



# PBA and FeeAccount

## Frequently Asked Questions

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## General Information

HM Courts & Tribunals Service introduced the Payment By Account (PBA) Service on 17 November 2014 providing Fee Accounts to Account Holders to pay court fees administered under Civil Procedure rules [www.justice.gov.uk/courts/procedure-rules/civil](http://www.justice.gov.uk/courts/procedure-rules/civil)

This document provides a selection of frequently asked questions (FAQs) and their answers.

### What is meant by Payment By Account (PBA) and Fee Account?

Payment By Account (PBA) is the credit service designed for firms and organisations who frequently bring proceedings and actions to HMCTS. A registered organisation becomes a Fee Account Holder who subsequently manages payment of fees using their allocated PBA number(s).

### Who is this service for?

This service is designed for customers who pay more than 12 court fees per year.

### Is there a charge for this service?

No, there is no charge for our PBA services.

### Where can I get further information and sign up?

Registration forms and information can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/form-fee-account-application-form-fee-account-customer-application-form>,

then direct your registration submissions and queries to: [MiddleOffice.DDServices@liberata.com](mailto:MiddleOffice.DDServices@liberata.com)

### What are the benefits of PBA to my firm?

The service offers customers improved fee management and court application processing, as well as improved internal efficiency and cost reduction through :

- Court applications will not be delayed due to payment clearance times as the correct fee will be deducted on lodgement (assuming sufficient customer funds/credit available).
- Elimination of your administration and banking costs for raising and authorising cheques
- Elimination of your administration costs for investigation and re-issue of payments to replace unsigned, incorrect value or lost cheques
- Refunds applied directly to your Fee Account (avoiding the administrative, postal and cheque banking delays).
- Control over payment method (customers can cancel the Direct Debit instruction at any time)
- Ability to include your firm's reference / catalogue numbers to simplify your reconciliation.
- Single invoice for period spend – showing a breakdown using your own references across all jurisdictions and services on a per-case basis of fees deducted and refunds applied

- Single invoice across all HMCTS jurisdictions and services you engage with (fees paid for civil proceedings in person, correspondence and online dashboards)
- Provision of invoice data in electronic format that simplifies your own reconciliation of fees. XML format files can be uploaded into your finance systems or even spreadsheet solutions.

### Which jurisdictions of HMCTS can I transact with using my PBA Fee Account in person or by correspondence?

Civil Court Proceedings Jurisdictions nationally [www.justice.gov.uk/courts/procedure-rules/civil](http://www.justice.gov.uk/courts/procedure-rules/civil) . The PBA service is available in and your Fee Account can be used to pay court fees administered by all offices of the high court, county court and family court, including local courts and hearing centres, National Business Centres (County Court Money Claim Centre, County Court Business Centre), magistrates' courts which deal with civil and family work, probate registries, Court of Protection, and Royal Courts of Justice.

The service is also available in Upper Tribunal Immigration And Asylum Chamber (UTIAC) for Judicial Review fees, with other tribunals under consideration.

### What types of fees can I pay using my PBA Fee Account in person or by correspondence?

All fees chargeable by Civil Court Proceedings Jurisdictions. These encompass application fees, and all fees within civil proceedings, including hearings, general applications, enforcement and appeals.

### Which services of HMCTS can I transact with using digital Professional Dashboards and Online PBA using my same PBA number?

Digital Transformation of HMCTS is underway, and as at time of publication, you can use **your existing PBA** Fee Account number when registering for the following online professional dashboard services (contact your applicable user engagement group for more details) and then pay fees for:

- County Money Claims – application for claim values under £10,000
- Probate – non-contentious application
- Divorce – consent application
- Financial Remedy – consent application
- Family Public Law - applications
- High Court CE-File – full proceedings

### Can I use my account for payments into court or to third parties or in the criminal jurisdiction (for instance: the Official Receiver or awards between litigants or fines)?

No, your PBA Fee Account is only used for the payment of fees for court proceedings.

## Registration Queries

### How do I register for the PBA Service and get assigned a fee account PBA number?

Registration forms and information is provided here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/form-fee-account-application-form-fee-account-customer-application-form>.

then send your registration and direct debit mandate submissions to:

[MiddleOffice.DDServices@liberata.com](mailto:MiddleOffice.DDServices@liberata.com)

### How long will it take to process my application for the PBA service?

We usually provide you with a decision within seven working days of receiving your correctly completed registration. However incorrect forms or credit check complications will increase timescales.

### Where will correspondence be directed?

Correspondence about your account will be directed to the named lead contact for the account.

