



Apply for criminal legal aid service

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Questions	Response
Why is the LAA introducing a new applications service now?	<p>The LAA's contract with the external service provider for eForms will end in September 2024.</p> <p>Apply for criminal legal will provide continuity of service, replacing CRM14 and 15 eForms with a user-centred digital service.</p> <p>Providers will no longer to be able to submit eForms from Tuesday 6 August 2024 and will need to use the new service.</p>
What will happen to the other eForms services?	<p>Other eForms include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">CRM4 – applications for prior authoritiesCRM5 – extension of upper limitCRM7 – non-standard magistrates fees <p>A replacement for these products is currently being worked on by a digital product team in the LAA, and a solution will be delivered in Summer 2024.</p> <p>POA – these will now be accepted via email: LAA will no longer accept POA submitted via e-Forms - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>
When will I start using the service?	<p>Once you are onboarded, you should submit all possible applications through the service to ensure a smooth transition before eForms is no longer available.</p>

Does that mean I will have to use 2 systems at the same time?	<p>Apply for criminal legal aid service can accept up to 98% of application types. It should be used for all applications, excluding those below which should still be submitted via eForms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • applicants who are self-employed • applications that are non means tested • applications for a change in financial circumstances • post submission evidence for applications that were originally submitted in eForms
My firm has been onboarded to the new service, but one member of staff cannot access it.	<p>To access the Apply for criminal legal aid service, users will need the eForms Author role on their user account in CWA. Any current eForms user in a firm who does not have the eForms Author user role will need to be given this role to access the new service. If new users are added to the firm in CWA and need to use the Apply for criminal legal aid service, they will need to be given the eForms Author role.</p> <p>Please see page 17 of the CWA user guide for further information.</p>
Can I still submit via eForms once onboarded?	<p>Yes, but we strongly recommend that you use the Apply for criminal legal aid service for submitting all available applications. This will ensure a smooth transition for your firm, including increasing your working knowledge of this new service before eForms is switched off permanently.</p>
Will all my applications transfer over to the new system?	<p>Applications will not transfer over to the new service.</p> <p>Direct access to historic eForms data will not be available for providers from Tuesday 20 August 2024.</p> <p>Due to the security risk in accessing the migrated data, from 20 August 2024, access to historical data will require a request to the LAA Customer Service Team.</p> <p>You will receive further information on this in due course.</p>
If I cannot use 'Apply for criminal legal aid' for my client, will I have to re-enter all information on eForms or will data be	<p>If an application is started in the Apply for criminal legal aid service but is out of scope, the application will have to be restarted in eForms.</p>

transferred from the new service to eForms?	Please check the criteria on the LAA Portal as to what functionality is available before starting your application.
What are the benefits of using the service?	The service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • follows user friendly design principles resulting in a simpler process that makes it easier to submit legal aid applications • streamlines application submission and reduces manual data entry - the service uses the answers you provide to determine what information or evidence is requested during the application process - which means you are only asked questions relevant to the type of application you are submitting
What if something is not working properly?	For support with a technical issue, please contact apply-for-criminal-legal-aid@justice.gov.uk For a crime specific query, please contact the Crime Customer Service Team on 0300 200 2020.
What training will be given and when will this be available?	We are in the process of creating demonstration videos of the service which will be available on the LAA's training and support website in due course.
What is the turnaround time for applications?	The 48 hour KPI (Key Performance Indicator) for processing applications will remain the same.
Using the service	
How do I sign into the new system?	Sign in will be via the LAA Portal , using your existing sign in details.
I cannot find the correct offence in the service.	It is important that when you come to the section where you input the offence name, you use the drop-down menu. When you start typing the offence name suitable options will appear in a drop-down menu. If the offence does not appear on the list, you can manually add an offence.
Will there be an offline form that can be uploaded	The offline form feature will not be available in the Apply for criminal legal aid service.

<p>to the application when online?</p>	
<p>How will I receive a date stamp?</p>	<p>The existing date stamp rules will apply. You will receive a date stamp automatically where it is applicable via the Apply for criminal legal aid service without the need to manually choose to do so as you do with eForms.</p>
<p>Why are some questions different to CRM14 and 15 eForms?</p>	<p>The service uses the answers you provide to determine what information or evidence is requested during the application process. This means you are only asked questions relevant to the type of application you are submitting.</p> <p>You may be asked less questions or they may appear in a different order. This is intentional and the information collected will be sufficient to make the same assessment the LAA makes on your CRM14 and CRM15 eForms submissions.</p>
<p>How will I receive my representation order?</p>	<p>You will receive the representation order via email, as you do in eForms.</p> <p>At present, the Apply for criminal legal aid service does not have the option to add an additional email address for your representation order to be sent to. As this is an iterative service, if you wish to add an additional email address, use the free text box on the ‘Do you need to add any more information to this application?’ page to confirm the email address to send correspondence to (including the legal aid decision). If no email address is supplied, we will automatically send correspondence to the user account email on record in CWA for the specific user submitting the application.</p> <p>We encourage you to keep your CWA details updated, with your CWA Firm Sysadmin role amending user email accounts. Guidance can be found here: CWA Administration Guide Version 6 (publishing.service.gov.uk)</p> <p>Please ensure your email settings are not set to identify ‘@justice.gov.uk’ emails as spam.</p>
<p>I got an error message whilst submitting an application, how do I know if the application was submitted?</p>	<p>In the unlikely event that an error message occurs during final submission, all information input on the application will be saved. To determine if the application has been submitted, navigate to the submitted applications tab from your dashboard. If the application is seen here, it has been submitted.</p>

