



Legal Aid Agency

COVID-19: Legal Aid Agency planning and preparation

An update for legal aid providers following HMCTS' guidance of 9 March 2020.

- During this phase of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Legal Aid Agency (LAA) will continue to provide civil and criminal legal aid and advice in England and Wales to help people deal with their legal problems.
- We routinely review our business continuity plans to ensure we can respond to and continue our work in extraordinary circumstances, including public health outbreaks.
- We have a flexible system – and a flexible workforce - designed to ensure access to justice can be maintained in the most challenging of times.
- You should continue to make legal aid applications for your clients in the usual way.
- We will work with you and the wider justice system to play our part in responding to emerging issues.

Government plans and preparedness

The Government's approach is data-led and informed by medical science.

The Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) maintains primary operational leadership of the medical information and response to the virus.

Read the latest information about the [Government's response and plans](#).

Our business continuity plans

We have well-established business continuity plans in place to ensure we can continue to deliver key services, protect the public and maintain confidence in the justice system.

We routinely review and test our plans, and this work is underway against the Government's four-phase framework:

- Contain phase
- Delay phase
- Research phase
- Mitigate phase

LAA priorities

In managing our response to COVID-19, our priorities are to:

- Ensure legal aid services from solicitors, barristers and the not-for-profit sector remain available to the public.
- Maintain normal operational decision-making and billing service levels.
- Monitor and subsequently manage any arrears of work that could accumulate in the worst-case scenario.
- Play our part in the cross-government and justice system-wide plans to deliver key services, protect the public and maintain confidence in the justice system

Going to court

You should continue to use courts and tribunals as usual.

If there are wider changes to the operational running of the courts this will be communicated in the first instance on HMCTS' Twitter channel: @HMCTSGOVUK

Updating you about any further impacts of COVID-19 on our services

We will inform you of any changes to our service through our usual communications channels.

- In the first instance by emailing legal aid representative bodies
- Follow @LegalAidAgency on Twitter

Ends