

Devon & Somerset Law Society
Family, Criminal & Dispute Resolution Committee
Tuesday 23rd September 2025 at 4:00pm via Zoom

1	Apologies & Minutes	Action Point	Actioned/Comments
	a) Attendees: Cara Hough (“CH”), Nicola Hall (“NH”), Liz Kendall (“LK”), Rebecca Milton (“RM”), Demelza Pallant (“DP”), Tony Steiner (“TS”) b) Apologies received from: Rhia Abukhalil (“RA”), Thomas Glover (“TG”), Imran Khodobocus (“IK”), Hannah Pettifer (“HP”), Kelly Baker (“KB”), Martin Laver (“ML”) Louise Saxton has stepped down from the Committee		
	c) Minutes of the last meeting held on 6 March 2025 were approved.		
2	Any Other Business		
	a) Feedback from the AI Event on 24 June 2025 at North Devon Council Offices - CH reposted she has heard good feedback on the event which was well received. - North Devon delegates were very pleased to have a free event in their area. - There was good attendance and very positive LinkedIn posts. - It was suggested that due to AI changing at such fast pace, we could do an updated version of the event, perhaps in 6 months in an alternative location.		
	b) Website “Our Committees and Groups” page – Sub Committee details The page has been updated and is ongoing and working well.	KB to keep updated	Nothing further to add.
	c) Letter to Civil, Family and Tribunal Stakeholders in the South West Region Letter advising changes taking place from April 2025 for information and circulation.		
	d) New Operational Leadership Structure – SW Region The operational leadership structure has changed in the SW.		Nothing further to add
	e) High-volume consumer claims – email circulated 29.09.25 The SRA have invited members to review the discussion paper at roundtable discussions. TS suggested DASLS should put a response together	NH will look into putting a response together	TS has included in BUZZ or the whole membership to view.
	f) Unqualified Lawyers practicing Litigation Guidance awaited from the Law Society	KB to add link on webpage	TS is in contact with Chancery Lane and will

	Firms need to be made aware of this. It will affect unqualified lawyers from running litigation cases.	LK will liaise with Emma Davies and feed back	circulate their reply as soon as he hears back.
3	Matters Arising		
	a) Civil Litigation Practice - Bristol Business & Property Court Users Group (Cara Hough) - Access to Justice – It's been noted that the hearing loops don't work in most of the courts, including Bristol. There isn't any money to resolve the issue. - CH raised the issue of unsuitable wheelchair access at Exeter Court highlighted at the Board of Directors Meeting. - Users Groups in Somerset - HP and NH haven't been able to attend. - Plymouth and Torquay Civil Court Users' Group - Nothing to report	NH is looking into this issue. HP & NH to liaise re attending the Users Groups	
	b) Family Practice - Family Court User Group (Imran Khodabocus – not present) - Emma advised there has been bit a shift around with circuit judges with some new people coming in.	KB to check in with IK to see how he is and if he still wants to remain part of the Committee or feed into the group.	
	c) Mediation - Mediation Service Update – Liz Kendall - HMCTS was late to produce their first years stats on the implantation of the mandatory small claims mediation and makes for very disappointing reading. The number of cases are increasing but the success rate is low at around 40%. - Mediation and personal injury is an area to keep an eye with potential changes ahead.		
4	Consultations & Procedural Updates		
	a) SRA Consumer Protection Review Update (Martin Laver – not present) https://www.sra.org.uk/home/hot-topics/consumer-protection-review/ CH updated the SR are pausing the plans to remove the client account from solicitors and will be doing more consultations and discussion as there is currently no viable alternative.	KB to remove medical records from the agenda	
5	Future Engagement Events		
	a) Plans for next meeting/event to be discussed Nicola does not have anything in place yet but due to time scale it will be mice pies and drinks social rather than an event at Stephens Scown in December	NH to speak with the event manager at Stephens Scown,	Owing to DASLS Social Committee hosting a Winter Drinks Event on 17

	- It was agreed one free event a year is enough for the committee to arrange due to workload. - EC advised they are hosting a couple of free events at Chambers. - CH asked the committee for any idea for the committee or agenda to be put forward to her and KB.	Exeter and will come back with a date CH to confirm June 2026 date EC will forward event details to KB for circulation to the committee	December 2025, we have agreed to attend that instead (as opposed to hosting our own).
6	Learning & Development Opportunities		
	a) 11.11.25 Value Based Pricing for Proactive Lawyers		
	b) 22.01.26 DASLS Family Conference		
7	Date, Time and Format of Next Meeting		
	Next full meeting will be in February 2025 at 4:00pm via ZOOM. Date TBC		

Key – Colour Coded Actions			
Cara Hough	Tony Steiner	Kelly Baker	Sub Committee Members
Cara Hough, Chair	Nicola Hall, Vice Chair	Rhia Abukhail	Ian Brown
Emma Cross	Thomas Glover	Tanya Jones	Liz Kendall
Imran Khodabocus	Martin Laver	Daya Mann	Rebecca Milton
Karen Osborne	Hannah Pettifer	Catherine Reynolds	Jonathan Ward
		Justices' Clerk Office Vacant	CPS representative - vacant