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Issue 10 of 2023

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Civil Legal Aid News

HLPAS and Housing & Debt Tenders in 11 Designated Areas

[On 11 April the LAA launched a further tender](#) for contracts to deliver HLPAS and mainstream Housing & Debt contract work in 11 scheme areas. This follows two previous unsuccessful tender rounds which received no compliant bids in those areas.

HLPAS contract work will allow providers to deliver early legal advice in social welfare law alongside the in-court duty scheme (previously HPCDS). The HLPAS tender is the opportunity to deliver this new service.

[See details of the tender process here](#)

The HLPAS areas covered under this process are:

- Birkenhead
- Cheltenham, Gloucester
- Crewe
- Dartford
- Hull
- Leicester
- Liverpool
- Salisbury, Swindon
- Southampton
- Telford
- Wigan

The deadline for submitting tenders for this procurement process is **12pm on 28 April 2023**.

Applicants who have already tendered to deliver HLPAS Contract Work do not need to tender through this procurement process unless they wish to bid to deliver HLPAS, and, where relevant, Housing and Debt Contract Work in the areas covered by this procurement process.



HPCDS Fee Changes

The LAA has emailed us to announce that they are extending the provisions in the contract that allow providers to claim for two clients where there has been a nil-session and to claim the HPCDS fee in addition to a Legal Help fee where a case moves on to Legal Help. These changes were due to end on 30th April 2023 and have been extended to 31st August 2023.

The amended paragraphs are 10.20 and 10.24.

[The revised contract can be found here](#)

Civil Legal Aid Means Testing Calculator

There is a recent release updating information on how to work out financial eligibility for legal aid: income and capital means testing, passporting and the civil legal aid calculator.

The link is [here](#).

New Civil Eligibility Calculator Tool

[The LAA has published news](#) on progress of the new online civil financial eligibility calculator. The news item notes that 'the working name for the new tool is 'Check if your client qualifies for legal aid' (CCQ). It is designed to be used when providing civil legal representation or advice to people with legal problems'.

The LAA is also expanding the pool of providers testing the new service as it develops. If you want to be involved in this pilot to help with the development work register your interest using the link provided above.

Possible changes to the First-tier Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) Rules and the Upper Tribunal Rules arising from Nationality and Borders Act 2022

The Tribunal Procedure Committee's reply to possible changes to the First-tier Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) Rules and the Upper Tribunal Rules arising from Nationality and Borders Act 2022 was published on 12 April.

[Please see here for further details](#)

Civil Processing Dates

There has been another update and [civil processing dates are here](#).

Civil Consultations

Revising the ‘Help with Fees’ remission scheme: a series of reforms to make the Help with Fees scheme more generous, target financial assistance at those most in need, whilst providing value for money for the taxpayer – closes 30 May 2023.

Supporting earlier resolution of private family law arrangements: particularly interested to hear from organisations representing separating families, family justice professionals, mediation service providers and other dispute resolution service providers – closes 15 June 2023.

You can find all current and closed consultations at <https://consult.justice.gov.uk>

Criminal Legal Aid News

The Secret Barrister lets rip on Twitter

The Secret Barrister published an excoriating Tweet in response to the Labour party’s poster attacking Sunak on sentencing – that poster has attracted a lot of controversy especially for its perceived inaccuracies. For a Guardian article with more information, [see here](#).

“Rishi Sunak believes that the criminal justice system is not a priority. He believes that it can be run by [his incompetent mates on bargain basement rates](#). He believes that the fact [it takes victims of serious sexual violence the best part of a decade to have their trial](#), does not demand urgent action. He believes in his Justice Secretary’s plans to maintain a record backlog in the courts – despite [his own MPs being among those condemning Raab’s “meagre” efforts](#). He believes that a system where serious trials are cancelled every single day due to a chronic shortage of courts ([because they’ve been sold off](#)), judges ([because they haven’t been recruited](#)) and criminal lawyers ([because they’ve been forced out](#)) does not need any more courts, judges or lawyers. He believes that it is acceptable for victims, witnesses, defendants and jurors to spend



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Agency

days [shivering](#) in [collapsing](#), [leaking](#) courts where [broken toilets spew sewage](#) and there is [nowhere to get a glass of water](#). He believes that addressing the epidemic of [overcrowding, violence, self-harm and mental ill health](#) in our prisons is less important than [putting even more people into those conditions](#). He believes that the measure of success is [how long those people remain there](#), rather than whether the public is any safer upon their release.

