



Ministry
of Justice



Legal Aid
Agency



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Legal Aid Statistics quarterly, England and Wales, January to March 2018

Main points

Police station advice workload and magistrates' court grants and completions all fell compared to the same quarter last year



Police station advice workload decreased by 6% and the number of magistrates' court representation orders granted fell by 8%, while completed work in the magistrates' court fell 10% this quarter with expenditure also falling by 9%.

Workload in the Crown Court was similar to the same quarter of the previous year, while expenditure increased by 3%.



The increase in expenditure was driven by the solicitor fee scheme, partly offset by the Very High-Cost Case scheme. Expenditure in the advocate fee scheme was similar to the same quarter of the previous year.

Mediation Information and Assessment Meetings were 19% lower than in the same quarter of 2017



Mediation starts between January and March 2018 were down by 18% and are now running at just under half of pre-LASPO levels.

Applications for civil representation supported by evidence of domestic or child abuse increased by 21%



The number of these granted increased by 14% compared to the same period of 2017.

745 applications for Exceptional Case Funding received in the last quarter



This is the highest number of applications received in one quarter since the scheme began in April 2013 and a 40% increase from the same quarter last year.

This edition comprises the first release of official statistics for the three-month period from January to March 2018 and the latest statement of all figures for previous periods.

The quarterly data in this year-end bulletin also includes figures on [central funds](#), [providers](#) of legal aid, and the [diversity](#) of clients receiving legal aid.

For technical detail, please refer to the [User guide](#) to legal aid statistics.

We have changed how our bulletin looks, and would welcome any feedback using this quick [survey](#).

For other feedback related to the content of this publication, please let us know at statistics@legalaid.gsi.gov.uk

1. Things you need to know

These symbols are used throughout this release to navigate to other documents of interest:



Data visualisation:
Click for tool allowing user-defined charts and tables.



User Guide:
Click for document giving definitions and explanations.



Tables:
Click for access to tables of figures.

To understand trends in legal aid as a whole, it is best to begin by looking at annual expenditure figures and then look at trends in both workload and expenditure for each category of legal aid. Summarising activity across the legal aid system meaningfully within a single number is difficult because of the diversity of services included. Expenditure on legal aid is measured differently for different purposes. The three most often-used measures, shown in Fig. 1, are:

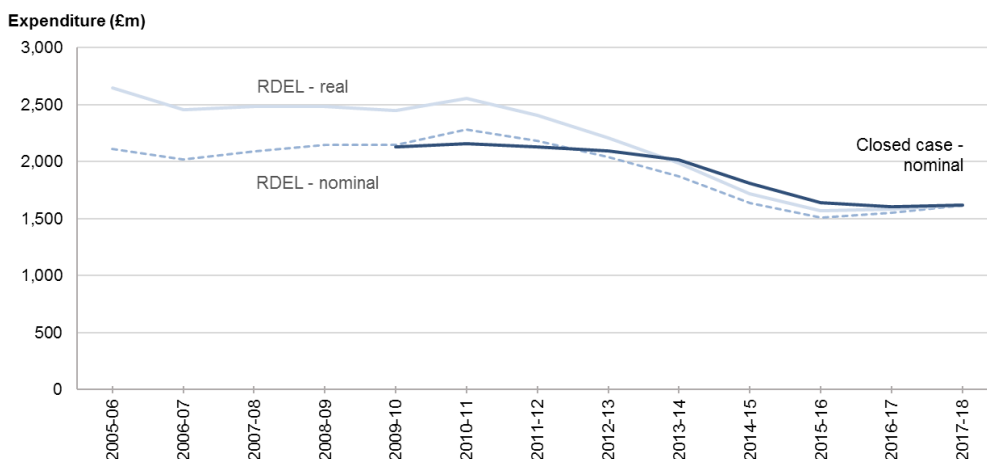
- **Closed-case expenditure is the measure used throughout these legal aid statistics.** It represents the total value of payments made to legal aid providers in relation to pieces of work that are completed in the period. This basis is comparable to volumes of completed work to which it relates, and to the same fine level of detail. This does not include income received or expenditure in relation to debt write-offs.
- **RDEL (Resource Departmental Expenditure Limits) nominal** is the main budgeting measure used by government to control current spending, both to set budgets for future years and report on how much has been spent. It represents the value of work carried out in the period better than the closed-case measure but cannot be broken down to such a fine level of detail. This measure does incorporate income and expenditure in relation to debt. 'Nominal' here means not adjusted for inflation.
- **RDEL real** is the RDEL measure adjusted for inflation to make the value of spending in previous years directly comparable with the specified year.

These measures show a large reduction in legal aid expenditure from around 2010-11, mostly due to changes to the scope of civil legal aid introduced by the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders (LASPO) Act from 2013-14, reductions in criminal legal aid workloads and reductions in the fees payable to legal aid providers. Expenditure has however increased slightly over the last year.

Figure 1: Overall annual legal aid expenditure, in closed-case and RDEL nominal and real terms measures (£m), 2005-06 to 2017-18



Table 1.0



2. Criminal legal aid



Tables
1.1 and 4.1

Workload in the Crown Court was similar in January to March 2018 to the same period of the previous year, while expenditure increased by 3%.

The increase in expenditure was driven by the solicitor fee scheme, partly offset by the Very High-Cost Case scheme. Expenditure in the advocate fee scheme was similar to the same quarter of the previous year.

Criminal legal aid can be categorised into Crime Lower and Crime Higher. Crime Lower work includes police station advice, magistrates' court and prison law. Crime Higher covers work in the Crown and Higher Courts.

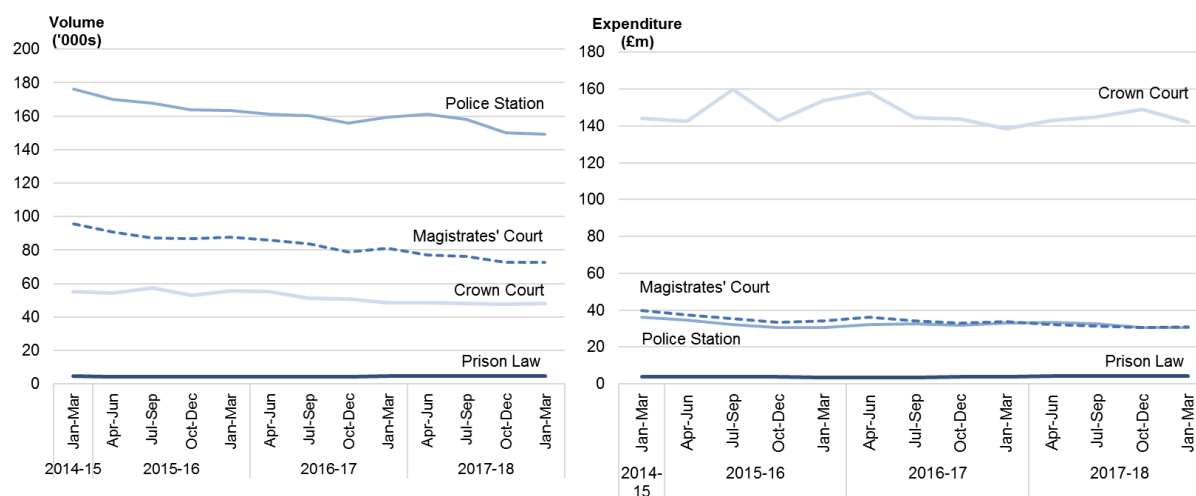
Figure 2: Crime overview, closed case volumes and expenditure for Jan-Mar 2018, and comparison with Jan-Mar 2017