### Where will invoices be directed?

All transactional information via the Advance Notice (Invoice) will be directed to the billing email address you provide

### How can I find out if my firm is already registered?

Contact the PBA support team who will be able to check although not provide details to you directly, in accordance with GDPR. If your firm is registered, they will direct your query to the named lead contact for your firm's account who can then advise you what PBA number to use.

### What are the contact details for PBA Fee Account registration enquires and issues?

The PBA support team can be contacted by email [MiddleOffice.DDServices@liberata.com](mailto:MiddleOffice.DDServices@liberata.com) or 01633 652125 (option 3)

### How is my credit limit decided?

HM Courts & Tribunals Service and their appointed providers/contractor carry out credit reference checks with a registered credit reference agency. If their recommendation is less than the limit requested you will be notified via your nominated email address. If you wish to appeal this decision you can do so by contacting the PBA support team [MiddleOffice.DDServices@liberata.com](mailto:MiddleOffice.DDServices@liberata.com)

### Can separate branches of my partnership have different PBA numbers?

Individual branches or businesses that are part of an overall group will be given a notional credit limit where those businesses are not recognised as separate business entities by HM Courts & Tribunals Service appointed credit reference agency. In these circumstances you will be notified of the notional branch credit limit based upon an equitable split of the group limit.

## Setting Up and First Invoice Queries

### How often will I be invoiced?

Weekly invoicing is recommended to enable your most efficient and flexible fee administration. Requests for monthly invoicing are considered by discretion.

### How will any applicable refunds be made?

The refund will be automatically applied directly to your Fee Account by the court and will be included in the next PBA invoice and Direct Debit settlement.

### What will my invoice look like?

You will receive an itemised invoice, titled “Advance Notice”, detailing each case fee with your unique reference number.

You will receive your invoice electronically by default. This will be emailed to your billing email address, as provided on your application form, in pdf format.

In addition to your PDF you may opt to receive an .xml format file. XML format files can either be uploaded into your finance systems or can be opened using MS Excel or similar software in order to aid the reconciliation of your fees.

### How will my invoice be settled

Settlement of the invoice by way of Direct Debit from the customer’s nominated bank account on or within three working days of the notifications date stated on your Advance Notice.

### How can I manipulate the data from xml into MS Excel?

In order to aid invoice reconciliation, the xml file can be saved onto your computer and opened in MS Excel. The following Microsoft process should be followed [Import XML data - Excel](#)

This should then provide the data in Excel that can be manipulated for reconciliation.

### How can I import the XML formatted invoice into other Systems?

Please follow the manual for your specific financial or accounting system or database, which will have a section for importing data files.

## Account and Banking Queries

### What do I need to send to courts to ensure the fee is deducted on lodgement and my account is debited?

Clearly and accurately quote your Fee Account number on any document sent to the court which requires a fee transaction. Ensure that each fee-attracting application lodged with the court is accompanied by the correctly completed paperwork and/or a letter on business letterhead advising the fee to be paid to the court.

### Can my credit limit be changed?

You will be informed of the amount of credit allocated to you when your unique PBA number is issued and initiates your Fee Account. To request a change in your credit limit, or alternatively arrange more regular collections, you need to contact the PBA support team by email [MiddleOffice.DDServices@liberata.com](mailto:MiddleOffice.DDServices@liberata.com). Your request will be considered and you will be notified of the decision accordingly. HM Courts & Tribunals Service has the right to increase or decrease this limit at its discretion. You will be notified by email within three working days of any credit limit or collection timing change.

### Where should I direct queries and issues to do with my credit limit, bank debit or suspended PBA account? Mainly When, Who and How Questions.

To refresh your knowledge on PBA Terms and Conditions, they can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/form-fee-account-application-form-fee-account-customer-application-form>

For specific queries you should contact the PBA support team by email [MiddleOffice.DDServices@liberata.com](mailto:MiddleOffice.DDServices@liberata.com) or 01633 652125 (option 3)

Examples include:

- I have received an email about my debit not working.
- How do I interpret this invoice?
- I tried to make an application on a digital dashboard and my PBA number was not accepted
- When is my next invoice due?
- This invoice shows the payment going to “CMC” – who does that mean?
- Why have I only received 1 invoice today when we have 2 PBA numbers?

### Where should I direct queries and issues to do with a line item on my invoice? Mainly Why, What and Where Questions.

You should contact the helpline or engagement lead for the court, service or office where you lodge your applications and court correspondence

Examples include:

- I do not recognise this transaction. What is it for?

- Why is the refund you confirmed last week not showing on this week's invoice?
- Why has this claim not been issued by now when the payment was deducted last Monday?
- I made these applications last week and they are not showing on this invoice. Why not?