He believes that if you are wrongly accused of a crime, you shouldn't be able to recoup your legal fees – meaning you could be [bankrupted for the crime of being innocent](#). And if you are wrongly convicted and spend years of your life in prison, Rishi Sunak does not believe that [you should be compensated](#).”

Digital Developments in Applying for Criminal Legal Aid

Following a meeting of the Crime Contract Consultative Group the LAA has sent out this information to share with members.

The LAA's current service contract for eForm applications ends in 2024. A new digital replacement service is being developed.

The new Criminal legal aid application service will replace the CRM 14 and 15 parts of the eForms service. Testing with a small group of providers and caseworkers will begin in summer 2023 on an early version of the service, which will cover new applications by defendants with:

- *A National Insurance Number, unless aged under 18*
- *A passported benefit, including Universal Credit*
- *No partner*

We plan to gradually sign up more providers as users while the service is being developed. Firms will be contacted to confirm when they can be brought on board.

It is expected that there will be a fully functional replacement for CRM 14s and 15s by early 2024.

[The gov.uk article](#) gives more detail. Members of the project team met representative bodies on 4 April and gave an overview of plans and demonstrated an early version of the service. The LAA welcome feedback on this development and would particularly like views on

how best they can keep providers updated on progress.

Please share your feedback with your representative body or send to LAApplyonboarding@justice.gov.uk, as per the article.

Common platform

The [Common Platform digital case management system](#) is now in use in Bournemouth Crown Court, Poole Magistrates' Court and Weymouth Magistrates' Court. We flag this up because it reminded us that at a recent meeting with the Shadow Lord Chancellor he was aware of concerns about the system. If you have any feedback you want to pass on to him please do contact him direct or email policy@lapg.co.uk and we can follow this up with him.

DSCC

At the most recent Crime Contract Consultative Group we were given a presentation about the DSCC covering performance, complaints and customer satisfaction entitled **Performance Update, February 2023**.

DSCC performance is considered 'green' and meeting Service Level Agreements, with one exception:

- 80.49% of calls answered within 30 seconds – exceeding target (80%)
- Average speed to answer 27 seconds or less – exceeding target (30 seconds)
- 94.84% calls answered by live operator – not meeting target (95%)
- 97.65% cases deployed within 5 minutes – exceeding target (95%)
- 99.37% cases deployed within 15 minutes – exceeding target (99%)

Please email policy@lapg.co.uk if you want to see the whole presentation – details of how to complain, number of complaints etc. We will email it to you.

Email address – criminal finance is now magistrates billing

Details are in the Criminal Legal Aid Manual – [see here](#).

Form for private prosecutors to apply for the costs of magistrates' and Crown Court cases

We can't imagine that many of our members will need to know this, but just in case the date of proceedings has been clarified on the PP1 claim form. [See here for further details.](#)

Legal Aid Scheme-Wide News

Minutes from Civil Contracts and Crime Contract Consultative Groups

The civil and criminal representative groups attend the Civil Contracts Consultative Group and the Crime Contract Consultative Group. [Minutes are published here.](#)



Changes to Provider Details

If changing bank account, setting up a new office or for other situations in which you need to notify the LAA of a relevant change, [information on how to do this is set out here.](#)

Sector News & Events

Save our Human Rights Act campaign

**THE HUMAN RIGHTS
ACT IS FOR EVERYONE**

LAPG has been attending regular meetings of this campaign. If you are interested in signing up to information about the government's various attacks on the Act or indeed in attending the online fortnightly meetings please contact Jun Pang: JunP@libertyhumanrights.org.uk

BIHR letter on section 3 of the Human Rights Act



The British Institute of Human Rights is concerned about the UK Government's attempts to undermine human rights protections by

weakening Section 3 of the Human Rights Act 1998 via the Bill of Rights Bill, the Illegal Migration Bill, and the Victims and Prisoners Bill. They are writing a letter to the JCHR to explain their concerns about this and to ask them to look out for similar provisions in future legislation and to raise the issue in Parliament.

