



24/08/23

## LAPG Member Update

Issue 22 of 2023

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## Civil Legal Aid News

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### Online eligibility calculator is now available

The new financial eligibility tool is called 'check if your client qualifies for legal aid' (CCQ). [See here for information.](#)

The CCQ tool can be used to perform a means calculation for both:

- certificated (licensed) legal work
- controlled work (legal help and family mediation)

To access the calculator - [Check if your client qualifies for legal aid](#)

Once you have had a chance to use the CCQ tool please do [send us any feedback](#) so that we can suggest any improvements to the LAA.

### Reminder: housing and debt tender in Walsall deadline is 5pm on 4 September 2023

We have put this in an earlier Update but just adding a reminder in view of the closing date of 4 September. [See details here.](#)



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## Criminal Legal Aid News

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### Updated Contract Schedules from 1 October 2023

The current schedules for the Standard Crime Contract 2022 end on 30 September 2023. New criminal contract schedules begin on 1 October 2023 and will run for 24 months until 30 September 2025. You will be able to view schedules in Contracted Work and Administration (CWA) from no later than 31 August 2023.



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[More information is here.](#)

### Crown Court Survey - Litigators' Graduated Fee Scheme: What factors impact volume of work required on a case?

This Ministry of Justice survey is aimed at understanding the factors which increase the volume of work for litigators in Crown Court cases, and the results will inform the work being carried out by the MoJ, The Law Society and other crime representative groups to reform the Litigators Crown Court fee scheme.

It would be great if as much information as possible is provided if they are to design a scheme that fairly reflects the work that practitioners undertake in these cases:

[SurveyMonkey Powered Online Survey](#)

The survey will be open until mid-September.

### When will the online eligibility calculator be available for crime cases?

The GOV.UK [press release here](#) which announced that the civil online eligibility calculator was now live states:

“We are in the early stages of developing a similar eligibility tool for criminal legal aid and will keep you updated on progress.”

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## Legal Aid Scheme Wide News

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### Updates to the Civil Finance Electronic Handbook and Escape Case Electronic Handbook

The LAA has updated the Civil Finance Electronic Handbook and the Escape Case Electronic Handbook. The LAA inform us that the main changes are as follows:

- “Overnight Accommodation Changes: The rates for overnight accommodation have been increased.
- Reject Guidance: In the EC handbook we have made changes to reflect the finalised approach in relation to rejects and assessments. There is a new table with details on decisions to make and the



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handbook has been updated at different points to reflect the guidance.

- Revocation Guidance: Added a reminder in the finance handbook that claims on revoked certificates must be submitted within 6 years
- Enhancement: Updated the finance handbook to confirm that providers can only claim panel membership when they are a panel member and removed the distinction for children panel members.
- FAS: Added a little clarity on final hearings and some of the new hearings.
- Booking Fees: We have removed reference to booking fees being administrative costs and therefore irrecoverable. Any claim for booking fees would be subject to a reasonableness assessment. A paragraph above referring to 4.29 of the contract reinforces that providers should be justifying disbursements.
- Cancellation Fees: Provided confirmation that the rules on cancellation fees apply equally to appointments and hearings
- Independent Social Workers: Added the new rate.
- Interpreters: Updated guidance on interpreters claiming above codified rate
- Refunds: Additional guidance added where change is required to payee.”

The LAA plans to publish the updated handbooks towards the end of the month/early September.

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## Sector News & Events

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### [Open Justice Consultation \(Ministry of Justice\)](#)

We have referred in various Updates to the [Open Justice consultation](#) which has a deadline for responses of 11.59pm on 7<sup>th</sup> September.

The consultation is quite short (under 40 pages) but there are 65 questions. It is not a brilliantly worded consultation but there are a number of questions which legal aid practitioners would be interested in, particularly for those supporting clients whose cases involve very personal issues. There is a section on Single Justice Procedure and transparency.

We will respond to some of the questions. If you



are thinking of responding and want a Word version of the questions please email [policy@lapg.co.uk](mailto:policy@lapg.co.uk) and we will send it to you. Please also contact us if you would like to feed your views into the LAPG response.

A lot of interesting work has been carried out over the years on this issue, not just by the Justice Committee but also [Transform Justice](#) and [Open Justice](#).

