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Legal Aid Statistics from October-December 2022 (released April 2023)

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Executive Summary

Welcome to our quarterly whistle-stop tour of the Legal Aid Agency's (LAA) statistics. Spring has sprung and has brought with it a veritable parliament of justice issues hitting our screens. Last Friday, we were delighted to welcome new Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice Alex Chalk KC MP to post. We have worked with Minister Chalk over a number of years through his career in his various roles as Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Ministry of Justice and then Solicitor General. He is a longstanding member of the APPG on Legal Aid and has been a strong advocate for the rule of law and access to justice issues.



Last week also brought with it the government's decision to amend its Illegal Migration Bill to allow ministers to ignore interim injunctions from the European Court of Human Rights that, for example, attempt to stop a deportation flight. The purpose of the bill is to create a scheme under which anyone arriving illegally in the United Kingdom will be promptly removed to their home country or to a safe third country to have any asylum claim processed. The Prime Minister has been warned that the Bill faces opposition in the Lords with various peers including Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd, a former lord chief justice, stating that the government's move was an "immensely serious step" and would be opposed in the upper chamber.

Finally, we expect to hear an update on the Means Test Review in the coming weeks together with the complete terms of reference for the Review on Civil Legal Aid. We'll be covering all that and more in our next bulletin in May.

Turning now to the quarterly statistics, as usual, we have quoted the LAA's language itself and we have indicated our own analysis of the figures and some background to the different practice areas where appropriate in blue. To our new readers, we are conscious of the sheer volume of acronyms in use within the legal aid sector and have attempted to explain them and the workings of the scheme where we can. Our regular readers or those more familiar with the justice system may prefer to skip over these explanatory paragraphs but we hope that newer readers find them helpful.

Statistics about the legal aid scheme are produced quarterly by the Justice Statistics

Analytical Services division of the Ministry of Justice and give us details around legal aid matter starts, completed cases and expenditure. The latest statistics cover the quarter from October to December 2022, and were released on 30 March 2023.

Statistical bulletin

The LAA bulletin can be accessed [in full here](#). Gov.uk now releases statistical bulletins in HTML format for ease of reading on mobile devices. It's not the most user-friendly of reads so please find below our overview in both civil and crime of, *inter alia*:

- numbers of new cases
- numbers of closed cases
- expenditure

There are comparisons with the same quarter from the previous year and also comparisons with the pre-LASPO figures. It is, however, hard to see the bigger picture using quarterly snapshots and so where possible we have tried to include data from the past ten years to provide context for these figures. The main points are summarised below. As ever, do [get in touch](#) if you would like any further information or any of these points clarified.

LAA Statistician's Comment

"This publication shows that expenditure across civil legal aid has increased year on year and has also increased more over the recent quarters. Following recovery from the impact of the pandemic, criminal legal aid expenditure has fallen in the most recent quarter due to strike action in the previous quarter in the Crown Court which impacted workload completed within the last two quarters.

Criminal legal aid workload for representation at the courts had returned to levels seen before covid but in the last few quarters we've seen falls in both courts suggesting a sustained fall in cases reaching court. In the last few quarters, we have seen a small increase in police station claims and an increase in representation orders at the magistrates' court. Expenditure in the police station increased in the quarter rose as expected due to higher fees for police station advice introduced at the end of September 2022. Extended sentencing powers at the magistrates' court, since temporary implementation in May 2022, has been feeding through to overall volumes with less committals for sentence arriving at the Crown Court and subsequently more trial work held at the lower court.

Civil legal aid volumes and expenditure show a varied picture compared to last year. Overall civil expenditure is returning to pre-pandemic levels driven by family law expenditure with the number of claims being paid outside of the fixed fee scheme increasing due to more time being taken during the court process. Other non-family workload has not recovered to the same extent, and this is driven by a slow recovery of housing work although in the last quarter this has increased. Overall civil legal aid workload still remains below pre-pandemic levels although trends are increasing in domestic violence, mental health and, within exceptional case funding and legal help, immigration."

Ed: The statistician's comment pertaining to civil legal aid workload is near-identical to last quarter's: "a mixed picture". Of note is the increase in expenditure for police station work due to higher fees introduced as part of the Criminal Legal Aid Review (CLAR) reforms at the end of September 2022 (see below).

