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05/01/24

## LAPG Member Update

Issue 1 of 2024

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### Renew your organisation's LAPG membership for 2024

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- High-Cost Family virtual clinic
- Immigration providers south west support directory
- Qualified Legal Representative: claiming guidance

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## Renew your organisation's LAPG membership for 2024

Happy New Year legal aid champions! We hope you managed to take a break over the last week or two (we know many of you didn't) and are looking forward to

2024.

The start of a new year is a time of reflection for many as we look back on the previous year and wonder what is in store for the year ahead. We know that for many legal aid practitioners any period of reflection is often dominated by thoughts on how much longer you can sustain legal aid work in such challenging circumstances. After the disruption and chaos of the pandemic, the cost of living crisis heaped yet more pressure on legal aid providers and we have nothing but admiration for those of you who have managed to maintain your commitment to publicly-funded work. In the absence of any significant improvements on offer from the MOJ in recent years it seems to us that the only thing holding the legal aid scheme together (and much of the wider justice system) is your tenacity and dogged determination to do right by your clients.

Will 2024 bring better fortunes for legal aid lawyers and the many thousands of clients who cannot get the legal help they so desperately need? The Law Society's JR might lead to a more rosy 2024 for crime practitioners. For civil practitioners, March will see the MOJ publish the outcome of the Review of Civil Legal Aid. LAPG worked tirelessly in 2023 to improve the Review and convince the MOJ to concentrate on the issues that really matter – increasing fees to make legal aid work viable and give you the resources you need to recruit, retain and support your teams. There are also potential improvements this year on contracting, tendering and, just possibly, means-testing and IT – all issues that have a direct impact on how you do your jobs and help your clients.

Oh, and there might be something called a General Election too.

We are incredibly proud of the work of our members. From the life-changing results you achieve at the coalface every day, to the input you provide on policy work and campaigning, it is a privilege to work with so many incredible social justice champions. As a membership organisation, we rely heavily on your support to carry out our activities – consultations, training courses, member updates, conferences, the LALYs, political influencing – all designed to improve the legal aid scheme and increase access to justice. Thank you to the many firms and not-for-profits which have already renewed their membership for 2024. If you're yet to renew, [please do visit our website](#) where you can complete the online renewal process.

Many thanks,

Team LAPG

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**Civil Legal Aid News**

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## Standard Civil Contract 2018 - Immigration & Asylum changes

The LAA has published an update to the 2018 Standard Civil Contract Immigration and Asylum category specific rules which came into effect from 1 January 2024. These amendments have been consulted on and relate to Illegal Migration Act cases.

[You can find the changes in the table of amendments here.](#)

## High-Cost Family virtual clinic

Book an online face-to-face, 20-minute appointment with experienced caseworkers at the LAA High-Cost Family (HCF) virtual clinic on 24 January 2024 as part of the #HelpUsSayYes campaign. Providers can discuss ongoing case specific issues with the LAA. Registrations are limited and the deadline for signing up is Wednesday 17 January 2024.

[Book an appointment > >](#)

## Immigration providers south west support directory

The LAA has updated the [list of providers](#) available to offer remote assistance to immigration clients in the south west of England.

We would be very interested in any member feedback about the operation of this directory by the LAA. If you have any views, or have experience of using the directory to, for example, try to make a referral, [please contact us](#).

## Qualified Legal Representative: claiming guidance

The LAA has published guidance when claiming for work undertaken under the Prohibition of Cross-Examination In Person Qualified Legal Representative (QLR) Scheme [which can be found here](#).



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### [Apply for a Very High Cost Case \(VHCC\) contract](#)

The LAA has advised that as of 2 January 2024 firms who hold a Standard Crime Contract will no longer need to demonstrate they meet the VHCC accreditation requirements. Firms who do not hold a Standard Crime Contract will need to demonstrate they meet the accreditation requirements.

[You can find the news story here with relevant guidance.](#)



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## Sector News & Events

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### [Civil Justice Council consultation on mental capacity](#)

The CJC wants your views on procedures for Determining Mental Capacity in civil proceedings.

