

LSA Circular 11/26

6 July 2026

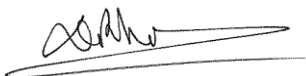
Dear Practitioner,

Prior Authority for Experts in legally aided cases

This Circular will be of interest to all practitioners who engage in legally aided cases across all levels of service.

1. Expert costs represent a significant portion of legal aid spend across all levels of service. Over 7,600 Expert authority requests were received and subsequently granted during 2025/26, representing a committed spend of over £12.2million.
2. This Circular introduces new Guidance '[LSANI Authorities Guidance – Seeking Prior Authority for Expert Witnesses – All Levels of Service](#)' which sets out a refined process for making applications for prior authority. The Guidance also clarifies where comparative estimates are required.
3. The new Guidance does not affect the operation of any of the General Authorities including the [General Authority on the use of psychiatrists and psychologists as expert witnesses in public law Children Order cases in the Family Proceedings Court](#) all of which remain in operation.
4. This Guidance is effective from **6 July 2026** and is supported by a narrated slide presentation '[LSANI Authorities Guidance Presentation](#)' which is available within the legislation and guidance area of the LSANI website.

Yours faithfully,



Paul Andrews
Chief Executive