

**Minutes of Meeting of Legal Aid Special Interest Group Committee held on
Tuesday 9th June 2020 – 8pm to 10pm**

Present: Bob Baker
Paul Seddon
Rachel Perkins
Charlotte Flanders
Steve Jepson

1. ICAs

BB confirmed that the ball is currently in the LAA's court on this issue.

2. Financial support for LAA providers

BB confirmed this will be raised at the next SPG meeting on 24.06.20 which he will be attending. BB also confirmed that he would be attending the CCCG meeting on 15.07.20.

3. Removal of Court Assessments by the LAA

The LAA spend £5m on Court fees, which equates to approximately 25k claims. Discussions took place regarding concerns as to capacity at the LAA to deal with these. Other concerns included the issue of appeals, rejections, the LAA's ability to process, lack of legal experience, the "honeymoon" period until it become mandatory, tight targets and turnarounds, concerns that the caseworkers are not objective and simple errors at the LAA.

PS is now on the LAPG advisory committee and confirmed that concerns should be confirmed on paper.

Discussions regarding:

- the issue that the LAA don't actually assess anything over £2500. VHCC matters are all pre-agreed and therefore are not actually assessed.
- document requests – at present the LAA will require attendance notes over 3 hours but will that remain the stance?
- the need for an adjustment to the process to allow for payment for appeal.
- Format of bill they will allow in the long term
- A request should be made for a performance report by category and type.
- Future allowances for bill preparation time.

Format of Claim – preferably in the format of a Court bill. A discussion was had regarding software and as legal aid costs lawyers are a smaller pool of the profession, there is no clout with the software providers. All transferable skills will now be removed. If the LAA value the calibre of people preparing claims, they will need to work with the Court.

CF agreed to draft the ACL LAG's response to the consultation, in conjunction with PS.

4. September Seminar

BB to speak to DP re options.

Next committee meeting – Tuesday 7th July 2020 at 8pm.