



Sir Robert Neill MP
Chair, Justice Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

20th April 2020

The Civil Legal Aid (Procedure) Regulations 2012

Dear Bob,

I am writing to you in your capacity as chair of the Justice Select Committee to notify you of an upcoming Statutory Instrument amending the Civil Legal Aid Procedure Regulations 2012. This Instrument will make provision for:

- the removal of the mandatory requirement to contact the Civil Legal Aid (CLA) Telephone Gateway for those seeking legal aid in discrimination, debt and special educational needs matters, reinstating immediate access to face-to-face advice in these cases;
- the introduction of a discretion for the Director of Legal Aid Casework (DLAC) to specify that a determination of legal help funding, in relation to inquests, after DLAC has waived the financial eligibility criteria may have effect from a date earlier than the date of determination;
- the amendment of the evidence requirements that need to be satisfied in order to qualify for legal aid in proceedings where the applicant needs to prove that they are a victim of or at risk of being a victim of domestic abuse; and
- the removal of the mandatory requirement that an applicant for legal aid for Family Mediation must always attend the mediator's premises in person in order to make their application for legal aid.

The removal of the CLA Telephone Gateway and the Backdating of the Legal Help waiver were announced as part of the Legal Support Action Plan and our Final Report: Review of Legal Aid for Inquests, both published in February 2019.

The Domestic Violence Evidence Requirements amendments and the Mediation Application provisions are being made in response to the proposals put forward by the charity 'Rights for Women' and the 'Family Mediation Council'.

ALEX CHALK MP