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24/07/25

LAPG Member Update

Issue 26 of 2025

Welcome to our latest member update covering the latest situation with the LAA's cyber-security breach and the process for registering for the new LAA digital interface, plus other news and events from across the sector.

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Cross-Cutting Legal Aid News

LAA cyber-attack latest – pilot to test new digital interface

As noted in their email bulletin yesterday (23 July), the LAA will now be sending out bulletins on a weekly rather than daily basis. Look out for the next LAA missive next Wednesday. The LAA has noted that any critical updates will be sent out immediately and they will continue to update [the incident page on gov.uk](#).

Please also note that both the [guidance for the average weekly payment scheme](#) and the [FAQ page](#) were updated yesterday. Please make sure you keep a regular eye (Ed – what is an irregular eye?) on these web pages and guidance documents as they are routinely updated in response to the feedback that we and other rep bodies are providing.

The big news this week from Albert Square, sorry we mean Petty France, came on Tuesday, with the announcement that the LAA is launching a new *Sign in to Legal Aid Services* platform. This is replacing the portal you have all come to know and admire. The LAA noted that “this new secure platform will allow Legal Aid Providers to login, and - once they are available - to access Legal Aid Agency digital services such as CCMS. This is an important step in returning our services to secure operation”.

The LAA has created a pilot group of 70 providers to test the new interface. The short pilot will “focus on identifying and removing any anomalies with the onboarding process, ahead of undertaking the onboarding process for all users nationally. Further information regarding the national rollout for onboarding will be shared over the next fortnight”. Yes, that is a lot of onboarding. To improve security, users of the new system will be required to confirm their identity.

Crucially, the LAA has also noted that no actual LAA digital services will be available before September. The onboarding process will only give access to the portal – **it will not give access to CCMS or CWA** or any other services. They have also not said which services will be available after September, or the order in which they intend to restore services.

Please do continue to get in touch with kate.pasfield@lapg.co.uk if you have a query or just need support with the ongoing crisis.

Compensation claims against the LAA

The Law Society is advising providers to keep detailed records of all the extra administration involved in undertaking legal aid work because of the data breach. They are looking into the possibility of providers claiming compensation for this time from the LAA. We will update you on this when we hear further. We are also seeking advice on this, and have asked the MOJ to consider creating a compensation scheme that recognises the severe impact that this incident has had on providers. We do not believe that providers should have to maintain detailed records about the impact of the LAA withdrawing its digital systems on top of all the chaos, stress and additional admin that has been created by the LAA's contingency arrangements. However the MOJ has not formally responded on this point. We'll keep you posted.

Weekly payments and the escalation process to alter payment amounts

A number of members have been in touch to express concern that their weekly contingency payments are insufficient to cover their weekly outgoings. Many have specifically noted the impact this is having on managing their ability to make payments to experts. An ‘escalation process’ exists to alter your weekly payments to cover disbursements and other case-related costs and to increase or decrease your weekly payments. Please speak to your Contract Manager about this as they will explain the process and provide you with the forms to complete to claim a

different amount.

MOJ considering an Interest on Lawyer's Client Accounts Scheme – have your say.

Yesterday (23 July) you may have received an invitation from the MOJ (via a new address: additionalfunding@justice.gov.uk) to attend one of three upcoming roundtable meetings to share your views about the potential creation of an MOJ scheme to collect interest from lawyer client accounts. The MOJ notes that ILCA schemes are “operating in jurisdictions in the USA, Canada, and Australia. These schemes generate funding for various access to justice projects by capturing interest earned on pooled client funds held by law firms”.

If introduced, the MOJ would utilise the funds for “key areas” of the Legal Support Strategy “including access to justice”. [LAPG sits on an advisory group](#) trying to influence the shape, purpose and activities of the Legal Support Strategy. [The Terms of Reference](#) of the group can be found here. The Legal Support Strategy seeks to identify how to make the legal support system more effective, efficient, and sustainable. However it specifically excludes thinking about the legal aid scheme as this is the preserve of different policy teams within the MOJ. Whilst all the MOJ policy teams are expected to work together in a co-ordinated way, the Legal Support team's projects currently focus primarily on the non-legal aid aspects of the advice ecosystem. We have therefore raised concerns with the MOJ that if they introduce an ILCA scheme, any funds raised should be used to make the legal aid scheme more accessible and sustainable.

If you have not received the invitation from the MOJ and you are interested in finding out more about this project, please contact us.

The MOJ has noted that they are particularly interested in hearing from you if:

- You work at a law firm of any size that undertakes a mixture of legal aid and privately paid work and hold client money in a pooled client account.
- You have an interest in providing views on the potential impact of an ILCA scheme on legal aid firms.
- You have a working understanding of your firm's financial model.

