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20/12/24

LAPG Member Update

Issue 37 of 2024

Welcome to our final (probably) LAPG member update of 2024. And there's some great news to greet you with today following the Lord Chancellor's announcement yesterday evening of a further fee increase for criminal defence legal aid. More on that below, along with a summary of what you, our members, have helped us achieve in 2024.

First up, in this bumper Christmas edition of our Update, is the announcement that we are supporting a fantastic new initiative called PAMELA.

The brainchild of LAPG Director Dr Laura Janes, PAMELA (Peri-menopausal And Menopausal Legal Aid Support Network) is a new support network focused on the implications of the (peri)menopause for legal aid lawyers and the advice sector. The network will provide opportunities for sharing resources and ideas including policies, practices and information, as well as a regular space for women to connect.

The network will create both physical and virtual places to share information and experiences to help legal aid and advice workers support each other and our clients.

If you would like to be involved, please sign up here:

<https://forms.gle/cCUk6VWYgEtT5bFS9>

An inaugural event will take place in February or March 2025. For more information, visit the [Campaigns page of our website](#).

Secondly, we wanted to [share a potted summary of our work on your behalf](#)

[over 2024](#), and to send you all a MASSIVE FESTIVE THANK YOU for all the support you have provided this year.

We've had an incredibly busy year, so rather than make this Update something that will take you until Christmas to read, [you can download the summary here](#). What the breadth of work demonstrates is how lucky we are to work with, and be supported by, so many dedicated practitioners, experts, consultants, funders and colleagues from across the sector. It is impossible to name you all, but please know that we are incredibly appreciative of your support – from our Board and Advisory Committee, to volunteers that help with events like the LALYs and conference. We want to pay particular tribute to the practitioners who donate so much time and expertise, on top of their challenging day jobs, to help us with our campaigns, policy work, consultations and other initiatives seeking to improve the legal aid scheme. Without you we simply wouldn't be able to function. You are an inspiration to work with.

And so, to the Member Update:

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- Submit a Contracted Work and Administration (CWA) claim online

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- Director of Legal Aid Casework annual report 2023 to 2024
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Sector News and Events

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- Apply for criminal court costs from central funds (form PP1)

- PLP immigration training - Challenging unfairness in the immigration system

LAPG News and Events

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- New Toolkit - Introduction to Managing Family and Civil Legal Aid Contracts
- Training Courses – New Training Course on People Management; 2025 Supervision Course dates; Introduction to Civil Legal Aid

Criminal Legal Aid News

Lord Chancellor announces up £92m of additional funding for criminal legal aid

On 19 December the Ministry of Justice announced that up to £92m per year of additional funding will be made available for criminal legal aid solicitors to 'help address the ongoing challenges in the criminal justice system'.

You can [read the full announcement here](#) and [The Law Society press release](#) from today. Although not set out in detail in the MOJ announcement, The Law Society has noted that there will be a consultation early in 2025 on an initial 6% increase, with an additional 6% committed by the end of this parliament. This is a positive step towards creating a more sustainable criminal defence sector, which is an integral part of the government's plans to address widespread issues across the criminal justice system. Readers will be aware of other recently announced measures, such as former Lord Chancellor David Gauke's appointment to lead an [independent review of sentencing](#), and Sir Brian Leveson's appointment to [independently review the criminal courts](#). The MOJ announcement also refers [to news from earlier this week](#) that a further 2,000 Crown Court sitting dates will be available this year.

Outcome for Stage 1 of the Crime Contract Procurement Process

The LAA published important information for organisations who tendered in Stage 1 of the crime tender process, who will be receiving the outcome for undertaking work under the 2025



The LAA has said that the notification process may take up to 3 working days. They have advised that if an organisation has tendered for a 2025 Standard Crime Contract in Stage 1, it is important to monitor the LAA eTendering system message board for the notification letter. Providers will need to ensure they have a registered user available to access the letter.

Anyone who tendered and did not receive their notification by Wednesday 18 December should send a message through the LAA eTendering system.

Verification deadline

The deadline for submitting compliant verification information is **11:59pm on 31 January 2025**.

