

PIDMs Feedback – COPFS Meeting 17.03.21 –

1. Just wanted to let you know my experience...great idea in theory... not so good in practice. Once you gain access to the booking form, I find that you put in the details click on the button to send and regularly you are told please try again something went wrong...I would estimate that it takes about 25 mins to book a meeting....what a waste of time!!
2. Twice recently, once in Paisley and once in Airdrie, we have booked PIDMs online but nobody from PF has contacted us.

There should be some alternative mechanism to inform the court that a case does not need to call for an ID where the PIDM process has failed.

I would like the point to be made forcefully that we are the only ones really impacted by a system failure. There will be a Sheriff, Clerk and depute in court anyway. We have to attend or to arrange cover for what is almost always a meaningless formal diet for which we are not paid. An alternative method of contacting the court to avoid a useless ID is essential. I would have thought that a simple email would be more than enough. And of course that a meaningless court attendance carries a risk to health.

3. I'm forwarding a fairly lengthy back and forth re PIDM problems which might be worth bringing up on the 17th.

The case I was referring to was covered by an agent initially (and notwithstanding a very full court report from them) I couldn't honestly say that a PIDM wasn't set.

I have of course had no response from the Response and Information Unit...

Member

From: COPFS

Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 10:56

Subject: RE: PIDM

Many thanks for this information.

I have reviewed the case below and note that the ID was scheduled for 12 February 2021, there was a PIDM date of 28 January 2021, which would have been able to book from at least 14 January 2021. This was all available on the booking application.

For cases which have not been set a PIDM by the court, our staff have been identifying the ID date on the booking application to assist defence agents when bookings PIDM dates.

PIDM dates are able to be booked 4 weeks in advance of the ID date as PIDM are held 2 weeks prior to ID and we allow for at least 14 days prior to the PIDM date for bookings to be made.

I will pass the further feedback you have provided regarding the use of the booking application to our Response and Information Unit to accompany your complaint which I passed on to them earlier in the week.

If you have any further queries please let me know

Many thanks

COPFS

From: Member

17 February 2021 10:24

To: COPFS

Subject: Re: PIDM

Dear COPFS

I suspect the problem here was that I was trying to deal with a domestic intermediate diet where a PIDM had never been set. I foolishly assumed that your PIDM system could nonetheless cope but it seems it can't.

I did of course spend 2-3 days trying to contact the fiscals by phone (simply to discuss a plea) but the initial phone message response left by one of your deputies did not include their direct contact number which meant enduring the hell that is your contact centre-average wait time to have a call answered at the moment is between 11 and 17 minutes in my experience.

I note from recent minutes of the law society Covid working group that problems with the PIDM system were raised with a COPFS representative. I understand that COPFS official line is that there is no problem with the system-instead it is a "user problem" i.e. idiot lawyers. Personally speaking, I'd fully accept that this may well be a part of it-but I can assure you that your system is not user-friendly, never mind being "idiot proof" which any well designed system really ought to be.

For example, 1) your initial video guidance for setting up the system lasts over nine minutes. I'm advised by a good friend-a Professor at Strathclyde University with some experience of user interfaces, that any user system's setup that takes more than 2 minutes to explain is by definition too complicated!

2) thereafter your forced use of the Microsoft login system is frankly hopeless; known in the trade, apparently, as the "Ryanair principle" of user interfaces i.e. loading all of the work onto your user (the idiot lawyers), whilst keeping your end of the system clean and simple.

Hope this helps...

Kind Regards

Member

From: COPFS

Sent: Monday, February 15, 2021 12:47:42 PM

To: Member

Subject: FW: PIDM

Good Afternoon

I have been passed your complaint regarding the booking application. I will pass this on to our Response and Information Unit on your behalf.

In the meantime, can you provide me with further details regarding the PIDM that you were unable to book? The Booking Application is set up in conjunction with the Practice Note 4 of 2020, that PIDM should be held 2 weeks prior to the Intermediate Diet at a date given by the court.

Many thanks

COPFS

From: _PFO Glasgow <PFOGlasgow@copfs.gov.uk>

Sent: 09 February 2021 10:50

To: COPFS
Subject: FW: PIDM

Good morning

Please see below

Thanks

COPFS

From: Member
Sent: 09 February 2021 10:11
To: _PFO Glasgow <PFOGlasgow@copfs.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: PIDM

Dear COPFS

Of course;

Case details provided here

The problem though isn't with just this case but rather it's systemic to your PIDM booking system.

I'd be delighted to discuss the details with your manager

Regards

Member

From: _PFO Glasgow <PFOGlasgow@copfs.gov.uk>
Sent: Tuesday, February 9, 2021 6:39:13 AM
To: Member
Subject: RE: PIDM

Good morning

Can you provide me with the PF reference and the name of the accused and I will pass this onto our Manager.

Kind regards

COPFS

From: Member
Sent: 08 February 2021 12:36

To: _PFO Glasgow <PFOGlasgow@copfs.gov.uk>

Subject: PIDM

Dear Sir or madam.

I write in respect of difficulties I am having in booking the above.

As I'm sure you're aware this system doesn't really work. In particular I can only book a PIDM for two weeks away. Intermediate diet is on the 12th Feb.

If you have any suggestions I would be happy to hear them (except of course the suggestion that I try to contact your office by phone-as I'm sure you're aware this is impossible these days..)

Please treat this as a formal complaint in respect of your PIDM system and feel free to escalate it upwards

Member

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4. PIDM System COMPLAINT

Member

7/3/2021 11:11

To RIU@copfs.gsi.gov.uk Copy [ServiceDesk](#), fiona@mckinnonlaw.co.uk

Dear Sir or madam

Just spent an hour of my life that I'm never getting back trying again to book a PIDM

I did contact the service desk on Friday, by email, but as yet have had no reply. Initial problem appears to be not filling in the "optional" boxes which results in a warning message that I have to "provide additional information". When I fill in the "optional"

boxes it looks like it's worked but I get the same warning message that "something has gone wrong" as I sent a screenshot of to the ServiceDesk on Friday.
Contrary to the Crown's contention at a recent coronavirus working group meeting your system is not working and it's not a "user" issue.

Incidentally, after my recent telephone call on 3rd March from a member of RIU, (coincidentally after I had forwarded the previous email complaint/conversation to the GBA) I was contacted by your service desk regarding my previous complaint. That ServiceDesk member however appeared to think he was contacting me about the SDS problem I was having and unfortunately appeared to think that it had been resolved. It has not.

It's not half as bad as the PIDM problem though...

Member