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13/08/25

LAPG Member Update

Issue 27 of 2025

Welcome to our latest member update covering the latest situation with the LAA's cyber-security breach and the registration process to access SILAS, the LAA's new version of the portal to access legal aid services, plus other news and events from across the sector.

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- Get a copy of a police caution for domestic abuse
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Cross-Cutting Legal Aid News

[Registration for 'Sign-In to Legal Aid Services' - Action Required by 22nd August](#)

In case you haven't seen it or are just too jaded to read any more LAA updates on the cyber-security breach, the latest set of comms to providers dated 6th August 2025 informs us that from that date, the LAA began to collect the information needed to onboard all users to 'Sign In to Legal Aid Services' (SILAS). This is the

new secure version of the portal to give access to LAA's digital services, although those services will not be available to you straight away. This follows on from a short pilot into the onboarding the process.

The LAA say that they are commencing this process now to ensure that users' accounts are verified and ready for when the SILAS platform becomes available from September (date not yet specified).

We understand that even once you have completed the sign-up process, no digital services will be immediately available. The LAA want to ensure that when services do resume, all users have been onboarded successfully. They are saying that services will be restored in phases. We have asked the LAA to provide more information about this phased return of services including a timetable, and the LAA have promised an update in the next week or so.

The latest LAA comms describes the process that you will need to follow. You should also by now have received an email from your Contract Manager confirming what information you need to provide and how to submit it to the LAA. Please contact your Contract Manager if you have not yet received this email.

We understand that once the LAA receive the necessary information, they will confirm next steps including how to verify your account.

If you have any questions or concerns about this process and want us to raise these directly with the LAA, please contact kate.pasfield@lapg.co.uk.

Other LAA announcements relating to the cyber-attack

The same comms has several useful bits of information towards the end, in case you didn't make it that far. Please note the information relating to payments over August:

Bank Holiday Payment Dates

Due to the bank holiday on Monday 25 August, payments due on that date will be made on Tuesday 26 August.

Civil Billing

To accommodate the bank holiday, any opt-ins for the Average Payments for Civil Representation scheme submitted during the week commencing 18 August should be received by 12 noon on Tuesday 26 August to allow for payment as normal on Monday 1 September.

Monthly Claim Submissions

We kindly ask that this month's Contingency Monthly Claim Submissions are made as early as possible, ideally by 12 August, so that we can accommodate for the bank holiday and the impact on our payment schedule. We will continue to accept submissions received up to 20 August but will be unfortunately unable to make payment for submissions received after this date until next month

There has also been an FAQ added on the process for refunding client contributions.

Guardian article on data breach

LAPG CEO, Chris Minnoch and LAPG Co-Chair, Jenny Beck KC (Hon) were interviewed by The Guardian for this article where they highlighted the scale of the problems faced by legal aid providers as a result of the LAA's data-breach:

[Legal aid cyber-attack has pushed sector towards collapse, say lawyers | Legal aid | The Guardian](#)

Along with placing [parliamentary questions](#) and direct liaison with the MOJ and LAA, we have been trying to raising awareness of the practical implications for providers and clients of the LAA taking systems offline. We're particularly interested in the issue of the MOJ making compensation available to providers for the additional costs associated with the contingencies processes, and in ensuring that as the LAA restores systems it also uses this opportunity to improve them. We're concerned that there is a low level of awareness across government and the media about the impact of the data breach, which may mean a lack of transparency and accountability and a lack of urgency to restore and improve systems. If you would like to assist us to raise awareness about the impact of the data breach please do get in touch.

What do you do when the 16-week delegated period expires on your case?

We have asked the LAA to explain what providers need to do once the 16-week

delegation period has expired. The contingency guidance currently says: “The LAA will apply the limitations at the point we issue the certificate, any existing grants under Delegated Functions which have not been issued by LAA will include these new limitations also.” The LAA have now been issuing certificates since 16th May, when CCMS went down and by our maths, this means that the timeframe for some cases will expire during the first weeks of September – which is not that long away.

