

## Crime Contract Consultative Group (CCCG) Meeting Tuesday 3 June 2025

### Minutes

When	<b>Tuesday 3 June 2025</b>
Where	<b>Via Teams</b>
Chair	David Thomas
Minutes	Eloise Worrall
Present	Andrew Cosma - MMS Avrom Sherr – IALS Baljit Matharu - LS David Thomas – LAA Glyn Hardy – LAA Kate Pasfield – LAPG Laura Janes – GT Stuart Mark Newby - TLS Matt Doddridge – LAA Melissa Thompson – LAA Neil Lewis – LAA Nick Ford – LAA Nick Poulter – LAA
Apologies	Adrian Vincent – BC Arron Dolan – CBA Carol Storer – LAPG Chris Minnoch - LAPG Chandni Brown – CilEx Daniel Bonich – CLSA Edward Jones - LCCSA Elaine Annable - LAA Elliot Miller – LAA Fadi Daoud – LCCSA 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 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

## 1. Introductions, minutes, and actions from previous meeting

Minutes and actions were agreed from the last meeting.

## 2. Operational update - Nick Poulter –

All internal and external systems for legal aid applications are currently down, including the application and billing systems (CCR and CCLF). Restoration is a top priority for the digital team.

Providers are advised to hold onto applications until systems are restored, but contingency plans are ready to be implemented if internal systems return.

For Magistrates Court cases (98% of which are simple means-tested), providers can consider these as granted and keep a note on file; when systems return, these will be processed, and if any are found to be ineligible, legal aid will be withdrawn only from the point of determination.

Crown Court and employed/self-employed Magistrates Court cases will require submission by email using CRM14 and CRM15 forms, which will be processed manually.

Processing paper forms takes about twice as long as electronic submissions, so providers are encouraged to delay Magistrates Court submissions to free up resources for Crown Court cases. Internally, the team is preparing guidance for providers on these contingencies and will issue communications in the next few days.

For billing, paper contingencies are in place for CRM4 and CRM5, with current processing times of five and four days, respectively.

Online CRM7s submitted before the outage are being processed; paper CRM7s are being processed in three days. Providers are encouraged to submit on paper rather than wait for the portal.

For graduated fee claims (LGFS/HGFS), assessments are being done offline and will be pushed through once systems return; if not, a spreadsheet contingency will be used to ensure payments are made. NP acknowledged the need for a workaround for MAAT numbers for billing, as many provider systems require a unique number, and agreed to coordinate with providers to find a solution.

Providers were advised to submit claims on paper where possible and not to wait for the portal to return, as this will help with processing and cash flow.

### **3. Response to the Cyber Security Incident:**

DT provided an overview of the data breach, explaining that systems were taken down as a precaution and restoration is ongoing, with security teams working to validate and bring systems back in an ordered manner.

The process is complex due to the interconnected nature of systems; turning on one system does not guarantee others can be restored immediately.

Providers were thanked for their patience and constructive cooperation during the incident.

Crime payments are expected to land with providers this week, with multiple payment runs planned to catch up. Systems are close to being back online for routine processing, but final security and technical checks are still needed. Contingency processes will be necessary as not all systems will be fully operational, providers may need to adapt their ways of working temporarily.

FD asked for clarification on "BAU" (Business as Usual), which David explained.

DT acknowledged the challenges for providers and welcomed ongoing feedback and suggestions.

NP confirmed that all internal and external systems for legal aid applications are currently down, and the digital team is prioritizing restoration.

Providers were advised to sit on applications until systems are restored, but contingency plans are ready if internal systems return.

For Magistrates Court, most cases can be self-granted; for Crown Court and employed/self-employed cases, applications will need to be submitted by email.

FD and DB pressed for more transparency, practical solutions, and clarity on the breach's impact, including the need for Word versions of forms and information about data loss.

DT confirmed that provider bank account and sort code information may have been accessed and that this was communicated in initial updates.

The investigation into the breach is ongoing, and more definitive information will be provided when available.

**APJUNE01 - LAA to issue clear guidance on current and future contingency processes, including self-granting for Magistrates Court and submission procedures for Crown Court cases.**

**APJUNE02 - LAA to provide more transparency and detail about the nature and extent of the data breach, including any data loss and risks to provider bank account information.**

**APJUNE03 - LAA to consider a generic or consistent MAAT number for billing during the outage and coordinate with providers to ensure system compatibility.**

### **3. Rep body ongoing topics & Queries**

Multiple representatives pressed for clearer, more transparent updates from the LAA regarding the cyber incident, system restoration timelines, and contingency plans. They emphasised the need for practical, timely information to manage business risks and resource allocation.

Rep bodies requested explicit written guidance on current and future contingency processes, including self-granting for Magistrates Court, Crown Court submission procedures, and backdating of legal aid. They highlighted the need for bullet-pointed instructions to avoid confusion.

There were repeated requests for CRM14, CRM15, and CRM4 forms to be made available in Word format to ease completion and submission during the outage.

Concerns were raised about the inability to bill proceedings matters without a MAAT number. Rep bodies suggested a generic or consistent MAAT number per firm as a workaround and agreed to coordinate feedback on system compatibility.

Rep bodies sought assurance that late claims due to the outage would be accepted as exceptional circumstances and flagged that some case management systems may block out-of-time submissions.

Queries were raised about whether signed applicant declaration forms would suffice in lieu of CRM14/15 signatures during the contingency period, with LAA confirming this would be acceptable.

Rep bodies asked for more detail on the nature and extent of the data breach, specifically regarding provider bank account information and any risks to internal accounts.

Concerns were expressed about the increased administrative burden on practitioners due to manual processes and the lack of recognition for this shift.

Rep bodies agreed to continue providing feedback on system workarounds and to coordinate with the LAA on practical solutions as the situation evolves.

### **4. AOB**

No other business was raised.

**The next meeting is Tuesday 3 June 2025**

