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The All-Party Parliamentary  
Group on Legal Aid

**APPG on Legal Aid Bulletin**

**9th Edition - June 2018**

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Dear Colleague,

Welcome to the ninth bulletin from the APPG on Legal Aid. This edition has three sections:

1. Dates for your diaries:

- APPG on Legal Aid Meeting: 10 July 2018 (10.30-12.00), Committee Room 8
- Free training for caseworkers in July: (1) Introduction to Immigration and (2) Advising your Constituents

2. APPG news

3. Legal Aid news and events

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**1. Dates for your diaries:**

**APPG on Legal Aid: Committee Room 8, Palace of Westminster**

There will be a meeting on **Tuesday, 10 July from 10.30-12.00 in Committee Room 8**. The topic will be an exploration of the Access to Justice issues raised in the forthcoming report by the Joint Committee on Human Rights and we are delighted to welcome the Rt Hon Harriet Harman QC MP, Chair of the Committee who will lead the discussion. The meeting will be chaired by Karen Buck MP.

All Parliamentarians are welcome. Please contact [Rohini.Teather@lapg.co.uk](mailto:Rohini.Teather@lapg.co.uk) if you have any questions.

Non-parliamentarians are also very welcome and can book their place [here](#). This is not a public event so the bookings will require the following password: APPGonLegalAid

We very much look forward to seeing you there.

**Free training for caseworkers 3 and 5 July 2018**

The APPG on Legal Aid is offering training to MPs as part of the House of Commons

## Roadshow

On Tuesday 3 July (4.30-6pm) we will be offering an Introduction to Immigration course through the House of Commons Library. This will take place in the MacMillan Room, Portcullis House. Training will be given by Jawaid Luqmani of Luqmani Thompson & Partners. The aim of the session is to identify common terminology used and to understand the distinctions between grants of limited leave, settlement and issues as to eligibility for citizenship. The session will examine common problems in relation to applications and appeals from family members based overseas. It will also examine who is regulated to carry out advice in this sector and the mechanisms for pursuing a complaint against an adviser. This will be an interactive session aimed at reflecting constituency issues that arise as well as an examination of how best to proceed with cases involving lost documents and how to seek to address Windrush cases which do not attract legal aid.

On Thursday, 5 July 2018 there will be a one hour, interactive session with Matt Howgate of DG Legal which will focus on legal issues to be aware of when advising constituents, useful tools and resources for busy caseworkers and when referrals to law centres or solicitors may be appropriate. This is part of the House of Commons Roadshow in the MacMillan Room.

Please contact [Rohini.Teather@lapg.co.uk](mailto:Rohini.Teather@lapg.co.uk) if you have any questions or are interested in attending a training event.

## **2. APPG news**

### **MP Survey**

The APPG on Legal Aid is collecting information to feed into the LASPO Post-Implementation Review and to help the Government to understand how the casework carried out by MPs fits into the wider network of advice services.

Recent research shows that a high proportion of casework carried out by MPs has a legal element. The research also suggests that demand is increasing and that MPs and their caseworkers are dealing with more complex and urgent queries. We hope that by conducting this cross-party survey, we will be able to gather data to enable the Government to explore these issues in greater detail as part of their review.

Thank you to everyone who has completed the survey. We would be extremely grateful if you could take a few minutes to complete this survey if you have not managed to do so already. It should take no longer than five minutes and all of the questions are

optional. So far we have received over 250 responses. The survey is [here](#).

### **Forthcoming training events**

The APPG on Legal Aid is delighted to be collaborating with the House of Commons Library and the Disability Law Service to design bespoke courses for MPs and their caseworkers around the areas of Disability Discrimination and Employment Law, Community Care and Welfare Benefits. For further details of these courses or any other training that we offer, please contact [Rohini.Teather@lapg.co.uk](mailto:Rohini.Teather@lapg.co.uk).

## **3. Legal Aid News**

### **Criminal Legal Aid**

On 12 June the Criminal Bar Association (CBA) narrowly voted to accept the terms of a deal put by the government. Turnout was high and 51.55% of CBA members voted to accept the terms of the deal. See [here](#) for more information.

The Law Society's Judicial Review which challenges the fees paid to litigators will be heard on 17 and 18 July.

