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28/08/24

## LAPG Member Update

Issue 27 of 2024

Welcome to the latest edition of the LAPG member update. We start this Update with an urgent message from the LAA for any civil legal aid provider still finalising their contract verification process.

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## Civil Legal Aid News

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### 2024 Standard Civil Contract verification - URGENT ACTION REQUIRED

As previously reported, the 2024 Standard Civil Contract commences on 1 September 2024. The LAA has been in touch with representative bodies with an urgent message for providers who have not yet submitted their verification information, which is set out below:

*'As you know the new Standard Civil 2024 contracts come into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> September. Thanks to all your members who have already submitted their verification information and have passed, we are uploading the last of the verified providers contracts over the next few days and they will have a contract uploaded before 1<sup>st</sup> September.*

*There remain over 300 providers both current and new who have submitted bids but have either a) not provided all the verification information we require to award a contract or b) have not engaged with the verification process at all. We have written to these bidders through Bravo on a number of occasions requesting this information, but to date we have had no response.*

*You'll recall we allowed verification after the original June deadline to offer as much flexibility as we could, however this cannot extend past 31<sup>st</sup> August. Therefore, could you please remind your members if they do not submit their verification information, fully before 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024, they will not be awarded a contract.*

*For those who do submit their verification information from now and up to the 31<sup>st</sup> August and pass, they will receive a contract however this will not start on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024 as we need to process the verification information prior to contract award. We will work to have all contracts in place as soon as is practically possible.*

*Please inform all members of the importance of checking their Bravo messages regularly, this is the only system the LAA can use to notify providers of*



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information relating to their bids to ensure fair and equal treatment. We will not write out to providers or bidders separately via any other avenue nor can we accept verification information via any other avenue.

Providers will also receive an automated email from CWA when their contract has been uploaded and is awaiting signature so, to ensure they have a contract in place for 1<sup>st</sup> September providers will need to log on to the system and sign their contract.

We appreciate your support in distributing this message to your members, the LAA wants all providers who can verify for a contract to have done so, as we recognise the importance of a healthy provider-base to support clients who require legal aid; but once the procurement ends at 23:59 on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024 there will be no further action taken to award contracts to providers that send verification after this date.'

The LAA published the final contract documents for the 2024 Standard Civil Contract on GOV.UK on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> August 2024. Providers are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the contract documents, [which are available here](#).

### **HLPAS Provider Guidance – 1st September 2024**

The LAA has sent out the following message to all HLPAS contract providers commencing work under the 2024 Standard Civil Contract from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024:

'Dear HLPAS Provider,

Please find attached information to assist in running your HLPAS contract from the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024.

### **HLPAS Provider Guidance – 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024**

This guidance sets out information regarding the scope of work covered by the service; eligibility requirements and how to make claims for work undertaken.

**For those who have held a HLPAS contract previously please take note of the way early legal advice claims should be made pre and post 1<sup>st</sup> September. For early legal advice cases started on or before 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024 these should be claimed via the offline contract report form (see below) as you have been doing under your previous contract. For early legal advice cases**

started on or after 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024 these should be claimed online via CWA (as per all other legal help work). All in court duty claims (pre and post 1<sup>st</sup> September) should continue to be claimed offline via the contract report form (below). Please see Chapter 5 of the Provider Guidance for further information on the Reporting and Payment arrangements.

### **HLPAS Contract Report Form v2.0 - 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024**

This report form should be used by all HLPAS providers to claim In Court Duty work.

**For those who have held a HLPAS contract previously please use this form to claim all early legal advice cases started on or before 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024. The form should **not** be used for any early legal advice cases opened on or after 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024 - such claims should be made via CWA.**

The above documents will be placed on gov.uk from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024 - **Housing Loss Prevention Advice Service (HLPAS) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)**

If you have any questions regarding the guidance and reporting work then please respond to this email address.

Many thanks,  
LAA HLPAS Team'

### **High-Cost Family (HCF) virtual clinic**

From the LAA:

'The HCF Clinic on 11 September 2024, part of the LAA's #HelpUsSayYes campaign, offers the opportunity to book a virtual face-to-face, 20-minute appointment with experienced case managers. Providers can discuss ongoing case specific issues. Registrations are limited and the deadline is Wednesday 4 September.

**[Click here to register for an appointment](#)**'

### **Detained Duty Advice Scheme (DDAS) webinars**

The LAA is offering two DDAS-themed webinars for new immigration providers (and existing ones if they would like) - how it operates and how to claim. The details are below:

**#HelpUsSayYes webinar: Detained Duty Advice**

This informative session will focus on what to expect before, during and after delivering a DDAS surgery and the differences when delivering this remotely or face to face. We will also show how work should be billed. Come along whether you are new to scheme or have delivered DDAS previously and would like a refresher.

[Click here to register'](#)

[Submit a CWA claim online](#)

[Please see here for the latest guidance](#) on how CWA works online: how to claim, bulkloading, outcomes, new matter starts and guidance.