		Category	Workload	Expenditure
Crime Workload 275,000 (7%↓) Expenditure £209m (<1%↔)	Crime Lower 227,000 (8%↓) £66m (7%↓)	Police station advice	149,000 (6%↓)	£31m (7%↓)
		Magistrates' courts*	73,000 (10%↓)	£31m (9%↓)
		Advice & assistance on appeals	339 (14%↓)	£0.5m (2%↓)
		Prison Law	4,600 (2%↓)	£4m (16%↑)
		Civil work associated with crime	39 (47%↓)	£0.02m (38%↓)
Crime Higher 48,000 (1%↓) £142m (3%↑)	Solicitor fee scheme	24,000 (1%↓)	£88m (8%↑)	
	Advocate fee scheme	24,000 (<1%↔)	£54m (1%↑)	
	High Cost crime cases	1 (88%↓)	£0.27m (92%↓)	

*includes court duty solicitor sessions and virtual courts

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.

Figure 3: Workload and expenditure in criminal legal aid, Jan-Mar 15 to Jan-Mar 18



Note: Advice and assistance on appeals and civil work associated with crime are excluded from these figures.



Tables
2.1 and 2.2

Police station advice

This category made up two thirds of the Crime Lower workload between January and March 2018 but just less than half of the expenditure. The workload in this period has fallen by 6% compared to the previous year, with expenditure down 7% (£2.3m). This continues the downward trend of the last three years, although this trend has not been as steep as the decline for Crime Lower as a whole, or overall figures from the Crime Survey for England and Wales¹.

The majority of the police station advice workload, 87% in January to March 2018, 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.



Tables
3.1 and 3.2

Applications and grants for representation in the criminal courts

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** fell by 8% in this quarter when compared to the same quarter of the previous year. This continues the downward trend of the last 3 years, which has been largely driven by summary-only cases. The overall number of receipts in the magistrates' court² (including those not involving legal aid) was 7% down over the same period. The proportion of these applications that are granted remains stable at around 95%.

Orders granted for legally-aided representation in the **Crown Court** were also down, by 13% this quarter compared to last year, which compares to a 14% decrease in total Crown Court receipts². Within the legal aid figure, orders relating to either-way offences fell by 18%, while those relating to indictable offences fell by 10%. The proportion of Crown Court applications granted remains at almost 100%.



Tables
2.1 and 2.2

Magistrates' court completed work

Legally-aided **representation in the magistrates' court** comprised almost one-third of the workload and just under half of expenditure in Crime Lower between January and March 2018. The volume of completed work in the magistrates' court fell 10% this quarter when compared to the same period of the previous year. Expenditure fell by 9% (£3.0m).



Tables
4.1 – 4.4

Crown Court completed work

Volumes of cases completed in the Crown Court have declined over recent years, though more gradually than new orders due to the stock of cases awaiting trial.

Completed work volumes within the **litigator (solicitor) fee scheme** were 1% lower in January to March 2018 than in the same period of the previous year, driven mainly by a 10% fall in cases in which the defendant pleads guilty at their earliest opportunity in the Crown Court. This may be due to procedural reforms in the court system, with more defendants pleading earlier at the magistrates' court.

¹www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmar2017

² www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-court-statistics

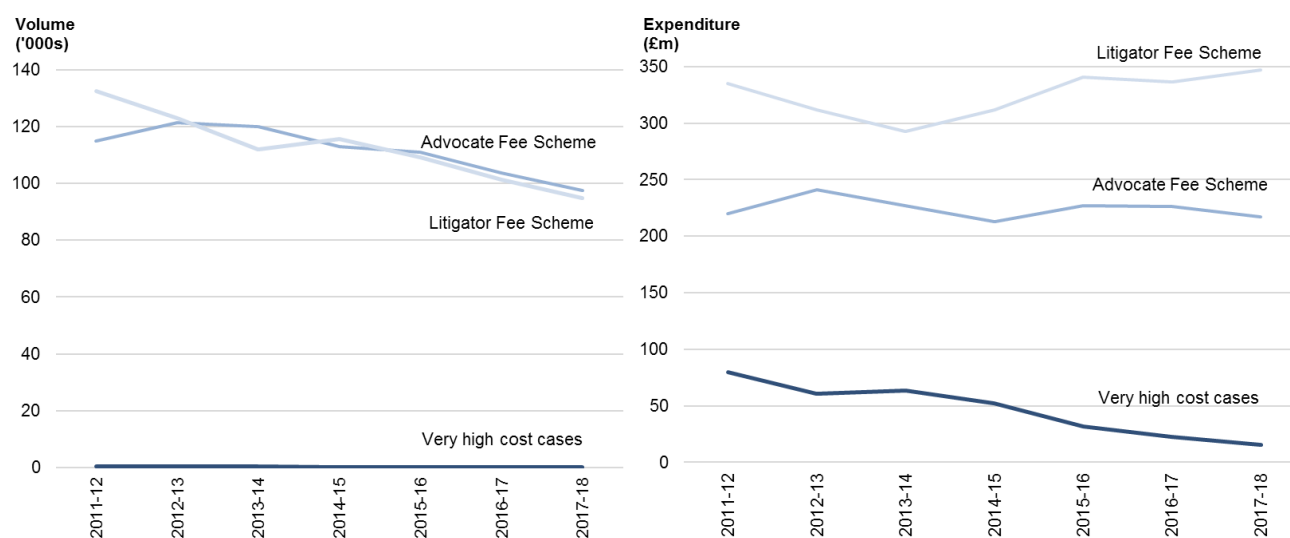
In the **advocate fee scheme** there was no change when comparing to the same period last year; again, while the largest fall was in the guilty plea category this was offset by an increase in cases where defendants plead guilty just before trial and those where sentencing in the Crown Court is required for defendants convicted in the magistrates' court.

Figures for expenditure on work completed in the Crown Court should be interpreted with caution as they may be revised in subsequent quarters as claims are assessed further on appeal and further payments added to the value of some completed claims. In the litigator fee scheme, expenditure was 8% higher in January to March 2018 than in the same period of the previous year. In the advocate fee scheme, expenditure rose by 1% over the same period.

The **Very High-Cost Case (VHCC)** scheme covers those Crown Court cases which, if the case were to proceed to trial, would likely last more than 60 days. These cases can span several years and, while they may involve small numbers of defendants, the associated expenditure is high in comparison.

There was only 1 defendant represented in the VHCC contracts that concluded in the January to March quarter 2018. Expenditure on this work over the duration of the contracts (i.e. on the closed-case basis) was just over a quarter of a million pounds. While the workload comprises a tiny proportion of legal aid in the Crown Court overall, the VHCC scheme currently represents around 3% of the cost, down from over 15% ten years ago.

