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21/03/25

LAPG Member Update

Issue 9 of 2025

Welcome to the latest LAPG Member Update.

Civil Legal Aid News

- Civil legal aid fees consultation
- Review of Civil Legal Aid: data publications deep dive reports
- Civil Apply – get on board
- Civil fixer emails
- Change in the costs limit on CCMS to 25k for child abduction and wardship cases effective from the 17th March
- HLPAS 2025 tender
- Introducing the new process for civil means
- #HelpUsSayYes Tutorial: High cost family (HCF): One Counsel hourly rates case planning process: 25 March 2025
- New Mailbox for mental health certificated work

Criminal Legal Aid News

- Development of Apply for criminal legal aid service
- Prior authority for contempt and breach cases
- Secure file exchange update for crime providers
- HMPPS Bail Information Service
- DSCC Telephony Outage
- Getting your criminal applications right first time
- Claims for costs following an appointment under the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act

- SQE Access and Reinvestment Fund
- #HelpUsSayYes webinar: Commissioning team: Procurement Act changes: Guidance

Sector News and Events

- Inaugural PAMELA meeting – 12 June 2025
- PLP advanced JR training – 28-30 April 2025

LAPG News and Events

- LALY25 nominations are open!
- LAPG Membership – thank you for renewing for 2025
- New Online Course: Introduction to Mental Health, Mental Capacity & Community Care Legal Aid
- Introduction to Managing Family and Civil Legal Aid Contracts Toolkit
- Training Courses – 2025 Supervision Course dates; People Management; Introduction to Civil Legal Aid

Civil Legal Aid News

Civil legal aid fees consultation

The Ministry of Justice's [consultation](#) on proposals to increase fees for Housing & Debt and Immigration & Asylum work closes at 11.59pm today. The consultation also seeks views from all practitioners about the LAA's current contractual approach to remote working and office requirements.

[You can download our consultation response here](#)

We have worked hard to obtain the views of as many of our members and the wider legal aid community as possible through various methods of engagement and these are reflected in our response. We have gathered views in the following ways to ensure as robust and detailed a response as possible:

1. Detailed semi-structured interviews with a small set of legal aid providers who have either a Housing & Debt contract, an Immigration & Asylum contract, or both.
2. In a joint initiative with ILPA, HLPAs and LCN we devised a survey to obtain the views of a wide range of legal aid providers about the consultation proposals and discussion points and those views are included in our response.

raising concerns for many years about the volume of non-chargeable work generated by having a legal aid contract and conducting legal aid cases. We are seeking to quantify the work, understand what causes it and formulate suggestions on how it can be minimised. We believe that this non-chargeable work should be recognised by the MOJ when they are setting fee levels.

The MOJ has made it clear that this consultation is just the first step in the civil legal aid reform programme. In the context of regressive legal aid policy making over several decades, this consultation represents a very positive first step. We have made it clear that we look forward to working with the MOJ on the next steps to improve the legal aid system, and we remain fully committed to our ongoing work with the LAA to improve systems and processes

Although the consultation closes today, work to improve the legal aid scheme is a never-ending process. We continue to welcome feedback from our members on the reform of legal aid and will continue to ensure that your views are heard by the MoJ and LAA. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with kate.pasfield@lapg.co.uk.

Review of Civil Legal Aid: data publications deep dive reports

The Ministry of Justice has published the final seven reports from the Review of Civil Legal Aid (RoCLA). RoCLA was launched in January 2023 to examine the civil legal aid system in its entirety and improve the sustainability of civil legal aid provision.

There are seven Data Publication Deep Dives covering each of the following areas of civil legal aid:

- public law;
- clinical negligence;
- claims against public authorities;
- community care;
- family;
- mental health; and
- discrimination, education and welfare benefits.

These reports summarise key descriptive information about solicitors and barristers who carry out civil legal aid work. MoJ will use these alongside the other RoCLA reports to inform the policy-making emerging from RoCLA.

[The reports are available here](#) (alongside the data Deep Dives on Housing & Debt, and Immigration & Asylum, which were published in January).

You can now use the Apply for Civil Legal Aid service to:

- Apply for Domestic Abuse (except for Domestic Abuse protection orders), Section 8 and Special Children Act proceedings
- Apply for passported and non-passported clients (in the above cases only)
- Submit new applications (you will need to manage live cases using CCMS) (in the above cases only)
- Make emergency applications if using delegated functions (above cases only)

This service is now available to all providers undertaking this work. The service aims to be user-friendly, reducing time and effort for users. The service has been designed to make it easy and straightforward to make legal aid applications, with features like the ability to make links and copy information from submitted applications in the service, it will save you time and reduce the need for you to retype information you have already given. The LAA will only ask you for the information they need, reducing the time and effort it takes to apply. Users have said the 'layout is easy to follow', it's 'straightforward' and 'self-explanatory'.