We will share the response from the LAA with our members on receipt, and the LAA have promised a solution in good time.

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.

Get a copy of a DVPO, DAPO, DVPN or DAPN

You can find sample letters to obtain proof that a partner has been issued with a DVPO or DAPO [if you are applying for legal aid here](#). And a sample letter to get evidence [of a DVPN or DAPN here](#).

Get a copy of a police caution for domestic abuse

[You can find the LAA's sample letter here.](#)

Get proof of a partner has been arrested for domestic abuse

[You can find the LAA's sample letter here.](#)

Civil Legal Aid News

CW3: extension of upper cost limit in Controlled Work cases

The LAA has updated the CW3A IMM, CW3B IMM, and CW3C IMM Controlled Work forms for extension requests on hourly rates and graduated fee cases.

[You can find the forms and further details here.](#)

Legal aid tender opportunities in Housing and Debt

The LAA is keen to encourage contract tenders for Housing & Debt and Welfare Benefits contracts in a worryingly large number of geographical areas. They say that the re-opening of the process to apply for the 2024 Standard Civil Contract is open to all geographic areas and categories of law, but are particularly keen to increase supply to Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits services in 18 specific procurement areas. This indicates that the LAA is concerned about very low or a lack of supply in these areas.

You can read their latest comms here.

While it is positive that the LAA is actively trying to encourage an increase in supply across the country, and in these 18 areas in particular, this is another worrying sign of the declining number of suppliers. As we noted in [our response to the Housing and Immigration Fee Increase consultation](#), the government needs to do so much more than introduce small fee increases if it wants to make this work financially viable and increase supply. Tinkering around the edges with tender processes and minor contract changes won't arrest the decline in provider numbers that we have seen over the last 15 years.

Support for providers who assist migrants and asylum seekers

Migration Exchange has updated its handbook and resources for organisations experiencing increased threats due to the assistance they provide to refugee and migrant communities.

MEX explain that:

This handbook is for organisations and individuals working with refugee and migrant communities, as well as those supporting racialised communities. The aim of this Handbook is to provide useful and readily accessible resources which individuals and organisations can access to boost their safety and security of staff and volunteers in times of crisis.

They have circulated the following:

- [Safety and Security Handbook](#)
- [Resilience and Wellbeing Handbook](#)

Our thanks to our colleagues at AB Charitable Trust for providing us with the information from MEX.

Criminal Legal Aid News

Passported benefits guidance

The LAA and LCCSA have met to discuss the passported benefits guidance for criminal legal aid cases, and have agreed the following 'translation' which hopefully is clearer than the LAA version. Although the LAA version has not been amended they have said that they accept the following as formal guidance that providers should follow:

1. When we first engage a client (at or before the first appearance) who is on a passported benefit we ask them if they have evidence of their benefits.
2. We put an attendance note on our file to say that we have asked this question.
3. If the client cannot provide evidence, then the application should be assessed as non-passported.
4. So, we should obtain information as normal of the type of benefit, amount, and frequency and use this to complete the application (using the 'workaround').
5. You suggest using the online means calculator (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/criminal-legal-aid-means-testing>), but it is not mandatory to do so.
6. We include a 'chaser' in our client care letter requesting clients respond with evidence of their benefits.
7. Nothing has changed in relation to NINO's – it is a mandatory requirement to obtain a NINO for anyone in receipt of a passported benefit.
8. We do not need to do this for cases that finished before 16 July – so only on new cases going forward.

[You can find the LAA guidance in the FAQs here](#) – under financial eligibility.

LAPG News and Events

LAPG Annual Legal Aid Conference – 20 October – reserve your discounted place

With huge thanks to our hosts, A&O Shearman, we are delighted to announce that we are now taking reservations for this year's in-person Annual Legal Aid Conference in London.