Figure 4: Completed workload and expenditure in the Crown Court, 2011-12 - 2017-18



Prison law



Tables
2.1 and 2.2

Workload this quarter decreased overall by 2% compared with the same period in the previous year, with a continuing increase in advocacy at parole board hearings (up 10%) offset by a 12% fall in free standing advice and assistance. Advocacy at parole board hearings currently makes up just over one-third of prison law workload, but a much larger proportion of costs (73%), so expenditure on prison law overall rose by 16% over this period.

Despite these increases, prison law work comprised 2% of the volume and 2% of expenditure of total criminal legal aid work in January and March 2018; unchanged from previous years.

Discretionary and legacy claims

This is legal aid in the Crown Court covering discretionary and legacy claims related to graduated fee schemes. These claims include:

- discretionary claims for costs under a Representation Order, for example litigators' claims for confiscation proceedings under the Proceeds of Crime Act, advocates' claims for committals for sentence and appeals to the Crown Court, and breaches of Crown Court orders;
- proceedings predating the various fixed fee schemes (legacy cases) or falling outside the scope of the formal schemes.

The figures in table 4.1 show a reduction in expenditure over the last few years as cases have moved out of discretionary claims in to the main graduated fee schemes. Much of the remaining £10m of expenditure in 2017/18 relates to confiscation proceedings.

The Higher Courts: Court of Appeal and Supreme Court

Legal aid for the higher courts is expenditure paid for claims heard in the Court of Appeal, Senior Courts Costs Office and Supreme Court, and is administered by those courts and paid by the legal aid fund. The grant of legal aid is determined by the courts by an Interest of Justice test only as there are no means tests for these areas.

Figures for these areas of legal aid are shown in table 4.1. The volume figures are based only on numbers of payment transactions. In the year from April 2017 to March 2018 there were 3,501 claims from the Court of Appeal, with a value of around £2.8m. For the Senior Courts Costs Office, there were 1,361 claims, with associated expenditure of just over £6.5m. Expenditure in the Supreme Court for this period was just under £0.3m. Expenditure in the Supreme Court relates to a very small number of cases.

3. Central Funds



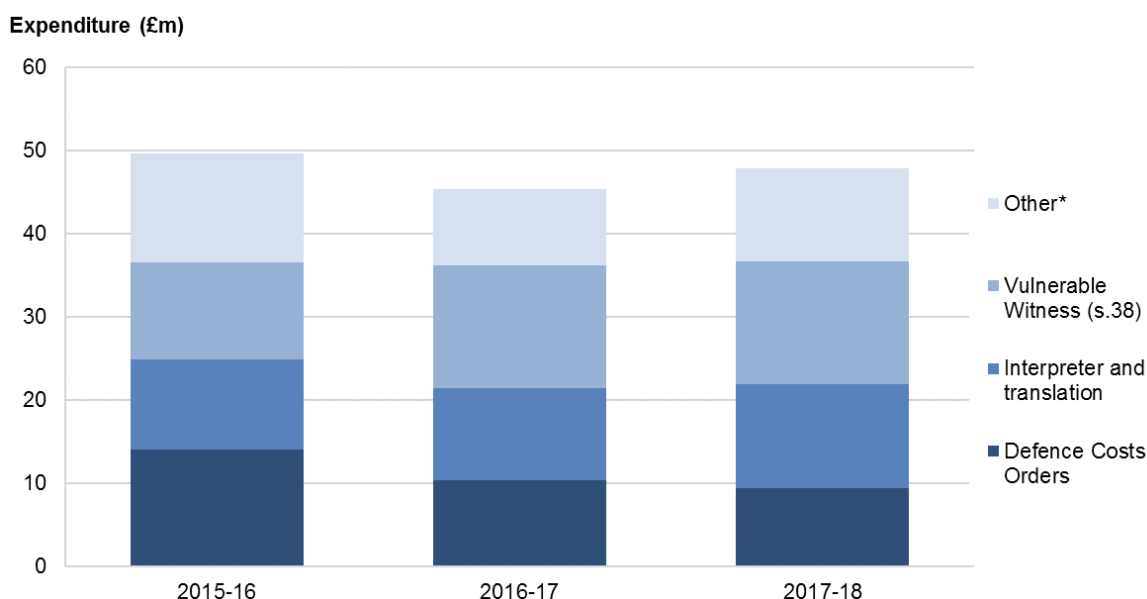
Table 11.1

In 2017-18 the total expenditure for Central Funds was just under £48m. This is 5% higher than the previous year.

This area encompasses arrangements to meet costs in a variety of scenarios that are not covered by the main criminal legal aid schemes. Some aspects of these are administered by the LAA and others by Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service.

In 2017-18 the total expenditure for Central Funds was just under £48m. This is 5% higher than the previous year.

Figure 5: Central Funds expenditure, 2015-16 to 2017-18



*Other includes intermediaries, private prosecutions and costs of attending magistrates' court for witnesses, experts and defendants

A large category of expenditure (£9.3m in 2017-18) relates to the reimbursement of defendants who have been acquitted after privately funding their defence lawyers. The process for assessing and authorising reimbursement of costs from central funds in this scenario is normally triggered when a judge grants a **Defence Cost Order** (DCO) for legal aid at Magistrates, Crown or higher courts.

Another sizeable area of Central funds expenditure (£14.7m in 2017-18) covers the costs of lawyers required where a defendant is unrepresented but where the court decides that the defendant must not themselves be allowed to cross-examine a **vulnerable witness**, with cases involving domestic violence being typical. This situation is covered by the terms of section 38 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999.

The costs of **interpreters and translators** in court comprise another area of Central Funds expenditure (£12.5m in 2017-18).

The remainder of Central Funds expenditure goes to meet the costs of court **intermediaries** (£6.1m in 2017-18) and successful **private prosecutions** (£3.7m in 2017-18) and towards meeting some of the reasonable **costs of attending magistrates' court** for witnesses, experts and defendants (£1.3m in 2017-18).

4. Civil legal aid



Table 1.2
and 8.1

Applications for civil representation supported by evidence of domestic or child abuse increased by 21%

The number of these granted increased by 14% compared to the same period of 2017.

Figure 6: Civil overview, closed case volumes and costs met by the LAA for Jan-Mar 2018, and comparison with Jan-Mar 2017

		Category	Workload	Expenditure
Civil Workload 67,000 (4%↓) Expenditure £169m (<1%↔)	Family 30,000 (2%↑) £133m (1%↑)	Family Public	21,000 (1%↑)	£111m (2%↑)
		Family Private	9,000 (4%↑)	£22m (2%↓)
		Mediation and MIAMS*	4,000 (16%↓)	£1m (12%↓)
	Non-Family 33,000 (7%↓) £35m (4%↓)	Immigration	11,000 (9%↓)	£11m (7%↓)
		Mental Health	9,000 (8%↓)	£11m (6%↓)
		Housing	10,000 (4%↓)	£6m (8%↓)
		Other Non-Family	3,000 (5%↓)	£7m (11%↑)

* Not included in family total

In this edition we are releasing additional detail on both legal help and civil representation. This will allow users to look at more specific categories within the higher-level groupings in this bulletin.

