



Legal Aid  
Agency

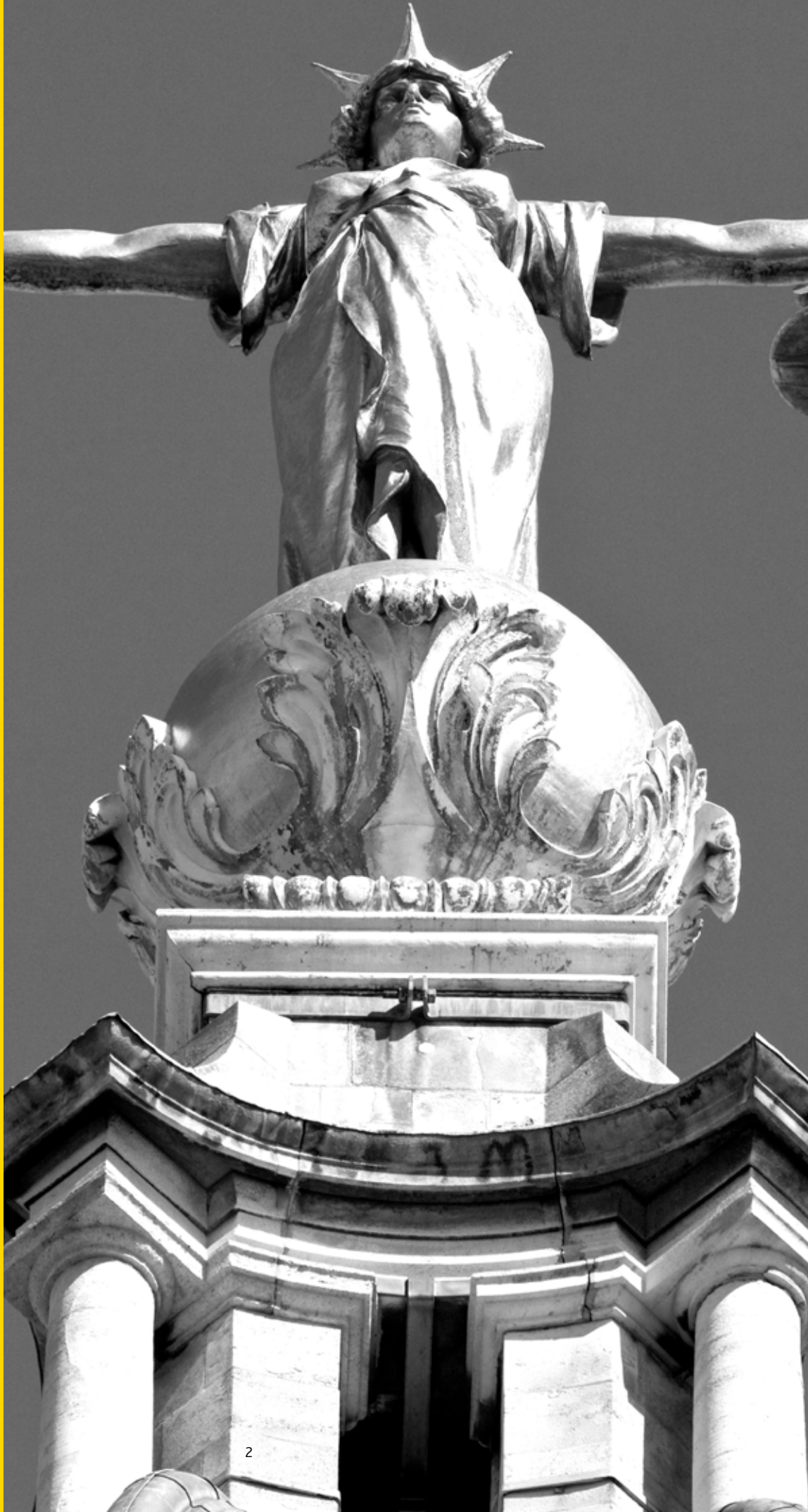
# Legal Aid Agency

## Our Business Plan 2018-19

Working with others to achieve  
excellence in the delivery of legal aid



# Introduction



# Shaun's Introduction

## Our Strategic Objectives

1. Provide simple, timely and reliable access to legal aid
2. Build strong relationships across Government and the justice system
3. Secure value for money for the taxpayer in all that we do
4. Achieve our full potential through being fair, proud and supportive

Whilst reflecting on my second year as Chief Executive, I have been impressed by just how well we have delivered. Achieving a high level of take up across our digital services, successfully implementing new crime contracts, our work to procure civil legal aid services and the way we have consistently exceeded the challenging bill payment targets we set ourselves have been true highlights. These are just a few examples of the achievements of teams across the Agency.

