



ITEM 3

JOINT CHAIRS' REPORT TO AGM 17TH OCTOBER 2024

It is a pleasure to welcome so many of you to this year's Annual Conference and AGM, all the more important when we are still delivering CVP /Face to Face hearings at a ratio of approximately 65/35 % and so rarely see each other.

When we took over as Joint Chairs from Pam Charlwood last year we already appreciated all the hard work which she had done for the Association over many years, but it was not until we were in post that we realised quite what she had undertaken singlehandedly and we are grateful to her for her continued support over the past year.

The committee has met 5 times during the past year and we continue to meet regularly with the Deputy Chamber President, Sarah Johnston, the Chief Medical Member, Joan Rutherford and the Operational Manager, Denise Leeson as well as our Chamber President, Mark Sutherland Williams. The items which we have discussed in those meetings are many and varied, and a summary of these meetings can be found on the website, which itself has been part of our focus this year. We hope that you have enjoyed the "new look" website with its more accessible format. Our discussion area continues to be a place of lively debate and views and a source of information sharing and has helped inform many of our meetings with senior management and our response to consultations so please do continue to contribute. You can easily set up an alert to the discussion area but if you have difficulties then please get in touch with Zoe.

We have also issued regular newsletters to ensure that you are up to date with what the committee has been doing.

We have had a successful recruitment drive, which will continue, and we would ask you all to 'spread the word' when you meet with colleagues on the panel who are not committee members. We have information and 'flyers ' for email distribution which we can share with you, so please contact us if you would like these.

There have been a number of important consultations this year.

We responded to the Rule 35 consultation (twice in fact!) the results of which have recently been published and which has led to an amendment which will allow the tribunal to make a decision on the papers on a reference in respect of a patient detained in hospital, aged 18 or over, with capacity and who is legally represented. We have been assured that it will be a three-member panel sitting on these paper hearing and not just a judge. It is not anticipated that this will come into force before November.

We also submitted a very comprehensive response to the consultation on "Treatment of Pensionable Service as Legal Chairman and Legal Member in the Mental Health Review Tribunal". Having done so, this consultation was suspended due to the election and we have, as yet, received no timetable when it is likely to be back on the agenda but we will be keeping a careful eye on this for those members who are affected. We sometimes co-opt members to assist the committee on particular issues and we would like to thank Roshan Bailey for her help on the Pensions consultation.

We submitted evidence to the 2024/5 Senior Salaries Review Body (SSRB) which as you will be aware was approved and we have all been awarded a 6% pay rise.

We have continued to have representatives on all of the mental health forums including the Forum of Tribunal organisations, the Senior President of Tribunal's termly meeting with that Forum, the MOJ 's regular meetings with the Forum, and the Stakeholder Group.

One of our committee members was asked to help draft this year's Judicial Attitude Survey and we were recently invited to provide representatives to the HMCTS Security Task Force which has resulted in the issue of up to date guidance to ensure judicial office holder's safety in hospital and community settings, and which was set up with the Chamber President.

Our involvement in all of these is testimony to the profile which MHTMA has with the senior judiciary.

There is little doubt that next year will prove as challenging and interesting as this year. As you know the Mental Health Bill is back on the agenda although we have no timetable for this. We will be responding to the revised consultation on Pensions as well as Working Practices and Additional fees reviews.

Our secretary Simon Dixey is leaving the committee this year and our thanks to him and to the committee and sub-committees whose hard work and support has made our task less daunting. And to our administrator Zoe who has been of immeasurable support and guidance to us as we have navigated our new roles.

Sue Green and Carolyn Taylor

Joint Chairs MHTMA

17th October 2024