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LAPG Member Update

Issue 6 of 2024

Review of Civil Legal Aid - Call for Evidence

Special LAPG Update on the MOJ's call for evidence about civil legal aid

LAPG draft response for members only

On 10 January the Ministry of Justice launched a [Call for Evidence](#) as part of the [Review of Civil Legal Aid](#) (RoCLA). It closes tomorrow, **21 February 2024**.

We have been preparing our response to the Call for Evidence and want to thank the many members who have sent us their thoughts and experiences and/or shared their own draft responses with us. While we are continuing to fine-tune our response, we thought it would be beneficial [to send out this draft for your comments](#). You are welcome to use our draft as a resource if you intend to make your own submission - just note that a number of sections will have additional content or be edited to some degree in our final submission (there are notes in the body of our draft indicating where some of these changes are likely to be made).

Over the last month we've reached out to members for input into our submission as we want to ensure that we reflect the views and experiences of as many legal aid practitioners as possible. We have received fantastic feedback, and as we know how busy you all are, we are extremely grateful for all the content. Many of you have also shared your clients' experiences, which are so important to capture and reflect in any policy document about the legal aid scheme. What good is a

legal aid scheme if it does not provide effective and practical access to your services and to the justice system?

We would like to include more examples from practitioners so our draft has a number of sections that can be amended to incorporate the views of all of you on the legal aid frontline. If anyone has had the chance to read the recent judicial review judgment on criminal legal aid funding, you will see that a great deal of emphasis was placed on the compelling evidence submitted by practitioners. The MoJ will be well-aware of the power and persuasiveness of first-hand accounts of the desolation wreaked by LASPO and other government 'reforms'. In particular it would be helpful to have your views, comments, suggestions and experiences in relation to the following:

- Page 10 - "Miscellaneous". Are there any headline issues that we have not mentioned albeit briefly in this section?
- Page 21 - "Quicker decision-making on legal aid applications and amendment requests". Can you give examples of delays in decision making and the effect of those delays?
- Page 32 - "Miscellaneous". Are there other examples from the misc. category, for example ASBI cases?
- Page 50 - Can anyone let us have a few examples of a legal aid hourly rate and compare with the private/CFA or other non-legal aid hourly rate for the same type of case?
- Page 52 - Could family lawyers email us with their views on any incentives or disincentives built into the Family Advocacy Scheme and High Cost Case scheme?
- Page 67 - Please can you give us examples of ways in which the county courts are broken, especially the difficulties posed to clients. And also please name any courts that have closed and the impact of this on your services and your clients.

You needn't send us detailed accounts - often the most impactful evidence is a short statement that sets out the issue and then explains what this means in practice for both lawyers and clients. Remember that the MoJ has spent a year analysing the issues, conducting research and taking evidence, so now the key is setting out what needs to change to make the system more sustainable for you, and more accessible for your clients. This should all feed into policy formulation that will go out for consultation in late spring or early summer.

Take care one and all,

Chris Minnoch, CEO [@ChrisLAPG](#)

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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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