

## **USER GROUP COMMITTEE (UGC)** **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **1. PURPOSE OF THE USER GROUP COMMITTEE**

- 1.1 The User Group Committee (UGC) provides a structured forum for constructive engagement between the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal (the Tribunal) and its key users. Its purpose is to support the efficient, consistent and transparent operation of Tribunal proceedings by promoting open dialogue, sharing information, and identifying areas where processes may benefit from clarification or improvement.
- 1.2 The UGC considers themes, policy issues, and operational matters affecting Tribunal practice. It is not a forum for issues relating to individual cases, nor for stakeholders to criticise each other except where this is directly relevant to the proper functioning of Tribunal procedures. Its role is systemic, not case-specific.
- 1.3 The Tribunal may seek targeted feedback from the Committee on procedural developments, reforms or documents. The overarching aim is to strengthen communication and mutual understanding between the Tribunal and its users, ensuring that the Tribunal's processes reflect the experience of those who appear before it.

### **2. MEMBERSHIP**

#### **2.1 Core Membership**

- 2.1.1 Core members include representatives from organisations and groups with a continuing involvement in Tribunal work, namely:
- The President of the Tribunal;
  - The Clerk and the Listings Manager;
  - Representatives of the Law Society (including the RPC Chair and a nominated solicitor);
  - Representatives of the Solicitors Regulation Authority and its appointed advocates;
  - Representatives of the Legal Services Board;
  - Solicitors and advocates who regularly appear for respondents;

2.1.2 Organisations with standing membership may nominate representatives by writing to the UGC Chair.

## **2.2 Additional Membership**

2.2.1 The Chair may invite further individuals, groups or organisations with a legitimate interest in Tribunal operations. Applications for membership must set out the applicant's role, relevance and proposed representative(s). In deciding, the Chair may consult existing members, balancing relevance, expertise and sector representation. Additional memberships are reviewed annually.

## **2.3 Member Responsibilities**

2.3.1 Members are expected to:

- Engage constructively and respectfully;
- Attend meetings wherever possible;
- Prepare by reviewing circulated papers;
- Represent the views of their organisation or user group;
- Respect confidentiality and apply the Chatham House Rule.

## **2.4 Leaving the Committee and Substitutes**

2.4.1 Members may resign with two weeks' written notice. Organisations may replace representatives on the same notice. Membership ends if an individual no longer represents their nominating body. The Chair may remove members for persistent non-attendance or confidentiality breaches.

2.4.2 Substitute representatives may attend if notified 48 hours in advance. Substitutes may participate fully except that they may not vote on procedural matters.

# **3. MEETINGS**

## **3.1 Frequency and Format**

3.1.1 The Committee meets at least twice yearly, with additional meetings arranged if required. Meetings may be held in person or virtually. Dates are set in advance with at least six weeks' notice and meetings proceed regardless of attendance numbers.

## 3.2 Meeting Structure

3.2.1 Meetings typically include:

- Review of previous actions;
- Consideration of standing statistical reports (e.g., adjournments, Agreed Outcome applications, new proceedings, appeal data);
- Discussion of thematic issues or developments;
- Consideration of agenda items submitted by members.

3.2.2 The Committee may also discuss cases of general importance where procedural or operational issues arise.

## 3.3 Agenda and Papers

3.3.1 A standard preparation timetable applies:

- **4 weeks before** – Chair requests agenda items
- **3 weeks before** – Members submit items and papers
- **2 weeks before** – Secretary circulates agenda and standing data
- **1 week before** – Members may submit response papers
- **48 hours before** – No late papers unless exceptional circumstances apply

3.3.2 SRA data and forecasts are provided as part of the normal reporting cycle.

## 3.4 Recordings

3.4.1 Meetings may be recorded solely for minute preparation, with prior consent of attendees. Recordings will be held securely and deleted within seven days.

## 4. MINUTES, DOCUMENTATION AND PUBLICATION

### 4.1 Minutes

4.1.1 Draft minutes will be prepared within ten working days. Following Chair approval, the final draft will be circulated within fifteen working days. Members may request factual corrections within five working days. Minutes are confidential and not published.

## 4.2 Public Summary

4.2.1 A public Summary of Discussions will be published within twenty working days, providing:

- An outline of issues discussed;
- Key statistical information (new cases, Agreed Outcome and adjournment data).

## 4.3 Document Management

4.3.1 The Secretary will maintain secure records with proper version control and archiving. Documents will be retained for at least seven years. Members may access papers issued during their membership.

## 5. COMMUNICATION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

### 5.1 Communications Between Meetings

5.1.1 Routine matters are handled by the Secretary. The Chair may consult members by email on policy issues arising between meetings.

### 5.2 Confidentiality

5.1.2 All discussions are subject to the Chatham House Rule. Papers must not be circulated beyond a member's organisation without the Chair's approval. Members may provide general feedback to their organisations but must not attribute comments to individuals.

## 6. Review and Amendments

6.1 These Terms of Reference are reviewed every three years at the first meeting of the year. Members may propose amendments with three weeks' written notice; changes require a majority of those present. The Chair may make temporary operational changes subject to ratification at the next meeting.

Signed



Alison Kellett, UGC Chair

Dated

December 2025