With reference to the slow recovery of housing work, it is worth noting that on 11 April the LAA launched a further tender for contracts to deliver Housing Loss Prevention Advice Services (HLPAS – see note below) and mainstream Housing & Debt contract work in 11 scheme areas. This follows a particularly difficult time for housing law providers over the lockdown period and two previous unsuccessful tender rounds which received no compliant bids in those areas. We have previously reported that since September 2018, 73 providers and 116 offices have ceased delivering services in housing legal aid. There are also a number of providers with dormant legal aid contracts, or only running a small number of cases each year. Shadow Justice Minister Afzal Khan asked Secretary of State for Justice Mike Freer, how many civil legal aid offices are starting less than or equal to 30 cases each year in each legal aid authority. The response (which can be found [here](#)) was that 206 offices throughout England and Wales run less than 30 housing cases a year under legal aid.

So what is HLPAS we hear you ask? HLPAS contract work will allow legal aid providers to deliver early legal advice in social welfare law alongside the in-court duty scheme (previously HPCDS). This current tender is for the opportunity to deliver this new service.

The geographical areas covered under this process are:

- Birkenhead
- Cheltenham, Gloucester
- Crewe
- Dartford
- Hull
- Leicester
- Liverpool
- Salisbury, Swindon
- Southampton
- Telford
- Wigan



Crime - a word or two on how criminal legal aid works

Ed: Criminal legal aid is reported as "Crime Lower" and "Crime Higher". Crime Lower includes police station advice, magistrates' court and prison law. Crime Higher covers work in the Crown and Higher Courts. There were very few changes to crime in the LASPO Act – however other factors come into play including reduced fixed fee payments and how payments are made.

In the magistrates' court the volume of completed work decreased by 2% and associated expenditure decreased by 4% when compared to the same post-covid period last year.

Conversely at the police station the volume of work increased by 2% with an associated 11% increase in corresponding expenditure due to higher fees for police station advice introduced at the end of September 2022.

Magistrates Court

Ed: You will see during the course of this bulletin, references to "representation orders". This used to be called 'Legal Aid', and in order to obtain it, an application has to be made to the court.

This application is subject to two tests:

1. The first, is called the "interests of justice" test. A representation order will only be granted if the court considers the case "serious enough" for the individual to need full legal representation.

Generally, if an individual is charged with a non-imprisonable offence their case will not pass this first test. Such offences include driving document offences, minor Public Order Act offences and being Drunk and Disorderly. If the individual is charged with an "indictable only" offence (an offence that can only be heard in the Crown Court) their case will always satisfy this first test.

2. The second test is a means test. Legal Aid will not be granted if the individual's income exceeds a certain amount. If the individual is in receipt of income based JSA, income support or a guaranteed pension then they will automatically be entitled financially to legal aid. If the individual is in receipt of other benefits then they will not automatically be entitled to legal aid and will have to provide the court with documentary evidence of this benefit.

Crown Court

Ed: If the individual's case goes to the Crown Court for trial they will automatically qualify for legally aid representation once they have completed an application form. However, after the individual has been means tested, they may have to pay towards the cost of their defence. This contribution could be from their income whilst the case is ongoing and/or from their capital, if they are convicted.

An individual will not have to pay towards the costs of their case if they are under 18 when they make their application or if you receive any of the following benefits: income support, income-based jobseekers allowance, guaranteed state pension credit or income related employment and support allowance.

Crime: Legal Aid Statistics

Police station advice

“This category made up two thirds of the Crime Lower workload between October and December 2022 but half of the expenditure. The workload in this period has increased by 2% compared to the previous year, with expenditure increasing by 11% (£3.3m). This is due to a 15% uplift in fees for police station advice introduced at the end of September 2022 as part of the criminal legal aid reforms. This reverses the general downward trend seen over the last few years with a decrease in police station advice workload since 2013-14.

The majority of the police station advice workload (89% in October and December 2022) consists of suspects receiving legal help with a solicitor in attendance at the police station, with the rest mainly consisting of legal advice over the telephone.”