If you have any questions or want to get involved in the work of the BIHR, please contact Louise McCormack: lmccormack@bihr.org.uk

The Supreme Court sitting in Manchester

[Blog](#)

Inside HMCTS

[See here](#) for a blog written by HMCTS.

Funding Gap in the Advice Sector – CJF report



The Community Justice Fund recently published its Funding Gap Report on the Free Legal Advice Sector 2023-24. This report and figures are based on conversation with Community Justice Fund grantees and are meant to give a broad indication of the issues faced by advice services at the frontline.

The report gives voice to frontline experiences demonstrating that the free legal advice sector is facing a £30million funding gap with over 40,000 people who are most impacted by the cost of living crisis potentially going without the advice and assistance they need.

In addition to strengthening their understanding about the increased impact that the cost of living crisis is having on advice organisations, the report also highlights their key learning around the relationship between long-term core costs funding and addressing the workforce wellbeing and retention issues facing the frontline.

[You can access the full report here](#)

They'd be really interested to hear your thoughts on the report, including any ideas on how they could share the findings and key messages to

further make the case for advice. If you're interested in sharing the report yourself, please feel free to do so, they have some key messages they're happy to share to help with promotion.

For further information, contact Emmeline Endresen, Senior Officer, The Network for Justice on:

contact@nfj.org.uk

PLP Events

PLP courses and conferences always look interesting, for example an all-day course on Public Law and the EU with stellar speakers on 24 April.

[See details here](#)



Public
Law
Project

Public Interest Law Centre Crowdfunding – LAA discrimination against pensioners

In 2022 Lynn (not her real name), aged 68, was the victim of a violent crime. She sought support, but instead of being helped she was sexually assaulted by a man who took advantage of his public position.

Lynn wants justice. Based solely on income from her State Pension and Housing Benefit, Lynn has been found ineligible for legal aid. Rather than giving up, she has decided to challenge the Legal Aid Agency head on and ensure that others in her situation are not excluded from accessing justice.

More details on the case and how to donate [are to be found here](#).



Law Society Gazette

This is just a reminder that if you have not been receiving the Gazette and wondered why not, it



went digital over a year ago. If you want a daily update or just the weekly magazine [you can sign up here](#). Monidipa Fouzder covers a lot of the legal aid news and does it very well.

LAPG News and Events

Less than a week to the LALY23 deadline!

A reminder that the deadline to submit your nomination is **23:59 on Monday, 24 April**, so now is the time to reach out to colleagues to support your nomination. We've simplified the process this year, with no more than 10 pages of supporting information to be included with nominations. It's quality over quantity when it comes to demonstrating the incredible impact of legal aid practitioners.



Some handy LALY23 links for you:

To submit a nomination:

<https://lapg.co.uk/lalys/laly-nomination/>

Donate to support the Friends of LALY23 crowdfunding for the Newcomer award:

<https://lapg.co.uk/laly-crowdfunding>

(And a HUGE Thank You! to everyone who has donated already. We've hit our initial target and are working towards our 'stretch' target.)

Join us on 12 July 2023 to celebrate the finalists and winners:

<https://lapg.co.uk/laly-tickets>

For all the latest news on the LALYs follow @LALYawards and @WeAreLegalAid

LAPG Website – members' section

Every member who receives this Update should now have access to the members' section of the



LAPG website. The section contains training offers, summaries of member updates (broken down by subject area), discussion threads and media work. There are also a number of blogs by members of staff about what they do along with e.g. a blog by Paul Seddon on judicial review costs. Matt Howgate's blog about how organisations have to subsidise legal aid work can be found there now.

If you want to write a blog – on legal aid, the law more widely or even just on an issue that LAPG members might be interested in reading, please email Anna, our Operations Officer: anna.neira.quesada@lapg.co.uk

LAPG Training Courses – New course for Managers; Supervision; Online Intro Modules



'Management Skills for Private Practice' Training Modules

In 2014 LAPG was awarded a government grant to develop a management training programme for legal aid law firms. Successfully piloted in 2015, the Certificate in Practice Management combined face-to-face training with online learning and materials to provide an accessible and affordable management training programme for busy lawyers and practice managers.