The CJC Working Group on mental capacity has been looking at how the Civil Courts approach determining mental capacity. They have looked at the procedure and common practice in use for determining whether a party lacks capacity to conduct proceedings (i.e. is a protected party within the meaning of Part 21 CPR). It has made recommendations to improve rules, practice directions, and other matters relating to this complex area.

The working group has now launched a public consultation, which will run for 3 months until **17 March 2024 at 23:59**.

[You can read the full consultation paper here along with information on how to respond.](#)



## Scarcity and Fairness in 2024 UK: What does it mean for Access to Justice?

A one-day conference examining the implications of scarcity and fairness for those seeking access to justice.

Delegates are invited from front line advice services, funders, policy makers and close stakeholders and allies, as well as those interested in issues related to fairness and distribution of resources. This is an in-person conference at a Central London location.

### Speakers include:

- Sir Ernest Ryder (Keynote)
- Professor Naomi Creutzfeldt, University of Kent
- Lu Thomas- Gypsy and Traveller Movement Wales
- Professor Eldar Shafr- Blatnavnik School of Government, Oxford University
- Will Snell, The Fairness Foundation

More to be confirmed closer to the time.

[More details and booking process here](#)

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## LAPG News & Events

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### LAPG training courses

#### *Supervision Courses*

Book your place on any of 2024 Supervision Courses below:

[18<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2024](#)

[7<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2024](#)

[23<sup>RD</sup> APRIL 2024](#)

[2<sup>ND</sup> MAY 2024](#)

[8<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2024](#)

[12 NOVEMBER 2024](#)



Designed for new LAA Supervisors or those wishing to refresh their supervisory skills, our

course helps you meet a key component in securing and then effectively operating your legal aid contract and meeting the LAA's supervisor standards. We again welcome Matt Howgate and Vicky Ling as our tutors for this course. You will receive practical help filling out supervisor forms, learn how to conduct file reviews and how to keep up to date with LAA changes.

LAPG members receive a £40 discount on the course fee, bringing it down from £250 to £210 for the day. Book multiple delegates from your organisation and receive an additional 10% discount.

We have reformatted the course so that we are covering all of the same content across one day rather than two days. The content in this course is relevant for both crime and civil practitioners.

If you would like to know more about this course, or to reserve your place, contact [Andrea Shumaker](#).

### ***Online Introduction to Civil Legal Aid Course***

The Civil Legal Aid scheme is incredibly complex and the consequences of getting something wrong can be damaging to a client's case or financially damaging to the organisation doing the work – sometimes both. We have therefore developed the first module in a series which provides a general introduction to the civil legal aid scheme aimed at trainees, paralegals, junior lawyers and those that wish to refresh their knowledge having worked in the sector for some time.

We have moved this online module onto a new training platform, Thinkific! This new platform allows for growth and development of the course and a better overall experience for the user. The same information is covered and it is still entirely self-paced, you will still receive access to the course for 12 months.

We now offer this course in written and video versions! Once you are enrolled on the course you will have the option to read through the material yourself or watch a video! You can mix and match how you learn to complete the course in a way that best suits your learning style and time constraints. All the video and written content are available on the Thinkific platform and you will have full access to both versions.

If you would like to subscribe for just £99 please

click [here](#). If you have any issues or require an invoice please email [Andrea Shumaker](#). We offer three discount codes, JFF, for Justice First Fellows, JFFO, for Just First Fellowship Host Organisation employees, and multiple-tickets, to be used when subscribing more than one participant on the course.

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Take care one and all.

Chris Minnoch, CEO [@ChrisLAPG](#)

Follow LAPG on Twitter [@WeAreLAPG](#)  
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05/01/24



[Subscribe to our courses](#)

Would you like to contribute to our Member Updates and share news and information with other members? If so, just email us and we can discuss how you can best contribute.

Thank you for being brave enough to be part of the LAPG community!

A dark blue rounded rectangle containing the text "LEGAL AID LAWYER OF THE YEAR AWARDS" in white, bold, sans-serif font, stacked in four lines.

**LEGAL AID  
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OF THE YEAR AWARDS**



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