With our usual mix of workshops, plenaries and clinics, this year's conference will also focus on the fall-out from the LAA data breach and rebuild of their digital systems. We have four legal aid category-specific sessions, three workshops to help you support your team, a session for prospective practitioners and specialists providing advice on costs maximisation. Along with panel discussions on the risks and rewards of AI adoption and legal aid policy development, this year's conference once again has something for everyone across the legal aid world. Sessions include:

- Tailored sessions for practitioners: Immigration & Asylum; Housing & Debt; Family; Crime
- Support your team sessions: Managing neurodivergent staff; (Peri)menopause - supporting colleagues and working with clients; Managing through a crisis – risk management and disaster recovery planning (this session will focus specifically on the LAA's contingencies if they are still in place)
- A career in legal aid, from our colleagues at Young Legal Aid Lawyers
- Maximising costs and ensuring compliance, by John M Hayes Ltd, costs specialists
- Panel of experts and practitioners: AI – what is it and is it safe to use?
- Minister Sackman invited to address the conference on future legal aid policy development
- LAA subject matter specialists in attendance to answer your queries, including on the contingency arrangements if they remain in force
- Refreshments, lunch and a drinks receptions at the conclusion of the event all included.

We will be taking bookings in the next few days, but in the meantime, to reserve your place(s) and ensure you benefit from our discounted Early Bird rates, please email chris.minnoch@lapg.co.uk.

Sector News and Events

UK/France Small Boats Deal

The MOJ has provided the following updates regarding the UK/France Small Boats Deal:

- The UK-France Agreement on the Prevention of Dangerous Journeys has now been ratified and has been published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ukfrance-agreement-on-the-prevention-of-dangerous-journeys-cs-france-no22025>
- Under the new UK-France pilot, any asylum claim submitted by a migrant who has crossed the Channel will be considered for inadmissibility and, if declared inadmissible, the Home Office will organise readmission of the individual to France. Further details of the inadmissibility process can be found in the relevant Home Office caseworker guidance - [Inadmissibility – third country cases: caseworker guidance - GOV.UK](#)
- For those coming to the UK under the agreement, an individual in France will submit an Expression of Interest application to the new route and the Home Office will make a decision once they have undergone biometric checks. Anyone who had arrived by small boat and returned to France will not be eligible for the legal route to the UK. The Immigration Rules to implement this part of the process were laid in Parliament on 5 August 2025, and further details are set out in the Statement of Changes to the Immigration Rules and supporting documents published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statement-of-changes-to-the-immigration-rules-cp-1373-5-august-2025>

Explanatory memorandum to the statement of changes to the Immigration

[Rules: CP 1373, 5 August 2025 \(accessible\) - GOV.UK](#)

We are in liaison with ILPA, LCN and the Law Society about the immigration law and legal aid aspects of these new arrangements and have arranged a meeting with the MOJ in the coming weeks. We'll keep you updated as we learn more but, as always, if you want to share your views or concerns on this issue with us, please do get in touch.

PLP events**Costs and funding in judicial review – Online, 30 September to 2 October**

Six practical, bite-size webinars delivered over Zoom, covering costs and funding in judicial review.

All sessions will be recorded and shared with attendees afterwards.

[Full details and booking process here](#)

Public Law Project Annual Conference 2025, (in-person, Weds 15 Oct)

[Find out all the details and how to book your place here](#)

Garden Court webinar – 25 Sept – Renters' Rights Bill

This event will explore the complexity of the Renters' Rights Bill, soon to become the Renters' Rights Act 2025, giving Housing practitioners a deep dive into new legislation and what it means for private renters' rights. Delivered by Liz Davies KC, and Stephen Cottle.

[Find out more and book your place here](#)

LAPG Training and Resources

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.

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.](#)

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 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.

Supervision Courses

We have two remaining 2025 Supervision Courses scheduled for 18th September and 25th November. You can book your place on any of these here:

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.

So there we have it, the LAA's first foray into a new system (or at least the gateway into a system) is about to go live so please do register and feed back to us about your experiences.

And please do get in touch if you have any questions about or would like to reserve your place for our Annual Conference in October.

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

13/08/25



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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