I also want to celebrate the LAA's outstanding People Survey results; at 71%, our Employee Engagement Index is in the top 5 across the Civil Service. This is a remarkable achievement for all of us, especially when considered against our score of 53% in 2011. The LAA has been on a phenomenal journey and I am deeply proud to be leading an organisation comprised of highly dedicated and talented individuals.

As we approach 2020 we remain committed to delivering more efficient services to society, the public and our legal aid providers. To drive this forward we have set ourselves the challenge of transforming the Agency, to become a simpler, smarter organisation.

We also play our role in the context of the wider department. We will continue to support delivery of the Secretary of State's priorities, working with colleagues from across MoJ to provide an effective and fair justice system which serves all users, whenever they need it. This focus is at the heart of our transformation work. The MoJ values, launched in 2017, will be a critical influence on our transformation. They will serve as a reminder of the importance of taking a unified approach towards focused outcomes. As we look ahead to the challenges of the future one thing is certain; our success is not just about having a clear business plan and a good strategy, it's about having good people, empowered to reach their full potential by being fair, proud and supportive, working together.



**Shaun McNally CBE**

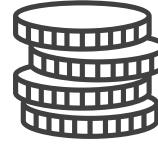
# Our Achievements – LAA in 17/18



## Strategic Objective 1 Provide simple, timely and reliable access to legal aid



We processed over **500,000** applications for legal aid within target time



We paid over **530,000 bills** within 20 working days of receiving them



We implemented new criminal contracts with **1299 providers**



We launched our new IT Portal, improving user experience for over **50,000 internal and external users**



The Public Defender Service **achieved Lexcel accreditation** for excellence in legal practice management and client care



## Strategic Objective 2 Build strong relationships across Government and the justice system

We worked with MoJ colleagues to implement changes to Domestic Violence evidence requirements



We worked with colleagues in HMCTS, CPS, police and the judiciary to deliver the new translation contract



We were chosen to host the new MoJ Counter Fraud and Investigation Team



**Strategic Objective 3**  
Secure value for money for the taxpayer in all that we do

We maintained a **net error rate of below 1%**, protecting taxpayer funds



We reduced our Admin spend by over



compared to the previous year



**Strategic Objective 4**  
Achieve our full potential through being fair, proud and supportive

Our staff engagement score rose 3 percentage points to

**71%**

**top 10**  
out of **98**

We were ranked in the



participating organisations for **8/9** People Survey themes



We embedded

**f(lexible)**

working across the LAA for our people

# Strategic Objective 1 – Provide simple, timely and reliable access to legal aid

## In 2018/19 we will:

- Maintain our focus on providing simple, timely and reliable access to legal aid for those whose life and liberty is at stake, where they face the loss of their home, in domestic violence cases, and where their children may be taken into care
- Deliver new civil legal aid contracts
- Provide high quality, responsive, accessible customer services to our users and partners in the justice system
- Continue to deliver a high quality Public Defender Service



## We will measure this by:

- Processing end-to-end 80% of applications for civil legal aid within 20 working days, except in the most complex cases; processing 90% of applications for criminal legal aid within 2 working days; paying 90% of complete, accurate, eligible bills within 20 working days
- Implementing new civil face to face contracts, Implementing new civil face to face contracts and Civil Legal Advice contracts by October 2018 and Civil Legal Advice contracts by October 2018
- Implementing our new Data Driven Strategy, enabling us to improve services to providers and draw on a broader evidence base when assessing performance
- Meeting rigorous targets for customer service and timeliness of response to correspondence
- Maintaining the Public Defender Service's Lexcel accreditation for excellence in legal practice management and client care

## Strategic Objective 2 – Build strong relationships across Government and the justice system

### In 2018/19 we will:

- Support delivery of the Secretary of State's priority for an effective and fair justice system which will serve all users, whenever they need it
- Work with our partners across the justice system to respond to the findings of the LASPO Post-Implementation Review
- Continue to embed the public sector equality duty in our design and delivery of legal aid



