
Response to HM Attorney General's Legal Aid Review Options and Recommendations Report

Legal Aid Committee

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Contents

Introduction	5
Response to Recommendations	
Legal Aid Office and Legal Aid Certifying Officer	6
Legal Aid Publicity and Guidance	7
Financial Eligibility	7
Appointment of Experts	8
Code of Conduct and Quality Assurance	8
Remuneration	8
Cost Assessments	10
Public Defender Scheme	11
Restraint Proceedings under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2008	11
Police Station Duty Advocate Scheme	11
Court Duty Advocate Scheme	12
Appropriate Adults	13
Interpreters	13
Unpaid Contributions	13
Leave to Appeal	14
Pro-bono Legal Work	14
Manx Citizens Advice Service	14
Mediation and Guardian ad Litem Services	14
Fixed Fees	15
Scope of Civil (Non-Family) Matters	16
Statutory Charge	16
Scrutiny of Parties' Legal Merits and Response to Correspondence	17
Use of Technology	17

Complex Criminal Matters	17
Criminal Justice Board	18
Financial Coercive Control & Domestic Abuse	19
Conclusion	20

INTRODUCTION

The Legal Aid Committee wishes to express its sincere thanks to the late HM Attorney General, John Quinn, QC, for his Legal Aid Review Options and Recommendations Report.

The Review has provided the Committee with extensive research and results along with the various Recommendations for change. The holistic approach taken by the Attorney General was wise; Legal Aid cannot and should not be viewed in isolation, but as a vital part in the process for providing citizens with access to justice.

The Legal Aid Act 1986 has been in existence for some thirty six years, albeit with the introduction of a number of Regulations between its inception and 2014. As the world has evolved and changed over the years so too have the needs of the people using the Legal Aid service. Their social, financial, educational and physical and mental health needs have all changed quite dramatically. Families are structured differently, the use of the internet and social media is mainstream, substance abuse is a growing problem and mental health issues are now publically recognised as matters of grave concern.

It is of paramount importance that every person, legally aided or not, has access to justice should they be in need of it. In order to enable this, it is now frequently the case that people require not only the assistance of a lawyer, experienced in a particular field of law, but more often than not additional expert and professional advice. This may include psychiatrists, psychologists, translators, appropriate adults, guardian ad litem and litigation friends to name but a few.

Legal Aid is frequently being asked to fund such support through disbursements. The judiciary and advocates recognise that individuals require such additional professional assistance and call upon Legal Aid to fund these disbursements to enable best representation and evidence to be achieved in the case they are dealing with. They ask in the hope that Legal Aid will step in because they cannot force funding to materialise and it appears that funding is not available from other parts of Government. Strictly speaking, in some cases the Legal Aid Act and Regulations do not make provision for these support professionals to be appointed and paid for under Legal Aid but they may provide crucial evidence in a case, both civil and criminal.

The Legal Aid Committee poses the question – should this burden be placed entirely upon Legal Aid? More joined up provision, information and cost sharing between Government bodies and departments could enable more effective and speedier justice through the courts and legal system on the island. This in turn could have wider social benefits without increasing costs.

The Committee's response to the recommendations follows.

Recommendation 1

The Legal Aid Committee should invite Treasury to consider the Legal Aid Office being established as a Statutory Board.

Accept

The Committee concurs with the view of the Attorney General that establishing a Statutory Board would add clarity to the independence of Legal Aid, removing “any prospect of potential influence or direction from Treasury or any other area of Government.” This is however a decision for the Treasury and Tynwald.

