

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, MP,
Chair of the Public Accounts Committee,
House of Commons,
London
SW1A 0AA

MoJ ref: Sub 125409

01 July 2025

Dear Sir Geoffrey,

INCREASES TO HOUSING AND IMMIGRATION CIVIL LEGAL AID FEES

Following my letter of 24 January, I am writing to inform you that we will be increasing civil legal aid fees for housing (housing and debt) and immigration (immigration and asylum) work. This will be confirmed in the consultation response we are publishing tomorrow.

We published a consultation paper on 24 January 2025 inviting responses on proposals to increase civil legal aid fees for housing and immigration work. It also sought evidence on potential changes to contractual requirements.

Following that consultation, tomorrow, I will be announcing our decision to uplift the rates paid for all housing and immigration legal aid work. We are increasing housing and immigration 'preparation and attendance' fees to a minimum hourly rate of £65.35/£69.30 (non-London/London). Where this new minimum rate would not represent at least a 10% uplift, the fee will be uplifted by 10%. This represents a significant investment – the first since 1996 - an increase of £20 million a year once fully implemented. Overall legal aid spending will increase by 24% for housing and 30% for immigration.

Alongside this we are taking steps to simplify and harmonise certain fees. This will reduce administrative burdens for providers, simplify billing, and allow them to spend more time helping their clients.

This investment will help to ensure effective access to justice for some of the most vulnerable in our society, supporting a more stable and sustainable legal aid sector – one that is fit for the future and attracts and retains the brightest and the best practitioners.

It will also help us deliver our wider government ambitions, with investment in immigration legal aid vital to supporting this Government's ambition to end hotel use and increase returns. The investment in housing legal aid will help ensure a sustainable sector as we expand housing rights in the Renters' Rights Bill.

The uplifts will be implemented as soon as operationally possible, at which point we intend to bring forward a Statutory Instrument to amend the Civil Legal Aid (Remuneration) Regulations 2013 to reflect the fee changes

Through the consultation, we have also gathered further important evidence to progress our thinking on potential changes to the current office and remote advice requirements set out in the Standard Civil Contract. Using this evidence, we will continue to review the Standard Civil Contract in these areas and consider next steps to ensure that we are supporting clients and providers as effectively as possible in the civil legal aid system.

I very much look forward to closer collaboration with you as we continue to seek to improve the experience of users and providers across the legal aid sector.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sarah Sackman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sarah" and the last name "Sackman" clearly distinguishable.

SARAH SACKMAN KC MP
Minister of State