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03/11/23

LAPG Member Update

Issue 30 of 2023

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2023 Conference

9TH NOVEMBER AT UCL (BENTHAM HOUSE) LONDON

The LAPG Annual Conference will be held in person on 9th November at University College London – details on [LAPG's website](#).

[Get your tickets here](#)

Civil Legal Aid News

Immigration Providers South West Support Directory

Last week, we reported that the LAA had written to all Immigration & Asylum legal aid providers offering the opportunity to be part of a list of providers who can take on cases from the South West of England where clients have been unable to instruct a provider in that procurement area. The list, or rather the Immigration Providers South West Support Directory, is up on the LAA website [here](#).

We also reported that the Immigration Law Practitioners Association (ILPA) had asked the LAA to provide further information on how this scheme is supposed to work in practice. The LAA has now responded to a number of questions. Questions from ILPA and answers from the LAA (in italics) are below:

- What cases will these providers who indicate their availability be permitted to accept? *Any cases that are permitted under the Immigration and Asylum contract.*
- Must these cases first be offered to providers in the South West, and only if individuals have not been able to instruct a



Legal Aid
Agency

- provider in the South West will individuals be referred to providers on the list? Yes
- If the providers outside of the South West take the less loss-making or non-loss-making South West cases, what viable work is left for the providers remaining in the South West? *Individuals in the South West should first contact a provider in the South West who can then say whether they are able to assist that individual. If they are not then the individual should be referred to the list*
 - What consideration has been given to the impact of these proposals on those remaining providers? One member has said, 'If the work is not restricted, it increases pressure on us to close and lose all capacity in the SW. *Individuals in the South West should first contact a provider in the South West who can then say whether they are able to assist that individual. If they are not then the individual should be referred to the list. This is intended to be in place only if providers in the South West are not able to assist individuals. This is being done in light of feedback that individuals in the South West are not able to find a provider to take on their case.*
 - Were providers in the South West consulted before this decision was taken? If not, why not? *This is not the first time we have operated such a list, a list operated from April 2022 to June 2023. If providers in the South West can assist an individual then they will not need to be referred to the list.*
 - Was any consideration given to better funding providers in the South West, so that they can increase capacity in the area? *The Review of Civil Legal Aid (ROCLA) is looking at the sustainability of the civil legal aid market.*
 - I also wonder if you are asking providers to indicate their ability and willingness to provide legal services face-to-face? *The advice can be remote.*
 - I appreciate 'The advice can be remote'. However, in relation to the last question, I am still wondering if in relation to the list, you are specifically ascertaining capacity and willingness to provide face-to-face rather than remote advice? *We are ascertaining willingness and ability to deliver remote advice.*

In our view the need to operate a system like this, whereby vulnerable clients are required to try to access remote services because of a lack of capacity for local services, is yet another clear indication of system failure. This is an issue that

must be directly addressed by the MOJ through RoCLA by improving payment rates across the legal aid scheme. Nothing else will ensure that providers can recruit, retain and support the staff required to deliver quality-assured services in their local area.

If you have any queries that you would like us to put to the LAA on this issues, please get in touch policy@lapg.co.uk.

Changes to the general specification - remote supervision

The LAA has made changes to the 2018 Standard Civil Contract General Specification to allow remote supervision. There are changes to paragraphs 2.21 and 2.23 of the General Specification. The provisions to allow remote supervision are in line with the 2022 Standard Crime Contract and the 2024 Standard Civil Contract.

Paragraph 2.21 has been amended to remove the requirement for a supervisor to designate at least one day per calendar month to be physically in attendance at each office where they supervise staff and on a day that coincides with the staff being present. Paragraph 2.23 has been amended to provide more flexibility over how supervision is conducted (whether face-to-face or remotely) and allows the provider to make that decision as they see fit.

The amended contract [can be found on the LAA website here](#).

RoCLA Advocacy Research

The Ministry of Justice has commissioned [IFF Research](#), an independent social research agency, to carry out research into the civil legal aid advocacy system as part of the MoJ's [Review of Civil Legal Aid](#) (RoCLA). This aims to collect evidence on the role of advocates, the incentives to work on legal aid and perceptions of advocates in the system from both advocates and instructing solicitors.

IFF Research are inviting **barrister advocates, non-barrister advocates and instructing solicitors** to a one-to-one research discussion in November or early December. To achieve a good understanding of perspectives and build a fuller picture of the legal aid advocacy system, they are looking to speak with legal professionals with

varying levels of experience and from across law categories, employer type and across England and Wales.

[The information sheet attached](#) outlines the research context, how participants can contribute, interview details and how to contact the IFF Research team.

If you, or any individuals within your networks, have further questions about the research or potential participants would like to take part, please contact the IFF research team at LegalAidStudy@iffresearch.com or call 020 7250 3035 and ask for Leyla Ahmed.

If you would like to speak to someone within MoJ to check the validity of the research, you can contact rocla@justice.gov.uk.

Criminal Legal Aid News

Fee increase announced for pre-recorded evidence

On 25 October 2023 the MoJ announced a barrister fee increase to help vulnerable victims bring attackers to justice! [You can read the press release here.](#)

Our understanding is that this fee will adjust an element of the AGFS and so will apply to all advocates carrying out pre-recorded evidence work, not just members of the Bar. Maybe this is why the MoJ is carrying out the advocacy research mentioned above - to improve their understanding of the term?



