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TRIBUNALS  
JUDICIARY

**JUDGE MARK HINCHLIFFE**

DEPUTY CHAMBER PRESIDENT  
FIRST TIER TRIBUNAL (HEALTH EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CARE)  
MENTAL HEALTH

I write this a week to the day after taking up my appointment as Deputy Chamber President with responsibility for the Mental Health jurisdiction (TSMH) within the Chamber. So far, I have been overwhelmed by the enthusiasm, goodwill and commitment to public service that I have encountered in all my meetings with judges, members and administrators in this fascinating and important jurisdiction.

My interest in mental health goes back many years. As a solicitor in private practice, I became a member of the Law Society Mental Health Panel and represented both restricted and unrestricted patients in the Yorkshire area, and I continued to do so until, eventually, my fee-paid judicial duties in other jurisdictions occupied all of my time. In many ways, therefore, coming back to the TSMH is like coming home.

Of course, we live in a world of enormous financial constraints, and none of us can reasonably resist the imperative for judicial efficiency and value for money as we strive to deliver justice promptly and effectively, and restrict liberty as little as possible whilst protecting both vulnerable people and the community from the distressing and sometimes dangerous consequences of mental disorder.

And so I hope to: -

- continue to work closely with the administrative support team;
- develop and improve the effectiveness of, and compliance with, our requirement for the timely delivery of reports that contain the prescribed information clearly set out in the Practice Direction;
- develop further constructive links with all those who have a stake and an interest in our work.

Finally, I should like to pay tribute to the work of the two former regional chairmen, Prof Cooper and Judge Wright. Prof. Cooper will be working as the Senior President's Training Adviser, but still giving one day a week to the TSMH, so his expertise will continue to be available. Judge Wright is to become the Principal Salaried Judge, now with a national remit.

I look forward to working with everyone involved in our jurisdiction.

**Mark Hinchliffe**  
**Deputy Chamber President (Mental Health)**