



Dear Members of the Legal Aid Community,

We know the crisis in legal aid is real - but we need your help to prove it.

As Government navigates the worst recession on record, we are determined that justice must not be an afterthought. Our organisations represent those on the legal aid frontline and we are calling for every practitioner working in publicly funded law to take part in the 2021 Legal Aid Census. We are asking every solicitor, barrister, legal executive, paralegal, caseworker, practice manager and those looking to enter the profession (and those who have already left it) to stand up and be counted.

We are asking you to give us just a few minutes of your time to take part in this unique survey, which will help shape legal aid policy for years - possibly decades - to come.

We all know that the crisis with legal aid did not start with the pandemic - and it won't end with it, either. Successive governments have failed to address existing problems in the justice system, as years of cuts and underfunding take their toll. There are now just over 2000 organisations across England and Wales with a legal aid contract – a massive reduction in client access in the last decade – and this erosion of access to justice shows no sign of waning.

That is why we are asking for your support to provide the detailed, robust evidence we need to show the current financial and emotional health of the organisations and individuals doing this vital work.

[You can access the Legal Aid Census here](#)

Legal Aid Census data will be analysed over the summer and the findings published in the autumn in time for the Treasury Spending Review and to feed into both Sir Christopher Bellamy's Independent Review of Criminal Legal Aid, and the Westminster Commission Inquiry into the Sustainability of Legal Aid, co-ordinated by the APPG on Legal Aid.

We know there can be no 'levelling up' in this country without a properly funded, sustainable justice system. That is why we, the undersigned, are urging you all to take part in LAPG's unique Legal Aid Census, so we can make the strongest possible case to government of the need for urgent reform of legal aid.

Yours sincerely,

Chilli Reid, Executive Director, **AdviceUK**

Claire Green, Chair, **Association of Cost Lawyers**

Hannah Perry and Siobhan Kelly, co-chairs, **Association of Lawyers for Children**

Rikki Garg, Chair, **Association of Prison Lawyers**



Black
Barristers'
Network





Natasha Shotunde, Chair, **Black Barristers' Network**

Joe Mensah-Dankwah, Serving Director of the **Black Solicitors Network**

Daniel Bonich, Chair, **Criminal Law Solicitors Association**

Cyrus Larizadeh QC, Chairman, **Family Law Bar Association**

Simon Mullings and Marina Sergides, Co-Chairs of **Housing Law Practitioners Association**

Sonia Lenegan, Legal Director, **Immigration Law Practitioners' Association**

Julie Bishop, Director, **Law Centres Network**

Manda Banerji Chair, **Law Society Junior Lawyers Division**

Mark Troman, President, **London Criminal Court Solicitors' Association**

Sue James, Director, **Legal Action Group**

Nicola Mackintosh QC (Hon) and Jenny Beck QC (Hon), co-chairs, **Legal Aid Practitioners Group**

Kate Tyrrell, Chair, **Mental Health Lawyers Association**

Jo Hickman, Director, **Public Law Project**

Elspeth Thomson and Emma Cordock, Legal Aid Committee co-chairs, **Resolution**

Mark Bowden, Head of Legal Services and Chris Walton, Deputy Head of Legal Services, **Shelter**

Derek Sweeting QC, Chair, **The Bar Council**



Public Law Project

