Department of Justice

An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Männystrie O tha Laa

Legal Aid - A Revised Framework for the Assessment of Legal Aid Costs Subject to Taxation

26 October 2026

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Ministerial Foreword

I am pleased to launch this consultation on proposals to reform remuneration arrangements for proceedings subject to assessment by the Taxing Master and paid from the legal aid fund.

The objective of taxation reform is to enhance transparency, accountability and budgetary control for what amounts to approximately £30m of legal aid expenditure each year.

The proposals set out in this consultation paper cover:

- how fees are set;
- how bills are submitted; and
- how bills are assessed.

Following this consultation, new remuneration arrangements will be brought in by remuneration orders made under the Access to Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2003.

Issuing these proposals for public consultation provides an opportunity for members of the public, for the first time, to have their say on this area of legal aid expenditure.

Naomi Long, MLA
Justice Minister

1. Introduction

1.1. This consultation outlines the Department's proposals on remuneration for solicitors and barristers in legally aided cases subject to taxation. The proposed revised arrangements will change:

- how fees are set;
- how some bills are submitted; and
- how bills are assessed.

1.2 In developing proposals the Department has recognised existing arrangements for the determination of other legal aid fees have the benefit of offering transparency and being tried, tested and familiar to practitioners, and the public and scrutiny bodies alike. It is therefore proposed that hourly rates be similarly set for solicitors and barristers acting in civil proceedings in the High Court, and for civil and criminal proceedings in the Court of Appeal. As with other fees, the new hourly rates will be specified in secondary legislation subject to the usual statutory and public consultative processes, economic appraisal, statutory impact assessments and Assembly scrutiny.

1.3. The new arrangements will retain the independent adjudicative function of the Taxing Master, albeit with some changes to how that function is exercised as the Master will be required to apply the hourly rates and fees specified by the Department to enable greater budgetary control, transparency and oversight.

1.4. As regards to process, it is again intended to replicate existing good practice where possible, and to standardise billing arrangements with barristers submitting itemised bills rather than a brief fee, in line with the current practice for solicitors.

2. Background

2.1. Legal aid is provided across two broad areas:

Civil legal aid, which supports advice, assistance and representation in civil and family matters, including cases involving children, divorce, personal injury, injunctions, bankruptcy, negligence, and judicial review.

Criminal legal aid, which supports individuals who are subject to criminal investigation or prosecution, ensuring access to appropriate legal advice, assistance and representation.

2.2. Remuneration for legal representatives undertaking legally aided work is governed by the statutory framework established under the Access to Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 ("the 2003 Order") and the Legal Aid, Advice and Assistance (Northern Ireland) Order 1981. While these provide the overarching framework, detailed fee arrangements are prescribed primarily through remuneration orders made by the Department and subject to Assembly scrutiny.

Assessment of Costs Through Taxation

2.3. The determination of fees in civil proceedings before the High Court, and civil and criminal proceedings before the Court of Appeal, has traditionally operated outside the broader remuneration framework, with costs assessed through taxation rather than by reference to fees and arrangements prescribed in legislation.

2.4. Under the process of taxation, solicitors submit a bill of costs to the Taxing Master who assesses and determines the amount payable. In determining solicitor costs, the Master will set and apply an hourly rate for the majority of work carried out and apply an item rate for specific activities such as issuing standard letters, emails and phone calls. The Master sets a “legal executive” rate, for fee earners not qualified as solicitors, and this rate is also used to remunerate solicitors providing representation in uncontested divorce proceedings in the High Court. These rates and fees are then uplifted by a percentage amount to reflect “care and conduct”. As with the hourly rates deployed by the Master, the uplifts are not prescribed in legislation but are instead applied at the Master’s discretion on a case-by-case basis. Following this process, a Certificate of

Taxation is issued, and on receipt of this the Legal Services Agency (LSA) will issue payment of the amount certified.

2.5. A different process applies to the current determination of barrister's fees. Unlike their solicitor colleagues and indeed barristers acting in other capacities, barristers remunerated from the legal aid fund in civil proceedings in the High Court and civil and criminal proceedings in the Court of Appeal will submit a single brief fee rather than an itemised bill. The brief fee is not supported by any detailed information relating to the amount or type of work undertaken by the representative in question and it covers all, or the overwhelming majority, of the work undertaken by barristers with the remainder made up of interlocutory fees which are set by the Taxing Master in consultation with the Bar.

