Legal Aid Agency

17 December 2025

Dear Provider,

Please find below information about systems availability during the Christmas break, and an update about legacy paper bills made via CIS.

We have also included helpful reminders about the start of the Average payment scheme recoupment process and last opt-in dates, the end of the contingency process to submit civil applications, and deadlines for monthly claim submissions.

Systems opening hours over the Christmas break

Please be aware that systems standard operation hours are 7am-9:30pm, 7 days a week.

On **25 and 26 December 2025, and 1 January 2026** Civil and Crime systems will not be fully functional. To avoid any disruption in your work, we kindly ask that you don't use the systems during these days.

The Customer Service team operates Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm. Please note that the team will not be available **25 and 26 December 2025, and 1 January 2026.**

For the attention of Civil legal aid contract holders:

Paper Civil Bills

Legacy paper claims are managed on a system outside of CCMS called CIS. CIS was also taken offline in May in response to the cyber-attack. Restoration of CIS is separate to that of CCMS, and it currently remains unavailable. The result of this is that the LAA is still unable to accept legacy paper claims that would be submitted by the CIV CLAIM1/CLAIM1A/CLAIM2 forms. We will publish more information on the timeline for restoration of this service in due course.

Recoupments of Average Payments

The recoupment process of payments made under the Average Payment Scheme will start week commencing **26 January 2026**. This means that the first recoupments will be made as part of the payment run of 2 February.

After the last payments made under the scheme on the 19 January 2026, all providers and barristers who opted in to the contingency process at least once will receive a copy of the schedule to show how much they have claimed and is due and how long the recoupment schedule will run for.

In the event of financial difficulty caused by the recoupment schedules, providers and barristers can ask for a two-week pause.

More information is available on our Restoration Hub: Civil System Restoration – Handling of Contingency Work - GOV.UK

Average Payments and the Christmas break

Processing of claims through CCMS is now underway and within performance targets, so providers and barristers should be reassured that payments will continue to be received during the Christmas period when submitted through CCMS.

The Average Payments scheme will remain open for opt-in during the Christmas and New Year break for providers and barristers who are otherwise unable to access CCMS for billing.

The LAA expects most civil representation claims should now be made through CCMS. The Average Payments scheme remains in place to assist providers and barristers who are facing either technical difficulty with system access, or have circumstances beyond their control, such as lengthy period of sickness absence for key support staff. It should not be used to cover ant pre-planned Christmas leave.

Providers and barristers are reminded that the next cut-off for opting in is 12pm (noon) on Monday 22 December 2025. The Monday deadline to opt in will not change during the holiday period. Any opt-in request received after the deadline will not be accepted.

Civil Applications

A reminder that all submissions from 15 December will need to be made via Civil Apply or CCMS. We have stopped accepting email contingency applications and amendments. There will be some limited exceptions to this, the webpage Civil Contingency – Legal Aid Learning has been created to explain in more detail.

Please note if you have an exception for not using Civil Apply or CCMS this should be made clear in your opening paragraph of any email, without this your emailed submission will not be considered and rejected.

For the attention of Civil and Crime legal aid contract holders:

Monthly Claim Submissions

Due to manual processing time while we continue to work under contingency, the deadline for November submissions will be **17 December 2025**, to ensure payments can be made as expected on 5 January 2026. November submissions received after 17 December 2025 will be paid as soon as possible.

The statutory instrument laid on 1 December 2025, introducing increases to some Civil and Crime legal aid fees, comes into effect on 22 December 2025. Please see Submit a Bulk Claim (SaBC) - GOV.UK for further details as well as the fee uplifts FAQs and latest fee code spreadsheet. These controlled work uplifts have also been shared with Software Vendors to ensure their systems reflect the changes.

The uplifts for controlled work will apply to applications made on or after the implementation date of 22 December 2025.

Providers will need to apply the fee uplifts via the contingency process until Submit a Bulk Claim becomes available. The deadline for December claims will be **20 January 2026**.

To help you prepare in advance, please begin organising your contingency-period claims now. We recognise that firms will be at different stages in terms of preparing historic submissions, so please take the steps that apply to your tools and processes:

If your software vendor provides a bulk-export tool

Most vendors have confirmed they support exporting contingency-period claims in a format aligned to Submit a Bulk Claim (SaBC). If your system already allows you to generate this export, please check with your vendor that this functionality is enabled and if so, you should prepare your historic submissions now using this functionality

If you prepare claims in spreadsheets

If you plan to export your contingency-period claims directly from your spreadsheet or system into the bulkload spreadsheet for SaBC, please start preparing your submissions now in preparation for SaBC becoming available.

If you do not currently use either method

We are aware there are some providers who cannot easily re-produce historic submissions to include the new fee code and we continue to explore how we can support you with that so your submissions can be compatible with SaBC.

We expect most Providers to be able to export their claims for the contingency period with fee codes included and to then upload these into SaBC. We want to hear from Providers who will not be able to do this, and from those who have yet to start completing the bulkload spreadsheet manually. For those who

- Cannot export contingency period claims with fee codes
- Do not have a case management system and will be completing the bulkload spreadsheet manually,

we kindly ask you to complete this survey https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/SaBC_FeeCodeTool/

Communications update

We would like to remind you that we have changed the frequency of our communications with you. Going forward, updates will be shared on an as-needed basis, rather than bi-weekly.

We don't expect there will be any communications during week commencing 22 December.

Guidance and resources on legal aid systems and current contingencies are available on GOV.UK:

- Legal Aid Agency cyber security incident - GOV.UK
- Legal Aid Agency cyber security incident: frequently asked questions - GOV.UK
- Civil System Restoration – Handling of Contingency Work - GOV.UK
- LAA SILAS Help and Information - GOV.UK
- Submit a Bulk Claim (SaBC) - GOV.UK

- Restoration – Legal Aid Learning
- Contingency – Legal Aid Learning
- #HUSY webinar: Civil restoration processes: Civil high-cost family recording: Civil Restoration – Legal Aid Learning