If you would like to on-board for 'Apply for civil legal aid', email:

LAAapplyonboarding@justice.gov.uk.

The LAA will then take you through the on boarding process and get you started. They will ask you to provide the CCMS usernames and email addresses of all users you would like to on board.

Civil fixer emails

The LAA has asked us to remind our members to use their fixer services: the application fixer, civil claim fix, and high cost family fixer emails are available.

You can use all three services depending on whether the issue is with a civil legal aid application, bill or high cost family case. All three services aim to help the LAA to issue certificates or pay bills more quickly.

[You can find more information here.](#)

Change in the costs limit on CCMS to 25k for child abduction and wardship effective from the 17th March

The LAA has informed us that they have carried out a review of current costs limitations for Child Abduction and Wardship cases it has been agreed, following consultation and feedback, that the cost limit for the substantive certificate will increase from £5000 to £25000. Their review of the data shows the costs

costs on these cases can quickly escalate, meaning that costs incurred can frequently exceed the standard £5000 cost limit. These certificates are regularly granted to include representation at the final hearing, and this change will allow providers to focus on the case rather than seeking to amend the costs limit of the certificate.

What changes will you see?

When granting an initial application, CCMS will grant a cost limit of £25,000 for the cases listed in the table below.

It will apply to the following proceedings only:

Proceedings
CH001 - Child Abd/Custody – free - High Court
CH003 - App for wardship - High Court
CH002- App - Child Abduction/Custody Act 1985 - High Court

Existing Scope and Proceeding limitations will continue to apply.

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

Implementation Date:

This was effective from Monday 17th March 2025. New applications started and submitted from that date will have the new standard cost limit of £25,000. Existing certificates will remain at their current limits until an amendment is requested.

HLPAS 2025 tender

A reminder that the Housing Loss Prevention Advice Services (HLPAS) procurement process covering the below areas closes at **5pm on 25th March**. The tender is open to any interested party that can meet the minimum tender requirements.

Organisations are now able to submit bids to HLPAS work in the following areas to deliver Contract Work from 1 June:

- Kidderminster, Redditch, Worcester
- Slough
- Uxbridge
- Winchester

Organisations are also able to submit bids to HLPAS work in the following areas to deliver Contract Work from 1 September:

- Grimsby
- Guildford
- Lancaster
- Wigan
- Wolverhampton

[The LAA news story is here.](#)

Introducing a new process for civil means

The LAA's Civil Means Team have introduced a new process for requesting further information for business cases to help save you time. The process commenced on 1 March 2025. Applications can be submitted in Welsh following the LAA Welsh language scheme.

[You can read more about the process here.](#)

#HelpUsSayYes Tutorial: High cost family (HCF): One Counsel hourly rates case planning process: 25 March 2025

The LAA has asked us to promote this tutorial. This is an opportunity to book an online tutorial group session (max 10 people per group), with experienced LAA HCF case managers, which will offer an in-depth walkthrough of the One Counsel hourly rates case planning process.

To register:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/husy-tutorial-hcf-one-counsel-hourly-rates-4010713>

New Mailbox for Mental Health certificated work

The LAA have launched a new mailbox specifically for queries related to mental health certificated applications and amendments. The mailbox has been created to ensure queries are referred to the most appropriate caseworker as soon as possible. The mailbox address, which can be used with immediate effect, is:

mhulegalqueries@justice.gov.uk

Criminal Legal Aid News

Development of Apply for criminal legal aid service

functionality was released in November 2024 which has now been extended by the new outcome feature that allows providers to view the funding decision in the LAA online portal.

[Read more about Apply for criminal legal aid](#)

Prior authority for contempt and breach cases

The LAA's Magistrates Billing Team will now consider prior authority requests in contempt and breach of anti-social behaviour injunction cases. The new email address to send requests for prior authority in contempt and breach of part 1 injunction cases is CNTP.extensions@justice.gov.uk.

[Read more about prior authority](#)

Secure file exchange update for crime providers

A reminder that on 31 March 2025, the LAA will delete the 'Special Preparation' workspace on the secure file exchange (SFE) platform Galaxkey. If you use this workspace to upload documents.

[Read more about the SFE for crime providers](#)

HMPPS Bail Information Service

The HMPPS Bail Information Service (BIS) is being rolled out nationally, with recruitment underway to support its delivery at first and subsequent hearings. Contact the Probation Service for your bail information officer's details and service availability at your court.

General BIS enquiries: Bail-information-service@justice.gov.uk

DSCC Telephony Outage

The LAA has advised that the Defence Solicitor Contact Centres (DSCC) will be conducting annual business continuity testing on Tuesday 1st April 2025.

They say that whilst all effort has been made to minimise operational impacts, some disruption to service is to be expected due to the nature of the testing.