Accountability and Financial Oversight

2.6. As taxation is a judicial function, decisions made by the Taxing Master are independent of the Department's standard financial control mechanisms. Payments arising from taxation are consequently not subject to the same level of departmental oversight, audit, or scrutiny as other areas of legal aid expenditure.

2.7. The absence of a structured framework for how such costs are determined is in sharp contrast to other areas of legal aid expenditure, where fees and rates are set out in legislation in line with Article 47 of the Access to Justice (NI) Order 2003 and Article 37 of the Legal Aid, Advice and Assistance (NI) Order 1981 so as to reflect:

a) the time and skill which the provision of services of the description to which the order relates requires;
b) the number and general level of competence of persons providing those services;
c) the cost to public funds of any provision made by the regulations; and
d) the need to secure value for money.

3. The Need for Reform

3.1. Concerns with the current system were raised by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) in its report on Managing Legal Aid in January 2017. The report recommended reform noting:

> 'There is a need for improved transparency and accountability for legal aid payments made under direction from the Taxing Master.'

3.2. The Report further reflected:

> 'The Taxing Master is an independent judicial figure and so sits outside the usual public sector accountability structures. The Committee considers that these arrangements lack transparency and accountability. In particular, there is no line of accountability from the Taxing Master through the Accounting Officer to this Committee.',

3.3. with the PAC recommending:

> 'the Department conducts a review of how expenditure currently adjudicated by the Taxing Master can properly be brought under the purview of the Accounting Officer'.

Enabling Access to Justice Reform Programme

3.4. In December 2024, Minister Long launched the Enabling Access to Justice Reform Programme. The Programme aims to ensure publicly funded legal and support services are effectively meeting the needs of citizens and that high quality information, advice and representation continue to be available, that delivery models are tailored to need, harness the benefits of technology and minimise stress. The Programme also aims to ensure that the system is cost-effective and transparent.

3.5. Taxation reform was included as a priority area in the reform programme. It was originally intended that taxation reform would be delivered in a phased approach based on proceeding type, with remuneration arrangements developed in relation to High Court bail applications, Judicial Review and Criminal Court of Appeal proceedings over the remaining assembly mandate, with other proceeding types to be addressed in the next mandate. That approach would have involved developing standard fees/and or hourly rates in legislation, as well as designing the operational processes that would be required

to establish an assessment function within the LSA, removing the Taxing Master's assessment role for this cohort of legally aided proceedings.

Expediting Reform

3.6. A number of developments prompted a review of the approach to taxation reform.

3.7. In April 2025 the Taxing Master issued a notification that the solicitors' hourly rate for taxed cases would be increasing from £102 p/h to £155 p/h (52% increase) from June 2025. In June 2025 the Master issued a practice direction which increased the interlocutory fees used by barristers for specific work items by, on average, 53%. This was the first increase to the respective rates since April 2014 and was informed by a Working Group established by the Lady Chief Justice to review rates.

3.8. The Department ultimately had no role in determining these increases and the rates were consequently set without reference to value for money, affordability or sustainability criteria that is expected to attach to expenditure from public funds.

3.9. In addition, the increases were introduced in the context of already escalating pressures, with taxed legal aid expenditure having already increased by 50% in nominal terms between 2015/16 and 2025/26, or 8% when adjusted for inflation using the UK GDP deflator, whilst volumes of bills decreased by 43% over the same period. That increase was predominantly driven by barrister brief fees, with the average barrister bill for a taxed case increasing by approximately 320% in nominal terms between 2016/17 and 2025/26, or approximately 205% when adjusted for inflation based on the HMRC UK GDP deflator while the average solicitor bill has risen by 48% or 6.39% when adjusted for inflation over the same period.

3.10. In developing proposals, the Department have also taken cognisance of the views of stakeholders. Most particularly, concerns which were raised regarding "removing" the Taxing Master from the assessment of legally aided bills. Having reflected on those views, the Department's new proposed approach retains the expertise of the Taxing Master, whilst increasing transparency and accountability for public expenditure.