For example, the table below shows inquest figures for legal help and civil representation, showing the increase in the volume and value of these cases since 2013. Legal help is available for advice and assistance in the run-up to an inquest involving a member of the individual's family – this can cover preparatory work associated with the inquest, such as submissions to the coroner setting out questions the family wishes the coroner to raise. Legal aid for representation at an inquest is only available through Exceptional Case Funding (ECF).

Figure 7: Inquests, closed-case volumes and costs met by the LAA for 2013-14 to 2017-18

	legal help		civil representation	
	Volume	Value (£'000)	Volume	Value (£'000)
2013-14	88	301	3	43
2014-15	90	453	30	224
2015-16	99	380	63	570
2016-17	112	737	87	869
2017-18	139	659	81	761

Similarly, more detail is available for family, immigration, mental health and other non-family work. The data is in ods format and can be found on our publication [webpage](#).

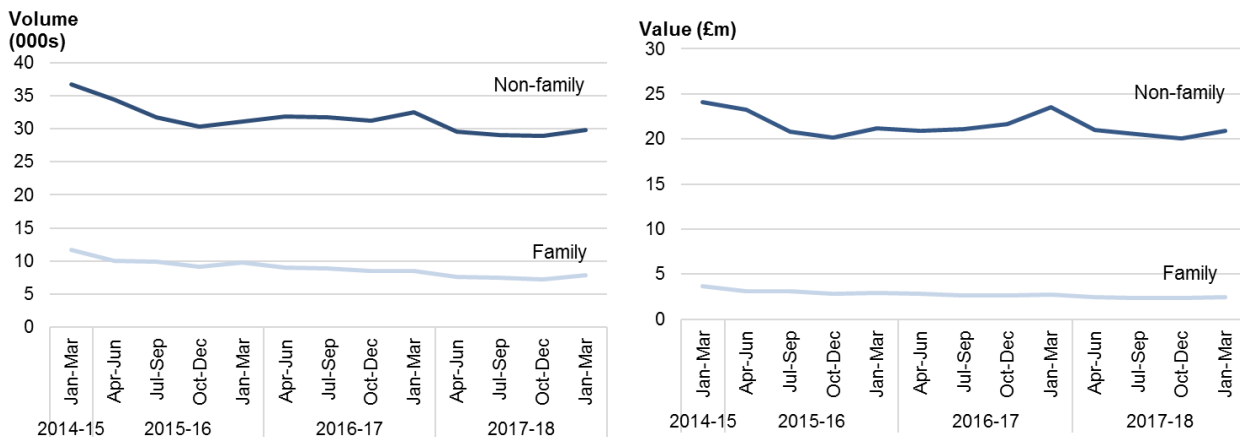
Legal help and controlled legal representation



Tables
5.1 – 5.3

In the last quarter, there were 9% fewer legal help new matter starts than in the same period of 2017. The volume of completed claims decreased by 8% and expenditure by 11% in January to March 2018 compared to the same period in 2017 (figure 6). The implementation of the LASPO Act in April 2013 resulted in large reductions in legal help workload, with the overall trend falling to less than one-third of pre-LASPO levels.

Figure 8: Completed workload and expenditure in legal help and controlled legal representation, Jan-Mar 2015 to Jan-Mar 2018



Civil Legal Advice (CLA)

The CLA service is usually delivered via a two-stage process. Typically, users contact the central operator service. This service diagnoses a client's case which, if it is potentially in scope and the client is financially eligible, is forwarded on to a specialist CLA provider. The specialist CLA adviser then assesses whether the matter should be started, or instead determined (for example because it is subsequently deemed out of scope, lacks merits or the client has failed to provide evidence).

The specialist advice service provides advice for debt, discrimination, education, family and housing matters. People seeking legally-aided advice in debt, discrimination or education must do so via the telephone gateway service initially (unless they meet certain specific exemptions).

Figure 9 below shows the number of specialist provider completed matters, alongside other legal help face-to-face completed matters. In the period from April 2017 to March 2018, 29% of completed matters in these categories of law were handled by the specialist advice service.

Figure 9: Specialist telephone advice and other face-to-face legal help completed matters, April 2017 to March 2018

	Specialist telephone providers completed	Other Legal Help matters completed	Total
Debt	383	40	423
Discrimination	1,419	0	1,419
Education	1,455	27	1,482
Family	3,106	27,059	30,165
Housing	13,405	20,734	34,139

Family legal help



Tables 5.1 – 5.3
and 7.1 – 7.2

In January to March 2018 family legal help starts decreased by 13% compared to the same quarter last year. There were decreases in completed claims (8%) and expenditure (10%). There was a steep decline in new matters started immediately following the implementation of the LASPO Act in April 2013, with a more gradual decline over the last 2 to 3 years.

In **family mediation**, Mediation Information and Assessment Meetings (MIAMs) were down by 19% in the last quarter compared to the previous year and currently stand at around a third of pre-LASPO levels. Mediation starts between January and March 2018 were down by 18% and are now running at just under half of pre-LASPO levels.

Non-family legal help and controlled legal representation



Tables
5.1 – 5.3

Legal help and controlled legal representation makes up over 95% of both **immigration** and **mental health** cases. Controlled legal representation relates to representation at tribunal and so is often longer and more costly than legal help but, as with legal help, the decision on whether to grant legal aid is delegated to providers.

The LASPO Act made changes to the scope of legal aid for immigration law, and the areas that remain in scope consist largely of asylum-related work. Having fallen by 70% over the 5 years to 2013-14, new matter starts in immigration have since stabilised, but stood 9% lower in January to March 2018 than in the same quarter of the previous year. Completed claims and expenditure in immigration were both down by 10% over the last year.

Within mental health most funding is spent on providing assistance to sectioned clients appealing the terms of their detention before a mental health tribunal. Mental health new matter starts fell 7% when comparing the latest quarter to the previous year. Completed claims fell by 8% and expenditure fell by 12% over the same period.

Over 80% of **housing** work volume is made up of legal help. The volume of this work halved between July to September 2012 and April to June 2013. The trend then fluctuated for around 18 months but has been gradually falling since 2014. In January to March 2018 there was a 10% decrease in housing work starts compared to the same quarter the previous year. There was a 5% decrease in completed claims and a 15% fall in expenditure.

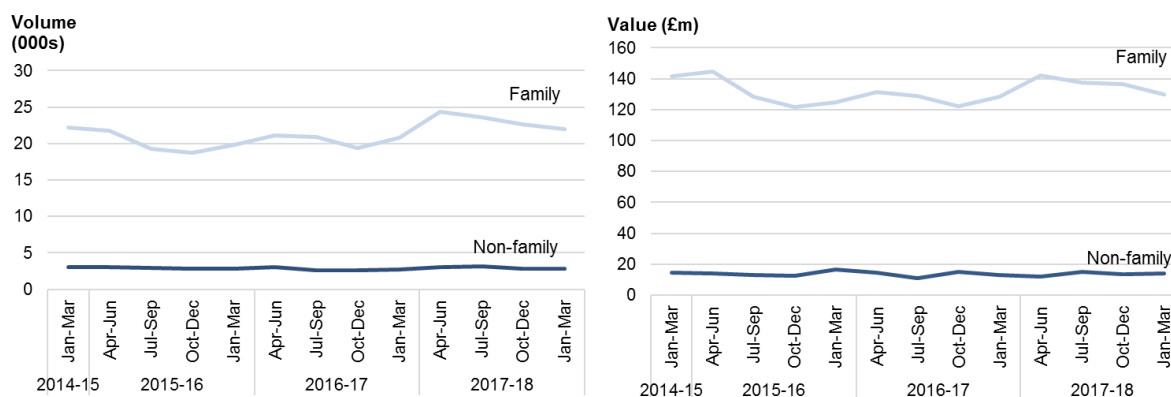
Civil representation



Tables
6.1 – 6.10

The number of civil representation certificates granted in the last quarter was up 4% compared to the same period of the previous year. The number of certificates completed increased by 6%, and the associated expenditure increased by 2% in the same period. Civil representation workloads fell following the implementation of the LASPO Act in April 2013 but by a smaller proportion than legal help and controlled legal representation.