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

Overnight accommodation and subsistence rates

From 5 December 2024, the guideline rates for overnight accommodation and subsistence increased for both providers and experts. The rates increased to up to £165 in London (within the M25) and up to £100 elsewhere (per person, per night, inclusive of VAT). The overnight subsistence rate will also increase from £21 to £25. The rarely used personal incidental allowance will be removed.

[Read more here](#)

Civil Legal Aid News

Fees consultation for housing, debt, immigration and asylum work

As reported in our last update, the MoJ intends to consult in January 2025 on increasing legal aid fees for those working in the housing (housing and debt) and immigration (immigration and asylum) sectors. The aim is to increase fees to a rate in the region of £65/£69 per hour (non-London/London), or provide a 10% uplift, whichever is higher. Fixed fees will be uplifted by an amount proportional to the increase in the underlying hourly rate for that



**Legal Aid
Agency**

work. This will be implemented in 2025-26 with costs scaling up to £20 million by 2027-28.

The consultation period is likely to run for 12 weeks and we are keen to be as prepared as we can be to respond. We will be inviting our members to feed into our consultation response so please do start thinking about what this increase might mean for your organisation. We haven't seen the consultation yet so don't know exactly what questions will be posed. However, it is likely that consultees will be asked whether they agree with the proposed uplifts, and if not, why not.

So please, if you are working in one of these areas of law, or if you are not and are keen to see increases across the board in all categories of legal aid, discuss this internally within your organisation. Will these increases make a difference to the sustainability of your practice and influence the types of cases you take on? Will they make a difference to the salaries or other benefits you offer or to your recruitment plans for 2025 and beyond? Will they make a difference to the viability of these areas of work?

We will provide further information on the consultation itself as soon as we have more details. In the meantime, if you do have any thoughts, please get in touch with kate.pasfield@lapg.co.uk.

Civil High Cost Family clinic - 22 January 2025

The LAA's HCF Clinic on 22 January 2025, part of their #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 15 January.

[Register for webinar here](#)

Immigration Providers South West Support Directory

[The full list of providers can be found here.](#)

Specialist Telephone Advice Headline Intentions

A Headline Intentions document for the LAA specialist telephone advice services has been published on their website.

It sets out their approach for a tender opportunity

planned to open in January for the 2025 Civil Legal Advice Contract to deliver specialist telephone advice as part of the publicly funded Civil Legal Advice Service.

[Read the headline intentions](#)

[Re-opening the Civil Contract tender process](#)

A further opportunity to tender for the 2024 Standard Civil Contract opened on Wednesday 4 December 2024. Current providers do not need to submit a response to this procurement process unless they wish to apply for new offices or categories of law. Applicants will be able to tender in all civil categories of law.

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

[Submit a Contracted Work and Administration \(CWA\) claim online](#)

For information on how CWA works online: how to claim, bulk loading, outcomes, new matter starts and guidance [read here](#).

Cross-Cutting News & Events

[Quarterly Legal Aid Statistics released for period up to 30 Sept 2024](#)



[Legal aid statistics England and Wales bulletin Jul to Sep 2024](#)
HTML

The MOJ has [published the latest set of ONS statistics](#) for the legal aid scheme.

The APPG on Access to Justice has published a detailed overview and analysis of the statistics. If you would like access to the APPG's quarterly analyses (and monthly bulletins) email our [Director of Parliamentary Affairs, Ro Jana](#) to join the mailing list.

[LAA payments to providers](#)

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

[Update your details with the LAA](#)

For solicitors and barristers: [how to submit any changes](#) in your details to the Legal Aid Agency.

Director of Legal Aid Casework annual report 2023 to 2024

The LAA has published the Director of Legal Aid Casework (DLAC) annual report covering the work carried out under this function.

[You can read it here.](#)

Civil and Criminal Financial Eligibility Tests

New legislation has been laid to disregard certain compensation payments from the financial eligibility tests for civil and criminal legal aid.

The legislation came into force on Wednesday 20 November 2024 and affects applications for legal aid made on or after this date.

[Read more about the new legislation](#)

Directory of providers

An updated list of legal aid providers by category of law [can be found here.](#)

Sector News & Events

Garden Court Chambers webinar - Community Care (Adults & Children) and Education Law: A Year in Review

Speakers from Garden Court Chambers' Community Care and Education Law Teams will bring attendees up to speed on key case law and legal developments over the last 12 months across:

- Adults' Health and Social Care
- Children's Health and Social Care
- Special Educational Needs and School Exclusions

For more information and to book your free place, [see here.](#)

Apply for criminal court costs from central funds (form PP1).