3.11. Additionally, in their response to the consultation on the Enabling Access to Justice Delivery Plan, the Law Society called for the expedition of taxation reform with regards to

family proceedings. Family cases account for the greatest proportion of taxed legal aid expenditure and have been subject to previous unsuccessful attempts to standardise fees. While they had originally been excluded from the proceeding types identified for taxation reform within the current Assembly mandate, the Department agrees with the Law Society that the case for reform is strong. Therefore, rather than the originally proposed incremental approach, the Department now proposes that reforms be introduced across all proceeding types, including family proceedings, in the current mandate.

Pre-Consultation Engagement

3.12. Prior to this consultation officials met with representatives from the Law Society and Bar of Northern Ireland, the Justice Committee and the Lady Chief Justice and Taxing Master. On 14 August 2026, the Department also took the additional step of issuing a pre-consultation engagement paper to the Law Society, the Bar and the Taxing Master to enable submission of early views and evidence on proposals to effect reform. We are grateful to the Law Society and the Bar for the responses received, which have been considered and are addressed in this consultation paper.

3.13. We are also grateful to the Taxing Master for his time and views on the operational aspects of the proposals and we thank him for his constructive engagement to date.

4. Proposed Approach

4.1. The revised framework will apply to the assessment and payment of both barristers and solicitors' fees in cases currently subject to taxation that are paid from the legal aid fund.

4.2. As noted above, the proposed model seeks to enhance transparency, accountability and budgetary control with regards to legal aid expenditure, while maintaining the assessment of bills by the Taxing Master.

4.3. The Department will prescribe the fees, rates and administrative arrangements relating to assessment and payment of fees to all legal practitioners in all cases subject to taxation that are paid from the legal aid fund within secondary legislation, to include:

- Setting hourly rates for barristers and solicitors;
- Setting itemised fees where appropriate;
- Setting out criteria for potential enhancement to rates to account for exceptional circumstances;
- Setting out the requirement for barristers and solicitors to detail the time spent and nature of work carried out; and
- Detailing appeal mechanisms.

5. Barrister Costs

5.1. The Department is proposing to set hourly rates for barristers, replacing the current practice of submitting a brief fee. The Department recognises the introduction of time-based billing represents a departure from current practice for barristers' remuneration subject to taxation and may require some adjustment by practitioners. However, it is also recognised that the new approach is not unprecedented as barristers are required to document work in this way for some other legally aided work or when submitting bills for work carried out under the Government Legal Services panel. In addition to hourly rates, the Department proposes to retain a certain number of relevant interlocutory fees, which are "per item" fees for which it is not necessary to record the time spent.

Proposed Hourly Rates for Barristers

5.2. The Department is committed to establishing hourly rates that fairly compensate barristers for their work and with appropriate regard to the statutory criteria. In the pre-consultation engagement paper, the Department set out the available evidence considered (appended at Annex 4) and made initial proposals for hourly rates for barristers. The Bar were invited to share their views on the Department's proposed hourly rates and to submit any additional evidence to help refine the proposed rates.

5.3. In their response, the Bar was critical of the proposed fee levels and the methodology through which they were developed, describing the approach as fundamentally flawed. In addition, the Bar suggested the Department had failed to establish a sufficiently robust evidence base to support the proposed fees, arguing the Department had failed to properly assess or reflect the time, expertise and skill required to undertake civil and family legal aid work. The response contended that no meaningful assessment had been made of the viability and sustainability of the specialist services provided through civil and family legal aid.

5.4. The Bar did not however provide any evidence to substantiate those criticisms or to justify alternative rates. The Department is therefore continuing to propose hourly rates for barristers, graduated by year of call and subject to assessment by the Taxing Master where costs are paid from the legal aid fund. The Department considers that these

rates will provide fair remuneration in the vast majority of circumstances, and for exceptional circumstances we have proposed arrangements at section 8 of this paper.

5.5. It is the Department's view that the hourly rate will ensure that barristers are remunerated for the time they spend on providing representation, and graduating the hourly rate based on year of call reflects the greater degree of skill more experienced barristers will bring. In addition, setting the rate at a level consistent with rates set for exceptional work at the Crown Court means the competency of practitioners engaged in representation at this level of court tier is reflected.

