



The Law Society



Legal Aid Agency

Crime Contract Consultative Group (CCCG) meeting Tuesday 13 February 2024

Minutes

When	Tuesday 13 February 2024
Where	Via Teams
Chair	Mark Newby
Minutes	Eloise Worrall
Present	Alice Mutasa – TLS Avrom Sherr – IALS Daniel Bonich – CLSA David Thomas – LAA Elaine Annable - LAA Fadi Daoud – LCCSA Glyn Hardy – LAA Kate Pasfield – LAPG Katy Hanson Mark Newby - TLS Melissa Thompson – LAA Nick Ford – LAA
Apologies	Adrian Vincent – BC Arron Dolan – CBA Andrew Cosma – MMS Carol Storer – LAPG Chris Minnoch - LAPG Chandni Brown – CiEx Edward Jones - LCCSA Elliot Miller – LAA Gerwyn Wise – GCLAW Helen Johnson - LAPG Henry Hills – SAHCA James MacMillan –MoJ Jerome Lucey - LAA

Jill Waring – LAA Kath Burdett - LAA Kathryn Grainger – LAA Martin Secrett - BC Matt Doddridge – LAA Neil Lewis - LAA Nick Poulter – LAA Rakesh Bhasin – LAPG Rebecca Booth – LAA Richard Miller – TLS Richard Owen – TLS A2J Cttee Sean Wardale - LAA Stuart Nolan – TLS Tony Ayton - LAA Will Hayden – LAA
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M Newby welcomed attendees to the meeting and confirmed that papers and minutes had been circulated in advance.

1. Minutes from December meeting were reviewed and approved.

The minutes and action items were authorised by the group.

2. Melissa Thompson - Operational update

M Thompson gave a brief overview of the performance pack that was shared with the group, she wanted to draw a few areas to the group attention. On Slide 7, there is information there about the new videos that are on the provider website, they are all in respect of criminal applications at present and how to help to compete the form. There will be crime billing added soon.

On the performance side, criminal applications are at 100% within 2 days. The number of applications that are being received is higher than usual in January.

Crime billing is in good position, uptakes particularly on AGFS, they are doing 100% within all areas, LGFS are processing the majority of LF1's within 3 days with Disk claims being done within 6 days and AGFS are being met at 7 days in that area with Disk being done in 4 days.

3. Elaine Annable - CMA 6-monthly update

E Annable talked through some points arising from the report she provided. The report covers April to September 2023. The report show that they are doing a blended approach to visits and remote visits as well by teams or secure file exchange. They are doing 68% on site with providers. And that has gradually increased since COVID.

On contract notices there has been a steady trajectory since COVID, there is a possible decrease likely in 23/24, but will review when the 6 months data is published

The report also shows repeat issues within contract notices and sanctions. They are relatively low volumes, contract notice verification activity is usually done within 3 to 4 months of the contract breach being identified and similarly with sanctions. Sanctions will always be under review.

In crime and civil there's been a slight projected increase in the initial peer review rating of four or five resorting and contractual action. It's unclear if that trend will continue in the remaining 6 months, E Annable doesn't know the reasons for that or the drivers.

A Sherr stated that there does not seem to be any special reason why they are moving up 1 or 2%. And over the last 4 to 5 years its been the same. A Sherr suggested waiting to see what happens over the whole year.

E Annable continued to say that in relation to contract notices, the key areas in relation to crime tend to be disbursements. Inaccurate claim codes, multiple minor breaches, inaccurate claiming examples might be use of agents, for example around disbursements claiming mileage during office hours by agents and so on. Court duty travel claims tend to be quite a frequent one on business days.

They get issues with Magistrates Court fees claim in a category 2 when there's been no trial, no prep for trial and also a common one is claiming the Crown Court sending fee for sentencing as opposed to when they're sent for trial and to help colleagues with that. What has been recently published is a common errors document, so hopefully providers have seen that through their contract managers because that has been distributed. There's also a link in a recent E Bulletin

4. Melissa Thompsons - Replacements digital products to replace CRM4,5 AND 7'S

M Thompson wanted to give the group update as to their position on replacing E forms, the LAA current service contract for E forms does end in September 2024, they are developing in house digital replacement systems for CRM4, 5's, 7's, 14's and 15's. This update predominantly focuses on the replacements for 4's, 5's and 7's, 14 and 15's are going to be replaced by the Apply for Criminal Legal Aid service.

From Spring 2024 there will be a staggered release of digital replacement services for the 4's, 5's and 7's, it will start with a replacement product for CRM4's force which is going to be called Apply for prior authority to incur disbursements. That will be followed by the replacement for CRM5's and replacement for the CRM7's will be later on in the year.

What they intend to do initially is for a small group of providers will be to start using the service and then provide feedback, gradually sign up more and more providers to use the new services as they're being developed and the ultimate aim is for the replacement services for all of the E forms to be before September 2024.

M Thompson asked the group for any questions.

F Daoud asked if it was possible for it to have as little clicks if possible? M Thompson confirmed she would pass that request along

5. Rep body ongoing topics & queries

K Hanson wanted to flag the issue at the moment with interpreters in the police station, there seems to be new guidance being given to the police and Solicitors are now being told they can't use the In- person Interpreter in the police station. They have to have their consultation with their client via a telephone interpreter, which is clearly not ideal and not as good. And then the police are using an in person interpreter, a different one for the interview. A lot of Members are saying that this isn't this isn't something they're prepared to deal with because it should really be that the remote one for the interview and the In-Person one for when they're having consultation. It's hard enough when you're having consultation through an interpreter, but that is multiplied when it's just on the telephone.

A Mustasa stated that this has been raised several times with the Law Society and her colleague has been dealing with it and she's spoken to the NPCC, A Mustasa will get an update from her colleague as to what discussions have gone on with the police

A Mutasa raised that after looking at the guidance that's been sent out, it clearly states that they can use their own interpreter and that the interpreter is paid for as a disbursement on legal aid?

H Puri As he understand the LAA doesn't fund them to take interpreter to the police.

APFEB01 A Mustasa to report back once she has more information from NCPP on the interpreter issue at the police stations.

6. AOB

A Sherr wanted to raised the problems of sending files over the system, It can be very difficult for some firms and the result is that they may not be sending all of their information. Is it reasonable that firms need to send all the information even if it is an unbelievable pain to put it through, a system which is so different from the systems that you use in your own firms.

A Sherr thinks it would be something that would be good to put in in the minutes for today, on the basis that some somebody might just see it and realise how important it is to them

The next meeting is Tuesday 9 April 2024 via Teams