



Legal Aid  
Agency

# Help us say yes webinar: LAA contract manager visits for providers holding a mediation contract

## Contract Management & Assurance (CMA) - 2022/23

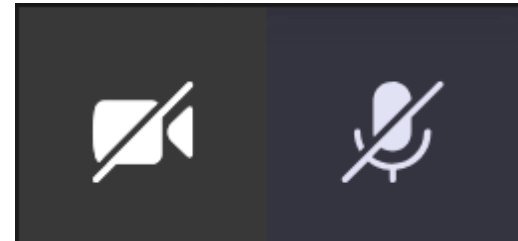
11 October 2022

## Technical tips for this webinar

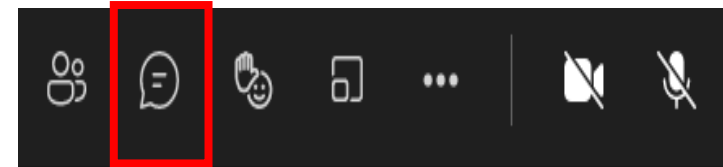
1. Please put yourself on mute during the webinar
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3. Click on the 'meeting chat' to ask a question
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Click here to view the meeting chat



# Content

**Guiding principles**

**Managing contracts**

**Additional reviews**

**Additional training and guidance available**

# Mediation contract webinar:

## Purpose of the webinar:

- The purpose of this webinar is to improve the way the LAA work with providers who hold a mediation contract



By the end of the webinar, you will have an understanding of:

- What we do in contract management and assurance (CMA)
- What you can expect from your contract manager
- Additional reviews that may be completed
- Where you can access additional support and training

# Our guiding principles

Adele O'Brien-Carr



# Our vision and guiding principles



To support **swift access to justice...**

through **working with others...**

to **achieve excellence** in the delivery of legal aid

We have set our ambition and approach to delivery with four guiding principles in mind.

We want to be:

- User centred
- Right first time
- Open and transparent; and
- A responsive, diverse, learning organisation

# Managing contracts

Adele O'Brien-Carr and Paula Hopkinson



## Role of contract managers:

- Contract managers normally engage with your LAA contract liaison manager
- They ensure that each service or organisation with a LAA contract complies with the terms of that contract
- Contract managers intervene early if there are any issues and work with the service provider, as they will have formed a constructive working relationship with you

Contract managers are the main point of contact for your service / organisation's contract liaison manager on legal aid contract matters. They:

- Check compliance against case files
- Monitor performance
- Provide updates on contractual changes
- Should be approached on changes to your business practices, including: changes to key personnel such as supervisors, business structure, and office location



## What you can expect:

Contact from your contract manager can take place in different ways.

This will include:

- Telephone calls
- MS Teams meetings
- E-mail
- Face to face meetings
- Secure file exchange (SFE)

- Contract managers aim to work with your service to ensure compliance with the contract
- Contract managers will be professional and polite
- Correspondence will be answered in a timely manner
- As an LAA provider, we would expect the same standards from you and your staff.

# Contract management annual review checks:

## Staff Compliance

Supervisor declaration forms

Membership of family mediation council (FMC) body

Contracts for external supervisors

## Business Compliance

Office manual including organogram

Quality assurance standards

Indemnity & public liability insurance

## Other Compliance

Work in progress

Provider activity report

Financial control

## File reviews:

Your contract manager will review a sample of mediation files you have worked on. This normally takes place annually

The sample will need to incorporate different forms of service and different matter types, for example, mediation information & assessment meeting (MIAM), child mediation, all issues, property and finance etc

For multi-outreach providers, files will be selected from across the locations

A small sample of open files may also be chosen for review on the day.

## File review outcomes:

Ideally providers should review files for supervision purposes and prior to billing

Possible review outcomes are no further action (NFA), or a contract notice could be issued if there is a breach of contract and costs recouped where appropriate

If there is a breach, the provider will be asked to self-review files to ensure that there are no other errors

The contract manager will complete any contract notice verification activity within 4-6 months of the issue of the contract notice to ensure no further breaches have occurred

## Provider activity report (PAR):

PAR contains a range of provider-specific data that captures all aspects of the work being delivered under the legal aid contract. It is refreshed and distributed quarterly and contains the following information:

- Fund take data so providers can check their records against Legal Aid payments during a specific period
- Fund take forecast to the end of the financial year
- Key performance indicator (KPI) data in relation to MIAM conversion rates
- Numbers of contract notices raised over the specified period