Ed: Rakesh Bhasin, partner at Edward’s Duthie Shamash, said that the *“increase was welcome and has been a long time coming. It was a recommendation in the Criminal Legal Aid Review (CLAR) and has taken nearly two years to implement.”* Unfortunately, he tells us, *this will likely be reversed in the next quarterly figures due to the change in policy with more suspects being released on bail as opposed to being released under investigation. This shift has the impact of delaying the submission of claims and therefore the payment to providers. Practitioners have already seen an increase in the number of arrests and the use of bail by the police and for longer periods of time.*

Magistrates’ court

“The number of orders granted for legally-aided representation in the Magistrates’ court increased by 3% this quarter when compared to the same quarter of the previous year. This reverses the downward trend of the last 3 years, which was largely driven by Summary Only cases. Indeed, last quarters’ statistics had seen the number of legal-aid representation orders granted decrease by 11% compared to the same quarter the year before.

The volume of completed work in the magistrates’ court decreased by 5% this quarter when compared to the same period of the previous year. Expenditure also decreased by 7% (£2m). These falls incorporate the accelerated Criminal legal aid reforms since October 2020 which cover payment for work on sending cases to the Crown Court. This new category shows in the tables accompanying the LAA bulletin had 9,237 claims costing around £2.1m completed this quarter.

While figures should be interpreted with caution as they may be revised in subsequent quarters as cases move into the Crown court, the number of orders granted for legally-aided representation in the Magistrates’ court increased by 11% this quarter when

compared to the same quarter of the previous year. This reverses the downward trend of the last 3 years, which was largely driven by Summary Only cases.

Legally-aided representation in the magistrates' court comprised almost one-third of the workload and just under half of expenditure in Crime Lower between October and December 2022. The volume of completed work (covered in this report) in the magistrates' court decreased by 2% this quarter when compared to the same period of the previous year. Expenditure also decreased by 4% (£1m).

These falls incorporate the accelerated Criminal legal aid reforms since October 2020 which cover payment for work on sending cases to the Crown Court. This new category shown in the tables accompanying this bulletin had 9,158 claims costing around £2.3m completed this quarter."

Crown Court

"Although Crown Court work comprises a relatively small portion of criminal legal aid in terms of volume, it accounts for around two-thirds of all criminal legal aid expenditure. Conversely, advice relating to the police station makes up the largest portion of workload, but a much smaller proportion of expenditure.

Orders granted for legally-aided representation in the Crown court increased by 6% this quarter compared to last year. Within the legal aid figure, orders relating to either-way increased by 9% and indictable offences increased by 17% compared to a fall of 14% in committals for sentence. This fall in committals for sentence is driven by the extended sentencing powers for the magistrates' courts with offences now remaining to be heard in the lower court. The proportion of Crown Court applications granted remains at almost 100%.

Completed work volumes within the litigator (solicitor) fee scheme decreased by 11% in October to December 2022 compared to the same period of the previous year, driven mainly by a 22% decrease in trial claims. In the advocate fee scheme, completed claims decreased by 10% compared to the same period last year. Falls seen in both schemes this quarter are partly due to impacts on workload completed in September 2022 due to industrial action and the barrister strike."

Ed: In his 27 March 2023 **correspondence with the Justice Committee**, Minister Mike Freer wrote that CLAR had noted an evolution in the role of the defence advocate in Crown Court cases: "encompassing increasing amounts of pre-trial preparation". The Minister announced a new AGFS fixed preparation fee of £62 (+VAT) in recognition of this, to expand the up-to-now "special" fee for wasted work and "particular circumstances" to encompass the consideration of audio-visual material and wider written work. The Minister stated his anticipation that this will enable the MoJ to spend the full amount of £3.3million on preparation fees that former Lord Chancellor Brandon Lewis had agreed to spend as part of a package to end the barristers' strikes.

Although this may seem like good news for practitioners, the letter goes on to read that "The MoJ has already concluded work to apply the general 15% uplift to AGFS fees recommended by CLAIR to almost all cases in the Crown Court backlog and introduced an additional fixed fee to more fairly remunerate defence advocacy in cases involving pre-recorded cross-examination of vulnerable witnesses." This has been interpreted by

some as referencing an uplift which many contend never happened. Indeed, although the 15% increase was described as the "bare minimum" in the **November 2021 Criminal Legal Aid Review**, its significant erosion by interim inflation has caused "fury", and The **Law Society and others have since issued judicial review proceedings** for the government's "unlawful and irrational" failure to implement the 15% minimum increase.

