



Legal Aid  
Agency

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

# Customer Service Strategy

For users and providers of our services

July 2021

# Customer Service Strategy

Welcome to the Legal Aid Agency Customer Service Strategy. This strategy is our commitment to improve our customer service as an ongoing process.

The aim of the strategy is to deliver practical changes that improve the experience of our service users and providers, whilst laying the foundations for future customer service improvements.

The Legal Aid Agency (LAA) will review this as an ongoing process to understand how it needs to be adapted for future years.

Throughout 2020 and into 2021 the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic have been some of the most difficult our organisation, users and providers of our service have faced in recent times. Despite this we maintained delivery of our services thanks to the efforts of dedicated staff and legal aid providers across England and Wales.

Much of our ability to react to the pandemic was due to the quality of our communication and collaboration with users and providers of our services. We want to build upon that and complement our LAA Strategy with a dedicated Customer Service Strategy to ensure we deliver a quality service for all of our customers whether they are users or providers of our services. We want to provide a service that we all have confidence in and can be proud of.

We will continue to put the experience of users and providers of our services at the heart of our customer focused approach.

We will engage with them to understand what their experience was like and share information on our performance and any proposed changes to services.

Any changes we make will be focused on delivering benefits for those using and providing our services, and the LAA.



**Jane Harbottle**  
Chief Executive

# Our Customers

Those who use or provide our services are key to how the LAA operates and are our 'customers'. We believe the LAA is unique in terms of the breadth of different user groups we either provide services to, or work with. We work across the whole of the justice system to make sure our services meet the needs of everyone who uses them, including the most vulnerable in our society.

## MoJ, Ministers and wider government

**Oversee and set direction and priorities.**

The LAA is part of the Ministry of Justice. We support Ministers and wider government in delivery of their priorities and work together to implement legal aid policy.

## The Legal Aid Agency

**Contribute to the 'deliver swift access to justice' strategic outcome, administering legal aid services as part of MoJ.**

Our people *deliver* our services working with providers and users. Our people also *use* employee services provided by the LAA.

## Providers

**Contracted to provide services on our behalf and users of our case management and contracting services, including:**

Providers contracted to deliver legal advice and representation via legal aid funding.

Advocacy services authorised to provide expert legal opinion in **legal** aid funded cases.

Contracted providers for other services we require.

Representative bodies who we consult and work with.

## Clients

**Use our case management and public defender services to obtain legal aid funding – providing them with access to justice, including:**

Clients in receipt of legal aid represented by providers or the Public Defender Service.

Members of the public who contact us about legal aid for example, to make representation.

Members of the public who apply directly for funding (Exceptional Case Funding).



# Our vision for Customer Service

## The LAA Strategy link

Our Customer Service Strategy links to the overall LAA Strategy, our vision and mission. In seeking to deliver excellent Customer Service we link to Strategic Objectives:



### Strategic Objective 1

Delivering access to justice through legal aid services that meet the needs of our users



### Strategic Objective 2

Modernise our services, delivering value for money for taxpayers

A focus on customer service supports our guiding principles of being:

User centred



Right first time



Open and transparent



## Our aims

In developing the Customer Service Strategy our goal has been to find ways to make positive changes to the

experience users and providers of our services have when interacting with the LAA. We also want to explore how we can develop an approach that forms positive relationships with our customers and creates opportunities for increased collaboration.

This strategy focuses on how the LAA and our customers work together to deliver legal aid at a practical, operational level. To do this effectively our approach needs to be open and transparent and provide more opportunity for our customers to engage with us and communicate.

We will publish this strategy annually, review it regularly, and we will provide progress updates, opportunities for customer involvement and seek feedback via our [@LAAHelpTeam](#) twitter channel.

In developing the Customer Service Strategy we have gathered information from people working across legal aid. Asking for their views on how our customer services can be improved. The feedback received fell into four key themes:

Improving customer experience



Putting our customers at the heart of our work



Engaging with our customers



Increasing our transparency



# The four key themes to our Customer Service Strategy

## Improving customer experience

As a delivery focused organisation, the LAA is measured by our ability to meet our service level agreements.

We recognise that good customer experience goes beyond achieving our service level agreements. Through implementing changes in how users and providers of our services interact with the LAA we will improve customer experience.

We will be looking for more opportunities to get feedback from users and providers of our services about their interactions with us and whether they meet their needs.

Where appropriate we will invite customers to contribute to shaping any changes the LAA make that will affect how they work.

We will share more about how we work to deliver our customer services. We will share this via [@LAAHelpTeam](#)

## Putting our customers at the heart of our work

Better understanding of our customers and the challenges they face will help us make the right changes and improvements to our services.

This year we will work to increase our awareness of our different customer groups. We will seek to share that increased knowledge and insight across our teams.

In turn, we will share with our customers our experiences of working within the LAA.

Discussing the challenges we face internally with our customers to create shared awareness.

## Increasing our transparency

We will be sharing more relevant information about our performance including the quality and speed of our work.

We will highlight where things are working well and those areas where we need to improve. We will share information about what we plan to implement to change or improve.

We will share what we learn from our customers – on their user experiences, whether positive or negative. We will look to share the lessons we learn from those interactions.

We will continue to keep our customers informed about changes the LAA make through our usual communication channels. We will post regular updates on our progress implementing our Customer Service strategy on the [@LAAHelpTeam](#) twitter channel.

## Engaging with our customers

We have already launched our [@LAAHelpTeam](#) twitter page so that we can interact with our customers more easily.

# Delivering our Customer Service Strategy

We will deliver our strategy by developing approaches that support our key themes. Our early deliverables include:

## Change 1

We're making web chat available across our crime and civil contact centres.

### Why?

To give users and providers of our services greater choice and flexibility in how they contact the LAA.

### Theme this change supports

1. Improving customer experience

## Change 2

Running event to raise awareness of our customer groups and the challenges they face.

### Why?

To help us understand more about different users and providers of our services.

### Theme this change supports

2. Putting our customers at the heart of our work

## Change 3

Increasing customer feedback.

### Why?

Understanding more about the experiences of those using or providing our services will help us understand how well we are performing as an organisation and where we need to change and improve.

### Theme this change supports

3. Engaging with our customers

We will also deliver our strategy through practical changes that improve our customer service.

We will update the strategy as we focus on new areas and also on our [@LAAHelpTeam](#) twitter channel.

### Measuring success

Through the practical changes we make to our customer services we will seek to realise measurable improvements, such as:

- Getting more things right first time, resulting in various customer services improvements such as, fewer rejections or further information requests.
- Less need for customers to contact the LAA via telephone, e-mail or other methods.
- Fewer interactions resulting in complaints to the LAA.

We will also measure our success through the level of engagement we have with our customers, the reported improved customer experience and feedback received.



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