



Ministry
of Justice

MoJ Analytical Services input for advice sector 'impact measurement' workshop

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Cris Coxon

Civil and Administrative Justice Research

MoJ appreciates the vital role the advice sector plays in helping people with legal problems

- Research literature and the results of legal needs surveys consistently highlight the importance of the advice sector in resolving legal issues. Importantly, we know that people contact advice services regardless of whether a problem is diagnosed as legal in nature.
- More generally we are very alert to the importance of early advice and support in preventing problems from escalating, clustering, and reinforcing characteristics of vulnerability. As well as securing better outcomes for individuals we also appreciate how early resolution, *where effective*, can divert pressure from the formal justice system including the courts and tribunals.
- At a time where state funding has been withdrawn from some parts of the system (e.g. reductions in direct legal aid funding) the advice sector is an important source of information about what people do and whether they are still able to enforce their right and secure just outcomes.

We see that external collaboration is vital as we assess the impacts of existing policy, develop new proposals, and reform our services

- We have already implemented, and are embarking on further, extensive policy and service delivery change programmes which impact large groups of the population and have wide reaching access to justice implications.
- Budget and resource restrictions mean we currently have limited capacity to carry out and commission research.
- We are also conscious that the courts and tribunals sit at the centre of most areas of social policy and, while they perform vital function, the vast majority of problems are resolved before people come into contact with our services.
- We are therefore keen to collaborate to make sure our own services and policies are working, but also understand upstream drivers of demand and how we can best support effective early problem resolution. Examples include our [Areas of Research Interest](#) publication, setting up innovative new work placements and opportunities for alternative research funding, efforts to open up our own data and several collaborations on individual projects.



Working more closely with the advice sector on data, analysis, and evaluation is a welcome opportunity

- The advice sector deal with large numbers of the population across a range of problem types, both upstream and downstream of any interactions with the courts. An advice agency might also be first contact point with a formal service that allows data to be captured about their situation and experience.
- We appreciate that there are many issues in terms of data quality and consistency but we welcome the chance to discuss possibilities for increased use and sharing of advice sector MI.
- We also appreciate the difficulties with measuring the *impact* of advice received e.g. defining suitable outcomes, identifying measurement data, establishing causality and understanding the counterfactual. Again, we are keen to be involved as the conversation progresses and we welcome opportunities for further input.