Prison Law

"Workload this quarter decreased by 8% compared with the same period in the previous year, driven by free standing advice and assistance which fell by 16% when compared to October to December 2021.

Conversely, advocacy assistance at parole board hearings increased by 2% compared to last year and have increased by 7% since last quarter (see figure 5). Advocacy at parole board hearings currently makes up almost half of prison law workload, but a much larger proportion of costs (81%), even so expenditure on prison law overall decreased by 8% over this period due to a drop of 27% in free standing advice and assistance.

Since April to June 2020, the workload and expenditure for advocacy assistance at prison discipline hearings has remained low with a change in process for internal prisons hearings continuing since covid (our emphasis added). Year-to-year comparisons show that workload decreased by 14% and expenditure decreased by 13% this quarter compared to last year. This quarter is compared against previously low volumes of claims with this category now only around one-tenth the volume from before covid."

Ed: It is worth noting when interpreting these figures that the number of prison lawyers has reduced dramatically in the past decade with a large number of firms ceasing to offer prison legal aid. In 2010 the Association of Prison Lawyers tells us that there were around 500 provider offices doing prison law, a figure which has now fallen to 110 across England and Wales. This was an area of law that the **Independent Criminal Legal Aid Review** recognised as crucial and recommended for inclusion within the proposed investment at paragraph 14.4.2. It was not, however, an area of law included within the Government's criminal legal aid recommendations and there remains no offer from the Government on the table in respect of them

Dr Laura Janes, consultant prison law solicitor said *"This government has put changes to the parole system at the heart of its agenda in an effort to protect the public. The number of referrals to the Parole Board now stands at almost 20,000 a year. While the number of legal aid lawyers has plummeted, the Parole Board has had to double its membership. There is good reason to believe that around half of applicants do not have representatives at the initial stage of parole reviews. This causes unnecessary delay and keeps people who are safe for release in prison. It is unfair, costly and makes no sense, especially when prisons are so full that judges are being told to suspend prison sentences where appropriate to ease pressure on the prison population. It is also not good for victims as it means cases inevitably take longer. The only reason given for not including prison law in the basic increase in pay is that the government wanted to prioritise the backlog. That is short sighted and needs to be reviewed before there are no prison lawyers left to do legal aid work."*

Civil: Legal Aid Statistics

Ed: Civil legal aid can be categorised by area of law into family and non-family. The category of family legal aid covers all work on both private and public family law and includes work associated with the Children Act, domestic abuse, financial provision and family mediation. Non-family legal aid encompasses all work related to immigration, mental health, housing and other non-family areas of law.

“Although workload for family and non-family law cases are similar, non-family comprises a relatively small proportion of civil legal aid expenditure. Public family legal aid makes up two thirds of family legal aid work and over 81% of expenditure.

Civil legal aid closed case expenditure increased this quarter; up by 21% compared to July to September 2021. This increase is driven by family civil representation expenditure increasing by 24% over the same period. Family civil representation expenditure had already been the driving force behind a 12% civil legal aid closed case expenditure increased in the previous quarter, which had taken total civil expenditure to its highest level since 2014-15.”

Legal Help

Ed: Legal Help pays for advice from a solicitor or legal adviser. They can negotiate on their client's behalf, gather evidence, and write letters. To qualify for the scheme a client must either:

- a) be on Income Support or Income-based Jobseekers Allowance, Income based Employment and Support Allowance, Guarantee Credit or Universal Credit.
- b) have a gross income of not more than £2,657 per month, (this figure increases if the client has more than 4 children) with a "disposable income" not exceeding £733 per month.
- c) have a case that is 'in scope', i.e. permitted within Schedule 1 of the Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012.

“In the latest quarter, there was a 4% increase in legal help new matter starts compared to the same period of 2021. The volume of completed claims increased by 11% while expenditure increased by 2% in October to December 2022 compared to the same period in 2021.

Although this hints at a potential for a recovery in Legal Help cases, it is important to note that the workload sits at less than one-quarter of pre-LASPO levels. Indeed, implementation of the LASPO Act in April 2013 resulted in large reductions in legal help workload, with the decline in the overall trend being further exacerbated by the effects of covid-19.”

