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LAPG Member Update

Issue 32 of 2023

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Civil Legal Aid News



The LAA is aware of a cyber-incident involving managed IT service provider CTS, which has resulted in the loss of CTS IT services to impacted law firms. Media reports suggest these are mostly conveyancing and property firms, however the LAA is aware of a small number of legal aid firms who are impacted. Due to the potential risk, impacted legal aid firms have had their access to LAA systems suspended until CTS and/or the impacted firm confirm that the incident has been resolved and services reinstated. The LAA is working closely with impacted firms and will look to reinstate access to LAA systems as soon as possible. The LAA are reliant upon impacted providers notifying them at the earliest opportunity so advised providers that if they have been affected, they should contact their LAA Contract Manager immediately.

The LAA has also provided the guidance below which may be helpful to you:

- LAA understands that HMCTS and CJSM are taking similar actions with identified law firms and user accounts for other MoJ services directly accessed by providers
- For civil providers, delegated functions should be used wherever possible for applications and providers should hold billing activity until system access is restored.
- For crime providers, applications can be submitted by post using CRM14 and where required, CRM15 forms and supporting evidence to the National Criminal Applications Team at our Nottingham office. Providers should hold billing activity until system access is restored.
- The LAA is aware that some providers are setting up new IT systems to enable them to operate whilst CTS resolves the incident. Where a provider can give the LAA assurance that the new environment is separate from, and has no exposure to any data, service or infrastructure provided by CTS, LAA will reinstate access to its systems
- Any new IT system or host environment must comply with the LAA Data Security Requirements and Data Security Guidance published on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)
- The LAA will review billing contingency measures as this incident develops and more information on recovery time becomes available.

- Providers should let the LAA know if they may experience financial hardship as a result of the incident.

Immigration contract changes from 1 January 2024

Changes are being made on 1 January 2024 which affect providers carrying out immigration and asylum work. It is important to read through the documents provided by the LAA on their website to understand the changes. Some of the main changes are summarised below. These changes follow a consultation with the LAA and the relevant representative bodies, including LAPG. Our thanks to ILPA, who provided very detailed response to the LAA consultation.

[You can read the LAA news story here.](#)

Category Definitions

- An amendment to reflect that the statutory IMA appeals fall within the Immigration Category.

Immigration Specification

- Changes to Remuneration in relation to IMA work are set out in the amended Remuneration Regulations.
- Unsuccessful applications for permission to appeal to the Upper Tribunal for IMA matters to be remunerated on the same basis as successful applications.
- The LAA has said that they are aware that there may be IMA related work that needs to be brought urgently to the court such as some judicial reviews. The LAA will ensure that legal aid decisions are made quickly. The operation of the IMA will be kept under review.
- As a result of feedback from rep bodies, the LAA has amended the Immigration Specification in relation to the self-grant of matter starts and the proposed referral mechanism.
- From 1 January 2024 providers may, at their discretion, attend DDAS surgeries remotely but they must have the ability to deliver in person advice where they decide that remote advice provision would be ineffective for a client due to e.g. disability.
- The LAA will be updating a number of guidance documents and we will share these

with you in due course. There will also be training for providers on the changes.

[LAA payments to providers](#)

[Check dates here](#) for processing (crime and civil) and planned BACS payments, get financial statements, switch to variable monthly payments.

[High cost family case planning hints and tips](#)

The LAA is offering the chance to learn how their caseworkers approach case plan submissions based on hourly rates in high cost family cases.

The webinar will be on 5 December 2023 at 4pm. You will be able to question the subject matter experts on the topics covered but they cannot answer case specific enquiries. Booking window closes 5pm, 4 December.

[Registration >>](#)

Criminal Legal Aid News

[Latest on the The Law Society JR in relation to CLAIR recommendations](#)

The Law Society Gazette ran two articles last week summarising the latest developments in the judicial review challenging the MOJ's alleged failure to implement recommendations from the Criminal Legal Aid Independent Review.

On [29 November the Gazette reported](#) that the court had granted a Law Society application, in full, which means that the government will need to provide specific disclosure relating to provider activity reports and scheme performance reports ahead of the full hearing of the judicial review later this month. By way of background, the article notes that '[e]arlier this year, the High Court granted the Law Society permission to bring the judicial review challenge against the government. The body sought the review after the government did not increase criminal defence solicitors' legal aid rates by 15%, as recommend by Lord Bellamy's independent review on criminal legal aid'.



Legal Aid
Agency

Further context was provided about the hearing last week and the information being requested via disclosure by The Law Society in [a second article on 1 December 2023](#).

Sector News & Events

HLPA conference – 14 December 2023

Housing Law Practitioners Association's annual conference takes place this year on 14 December with a focus on the impact of racism in housing. This hybrid event in London has an excellent line-up of plenaries and seminars with an outstanding range of speakers.

For further information on the event and how to book, [visit the HLP website here](#).



LAPG News & Events

2024 LAPG Membership Renewals

It's that time of year again, when we ask you to dig deep to renew your LAPG membership for another year to support our work.

As ever, we had tried really hard to keep our membership fees as low as possible, with the 2024 fees set at the same level as they were in 2016. We know just how difficult legal aid life has been for so many years and keep this front and centre in our thinking when we set our fees.

We've posted a summary of our work on your behalf in 2023 and 2022 on [the membership page of our website](#). 2024 is going to be another crucial year for practitioners and the clients you strive to serve, and we'll be working as hard as we can to support you and to advocate for you and the importance of your work.

To renew your membership for next year [please do visit our website](#) where you can complete the



online renewal form, upload the details of who needs to be added to the mailing list, and make payment.

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:

1. [Marketing & Communications](#) - 14th December, Half-Day Session (AM)
2. [Managing a Legal Aid Contract](#) - 14th December, Half-Day Session (PM)

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](#)

Supervision Courses

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](mailto: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.

Take care one and all,

Chris Minnoch, CEO [@ChrisLAPG](#)

Follow LAPG on Twitter [@WeAreLAPG](#)

[#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!

LEGAL AID LAWYER OF THE YEAR AWARDS



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