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### Civil Justice Council – report on Pre-Action Protocols



The Civil Justice Council has published its final report on Pre-Action Protocols, following its Interim Report and consultation.

You can read the [announcement and Final Report here](#).

Details of the working group, consultation responses, and the Interim Report can be found on the [CJC's webpages here](#).

It is called 'Final Report – Part 1'. Why?

'Following the conclusion of the consultation period, the Council decided to bifurcate the process for concluding its review. The first phase (this report) would be dedicated to examining the role of PAPs in the civil justice system, and in particular the potential benefits of digitalising pre-action processes, and the place and content of the Practice Direction on Pre-action Conduct. The second phase, which is still to come, would be focused on potential reforms to litigation specific PAPs and/or the creation of new litigation specific PAPs.'

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### PHD survey – wellbeing – call for participants



Lucinda Soon, a doctoral researcher in organisational psychology at Birkbeck, University of London, has contacted us to ask for legal aid lawyers to participate in a wellbeing survey. Her research focuses on the well-being of lawyers, accounting for the different contexts in which lawyers work. She is currently conducting the second study of her PhD which is looking at

understanding what is important to lawyers working in two distinct contexts in England and Wales: large commercial law firm practice and legal aid practice. Her study aims to identify the differences and commonalities between these two groups of lawyers in terms of what they value about their work and their work environment.

She has so far reached the required number of participants for her large commercial law firm group; however, she would like to interview more legal aid lawyers. She has interviewed 16 legal aid lawyers and would like to interview a total of 25. She emailed to ask:

‘I wondered if you might be able to help circulate my call for participants to your network? Your help would be gratefully received and all participants will receive a copy of the findings following my data analysis. If you are able to share the study, the link below contains more details and the form for participants to register:

[www.tinyurl.com/wellbeinginlaw](http://www.tinyurl.com/wellbeinginlaw)’

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### **Walk the Thames – Saturday October 14<sup>th</sup> – and all legal walks**

Sir Peter Gross and The Rt. Hon. Lord Justice Haddon-Cave will be leading runners and walkers at Walk-the-Thames on Saturday October 14<sup>th</sup> to raise funds for London’s free legal advice charities.

All that is needed to register a team is for someone there to agree to be team organiser and complete the form on [the London Legal Support Trust web page](#).

[For a full list of nationwide walks see here](#)



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### **Access to Justice Foundation Grant Round**

This is not technically a legal aid issue but members who are eligible will be aware of a large grant funding round being administered by the Access to Justice Foundation. The Foundation publicity states that:

“We are pleased to announce that we are now accepting Expressions of Interest for Round One

The logo for The Access to Justice Foundation consists of the text 'THE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOUNDATION' in a blue, serif font, arranged in four lines. Below the text is a blue, horizontal swoosh that tapers at both ends.

of the Improving Lives Through Advice (ILTA) grant programme.

This will provide multi-year core costs grants to successful organisations over a period of five years. We expect to award grants in the region of £50,000 and £100,000 per annum. We welcome applications from *registered charities based in England who have a track record of delivering specialist legal advice in social welfare law.*

The Access to Justice Foundation held a Q&A session on the 14<sup>th</sup> August 2023 to answer questions about the application process. A recording of the event is [now available via the CJF website here](#). Please send in any queries you may have in advance to be answered within the session or added to the FAQs at [grants@atjf.org.uk](mailto:grants@atjf.org.uk).

The deadline for submitting applications for Round 1 will be no later than 4pm on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2023. Find out more about the eligibility criteria and application process [HERE](#)."

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### **ACL Legal Aid Group Autumn Seminar - The Horizon Leeds, Monday 11th September 2023**



This seminar presents the perfect opportunity for attendees to resolve some of their more problematic legal aid issues, hear from the experts and network with others in the legal aid field.

Senior Legal Aid Agency staff will be speaking and the ever-popular one-to-one drop-in session returns, for delegates to discuss in confidence those troublesome cases with the LAA finance and High Cost specialist fixers.

