

Personas in Alpha

HMCTS



**Gatekeeping
Judge**

Legal adviser

**Legal team
manager**

Administrator

Local authority



Solicitor

Legal assistant

Principal lawyer

Age
30-45

Background

They manage legal documentation and correspondence that goes to the court, including case applications, the court bundle witness instructions, draft case management orders and all correspondence. They are involved in case preparation. They need to get an approval from solicitors before sending out documentation.

User needs

- Ensure I only submit the information that is needed to consider the application.
- Provide data in a simple, quick, efficient way - without re-keying.
- Know what information is expected of me for the application.
- Consistent guidance as to what constitutes an urgent case.

Pain points

- Wasting time doing a lot of admin work (preparing and re-keying information: C110A, C2, CMO...)
- Burden of case progression (have to chase and being chased) lies only on them.
- Communicating with the court (unless they get direct e-mail from the judge)
- Not receiving Cafcass perspective on time.

Digital skills

- Very varied capabilities; some are legally qualified. They are experienced within the court system.
- Confident/expert online and with applications such as Word, Excel etc.
- Fully trained on how to use internal systems.
- Daily use of document management, form filling, scanning / attaching files, email, online case management and research.

Lots of duplication in the form - parent/child names, threshold assessments and care plans. We waste time re-keying information.



Age
30-45

Background

Accountable for threshold decisions and for all documentation that goes to the court, including case applications, the court bundle witness instructions, draft case management orders and all correspondence. Some solicitors also represent in court.

Courts sometimes fail to book an interpreter and so a new hearing is needed. Equally, courts may book an interpreter in the wrong dialect (eg. Somalia has 6 different dialects)



User needs

- Ensure I only submit the information that is needed to consider the application.
- Provide data in a simple, quick, efficient way - without re-keying.
- Know what information is expected of me for the application.
- Consistent guidance as to what constitutes an urgent case.
- Be able to delegate to a legal assistant and know when the application is ready for me to review

Digital skills

- Legally qualified and very experienced within the court system.
- Generally confident online and with applications such as Word, Excel but some task specific and use Dictaphones for assistants to type up
- Fully trained on how to use internal systems.
- Daily use of document management, form filling, scanning / attaching files, email, online case management and research.

Pain points

- Wasting time doing a lot of admin work (preparing and re-keying information: C110A, C2, CMO...)
- Burden of case progression (have to chase and being chased) lies only on them.
- Communicating with the court (unless they get direct e-mail from the judge)
- Not receiving Cafcass perspective on time.

Age
35-65

Background

Accountable for final decisions on applications documentation that goes to the court. They will have led discussions of the case before making the decision to proceed with a care order. They will review forms before being sent to the court.

I have overall responsibility for the application. We're under pressure to list as urgent but the court will say it's not. We want to know what will satisfy the criteria to make an urgent hearing.



User needs

- To be able to know when an application is ready for their review.
- Control who can send applications to court.
- Know when someone is making changes to a form so I don't override them.
- Consistent guidance on what counts as an urgent case.

Digital skills

- Legally qualified and very experienced within the court system.
- Confident/expert online and with applications such as Word, Excel etc and often work on laptop while on the move.
- Fully trained on how to use internal systems.
- Daily use of document management, form filling, scanning / attaching files, email, online case management and research.

Pain points

- Waiting for social workers to get back with details.
- Social workers pushing majority of cases as urgent.
- Team members not completing the President's Guidance.
- Complexity of the form when reviewing it and information spread in different places.
- Lateness of notification from the court when a hearing will take place.
- Being placed as the main Local Authority contact on the application even if I don't know details of the case.

Age
25-55

Background

They review incoming applications and sift out Emergency Protection Orders away from Gatekeepers and list them. They will go into courtrooms to get a legal adviser or judge to deal with urgent hearings if no gatekeeper is on duty.

We receive applications by email from the local authority. We do a quick check that all the information is there. Then log it on our fee sheet and pass it on to the gatekeepers.

User needs

- Assess the application information in a logical and intuitive order.
- Understand immediately the complexity of the case (for tier and allocation)
- Be able to be alerted if an Emergency Protection Order with less than 24 hours notice arrives.
- To know when an allocation is approved so they can list for hearing.
- Know an application has been picked up by a gatekeeper.

