

Key Messages for Legal Suppliers – May 2020

Queried Matters

Practitioners are reminded that when queries are raised by the Agency, until the responses are resubmitted to us, in accordance with pages 213-218 of the [LAMS Supplier Manual](#), we are unable to progress the request.

There are currently almost 3,500 outstanding queries (across all request types) to which we have not received responses – dating from 5 July 2019. Practitioners are encouraged to urgently review the matters which have been queried to them.

To prevent this the outstanding query list from growing further, with effect from **8 June 2020** the Agency will be adopting the following position in respect of any **new queries** raised from that date on **new application requests**:

1. For emergency applications, all queries will indicate that the supplier has 7 days to respond and failing to do so will result in the application request being recalled by LSA and withdrawn and thereafter closed meaning that no further requests can be made on that application.
2. For non-emergency applications, all queries will indicate that the supplier has 21 days to respond and failing to do so will result in the application request being recalled by LSA and withdrawn and thereafter closed meaning that no further requests can be made on that application.

Requests for transfer of legal aid from one Solicitor's firm to another

When completing the first two questions of the Transfer Request details on LAMS Practitioners are asked to answer 'YES' to each question: **IF** they are confirming –

(1) "that there are no material facts/ changes which ought to be disclosed..." ; and,

(2) 'that there is no reason why, in your opinion, the existing legal aid certificate should not remain in force.'

If the answer is 'NO' to these questions – the Practitioner will be required to provide full details.

Please also note that if the legal aid certificate in question is more than one year old, the Practitioner seeking transfer should provide the Agency with an update on the status of the proceedings.

Civil Injunctions under the Protection from Harassment (NI) Order 1997

While there is clearly overlap between these proceedings and Personal Injury cases brought by way of Civil Bill to the County Court, applications for civil injunctions under the Protection from Harassment (NI) Order 1997 should only be made under the matter type “Other” and “Injunction”. Going forward, applications which are made using any other matter type than “Other” and “Injunction” will be withdrawn.

Incorrect information Criminal Cases in LAMS

Should the detail of your criminal case in LAMS be incorrect you should, in the first instance, contact the appropriate court office and ask them to amend the details. Once they have confirmed that the record has been updated you should wait a few days before checking that the LAMS case has been updated.

If your case is not appearing in LAMS you should again contact the Court office to confirm that the legal aid details have been ‘resulted’ by the Court. Again, once they have confirmed that the details have been ‘resulted’ you should wait a few days before checking that the LAMS case has been updated.

If on checking the details the case is still not in LAMS or is not correct you should then contact LSA on 028 9040 8888.

Rescheduling of LAMS Re-registration

As many suppliers are either working remotely or are self-isolating due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, LSANI have decided to suspend this year’s LAMS re-registration process. This will ease the burden on both the Agency and the legal profession and ensure that business can continue to be transacted without further disruption.

The re-registration is now scheduled to take place in June 2021, and we will issue a reminder and additional guidance in the spring of 2021.

If you have registered for self-billing, this will continue to apply, and does not need to be extended. You should still notify us however if:

- Your VAT registration number changes
- You cease to be VAT registered
- You sell your business or part of your business

However, if you are now VAT registered and have not notified the Agency you should do so immediately. You will also wish to register for self-billing.

Solicitors should continue to review and update their account details to reflect their current qualifications with the Agency in the current year. You must also notify the

Agency if any restrictions have been imposed or uplifted from a practicing certificate. If you cease to practice, you should notify the Agency that you no longer practice.

Barristers should review and update their qualification status if that has changed in the current year.

Everyone should check that all information held on LAMS is up to date – including office details, contact numbers, bank account, who is attached to the firm and especially email addresses.

These changes should be actioned in the normal way, using the “modify my account” tool on LAMS, and by uploading supporting evidence as necessary. Administration staff have been appointed to conduct the verification process on these change requests.

If you are newly qualified or returning to practice and do not have a LAMS account you will have to register on LAMS. Please follow the instructions on the ‘[ni direct](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/create-solicitor-or-barristers-legal-aid-account-or-log-lams)’ page (<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/create-solicitor-or-barristers-legal-aid-account-or-log-lams>).