### **LASPO Post-Implementation Review**

The Legal Aid Practitioners Group held a LASPO Review Conference for over 70 organisations on 15 June 2018. Eight members of the Ministry of Justice Post-Implementation Review team attended. Delegates were updated on the progress of the Review and in particular on the Ministry's consultative group meetings, which cover criminal, family and civil justice and the third sector. Matthew Shelley, the Ministry's Deputy Director for Legal Support and Court Fees, said that some of the emerging key themes were that people "accept that reversing the cuts is not a solution. We need to look at ways in which we are delivering services." He also encouraged practitioners to send in hard data when responding to the consultation, although some attendees pushed for further clarification about exactly what data was required and highlighted that data collection can be a time consuming and difficult task. The review continues and practitioners have until the end of September to submit evidence.

### **Justice Select Committee**

On 22 May the Committee held an evidence session into criminal legal aid. The

purpose of the session was to provide an opportunity for the solicitors' profession to explain their current concerns about criminal legal aid, in particular their concerns about reforms to the Litigators' Graduated Fee Scheme for Crown Court work. You can watch the session [here](#) or read the transcript [here](#).

The Lord Chancellor has also indicated that he is considering the position of legal aid provision for inquests. This issue has been debated in Parliament and there has been pressure to implement a "Hillsborough Law" regarding exceptional funding for inquests. The Lord Chancellor's guidance for exceptional funding for inquests as well as the provision of legal aid will now be considered as part of the Post-Implementation Review of LASPO. You can read the letter from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice, Lucy Frazer MP, to Bob Neill MP, Chair of the Committee [here](#).

Other published evidence and correspondence:-

- A further response from the Ministry of Justice on [Employment Tribunal fees](#) stating that the Ministry of Justice will be writing to everyone who paid an employment tribunal fee over the next few months. Over 14,000 letters have been sent as at 4 June 2018.
- Written evidence received in relation to the Committee's inquiry into the [disclosure of evidence in criminal cases](#)
- Written evidence received in relation to the Committee's inquiry into [Prison Population 2022: planning for the future](#)
- Written evidence received in relation to the Committee's inquiry into [Transforming Rehabilitation](#)

### **Recent cases about legal aid**

On Friday 22 June the Law Centres Network succeeded in their challenge of the government's civil contract tendering of the housing possession court duty schemes (HPCDS), which offer face-to-face advice and advocacy at court to people facing possession proceedings. The proposed changes would have seen the consolidation of contracts. The judgment is [here](#).

### **Windrush and legal aid**

There has been debate regarding what impact the lack of legal aid for immigration advice, particularly early advice regarding legal status, may have had on the scandal

affecting the Windrush generation. The previous Home Secretary maintained there was no need to change legal aid. The new Home Secretary Sajid Javid MP referred to the Post Implementation Review of LASPO. However the question continues to be asked regarding legal aid. David Lammy MP raised this again in a letter to the Lord Chancellor, the Right Hon David Gauke MP requesting that exceptional funding be available to those affected. The response on 7 June 2018 was that the Windrush citizens would not need legal aid as the process of obtaining documents would be made as simple as possible by the Home Secretary.

### **Written questions**

Ronnie Cowan MP asked about what assessment there had been regarding the provision of legal aid for refugee family reunion applications. You can read the questions and answers [here](#).

### **Legal Aid Statistics**

The Legal Aid Agency has released the latest statistics up to 31 March 2018 which can be viewed [here](#). We are reviewing the statistics and will provide our thoughts and analysis in the next Bulletin.

**Chris Peace**

**Rohini Teather**

**APPG Project Workers**

**29.06.18**

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### **About the APPG on Legal Aid**

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Legal Aid aims to promote parliamentary and public understanding of the importance of the role of publicly funded legal services. It is chaired by Karen Buck MP. Secretariat support is provided jointly by the Legal Aid Practitioners Group (LAPG) together with Young Legal Aid Lawyers (YLAL) with funding from The Legal Education Foundation.

For more information contact:

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### **About the APPG Plus Project**

LAPG and the APPG on Legal Aid have been funded by The Legal Education Foundation to engage with MPs and councillors and their caseworkers to ensure that there is a good understanding of what is left in legal aid in the wake of LASPO, and to offer constructive advice, resources and training on how busy MPs and their caseworkers can engage better with lawyers and advice charities in the legal aid sector. In doing so, we aim to assess current access to justice issues facing the public and to help inform future decision making at a policy level.

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You are receiving this email because you have expressed an interest in the work of the APPG on legal aid or generally in issues affecting access to justice.

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