



Ministry  
of Justice



Legal Aid  
Agency

# Consultation on the publication of Legal Aid Statistics in England and Wales

Legal Aid Agency

**Ministry of Justice**

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# Introduction

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Legal Aid Statistics in England and Wales is published every quarter at the following link, presenting the key statistics on activity in the legal aid system. Each edition comprises the first release of official statistics for the latest three month period and also provides the latest statement of all figures for previous periods and longer term trends.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/legal-aid-statistics>

The statistical release consists of a set of documents:

- The main bulletin, which provides key figures, graphs, explanation and commentary
- A set of main tables, provided as spreadsheets, which give more detailed figures and full time-series for each area
- A more detailed set of underlying data, provided in the form of a CSV (comma separated variables) file to facilitate detailed analysis using pivot tables, and re-use of the data using a variety of software packages. Guidance on how to use this underlying data is also provided alongside it.

Legal aid is a complex topic, and its provision involves a great diversity of providers, clients, delivery methods and areas of law. The users of statistics on legal aid are also diverse, and we are seeking to learn more about them. This will help us to meet their needs better by prioritising our use of available resources to improve and developing the service we provide.

In particular we are seeking from users:

- information about how and why they use these statistics;
- views on recent changes to the publication;
- views on proposed changes to the publication;
- any other suggestions or comments.

Users are invited to respond in relation to any or all of these points. Enquiries and responses should be directed to the contact details below. Please put 'Consultation Response' in the title of any emails:

**This consultation will run from 18 December 2014 until 19 February 2015.**

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# Consultation Questions

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In this section we examine the information we would like to gather in more detail.

## How do you use these statistics?

1. Please tell us who you are and why you use legal aid statistics.
2. Which part(s) of the Legal Aid Statistical publication do you use:
  - a. The main bulletin, which provides key figures, graphs, explanation and commentary
  - b. the main tables, provided as spreadsheets, which give more detailed figures and full time-series for each area
  - c. the more detailed underlying data, provided as a CSV (comma separated variables) file, with accompanying guidance document?
3. In relation to your answer to Question 2,
  - a. Do you find the format of this part(s) of the publication easy to use?
  - b. Do you have suggestions for improvement?
4. To what extent does the information in the publication meet your needs?
5. Do you use the Open Justice website?
6. Do you find legal aid statistics easy to locate and access on the Gov.uk website?

## Views on recent changes to the publication

As part of our continuing work to the provision of statistics on legal aid we have already made some recent changes to the way we publish our data.

It would be helpful to hear users' views on these changes, some of which are listed below for ease of reference:

7. Publishing on a quarterly basis (previously annual) to ensure that more frequent and timely data is available to all.
8. Extending published time series by releasing historical data for many of the legal aid areas covered to facilitate time trend analysis and longer-term comparisons.
9. The expansion of the CSV file to provide more of the underlying data to allow users to perform their own analysis.
10. The consolidation of statistics on legal aid into a single publication (as far as possible) to enable users to find all statistics on legal aid in one place.

11. More explanation of what the statistics represent, for example on terminology and changes in the legal aid system.

## Views on proposed changes to the publication

We are also proposing the following changes to the way the data will be published in the future. We are interested in users' views on these proposals as this will help us to prioritise the changes in forthcoming publications.

12. Providing a monthly breakdown of data (though still published on a quarterly basis) to allow for more detailed analysis such as statistical modelling.
13. Providing a further breakdown of crime lower data to include information on offences and outcomes, this will bring crime lower data in line with what is reported on crime higher.
14. Report crime lower data against criminal investigations, criminal proceedings and prison law to bring it in line with the way the work is conducted, removing the categorisation of pre-charge suspects, charged defendants, representation at Magistrates' court and Prison law.
15. Expanding the information included on providers of legal aid.
16. Include the reason for determination from the telephone specialist advice service for greater transparency.
17. Include the number of sessions provided in Mediation to address public interest in this area.

## Other suggestions or comments

18. Suggestions are invited from existing users or potential users for the development of any new statistics, products or services. Please include how this data will help you as this will help inform our decision.
19. Suggestions from providers for any reductions in the amount of data we collect and publish. Please include reasons for these reductions.

Users are invited to respond in relation to any or all of these points. Enquiries and responses should be directed to the contact details below. Please put 'Consultation Response' in the title of any emails:

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