Ed: how does this translate to actual numbers of people seen? LAA statistics show that in 2011-2012 there were 679,768 Legal Help starts. This had dropped to 573,770 the following year and for the year 2021-2022 was just 127,782. The numbers are relatively stagnant this year, with 32,001 cases started last quarter and 31,032 this quarter, a slight decrease consistent with the pattern of a decrease in Legal Help matter starts towards the end of the calendar year before a pick-up in January. Numbers of providers are

falling and there are many who have legal aid contracts which either lie dormant or see fewer cases.

How does this relate to spend? As part of last month's look into the impact of LASPO upon various areas of civil legal aid, we put together our own table comparing government spend pre and post LASPO in relation to legal help, the costs of representation and we include for reference only the costs paid by opponents to legal aid providers. Figures below are in £000's and we can see the correlation between legal help matter starts and the decrease in costs. This is particularly dramatic in family law where LASPO removed much private family work from scope. Only those cases with evidence of domestic violence or child abuse, child abduction, forced marriage, FGM, or where the child is a party to the case are now covered by legal aid. Representation costs remain high however, with parties continuing to litigate.

We also note that the legal aid statistics available on the government website (please see: **Civil Tables & Data**) calculate the civil representation costs met by the LAA based on "certificates completed" (Table 6.5 of the LAA Bulletin) whereas for Legal Help and Controlled Legal Representation the values are for "claims submitted" (Table 5.3 of the LAA Bulletin).

Category of spend Type of law	Costs of Legal Help*		Representation costs paid by the LAA		Costs awarded from the opponent to the providers	
	2011-12	2021-22**	2011-12	2021-22	2011-12	2021-22
Actions Against the Police	1,597	3,464	1,784	3,569	12,641	25,802
Family	50,942	8,257	640,939	648,458	1,907	116
Housing	21,219	8,128	25,050	11,619	10,831	8,131
Immigration	53,867	36,392	4,930	2,489	2,085	7,539
Mental Health	36,375	28,857	5,014	14,878	86	93
Community Care	2,227	1,571	2,845	19,495	1,067	1,395
Education	1,912	2,584	545	130	141	262
Public Law	686	1,849	5,945	3,812	4,956	14,150

*Data for Immigration and Mental Health includes both Legal Help (LH) and Controlled Legal Representation (CLR). CLR typically covers representation before tribunals.

**These figures are nominal and therefore do not factor in inflation. The Bank of England states that inflation between 2012 and 2022 was 27%. To illustrate, the £640k family representation spend of 2012 would be £810k in 2022 if it had kept pace with inflation, and £845k today.

Family Legal Help Cases

"There was a steep decline in family legal help (see table above) immediately following the implementation of LASPO Act in April 2013, with a more gradual decline over the last 6 years.

In October to December 2022 family legal help starts decreased by 7% compared to the same quarter last year. Completed claims also decreased by 1% and expenditure

decreased by 2%. From September 2021, callers to the Civil Legal Advice (CLA) helpline with family issues are no longer referred to specialist telephone advice."

Family Civil Representation

"While civil representation for public family law remains available, the LASPO Act removed legal aid for most private family law including issues such as contact or divorce. However, legal aid remains available for such cases where there is a risk of domestic violence or child abuse. Certificates granted for family work stayed the same in October to December 2022 compared to the previous year.

Certificates completed increased by 1% and associated expenditure has increased by 16% compared to the same quarter the previous year. The volume and expenditure for closed case domestic violence civil representation increased substantially following the initial impacts of covid-19. In October to December 2022, certificates completed for domestic violence is down by 6% compared to the same period of the previous year.

In October to December 2022, applications for civil representation supported by evidence of domestic violence or child abuse decreased by 1% compared to the same period of the previous year. The number of certificates granted via the domestic violence and child abuse gateway decreased by 1% over the same period. The proportion of applications granted remained steady at around 70% from the inception of this type of application until the end of 2015, before increasing to around 80%. The provisional figure for the latest quarter is 82%."

Family Mediation

"One of the aims of LASPO was to encourage people to use alternative methods of dispute resolution, such as mediation. It is well known that post-LASPO there was a considerable drop in mediation cases because family lawyers had been making many of the referrals – and without legal aid for private family law, and that initial contact with a legal professional, the referrals to mediation declined drastically.

