

**Minutes of a meeting held at 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Markwell House  
on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

<b>Members Present:</b>	Ruth Costain (Chair)	RC
	David Trace (Vice Chair) ( <i>via Teams</i> )	DT
	Colm Andrew	CA
	Bob Ayre ( <i>via Teams</i> )	BA
	Pam Pringle	PP
	Howard Connell	HC
<b>Officers Present:</b>	Christine Clucas	CC
	Martina Jay	MJ/LACO
	Alex Powell (Note Taker)	AP
<b>Apologies:</b>	Paul Coppell	

<b>18/23</b>	<b>WELCOME AND MINUTES</b>		
	<p><i>Due to technical issues the meeting commenced at 14:15</i></p> <p>RC opened the meeting and apologies from PC were noted.</p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting 12<sup>th</sup> April, having been previously circulated, were approved.</p>		
<b>19/23</b>	<b>MATTERS ARISING</b>		
		<p><b>12/23 (ii) Disbursements</b> – CC said that advice was awaited. HC noted that specific legislation may be required to direct Departments to pay for areas where they, rather than Legal Aid, are liable to cover costs.</p>	
<b>20/23</b>	<b>MATTERS REQUIRING ACTION AND DECISION</b>		
	<b>(a)</b>	<b>Update from the Legal Aid Certifying Officer (MJ)</b>	
		<p>MJ reported that she had been on leave and that the Interim Deputy Certifying Officer had been providing cover.</p> <p>The meeting was asked to note that the Joint Consultative Committee is due to hold their annual meeting in November this year.</p>	
	<b>(b)</b>	<b>Update on Staffing/Operational Matters (CC)</b>	
		<p><b>(i)</b> CC reported that staffing issues were ongoing but with temporary staff in place hopefully service delivery had not been impacted upon. PP said that there had been some delay in payment of Bills of Costs.</p>	

		<p>CC is to provide further information to Treasury on HM Attorney General's Legal Aid Review.</p> <p>CC referred to the Legal Aid budget and advised that expenditure on criminal disbursements, notably for expert reports, was indicating overspend. Criminal spend overall was over budget for the financial year ending 31 March 2023.</p>	
<b>21/23</b>	<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>		
		<p>It was agreed that the Code of Conduct and Attendance Policy draft documents, having been circulated ahead of the meeting, required further editing and were deferred to the next meeting. HC and CA to liaise with AP directly.</p> <p>PP gave her apologies for the next meeting which is due to take place on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> June at 14:00.</p>	<b>AP/HC/CA</b>

The meeting closed at 15:00

**Minutes agreed**

**By  
Chair**



**Date**

12/07/23