

## Crime Contract Consultative Group (CCCG) Meeting Tuesday 29 July 2025 Minutes

When	<b>Tuesday 29 July 2025</b>
Where	<b>Via Teams</b>
Chair	Neil Lewis
Minutes	Eloise Worrall
Present	<p>Adrian Vincent – BC  Alice Mutasa – TLS  Andrew Cosma - MMS  Avrom Sherr – IALS  Daniel Bonich – CLSA  Elaine Annable - LAA  Fadi Daoud – LCCSA  Glyn Hardy – LAA  James MacMillan –Moj  Kate Pasfield – LAPG  Kath Burdett - LAA  Mark Newby - TLS  Matt Doddridge – LAA  Melissa Thompson – LAA  Nick Poulter – LAA</p>
Apologies	<p>Arron Dolan – CBA  Chris Minnoch - LAPG  Chandni Brown – CilEx  Edward Jones - LCCSA  Elliot Miller – LAA  Gerwyn Wise – GCLAW  Helen Johnson - LAPG  Henry Hills – SAHCA  Jerome Lucey – LAA  Jill Waring – LAA  Kathryn Grainger – LAA</p>

	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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N Lewis welcomed attendees to the meeting

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

Minutes and actions were agreed from the last meeting.

### **Update on Contingency.**

NL confirmed that the LAA has moved from daily to weekly updates regarding business continuity and contingency plans.

DB and AM raised concerns about the frequency and clarity of updated guidance, noting it causes confusion and "fatigue" among providers. They requested more consistency in timing and retention of previous guidance versions for reference.

DB and AM emphasised the need to keep historical versions of guidance accessible, as requirements have changed over time and firms may need to check what was in effect at a specific date. Neil agreed to look into this.

NP explained that most recent changes are clarifications rather than major shifts, but acknowledged that initial guidance on passported cases and evidence requirements was unclear and has since been revised. He noted that the LCCSA's simplified bullet points (shared in chat) are approved by the LAA, though not official LAA wording.

FD and others reported that contingency processes have increased administrative burden, with forms taking much longer to complete and process, and requested Word versions of forms and clearer guidance on which version to use.

NL and NP agreed to review the process for sharing and archiving guidance, consider provider input on draft communications, and address issues with form formats and website updates.

**APJULY01 - NL to investigate how previous versions of contingency guidance can be made accessible for reference.**

**APJULY02 - NL and NP to consider establishing a process (e.g., email group) for providers to review and comment on draft guidance before publication, where appropriate.**

## **2. Operational update - Nick Poulter.**

Intake of applications has dropped by over 50% due to contingency arrangements, allowing the LAA to process most applications within two days, with only a small number reaching three days. Manual processing is significantly slower than electronic systems.

Graduated fee claims (Crown Court) are nearly back to pre-incident turnaround times (5–8 working days for most claim types). Some manual workarounds remain, especially for payment status updates

CRM4 forms are taking about five times longer to process via email than electronically, with current turnaround at nine days. Resubmissions due to errors further extend this. CRM5 and CRM7 forms are also affected, with CRM7 at 19 days.

LAA is reallocating staff, recruiting new team members, and introducing risk-based processes to help manage CRM 4 backlogs.

Providers report significant administrative burden and delays, especially with CRM4 and prior authority requests.

Some automated processes (e.g., correspondence via Xerox, income evidence reminders) are still offline, with estimated restoration by mid-August.

Central Funds and VHCC payments are largely unaffected, as they use separate systems or manual processes that have continued as normal

**APJULY03 - NL to investigate the password issue with the online means calculator and ensure it is accessible.**

**Post meeting note:** LAA Comms Team have confirmed that the password has been in place since 2014 but that this is to protect the formulas etc. All providers should be able to download the calculator from the website and then use it. If this remains a issue for the rep bodies to inform LAA

**APJULY04 - NP to maintain and expand resource reallocation and recruitment to manage CRM 4 and other magistrates' billing backlogs.**

**APJULY05 - NP to keep providers updated on restoration timelines for automated processes (e.g., Xerox correspondence, income evidence reminders).**

KB explained that providers using the criminal cases unit (handling Central Funds, section 36/38, court appointments, defendants' cost orders, private prosecutions) have been largely unaffected by the incident, as these processes run on separate systems not impacted by the outage.

The Special Wasted and Unused Prep Assessments, these are running as usual, with current processing at 10 days for AGFS and LGFS, and the team is caught up.

Proceeds of Crime Act Payments are also unaffected, processed through the Central Fund system, with turnaround between three and eleven days depending on bill value.

Very High Cost Cases (VHCC), Providers have not experienced disruption, as submissions and assessments are always handled by email and Excel. However, staff are using contingency processes for payments and contracts due to lack of system access, but this has not impacted providers. Current VHCC processing is at 14 days, which is normal.

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

AM questioned how legal aid applies to Intensive Supervision *Courts* review hearings, especially regarding payment for solicitors or advocates when clients face possible sanctions for non-compliance. She noted a lack of clarity in official documents.

JMc stated that the ISC pilot in four areas did not report issues with legal aid provision, implying most review hearings may not require legal representation. However, he agreed that if imprisonment is a risk, legal representation should be available. He mentioned that current LGFS fixed fees for post-sentence hearings might need regulatory updates to cover these proceedings.

AC and DB explained that, typically, solicitors do not attend ISC review hearings unless breach proceedings are started, at which point legal aid is sought.

There remains uncertainty about whether future policy or the pilot will change the need for legal representation at these hearings, and further written clarification was agreed as an action.

**APJULY06 - JM and LAA colleagues to provide a written response to Alice's questions about legal aid provision and payment for representation at Intensive Supervision Court review hearings, summarizing the discussion and clarifying the applicable regulations.**

**APJULY07 - JM and team to investigate whether ISC review hearings in the pilot areas involved legal representation and if regulatory changes are needed for LGFS fixed fees to apply**

### **4. AOB**

DB explained that TRAM meetings ("trial readiness advocates meetings" or similar) are pre-trial virtual meetings (Zoom/phone) held about two weeks before trial, involving a judge, case progression officer, CPS, and optionally a defence solicitor. They are not considered formal hearings, so counsel is not required.

If a defence solicitor does not attend, the case is listed for a mention hearing with counsel and the defendant present, increasing costs. DB noted that when litigators attend, the meetings are effective; when they do not, they are not.

There is currently no funding for solicitors to attend these meetings, which is leading to low attendance outside Kent and complaints from practitioners. Daniel warned that as more courts adopt TRAM meetings, the lack of funding could undermine their effectiveness and requested the issue be reviewed.

The resident judge at Maidstone reported that TRAM meetings have helped reduce the trial backlog, with a significant percentage of cases cracking as a result.

NL acknowledged the issue, noted it was new to most present, and agreed to look into it further.

**APJULY08 - NL to look into the funding and policy implications of TRAM meetings as raised by DB.**

End of meeting.

**The next meeting is Tuesday 23 September 2025**