Recommendation 2

Legal Aid provision in the Island (including Criminal and Civil Legal Aid) should be centralised in one Legal Aid Office to include:

- (a) the grant and issue of Criminal Legal Aid Certificates, subject to the necessary provisions and resources being put in place to ensure there are no delays in issuing Certificates in Criminal matters; and
- (b) case management of Criminal cases in the context of the Legal Aid Certificate issued by the Legal Aid Certifying Officer
- (c) provision for the Appeal process to also apply to Criminal Legal Aid
- (d) enabling prisoners to be able to apply directly to the Legal Aid Certifying Officer to seek Legal Aid

Accept

The Legal Aid Committee consider it to be logical to have every aspect of Legal Aid provision under “one authority” however that may be established and constituted. This would provide greater clarity for the legal profession and the general public.

Providing the necessary provisions and resources are put in place to run the service effectively and efficiently, with no delays to the issue of Criminal Legal Aid Certificates, a) b) c) & d) are all accepted.

Recommendation 3

The Legal Aid Committee should invite Treasury to consider amending the reference to the various authorities referenced in Column 2 of Schedule 3 to the Legal Aid Act 1986 by replacing them with the Certifying Officer as the authority to grant Legal Aid in respect of the proceedings specified in Schedule 3.

Accept

The Legal Aid Committee invite the Treasury to amend the references in Column 2 of Schedule 3 of the Legal Act 1986 as per the Recommendation 3 or make suitable provision within new legislation to give the Legal Aid Certifying Officer the authority to grant Legal Aid in respect of proceedings currently specified in Schedule 3.

Recommendation 4

The Legal Aid Committee should urgently consider:

- (a) the content, effectiveness and messaging of its publicity and guidance concerning all aspects of the Legal Aid offering available on the Island.
- (b) reviewing whether those in receipt of Legal Aid are made sufficiently and appropriately aware of their personal responsibilities and if these obligations are being met
- (c) work with courts/General Registry with a view to adapting UK guides to self-representation for use in IoM Courts

Accept

- (a) Considerable effort has been made to update and improve guidance on Legal Aid but this is an ongoing process which is kept under regular review.
- (b) It is the duty of the Advocate to advise a client of their personal responsibilities at the point of application and to remind them during the life of their Legal Aid Certificate(s). The Legal Aid Certifying Officer will provide additional guidance to Advocates in this regard.
- (c) Legal Aid will engage with the Courts to adapt such documentation to improve guidance to the public.

Recommendation 5

The Legal Aid Committee should make provisions for both Civil Legal Aid and Criminal Legal Aid to have the same financial eligibility limits based upon criteria for Civil Legal Aid.

Accept

The Legal Aid Committee noted the comments made by the Advocates and Judiciary within the consultation that the current eligibility criteria excludes a large proportion of society who do not have the financial means to pay privately for legal advice and representation. This has the result of slowing down the Court system as people have to self-represent, it also affects people's faith in the legal system and prospects of success of their legal action. At present it appears that legal representation in Court is limited only to "the rich and very poor."

People in receipt of certain Social Security income based benefits automatically qualify for Legal Aid. Comments from the consultations indicate that on occasions' people manipulate their hours of work and finances in order to qualify for benefits to entitle them to Legal Aid. This causes unfairness in the system when people on benefits are in a more advantageous position than those who are not. In addition the manner in which Social Security allowances are applied is not necessarily consistent in reflecting an individual's disposable income for Legal Aid purposes.

The Legal Aid Committee would welcome provision not only for the same financial eligibility limits for Civil and Criminal Legal Aid but also a review of the eligibility criteria and permitted allowances for outgoings. New Legal Aid Regulations on financial eligibility criteria are required.

Recommendation 6

The Legal Aid Committee should seek to improve the processes for the selection and authorisation of experts in both Criminal and Civil proceedings to ensure that they are suitably qualified and meet the required quality standards.

Accept

The Legal Aid Certifying Officer has already progressed this initiative and to date good provision has already been made for a database of experts. This list of experts will continue to be reviewed and updated.

Recommendation 7

The Legal Aid Committee should consider introducing a Code of Conduct along with a Quality Assurance Agreement/Service Level Agreement to be entered into with the Advocates who are currently serving on the Criminal and Civil Legal Aid Panels and for future members of such Panels.