Figure 10: Completed workload and expenditure in civil representation, Jan-Mar 2015 to Jan-Mar 2018



Family civil representation



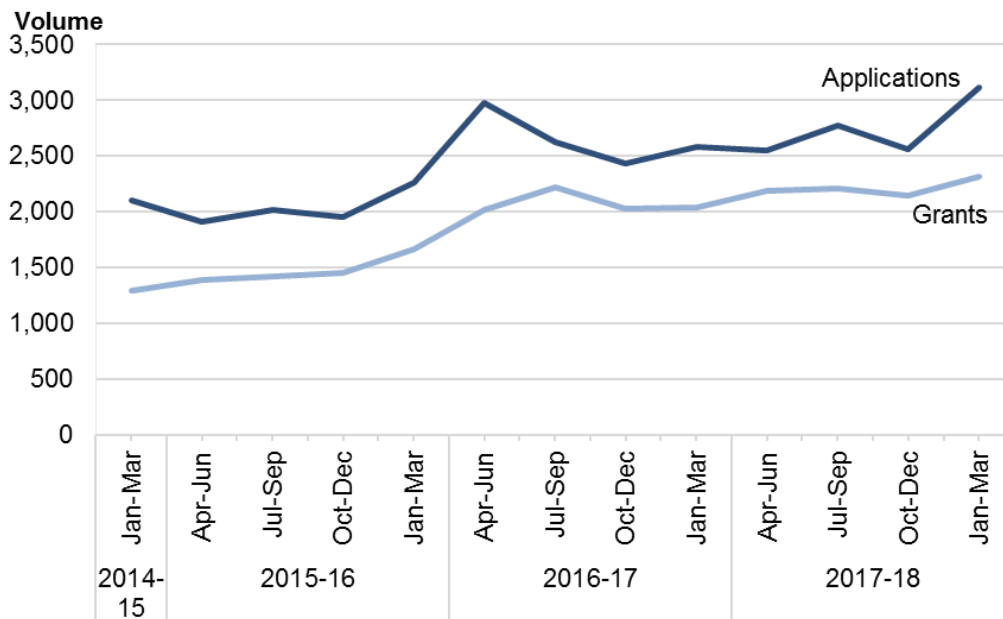
Tables
6.1 – 6.10

Certificates granted for family work increased by 5% in January to March 2018 compared to the previous year. There was an increase in certificates completed (6%) compared to the same quarter the previous year, however there has been a gradual decrease each quarter since April to June 2017. The associated expenditure follows a similar pattern (2% up from the same quarter the previous year). This increase was largely due to **public family law**, which makes up around three quarters of family workload and over 80% of family expenditure. Certificates completed in public family law have fallen after the peak in April to June 2017.

In January to March 2018, applications for civil representation supported by **evidence of domestic or child abuse** increased by 21% compared to the same period of the previous year. The number of these granted also increased (up 14%) compared to the same period of 2017. These are the highest quarterly figures since the inception of this type of application, in 2013 (Figure 11). 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%. In the latest quarter it was 77%.

On 8 January 2018 changes to evidence requirements in private family law disputes came into effect. There is now no longer a time limit on abuse evidence, which previously stood at 5 years. Additionally, the range of documents accepted as evidence of abuse was widened to include statements from domestic violence support organisations and housing support officers. Table 6.10 shows that these types of evidence are being used, and have contributed to the increase in applications seen this quarter. More details on this can be found in the user guide.

Figure 11: Applications received and certificates granted via the domestic violence and child abuse gateway, Jan-Mar 2015 to Jan-Mar 2018



Non-family civil representation



Tables
6.1 – 6.7

Non-family certificates completed make up just over 10% of the total civil representation workload and expenditure. There are only a small number of **immigration** and **mental health** cases in civil representation as most work in these areas consists of controlled legal representation. The majority of the certificates completed in this category are for **housing** work. There has been a gradual decline in housing certificates completed and in expenditure on this category since 2014, but in the latest period there were 4% more certificates completed than in the same period of the previous year.

Judicial reviews



Of all civil representation applications granted, around 3,000 a year relate to judicial review. The number granted in January to March 2018 was 5% lower than in the same quarter in 2017. A third of judicial reviews were for immigration cases and another third were for public law.

Exceptional Case Funding (ECF)



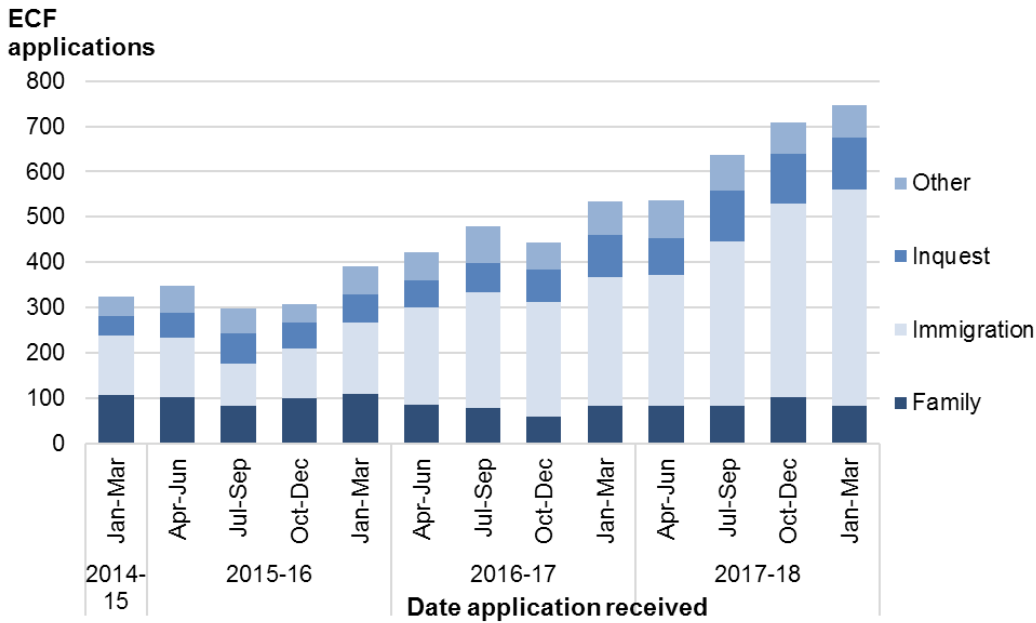
Tables
8.1 and 8.2

There were 746 applications for ECF received from January to March 2018. This is the highest number of applications received in a single quarter since the scheme began in April 2013 and a 40% increase from the same quarter last year. 657 (88%) of these were new applications.

