

**Minutes of a meeting held at 2nd Floor Markwell House
on Wednesday 12th July 2023**

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

22/23	WELCOME AND MINUTES		
	<p>RC opened the meeting, no apologies had been received.</p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting 10th May, having been previously circulated, were approved.</p>		
23/23	MATTERS ARISING		
		None.	
24/23	MATTERS REQUIRING ACTION AND DECISION		
	(a)	Update from the Legal Aid Certifying Officer (MJ)	
		<p>MJ reported that there was currently no backlog in terms of issuing and amending Legal Aid Certificates.</p> <p>Due to increased governance of cases, fewer requests for reviews of cost assessments were being received.</p> <p>DT asked for it to be placed on record that the Committee thanked MJ and the Legal Aid Team for their work.</p>	
	(b)	Update on Staffing/Operational Matters (CC)	
	(i)	<p>CC reported that there continued to be some levels of staff absence, however, two excellent temporary members of staff had been engaged to assist in continued delivery of day-to-day service.</p>	

		<p>Legal Aid Appeal Tribunal (LAAT) (see 56/22 (a) (i)) – a redacted copy of the Tribunal’s judgment was circulated to the Legal Aid Committee prior to the meeting. The LAAT Chair has determined that the Tribunal <i>does</i> have the power to review the financial aspect of appeals against the award of Legal Aid. Concerns were expressed by several LAC members as potentially this could be used tactically by - particularly controlling and coercive -opponents to delay proceedings. CC was asked to identify where regulatory amendment was required so that the LAC can consider and make necessary representation to Treasury/Tynwald in order that Regulations can be updated.</p> <p>CC advised that the HM Attorney’s General’s Legal Aid Review was currently being considered by the Justice Sub-Committee. The next step will be a paper for the Council of Minister’s and subsequently Tynwald’s consideration before any recommendations can be implemented. The Committee noted that they were in a difficult position in terms of the Law Society’s perceived lack of progress and further noted that the matter was out with the gift of the Committee at the present time. CC said that only Treasury can agree to an increase of the hourly rates of Advocates and the Treasury Minister has corresponded with the Law Society on this matter.</p>	CC
25/23	ATTENDANCE POLICY		
		The Legal Aid Attendance Policy was approved and signed off by the Chairman.	
26/23	ANY OTHER BUSINESS		
		HC gave (potential) apologies for the next meeting which is due to take place on Wednesday 9 th August at 14:00.	

The meeting closed at 15:24

Minutes agreed

**By
Chair**



Date 09/08/23