

Sixteenth Progress Report of the Litigants in Person Reference Group

(Meeting 13th June 2023)

Introduction

At its inaugural meeting on 12th February 2019, it was agreed that a Progress Report summarising key decisions and activities of the Reference Group (RG) should be published following each meeting. This is the sixteenth of those reports and relates to the meeting held on 13th June 2023.

1. Fifteenth Progress Report

This was considered and approved. It is to be added to the RG's website (<https://www.litigant-voice.co.uk>)

2. Changes to membership of the RG

It was noted that this would be Sinead Mulhern's last meeting following the end of the handover period to the new Chair Les Allamby.

It was also agreed that the membership of the RG should be increased from sixteen to eighteen to include a member from the voluntary sector and one more personal litigant member in order to maintain the balance of the group. The Terms of Reference are to be amended accordingly.

3. External Engagement

RCJ Focus Group

Following participation by a representative from the RG in the focus group on the renovation/upgrading of the RCJ, it was noted that a meeting had taken place between the NICTS Programme Manager and several members of the RG. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss issues of particular concern to the RG. It was agreed that the meeting and the RG's continued participation in the wider focus group is very useful.

Meeting with the LCJ

It was noted that the request for a meeting with the LCJ has been accepted. Arrangements for the meeting are underway and it was agreed that the Chair and two or three other members should attend from the RG.

Meeting with “Ladies who Litigate “

Following a request to meet from “Ladies who Litigate” (a group of personal litigants who are, or have been, involved in industrial tribunal cases), Les Allamby and Sinead Mulhern met with representatives of the group to explain the background to the RG, our work and our current focus on the court system, in particular the Family Courts. It had been a constructive meeting with a useful exchange of information, experiences, and perspectives.

4. Courts’ Modernisation Programme (Vision 2030)

Presentation by NICTS

NICTS’ Chief Modernisation Officer and the Head of Digital Modernisation attended the meeting to update the RG on the continuing roll out of Vision 2030. The discussion was wide- ranging and included developments in areas on which the RG had previously provided written comments/suggestions to NICTS: in particular, the Court Modernisation and Digital Modernisation Programmes. The presentation was followed by questions and discussion during which the RG again stressed the importance of gathering data on not only the number of users of the new systems but the type of users, including LiPs. It was again agreed that the collection of comprehensive and real time management information will be critical to evaluating the effectiveness of any changes going forward. NICTS also confirmed there would be user guides developed for the new system and these would be tailored to the different user groups.

All agreed that these regular meetings between NICTS and the RG to exchange information/developments are important and useful. The Chair extended an open and ongoing invitation to NICTS to seek feedback from RG on any proposed changes/initiatives.