Of the 746 ECF applications received between January and March 2018, 88% (658) had been determined by the LAA as of 20 May 2018. 59% (390) of these were granted, which is

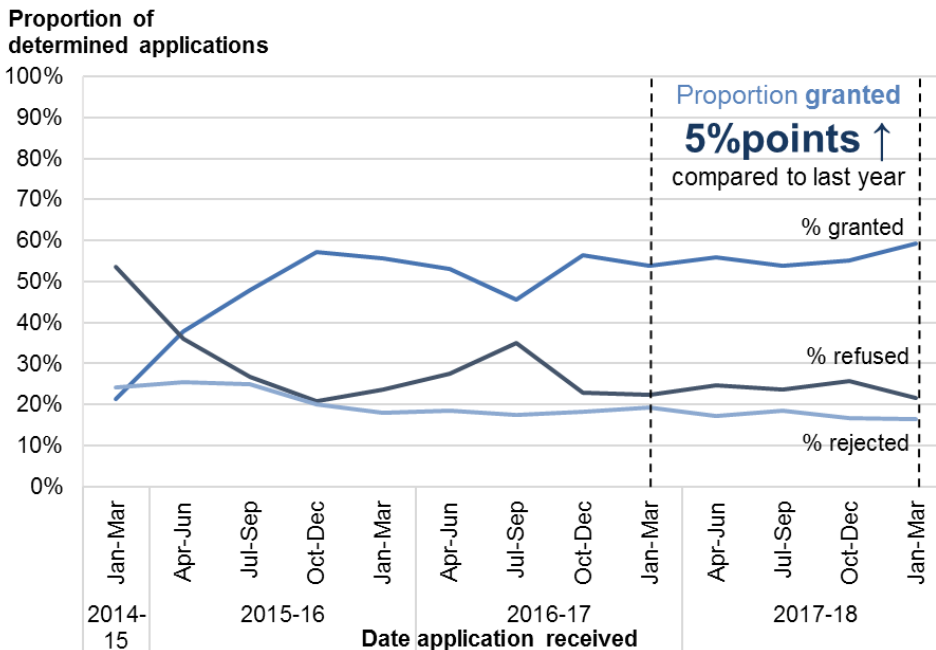
the highest proportion and number of grants since the scheme began. 22% (143) of applications were refused and 16% (108) rejected (see figure 13).

Figure 12: Volume of ECF applications received Jan-Mar 2015 to Jan-Mar 2018



Among the ECF applications received between January and March 2018, immigration (64%), inquest (16%), and family (11%) remained the most requested categories of law (figure 8). The increase in ECF applications over the last two years is driven by an increase in immigration applications.

Figure 13: ECF determinations by outcome, Jan-Mar 2015 to Jan-Mar 2018



In this edition for the first time we are publishing information about the characteristics of ECF applicants, with breakdowns by sex, ethnicity, disability and age for applications and grants included in the client diversity data file and discussed in the chapter below.



5. Appeals and representations

Civil representation appeals rose over the last year, driven by the domestic violence and housing categories.

The volume of representations closed out this year has fallen again, although the number of representations received increased.

Appeals

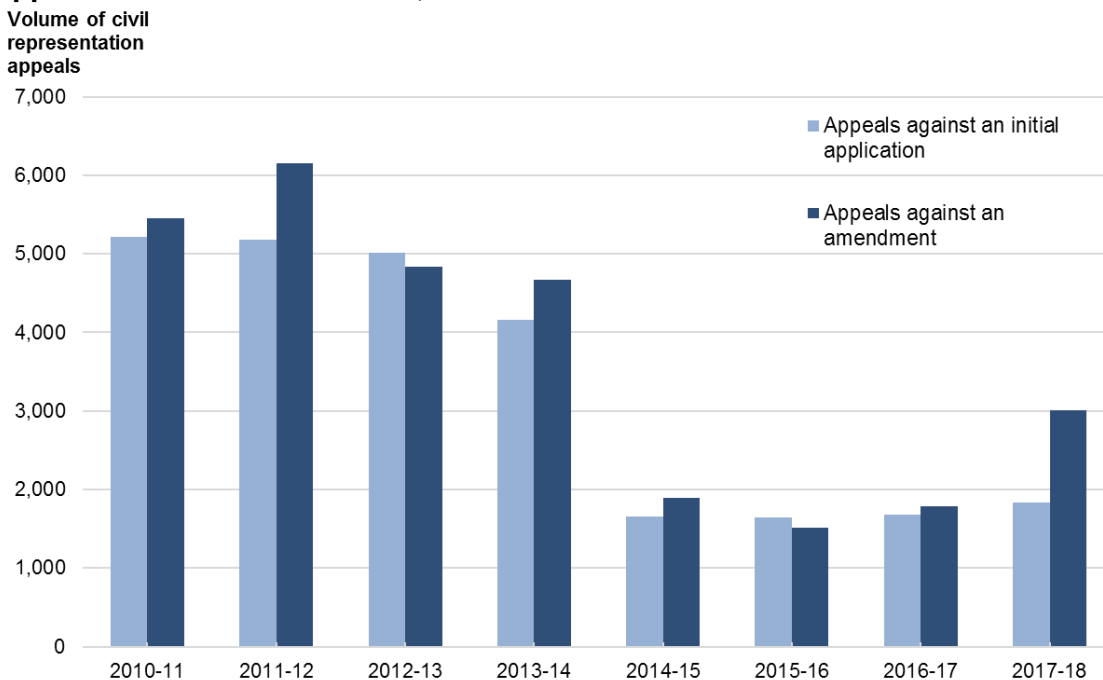
There are two main types of appeal relating to decisions on the award of public funding for legal aid: funding appeals and cost assessments.

Funding Appeals

These are appeals against determinations made by the LAA. They include reviews and full appeals against determinations on whether a client qualifies for legal aid, scope decisions or the extent of funding granted for a case. For more information please see the [User guide](#) to legal aid statistics.

Figures in this bulletin include volumes of legal appeals against initial civil representation applications and civil representation amendments. Data are available on the category of law of the certificate that is being appealed, and the outcome of this appeal. Figures are published against the date the final decision was made by the LAA.

Figure 13: Volumes of legal appeals against decisions on civil representation initial applications and amendments, 2010-11 to 2017-18.



Following the introduction of the LASPO Act, which caused civil representation volumes in general to drop from 2013-14, (Figure 13), numbers of appeals also fell sharply. Since then, civil representation appeals have increased. There were 40% more total civil representation legal appeals in 2017-18 than in 2016-17, driven by appeals against amendments.

53% of all appeals against initial civil representation application decisions were granted (at least in part) in 2017-18, consistent with the previous year. Among appeals relating to non-family applications the proportion increased again this year, up from 42% to 49%, driven by the housing, immigration and public law categories. For the family category it remained stable at 56%. For amendments, the proportion of appeals granted has increased slightly to 61% for family and 62% for non-family.