Confirmed speakers are:

- David Bailey-Vella - ACL Vice-Chair / prev Legal Costs Manager for Shelter - Housing - SiGs, potential interpartes recovery, FRC's and the future?
- Jamie Butt - Contract Manager & Civil Bill Reject Lead LAA - Civil Billing Rejections - Understanding Expectations
- Vicky Ling - on behalf of Resolution - New Legal Aid Contracts and Resolution issues
- Rob Damiao & Greg Cowley LAA - Post-assessment assurance activity

- Paul Seddon – ACL Legal Aid Group Co-Chair / Seddon Costs - Recovery of Inter Partes costs - what to consider and how to cope with CCMS
- Peter Reed - LAA - Merits and scope assessments
- Charlotte Flanders - Veritas Professional Legal Services - Billing - practical hints and tips
- David Crawford - LAA - CCMS Hints and Tips

Exclusive rate for LAPG members of £135 – places can be [booked here](#).

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### **Support Through Court's annual Family Law Breakfast event – 19 October 2023**



Our friends over at Support Through Court have been in touch about their upcoming event:

“We're delighted to announce this year's Family Law Breakfast!

*‘Litigation Lending Levelled? Funding in a post Simon v Simon world’*

Join Support Through Court on Thursday 19 October for our annual Family Law Breakfast, where our keynote speaker, Sir Andrew McFarlane, introduce an expert panel chaired by Sarah Higgins (Charles Russel Speechlys) to discuss litigation funding in the Family Courts.

This year's event will be kindly hosted by Charles Russell Speechlys at their London office from 8:30-10am, generously supported by our headline sponsor, OurFamilyWizard. A selection of breakfast refreshments will be available.

Every ticket sold will enable an individual to better access justice with the support of one of our volunteers and make a real difference to the lives of people going through court alone, so please pass on this message to anyone else who you think might be interested in this event.

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**[Get your tickets now!](#)**



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## LAPG News & Events

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### APPG on Access to Justice

As mentioned in Member Update 16 back in June, the APPG on Legal Aid recently merged with the APPG on Pro Bono and PLE to form the **APPG on Access to Justice**. LAPG provides the secretariat for the Group and together with Co-Chairs Karen Buck MP and Laura Farris MP, Ro Jana, LAPG's Head of Parliamentary Affairs, works with parliamentarians across the main parties to keep access to justice on their agenda.



The Group will be hosting meetings on a range of justice topics in Parliament and at party conferences in the months to come. It also circulates a monthly bulletin on all things Access to Justice related and a statistics bulletin for those looking for analysis of the LAA's quarterly figures.

For more information on the new APPG, [visit the website here](#) or contact [LAPG's Head of Parliamentary Affairs, Ro Jana](#) to be added to our mailing lists and kept informed of any upcoming APPG events.

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### LAPG Training Courses

#### **Management Skills for Private Practice (online, live training sessions)**

In 2015, LAPG launched the Certificate in Practice Management. 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. Complete them all and you will be awarded the LAPG Certificate in Private Practice Management. 90% of employers surveyed said they had 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](#) – 28<sup>th</sup> September
2. [Business Planning & Risk Management](#) – 19<sup>th</sup> October
3. [Managing People](#) – 9<sup>th</sup> November
4. [EDI, Policies & Compliance](#) – 30<sup>th</sup> November
5. [Marketing & Communications](#) – 14<sup>th</sup> December, Half-Day Session (AM)
6. [Managing a Legal Aid Contract](#) – 14<sup>th</sup> December, Half-Day Session (PM)

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. We are able to heavily discount this course thanks to the generous support of The Legal Education Foundation and the Community Justice Fund.

Our lead 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

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

**Legal Aid Supervision Course (online, live training**

session)

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. You can book your place on either of the remaining 2023 training dates below:

[26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023](#)

[22<sup>ND</sup> NOVEMBER 2023](#)

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.

The content in this course is relevant for both crime and civil practitioners.

### **Introduction to Civil Legal Aid (online, self-paced module)**

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 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 is available on the learning 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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We do hope you have all been able to get away for some R&R over the last couple of months. If anyone needs and deserves some time away to refresh and recharge, it is legal aid lawyers.

And a quick reminder that if you are looking for content from previous Member Updates, they are all stored in the Members' Area of our website. Everyone on this mailing list from a LAPG member organisation has access to the Members' Area. Our wonderful Operations Manager, Anna, has even taken the content of each Update and helpfully filed them by legal aid contract category. If you're not sure how to access the Members' Area of the website, [please get in touch with Anna](#) and she'll get you logged-in.

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!**

# LEGAL AID LAWYER OF THE YEAR AWARDS



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