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LAPG Member Update

Issue 2 of 2022

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Legal Aid News & Events

LAPG HPCDS consultation response and the Early Legal Advice Pilot

On 20 January 2022 we published our response to this interesting consultation on the future of Housing Possession Court Duty Schemes. We think it is interesting because it shows genuine intent from the MOJ to improve the sustainability of HPCDS schemes. However, as set out in our

Statutory Instruments

[UK Parliament](#) > [Business](#) > [Legislation](#) > [Statutory Instruments](#) > [SI 2022](#)

Early Legal Advice Pilot Scheme Order 2022

SI 2022, laid on 19 January 2022

response, we have a number of serious reservations about the proposed model and about the MOJ's unwillingness to address the broader, systemic issues undermining client access and the viability of providers. We make the point that without addressing these wider issues, the relatively modest proposals within this consultation will do little to ensure HPCDS schemes are more effective or more sustainable.

[Read our full response here](#)

We anticipate a great deal of ongoing dialogue with the MOJ about future arrangements for HPCDS services and how to improve the sustainability of legal aid providers more generally. This consultation must also be viewed in conjunction with the MOJ's plans to pilot and assess the effectiveness of early legal advice for linked social welfare law problems. On 19 January 2022 the MOJ laid a new statutory instrument before parliament to enable the pilot: [The Early Legal Advice Pilot Scheme Order 2022](#). The instrument has not yet been considered by the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments but it is anticipated that this will happen in February. Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State with responsibility for legal aid, Lord Wolfson, has described the pilot thus:

The Early Legal Advice Pilot is one of several pilots which the Government committed to in its Legal Support Action Plan (2019), which set out a range of actions to be taken forward to ensure that legal aid continues to be available and effective for the most vulnerable. The pilot is designed to test the expansion of legal aid to an area of social welfare, demonstrate the possible benefits of advice in encouraging early resolution, and quantify the downstream benefits of early resolution to Government, individuals and other stakeholders such as local authorities. These objectives were developed in response to the Post-Implementation Review of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 ("LASPO").

In a nutshell, the SI amends LASPO to enable a small cohort of providers (in this case in Manchester and Middlesbrough) to deliver a fixed amount of advice to housing clients on debt and welfare benefits issues (bringing these issues back into scope in very limited circumstances). The advice will also be non-means and non-merits tested for the purposes of the pilot. The stated aim of the pilot is to test whether early provision of legally aided advice in these areas of law helps to encourage early resolution of certain housing,

welfare benefit and debt issues (reducing homelessness long-term).

We have already raised numerous concerns with MOJ about the model, the remuneration and the location of the pilot, but not all of these concerns have been taken on board. We are seeking further clarification from the MOJ about how the pilot will work in practice and how it will be evaluated and will update you as soon as we can.

In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns about the pilot [please contact us](#) to discuss them.

Criminal Legal Aid Review: APPG meeting and Law Society webinars

APPG on Legal Aid meeting

Following the publication of [Sir Christopher Bellamy's Criminal Legal Aid Independent Review report](#) in December 2021, the government has committed to responding by the end of March 2022. The report and recommendations have generated a great deal of debate across the sector about what might happen next for criminal legal aid. The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Legal Aid will be hosting a meeting on 9 February 2022 to consider the CLAIR report. The Minister with responsibility for criminal legal aid, James Cartlidge MP, will be speaking along with representatives from a range of practitioner groups.

CLAIR - where do we go from here?

Location: Room O of Portcullis House

Date and Time: Tuesday 9th Feb – 16:00 – 17:30

Confirmed speakers:

- Minister James Cartlidge MP
- Shadow Justice Minister Afzal Khan MP
- I.Stephanie Boyce , President of The Law Society
- Daniel Bonich, Chair of the Criminal Law Solicitors Association
- Jo Sidhu QC, Chair of the Criminal Bar Association
- Hesham Puri, President of the London Criminal Courts Solicitors' Association



The All-Party Parliamentary
Group on Legal Aid

The meeting will be chaired by James Daly MP, vice-chair of the APPG on Legal Aid.

To register your interest in attending please email LAPG's Head of Parliamentary Affairs, [Rohini Teather](#).