Proposed Hourly Rates – Barristers

Category	Rate (per hour)
King's Counsel	£164
Counsel A (10 years +)	£132
Counsel B (5 years – 10 years)	£113
Counsel C (Less than 5 years)	£101

Interlocutory Fees

5.6. In the pre-consultation engagement paper shared with the Bar and Law Society the Department proposed that interlocutory fees remain in their current form as set out in the Taxing Master's Practice Direction 01/2025 in both the fee amount and the items prescribed by it. The Bar response to the pre-consultation engagement paper did not comment on this proposal.

5.7. Following further consideration, the Department is now proposing that the interlocutory fees relating to:

- Consultation (including joint negotiations) up to one hour (Senior and Junior) and thereafter per ½ hour
- Appearance at Review/Application/Mention hearing less than 30 minutes and up to one hour

should be removed from the list of fees, and instead remuneration should be a time-based fee under the appropriate hourly rate. This would ensure consistency with how solicitors are remunerated for this type of work. It is proposed these fees will not be subject to any further enhancement. A full review of interlocutory fees will take place along with any future reviews of the new hourly rates.

6. Solicitor Costs

6.1. The Department is also proposing to introduce an hourly rate for solicitors providing representation in the High Court and Court of Appeal, where costs are assessed by the Taxing Master and paid out of the legal aid fund.

6.2. As with barristers, the Department is committed to establishing hourly rates that fairly compensate solicitors for their work and with appropriate regard to the statutory criteria. In the pre-consultation engagement paper, the Department set out the evidence informing initial proposals. This evidence is appended at Annex 3. The Law Society were invited to share their views on the proposed hourly rates and to submit any additional evidence to help refine the proposed rates.

6.3. In their response, the Law Society highlighted the BDO report it commissioned to inform the Taxing Master's consideration of the solicitors' hourly rate. The Law Society also advised that it had commissioned a further, updated report from BDO and noted that the forthcoming report will include consideration of an appropriate profit margin for legal aid work.

6.4. The Society emphasised that legal aid cases often require the same level of expertise, skill and professional input as privately funded cases. The Society strongly supported the continued availability of fee uplifts, arguing that they are an essential component of legal aid remuneration. It stated that cases can vary significantly in complexity, novelty, volume of documentation and overall workload, and that uplifts provide a mechanism for recognising these differences. The Society expressed concern that restricting the availability of uplifts could result in solicitors being under-remunerated for particularly demanding cases. It further argued that an inability to recover the true cost of legal aid work could discourage firms from undertaking such cases, potentially impacting the sustainability of legal aid provision and access to justice. The Society indicated that it intends to provide more detailed comments on the proposed criteria for assessing uplifts during the formal consultation stage. We welcome that commitment to engage with the Department to inform further consideration of these issues.

Proposed Hourly Rates for Solicitors

6.5. The Department proposes that the solicitor hourly rate be set at **£173 per hour**. That includes a base rate of £137.77 (rounded to £138) which covers the "cost of production", and a 25% uplift to £173 to provide a profit margin of 20%. The Department considers this to be a reasonable level of profit from public money, and that it should provide fair remuneration in the vast majority of circumstances. For exceptional circumstances we have proposed arrangements at section 8 of this paper.

6.6. It is the Department's view that the hourly rate will ensure that solicitors are remunerated for the time they spend on providing representation and that a composite rate will allow for solicitors of all levels experience levels to be remunerated without introducing complicating billing arrangements. By setting the rate at a level consistent with rates for exceptional work at the Crown Court, the new fees will in the round reflect the competency of practitioners engaged in representation at this level of court tier.

Legal Executives

6.7. The Taxing Master currently sets a "legal executive" hourly rate for work carried out by unqualified practitioners. This is set at 75% of the rate paid to solicitors. The Department proposes to set a legal executive rate at 75% of the proposed legal aid hourly rate for solicitors of £129.75. This rate will not be subject to any further enhancement.

Matrimonial Rate

6.8. For uncontested divorce proceedings, the Taxing Master assesses solicitor costs using the legal executive rate. The Department proposes to set a rate in legislation aligned with this practice, utilising the legal executive rate of £129.75. This rate will not be subject to any further enhancement.

