



**An overview of LAPPG's work in 2022 to improve the legal aid scheme, influence policy-makers and support those who deliver legal aid services.**

- In March, we published the [Legal Aid Census](#), the culmination of our research project about the health and viability of the legal aid workforce. The Census was designed to address the **lack of reliable data about current, former and aspiring legal aid practitioners**, which we believe has undermined government policy-making. The report contained analysis of 2500 survey responses by an independent panel of academics along with our recommendations to improve the legal aid scheme. The APPG has also been appointed an official training provider to the House of Commons, delivering courses to MPs and their caseworkers on the legal issues that matter to their constituents.
- We continued to provide secretariat support to the [All-Party Parliamentary Group on Legal Aid](#), this year building on the seminal work of the 2020/21 [Westminster Commission Inquiry into the Sustainability of Legal Aid](#) to influence those at the highest level in government. Along with supporting practitioners to engage with parliamentarians on the Criminal Legal Aid Review, the APPG directly engaged with Ministers across several departments through meetings and party conference events.
- Each year we bring practitioners together to celebrate the incredible impact of legal aid through the [Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year Awards](#). 2022 was the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this inspiring event, and a record 600 guests from across the legal aid world joined us [for a spectacular ceremony in central London](#). As our first opportunity to host the awards in-person since 2019, we pulled out all the stops to make this a night to remember. We run the awards on a non-profit making basis to ensure that all practitioners can be part of the LALY family. The buzz created by the LALYs, particularly on social media, significantly increases the profile of legal aid, reinforcing a sense of community and raising morale brilliant amongst the practitioners delivering such vital services.
- As an **official contract consultee body** (along with The Law Society and Bar Council) the government must consult us on all proposed contract and policy changes. 2022 was an important year for policy work, with mammoth consultations arising out of both the [Criminal Legal Aid Review](#) and [Means Test Review](#). Our efforts to represent practitioners' views continue as these two processes rumble on into 2023. A wide range of other important consultations occurred in 2022 and we submitted responses in relation to the [CJC's review of costs](#), and LAA operational and contract consultations on the Housing Loss Prevention Advice Service, the Early Legal Advice Pilot, Pre-Charge Engagement, Mental Health category specific rules, and Immigration and Asylum specification changes and fees.
- We lobbied the LAA to **maintain the sensible contingency measures** introduced to support providers during Covid-19 lockdowns, such as flexibility over office opening hours, remote working, supervision and postal applications. Some of the measures became amendments to the Standard Terms of legal aid contracts, and others will be incorporated into future contracts.
- Each year we deliver **training and development courses** tailored to the needs of frontline legal aid practitioners, managers and support staff. We delivered an intensive practice management course, a management programme aimed at the NFP advice sector, held regular workshops on LAA supervision, and improved our online introduction to legal aid course for new practitioners. We're developing new courses covering a wide range of legal aid practice areas and an introductory course for those new to management. We implemented an amazing online training platform, diversified our training delivery methods to meet a wider range of learning styles, and introduced alumni programmes to enable delegates to maintain peer-to-peer support networks. Over **250 practitioners participated in our training courses** in 2022.



- We **significantly improved our website and social media presence** in 2022 to broaden our reach and improve our ability to interact with new audiences. We launched an Instagram account and polished-up our presence on Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook. Our website took big strides forward, with expanded content, improved design and discoverability, the introduction of an e-commerce platform, and the development of a ‘members-only’ area to support legal aid practitioners (to be launched in early 2023).
- In 2022 **we received tremendous support from our funders** – The Legal Education Foundation, Therium Access, Baring Foundation and AB Charitable Trust – giving us the resources to expand our training services and research capacity, and improving our ability to support legal aid providers to deliver their services and develop their team members.
- We have continued to work with the LAA on improvements to processes and decision-making through the crime and civil **Contract Consultative Groups**, the Process Efficiency Team and a wide range of ad hoc meetings and work strands. In 2022 we also enabled practitioners from a wide range of disciplines to meet with the LAA to discuss how contracts, specifications and guidance could be improved **to make legal aid practice more effective** and to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and risk.
- We have continued to lobby Ministers and the senior team at the MOJ about **the sustainability of the civil legal aid sector**. A formal Review was **‘announced’** in autumn 2022, when contracts were extended to enable the LAA to consider any changes that arise from the Review. While we await publication of the MOJ’s plans and terms of reference for the Review, this will be a major element of our policy work in 2023 given the fragile state of the legal aid provider base.
- We **worked directly with practitioners and membership bodies** to tackle the issues that matter to frontline professionals and the clients they strive to assist. Examples include our work with HLPAs, LCN and a number of other groups to campaign against the expansion of the Fixed Recoverable Costs regime, and our work with family specialists to address the LAA’s approach to Very High Cost Cases.
- We engage with the MOJ on the future of legal aid policy through the **Legal Support Advisory Group**, and we are represented on the Civil Justice Council and a sub-group of the Administrative Justice Council. We sit on all of the **government advisory groups** set up to advise and shape government proposals around the means test, the criminal legal aid review, the early advice pilot and other key work strands that arose from the Legal Support Action Plan. Our role is to ensure that practitioner voices are heard so that we can safeguard and improve legal aid and increase client access.
- We have continued to **answer queries from LAPG Member organisations** on operational issues, with those queries **feeding directly into our policy work** with the LAA and MOJ. We engage with MOJ and LAA through the range of formal and ad hoc processes, as set out above.
- Members receive **regular email updates** on operational and policy issues, news and events. These come out about once a week and keep practitioners informed about all things legal aid and access to justice.
- We support Members with **recruitment**, advertising vacancies for free on our website and on social media. We also **encourage the next generation of legal aid lawyers** through our work with Young Legal Aid Lawyers and with a range of universities and colleges.

Our work wouldn’t be possible without the input of the **legal aid champions across our Membership**, and the support we receive across all areas of our work from of the practitioners, managers and policy specialists that make up our **Board of Directors and Advisory Committee**.