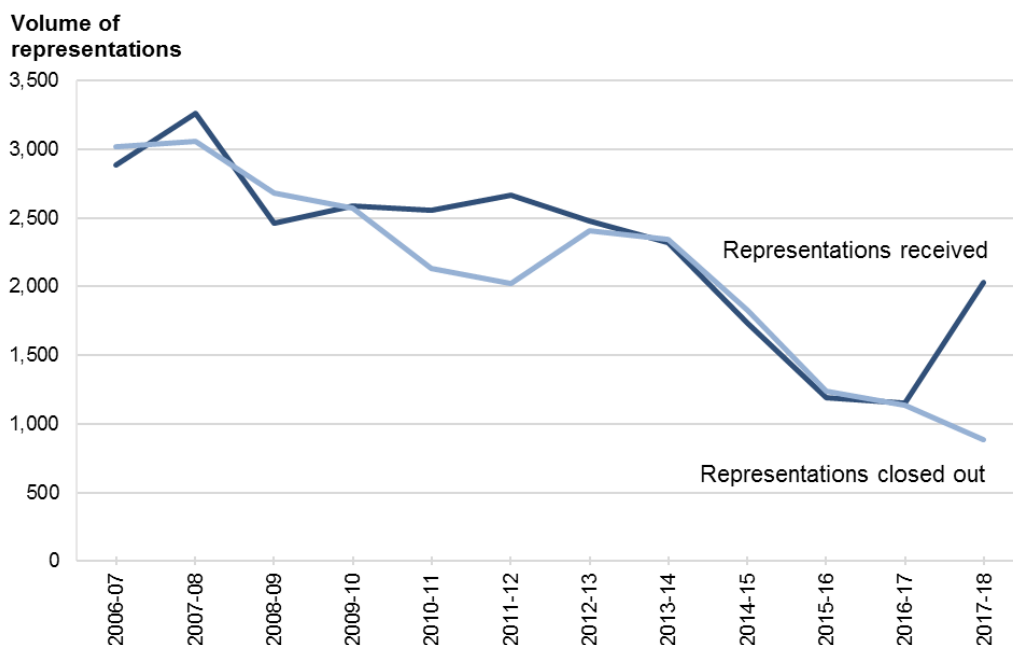
The increased volume of appeals against amendments has been driven by increases in those for domestic violence and housing. The most common type of legal appeal for initial applications is still Private Law Children Act proceedings, the same as the previous year.

For general information on **cost assessments** and **IOJ appeals** please see the [User guide](#) to legal aid statistics.

Representations

When legal aid funding is granted to an individual, their opponents or other third parties may make representations against the grant of legal aid or continuation of funding. Representations may be made concerning the legal merits of the case, the financial means of the applicant, or both.

Figure 14: Volume of representations received and closed out, 2006-07 to 2017-18.



The total volume of representations has generally been falling since 2006-07. The volume closed out in 2017-18 was 22% lower than in 2016-17, however the volume received was up 76% (Figure 14), driven by a greater increase in merits reps.

This year, the data on closed representations cannot be split between whether the rep concerned the financial means of the applicant or the legal merits of the case.

6. Legal aid providers



Tables
9.1 – 9.4

Over the last 5 years there has been a fall in the number of provider offices completing legal aid work.

Over the past year, this fall has slowed somewhat for civil work (down 5%), while for criminal work numbers have risen slightly (up 1%).

Legal aid services in England and Wales are delivered through solicitor firms, Not-for-profit organisations, telephone operators and barristers, most of whom are contracted by the LAA to do legal aid work. This chapter presents the number of providers who have completed work and received associated payments from the LAA in any given quarter or financial year.

A provider may consist of a large firm with several offices around the country or a single office location at which one or more individuals are based. For more information on data sources, quality and usage please see the [User guide](#) to legal aid statistics.

The timing with which a completed piece of work and the total payment, or expenditure, associated with it are reported are based on the point at which the main final payment for that piece of work was authorised by the LAA, not the timing of cash transactions. Figures for a given period may include the value of work conducted in earlier periods and the expenditure presented in these statistics represents total legal aid fee payments for each item of completed work.

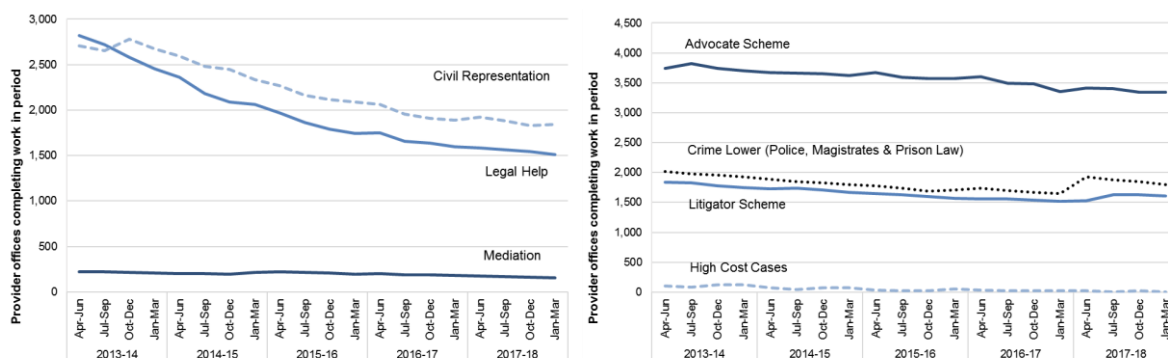
These figures are not equivalent to providers' profits, earnings or take-home pay. Figures are based on the provider office location and not the location of the client. A provider may serve clients from other geographic areas as well as that in which the office is located. As this data reflects only the location of the provider office it cannot be used as a reliable indicator of the distribution of the clients or benefits of legal aid, or to infer a precise picture of coverage of legal aid services.

Volume of providers

Across civil legal aid as a whole, the number of provider offices completing work has fallen by a third over the last 5 years but this fall slowed somewhat over the latest year (down 5%). Numbers have fallen more sharply in legal help than civil representation.

For criminal work there has been a more gradual downward trend, with an 8% fall over the last 5 years. Over the latest year numbers have risen slightly (up 1%), driven by an increase in solicitor offices.

Figure 15: Number of provider offices completing legal aid work, 2013-14 to 2017-18



7. Client diversity



Tables
12.1 – 12.5

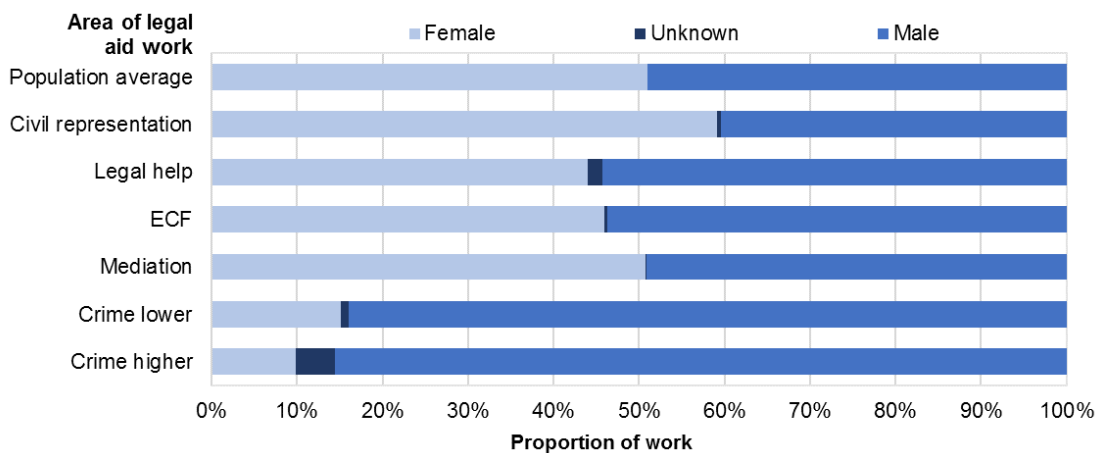
In general, the proportions of legal aid work by sex, disability status, ethnicity and age band of the client in 2017-18 are consistent with 2016-17, though existing trends in some areas have continued.

