

HEARINGS MANAGEMENT SUB-GROUP

AGENDA

Minutes of Meeting 12th January 2022

Virtual @ 10:00AM

1. Apologies

Lesley King; Nicola Harkness attended on behalf of Leslie

2. Sabbatical

There are currently eight panel members off rota, six females and two males. There are three females who may not return to rota, we are currently still unable to get a response from two. One male has not undertaken any training, is still not on the system and has not been proactive in taking steps to resolve, despite advice given by AST members, further discussion required about appointment.

3. Resignations

None

4. Hearing Stats - period 1st December 2021-11th January 2022

- Deferred Cases - Seventeen virtual cases deferred; five no social work reports available; three awaiting grounds to be established; eight relevant persons failed to attend and one legal rep failed to attend; one case, which was a request to add to rota, no papers available and grounds still at court.

One face to face deferred - One relevant person had no legal representation and the other relevant person had to attend a funeral.

- Cancelled Sessions - As a result of Omicron variant and changes to government advice all January face to face hearings have been cancelled and moved to virtual hearings.

- Secure Hearings - None
- Extra Hearings/Sessions - None

- Swaps - Eight swaps in total; two virtual and six face to face.
- Continuity - Two requests made in December with hearings taking place in January.
- Six standby sessions over the festive period, one required to be used for 2nd Working Day hearing.

5. Pastoral Care

One panel member was and continues to be impacted by COVID.

6. Panel Member Strength

Eighty four panel members, of which sixty one are female and twenty three are male. Currently there are seventy six panel members who are available for rota scheduling, this is made up of fifty six females and twenty males.

7.AOCB

One face to face session had started at 9.30am and panel members did not leave until 4.30pm. The first family arrived an hour late, which then had a subsequent impact on ability to complete the record of proceedings at the end of the sessions, and the following hearings, all three records of proceedings had to be completed at the end of the sessions. There were also technical difficulties with CSAS not saving or allowing submission of the records. There were also technical difficulties with the equipment in Glen Lane with the staff who were available unable to resolve the issue and subsequently no blended hearing could take place. The session had to be managed by rotating participants. In addition, there had been no food or drink available, resulting in the panel members, understandably, being less than happy about the situation.

Following discussion it was identified that the CSAS problem is not always happening as a result of the time out protocol, which was previously identified. Issues appear to continue with panel members who have just signed in, experiencing the same problems of not saving or submitting or being kicked out. It was agreed that we need to make all panel members aware that when this happens, they need to email digital services immediately, as the problem is ongoing and not wait until afterwards. It is hoped that by reporting as the issues are actually occurring that digital services will be able to identify the root cause and provide a solution.

Nicola advised that both she and Andrew Mobbs had tried to replicate the issues of not connecting screens/rooms but the same problem did not present itself and they were able to do so successfully. Nicola is issuing guidance to SCRA staff around who to contact, should they not be able to resolve any connection issues themselves in the first instance, and this should prevent the same situation for blended hearings from happening.

A query was raised regarding an upcoming session which has been scheduled on CSAS as 3pm until 7pm, the panel member due to chair has made it clear she will not be able to be in attendance until 7pm due to other commitments, but the AST also had concerns that hearings were being scheduled for these timings and any expectation on panel members. It was clarified that the session was booked to start at 3pm, it is one case, albeit a difficult case, but there is no expectation on panel members or reporters to be still in attendance at 7pm. The system has allocated a four hour slot by default.

As a result of the increase in virtual hearings, SCRA have managed to secure two additional sessions for the Rota, from RAVHI capacity. There will be additional Monday and Tuesday afternoon availability.

Face to Face hearings will only take place when it is necessary for the family and it is expected that February and March will also be virtual hearing sessions only, although further information will follow in line with guidance from government and the outcome of operational discussions within SCRA and other agencies.

It had been suggested that three panel members could attend Glen Lane to participate in blended type hearings, which may provide more available pm's if those who do not wish to do virtual could attend. Unfortunately these would still need to be included with already allocated virtual slots due the need for RAVHI support and at this time would not increase capacity. Nicola advised that should rota capacity dictate the need to use panel members who only do face to face hearings then further discussion can take place.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday March 1st 2022 Virtual at 10:00am