

Nineteenth Progress Report of the Litigants in Person Reference Group

(Meeting 26th March 2024)

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 nineteenth of those reports and relates to the meeting held on 26th March 2024.

1. Eighteenth Progress Report

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

2. Membership of the RG

The Law Society has nominated a new representative to the RG and the Chair will continue to liaise with the Bar Council regarding the nomination of a new representative from the Bar.

3. External Engagement

Estate Strategy Working Group

It was noted that the meeting of the Estate Strategy Working Group had been re-scheduled to take place on 30 April 2024 and would be attended by a member of the RG. A report back will be provided at the June meeting.

Consultation Responses

It was noted that the RG's response to the consultation on McKenzie Friends has been submitted and that it is proposed to submit a response to the Civil Legal Aid Review. In relation to the latter RG members were encouraged to forward any comments/evidence for inclusion to the Chair.

DOJ Update

DOJ provided an update on their work on the Reform Programme. The Department intends to set up two groups to take forward this work- a Stakeholder Reference Group and an Equal Opportunities Forum. The Department will be inviting the RG's involvement in these two groups which was welcomed. The RG also re-iterated its desire to see training for personal litigants addressed as part of the Reform Programme, given the challenges that persist for most in navigating the legal system.

Judicial Studies Board (JSB)

In relation to recent email correspondence with the Secretary to the JSB, the RG re-iterated its view that it would be useful for the JSB to meet Litigants in Person from the RG to hear directly about their experiences of navigating the legal system.

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4. Seminar

It was noted the lunchtime seminar will take place in June 2024. It will be a joint venture with Law Centre NI, with the latter providing the technical, administrative, and marketing support for the event. The focus will be on the Equal Treatment Bench Book (ETBB). The Chair will take forward issuing invitations to speakers.

5. Other developments

Terms of Reference

Given the ongoing work and discussions in which the RG is involved, it was agreed that it would be timely to review its Terms of Reference once again. This is to be included in the agenda for the next meeting.