Clerks' Society should be added.

Action Point [9]: Officials to add Justices' Clerks' society to the list of stakeholders.

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6.6 District Judge Foss noted a minor grammatical error in paragraph 8 of the consultation covering note, which should be corrected.

Action Point [10]: Officials to amend the grammatical error in paragraph 8 of the consultation.

6.7 HHJ Suh discussed the identification of respondents to Jade's Law applications. It was noted that where children are living with carers brought into proceedings by a local authority, those individuals would not automatically be respondents. Laura Coyle considered that this complexity may not be immediately apparent from the draft proposals and suggested that the consultation should make these scenarios more explicit in order to invite informed responses.

6.8 Related concerns were raised about cases in which a child may no longer be living with a parent, including circumstances where a child has moved into long-term care arrangements or in the process of being adopted. Members emphasised the importance of ensuring that consultation respondents were prompted to consider how Jade's Law would operate in such situations.

6.9 Laura Coyle also raised concerns regarding legal aid, including the position of carers who may be directly affected by proceedings but are not within scope for legal aid, contrasted with the position of the offender parent. It was noted that these issues had been raised previously and that the draft consultation did not propose changes to legal aid eligibility.

6.10 Officials confirmed that they would pick up the legal aid issues with legal aid policy colleagues to confirm the position. Shabana Jaffar recalled previous advice from legal aid officials that no changes to scope were currently planned.

6.11 Subject to the agreed amendments to the consultation documentation and consultee list, the Committee confirmed that it was content for the consultation to be issued as proposed.

Action Point [11]: Officials to strengthen consultation signposting on respondent identification, including scenarios involving changed care arrangements and a child who is in the process of being adopted.

Action Point [12]: Officials to proceed with consultation on the proposed rule changes and report back to the Committee with an analysis of responses.

Action Point [13]: Officials to liaise with Legal Aid policy officials to reconfirm the position on legal aid eligibility for parties affected by Jade's Law proceedings.

DOMESTIC ABUSE PROTECTION ORDERS (DAPOS)

7.1 Officials informed the Committee that Ministers had decided that the DAPO pilot would conclude on 24 November 2026, coinciding with the completion of the external evaluation. Ministers had also agreed that DAPOs should be rolled out nationally across England and Wales, and across all court jurisdictions, from 25 November 2026.

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- 7.2 Officials invited the Committee and its Domestic Abuse Working Group (DAWG) to review the DAPO Pilot Practice Direction, together with the associated court forms and order templates, in preparation for national roll-out.
- 7.3 Officials proposed that the Pilot Practice Direction should continue to apply during the early stages of national implementation (amended as necessary), pending a more settled position on whether changes should subsequently be incorporated into Rules.
- 7.4 The Committee agreed to support the recommendation that the Pilot Practice Direction should continue to be used during the early stages of national roll-out, rather than moving to Rules at this stage.
- 7.5 The Committee also approved the proposal for the Domestic Abuse Working Group to consider any amendments required to the Pilot Practice Direction, court forms and templates to support national roll-out within the family jurisdiction.
- 7.6 Officials confirmed that they intended to return to the Committee in June or July with an amended Pilot Practice Direction following consideration by the DAWG, with the October Committee meeting reserved as the final opportunity for approvals ahead of national roll-out in November 2026.
- 7.7 HHJ Suh expressed concern about national rollout taking place before completion of the evaluation and queried whether existing remedies such as non-molestation orders and occupation orders would be repealed. Officials acknowledged the concerns raised and confirmed that these orders would not be removed in the immediate term, although it was recognised that a partial transition could present practical challenges. Officials noted that engagement with partners, including the judiciary, in pilot areas had already identified many of these issues, and advised that feedback from those areas was being actively considered alongside emerging evaluation findings.
- 7.8 District Judge Nelson highlighted differences between implementation of DAPOs in the criminal and family jurisdictions, including the availability of duty solicitor schemes in the criminal courts and the absence of equivalent provision in family proceedings. Members reiterated that non-molestation orders often operated more effectively within the family jurisdiction as currently framed.