LAPG News & Events

LAPG Annual Conference 9 November - in person at University College London

We have 150 people booked into the conference



already. Please do book soon if you want to attend – there is the usual mix of plenaries and three sets of workshops with a choice of four workshops at each time. The keynote speaker is Raju Bhatt, founding partner of Bhatt Murphy. The Lord Chancellor has confirmed his attendance at 5pm and we hope that representatives from Labour’s shadow justice team will also attend as we seek to influence policy ahead of the next general election.

[See here for more information and how to book.](#)

And the cost?

- **LAPG Members** – £99 + VAT = £118.80
- **Non-Members of LAPG** – £140 + VAT = £168
- **YLAL/ JFFs/ SWSQF Members** – £30 + VAT = £36

Thank you to UCL, Accesspoint and John M Hayes for their support which has enabled us to keep the prices so low.

LAPG training courses

Management Skills for Private Practice Training Modules

In 2014 LAPG was awarded a government grant to develop a management training programme for legal aid law firms. Successfully piloted in 2015, the Certificate in Practice Management combined face-to-face training with online learning and materials to provide an accessible and affordable management training programme for busy lawyers and practice managers.

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. If you would like to learn more or book an individual session please [click here](#). Complete them all and you’ll be awarded the LAPG Certificate in Private Practice Management. 90% of employers surveyed said they’d 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:

The remaining modules in the current course are:

3. [Managing People](#) – 21st November*
4. [EDI, Policies & Compliance](#) – 30th November
5. [Marketing & Communications](#) – 14th December, Half-Day Session (AM)
6. [Managing a Legal Aid Contract](#) – 14th December, Half-Day Session (PM)

*Date has been changed from originally advertised

You can book any of the individual sessions above by clicking on them. If you would like to take multiple sessions, but not the entire course, please contact our Head of Learning & Development, [Andrea Shumaker](#). For each additional session you book, you receive a 10% discount.

The course trainers include Vicky Ling, Matt Howgate and other legal aid sector experts. Phaniel Mutumburi and Themer Slimane will join us for sessions 4 and 5 respectively. Themer will discuss different approaches to communication with a focus on social media and Phaniel Mutumburi will focus on the importance of diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

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

We house this course on our new learning platform Thinkific! It is a wonderful way to engage in our courses, save time and have everything you need all in one place rather than sifting through your emails trying to find materials and zoom links.

This platform is easy to use and gives us the opportunity to update our courses to be more effective for our participants.

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

If you would like to know more about this course, or to reserve your place, contact [Andrea Shumaker](#).

Supervision Courses

We have one Supervision Course remaining for 2023 scheduled for 22nd November, you can book your place below:

[22ND NOVEMBER 2023](#)

We have confirmed the dates for our 2024 Supervision Courses scheduled for 18th January, 7th March, 23rd April, 2nd May, 8th August and 12th November you can book your place on any of 2024 training dates below:

[18TH JANUARY 2024](#)

[7TH MARCH 2024](#)

[23RD APRIL 2024](#)

[2ND MAY 2024](#)

[8TH AUGUST 2024](#)

[12 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.

Sector News & Events

[PLP Event: Challenging Unfairness in the Immigration System - course 21-24 November 2023](#)



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The immigration system is now more complex and punitive than ever. This event is for those seeking to challenge discrimination and unfairness in immigration, using strategic legal, research and policy work.

PLP is presenting this series of seminars in partnership with Immigration Law Practitioners' Association (ILPA), the Strategic Legal Advice Committee (SLAC), and the Strategic Legal Fund (SLF).

The 6 seminars are presented online 1 or 1.5 hour sessions (9.5 hours in total) split over 4 days.

All sessions are recorded so attendees can access after the event.

[Full details here](#)

[Civil Justice Council's 12th National Forum - Friday 17 November 2023](#)



The Civil Justice Council's 12th National Forum on access to justice in a cost of living crisis will take place at Friends House, Euston and online on Friday 17 November 2023.

Further details and how to register [can be found on here](#).

The Law Society report from the 21st Century Justice Project

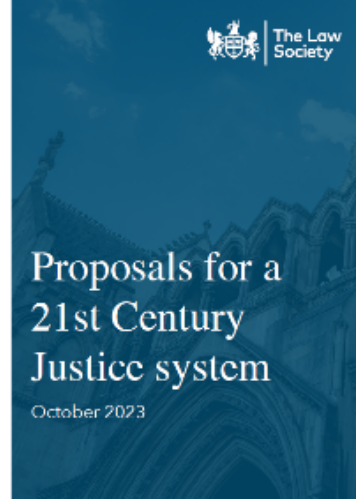
In March 2023, The Law Society kicked off a three-year project to look at the problems facing justice in England and Wales and explore practical changes to make sure the system works effectively, now and in the future.

In year one, they say they have focused on four key areas:

- improving the alternative / non-court dispute resolution landscape
- making legal services more affordable
- civil legal aid reforms
- making online justice portals work better for end-users

They would like to hear your thoughts on their proposals to improve access to justice.

You can read all about the project and their proposals for a [21st Century Justice System here](#).



Less than a week now to our Conference next Thursday and we are really looking forward to seeing our friends and colleagues from across the sector. This is our first in-person annual conference since 2019 and we're really pleased with how many practitioners, students and policy friends have already confirmed their places. One of the crucial aspects of this conference will be the opportunity for practitioners to interact with the MoJ's policy officials (and the MoJ appointed consultants) to explain the realities of working in legal aid. Direct contact with those on the legal aid front line will help policy leads and consultants to truly understand what needs to improve to make legal aid more viable and more sustainable.

Take care one and all,

Chris Minnoch, CEO [@ChrisLAPG](#)

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03/11/23



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Thank you for being brave enough to be part of the LAPG community!

LEGAL AID LAWYER OF THE YEAR AWARDS



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