## Common errors:

- Form completion and evidence of means
- Agreed proposal fees
- Co-mediation
- All issues cases
- Re-referrals to mediation
- Direct consultation with children
- Failure to report changes in contact details or changes to business structure

# Other reviews

Adele O'Brien-Carr



## Types of review: Core testing:

### What is core testing?

- An assessment of the amount of error in payments and applications for Legal Aid
- A monthly sample of claims and applications across all types and categories of work (including mediation)

### Why does the LAA conduct these audits?

- The duty to demonstrate accurate spending of public funds
- Independently verified by the national audit office, and laid before parliament
- Results published as part of annual report and accounts
- Results inform improvements to LAA processes or identify if further assurance is required

### How does it differ from contract management activity?

- Conducted independently of the contract manager by the core assurance and risk management team
- A random sample, not linked to any risk or indicators
- The audit identifies errors made by LAA staff and processes, in addition to those made by providers or clients



## Types of review: Targeted file review:

- Occurs where data suggests there is an issue that should be explored further. For example, duplicate claims, use of codes
- Commissioned by the contract manager, but often conducted by assurance analysts
- File selection is not random. It is targeted to explore the potential issue, with the number of files depending on the circumstances
- Providers are asked to send files to the LAA for review. You can send paper files or by secure file exchange (SFE)

**Additional guidance and training materials /  
contact us**



# Legal aid agency training website:



Home Civil Crime Online Support Trainer led online modules

## Welcome to the Legal Aid Agency's training and support website.

We are continuing to develop features and content based on user research.

### New features

Live chat is now available 9:00am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday. The live chat function builds on the success of the Online Support chat that was available on the old CCMS training website and will be available for all queries and not just Online Support queries.

[Start chat](#)

### Coming soon

We are looking to develop functionality that will improve user experience such as:

- an improved layout for quick guides
- quick guides to support crime legal aid providers
- a discussion forum for all legal aid providers

If you are unable to find what you are looking for, please click the link below to provide further details and a member of our team will get back to you to as soon as possible:

[Website Navigation Assistance](#)



Civil



Online Support



Crime

## Our regulatory framework and guidance:

**Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO):**

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/10/contents/enacted>

**Civil Legal Aid (Merits Criteria) Regulations 2013:**

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/104/contents/made>

**Civil Legal Aid (Procedure) Regulations 2012:**

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/3098/contents/made>

**Civil Legal Aid (Financial Resources and Payment for Services) Regulations:**

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/480/contents/made>

**Civil Legal Aid (Remuneration) Regulations 2013:**

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/422/contents/made>

**Cost Assessment Guidance:**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/funding-and-costs-assessment-for-civil-and-crime-matters>

- Lord Chancellor's Guidance under Section 4 LASPO
- Means Assessment Guidance
- Civil Finance Electronic Handbook
- LAA Training and Support Website
- Mediation Guidance

# Key LAA documents and training materials

## What you can find on our website

### **2018 SCC Mediation Specification**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/standard-civil-contract-2018>

### **2018 SCC Mediation Category Specific Rules**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/standard-civil-contract-2018>

### **Family Mediation Guidance Manual VERSION 5 – SEPTEMBER 2018**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/legal-aid-family-mediation>

### **Guidance for Reporting Work under the Mediation Contract Version 4 – March 2015**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cwa-codes-guidance>

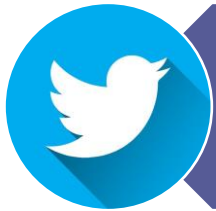
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Eligibility Query?  
[pa-civillegalhelpqueries@justice.gov.uk](mailto:pa-civillegalhelpqueries@justice.gov.uk)



# Our communications channels:

### Legal Aid Bulletin

- Our fortnightly e-alert covers legal aid news and links to relevant GOV.UK pages
- Sign up: [LAA bulletin sign up](#)




### Social Media

- Follow us on Twitter: [@LegalAidAgency](#) and [@LAAHelpTeam](#)



### LAA Portal

- We post information on the status of our online systems on the portal's landing page



### Emailing you

- On occasion we email your organisation's contract liaison manager (your nominated contact) with important information
- They are responsible for cascading LAA information to relevant employees
- If your contract liaison manager, or nominated contact address changes, notify your LAA contract manager



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