Action Point [14]: Officials to seek to share available interim evaluation findings at the July 2026 Committee meeting.

- 7.9 The Committee agreed that work on DAPOs should continue and supported the proposal that the Domestic Abuse Working Group should consider, in the first instance, the amendments required to the Pilot Practice Direction, forms and templates within the family jurisdiction to support national rollout.

Action point [15]: Domestic Abuse Working Group to consider implications of DAPO rollout for family proceedings.

- 7.10 Officials confirmed their intention to return to the Committee in June or July 2026 following consideration by the DAWG, with the October meeting identified as the final opportunity for formal approvals ahead of national rollout in November 2026. Members also requested sight of any available interim evaluation material at the June meeting

Action Point [16]: Officials to bring an update on DAPOs to the July 2026 meeting, including any available interim evaluation findings, ahead of final approvals in October 2026.

PD36ZI NON-MOLESTATION ORDERS AND POLICE NOTIFICATION

- 8.1 Officials reminded the Committee that, in June 2025, it approved a new Pilot Practice Direction (PD36ZI) to enable the automatic electronic notification of non-molestation orders made by the Family Court and the Family Division of the High Court to the police. The pilot became operational in September 2025 and has operated effectively.
- 8.2 Officials noted that learning from the pilot remained ongoing, particularly in relation to testing the technical solution from the ManageCases platform (currently underway) and supporting wider collaboration between ACRO, police forces and HMCTS.
- 8.3 Given the pilot was due to expire after one year in July 2026 officials invited the Committee to approve a further one-year extension to PD36ZI, which the Committee agreed.
- 8.4 Officials also informed the Committee that consideration would now be given to expanding the information shared with the police, in order to assist ACRO and police forces in accurately identifying the parties and matching addresses to the relevant police force area.
- 8.5 Officials confirmed that developed proposals relating to the sharing of such information would be brought back to the Committee through additional amendments to the Practice Direction, following further consideration by the Domestic Abuse Working Group during May and June 2026.
- 8.6 The Committee agreed to extend the duration of PD36ZI, for a further year, to July 2027.

Action point [17]: Approved amendments to be included in the next suitable PD Update.

DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION BETWEEN FAMILY AND CRIMINAL AGENCIES AND JURISDICTIONS: 2024 PROTOCOL: SIGNPOSTS IN PRACTICE DIRECTIONS

- 9.1 Officials reminded the Committee that, in May and June 2024, it had agreed in principle to amend certain Practice Directions to signpost the Disclosure of Information between Family and Criminal Agencies and Jurisdictions: 2024 Protocol ("the 2024 Protocol"), rather than incorporate the Protocol directly into the Family Procedure Rules or Practice Directions.
- 9.2 Officials explained that implementation of those amendments had been paused by the Committee pending resolution of concerns relating to the Annex 5 template order and Handling Instructions. Officials noted that this work was now nearing completion and suggested that this may be an appropriate stage at which to return to the deferred practice direction amendments.
- 9.3 Officials noted the Criminal Procedure Rule Committee were also now to be asked to consider annexes 4 and 5 of the Protocol. Officials also noted that the Handling

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Instructions remained subject to any further refinements arising from comments made by the Committee at its April 2026 meeting.

- 9.4 The Committee considered whether the proposed signposting amendments should now proceed as part of the next suitable practice direction update, and whether implementation should await finalisation of the Annex 5 and Handling Instructions work.
- 9.5 The Committee also considered whether the explanations provided by police representatives adequately addressed the issues raised at the April 2026 meeting relating to the Handling Instructions, or whether further amendments to the Handling Instructions were required before endorsement could be considered.
- 9.6 Subject to the Committee's steer, officials confirmed that the proposed amendments would be included in a future Practice Direction update and that the Committee would be notified once implemented.
- 9.7 Mr Justice Peel sought clarification on the anticipated timetable for receiving a response from the Criminal Procedure Rule Committee and whether this was likely to be resolved in advance of the next Practice Direction update. The Chair asked officials to check the position and report back.