Law Society webinars

The Law Society is running two webinars to help practitioners better understand the independent report and the likely government response:

What CLAIR Means For You

[Wed 9 Feb 2022](#) (10-11am)

[Mon 22 Feb 2022](#) (2-3pm)

The Criminal Legal Aid Review has concluded and Sir Christopher Bellamy has published his report which includes 19 recommendations for changes to the criminal legal aid system. This webinar will discuss the recommendations; the possible ways in which they might be implemented, and potential impacts on legal aid providers.

LAA opens tender for contract to administer the SQM

From the LAA on 27 January 2022:

A tender opens on 27 January 2022 to deliver auditing services for the Specialist Quality Mark.

The tender is open to any interested party that can meet the minimum tender requirements. We are seeking to award one contract for the delivery of this work across England and Wales.

We are also updating the SQM standard and SQM guidance. These changes will come into effect on 1 October 2022.

Timescales

- tender opens on 27 January 2022
- deadline for submitting tenders is 5pm on 10 March 2022
- services under the new contract will begin on 1 October 2022



Legal Aid
Agency

What is the SQM?

The SQM is the organisational quality standard owned by the LAA. It is designed to ensure providers of legal services:

- are well managed
- give good levels of client care
- deliver good quality advice through appropriate systems

It is a requirement for legal aid contract holders to hold either the SQM or the Law Society's equivalent 'Lexcel' accreditation.

Where can I find out more?

Detailed information on the tender is available in the 'Information for Applicants' document on our tender pages.

Information on the updates to the SQM standard and SQM guidance can be found on the 'Legal Aid Agency quality standards' page on our website.

Further information

[Specialist quality mark service from October 2022](#) – to download 'Information for Applicants' document

[Legal Aid Agency quality standards](#)

Sector News & Events

Justice First Fellowship scheme opens applications for 2023 host organisations

A very exciting announcement from our good friends at The Legal Education Foundation:

Applications are now open to organisations interested in hosting a Justice First Fellow in 2023.

Next year will see the 9th cohort of trainee solicitors take up coveted places in social justice organisations across the UK. The Legal Education Foundation are looking for 15-20 organisations to support these Fellows. Applications will be accepted for both training



The
Legal
Education
Foundation

contract and SQE routes to qualification. Charitable organisations who wouldn't be eligible to host a solicitor trainee are also encouraged to get in touch with us and discuss their suitability to host in partnership with a legal advice provider who can provide the required legal supervision. This is an approach that is working well in the current cohorts of Fellows.

The JFF programme has elements which work to benefit both the host organisation and the Fellow. It consists of a grant covering training and supervision costs for the two years of a Fellow's training contract; bespoke training for Fellows and hosts including fundraising, project management and self-care; and access to an ever-growing network of JFF alumni and legal advice providers.

BBC Children in Need continue their support this year and so applications from potential hosts with a focus on child law are especially encouraged.

Applications remain open until 5pm on 30th March. Read more about the programme [here](#). We would encourage potential hosts to get in touch to talk about the programme and their suitability before submitting an application.

Please share with your network or [contact us here](#).

***As the Fellowship and alumni network continues to grow we are pleased to open recruitment for a JFF Manager. This new role will be central to the continued success of the programme. Please share amongst your networks. Applications for this post will close on 31st January. [Read more here](#). ***

Upcoming events from Public Law Project



Public
Law
Project

PLP has an interesting series of events planned for the first quarter of this year. Here's a quick summary:

[Funding and costs in public law](#)

1 - 11 February 2022

Practical, bite-size seminars online over two weeks, all sessions recorded and available ASAP after live event for delegates.

Who should attend?

Barristers, solicitors, paralegals, and some advisers, and anyone tasked with legal strategy in an organisation with a public law contract, or an NGO / charity using the law for the benefit of their clients.

Legal aid ECF training

3 – 4 February 2022

PLP is offering live, online skills-based workshops training people to make Legal Aid Exceptional Case Funding. All sessions will be recorded and available to delegates post-event.

PLEASE NOTE: This training is included in the ticket for PLP's Costs and Funding event. If you have booked for Funding, or Costs and Funding, you do not need to book another ticket for this training.

Who should attend?

Any lawyer, paralegal, adviser, advocate or law student making, or intending to make, ECF applications on behalf of clients, whether as part of a clinic, pro bono scheme, or in a legal practice setting. Legal aid lawyers whose clients are currently out of legal aid scope, but meet the legal aid means test and may fit the criteria of ECF.