Set Fees for Standard Work

6.9. The Taxing Master currently sets fixed fees for untimed professional work such as outgoing letters, emails and calls. Those fees are currently set at 10% of the hourly rates for both solicitors and legal executives. The Department proposes instead setting fixed fees at £17.30 per item claimed by solicitors, and £13 per item claimed by legal executives. It is not proposed these fees will be subject to any further enhancement. Set fees for these types of standard work are not currently in place for barristers, but the

Department would invite views on whether it would be necessary to develop equivalent rates for barristers to ensure that this type of work is appropriately remunerated.

7. Documenting Work and Submission of Bills to the Taxing Master

Submission of Bills

7.1. The Department does not propose to amend the current process for the submission of bills by solicitors. We consider the current approach provides sufficient detail to enable the Taxing Master to assess costs claimed and meets the requirements of managing public money in terms of transparency. We will, however, continue to engage with the Taxing Master and his Office to determine if the process for submission of bills can be simplified.

7.2. The Law Society in their response to the engagement paper welcomed the retention of the Taxing Master's assessment role noting it will allow for importance independence and oversight within the process. They also welcomed the acknowledgement of the detail they provide on their current bills.

7.3. Under proposed new arrangements, barristers will likewise be responsible for compiling a time and line bill to supplement the current report on case. It is proposed these documents then be provided to instructing solicitors or the solicitors' costs drawer for onward submission to the Taxing Master for assessment. A billing template will be developed which will require barristers to provide the following standard information:

- Date/time and hours worked;
- A description of work undertaken (e.g. reading documents, drafting documents, legal research, consultation, court attendance);
- The applicable hourly rate;
- Case details and legal aid certificate reference; and
- Total fee and VAT.

7.4. The Bar made no substantive comment on these proposals in its response to the Department's engagement paper.

Assessment process

7.5. Bills submitted will continue to be assessed by the Taxing Master, who will determine the appropriate level of costs in accordance with the prescribed legislative framework.

7.6. As part of this process:

- additional information may be requested by the Taxing Master where required;
- individual elements of a claim may be reduced following scrutiny;
- greater visibility may be provided on how reductions are applied to specific elements of work.

7.7. It is proposed that following assessment, solicitors and/or barristers would submit the assessed bill and supporting documentation through LAMS to allow the Legal Services Agency to verify the claim and process payment. The Bar made no substantive comment on these proposed arrangements in its response to the Department's engagement paper. The Law Society's response welcomed the retention of the existing process for submission of bills, highlighting that it is comprehensive, transparent and evidence based.

8. Enhancement to Hourly Rates

8.1. The Department considers that the proposed rates provide fair remuneration for solicitors and barristers providing legal representation in proceedings in the High Court and Court of Appeal. However, the Department acknowledges that in limited circumstances there may be justification for hourly rates to be enhanced to reflect particular exceptional circumstances.

8.2. The Department's engagement paper proposed that enhancements be capped at a 100%, and would be available when care, speed and economy with which a case was prepared merits an enhancement.

8.3. The Law Society's response stated 'In relation to uplifts, it is vital that uplifts are available to ensure that solicitors undertaking publicly funded work are properly remunerated for the complexity, responsibility and skills that such cases demand. Cases can vary significantly in respect of complexity, volume of documentation, novelty and the level of work required. Restricting the criteria to apply an uplift risks undercompensating solicitors who are undertaking the most demanding and complex work.'

8.4. The Bar response made no comment on this proposal.

8.5. Having considered responses, to ensure appropriate remuneration and aid assessment the Department is proposing to set criteria under which a representative, who considers that elements of work done satisfy those criteria, may seek an enhancement to the applicable hourly rate. It is proposed that the Taxing Master would then assess the work done against the criteria to determine whether an enhancement is appropriate, and if so the level of enhancement to be applied up to the maximum set by the Department.

8.6. The Department proposes that:

Where a representative considers that the work carried out involved:

- a degree of urgency;
- exceptional complexity; or
- exceptional circumstances

the representative may seek an enhancement of the applicable hourly rate.

8.7 The Taxing Master may allow an enhancement to the hourly rate only when satisfied that at least one of the criteria above has been met.

8.8 When determining the percentage by which the hourly rate may be enhanced, the Taxing Master must have regard to the level of diligence, responsiveness, speed and efficiency demonstrated by the representative.

