

Dear Legal Aid Group Member,

Myself and fellow LAG executive committee member Bob Baker attended the above bi-monthly meeting of the Civil Contract Consultative Group with other representative bodies from the provider community last month. Bob has kindly prepared a report on the main points to note arising from the meeting:

## **1 . CCMS**

The CCMS new portal was reported to be up and running and performing in a much more stable manner than the previous version. It has been tested for up to 5,000 users at the same time but so far has only had up to 500 users on at any one time.

Of the 50,000 registered users only 13,000 have so far updated their passwords and log in details and providers are asked to review the registered users in their organisation and remove anyone who is no longer working for them or no longer requires access to the CCMS portal. Regular reviews of the registered users were also suggested to try and keep the numbers at a sensible and maintainable level.

Passwords are recommended but not to use email addresses as this causes a lot of confusion. Multiple users (Costs Lawyers mainly) need to ensure that they use unique passwords and security information to avoid duplication or confusion.

There is a Survey on CCMS which the LAA would be pleased for users to complete so that there is some feedback on the new system.

Further changes to the Portal are to be released over the next few weeks in relation to merits and amendments and a document upload facility is to be added to requests for Prior authority.

The legalaidtraining.justice.gov.uk training website, which was introduced in late 2012 regarding legal aid LASPO, is to close. The [CCMS Training Website](#) (which includes the CCMS Quick Guides) will remain as present and some of the content on legalaidtraining.justice.gov.uk will be revised and moved to the Gov.uk site. Entry level training material for new users is also promised.

It was report that case outcome processing and responses to queries are reported to be taking 2 days now and billing claims are taking 6 days to turn around.

## **2 . Tenders**

Tenders are now being sought for the new 2018 contract. Firms are asked to ensure that there are at least 3 people registered from each organisation to receive emails and deal with questions arising during the process. The LAA is aware that in smaller organisations if someone is away on holiday this can lead to either delays or at worst missing some crucial deadline for supplying required material so the more people who can receive and deal with email traffic the better.

Those tendering are reminded that the cut-off date means just that and any submissions after the cut-off date and time will not be processed at all. The best advice is to submit as soon as you can even if you make amendments after submissions as it is possible to access the submissions and make adjustments at any time before the cut-off point.

A reminder was given that it is required to complete both Selection Questionnaires (SQ) (previously Pre-Qualification Questionnaire) and the Invitation to Tender (ITT). There is a helpful relevant

Information for Applicants (IFA) which can be printed off to refer to when completing the bid, and which gives the guidance very clearly as to exactly what is required before any forms are completed.

Bidders can go back into Bravo and amend and resubmit their bid until the deadline. Once the deadline closes, the tender taken will be the last saved tender document. The deadline *time* is 5pm this time.

### 3. ECF

Exceptional Case Funding applications are now reported to be granted at the rate of 50% of all applications and this is a significant increase from the initial levels after the scheme was introduced.

### 4. Grenfell Claims

There is a special arrangement as to the requirement for production of evidence as to means for 3 months for clients who have been victims of the Grenfell Tower disaster. Claims arising from the disaster are means tested but the LAA accepts that where all evidence has been destroyed discretion is required on their part as to the 3 months evidence they will accept. There is also discretion about the use of donated funds that such applicants might have received from the various disaster funds which are not taken into account in any application for funding. However, providers are reminded that evidence of means after this date is still required, although issues arising from correspondence not being received by those accommodated in hotels etc. can be taken into account.

Regards,

Paul Seddon  
ACL Legal Aid Group Chair



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