Action Point [18]: Officials to engage with and chase the Criminal Procedure Rule Committee to confirm the anticipated timetable for consideration of Annexes 4 and 5 and the Handling Instruction.

- 9.8 On the basis of the draft Practice Direction amendments as presented, and subject to confirmation of the position with the Criminal Procedure Rule Committee, the Committee indicated that it was content for the signposting amendments to proceed for inclusion in the next available Practice Direction update once outstanding cross-jurisdictional issues had been resolved.

Action Point [19]: Officials to include signposting amendments for inclusion in the next available Practice Direction update once any outstanding issues relating to the Annex 5 order and Handling Instructions are resolved.

NOTIFICATION OF FGM PROTECTION ORDERS AND FORCED MARRIAGE PROTECTION ORDERS TO THE POLICE: MINOR PD11A AMENDMENTS

- 10.1 Officials updated the Committee on the process for notifying the police of Forced Marriage Protection Orders and Female Genital Mutilation Protection Orders.
- 10.2 The Committee was informed that with effect from 26 October 2026 the Home Office would like orders to be emailed to acroprotectionorders@acro.police.uk. Notifications of service would be sent to local police forces.
- 10.3 Officials sought the Committee's approval to amend Practice Direction 11A to reflect the new ACRO email address for the transmission of orders, which the Committee approved. Officials noted that ACRO would ensure orders were routed to the local police force for the person to be protected and, where directed by the court, to the respondent's local police force.
- 10.4 The Committee was also informed that notifications relating to the variation, extension or discharge of protection orders would need to be sent by the court to the

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relevant local police force and, where directed, to the respondent's local police force. Notifications of service would need to be sent by the applicant's legal representative, or by the court where it had effected service, to the relevant local police force and, where directed, to the respondent's local police force.

- 10.5 Officials confirmed that they would return to the Committee with a further update if requested.
- 10.6 HHJ Suh asked whether the process would be sufficiently transparent for applicants and how they would know which local police force to notify and what the email address was for that force. MoJ Legal noted they understood that this information could be provided by HMCTS, and that PD11A could be amended to expressly note this.
- 10.7 The Chair suggested that the amendments could be prepared and brought to the Committee's meeting in June.

Action Point [20]: Officials to prepare further PD amendments and bring them to the June 2026 meeting for the Committee's consideration.

JUSTICES' LEGAL ADVISERS: PD2C: EXTENDING PUBLIC LAW TIMELINES

- 11.1 Officials presented proposed amendments to Practice Direction 2C, noting they would permit Justices' Legal Advisers, in specified circumstances, to exercise the court's powers to extend the timetable in public law proceedings beyond a previously authorised extension to the 26-week time limit.
- 11.2 Officials set out the circumstances in which those powers could be exercised for the Committee's consideration.
- 11.3 The Committee considered the draft amendments and was invited to decide whether Practice Direction 2C should be amended accordingly.
- 11.4 Helen Sewell observed that the amendments were intended to improve efficiency and avoid unnecessary delay, particularly where extensions were required because parties needed to be chased for information. It was noted that requiring judicial involvement in all such cases could be inefficient, and that the proposed approach would allow such applications to be processed more swiftly.
- 11.5 In relation to some of the existing content of Practice Direction 2C, Mr Justice Peel noted divorce proceedings are now conducted entirely online. He observed that while the proposed amendments were limited to the tracked changes before the Committee, there may be broader issues with the existing framework that warranted consideration in due course and suggested that relevant experience from divorce proceedings should be considered alongside the public law approach, discussion with His Honour Judge Chris Simmonds.
- 11.6 District Judge Foss clarified that, in the divorce context, it is typically a Justices' Legal Adviser, rather than a Judge, who undertakes much of the routine work in the divorce unit, with matters being referred to a judge only where unusual or complex issues arise. Graeme Fraser also noted practical challenges in working within the Portal. Graeme Fraser noted that he would draw up a list to support further discussion of this issue, and that this would be shared with District Judge Foss and His Honour Judge Chris Simmonds