The online roundtables will run for approximately 60 minutes on the 6th, 11th and 113th of August. You have until 1st of August to express an interest by completing this form:

<https://forms.office.com/e/L5UkGhe0Gd>

Civil Legal Aid News

2024 Standard Civil Contract tenders – amendment notice published 22 July 2025

Since December 2024 the LAA has been [inviting tenders for the 2024 Standard Civil Contract on a rolling basis](#), as opposed to only enabling applications during an open tender process. They call this the ‘always on’ process which allows tenders to be submitted at any time, with the significant advantages of no fixed deadlines and the ability to correct errors in those tenders. The LAA has received a steady stream of tenders since December and a high proportion of those have led to the award of contracts in recent months. This process is open to new providers, and to existing providers who wish to expand into a new category or procurement area.

This week the LAA [published an Amendment Notice](#) updating the following areas of their application guidance:

- Application process – see paragraph 3.3
- Incomplete tender – see paragraph 4.3
- Existing 2024 Standard Civil Contract Holders: New Offices and Office Moves (same Category of Law) – see paragraphs 7.3 and 7.4
- Existing 2024 Standard Civil Contract Holders: New Categories – see paragraph 7.5
- Issue of Contract documentation – see paragraph 15.1

Updated CivAPP8, CivAPP8A and CivAPP11

A reminder that in the new (old) world of having to use ‘paper’ civil legal aid forms that we find ourselves in, the above forms have been amended to include a field for the applicant’s first name rather than their initials.

[You can find the updated forms here.](#)

Criminal Legal Aid News

Tender open to deliver Criminal Defence Direct services

On 16 July the LAA commenced a tender process for two new CDD Contracts to deliver 24/7 telephone-based legal advice from 4 May 2026. These services support individuals detained at police stations in England and Wales for non-indictable offences.

[See here for more information](#) about the contracts and tender process.

Sector News and Events

Justice Committee launches new inquiry into access to justice

The Justice Committee [launched a new inquiry](#) yesterday (23 July) into access to justice in England and Wales.

Announcing the inquiry the Committee said:

'MPs on the cross-party Committee chaired by Labour MP Andy Slaughter will examine the current state of the legal services and representation market, and how it, and associated operating pressures, affect access to justice.

It will also look at the impact of those acting without legal advice and / or representation on access to justice and the ways in which the legal services and representation sector is adapting post LASPO 2012 to secure access to justice across civil, criminal and family law.

The inquiry will also assess potential new funding options and the scope for future

innovations and potential adaptation of services, funding, regulation and technology to support access to justice.

The Justice Committee previously undertook a broad inquiry on the Future of Legal Aid in 2022-23, looking at the challenges facing legal aid clients and providers and how they might be tackled. It built upon work undertaken by the Committee in 2015 on the impact of changes to civil legal aid under Part 1 of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012.'

Written evidence can be submitted to the inquiry up to 30 September 2025. The Committee will also hold a series of oral evidence sessions. Visit the Committee website for more information about the Terms of Reference, which sets out the issues the Committee will be exploring.

LAPG News and Events

APPG on Access to Justice Meeting with Minister Sackman – 21 July 2025



On Monday 21 July, the APPG on Access to Justice hosted a meeting with Minister for Courts and Legal Services, Sarah Sackman, on 'Access to Justice, Legal Aid, and The State of the Estate'. The meeting drew the Minister's attention to the very real and very significant impact of the LAA data breach on both providers of legal aid and clients seeking help and protection. We are extremely grateful to Jenny Beck KC (Hon) (Beck Fitzgerald), Craig Keenan (Community Law Partnership), Ian Townley (Broudie Jackson Canter) and Jo Cecil KC (Garden Court Chambers) for speaking so openly to the Minister and assembled audience.

A summary of the critical discussion points can be found here, from our Director of Parliamentary Affairs and main driving force behind the APPG, Ro Jana:

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7353423052191195136/>

A more detailed summary of discussions will be published by the APPG as part of its series of monthly bulletins, including an outline of the issues we will be raising formally with the Minister after the meeting. If you are not yet subscribed to the APPG mailing list, please contact either APPGA2J@lapg.co.uk or Rohini.Jana@lapg.co.uk for tickets.

LAPG Training and Resources

Online Modular Legal Aid Courses

Introduction to Immigration & Asylum Legal Aid

We have launched the third instalment of our legal aid training series aimed at Immigration & Asylum Practitioners! This course is perfect for trainees, paralegals, junior lawyers as well as those that wish to refresh their knowledge in these areas. This course provides your new and junior staff with comprehensive training in an easy and accessible way, perfect for onboarding.