Mediation Information and Assessment Meeting (MIAMs), family mediation starts, and outcomes decreased significantly following the covid-19 restrictions in March 2020. Since then, volumes and expenditure have rapidly increased to levels temporarily exceeding pre-covid figures. MIAMs decreased by 3% in the last quarter compared to the previous year and currently stand at around a third of pre-LASPO levels. Family mediation starts increased by 1% and total outcomes decreased by 12%, of which 60% were successful agreements, and are now sitting at around half of pre-LASPO levels."

Ed: the MoJ are currently consulting on proposals to support earlier resolution of private family law arrangements. These include mandatory mediation for supporting families. For further details of the consultation, [please see here](#).

Non-Family Legal Help

"Controlled legal representation relates to representation at tribunal but unlike civil representation, the decision on whether to grant legal aid is delegated to providers. Legal Help and controlled legal representation make up over 95% of both immigration and mental health legal aid cases."

Ed: The LASPO Act 2012 - the bulletin itself still errs in referring to the "2013" Act - made changes to the scope of legal aid for immigration law, but some areas remained in scope. Workload that remains in the immigration category consists largely of asylum-related work.

Immigration

"Having fallen by over 45% in April to June 2020, new matter starts in immigration increased by 13% in October to December 2022 compared to the same quarter of the previous year. Completed claims in immigration were up by 28% in the last quarter compared to the previous year and expenditure also increased by 14%."

Mental Health

"Within mental health, most funding is spent on providing assistance to sectioned clients appealing the terms of their detention before a mental health tribunal (see table above). Mental health new matter starts decreased by 4% when comparing the latest quarter to the previous year. Completed claims also remained unchanged while expenditure decreased by 1% over the same period."

Housing

"Over 80% of legal aid housing work volume is made up of Legal Help. The volume of legally aided housing work halved between July to September 2012 and July to September 2013. Housing Legal Help had been particularly affected by covid-19 with starts and completed claims nearly halving again between January to March 2020 and April to June 2020. Recent quarters have displayed a gradual recovery following the impact of covid-19. In October to December there was a 13% increase in housing work starts compared to the same quarter the previous year. There were also similar increases in completed claims (14%) although these had a decrease in expenditure (21%)."

Ed: Dan Carden, Labour MP for Liverpool, Walton, recently asked the Justice Secretary several questions on the topic of housing and civil legal aid more widely, including:

- whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of providing a temporary increase in funding for the civil legal aid system while the present civil legal aid review takes place. (**answer here** – additional money is being injected through HPCDS but we await RoCLA for system-wide change)
- what steps his Department is taking to help ensure the uptake of Housing Loss Prevention Advice Scheme contracts in Liverpool. (**answer here**)
- what assessment he has made of the implications of his policies of access to a local legal aid provided for housing advice in (a) Liverpool, Walton constituency, (b) Merseyside and (c) the UK. (**answer here**)

Civil (non-family) representation applications

"The number of civil representation certificates granted in the last quarter increased by 1% compared to the same period of the previous year. The number of certificates completed increased by 1%, and the associated expenditure increased by 17% over the same period. This is due to the number of claims being paid outside of the fixed fee scheme increasing due to more time being taken during the court process. At a cost of

around £218m in October to December 2022, total civil representation expenditure is the highest it has been since 2011-12.”

Judicial reviews

“Of all civil representation applications granted, 690 in the last quarter related to a judicial review.

The number granted in October to December 2022 decreased by 5% compared with the same quarter in 2021. Over half of judicial reviews were for public law and further Judicial review data is available in the detailed csv accompanying this bulletin.”

Rohini Jana
Head of Parliamentary Affairs
24 April 2023

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About the APPG on Legal Aid

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Legal Aid aims to promote parliamentary and public understanding of the importance of the role of publicly funded legal services. It is chaired by Karen Buck MP. Secretariat support is provided jointly by the Legal Aid Practitioners Group (LAPG) together with Young Legal Aid Lawyers (YLAL) with funding from The Legal Education Foundation.

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About the APPG Plus Project

LAPG and the APPG on Legal Aid have been funded by The Legal Education Foundation to engage with MPs and councillors and their caseworkers to ensure that there is a good understanding of what is left in legal aid in the wake of LASPO, and to offer constructive advice, resources and training on how busy MPs and their caseworkers can engage better with lawyers and advice charities in the legal aid sector. In doing so, we aim to assess current access to justice issues facing the public and to help inform future decision making at a policy level.

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