Accept

The Legal Aid Committee consider that a Code of Conduct along with a Quality Assurance Agreement/Service Level Agreement would be helpful in providing clarity on the standards expected for Legal Aid. This should also provide the process and procedures to deal with any non-compliance.

Recommendation 8

The Legal Aid Committee should consider changes to the remuneration payable to Advocates as follows:

- (a) That fixed fees are introduced for defined processes (e.g. Summary Court proceedings, Divorce, judicial Separation) as operated in Guernsey

Accept

The Legal Aid Committee acknowledge that further input from stakeholders, including, but not limited to, the Law Society may be required.

- (b) That otherwise than when a fixed fee is applicable as above that the current two tier system of remuneration (rates for Junior/Senior Advocates) be abolished

Reject

The Legal Aid Committee consider that a differentiation in financial reward between Junior and Senior Advocates should remain. Rather than the current system the Committee would support a system where the differentiation between Junior and Senior Advocates was based on evidenced training and relevant experience in specific areas of law e.g. criminal law, rather than years qualified.

- (c) That a new two tier rate be adopted based on cases which the Legal Aid Certifying Officer considers (acting reasonably) on the grant of the Legal Aid Certificate to be routine cases and/or those which are considered unusually complex. To support this that the Legal Aid Committee determine to be routine cases and those exceptional cases regarded as unusually complex which will at all times be subject (at the discretion of the Legal Aid Certifying Officer) to change if considered appropriate. The Legal Aid Committee may wish to consider criteria that Advocates should meet (e.g. in terms of relevant experience) in order to undertake complex matters at the higher hourly rate.

Reject

The Committee consider this would create a system where too much onus would be placed upon the Legal Aid Certifying Officer to determine the complexity of the case which may well change as the matter progresses.

- (d) The hourly charging rate for routine cases is fixed at £150 per hour and for most complex matters at £175 per hour

Reject

Payment should not be based upon the perceived complexity or otherwise of the case which may alter as the case progresses.

- (e) When no Manx Advocate is available or able to represent a person eligible to obtain Legal Aid and the IOM Law Society confirm that situation exists then, subject to the merits test being met and the satisfaction of the financial eligibility requirements, all Legal Aid schemes will be available to non-Manx qualified lawyers holding a current practising certificate in England and Wales who are practicing at an hourly rate of £115 per hour.

Accept

The Committee consider this should be the option of last resort. It is to be hoped that the Isle of Man Law Society will encourage more of its members to undertake Legal Aid work. If representation is not available locally however, then the Committee accept that there should be the option to appoint from off-island, subject to any regulatory and insurance requirements being adhered to. The lower rate available to off-island lawyers recognises the fact that they are not experienced in Manx law.

Recommendation 9

The Legal Aid Committee should consider improvements to the current Legal Aid cost assessment process as follows:

- (a) Guidelines setting out the basis upon which a Bill of Costs will be assessed and taxed are published

Accept

- (b) Arrangements are put in place to supplement the capacity to review bills of cost (the Costs Officer is currently in the General Registry) by sending those over a certain value to a specialised 'costs draftsman' for assessment/taxation against the published guidelines

Accept

The Committee would expect on-island options to be considered in the first instance

- (c) The IoM Law Society is invited to amend the Advocates Practice Rules to replicate the rule applicable to Civil Legal Aid costs so that it equally applies to Criminal Legal Aid costs that when a bill of costs is on assessment/taxation reduced by 50% or more that the matter would be referred to the Advocates Disciplinary Tribunal as a disciplinary offence

Accept

- (d) That Regulations be amended to require that Advocates submit their claim for payment under the Legal Schemes within 6 months of conclusion of the case or matter.

Accept

The Committee acknowledges that this may present a challenge to smaller firms of Advocates in the absence of a digital solution i.e. appropriate software being available to Legal Aid/the Courts Cost Assessment Office.

