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22/01/25

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Issue 2 of 2025

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Criminal Legal Aid News

Crime Contract verification deadline approaches

A further reminder that the deadline for submitting compliant verification information for those who successfully tendered in Stage 1 of the crime contract procurement process is **11:59pm on 31 January 2025**.



[You can find the LAA news story here.](#)

Extension of Deborah Taylor's term as Chair of the Criminal Legal Aid Advisory Board

The Lord Chancellor has extended the appointment of Deborah Taylor as the Chair of the Criminal Legal Aid Advisory Board (CLAAB) for an additional 12 months from January 2025.

[Read more here.](#)

Crime processing dates

[Check timescales](#) for the Legal Aid Agency (LAA) to process your work (eg prior authority application, graduated fee claims).

Duty solicitors: rotas, information and guidance

Duty solicitors' rotas, lists, standard crime contract 2022 and contact details [are found here](#).

Civil Legal Aid News

Civil processing dates

[Check timescales](#) for LAA to process your work (for example, civil applications and bills).



Legal Aid
Agency

Cross-Cutting News & Events

Directory of providers

To view the latest version of the Directory see here:

[Information about legal aid providers by category of law.](#)

Please do check the information listed about your organisation. During a recent conversation with a member firm it transpired that the Directory contained incomplete information about their contracts, which means that clients searching for support through the Find a Legal Advisor website would not be able to access accurate information about the firm.



Legal Aid
Agency

LAPG Membership – Renew for 2025

A little nudge from the team here about renewing your membership for 2025. Membership for those working in organisations with legal aid contracts is via the organisation rather than the individual. This means that everyone in the firm or NFP with a contract becomes a member and can benefit from our services and support. However we also have membership options for organisations interested in legal aid that do not have a contract and for individuals such as barristers who carry out publicly-funded work.

The membership period runs from 1 January to 31 December each year and enables legal aid practitioners to:

- Receive regular email updates containing up-to-date information about legal aid policy, news and events



- Access our training courses and events such as our annual conference at significantly discounted rates
- Raise Member Queries to obtain our support and guidance on legal aid contracting issues (which can include working with the LAA to find solutions)
- Join our Advisory Committee to support a wide range of policy, training and influencing activities
- Access the members-only area of our website, which allows practitioners to view our archive of legal aid resources and connect with others in the field
- Contribute to our policy work, consultations, research and campaigns to improve the legal aid system and widen access to justice
- Post vacancies on our website and receive support to publicise opportunities via our social media channels
- Participate in our community-building activities, such as networking activities and the quite wonderful Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards

If you're yet to renew, [please do visit our website](#) where you can complete the online renewal process. If you have any questions about membership, please get in touch with our membership guru, [Anna Neira Quesada](#).

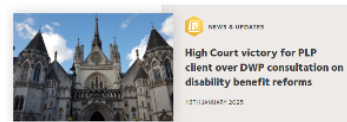
If you would like to talk to us about how you can maximise the benefits of LAPG membership, please do get in touch.

Sector News & Events

[Call for evidence on the digital reform of tribunals and addressing disadvantage](#)

The Administrative Justice Council (AJC) is calling for evidence on the [impact of digital reform of tribunals on users](#) and [addressing disadvantage in the administrative justice system](#).

The AJC has said that they are particularly interested in hearing about examples of challenges faced by advisors and clients, areas of best practice to help people through the system and



suggestions for where improvements could be made to assist participants in the administrative justice system.

Section 1 is to collect evidence on the impact on users of digital reform in tribunals and Section 2 is to collect evidence on the barriers to accessing administrative justice arising from personal circumstances or personal characteristics of people seeking justice. Respondents are free to only answer sections/questions they feel most relevant to them.

The call will run until Monday 10 February at 5pm.

<https://www.judiciary.uk/call-for-evidence-on-the-digital-reform-of-tribunals-and-addressing-disadvantage/>

If you wish to contribute to our response, please contact our Director of Legal Aid Policy, [Kate Pasfield](#).

Call for evidence on the Independent Review of the Criminal Courts

Former President of the Queen's Bench Division, Sir Brian Leveson, has been appointed to carry out an independent review into the criminal courts. The Government has said the following in the call for evidence [which can be found here](#):

The purpose of this review is to produce options and recommendations for a) how the criminal courts could be reformed to ensure cases are dealt with proportionately, in light of the current pressures on the Crown Court; and b) how they could operate as efficiently as possible. This should include consideration of the processes of partner agencies where they impact the criminal courts. The review should lead to a more efficient criminal court system and improved timeliness for victims, witnesses and defendants, without jeopardising the requirement for a fair trial for all involved.

If you would like to feed into the LAPG response please get in touch with Kate Pasfield, details above.

High Court victory for PLP client over unfair DWP consultation

Congratulations to our friends at the Public Law Project on this win in the High Court for their client. The High Court has ruled that the

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) acted unlawfully by presenting benefit assessment reforms as a way to support disabled people into work, without making clear that cost savings was a “primary rationale” for the proposals.

The judge also found that the consultation failed to explain that planned reforms would lead to **424,000 disabled people** receiving lower benefit rates and that many would be worse off by at least **£416.19 per month**.

[You can read more about the case and the full judgement here.](#)

LAPG News & Events

LAPG research project – non-chargeable time in legal aid work – PARTICIPANTS NEEDED



We are still on the look-out for participants for our non-chargeable time research project.