<p>I cannot locate an application that I submitted.</p>	<p>Please ensure that you are looking under the correct office account number on the service. If you have checked the office account number and still cannot locate the submitted application, then please contact apply-for-criminal-legal-aid@justice.gov.uk</p>
<p>Can I search for applications in the service?</p>	<p>Not at present. A search function will be implemented in future – this will not be until after eForms has been replaced.</p>
<p>Why do I not get asked for Interest of Justice (IoJ) justification on certain offences?</p>	<p>For applicants who are under 18, and for certain offences where applicants are aged 18 and over, providers will not be required to submit additional IoJ justification. This change is based on evidence which confirms that a decision can be made without this information for certain offences. The offences that do not require IoJ justification are subject to change based on further data analysis or assurance checks. Providers may be asked for justification on any offence, regardless of whether they have been asked to input justification in previous cases of the same type. Providers should document their IoJ justification on their file, regardless of whether this information is requested at the application stage.</p>
<p>Why am I being asked for Interest of Justice (IoJ) justification on split cases?</p>	<p>Based on offence, on certain cases, you will not be asked for an IoJ justification. When an application is submitted with one of these offences the form will return a result that no further IoJ justification is needed.</p> <p>However, when an application is received which has split offences, meaning that the offences are being heard under different court case numbers, checks will be made to see if any offences do require further IoJ justification. If they do, the form will be rejected back asking for further IoJ justification for all of the offences.</p> <p>If you are aware that a case is split, we recommend that you submit separate applications for each case to prevent rejection of your application.</p>
<p>Why can I not see the outcome or MAAT number for my application?</p>	<p>At present, this functionality is not available in the Apply for criminal legal aid service but is due to be built in the near future. You will receive your representation order/refusal notice, which contains the MAAT number, as usual via email or you will receive a separate email communication with reasons for refusal.</p>

	<p>If you do not receive your representation order or a refusal email within the expected timeframe, please contact our Customer Service Team to query the status of your application.</p>
<p>Can I submit Post Submission Evidence (PSE) on this service if my original application was submitted via eForms?</p>	<p>No, you would need to submit your PSE via eForms if the original application was submitted in that service.</p> <p>When eForms is no longer available after 5 August 2024, any PSE relating to an eForms application should be submitted via email to:</p> <p>BirminghamCAT@justice.gov.uk,</p> <p>NottinghamCAT@justice.gov.uk or LiverpoolCAT@justice.gov.uk</p> <p>Self-employed PSE can be sent to nationalcrimeteam@justice.gov.uk</p> <p>Please ensure you are keeping a reference of MAAT/URN references so that these can be linked to your original application.</p>
<p>How do I submit Change in Financial Circumstances (CIFC) when the original application was on eForms?</p>	<p>You can still submit CIFC applications via eForms until 5 August 2024.</p> <p>You will be notified when CIFC functionality is released on the Apply for criminal legal aid service. When functionality is released, you will be able to submit CIFC applications even if your original application was via eForms.</p>
<p>How do I submit Appeal to Crown Court applications, when the original application was on eForms?</p>	<p>You can submit Appeal to Crown Court applications via eForms until 5 August 2024; however, we would encourage you to submit via the Apply for criminal legal aid service so that you can increase your working knowledge of the service.</p>
<p>Do I need my client's National Insurance (NINo) number to use the service?</p>	<p>No - prior to the unemployed journey being released, the service could not be used without a NINo. Since the unemployed journey was released in late April 2024, this is no longer a restriction to using the service. However, if the client states they are in receipt of a passporting benefit and is not in Court Custody, you will not be able to submit the application without the NINo.</p>
<p>If I have a returned or incomplete date stamped</p>	<p>If you have an incomplete application or one that has been returned, it is strongly recommended that you submit these</p>

<p>eForm and the service has closed, how do I retain the date stamp when making a new application?</p>	<p>applications through eForms, whilst it remains available. If you start an application on eForms and need to submit it via the Apply for criminal legal aid service, it is recommended that you take a screenshot of the date stamp with the defendant's name and DOB and upload this screen shot with your application.</p>
<p>I have received a '403 forbidden error' message when completing the IoJ decision.</p>	<p>Users are advised to remove special characters e.g. brackets from the text if they have this issue.</p>
<p>Why doesn't the service differentiate between 'undetermined' and 'failed' on the passported check?</p>	<p>When a passported check is completed, this will bring back either a positive or an undetermined result. An undetermined result could mean that some details are incorrect or that the defendant isn't on a passported benefit. We are aware of the benefit of being able to distinguish between the two and this will be taken into consideration for future iterations of the service.</p>

This document is subject to change based on future FAQs being added and updates to the scope of the service.