The Committee would like to see included that any Advocate who wishes to have a review of any reduction of payment in their Bill of Costs by the Costs Officer is required to make such an application no later than 3 months from the date of the

decision. This would greatly assist the Legal Aid Certifying Officer, or Deputy, currently tasked with carrying out the review.

Recommendation 10

The Legal Aid Committee should not consider at this stage the establishment of a Public Defender Scheme.

Accept

The Committee is content that a Public Defender Scheme is not established for the time being. Deferring will provide the opportunity to see what change is achieved as a consequence of this Review.

Recommendation 11

The Legal Aid Committee should consider the issue of a Fixed Fee Legal Aid Certificate to persons whose available assets have been restrained under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2008 and that Schedule 1 of the Legal Aid Act 1986 be amended accordingly.

Accept

The Committee considered that a Fixed Fee Certificate should be available, subject to the Statutory Charge being applied.

Recommendation 12

The Legal Aid Committee should consider changes to the existing Police Station Duty Advocate Scheme to:

- (a) Dispense with the need to have second Advocate more senior on call

Reject

Senior Advocates are required to deal with very serious cases of crime e.g. homicide, rape etc. The Senior may also be called upon to provide additional cover in the event that the Duty Advocate is at capacity or if there is a conflict of interest. It is possible that the Police may experience problems in finding a Senior Advocate to attend the Police Station at unsociable hours if the Advocate is not on a rota to attend. The Committee consider that the benefits provided by having an on-call Senior Advocate far outweigh the cost.

- (b) Provide guidance as to the circumstances when an Advocate might need to consider physical attendance at the Police Station rather than by phone (or electronically)

Accept

- (c) Require the IoM Constabulary to arrange fixed appointment times for the Advocate to attend at the client interview

Accept

The Committee would welcome this initiative if it can be implemented effectively by the Constabulary.

- (d) Extend the existing scheme to any formal interview held under caution whether at the Police Station or elsewhere

Accept

The Committee noted that this is already provided within the existing legislation, consideration should be given to amending the legislation to provide clarity.

- (e) Provide for a pilot scheme for initial one year duration for the attendance of a Duty Advocate, for one full day each calendar month at the Isle of Man Prison, Jurby. This should be provided on a Prison-prepared appointment basis for prisoners to seek and obtain legal advice and assistance.

Accept

The Committee has previously been made aware of the difficulties faced by some prisoners in finding legal advice and assistance.

- (f) Provide for the charge for waiting time under the Scheme to be fixed at £50 per hour (pro rata)

Reject

It is neither realistic nor fair to expect an Advocate to attend a Police Station, often at unsociable hours, to be kept waiting and then be paid below their hourly rate. If fixed appointment times are to be introduced and kept then this reduced hourly rate would not be required.

With regards to the Court Duty Advocate Scheme the Legal Aid Committee is of the view that if the Courts could introduce better scheduling of cases it would provide a substantial saving to the Public Purse.

Recommendation 13

The Legal Aid Committee should consider introducing a pilot scheme for a period of up to 3 years to engage a Duty Advocate to serve as a second Advocate under the Court Duty Advocate Scheme and to review whether such additional provision serves to improve the better administration and disposal of cases before the courts which the Court Duty Advocate Scheme currently serves.

Accept

The Legal Aid Committee consider that engaging a second Advocate for the fixed courts would be beneficial for the service users in ensuring they are provided with the opportunity to gain the necessary advice. It would also assist the Duty Advocate providing the advice as on occasions demand outstrips capacity. This may reduce the number of adjournments required and help cut both costs and delays.

The Legal Aid Committee agree with the comment made by the Attorney General that better scheduling of matters rather than having all defendants answering their summons at the same time would also assist and may improve the efficiency of the court and lead to savings in Advocates appearance costs.

