

MPTS User Group meeting – Tuesday 17 March 2026

Actions/Minutes

Present: Fiona Monk (Chair), Tamarind Ashcroft, Gavin Brown, Sara Mason, Brendan Costello, Colin Barker, Gill Edelman, Laura Jones, Vaishali Fitton, Lisa V Jones, Lucy Evans, Gemma Barnes, Margaret Barry, Ravi Gupta, Sara Foster, Isaac Ahmer (minutes).

	Minutes	Action
1.	<p>Introductions and Chair's welcome</p> <p>The new MPTS Chair, Fiona Monk, welcomed attendees and brief introductions were made.</p>	
2.	<p>Approval of Tuesday 09 September 2025 meeting minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Minutes from 09 September 2025 meeting were previously circulated to attendees and approved at this meeting. 	
3.	<p>Chair's update including quality assurance of decisions and Tribunal member training</p> <p><u>Introduction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Chair introduced herself to the group. ▶ Since taking up her new role in January, Fiona has met with some of the attendees of this call and is currently in listening mode. ▶ She has met with external parties including MDOs, the BMA, and patient groups. Communication and feedback has been valuable. ▶ The <i>Guidance for MPTS Tribunals</i> has received positive feedback and the MPTS is keeping it under review. ▶ Conversations about sexual misconduct cases and how to best support tribunal members with additional training are ongoing. ▶ Fiona offered to meet directly with any organisation that attends the User Group, if they would find that helpful, and stressed she wants to keep lines of communication open. 	

	<p><u>Quality assurance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The MPTS are building and strengthening quality assurance processes, implementing a three-stage approach with more oversight by the Chair. ▶ A legally qualified staff member will assess the determinations in new MPT cases for learning opportunities, and there will be a monthly Decision Review Meeting (DRM), starting next Monday. ▶ Cases that are referred will be considered, alongside a selection of interim hearing decisions. The DRM group will determine further actions, feedback, and support to be extended to tribunal members, and these will also feed into the annual tribunal member training. ▶ The DRM group are particularly keeping an eye on why hearings may be going part-heard. ▶ The final stage will be a revised Quality Assurance Group led by the MPTS Chair, which will meet less frequently and expand its membership to non-sitting members of the statutory committee. <p><u>Tribunal member training</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The MPTS are planning on adding to the tribunal member training for the coming year. The feedback from tribunal members regarding what is currently on offer in the annual training has been positive. ▶ Currently looking at training on trauma informed practice and started discussions on how to bring that into MPTS training. ▶ Fiona has met with Community Safety Trust and TellMAMA and we hope that they will contribute to tribunal member understanding of relevant contexts. ▶ Within the tribunal member pool, there is outside experience in working with sexual misconduct cases. A ticketing system for Legally Qualified Chairs and strengthening appraisal and feedback is being considered. <p><u>Guidance for MPTS tribunals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The guidance remains under review and is open to feedback. ▶ New versions of the document are not intended to be frequent and the first full document review will be carried out at the end of March. ▶ Review of the guidance will continue on a four-monthly basis in the initial two years. ▶ Feedback for the initial review in March should be sent by the end of the month, but if not, there will be further reviews of the document in July and in November. 	
4.	<p>Operational updates including retention of recordings, Guidance for MPTS Tribunals, new guidance and audio loop system</p> <p>Tamarind Ashcroft:</p> <p><u>Tribunal Member Guidance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The <i>Guidance for MPTS Tribunals</i> will be reviewed from the end of March, then again at key intervals. ▶ We are expecting lots of feedback as this is the first review point and any comments submitted before the end of the month will be taken on board 	

for the March review.

- ▶ The feedback will be worked on with Policy colleagues, and the updated version will be released around July.
- ▶ We are reviewing further guidance for reviews, voluntary erasure and restoration hearings. They will be shared in due course.

Teams Premium

- ▶ We are now using Teams Premium, using coloured branding and an MPTS background to be used by Tribunal Members.
- ▶ A watermark with a hearing attendee's own email address will be visible on their own screen. This would allow us to trace copies of unofficial recordings and images. People will only see their own email addresses, and this will not be shared.

Changes to hearing centre

- ▶ All the 4th floor hearing rooms have been updated with induction hearing loop systems, as well as Hearing Room 7.4.
- ▶ Bluetooth compatibility is only installed in limited rooms, so please let Margaret Barry and the team know if this is required.

Retention of recordings

- ▶ Recordings will only be kept for seven years once the recording is made and then automatically deleted.
- ▶ Transcripts will have to be requested whilst we still hold the recordings – there should be plenty of time to request transcripts for appeals processes and any relevant purposes before seven years expires.

