Frequently Asked Questions – Apply for civil legal aid

What can I use Apply for civil legal aid for?

The Apply for civil legal aid service can be used for the initial application only

Apply for civil legal aid can be used for the following proceedings:

You can apply for:

- Domestic Abuse – excluding Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPOs)

- Section 8 Children Act

- Combined Domestic Abuse and Section 8 Children Act – excluding Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPOs)

- Special Children Act (SCA)

- Public Law Family

What proceedings are excluded from Apply for civil legal aid?

If the matter type isn't one of those listed above, then it is excluded from using Apply for civil legal aid. Please submit the application through CCMS.

Are there any other exclusions?

If the application is means tested, then clients who are in the following are excluded from currently using Apply for civil legal aid:

- Armed forces
- Business means - self-employed, involved in running a business, such as partnership, company director or shareholder
- Prisoner
- Client lives aboard.

Can I use Delegated Functions on 'Apply for civil legal aid'?

Provider can use delegated functions for the above-mentioned proceedings in same ways as you would on CCMS, there is a slight difference in relation to SCA cases, please see below.

How do I use Delegated Function in a SCA case?

If you wish the certificate to be dated earlier than the date of submission, then please answer Yes to using Delegated Functions and select the date you wish to certificate to be effective.

Can I use different Delegated Functions dates for different proceedings?

Yes, unlike in CCMS you can report a different Delegated Functions date for different proceedings.

Why does Apply request a National Insurance (NI) number for SCA cases, while CCMS applications do not?

Apply asks for an NI number because it automatically links the client to their existing record in CCMS. In contrast, CCMS requires providers to manually select the correct client record.

We understand that for SCA non-means cases, providers may not have this information readily available, and for children, it may not apply.

If you have the client's NI number, please enter it. If not, select **No**—the system will allow you to continue.

Can linked cases be submitted on 'Apply for civil legal aid'?

Apply can be used to manage:

- Family links in proceedings to represent 2 or more family members, with an option to copy details between linked applications.

- Legal links, if the client is involved in more than one proceeding.

- 'Apply for civil legal aid' **cannot** be used if the application has both a family and a legal link. These cases should be submitted through CCMS.

How does the 'Apply for civil legal aid' service collect client financial information?

'Apply for civil legal aid' has an automated link to HMRC and can access client pay information.   Depending on the quality of the data HMRC hold in relation to client, may result in the LAA asking for sight of the client's wage slips.

There is also a feature to upload wage slips as part of the initial application.

There is also Open Banking functionality which can be used, with the client's permission to automatically obtain bank statements.

How does the Open Banking feature work in 'Apply for civil legal aid'?

If you answer 'yes' to the question, does your client use online banking? When you select 'yes' a guide will be provided, which you can print off and share with the client.