Recommendation 14

The Legal Aid Committee should encourage the Department of Home Affairs to review the Appropriate Adult Scheme with a view to improving the rate paid to such persons and take steps to increase and improve the recruitment, training, retention and number of persons prepared to act as Appropriate Adults.

Accept

The Committee consider this to be essential to safeguard the interests, rights and welfare of children and vulnerable people who are suspected of a criminal offence.

Recommendation 15

The Legal Aid Committee should encourage the Department of Home Affairs and/or the Cabinet Office to review the arrangements currently in place for Interpreters and in so doing to identify improved methods of procuring the service and its availability.

Accept

The Committee consider that with an increasingly diverse population it is essential that appropriately qualified Interpreters are available to assist persons whose first language is not English.

Recommendation 16

The Legal Aid Committee should consider amending the Legal Aid Act 1986 so as to enable unpaid contributions for Criminal Legal Aid to attract "additional days" in the same way as is currently the case for unpaid fines.

Reject

The Committee consider there needs to be a fairer way of recovering unpaid contributions such as an attachment of earnings/benefits.

Recommendation 17

The Legal Aid Committee should consider liaising with the Department of Home Affairs with a view to seeking an amendment to s30 to the Criminal Jurisdiction Act 1993 so as to require that "leave" be granted before any appeal on conviction or sentence in Criminal Proceedings. An application for "leave" to be made within 28 days of conviction or sentence.

Accept

The Committee accept this should be raised with the Department of Home Affairs although it is questionable whether it is within the remit of the Legal Aid Committee.

Recommendation 18

The Legal Aid Committee should engage with the IOM Law Society with a view to the Society establishing a 'Manx Pro Bono Pledge' by its Membership.

Accept

The Committee agree to engage with the IOM Law Society but the progression of this recommendation is within the gift of the Society. The Committee recognises that many members of the Law Society do undertake work "Pro Bono" but it may be that members are prepared to establish this on a more formal footing.

Recommendation 19

The Legal Aid Committee should invite Treasury to consider the redefining and if necessary expansion of the existing Manx Citizens Advice Service.

Accept

The Legal Aid Committee are in agreement with inviting the Treasury to consider the redefining and possible expansion of the existing Manx Citizens Advice Service. The Committee recognise that the Manx Citizens Advice Service could provide an opportunity to offer a gateway and early signposting to legal advice and assistance. This may prove beneficial to persons who are not familiar with the Legal Aid Service and are either, reluctant to, or nervous about, consulting with an Advocate in the first instance.

Recommendation 20

The Legal Aid Committee should consider inviting Treasury to consider introducing a pilot scheme for a period of up to three years during which individuals would be directly employed within the Legal Aid Office to undertake the following functions:

- (a) Mediation Services and
- (b) Guardian Ad Litem services for children engaged in family proceedings.

Reject

- (a) The Legal Aid Committee fully supports mediation as it is recognised that this early intervention in family matters, as well as other legal disputes, can lead to a quicker resolution, saving time, money and in certain cases acrimony.

With regards to mediation for Legal Aid cases the landscape has shifted since the consultations were launched, due in a large part to covid which necessitated change. Many mediation sessions now take place via video link using mediators based in the adjacent islands. This is not to say this is the perfect solution and in some cases, in person, island based, mediation may be preferable.

- (b) The Legal Aid Committee note the comments that direct employment of Guardians ad Litem works well in neighbouring jurisdictions. However, the Committee do not think this service should be situated within the Legal Aid Office. The Committee considers that the appointment of Guardians ad Litem should be a matter for the Courts to ensure that independence is maintained.

Recommendation 21

The Legal Aid Committee should consider making provision, wherever appropriate, that the granting of a full Legal Aid Certificate be conditional upon the parties having actually made use of the Mediation service and the Legal Aid Certifying Officer reconsidering the merits test following such Mediation.