A big thank you to Matthew Davies from Wilsons Solicitors London and Jawaid Luqmani from Luqmani Thompson for writing this module!

Course content:

Immigration Overview

- What is in Scope
- How is Work Divided Between Different Legal Aid Types
- Cases with Previous Legal Aid Advisors
- Compliance and LAA Auditing

Controlled Work: Starting it Right

- The Basics
- Signing Up a Client for Legal Help or Controlled Legal Representation
- Means – The Financial Eligibility Test
- Merits – The Two Tests

- Running the Case Successfully Under Legal Aid

Running the Case Successfully Under Legal Aid

- Is it a Standard Fee Matter or an Hourly Rates Matter
- Standard Fees
- Time Recording and Attendance Notes
- Attending Home Office Interviews
- Getting Paid

Immigration Certificate Funding (Licensed Work)

- Immigration Certificate Funding (Licensed Work)
- CCMS Applications
- Merits Assessment
- Means Assessment
- Limitations on Funding Certificates
- Costs Risks
- High Costs Cases
- Inter Partes Costs
- Split Costs Orders

Contributors

Matthew Davies, Deputy Managing Partner, Wilson Solicitors LLP

Jawaid Luqmani, Joint Head of Immigration & Head of Public Law, Luqmani Thompson

Subscribe

This course is hosted on our learning platform Thinkific, delegates have access to the course for 12 months from the date of booking so they can continue to reference the material as they work through cases or across different categories of legal aid.

[You can book this course at the LAPG Member rate of £200 here.](#)

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. If you have any issues, questions, or require an invoice please email Andrea Shumaker.

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

Introduction to Mental Health, Mental Capacity & Community Care Legal Aid

We have launched the next course in our legal aid training series aimed at Mental Health, Mental Capacity/Court of Protection and Community Care Practitioners! This course is perfect for trainees, paralegals, junior lawyers as well as those that wish to refresh their knowledge in these areas. Paired with our Introduction to Civil Legal Aid Course, you can provide your new and junior staff with comprehensive training on the Civil Legal Aid Scheme as well as category specific information in an easy and accessible way.

Course content:

Mental Health

- Non-Mental Health Tribunal Work
- Non-Means Tested Non-Mental Health Tribunal Work
- Non-Means Tested Mental Health Tribunal Work
- Help at Court for Victims and Licensed Work for Representation before the Upper Tribunal/High Court
- Applying Guidance
- Costs

Mental Capacity/Court of Protection

- Cases Under the Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Cases Under the Inherent Jurisdiction of the High Court
- Full Representation Certificates -COP Cases
- The Legal Aid Application
- Financial Eligibility (Section 21 MCA 2005 Cases, Young People, Trapped Capital)
- Other Considerations – Court Orders

Community Care

- What is Community Care Law?
- Legal Help

- Full Representation
- Investigative Representation
- The Legal Aid Application
- Other Considerations
- Payment for Community Care Work

Contributors

Alison Ward is a salaried director at MJC Law in Nottingham where she practices mental health law. Alison has vast experience in representing patients subject to all sections of the Mental Health Act and is an experienced Advocate before the First Tier Tribunal (mental health), having sustained her Law Society accreditation throughout. She has a particular specialism in representing forensic patients including those detained in high secure care at Rampton Hospital. She has been involved in a number of judicial review applications throughout her career. She has also dealt with appeals including to the Upper Tribunal.

Rosie Campbell is an Associate Solicitor at Rook Irwin Sweeney. She qualified as solicitor in 2018 and specialises in public law and human rights, community care, and mental capacity law. She is committed to access to justice and has a particular interest in cases concerning the rights of disabled children and adults. Rosie has a wealth of experience in health and welfare cases in the Court of Protection. She regularly acts on behalf of adults who lack mental capacity, instructed by the Official Solicitor, as well as family members. She acts in complex cases including in relation to the withdrawal of life-sustaining medical treatment for both adults and children, best interests disputes, deprivation of liberty, and welfare deputyship applications.

Subscribe

This course is hosted on our learning platform Thinkific, delegates have access to the course for 12 months from the date of booking so they can continue to reference the material as they work through cases or across different categories of legal aid.

[You can book this course at the LAPG Member rate of £200 here.](#)

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

Introduction to Managing Family and Civil Legal Aid Contracts Toolkit

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.

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 session 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: Building Your Team – 7th October 2025

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 – 14th October 2025

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.

Supervision Courses

We have two more Supervision Courses scheduled for 18th September and 25th November. You can book your place on any of the remaining 2025 training dates below:

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, JFFfree, 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.

Take care one and all and, as ever, if you need our help or support, please do get in touch,

Chris Minnoch, CEO [@ChrisLAPG](#)

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[#WeAreLegalAid](#)

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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!





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