

**Academic Panel – 12<sup>th</sup> September 2018**

**Allen & Overy**

**Minutes**

<b>Attendees:</b>	<b>University/Organisation</b>
Robert Thomas (RT)	(Co-Chair) University of Manchester
Naomi Creutzfeldt (NC)	(Co-Chair) Westminster/Oxford University
Heidi Bancroft (HB)	Secretary to the AJC
Brian Thompson (BT)	Liverpool University School of Law
Christopher Hodges (CH)	Oxford University
Huw Pritchard (HP)	Cardiff University
Sarah Nason (SN)	Prifysgol Bangor University
Chris Coxton (CC)	MoJ Analytics Team
Rohan Grove (RG)	HMCTS, Insight and User Research Division
Abi Adams (AA)	Oxford University
Tamara Hervey (TH)	University of Sheffield
<b>Apologies:</b>	<b>University/Organisation</b>
Charlotte O'Brien	University of York
Stephen Hardy	Coventry University
David Cowan	University of Bristol Law School
Lindsay Stirton	University of Sussex
Margaret Doyle	UK AII
David Southern	Queen Mary University of London
Helen Fenwick	Durham University
Joe Tomlinson	Kings College
Graham Gee	University of Sheffield
Tom Mullen	University of Glasgow
Richard Kirkham	University of Sheffield
Ann Sherlock	
Grianne McKeever	Ulster University
Chris Gill	University of Glasgow

**1) Welcome and Introductions**

RT welcomed attendees to the second meeting of the Academic Panel.

**2) Council meeting - feedback**

RT gave an update on the full Council meeting, which took place on 13<sup>th</sup> July. The Council had given their go ahead on areas identified in the last academic panel meeting.

NC gave an update on the Pro Bono Panel meeting which she had attended. They had narrowed down their six priority areas into two. The Pro Bono Panel were keen to have input from academics. They had asked for comparative research looking at the costs of tribunals and whether successful challenges get shifted on to the correct department. CH stated that 'polluter pays' was ineffective

and didn't act as an incentive for departments to get decisions right. He suggested looking at alternative models.

RT informed the panel that Warren Seddon from the Public and Health Services Ombudsman (PHSO) had requested that the panel conducts some research on gaps in ombudsman schemes and areas that aren't covered in the Public Services Ombudsman Bill, as well as own initiative powers.

### **3) Working groups**

NC informed the panel that there will be 5-6 areas the panel should focus on. She requested that members let them know which groups they would like to opt into. Members gave an update on workshops in the four themes already identified by the panel.

**a) Ombudsman Reform** – workshop in Sheffield in January organised by Richard Kirkham. Any members who were interested in this area and would like to contribute should inform HB.

**Action** – 1) NC to circulate the details of Sheffield workshop in January; 2) Members who are interested in Ombudsman reform to inform HB.

**b) Data** – Data – AA gave an update on the workshops being hosted by herself, Natalie Byrom from the Legal Education Foundation and Jeremias Prassl from Oxford University. They would be looking at the 6 principles identified by the Senior President of Tribunals for evaluating the reforms and build them into a seminar series.

**c) Tribunals modernisation** - workshop taking place in December. The judiciary had been sent round an internal survey on their views on the modernisation programme and the report would be due in November.

### **d) Administrative decision-making and administrative procedures**

There would be a workshop on 2<sup>nd</sup> November on administrative justice decision-making and procedures. It was a broad area but there would be cross-cutting themes. RT had invited a range of stakeholders and would have the main players in the room to hear their views including government departments. RG had a contact at DWP and he would encourage them to support the event. CH agreed to prepare a paper.

### Data Access

There was a discussion about data access. RG informed the panel that Susan Acland-Hood, Chief Executive of HMCTS, had made a medium term commitment at the UCL conference and in her blog of October 2017 on access to appropriate data. HMCTS would look to evolve its existing data access panels to better support researchers. They would be working with partners to prepare data sets for external users for appropriate use. He noted the importance in getting the data to a stage where it's much more useable; seeing what data sets were available and what the limitations were. They were looking to prepare data in a way that benefited everyone. It would enable the improvement of public research and policy by those involved in policy decisions.

**Action:** 1) RG to contact DWP contact and invite him to the workshop; 2) CH to prepare a paper for the administrative decision-making workshop

#### **4) Other areas of research**

RT emphasised the importance of decisions by local authorities and local authority tribunals. There was also a local government ombudsman who dealt with more cases than the PHSO. It was not only areas such as tax and social security that were affected by poor decision-making but also decisions by local authorities which were more difficult to access. He referred to the paper produced by Dave Cowan on homelessness decision-making.

The panel gave an update on their research.

#### **5) Website**

HB gave an overview of the website for the AJC. It was a great platform for visible exchange and published papers could be posted by the panel and other members of the full Council.

CC suggested having a document which mapped out and how the organisation and different groups were linked so people could see the bigger picture. He would be happy to put something together.

**Actions:** 1) Members to send HB suggestions for the website; 2) CC to put together a document mapping put the different panels/organisations and how they are linked together.

#### **6) Terms of Reference**

HB reminded the panel that they had agreed to have a 'terms of reference' for the panel. The panel provided some suggestions on the wording. HB would draft the document and circulate it to the panel for comments.

**Action:** HB to draft TOR and circulate for comments.

#### **7) Any other business**

RG had been invited to speak on AI in law at a Nuffield conference on Friday. He would welcome any thoughts. There would be some debate on what AI might do and he would be free to discuss this off-line. He also drew the panel attention to some work he had been doing on asylum appeals and putting safeguarding ethics in place for researchers. He would welcome input from anyone who had considered safeguarding around primary qualitative research on this area. NC would send RG the requirements that Oxford academic researchers have to fill out for their own safety.

#### **8) Date of next meeting**

Panel members would vote on the date of the next meeting – 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> November.