8.9. The Department considers that the proposed criteria would benefit from the development of guidance or a framework which sets out the characteristics which would meet each of the criteria, so that whilst there is still an element of subjectivity, there is a framework which provides transparency and allows for consistency in how it is applied. The Department would invite views on this approach.

8.10. Currently, the Taxing Master applies an uplift to a "cost of production" rate. For solicitors, limiting the level of enhancement the Taxing Master may apply in such circumstances to no more than 100% of the proposed cost of production base rate of £138 results in an hourly rate of £276 per hour or an enhancement of 59.52% to the £173 solicitor hourly rate. For efficacy, the Department proposes to therefore limit the level of enhancement for both solicitors and barristers at 60% of their applicable "full" hourly rates. This results in a maximum hourly rate of **£277 per hour** for solicitors.

8.11. For barristers, this results in the maximum hourly rates of:

Category	**Maximum Enhanced Rate (per hour)**
King's Counsel	£263
Counsel A (10 years +)	£212
Counsel B (5 years – 10 years)	£181
Counsel C (Less than 5 years)	£162

9. Stamp Duty

9.1. The Department's engagement paper discussed the possibility of amending the administrative arrangements in relation to the payment of stamp duty which is ultimately recoverable from the legal aid fund, with a view to reducing the burden on practitioners. The Bar made no substantive comment on this, whereas the Law Society welcomed the suggestion and stated they awaited further information. Discussions with the LSA and NICTS are ongoing. The Department will provide further information on the outcome of those discussions in due course.

10. Review of Rates

10.1. The Department proposes to review the rates on a triennial basis. The first review will be conducted in parallel with the next statutory reviews of criminal, civil and family legal rates (October 2029).

11. Impact Assessments

11.1. The Department has completed an impact screening exercise in relation to these proposals including Equality Impact Screening, Rural Needs Impact Assessment, and Human Rights Impact Assessment.

11.2. The impact assessments and impact screening documents have been published alongside this consultation on the DoJ website and will be finalised post consultation to take account of any further information received during the consultation.

12. How to respond

12.1. Consultation on the policy proposals will run for 8 weeks until 21 December 2026. Consultation on the impact assessments and screening will run for 12 weeks until 18 January 2027. You can respond on-line via Citizen Space.

12.2. We would ask that you respond to the consultation using the online facility on the Citizen Space platform. However, if you are unable to respond using our online consultation facility, please submit your responses using the template (Annex 1).

13. Confidentiality and Access to Information

13.1. For this consultation, we may publish all responses except for those where the respondent indicates that they are an individual acting in a private capacity (e.g. a member of the public). All responses from organisations and individuals responding in a professional capacity will be published. We will remove email addresses and telephone numbers from these responses; but apart from this, we will publish them in full. For more information about what we do with personal data please see our consultation privacy notice (Annex 2).

13.2. Your response, and all other responses to this consultation, may also be disclosed on request in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR); however all disclosures will be in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679.

13.3. If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential, so that this may be considered if the Department should receive a request for the information under the FOIA or EIR.

14. Enquires

14.1. If you have any queries regarding this consultation or require additional information, please write to EAJDConsultations@justice-ni.gov.uk

15. What Happens Next

15.1. Following the close of the consultation on 21 December and for impact assessments and screening on 18 January 2027, all responses and feedback will be analysed, and a post-consultation report will be published.

Annex 1: Response Template

Responding to our consultation

We ask that you respond to the consultation using the online facility on the Citizen Space platform. However, if you are unable to respond using our online consultation facility, please submit your responses using this template Please submit your response by 21st December 2026 to EAJDConsultations@justice-ni.gov.uk

I am responding as: An individual ☐ On behalf of an organisation ☐

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please provide your name, organisation, and email address.