The form for private prosecutors to apply for the costs of magistrates' and Crown Court cases [can be found here.](#)



Free Webinar

PLP immigration training - Challenging unfairness in the immigration system

A series of six 90-min webinars presented over three days on Zoom

This event is for those seeking to challenge discrimination and unfairness in the immigration system, using strategic legal research and policy work. The topics cover socio-economic discrimination to asylum and trafficking, and a how-to on running systemic cases to challenge unfairness in the immigration system as a whole.

Presented in partnership with the Immigration Law Practitioners' Association (ILPA).

All sessions will be recorded for delegates to access post-event.

This training is intended for:

- Lawyers and advisers across immigration, human rights and public law
- Those working on immigration policy, including in the civil service, think tanks, and policy organisations, and researchers
- Frontline immigration organisations

LAPG News & Events

LAPG research project – non-chargeable time in legal aid work – PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

We are still on the look-out for participants for our non-chargeable time research project.

As reported in previous updates, LAPG is conducting a research project in an effort to capture the amount of time spent on non-chargeable tasks generated by undertaking casework and operating under a legal aid contract – so both casework and non-casework tasks. These tasks can be many and varied taking differing amounts of time. Some are conducted daily, some weekly and others less frequently, such as file reviews and audits.

The overarching aim of the project is to compile



robust empirical data on hidden or 'non-chargeable' costs of doing legal aid work, in order to influence policy in relation to legal aid funding and the operation of the scheme. We plan to share an anonymised analysis of the data that we capture with the MoJ and the LAA in order to demonstrate the time that legal aid providers spend on work that they cannot charge for. We have three research objectives:

1. Identify and quantify 'hidden' but unavoidable costs associated with legal aid contracts.
2. Analyse what tasks are intrinsically linked to the proper management of casework but are not currently claimable time in the Cost Assessment Guidance and Criminal Bills Assessment Manual.
3. Evaluate the complexity of the funding scheme and contractual framework and identify elements that may create complexity without adequate justification. This may include identifying of duplication of tasks required by legal aid contracts and regulatory or quality assurance requirements.

Having completed the pilot phase, we are now recruiting participants for the main phase of the research project and a number organisations have signed up and started recording their non-chargeable time for us. But, we still need a larger pool of legal aid providers to join our project.

We need to ensure that we have as wide a variety of types of providers as possible, so large, medium and small firms and not-for-profits, covering all areas of legal aid practice, including mixed practices who also carry out privately funded work.

Please get in touch with our Head of Learning and Development Andrea Shumaker (Andrea.Shumaker@lapg.co.uk) if you want to discuss getting involved. We really do need your help to try to tackle the enormous complexity, unpaid and wasted time associated with legal aid work.

New Toolkit - Introduction to Managing Family and Civil Legal Aid Contracts

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, Thinkifc, 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.

Training courses

****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 - 21st January 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 - 25th February 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 confirmed the dates for our 2025 Supervision Courses scheduled for 16th January, 13th March, 15th May, 10th July, 18th September and 25th November. You can book your place on any of the remaining 2025 training dates below:

[16TH JANUARY 2025](#)

[13TH MARCH 2025](#)

[15TH MAY 2025](#)

[10TH JULY 2025](#)

[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, 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.

So there we have it legal aiders, our final Update of 2024 (unless something comes up in the next week or so that really can't wait until the New Year).

Thank you to everyone who is still committed to legal aid. And, as we have said above, thank you for your ongoing support for our work. We are incredibly lucky to represent you, the very best of the legal profession doing the most important and impactful work. 2024 has ended with some encouraging green shoots of recovery, something we had hoped for but not expected this time last year. So we're feeling optimistic as we head into the festive period and we hope you can too.

Please, please, please, if you can, try to get some rest over the next couple of weeks. You have earned it and you deserve it. See you all next year!

Take care one and all,

Meri Kirihimete

Chris Minnoch, CEO [@ChrisLAPG](#)

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



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