Freedom of information request to the Ministry of Justice

26 July 2017

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Court of Protection Transparency Pilot**

The Transparency Project is a registered charity no. 1161471. We make this request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

We refer to the current Court of Protection pilot scheme on holding hearings in public, and specifically to:

1. The following paragraph in the Background Note to the pilot, issued in January 2016:

‘It is proposed that the pilot should run in all regions of England and Wales, from January 2016 and for at least six months (with the possibility of extension) to allow for the changes to be fully tested. Ministry of Justice Analytical Services will contribute in an advisory role on appropriate approaches to seeking feedback on the impact of the changes. We will seek to understand how the pilot has been implemented and how it has worked in practice, including exploring issues such as accommodating press and the public in courtrooms, and any publication or unwanted disruption attributed to the changes.’

And

1. The observations about an assessment of this pilot made by Mr Justice Charles in his judgment in *V v Associated Newspapers* [2016] EWCOP 21 in April 2016
2. he observations about an assessment of this pilot made by Mr Justice Charles in his judgment in *V v Associated Newspapers* [2016] EWCOP 21 in April 2016 in paragraphs 8 and 214-215.

**Our questions are:**

1. If any review, assessment, evaluation or other report on the operation and/or outcomes of the Court of Protection transparency pilot under which hearings are held in public has been undertaken by or on behalf of the Ministry of Justice, please provide us with information / statistical or qualitative data gathered and analysed on the impact of the pilot on court staff and court users (anonymised if necessary).

1. If no such review etc. has been undertaken, please advise us with information on:

2 (a) How persons concerned ('P') and their families are being informed about the pilot and when and how they might make representations about the hearings being held in public and being reported on. Please provide any information leaflets, standard letters or templates, feedback forms or guidance for court staff relevant to this issue.

(b) How the impact of the pilot on P and their families is being measured (including subjective views of families about any impact on them and the views of their representatives) and any statistical or qualitative data gathered as a result (anonymised if necessary).

(c) How the impact of the pilot on practitioners, judiciary, and court staff is being measured and any statistical or qualitative data gathered as a result (anonymised if necessary).

1. Please provide us with information on any proposals for a public consultation  regarding hearings being held in open court, after the pilot is due to end in August 2017.

1. Please provide us with the numbers of people who attended hearings under the pilot scheme from commencement to date (broken down into periods if possible), specifically:

(a) how many hearings were attended by representatives of the press and/or broadcast media

(b) how many hearings were attended by individuals who were not representing the media

or if your data is not broken down in this way, showing such separate categories as you hold data for.

1. Please provide us with any data gathered / recorded by HMCTS staff for management purposes relevant to the operation of the pilot, broken down into such periods / categories as you hold, and anonymised as necessary.

Yours faithfully,

Lucy Reed

Chair

The Transparency Project