### We will measure this by:

- Progressing with our Agency Transformation Programme, which will simplify the delivery of legal aid by 2020 through simplification, automation and organisational design
- Responding to the findings of the Lammy Review and the LASPO Post-Implementation Review
- Improving our data sharing across the justice system and wider Government

## Strategic Objective 3 – Secure value for money for the taxpayer in all that we do

### In 2018/19 we will:

- Exercise careful financial stewardship of the Legal Aid Fund, focussing on identifying efficiencies in business processes and fraud prevention
- Undertake the effective commissioning of services and contract management
- Continue to deliver our Change Portfolio, ensuring that we contribute to MoJ's drive to maintain a continued tight grip of departmental finances



### We will measure this by:

- Closely monitoring Fund and Admin spend
- Maintaining net error rate below 1%
- Working with MoJ colleagues to deliver IT infrastructure improvements to improve the security, stability and reliability of our digital services





## Strategic Objective 4 – Achieve our full potential through being fair, proud and supportive

### In 2018/19 we will:

- Implement our People Plan, better enabling us to attract and retain a diverse range of people, provide the right mix of learning and development, and build our future leaders
- Continue to create a great workplace that is fair and inclusive, using the MoJ Values to set high expectations of behaviour. Support increased social mobility, and better physical and mental health
- Embed our Digital Strategy, ensuring that across all our sites our people have the tools and capabilities needed to take advantage of our Smarter Working offer



### We will measure this by:

- Delivering Apprenticeships, the Skills Development Programme, and the Leadership Potential Programme, and enabling our people to participate in Civil Service talent programmes such as the Senior and Future Leaders Schemes
- Further embedding Fair & Inclusive Recruitment including strength-based assessments, continuing to implement the principles of the Disability Confident scheme, and introducing Mental Health Allies across our sites
- Maintaining our Staff Engagement and Fairness & Inclusion scores in the annual Civil Service People Survey and regular Pulse Surveys

# LAA's Agency Transformation Programme

Through the Agency Transformation Programme (ATP) we are committed to delivering more efficient, smarter services to society, the public and our legal aid providers, and ensuring that the LAA remains a great place to work. ATP's vision is to simplify the delivery of legal aid by 2020. We will achieve this through simplification, automation and organisational design.

## **In 2018/19 we will continue implementing our plans to:**

- Provide a service that is easy to access and simple to administer;
- Establish a modern digital service;
- Be a flexible, valued part of the justice system that adapts to meet future needs.

## **We will measure this by:**

- Reducing the amount of rework, completing more cases in one pass;
- Increasing the number of online communications;
- Working closely with our government colleagues to look at options for data sharing.



# Appendices

## Director of Legal Aid Casework

**The LASPO Act 2012 ensured that the decision making process for legal aid applications remained independent from Ministers.** The role of Director of Legal Aid Casework (DLAC), which was created as a result of the Act, has sole responsibility for making decisions on individual applications for legal aid. The LAA Board and the Central Legal Team support the Director to ensure that robust practices are in place to maintain the independence of the decision making process. The LAA's Chief Executive undertakes this role. The DLAC Report is published annually alongside the Annual Accounts.

## Living within our means

As part of MoJ we will contribute to the overall required reduction in spend at departmental level.

Our Fiscal Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit outturn for 17/18 and budget for 18/19 are set out below:

	Actuals 17/18	Budget 18/19
Fund	£1,619m	£1,555m
LAA Operations	£60.4m	£60.4m

## Managing our risks

The Agency's approach to risk management is supported by its Assurance Framework which follows HM Treasury best practice. The framework identifies three lines of defence to provide sufficient, continuous and reliable assurance on our organisational stewardship and management of the major risks to our organisational success and delivery of improved, cost effective legal aid services.

The three lines are:

1. Front line operational arrangements to manage risk
2. Second line assurance activities involving expert guidance, monitoring and compliance reviews to assure the effectiveness of front line arrangements on risk and control
3. Independent assurance of LAA's control processes, both from within MoJ (Internal Audit), and also outside (National Audit Office)

Further detail on our risks and our financial performance can be found in the Annual Governance Statement which will be published as part of the LAA Annual Report and Accounts.



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