[Civil processing dates](#)

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

['Check if you can get legal aid service' prototype – feedback required](#)

The LAA's Civil Legal Advice (CLA) team has been working on improving the digital 'Check if you can get legal aid service' service. The LAA is asking civil legal aid providers to look at their prototype and tell them what you think. Does this show the most common problems that clients bring to you?

[See the prototype](#)

[Give the LAA feedback](#)

[Get in touch with the LAA](#)

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## Criminal Legal Aid News

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### [Operation Early Dawn](#)

Please see below message from the LAA in respect of OED:

*'The LAA is aware that HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) has reactivated a temporary short-term contingency measure to maintain the effective management of prisoner transfers between courts and*



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custody.

*This contingency involves an operational assessment being made each morning on which prisoners can be transferred from police cells and taken to courts to ensure there is a safe and secure location if remanded to custody.*

*Operation Early Dawn is expected to be implemented to address capacity concerns in the following areas:*

- *North East and Yorkshire*
- *Cumbria and Lancashire*
- *Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire*
- *East and West Midlands*

*The government will keep this measure under constant review and will activate or deactivate as necessary. Ongoing trials in the Crown Court will not be directly impacted and prisoners being held for Crown Court hearings will be brought to court and taken back to prison as usual.*

*The LAA is engaging with other CJS agencies to facilitate the operation of this short-term measure.*

*We are aware that the contingency arrangement could lead to short-term pressures in some areas, such as delays in court hearings and police custody suites reaching capacity. In the event that measures are needed to reduce pressures on courts, custody suites and providers, we may consider calling in additional duty solicitors to increase capacity on a short-term basis. HMPPS is working with the police and courts to minimise any impact on frontline operations.*

*We are continuing to monitor the operation of duty schemes and our monitoring of the Defence Solicitor Call Centre (DSCC) operation also continues.*

*Our Contract Management team are embedded in Local Justice Areas and will liaise with stakeholders should issues arise.'*

### **Crime processing dates**

**Check timescales** for the LAA to process your work (e.g. prior authority application, graduated fee claims).

### **CMR4 and CRM5 replacement service launch**

All providers should have received email confirmation from the LAA that they have been on-boarded to the replacement service for CRM4

and CRM5 eForms. These services should be available on [LAA Online Portal \(legalservices.gov.uk\)](https://legalservices.gov.uk), with immediate effect. If you have not received an email confirming that you have been on-boarded, please contact [NSCC@justice.gov.uk](mailto:NSCC@justice.gov.uk).

[Read more](#)

### **Digital Apply for all criminal legal aid applications**

The LAA has said that Apply for Criminal Legal Aid has 100 per cent functionality so all applications should now be submitted via this service. Further developments are already underway and the LAA says that they have listened to your feedback and are prioritising developing the facility to view the outcome of an application within Apply. You can access the service from your usual portal access under the link “Apply for criminal legal aid”.

[Read more](#)

### **Advantis awarded debt collection contract**

The LAA has said that Advantis Credit Limited will deliver Crown Court means testing (CCMT) debt collection and enforcement services (DCES) on their behalf.

The new contract goes live on Monday 3 February 2025. The incumbent supplier - Marston Holdings Ltd - will continue to deliver the current DCES contract until Sunday 2 February 2025.

[Read more](#)

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## **Cross-Cutting News & Events**

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### **Directory of providers**

[Check out the last version of the Directory](#), updated on 27 August 2024, to make sure the details for your organisation are correct.



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## **LAPG News & Events**





## LAPG Annual Dinner and Conference

We were delighted to officially launch our Annual Conference programme and the details of our Annual Dinner on 12 August. Many thanks to those of you who have already booked – we’re really looking forward to seeing you all on Friday, 8 November.

Full details about the conference can be found on our website here: <https://lapg.co.uk/conference/>



We have an excellent range of workshops to suit practitioners from across the scheme and our plenaries and speeches will inform, challenge and inspire. We’re in active discussions with the Ministry of Justice about future legal aid policy and will use the conference as a way of both updating delegates about future government plans and enabling the Ministry to interact with you to gather your views.

As always, we’ve kept ticket prices for the conference as low as possible to ensure that the event is accessible to the widest possible audience or practitioners, policy specialists and future practitioners. Many thanks to Herbert Smith Freehills for helping us to make that possible, and to our conference and dinner sponsors, John M Hayes.

We’ll be releasing more details about our Annual Dinner shortly. Even if you can’t make the conference join us for dinner and drinks and a chance to catch-up with friends and colleagues on Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> of November at The Folly in central London. If you would like to make an advance booking for the Dinner, [please get in touch](#).

## LAPG training courses

### *Supervision Courses*

We have confirmed the dates for the remainder of our 2024 Supervision Courses. You can book your place on any of the training dates below:



3<sup>RD</sup> OCTOBER 2024

12<sup>TH</sup> 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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With the start of the new Standard Civil Contract just around the corner, if you have any concerns about whether you have completed the process and can start work from 1 September, please contact the LAA through the Bravo messaging system. We are also on hand to help with queries or concerns so please get in touch if you need our support.

Take care one and all,

**Chris Minnoch, CEO** [@ChrisLAPG](#)

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28/08/24



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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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