We have now completely re-designed the programme and this year sees the launch of our Management Skills for Private Practice training modules. You can take any number of modules to suit your needs. If you would like to learn more or book an individual session please click [here](#). Complete them all and you'll be awarded the LAPG Certificate in Private Practice Management. 90% of employers surveyed said they'd noticed increased knowledge, skills and confidence in the staff that had attended the full programme.

The modules are designed around the Law Society LEXCEL standard, the Specialist Quality Mark and the SRA competence framework:

1. [Finance & Resource Management](#) - 28th September
2. [Business Planning & Risk Management](#) - 19th October
3. [Managing People](#) - 9th November
4. [EDI, Policies & Compliance](#) - 30th November
5. [Marketing & Communications](#) - 14th December, Half-Day Session (AM)
6. [Managing a Legal Aid Contract](#) - 14th December, Half-Day Session (PM)

You can book any of the individual sessions above by clicking on them. You can book the entire course [here](#). If you would like to take multiple sessions, but not the entire course, please contact [Andrea](#). For each additional session you book, you receive a 10% discount.

The course trainers include Vicky Ling, Matt Howgate and other legal aid sector experts. Phaniel Mutumburi and Themer Silmane will join us for sessions 4 and 5 respectively. Themer will discuss different approaches to communication with a focus on social media and Phaniel Mutumburi will focus on the importance of diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

We are able to heavily discount this course thanks to the generous support of The Legal Education Foundation and the Community Justice Fund. Our main tutors, Matt Howgate and Vicky Ling, bring invaluable knowledge gained through many years of work in the sector and consultancy. Matt and Vicky will:

- Show you how to set meaningful organisational and operational objectives by using a SWOT analysis
- Help you carry out effective financial planning and analysis by focusing on understanding resource, income, budgeting, forecasting, resource and variance analysis
- Give you the tools to manage all aspects of people management from recruitment to appraisal
- Discuss SQM and Lexcel as well as policies to ensure compliance with SRA, OISC, Legal Aid and regulatory requirements including how to avoid audit issues and contract notices
- Create communication strategies

We house this course on our new learning

platform Thinkific! It is a wonderful way to engage in our courses, save time and have everything you need all in one place rather than sifting through your emails trying to find materials and zoom links. This platform is easy to use and gives us the opportunity to update our courses to be more effective for our participants.

A recent graduate of the 2021 CPM course said:

"I would highly recommend the LAPG Certificate in Practice Management course for all partners and managers in legal aid firms. It is the only law management course I know of aimed exclusively at helping legal aid firms to manage their businesses – good management is so essential for delivering access to justice to all. The course is full of practical tips and over 5 sessions gives you get a very good overview of all the key aspects of running a legal aid practice."

Managing Partner of a large legal aid firm

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

Supervision Courses

We have confirmed the dates for our 2023 training programme, with Supervision Courses scheduled for 21st April (NEW DATE), 17th May, 5th July, 26th September and 22nd November, you can book your place on any of the remaining 2023 training dates below:

21st APRIL 2023 (NEW – date added due to latest LAA civil tender plans)

17TH MAY 2023

5TH JULY 2023

26TH SEPTEMBER 2023

22ND NOVEMBER 2023

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.

Online Introduction to Management Course

We are currently working on a new and exciting training course, an online module similar to our Introduction to Civil Legal Aid Course, all about management. This course will offer an introductory look into management and will be entirely self-paced!

We are soft launching this course shortly and it will be made widely available in the coming months! If you are interested in partaking or getting more information please contact [Thomas Rigard-Asquith](#).

I hope you all managed to take a break over the Easter period to relax and recharge your batteries.

We're really excited about the LALY nomination deadline next Monday and seeing this year's crop of incredible, inspiring, life-changing accounts of the work of legal aid lawyers and support staff. If you have any questions about the LALY nomination process, please let me know.

Take care one and all,

Chris Minnoch, CEO [@ChrisLAPG](#)

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19/04/23



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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!

LEGAL AID LAWYER OF THE YEAR AWARDS



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