



24 June 2025

Dear Provider,

Thank you for your continued flexibility and constructive collaboration with us whilst we navigate the challenges posed by the criminal attack on our systems.

From 27 June 2025, the Legal Aid Agency (LAA) will introduce enhanced business continuity arrangements to support you in delivery.

Our main priority continues to be ensuring access to justice and making sure legal aid providers receive payment. These strengthened measures are intended to support providers, ease administrative pressures, and help prevent an unsustainable backlog of cases from growing while contingency arrangements remain in effect.

In order to allow providers time to familiarise themselves with the new arrangements, we are sharing detailed guidance setting out the new contingency processes for Crime and Civil applications, how to complete forms, and the support available from LAA.

[Civil Legal Aid Contingencies from 27 June 2025](#)

[Criminal Legal Aid Contingencies from 27 June 2025](#)

These changes will be reflected on the incident webpage on Friday 27 June. Please note that until then, the current contingency measures on GOV.UK will continue to apply. We have consulted with the Law Society, LAPG and Bar Council in creating this guidance and are grateful for their constructive input.

See below for a summary of key measures.

Civil Legal Aid

For the period that these arrangements remain in place:

- Emergency representation time limits will be extended to 16 weeks and the default costs limitation set at £4,500.
- Initial means and merits decisions will continue to be made by the LAA via emailed forms, however providers will now be empowered to amend substantive certificates. This includes changes to the level of service, proceedings, scope and costs up to a maximum of £7,900 (or already existing £25,000 limit for certain proceedings e.g. care). If an existing substantive certificate already has a higher cost limit then this will remain.
- Providers will have the ability under delegated functions to handle non-contentious withdrawals.
- The LAA will honour all uses of Delegated Functions which comply with the provisions of the relevant Contract and any applicable regulations. If it is determined that the merits criteria are not met at the

point the LAA assesses the application, an embargo and/or discharge of the emergency certificate will take place from that date. Providers will be able to claim for work up to that date.

- Client contribution payments will be waived for existing and new cases and will not be required to be paid once services are restored.

Criminal Legal Aid

For the period that these arrangements remain in place:

- Providers will have the ability to complete means and merits (interest of justice) assessments using their delegated functions, for summary only offences and either-way offences in the magistrates' court (and other incidental proceedings) only where the client is passported, unemployed, or under 18. Providers will be able to issue representation orders for these cases using a template provided by the LAA.
- Providers will have the power to withdraw a representation order in the magistrates' courts (but LAA's power to review withdrawal decisions will be extended to cover decisions made by the LAA and by providers).
- Providers will be empowered to make decisions about representation for committals for Crown Court sentence for either-way offences where the substantive proceedings have taken place in the magistrates' court to providers.

To help providers to focus their time on implementing these contingencies, LAA contract managers will work with those providers who have an annual visit currently planned for July and August to see if that timing still works for those providers, and to consider deferring if not. We will at all times continue to act within the terms of the Contract we hold with providers.

Providers should please retain on file the information used to support their decision making, including as covered within the guidance and forms. This may be subject to audit to help us to identify where providers need additional support and to assess the effectiveness of the contingency. Where we identify that providers

require additional support to accurately understand or implement the guidance, we will in the first instance work with them to provide that support, rather than take action under the contract or to recoup payment.

In such instances where taking contract action would be reasonable and proportionate, such as where a pattern of dishonesty is shown, this will be done based on the individual circumstances. The LAA promotes a zero-tolerance approach to fraud.

The incident webpage will be updated with the new guidance on Friday 27. The current FAQ webpage will be archived, and a new FAQ created so that we can ensure all the new processes are correctly reflected, and information can be easily located.

Support is available from the Customer Service Team should providers need any assistance.