



Ministry
of Justice

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Parliamentary Under
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**CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED TRANSFER OF THE ASSESSMENT OF ALL CIVIL LEGAL
AID BILLS OF COSTS TO THE LEGAL AID AGENCY**

I am writing to inform the committee of the consultation the Ministry of Justice is publishing with regard to the proposed transfer of the assessment of all civil legal aid bills of costs to the Legal Aid Agency.

Tomorrow, the Ministry of Justice will launch a consultation on the transfer of civil legal aid bills of costs to the Legal Aid Agency (LAA), from HMCTS.

The consultation seeks views on a proposed transfer of civil legal aid costs to the LAA from HMCTS. The contract between the LAA and legal aid providers sets out that, subject to the general discretion of the Lord Chancellor, costs will be assessed by the LAA in cases not involving an inter partes detailed assessment. The LAA has historically paid HMCTS to undertake some of this work on their behalf. Following concerns raised by stakeholders about not being paid promptly due to the Covid-19 pandemic, from July 2020 providers could elect whether to send bills to LAA or HMCTS for assessment.

There will be an eight-week consultation period which will close on 10 April 2021, at which point the Ministry of Justice will review the responses and provide a recommendation as to whether the transfer of civil bills should be implemented on a permanent basis.

Yours sincerely,

ALEX CHALK MP