Name:	

Organisation:	

Email address:	

Proposals: Consultation and Impact Assessments/Screening

Question 1: Do you agree with the proposed hourly rates for counsel, including the categorisation of fee earner based on year of call?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't have an opinion ☐

Comments:

Question 2: Do you agree with the proposal to retain interlocutory fees for barristers, minus the time-based fees in relation to consultations and appearances?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't have an opinion ☐

Comments:

Question 3: Do you agree with the proposed hourly rate for solicitors?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't have an opinion ☐

Comments:

Question 4: Do you agree with the proposed hourly rate for legal executives?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't have an opinion ☐

Comments:

Question 5: Do you agree with the proposed matrimonial hourly rate, for solicitors providing representation in uncontested divorces?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't have an opinion ☐

Comments:

Question 6: Do you agree with the proposed set fees for standard work for solicitors?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't have an opinion ☐

Comments:

Question 7: Would there be a requirement for the set fees for standard outgoing emails/letters and telephone calls to apply to barristers?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't have an opinion ☐

Comments:

Question 8: Do you agree with the proposals for the documenting and submission of work by solicitors and barristers?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't have an opinion ☐

Comments:

Question 9: Do you agree with the proposed assessment process?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't have an opinion ☐

Comments:

Question 10: Do you agree with the proposals in relation to the enhancements to hourly rates, including the proposed criteria and maximum level of enhancement?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't have an opinion ☐

Comments:

Question 11: The Department welcomes views on the characteristics which would meet the proposed enhancement criteria, which could then be used in accompanying guidance to provide for transparency and consistency.

Comments:

Question 12: Do you agree with the proposed triennial review of rates, the first of which will commence in October 2029?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't have an opinion ☐

Comments:

Question 13: Do you have any comments on the Rural Needs Impact Assessment?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't have an opinion ☐

Comments:

Question 14: Do you have any comments on the Equality Impact Screening?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't have an opinion ☐

Comments:

Question 15: Do you have any comments on the Human Rights Impact Assessment?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't have an opinion ☐

Comments:

Question 16: Do you have any comments on the Impact Assessment Screening document?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't have an opinion ☐

Comments:

Annex 2: Privacy Notice

Public Consultation on Proposals for Legal Aid Remuneration

Data Controller:	Department of Justice (DoJ)
Address:	Castle Buildings, Stormont, BELFAST, BT4 3SG
Telephone:	028 90 169 694
Email:	EAJDConsultations@justice-ni.gov.uk
Data Protection Officer:	DoJ Data Protection Officer
Telephone:	028 90 378 617
Email:	DataProtectionOfficer@justice-ni.gov.uk

Being transparent and providing accessible information to individuals about how we may use personal data is a key element of the Data Protection Act (DPA) and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The Department of Justice (DoJ) is committed to building trust and confidence in our ability to process your personal information and protect your privacy.

Purpose for processing

We will process personal data provided in response to consultations for the purpose of informing the development of our policy, guidance, or other regulatory work in the subject area of the request for views. We will publish a summary of the consultation responses and, in some cases, the responses themselves but these will not contain any personal data. We will not publish the names or contact details of respondents, but will include the names of organisations responding.

If you have indicated that you would be interested in contributing to further Department work on the subject matter covered by the consultation, then we might process your contact details to get in touch with you.

Lawful basis for processing

The lawful basis we are relying on to process your personal data is Article 6(1)(e) of the GDPR, which allows us to process personal data when this is necessary for the performance of our public tasks in our capacity as a Government Department.

We will only process any special category personal data you provide, which reveals racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious belief, health or sexual life/orientation when it is necessary for reasons of substantial public interest under Article 9(2)(g) of the GDPR, in the exercise of the function of the department, and to monitor equality.

How will your information be used and shared

We process the information internally for the above stated purpose. We don't intend to share your personal data with any third party. Any specific requests from a third party for us to share your personal data with them will be dealt with in accordance the provisions of the data protection laws.

How long will we keep your information?

We will retain consultation response information until our work on the subject matter of the consultation is complete, and in line with the Department's approved Retention and Disposal Schedule DoJ Retention & Disposal Schedule .

What are your rights?

- You have the right to obtain confirmation that your data is being processed, and access your personal data
- You are entitled to have personal data rectified if it is inaccurate or incomplete
- You have a right to have personal data erased and to prevent processing, in specific circumstances
- You have the right to 'block' or suppress processing of personal data, in specific circumstances
- You have the right to data portability, in specific circumstances
- You have the right to object to the processing, in specific circumstances
- You have rights in relation to automated decision making and profiling.

How to complain if you are not happy with how we process your personal information

If you wish to request access, object or raise a complaint about how we have handled your data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer using the details above.

If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are not processing your personal data in accordance with the law, you can complain to the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
casework@ico.org.uk