Accept

The Committee acknowledge however that this is only "wherever appropriate" as some cases are not suitable for mediation e.g. cases of domestic violence.

Recommendation 22

The Legal Aid Committee should consider the adoption of the Fixed Fee Legal Aid Certificates as operated in Guernsey

Accept

In a centralised or unitary Legal Aid set up the Legal Aid Committee would be open minded to the adoption of fixed fees for certain types of work.

Recommendation 23

The Legal Aid Committee should consider the issue of a Fixed Fee Legal Aid Certificate in respect of legal advice and assistance in cases before the Mental Health Review Tribunal.

Reject

Advice and assistance in Mental Health Tribunal cases is normally carried out under Green Form which provides an initial 3 hours, this may be extended to a maximum of 9 hours with the prior authorisation of the Legal Aid Certifying Officer. In more complex cases a full Certificate may be granted but such applications are rare.

The Legal Aid records show that the vast majority of cases are completed within the initial 3 hours or with a limited extension of hours.

Recommendation 24

The Legal Aid Committee should include the ability for a Legal Aid Certificate to be issued to the legal representative of a deceased person who has died in the custody of the State (e.g. Police Station, prison, hospital, care home) for proceedings in an inquest without the necessity of meeting either the financial eligibility test or merits test, and that Schedule 1 to the Legal Aid Act 1986 be amended accordingly.

Accept

In the case of death whilst in the care of the State the Committee supports the automatic right to legal advice and assistance at an Inquest for the personal representative of the deceased.

Recommendation 25

The Legal Aid Committee should consider amending the Tribunals Act 2006 and other relevant legislation to remove from its provisions the eligibility for full Legal Aid of (a) Financial Services Tribunal (b) treasure inquiries and (c) boundary disputes.

- (a) Financial Services Tribunal **Reject**
On the basis a decision of the Financial Services Tribunal could remove a person's livelihood
- (b) Treasure Inquiries **Accept**
- (c) Boundary Disputes **Accept**

Recommendation 26

The Legal Aid Committee should undertake a review of the application, effectiveness and scope of the Statutory Charge.

Accept

A considerable amount of work has already been undertaken to address shortfalls in the Statutory Charge process and a more proactive stance is being undertaken in enforcing the Charge.

The Legal Aid Office is considering further changes to the process to ensure that the assisted person is made fully aware of the Statutory Charge at the point of application and that the Advocate reminds the assisted person on an on-going basis.

The Legal Aid Committee accepts that a review of the scope of the Statutory Charge, including whether it should be applied to the matrimonial home/a cap on the threshold for the value of a property, should be undertaken.

Recommendation 27

The Legal Aid Committee should consider introducing measures to:

- (a) Increase the scrutiny of parties' legal merits; and
- (b) Reduce unnecessary costs attributed to proceedings which could have been avoided had a party responded appropriately to correspondence at an early stage.

Accept

The Legal Aid Committee acknowledges that significant change has already been introduced in the administration of Legal Aid since the commencement of the Review. The current Certifying Officer(s) have increased the scrutiny of parties' legal merits and monitor closely to ensure that the legal merits test continues to be met for the duration of the case.

The continuing oversight of cases by the Legal Aid Certifying Officer seeks to ensure unnecessary costs are not incurred. Legal Aid Advocates are fully aware that they are required to progress cases as expeditiously as possible and ensure that their clients act appropriately.

An electronic case management system would greatly assist the Legal Aid Office in implementing and monitoring this Recommendation.

Recommendation 28

The Legal Aid Committee should promote an increase in the use of technology, including video conferencing between the IoM Prison and the Courts, to increase the efficiency of Court proceedings by reducing Court time and costs; reduce the necessity of transporting prisoners between the IoM Prison and the Courts, and reduce associated security and safety risks. It could also facilitate ease of face-to-face conference between Advocates and prisoners at the IoM Prison.