As reported in previous updates, LAPG is conducting a research project in an effort to capture the amount of time spent on non-chargeable tasks generated by undertaking casework and operating under a legal aid contract – so both casework and non-casework tasks. These tasks can be many and varied taking differing amounts of time. Some are conducted daily, some weekly and others less frequently, such as file reviews and audits.

The overarching aim of the project is to compile robust empirical data on hidden or ‘non-chargeable’ costs of doing legal aid work, in order to influence policy in relation to legal aid funding and the operation of the scheme. We plan to share an anonymised analysis of the data that we capture with the MoJ and the LAA in order to demonstrate the time that legal aid providers spend on work that they cannot charge for. We have three research objectives:

1. Identify and quantify ‘hidden’ but unavoidable costs associated with legal aid contracts.
2. Analyse what tasks are intrinsically linked to the proper management of casework but are

not currently claimable time in the Cost Assessment Guidance and Criminal Bills Assessment Manual.

3. Evaluate the complexity of the funding scheme and contractual framework and identify elements that may create complexity without adequate justification. This may include identifying of duplication of tasks required by legal aid contracts and regulatory or quality assurance requirements.

Having completed the pilot phase, we are now recruiting participants for the main phase of the research project and a number organisations have signed up and started recording their non-chargeable time for us. But, we still need a larger pool of legal aid providers to join our project.

We need to ensure that we have as wide a variety of types of providers as possible, so large, medium and small firms and not-for-profits, covering all areas of legal aid practice, including mixed practices who also carry out privately funded work.

Please get in touch with our Head of Learning and Development **Andrea Shumaker** (Andrea.Shumaker@lapg.co.uk) if you want to discuss getting involved. We really do need your help to try to tackle the enormous complexity, unpaid and wasted time associated with legal aid work.

[New Toolkit - Introduction to Managing Family and Civil Legal Aid Contracts](#)

This new Toolkit draws together key information to enable practices to understand their legal aid contract. Particularly useful for those new to delivering legal aid, it links to more detailed sources from the LAA, LAPG and others. Designed as a comprehensive resource for the people in your organisation responsible for day to day management of your legal aid contract.

[Subscribe to the toolkit here](#)

This annual subscription will keep you up to date and regularly informed of all key changes.

LAPG Members - **£100** per annum

Non-members of LAPG - **£400** per annum

Included in your purchase is the Toolkit itself as

well as access to a Community Board.

The Toolkit has seven main headings:

- Some Key Changes Between the 2018 Civil Contract and the 2024 Civil Contract
- Contracts Overview
- Key Issues Under the Standard Civil Contract 2024
- Managing Casework
- Managing Billing
- Managing Quality & Compliance
- Sources of Support

The Community Board notifies subscribers of all official amendments/additions to the contract and supporting documents. Updates will be incorporated into the Toolkit, which will be kept under constant review. The Community Board is a peer network which enables subscribers to interact with others managing contracts.

Hosted on our learning platform, Thinkific, the Toolkit is an intuitive and easily navigable resource.

Contributors

Vicky Ling has spent her career in the advice and legal sector and has worked with a wide range of solicitors' firms and not for profit legal practices. She is a Chartered Quality Professional and provides expert consultancy support in relation to practice management and legal aid service delivery issues and has written extensively on these topics. She edits the LAG Legal Aid Handbook.

Matthew Howgate is an Organisation Development Consultant and Director of the LAPG Management & Leadership Hub. He started his career as a legal aid solicitor and has spent the last 15 years working as a consultant across the legal aid and advice sectors.

Training courses

****New Training: People Management - Building & Managing Your Team****

Delivered by experienced organisational development consultants Vicky Ling and Matt Howgate, this two-day online course focuses on the key management skills needed to build, strengthen and manage teams while enhancing

their performance. Each session runs online from 10am to 4pm with breaks and is accompanied by a full set of written materials. This course is perfectly pitched at new managers (and potential managers) but is a great reminder session for those who have been managing for some time.

Session 1 took place on the 21st of January 2025, with Session 2 scheduled for the 25th of February.

Session 1: Building Your Team

With reference to SRA, legal aid, Lexcel and SQM requirements, participants will understand how to deliver effective recruitment, induction and probation, training and development, delegation, creating healthy workplaces and how to manage people exiting the firm.

Session 2: Managing Your Team

With reference to SRA, legal aid, Lexcel and SQM requirements, participants will understand how to deliver effective supervision; performance management, giving feedback, dealing with bullying and inappropriate behaviour, whistleblowing and handling grievances and disciplinary matters.

LAPG members receive a £80 discount on the course fee, bringing it down from £500 to £420. Please click [here](#) to book your place now! 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.

*Must be a current host organisation. Current host organisations are eligible for the discount during the calendar year their fellow is placed with them.

We'll be looking to run a second iteration of the course later in 2025 so if you are interesting and want to join the waiting list please contact [Andrea Shumaker](#).

Supervision Courses

We have confirmed the dates for our 2025 Supervision Courses scheduled for 16th January, 13th March, 15th May, 10th July, 18th September and 25th November. You can book your place on

any of the remaining 2025 training dates below:

[16TH JANUARY 2025](#)

[13TH MARCH 2025](#)

[15TH MAY 2025](#)

[10TH JULY 2025](#)

[18TH SEPTEMBER 2025](#)

[25TH NOVEMBER 2025](#)

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.

A relatively quiet week or so in the world of legal aid, but that might be because a certain fees consultation will be launched in a couple of days...

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[#WeAreLegalAid](#)
22/01/25

Take care one and all,

Chris Minnoch, CEO [@ChrisLAPG](#)



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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!



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