Published alongside this year-end bulletin is a diversity data file which breaks down legal aid work by the sex, disability status, ethnicity and age band of the client and, for criminal legal aid, the applicant. In this chapter this data is compared with the national breakdown from the 2011 census data from the Office for National Statistics³. More detail on disclosure control, methodology and data quality can be found in the User Guide to legal aid statistics. Generally speaking, the diversity of legal aid clients compared to 2016-17 is unchanged. This stability in high level proportions over time can be seen in table 12.1.

Sex

The profile of criminal legal aid clients in 2017-18 differs from the population average with a much greater proportion of males (Figure 16). This reflects the picture across the criminal justice system as a whole⁴ and is consistent over time. However, the proportion of females varies with the type of work being claimed for. In 2017-18, 16% of magistrates' court representation work and 15% of police station advice involved females, whereas only 3% of prison law work was for females. Among claims for free standing advice and assistance not in the police station, almost half involved female defendants.

Figure 16: Proportion of legal aid clients in 2017-18 by sex



The profile of civil legal aid clients in 2017-18 broadly matches the general population, though civil representation has a slightly greater proportion of female clients (59%) and Legal help slightly smaller (44%). The proportion of female legal help clients has been decreasing; down 10 percentage points since 2012-13, driven mainly by immigration where the proportion of females has decreased from one third to one quarter. Conversely, in civil representation claims, the proportion of males in the domestic violence work category has decreased from 18% in 2010-11 to 6% this year.

³ Unrounded estimates of the usually resident population by age and sex, along with household estimates on census day, 27 March 2011 www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/2011censuspopulationestimatesbysingleyearofageandsexforlocalauthoritiesintheunitedkingdom

⁴ MOJ, Criminal Justice statistics quarterly: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice/series/criminal-justice-statistics

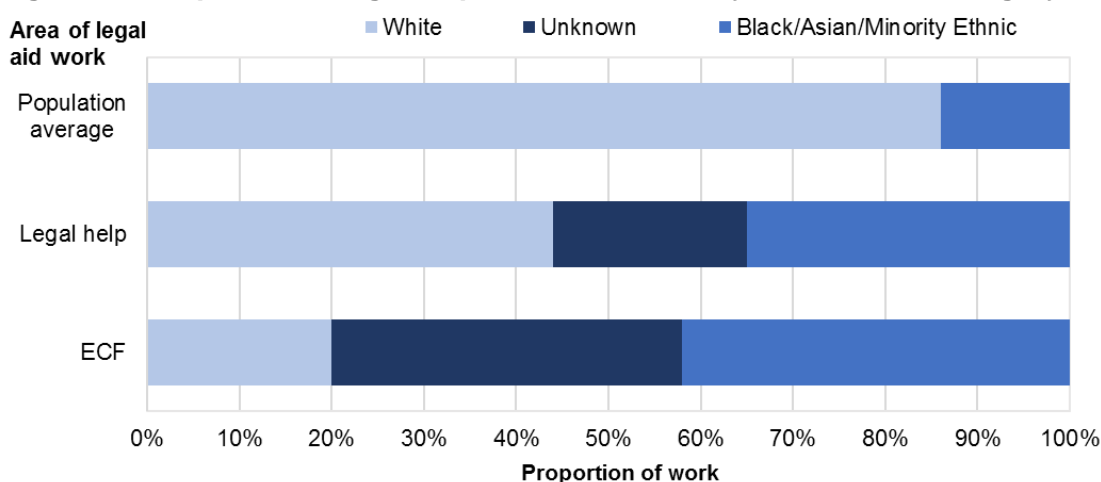
Disability

It is difficult to draw firm conclusions for most categories of legal aid on this characteristic because of the relatively high proportion of unknowns. Crime Higher has the lowest proportion of unknowns, although no detail about the type of disability is recorded, (as with crime lower). A higher proportion of legally aided Crown Court defendants have a disability (26%) than the population average (18%).

Despite the unknowns, the figures show that a higher proportion of legal help clients have disabilities than the general population. This may be partly because mental health controlled legal representation work is included within legal help. In 2017-18, two thirds of the legal help closed case mental health work claims had the client recorded as having a mental health condition, making up 94% of all the legal help claims with a recorded client disability.

Ethnicity

Figure 17: Proportion of legal help and ECF clients by broad ethnic category, 2017-18



It is difficult to draw firm conclusions from some the ethnicity data because of the high proportion for which ethnicity is unknown in most areas. Nevertheless, the proportion of legal help and ECF clients reporting as Black/Asian/Minority Ethnic (BAME) is much larger than in the general population. This may reflect the fact that controlled legal representation (CLR) for immigration is included within legal help and the majority of ECF grants are for immigration work. In 2017-18 only 7% of immigration legal help/CLR work and 5% of immigration ECF grants had a White ethnicity recorded.

Age






Generally, the age profile of legal aid clients is much less evenly spread than the population average, with a higher proportion of working age clients and a smaller proportion over 55s. A much greater proportion of clients of criminal legal aid are from young adult age groups (aged 18-24 and 25-34) than in the general population. Civil representation has the greatest relative proportion of clients under the age of 18; over one third of all certificates completed this year. Within this, other public law children act proceedings and special children act proceedings both had high proportions of clients under 18; 60% and 48% respectively in 2017-18 (both increased from 2016-17). It also has the smallest proportion of clients aged 45 and above; 13% compared to 29% for ECF. The overall age profile of clients in 2017-18 is similar to previous years, although there has been a steady increase in the proportion of under 18-year olds in civil representation, up from 16% in 2008-09 to 35% this year.

8. Further information

This publication presents quarterly data trends and completes the full 2017-18 financial year. For our annual butterfly charts, please refer to the [infographic pdf](#) published alongside.

Accompanying files

As well as this bulletin, the following products are published as part of this release:

-  • **Tables:** A set of tables, which give further detail and full timeseries for each area.
-  • **More detailed data:** A detailed file to allow detailed analysis provided in .ods (OpenDocument Spreadsheet) formats
-  • **[Data visualisation tool:](#)** A web-based tool allowing the user to view and customize charts and tables based on the published statistics.
-  • **Index of data in Legal aid statistics:** An index to the more detailed data published in the .ods files, lists of available data from Legal Aid systems and guidance on how to work with the more detailed data using pivot tables.
-  • **[User Guide to legal aid statistics:](#)** This provides comprehensive information about data sources and quality as well as key legislative changes.

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National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

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