Accept

The Legal Aid Committee recognise that the difficulties encountered during covid accelerated the adoption of technology for many legal processes. Whilst the Committee support and will encourage the increased use of technology they do consider this matter to be within the control of Home Affairs & the Criminal Justice Board.

The Committee is disappointed that Treasury has not provided appropriate technology for the Civil Legal Aid Office. Whilst other areas of the Justice System are progressing with digitisation this is not the case with Civil Legal Aid. This is neither efficient for the Legal Aid team nor the Advocates and Assisted Persons they serve.

Recommendation 29

The Legal Aid Committee should raise with the IoM Law Society the issues raised by individuals who have been through the criminal justice system regarding the ability and/or

quality of Manx Advocates to deal with complex criminal matters including financial crime and seek assurances from the IoM Law Society that these matters will be considered and addressed.

Accept

The Legal Aid Committee agree to raise this with the Law Society and seek assurances that they will address this issue within their professional studies, training and continuing professional development.

Recommendation 30

The Legal Aid Committee should recommend to the Criminal Justice Board that Criminal Legal Aid is not considered in isolation, and instead as part of a holistic criminal justice system to ensure that there is an awareness and understanding that the policies and processes of one agency (e.g. Department of Home Affairs; IoM Constabulary; Prosecutions; Courts; IoM Prison and Probation; Legal Aid Office, IoM Law Society) can have a significant effect on one or more of the other agencies, and ultimately Criminal Legal Aid and expenditure. The Criminal Justice Board is ideally placed to achieve this, as all of the aforementioned key agencies are members.

Accept

Recommendation 31

The Legal Aid Committee should consider putting in place measures to:

- (a) Support and protect from further risk individuals who wish to seek legal advice or representation on divorce / dissolution of a civil partnership due to domestic abuse
- (b) Address the impact of a financial eligibility determination based on the joint income or co-owned assets of a couple, where one party does not have equal access to that income (e.g. in cases of domestic abuse / financial coercive control)
- (c) Better serve individuals whose ex-partners are effectively able to control their eligibility for Legal Aid by providing inconsistent financial contributions (e.g. for child support) which can cause the individual to be in a recurring cycle of eligibility / ineligibility for Legal Aid leading to significant delays and difficulties in accessing legally-aided services.

Accept – in part (see (a) below)

- (a) The Committee noted that it is the role of the Department of Home Affairs to 'support and protect' individuals from risk rather than that of Legal Aid. That said, the Legal Aid Certifying Officer is working with the Department of Home Affairs' Domestic Abuse Taskforce.
- (b) The issue of financial determination based on joint income will need to be addressed within new/revised Regulations.

- (c) This will require research to see how the eligibility criteria test can be met in the circumstances described above and provided for in new Regulations.

Recommendation 32

The Legal Aid Committee should consider a child or young person who is party to Care Proceedings should be automatically eligible to receive Civil Legal Aid by disregarding their financial resources

Accept

The Committee agree that the grant of Legal Aid for a child or young person who is party to Care Proceedings should disregard the financial resources test.

The Legal Aid Committee also agree with the comments of the Attorney General that he ought not to have any involvement in appointing either the Advocate or the Guardian for the child or young person engaged in Care Proceedings.

Conclusion

The Legal Aid Committee has accepted the majority of the Recommendations and sincerely hopes that the Treasury and Tynwald will see fit to invest the resources required to drive forward, enhance and modernise Legal Aid and its associated services. This change will need new legislation as its foundation, followed by much needed investment in technology, software and human resources. The new direction will require all stakeholders to support and drive forward this initiative to ensure it reaches its full potential for the benefit of the Manx public.

The Committee does believe that adoption and implementation of the modernisation outlined in this Report can provide improved access to justice, better quality services and value for money. The Committee is willing, for so long as it remains in existence, to work with Government and the various stakeholders in order to move forward the modernisation of Legal Aid.

Legal Aid Committee

Ruth Costain Chairman

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