The Human Rights Act Government consultation

16 February 2022

The Government's HRA consultation closes on 8 March. The consultation proposes major changes to the operation of the HRA and follows the Independent Human Rights Act Review (IHRAR) led by Sir Peter Gross. Public Law Project are convening a day of panels to assist organisations and individuals across civil society, Government and private bodies in Wales to consider their response. PLP's main focus is on the proposals that would affect how people can enforce their legal rights and hold public authorities to account.

Online Judicial Review Academy

21 – 24 March 2022

A complete course, run in short (1hour +) sessions over 4 days (21-24 March). All sessions are

recorded and will be circulated with delegates ASAP after the training concludes.

Who should attend:

- Junior and trainee lawyers, advisers, advocates and anyone likely to be involved in judicial review claims.
- Anyone responsible for legal policy in NGOs or Government, or those tasked with Government decision making.
- Those working in campaigning organisations with a legal strategy and
- those representing and advising marginalised groups in society

LAPG Training & Support



It's time to renew your organisation's membership for 2022

As you know, LAPG Membership runs from January to December so we are now reaching out to all member organisations to start the renewal process. This year, given the unprecedented pressures facing you all, we have once again frozen fees, after reducing them by 10% last year. If you renew before 28 February 2022 you will also benefit from the Early Bird discount.

Number of fee earners	Early Bird Fee (runs to 28.02.22)	Standard Fee (from 01.03.22)
1 – 5 fee earners	£150.00	£175.00
6 – 10 fee earners	£225.00	£265.00
11 – 20 fee earners	£325.00	£380.00
21 – 30 fee earners	£425.00	£520.00
31 – 50 fee earners	£530.00	£605.00
51+ fee earners	£620.00	£700.00
Non-contract holding rate	£250.00	£315.00

To download the membership renewal form or for more information on the renewal process please [visit the Membership page of our website](#).

If you have any queries about LAPG membership or the renewal process, please contact our ever-helpful Operations Officer, [Anna Neira Quesada](#).

Our work in 2021

It was an exhausting and challenging year, but with your support 2021 was a success in terms of our three core objectives: influencing policy-makers to improve legal aid; providing support to practitioners on operational issues; and fostering a community of legal aid practitioners. For an overview of our work in 2021 [see here](#).

For more detail on our influencing work, why not follow the APPG on Legal Aid over on Twitter or sign up to the APPG's bulletin by contacting [Ro Teather, Head of Parliamentary Affairs](#). For a sneak peek at what you can expect, take a look at last month's bulletin looking at the [CLAIR report here](#).

LAPG's practitioner-focused training courses

For full details of our current and upcoming courses, visit the [Courses page of our website](#).



Supervision

Our next online Supervision Courses take place on 14 & 21 January 2021. 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.

[JANUARY 2022 COURSE - BOOK YOUR PLACE HERE](#)

We have now scheduled courses for March (10 & 25) and June (10 & 17) 2022.

[MARCH 2022 COURSE - BOOK YOUR PLACE HERE](#)

[JUNE 2022 COURSE - BOOK YOUR PLACE HERE](#)

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.

To subscribe for just £99 please email [Anna Neira Quesada](#).

The Certificate in Practice Management

Focussed primarily on the needs of managers and supervisors in private practice, the LAPG CPM covers key strategic and management issues over 5 full-day online workshops:

- Session 1: Financial Management
- Session 2: Business Planning and Risk Management
- Session 3: Marketing and Communications (a.m.) & Legal Aid Contracting (p.m.)
- Session 4: Equality and Diversity & Leadership
- Session 5: Managing People

We have now set the dates for the 2022 course and will soon be opening up the booking process. If you would like to know more about this course, or to reserve your place, contact [Anna Neira Quesada](#).

The Management & Leadership Programme

Now being delivered under the auspices of our recently launched Management & Leadership Hub, this course focusses on the management requirements of those in the NfP sector. We are currently redesigning this course and the 2022 version will be launched soon.

How are we almost a whole month into 2022 already?? That's almost 8.33% of the year gone in a flash.

Please do get in touch if you want to discuss anything in this update. We're also always open to suggestions from members about content for our update so please let us know if you have any thoughts, or have news or events to share with other practitioners.

Have a wonderful weekend all,

Chris Minnoch, CEO [@ChrisLAPG](#)

Follow LAPG on Twitter [@WeAreLAPG](#)

[#WeAreLegalAid](#)

28/01/22

#WEARELEGALAID



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 Practitioners Group

2021

LEGAL AID
LAWYER
OF THE YEAR AWARDS

19th year



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