



10 September 2025

Dear Provider,

For both crime and civil providers, this email includes updates to FAQs on SILAS, regarding third party declarations and use of authenticator apps; please see those at the end of this email. Otherwise, today's email focuses on the upcoming restoration of our crime services.

Below are further details of our expected timeline for phased system restoration. This is subject to the testing and acceptance, security and legal criteria being met. Our focus for restoration is putting safety, legality and responsibility at the heart of decision-making, which will ultimately determine the stand up of systems.

- In mid-September, Crime Apply and Submit a Crime Form will be available for access. Subject to testing and security reviews, we hope to restore access in week commencing 15 September 2025. (Next week)
- From mid to late September, Civil Apply and CCMS will be available for access.

- Services relating to functionality previously provided by CWA are expected to return from October.

We are continuing to engage with representative bodies to understand your experiences and help us shape the steps to system restoration in a way which supports you most effectively. We are grateful for their input as we have developed the guidance below.

## **Crime Restoration**

### **When will restoration happen?**

We expect to restore access to Crime Apply and Submit a Crime Form to providers during the week of **15 September 2025**. The specific date of launch is dependent on final testing being successful, including security reviews.

This will involve LAA restoring the platforms you are familiar with, but through our new Sign in to Legal Aid Services (SiLAS) platform – this is the replacement to Portal that you will have used previously.

### **What will I need to do to access Crime Apply and Submit a Crime Form (NSCC)?**

Users for Contracted Providers will receive an activation email from the email address [laa.account.activation@notifications.service.gov.uk](mailto:laa.account.activation@notifications.service.gov.uk) with the title 'Sign in to legal aid services – activate your account'. Please follow the instructions within the email to complete the activation. You will then be able to sign into SiLAS and should see the options to access Crime Apply and Submit a Crime Form.

Contracted Providers have identified their Administrators when submitting organograms for us to create SiLAS

accounts. These Provider Administrators will need to grant each user in their organisation (the users who have been listed on the organogram sent to the LAA) with the correct permissions, in order for them to access the correct systems and permission groups. A user guide will be shared via email and on the Legal Aid Agency training and support website prior to going live to instruct Provider Admins as to how to do this.

### **What will be different about Crime Apply and Submit a Crime Form (NSCC)?**

These platforms will look and feel as they did prior to the outage. The processes to submit, update and complete applications will be the same as prior to the outage for both providers and LAA staff.

We know that the security and stability of our systems is important to you. To support security measures over the initial restoration of services, platforms will have temporary restricted operating hours. For crime providers, this will mean you will have access to Crime applications initially between **0700-1900 on weekdays only**. This is to ensure that there is appropriate digital support available to monitor platforms as part of our security measures. This is hoped to be a temporary measure, and we will review the hours of operation after the first week of systems being available. We will provide updates ahead of CCMS restoration, on any change to the hours of operation for SiLAS.

### **Will there be any change for Claim for Crown Court Defence (CCD)?**

Please note CCD is already live and currently doesn't require SILAS to login. In the future this may be integrate with SILAS, but we will consult with representative bodies on when and how this is done.

## **When will the current contingency measures end and how long do I have to prepare for this transition?**

Information on Business Continuity Measures will continue to be hosted on the GOV.uk website here: [Legal Aid Agency cyber security incident - GOV.UK](#)

As Business Continuity Measures are stood down, this will be highlighted via email and on the GOV.uk website, with notice given prior to the change. We will continue to provide updates to you via the weekly provider email and any urgent updates will be sent as individual communications.

The following changes to submission processes following the restoration of Crime Apply and/or Submit a Crime Form:

### **Delegated functions during transition**

For the remainder of September, in order to effectively manage the return to normal operations, we ask that providers continue self-granting Representation on Summary only, Either way and Prescribed Proceedings cases in the Magistrates' Court or the Youth Court, where the defendant is on a passported benefit, unemployed or is a Youth.

### **Crime Apply**

For Crime Apply applications, we will continue to allow submissions via the email contingency route for **two weeks following system restoration**. Specific dates will be confirmed alongside system launch. This is to

help with the transition from manual to digital processes for both providers and LAA staff.

After two weeks we will only accept new submissions via Crime Apply. Please note that applications submitted via email will **not** be uploaded onto Crime Apply, therefore any Post Submission Evidence applications will still need to be submitted via email.

Please note that any **rejected applications** that remain outstanding at the end of this two week period will need to be submitted via Crime Apply. Please include all of the information and evidence in your submission and a note with regards to the date the client first instructed you. We will then process this application in line with the below date stamp rules.