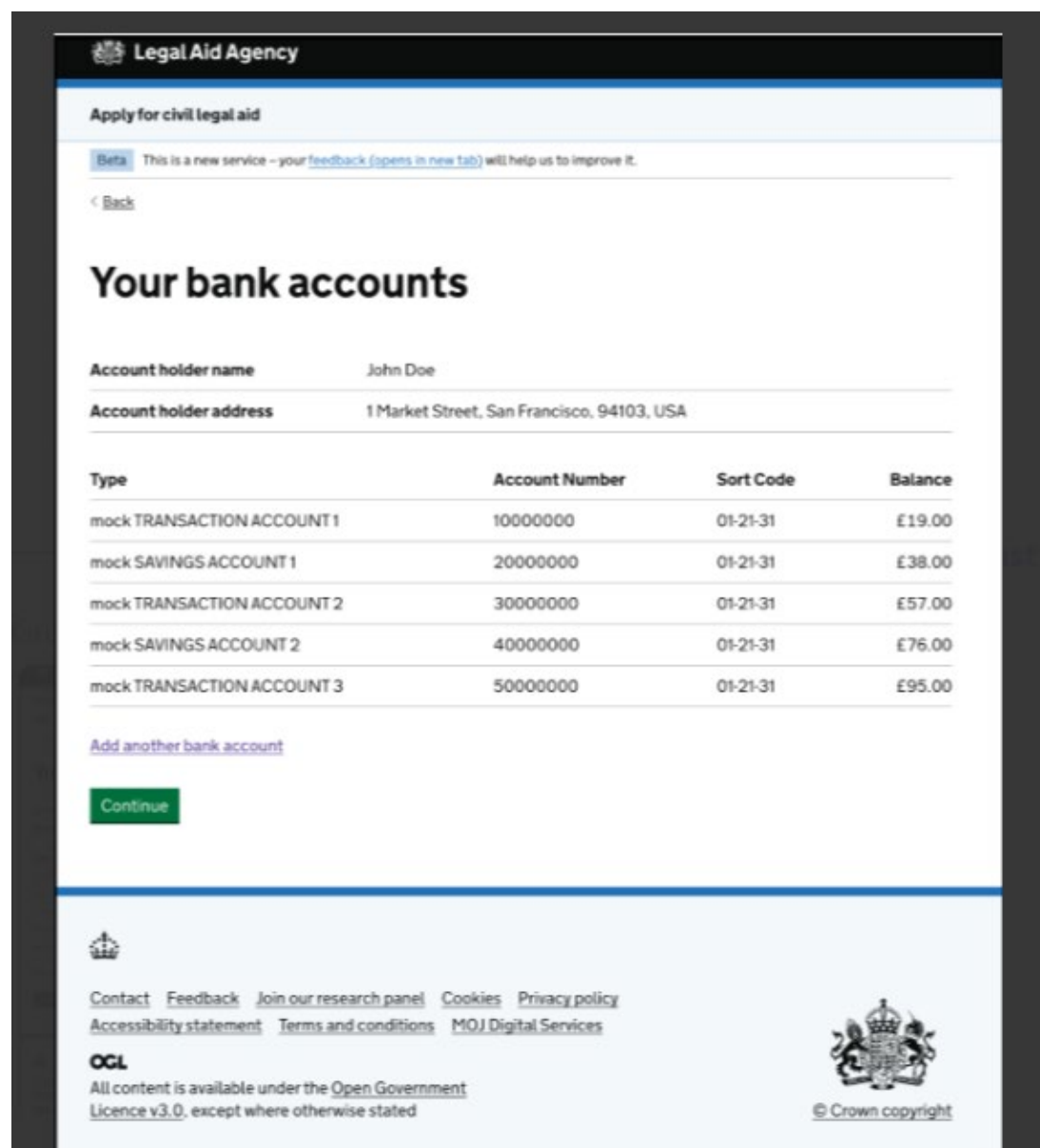You will be prompted to provide the clients email address, which will validate the client's email address

The client will receive an email clearly labelled from the Legal Aid Agency (LAA) asking them to share 3 months of bank statements. The email contains a link directing them to 'Apply for civil legal aid' to get started.

There is also a feature to upload bank statements as part of the initial application.

Can I add more than one bank account?

The role of the provider is to list all the bank accounts the client holds when submitting the application via Apply for civil legal aid.

On your bank account page, there is a facility for the client to add more than one bank account and use Open Banking for more than one bank account.

How and when does the DWP benefits checker work within the 'Apply for civil legal aid' service?

The client's details are sent to the DWP benefit checker to verify whether an individual is in receipt of passported benefits. At the end of the client's details and entering the proceedings and details of the case, the result is presented to the provider. At this point, if the result is 'no', you are asked if the DWP records are correct.

How do I resubmit a rejected Apply for civil legal aid application?

If the application is rejected, you will receive the notification on CCMS, and you will need to resubmit the application through CCMS, as Apply for civil legal aid is only available for the initial application.

What if I want to submit a further amendment, case enquiry or legal appeal request?

Apply for civil legal aid is only available for the initial application. Once the initial application has been processed, then any further requests such as an amendment, case enquiry or legal appeal will need to be submitted via CCMS.

How do I give additional new staff access to Apply for civil legal aid?

Use the "Manage your users" function in SiLAS to add, update or amend information relating to your account. You can find information on this in the 'Manage your users' guidance. This action will need to be completed by the person in your firm with the Administrator role.