Pain points

- Wasting time re-keying information into family man and CMS.
- Dealing with F-diary to manage judges' diaries.
- Not being told by a local authority that an Emergency Protection Order that will need to be heard that day is being prepared.
- Finding a legal adviser or judge to deal with urgent applications.
- Storing applications in own database.

Digital skills

- Very experienced within the court system.
- Confident online due to range of online tools they must use in role.
- Fully trained on how to use internal systems.
- Has very good awareness of judges' availability.



Age
30-55

Background

They review incoming applications and perform triage. They allocate applications to the right tier of judiciary or to magistrates. They coordinate with court admin staff and issue standard directions to all parties.

We get a lot of cases for urgent hearing even they are not urgent. This creates a burden on the system. It is hard to find a judge when all the judges are already listed for hearings.

User needs

- Assess the application information in a logical and intuitive order.
- Understand immediately the complexity of the case (for tier and allocation)
- Be able to make my decision based on only the information supplied to me.
- Automate outputting of Standard Directions without re-keying.
- Be able to start drafting Standard Directions while waiting for allocation decisions to be confirmed

Pain points

- Wasting time re-keying information into family man and CMS.
- Getting urgent hearings listed.
- Finding a judge to agree their decision.
- Getting in-complete applications.
- Sending too much time editing standard direction word template.
- I need someone to help me with listing hearings effectively.
- Not receiving guardian allocation in time from Cafcass.

Digital skills

- Legally qualified or very experienced within the court system.
- Expert in their area of law.
- Confident online as most cases currently processed by PDF
- Fully trained on how to use internal systems.



Age
40-65

Background

They manage the team of legal advisers and sometimes act as gatekeepers themselves. They manage rotas for gatekeepers to handle public law at set times and work closely with judges and the Designated Family Judge to ensure that their team is managing the workload in the required time and are following the President's Guidance.

I work closely with the Designated Family Judge to ensure procedures are in place and are followed.

User needs

- Be able to assign work to their team and know what its status is
- Be able to move along issues with allocations, such as by being able to go to a judge or to follow up with local authorities
- Assign roles to team members
- Be able to pick up work if a team member is unavailable
- Be able to take a judge's verbal agreement to progress an application without the system blocking me

Pain points

- Local authorities and team members not following the President's Guidance
- Local authorities sending too many urgent cases to the court
- Urgent applications coming in outside the rota timetabled for their team to manage Public Law applications
- Legal advisers getting bogged down in administrative systems that are complex to use (eg judge diary tools)

Digital skills

- Legally qualified or very experienced within the court system.
- Expert in their area of law.
- Confident online.
- Fully trained on how to use internal systems.
- Skilled at using team management tools



Age
40-65

Background

Judges hear cases and make decisions on directions and orders. District Judges, managed by the court's Designated Family Judge are responsible for making sure that the Family Public Law cases are handled within 26 weeks. District Judges also work with legal advisers to make gatekeeping decisions on case allocation.

**Hearings are reschedule
when local authority legal
team is not well prepared
and when directions are not
completed before first
CMH.**



User needs

- Have application information in a logical, intuitive and concise presentation.
- Make a direction or order for a case.
- Know if a case urgently requires my attention
- Access to all case documentation, both in court and remotely.
- Prepare a case for a hearing. Assemble the key information needed to run the hearing.
- Understand my case load and see incoming and scheduled cases.
- Review all documentation associated with a case.

Digital skills

- Have basic digital skills due to amount of online tools used in court but some are reluctant
- Expert in their area of law.
- Empowered to make decisions about how to handle cases.
- Lead hearings and produce directions and decisions.

Pain points

- Parties not being prepared with position statements.
- Not knowing if parties have completed directions in time.
- Not having access to full information in application form and some information in evidence documents.
- Time pressures do not allow sufficient time to be spent on any one task.
- Current technology is unreliable and not always a good fit for the task.
- Limited support / opportunities for delegation. Technical support minimal, clerk support not guaranteed.
- Running out of allocated days to hear cases means voluntarily taking on more.