Security arrangements

- ▶ The Greater Manchester Police (GMP) have reviewed our existing security arrangements, and GMC Facilities are now implementing additional arrangements into business as usual.
- ▶ There will be visual bag searches upon entry and access passes issued for one day, which will have to be returned and reissued every day.
- ▶ We will strive to list hearings on the 7th floor wherever possible to limit inconvenience.
- ▶ Additional security arrangements such as portable body scanners and an intercom system are additional arrangements we may explore in the coming months.

- ▶ Ravi Gupta queried whether the new security measures would include considerations of legal teams and registrants being given a weeklong access pass. Tamarind explained that as a starting point our Facilities colleagues will be issuing just daily passes, but that that we will take on board any difficulties and feedback.
- ▶ Lisa V Jones sought clarity on whether visitors would go through security on every occasion they leave the building within the day. Tamarind clarified that this had been explored but was considered disproportionate. Daily passes will be the starting point, being reactive to the external environment and responsive to advice.

<p>5.</p>	<p>Case management update including referral numbers, hearing bundle audit and new team members</p> <p>Margaret Barry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ In January 2026 CMHP welcomed two new Case Managers, Laura Jones and Zac Mawhinney. ▶ Current listing capacity for new hearings is October 2026 but this is likely to quickly be utilised given referral rates for the month of March. MPTS has capacity for shorter hearings, in advance of October. ▶ Continue to audit hearing bundles- following the previous update regarding Quarter 1 and 2 of 2025, update was given for Quarter 3 and 4: <p>Quarterly breakdown</p> <p><i>Q3 of 2025</i></p> <p>75* bundles audited 31 late (41%) Of the 31 late, 20 (65%) from doctors with legal reps</p> <p><i>Q4 of 2025</i></p> <p>73* bundles audited 21 late (29%) Of the 21 late, 17 (81%) from doctors with legal reps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Emphasised the importance of timely hearing bundles and that they are collated and presented in line with the MPTS hearing bundle guidance available here. It was noted that tribunal members continue to regularly feedback about both receiving the bundles late and formatting issues, with some hearings losing time consequentially. ▶ Advised that CMHP are starting to look at the time taken to reconvene hearings. Having conducted the initial review, there is some evidence to show that agreeing reconvening dates in session results in less of a delay and therefore parties were urged to attend hearings with all relevant availability to hand so that dates can be agreed with the TMs. ▶ Noted that there was some good evidence of collaboration between parties in the pre-hearing stages, particularly in cases involving vulnerable registrants and witnesses. 	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Change of transcript provider</p> <p>Colin Barker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ As part of a regular procurement exercise, we have had a change of transcript provider. ▶ To ensure transcripts are the right standard with the new company, there will be extra checks on any transcripts ordered before they are sent out. You may be quoted a day longer on transcripts ordered in the short term. ▶ If there are any concerns about timings or transcripts, please get in touch. We should return to business as usual after the initial few months. 	

7.	<p>Matters raised by User Group members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Sara Foster raised that there are multiple interim hearings listed at 09:30am for a single tribunal, with GMC counsel covering them all but only one case starting at 09:30am. Tamarind explained that for best use of time interim hearings are block scheduled, and timing updates are provided to parties when one hearing concludes and the next is ready to proceed. ▶ Lisa V Jones raised that time estimates from tribunals regarding determinations can vary in terms of accuracy and create issues for parties when they are consistently incorrect and infrequent within a hearing. Ravi Gupta shared a specific example of problematic time estimates from his experience. Tamarind shared that tribunal members are trained on managing expectations and vulnerability, and tribunal clerks are knowledgeable about the length of processes. Time estimates should be suitable and realistic. Tamarind requested the details of Ravi Gupta's case to be shared with herself so that it can be investigated further in DRM. ▶ Lisa V Jones raised that press interest in a hearing can surprise and upset registrants when it is not expected and sought clarity on whether it would be possible to be made aware of press interest in a case. Colin Barker clarified that due to the large volume of press enquiries, it would not be realistic to make Medical Defence Organisations (MDOs) aware of every media enquiry. However, in exceptional cases, for example where there is a vulnerability, we would be happy to alert MDOs or reps that there is media interest in a case, if that would be helpful. If a determination is handed down in public, it is prudent to assume that it may be requested by the media. Margaret Barry added that non-publication requests can also be made to her team pre-hearing. 	
8.	<p>Time of future User Group meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ There were no concerns raised regarding the current timing of the User Group meetings. Future meetings will continue to be scheduled from 5pm-6pm unless concerns are raised. 	
9.	<p>Any other business</p> <p>No other business raised.</p>	
10.	<p>Date and time of next meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Tuesday 22 September 2026, 5pm. 	