More detailed guides for Providers, Advocates and Chambers/Counsel can be found here: User roles and responsibilities – Legal Aid Learning

What if something is not working properly?

In the event there is a technical or operational issue, please contact:

Apply for Civil Legal Aid applications technical support:
Online chat – Ministry of Justice: Contact Us
Phone – 0300 200 2020 – option 3
Email – online-support@justice.gov.uk

Apply for Civil Legal Aid applications operational support:
Online chat – Ministry of Justice: Contact Us
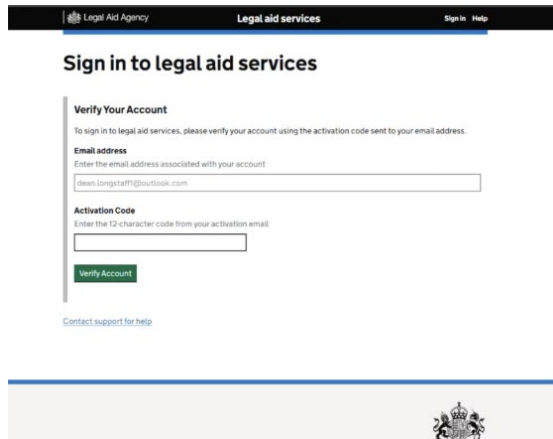Phone – 0300 200 2020 – option 2
Email – ContactCivil@justice.gov.uk

What is the turnaround time for applications?

The Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for processing applications will remain the same. **85% of civil legal aid applications within 20 working days (end-to-end)**, excluding the most complex cases.

How do I sign into the Apply for Civil Legal Aid system?

Sign in will be via the [Sign in to Legal Aid Services (SiLAS) platform](#).

Please see [Sign into Legal Aid Services (SiLAS) – user guide – Legal Aid Learning](#), for further guidance on using the service.

I got an error message whilst submitting an application, how do I know if the application was submitted?

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.

I cannot locate an application that I submitted.

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 our technical support team at:

Online chat – [Ministry of Justice: Contact Us](#)
Phone – 0300 200 2020 – option 3
Email – online-support@justice.gov.uk

Can I search for applications in the Apply for civil legal aid service?

Yes, there is a search function within Apply for civil legal aid, this can be located on the top of the page.

Can I use the service if I do not hold a civil contract?

If a firm does not hold a civil contract, they do not have authorisation to access Apply for civil legal aid.

Can I edit information once I've confirmed the 'Check Your Answers' page?

No, once you have confirmed that the information is correct and you have passed the 'Check Your Answers' page, there is no facility to go back and amend.

If the information is incorrect once you have passed this stage, you will need to delete the application before submission and create a new application.

How can I delete applications?

Yes, there is a facility to delete the application prior to submission within Apply for civil legal aid. Once the application has been submitted there is no facility to delete the application.

To delete an in-progress application, if you go to Your application and select the Action to delete.

What are the benefits of 'Apply for civil legal aid' compared to CCMS?

- **Quicker service:** Due to the intuitive process of 'Apply for civil legal aid', the application process appears to be shorted (as unnecessary steps/questions are not required), therefore payment can be made quicker. - *One provider has said "It takes 15 minutes, it took up to an hour previously depending on the case." "...a more quicker and efficient way of doing it."*

- **Right first time:** 'Apply for civil legal aid' requests all the relevant information in the first instance, this means fewer rejections and further information requests, resulting in quicker decisions.

- **Integrated service:** 'Apply for civil legal aid' has links to Open Banking and DWP benefits checker

- **Search function for proceeding types:** "*you are able to search for the proceedings that you require by typing it and search results will appear, which is far better than having to sift through all the proceedings.*"

- **Linked cases:** When representing 2 or more family members that are family linked, there is an option to copy details between linked applications, rather than having to enter them manually on each application, which saves administrative time for providers.

- **Provider – focus:** 'Apply for civil legal aid' has been designed with the provider as the main focus, incorporating provider feedback to ensure provider needs are met.