### **Non-Standard Crime Claims**

For Non-Standard Crime Claims (**CRM 4** - application for prior authority to incur disbursements in criminal cases, **CRM 5** - application for extension of upper limit) we will be returning to **digital submissions only** once Submit a Crime Form is restored. This means that once you have regained access to Submit a Crime Form you should please begin using it as the sole method of submission.

If you currently have outstanding contingency forms to submit please do so before the system goes live.

Please note that the **CRM 7** – “non-standard fee contract work assessment process” will revert back to the standard process whereby claims can be made either by the digital system or by sending the claim via the post.

## **Date Stamping**

In order to support the clear understanding of how cases will be date stamped during this period, the following guidance will apply:

- 1.** For any application where the solicitor was instructed **prior** to the date of restoration of Crime Apply, we will follow the contingency date stamping arrangements – solicitors will need to clearly indicate on the application the date that you were first instructed, we will then back date the representation order to the date provided.
- 2.** For any case where they are instructed **on or after** the date of restoration of Crime Apply, we will revert to the original date stamping arrangements - Please refer to the Criminal Legal Aid Manual - Section 3.3 Dating the Representation Order for guidance on this.
- 3.** For any applications where the solicitor was instructed during the **weekend** when the service is not available, the solicitor must submit the application on the next available day (Monday) with the request to backdate the date stamp.

### **Where can I find guidance on accessing and using Crime Apply and Submit a Crime Form (NSCC)?**

For guidance on initial access to SiLAS, a user guide will be added to our Legal Aid Agency training and support website prior to go live.

For guidance on how to use Crime Apply and Submit a Crime Form including how to submit and update an application, there is no change. You can continue to find the guidance on our learning platform: [Criminal legal aid – Legal Aid Learning](#)

## **What do I do if I have a technical issue with accessing or using Crime Apply or Submit a Crime Form (NSCC)?**

If you encounter a technical issue with logging into SiLAS please refer to the troubleshooting guidance which will be added to our Legal Aid Agency training and support website once we are ready to go live.

If you encounter a technical issue with accessing or using Crime Apply or Submit a Crime Form please contact the Customer Service Team in the first instance. You can do this via the existing online service support portal or the support telephone number **Customer services - 0300 200 2020** (Option 1 for support regarding SiLAS).

## **Who can I contact for questions on submitting applications after the platforms are available again?**

For questions relating to the policy and requirements for submitting applications, please refer to the existing guidance which can be found here: [Criminal legal aid – Legal Aid Learning](#)

Questions relating to individual submissions should be directed to our customer service team in the first instance. For individual passported, employed or unemployed applicants the following email inboxes relate to the relevant CAT team:

- [BirminghamCAT@justice.gov.uk](mailto:BirminghamCAT@justice.gov.uk)
- [LiverpoolCAT@justice.gov.uk](mailto:LiverpoolCAT@justice.gov.uk)

- [NottinghamCAT@justice.gov.uk](mailto:NottinghamCAT@justice.gov.uk)

For queries regarding applicants who are self-employed, directors, non-means tested and hardship applications the following email should be used:

- [Nationalcrimeteam@justice.gov.uk](mailto:Nationalcrimeteam@justice.gov.uk)

### **FAQ additions**

The following questions have been added to the [FAQ](#) section on the incident webpage.

#### **Can I use the same Microsoft Authenticator App to authenticate multiple user accounts? [added 10 September]**

A third party user that holds numerous unique accounts can use the same Microsoft Authenticator App to authenticate all of their accounts, however the same Microsoft Authenticator App cannot be used to authenticate more than one user within an organisation.

The following FAQ response has been updated.

**Can an external firm handle the verification of their users and provide a third party declaration to our firm if they provide a Data Protection Agreement to meet the LAA requirements? [updated 10 September]**

Yes, an external ID checker can be used as long as the following is adhered to:

The external ID checker would rely on an addendum to their Data Processing Agreement (DPA) between the solicitor (Data Controller) and themselves as the Data Processor. The addendum would require the external ID checker, in their capacity as data processors, to validate the identity of individuals who will have access to SiLAS and retain appropriate verification records.

The body undertaking the check must view:

- A valid, in date, government issued photo ID (such as driving licence, passport, biometric residence permit)
- The person being ID'd

The body doing the check should then retain an audit log including:

- The unique number of the ID document

- The name of the person checked
- The date the check was completed
- Any declarations as to likeness or completion of check that the Agency are asking for

The record must be retained for at least as long as the user is active on SiLAS, or otherwise in accordance with their normal data retention policy.

The declaration and ID evidence may be requested by the legal aid provider and provided to LAA, usually as part of LAA audit and assurance activity.

If you wish to adopt the above agreement, you will need to speak to your contract manager to obtain an updated declaration to reflect the above requirements.