

Contingency Measure for Civil Escape Cases – Electronic Submission:

The Legal Aid Agency (LAA) is currently following government advice regarding staff working from home when able to do so as part of the nationwide approach to dealing with the COVID 19 outbreak. The result of this means that we have minimal scope to process physical Escape Case claims that have been submitted to the LAA as paper based claims for assessment.

To maintain the Escape Case workstream in respect of Controlled Work matters the LAA is mandating that providers submit their Escape Case claims electronically during this period. Your claims and supporting documents can be submitted via email or uploaded into your cloud account, which you can provide our Caseworkers with access to.

We appreciate that not all providers currently work with digital files and as such submitting the case file in support of the claim will not be possible. For providers who cannot submit an electronic case file with the claim, we confirm that whilst the government is requesting individuals to work from home when possible, we will assess your Escape Case claims with the submission of the following details only:

- Completed EC Claim 1 form and case summary
- Controlled Work Application form (CW1/CW2)
- Means assessment evidence
- Disbursement vouchers
- Running record of costs/cost ledger
- Any other information/documents you feel are relevant for the assessor to consider that can be scanned and sent electronically (for example expert reports, skeleton arguments, witness statements). Please note the additional information aspect is discretionary.

Please submit each claim via email to mhu-ec@justice.gov.uk and the Escape Case team will process your claim as normal based upon the information submitted. Please note that if a Caseworker feels they need to view an item from a file to make an assessment decision that they will contact you and request the same. We will endeavour to keep such requests to a minimum. Once the assessment decision is made the result will be issued to you via email. You will still have the usual right of appeal against any reductions made upon assessment and appeals are to be submitted to the same email address as the claims.

The above approach lets providers continue to submit Escape Case claims allowing assessments and payments to be made during this period. Once the government's advice regarding working at home recommendations alter we will revert to the standard approach and claims and files will again be accepted as either electronic or physical documents. This is a temporary change and we will issue a further communication when we are able to do so.

Please do not send physical claims until we advise that we are once again accepting them, as they will not be processed and returned to you asking for a digital submission as outlined above.

If you have any questions please contact the Escape Cases team at mhu-ec@justice.gov.uk.