The details and impact are as follows:

Between the hours of 13.50 and 14.00 on 1st April, DSCC will implement a test of their emergency interactive voice response (IVR) messaging process with no telephony

call back.

If you call is non-urgent please consider not calling around these times or alternatively refer to the DSCC website. The DSCC website and email address will remain active throughout this testing.

If you have any concerns or require further information please feel free to contact Annemarie.joyce@justice.gov.uk

Getting your criminal applications right first time

The LAA is offering a webinar at 4pm on 1 April, from the National Criminal Applications Team (NCAT), which will focus on the top 4 most common reject reasons and give you hints and tips on how to avoid them.

[Reserve your space at the webinar](#)

Claims for costs following an appointment under the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act

A webinar at 5pm on 3 April from the LAA Criminal Cases Unit will focus on how to avoid rejects.

They will cover hints and tips on completing the claim forms including submitting your papers and the information you can provide.

[Reserve your space at the webinar](#)

Cross-Cutting Legal Aid News

SQE Access and Reinvestment Fund

The SRA has opened a fund that can cover the cost of SQE assessments for organisations that have a demonstrable track record of helping aspiring solicitors who face personal barriers to qualification.

[You can read about it further here on the SRA website.](#)

#HelpUsSayYes webinar: Commissioning team: Procurement Act changes: Guidance

- The LAA learning website link includes the slide pack and this is where the Q&A document will be uploaded in due course: [LAA learning website: #HUSY webinar recording: Procurement Act 2023 changes](#)
- The LAA You Tube channel has the webinar recording – please remember to like and subscribe!: [LAA YouTube channel: #HUSY webinar recording: Procurement Act 2023 changes](#)

Sector News and Events

Inaugural PAMELA meeting – 12 June 2025, from 6.30pm

We're delighted to announce the details of the inaugural event for [PAMELA, the new Peri-Menopausal and Menopausal Legal Aid Support Network](#). Kindly hosted by leading legal aid firm Hodge Jones & Allen, the event will bring people together from across the legal aid sector to share their experiences and hear from network founder Dr Laura Janes and writer and women's health expert Kate Muir.

The event will start with drinks, nibble and networking from 6.30pm.



From 7.00pm Dr Janes will introduce the network and women's health expert, documentary maker, and author [Kate Muir](#), who will discuss how perimenopause and menopause affects women at work, particularly in the legal aid sector. Kate will explain the symptoms, treatment and mental health effects of menopause - and how changing hormones affect our careers. Understanding menopausal changes in clients matters too, as well as signposting them to good advice.

The presentation and Q&A will be followed by drinks and networking.

[Register for your free place here](#)

PLP Advanced JR training – 28-30 April 2025

This series of six 90-minute webinars, presented over three days on Zoom, is designed for those who know how to do judicial review and want to up-skill. This course will provide insight and outlook across cutting-edge and key areas of practice in judicial review.

Who this training is for

- Academics and researchers in public law
- Policy people in Government or NGOs concerned with public law
- Law students

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

LAPG News and Events

LALY25 nominations are open!



A reminder that nominations are now open for the 2025 Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards. **Nominations close on 22 April 2025**, so now is the time to speak to colleagues and friends across the sector about putting together a submission for your legal aid hero.

For everything you need to know about the 2025 LALYs, including this year's categories, sponsors, details of the ceremony on 4 July 2025 and guidance for making a nomination, [visit our dedicated webpage](#).

LAPG Membership – Thank you for renewing for 2025

Thank you to all those who have renewed your membership for 2025. The team at LAPG gets a real boost every time an organisation renews as we really do believe that we can only do what we do if we have you behind us. You are not only providing us with the resources we need through your membership subscriptions, you are our eyes and ears at the legal aid coalface and our collective brains trust when it comes to pushing for improvements to the legal aid scheme.

Thank you for your continued commitment to legal aid and access to justice. We salute you all.

New Online Course: 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.

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

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:

- [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.

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 – 7th October 2025

With reference to SRA, legal aid, Lexcel and SQM requirements, participants will

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.

Supervision Courses

We have confirmed the dates for our 2025 Supervision Courses scheduled for 15th May, 10th July, 18th September and 25th November. You can book your place on any of the remaining 2025 training dates below:

[**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

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.

A huge thank you to everyone who contributed to our civil fees consultation response. Whether you completed the survey, took part in our non-chargeable research project, submitted to a grilling from Kate and I, or sent us your thoughts direct, you have all made a massive contribution to our response. Processes like this really do remind me that you are a committed, talented and seemingly indefatigable group of social justice champions. Now we just have to get the government to pay you at a rate that matches your expertise and your effort.

Take care one and all,

Chris Minnoch, CEO [@ChrisLAPG](#)

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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!



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