

Review of the supervision of court appointed deputies by the Public Guardian

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In December 2014 Parliament published its review of the way in which the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) supervises Court appointed deputies. The review was prompted by a number of factors including the growth in the supervision case load for the OPG since the commencement of the MCA and the anticipation that such growth will continue, issues of dissatisfaction with the standard of the OPG's customer service and concern expressed by some Members of Parliament at charges levied by professional deputies in specified cases.

A number of changes are planned as a result of the review, some of which have already come into effect. These include the move to supervision by the OPG according to deputy type so that staff may specialise, for example, in supervising a lay deputy as opposed to a professional or panel deputy. The OPG intends to implement several new measures around the issue of better control of professional deputy charges. These might include the requirement for an annual plan with work and cost estimates which can be scrutinised both in advance and afterwards. Finally, there will be a move towards digital reporting by deputies to speed up the process and reduce paperwork. A pilot scheme is intended to come into force sometime in 2015.

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