Action Point [21]: Graeme Fraser to draw up a list of concerns in relation to use of the online portal for divorce proceedings and share it with District Judge Foss and His Honour Judge Chris Simmonds to inform further consideration of this issue.

11.7 The Committee approved the proposed amendments to Practice Direction 2C regarding the extension of public law timelines.

11.8 MoJ Legal noted it was their understanding from Helen Sewell that communications would be issued to notify courts of the amendments, but that it was not considered that additional training would be required. The changes would be included in the next available Practice Direction update, with a short commencement period.

Action Point [22]: Officials to include the approved amendments to Practice Direction 2C in the next available Practice Direction update.

SECRETARIAT ITEMS

PRIORITIES TABLE, TRIAGE FORM

Priorities Table

12.1 The Committee considered the Priorities Table and Triage Form, including how workstreams are prioritised and managed in circumstances where resource constraints mean that some items cannot be progressed immediately. Graeme Fraser sought clarification on what it means in practice when work is recorded on the priorities table as having “stopped”. In particular, he asked whether this indicated a complete halt to work, or whether there remained a mechanism for review. Members noted that greater transparency would be helpful to understand how paused items are monitored and reconsidered, particularly in light of resource pressures.

12.2 Officials explained that the priorities and triage process is intended to reflect available resource and capacity. It was clarified that initial prioritisation of recommendations made by officials, but that the Committee retains oversight and may express a view if it considers that an item should be progressed or reprioritised. Officials noted that items can be brought back for reconsideration where circumstances change.

12.3 HHJ Suh referred to work relating to the Child-Focused Courts workstream and asked when this was expected to return to the Committee following the discussion which took place at the April Committee meeting. Officials The Secretariat said they will confirm this with policy leads.

Action Point [23]: Secretariat to speak to policy leads and determine when proposed Practice Direction amendments relating to Child Focused Courts should be brought back to the Committee.

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12.4 Mr Justice Peel noted that the Committee had previously identified work relating to the overriding objective and observed that this should be considered alongside the emerging work on open justice and transparency, rather than as a separate or parallel workstream.

Action Point [24]: Secretariat to ensure that potential consideration of the overriding objective is appropriately reflected in the ISTWG work programme, with indicative timescales where possible.

12.5 A triage form (Finding of Facts hearings in public law) has been included in relation to a proposal to amend PD12A, to require findings of fact made in public law proceedings to be appended to the court order, reflecting practice in private law proceedings. The Committee was invited to note the triage form for consideration, with officials proposing to allocate the item to Tier 3.

Action Point [25]: Secretariat to add finding of facts workstream to the priority table at tier 3.

Action Point [26]: Officials to progress the finding of facts workstream and bring back the matter in the October 2026 meeting.

OTHER PROCEDURE RULE COMMITTEES

13.1 Officials informed the Committee that following the OPRC's consultation in December/January on the first Online Procedure Rules (OPR), final drafting has now been approved by the OPRC. Subject to legal checks and ministerial agreement, officials anticipate laying the SI in Parliament in June 2026.

13.2 The Chair stated that there were no updates from the Criminal Procedure and Civil Procedure Rule Committees.

14. The Committee were reminded that the June 2026 meeting has moved from the 1 to the **15 June 2026**.

DRAFT JUNE 2026 AGENDA

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

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 15 June 2026

The next meeting will be held on Monday 15 June 2026 and will be a hybrid meeting both at the Royal Courts of Justice and via MS Teams.

FPRC Secretariat

May 2026

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