



Ministry  
of Justice

# **Legal aid statistics in England and Wales**

**Guide to LAA CSVs**

## General

The information provides the user with breakdowns of Legal Aid data from April 2000 in some areas but also quarterly for the last five years where possible. The aim is to maximise the usage of data by users so analytical work can be carried out independently.

The data is provided in a comma separated value (CSV) machine-readable format so that it can easily be imported into analytical software packages. These packages include R, Access, SQL, SAS, up-to-date versions of Excel but not versions of Excel prior to 2010 (because of insufficient number of rows). This format enables the user to manipulate and aggregate the published data in different ways.

Figures displayed may differ from previously published due to improvements in data processing.

Below are full descriptions of the variables and the list of possible values for each dataset provided.

Each data-set has the following standard variables:

**fin\_yr:** This is the financial year to which the data relates e.g. 2009-10 would refer to April 2009 to March 2010.

**fin\_qtr:** Each year is divided into four quarters and this is the quarter to which the data relates. These are based on financial years:

| fin_qtr | description         |
|---------|---------------------|
| 1       | April to June       |
| 2       | July to September   |
| 3       | October to December |
| 4       | January to March    |

**scheme:** This outlines the broad scheme of LAA statistics the data falls within.

| Scheme       | description  |
|--------------|--|
| Crime Lower  | This area covers pre-charge, the early court system and prison assistance. It covers work carried out by legal aid providers at police stations and in magistrates' courts in relation to people accused of or charged with criminal offences. Prison law is also included within the latter category. |
| Crime Higher | Information is provided on legal representation in the Crown Court and above. This includes, Crown Court cases (typically solicitor prepares case for trial and  |

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
|                      | barrister or solicitor advocate provides representation), Very High Cost Cases (extensive evidence reviewed and case prepared by solicitor where the senior counsel (QC) often presents)   |
| Legal Help           | This is a form of civil legal services which includes advice and assistance about a legal problem, but does not include representation or advocacy in proceedings. It is usually the first point of civil legal advice and covers help via telephone, face-to-face and not for profit centres.                                       |
| Mediation            | Family mediation allows a neutral mediator help the parties to reach a mutually acceptable compromise while conciliation gives the mediator the power to suggest grounds for compromise. Those in mediation may have also required Legal Help in the first instance and after mediation may result in Civil Representation in court. |
| Civil Representation | Civil Representation is representation by solicitors and barristers for civil cases, which could go to court. Many legal help cases will extend to civil representation with full investigations undertaken or in court representation given although it is possible enter straight into civil representation.                       |
| Appeals              | Covers the appeals decisions against Civil Representation decisions, appeals against the decision to award legal aid and exceptional case funding applications and outcomes.   |

**Crime Lower: there are five main categories within this scheme:**

| category                             | description   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Pre-charge suspects                  | <p>Anyone in England and Wales interviewed by the police or attending a police station can receive advice funded by legal aid either via the telephone or by a solicitor in attendance with the suspect. This includes advice on rights and options pre-charge, relating to pre-charge; or applications to extend detention.</p> <p>The LSC has limited control over the volume of police station claims. Increases or reductions in the number of police officers will lead to changes in the number of arrests, charges and cautions.</p> |
| Charged defendants                   | Legal aid providers carry out work at magistrates' courts in relation to people accused of or charged with criminal offences; this includes solicitor preparation for appearance or trial and representation within the magistrates' court, often by a solicitor advocate or junior barrister.  |
| Representation at Magistrates' court | <p>Legal aid providers carry out work at magistrates' courts in relation to people accused of or charged with criminal offences; this includes representation within the magistrates' court, often by a solicitor advocate or junior barrister.</p> <p>Figures include Court duty solicitor sessions</p>  |
| Prison law                           | This is advice for prisoners relating to their treatment or discipline in prison (e.g. parole hearings) and their progression through the prison system.  |
| Legal Aid grants                     | The figures for the number of applications and volume of those granted legal aid in the lower courts  |

**sub\_cat:** The variables **sub\_cat1**, **sub\_cat2** and **sub\_cat3** provide extra detail regarding the type of case, and are specific to the preceding category. **sub\_cat4** and **sub\_cat5** are not applicable to this scheme.

**count:** This provides the sum of distinct cases in each quarter based on the sub\_cat3, except where stated; i.e. Court duty solicitor sessions where the number of claims is provided. Please note that if a case spans over multiple months it will count more than once, e.g. if a case spans over April and May and is billed in both months, it will contribute a count of 2 to the total number of cases, although this only affects a small proportion of cases.

**value:** This provides the sum of the value of claims within the category stated in thousands. This value includes VAT.

**Crime Higher: there are five main categories within this scheme:**

| category                          | description  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Advocate Graduated Fee Scheme     | The fee scheme which governs fees paid to advocates (barristers or solicitor advocates) who represent clients in criminal proceedings in the Crown Court, other than in cases which have been classified as very high cost (Criminal) cases. |
| Litigator Graduated Fee Scheme    | The fee scheme which governs fees paid to solicitors who represent clients in criminal proceedings in the Crown Court, other than in cases which have been classified as Very High Cost (Criminal) Cases.                                    |
| High Cost Crime                   | The Complex Crime Unit manages all Very High Cost Cases under a criminal legal aid contract and this provides the volume, expenditure,   |
| Higher Courts                     | The volume and associated expenditure within the Crown Court for Proceeds of crime and escapes from the graduated fee schemes and the same for the Court of appeal, senior court costs office and supreme court                              |
| Legal Aid Grants in higher courts | The figures for the number of applications and volume of those granted legal aid in the Crown Court  |

**sub\_cat:** The variables **sub\_cat1**, **sub\_cat2** and **sub\_cat3** provide extra detail regarding the type of case, and are specific to the preceding category. Including offence type, type of case (trial, guilty plea etc)

**count:** This provides the sum of cases closed in each quarter

**value:** This provides the sum of the value of claims within the category stated in thousands. This value includes VAT.

**Legal Help: there are two main categories within this scheme:**

| category          | description   |
|-------------------|---|
| Matters started   | This is the number of new starts within this scheme, it covers new starts from solicitors, Not for Profit organisations (NfPs), telephone advice service, Housing possession court duty scheme and Telephone operator service and previously Community Legal Advice Centres (CLAC). |
| Matters completed | This is the number of reported matters completed, this covers completions from solicitors, Not for Profit organisations (NfPs), telephone advice service and previously Community Legal Advice Centres (CLAC).  |

**sub\_cat:** The variable **sub\_cat1** outlines the type of provider. The current status of the provider at the time of the report being run is used to classify all of the provider's cases, albeit of the status of the provider when the case was actually undertaken. **sub\_cat2**, and **sub\_cat3** provide detail regarding the category of law. **sub\_cat4** is only applicable to matters completed (solicitors and NfPs) and provides information on outcomes and is only available for matters completed (solicitors and NfPs). **sub\_cat5** is not applicable to this scheme

**count:** This provides the number of cases in each quarter.

**value:** This provides the sum of the value of claims within the category stated in thousands. This value includes VAT. This is only available in matters completed (solicitors and NfPs).

**Mediation: there are three main categories within this scheme:**

| category              | description  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Mediation assessments | This is the number of assessments                        |
| Mediation starts      | The number of full mediation starts after the assessment |
| Mediation outcomes    | The outcome of the mediation                             |

**sub\_cat:** The variable **sub\_cat1** outlines the type of assessment or mediation.. **sub\_cat2** provides the outcome of the mediations and **sub\_cat3** the overall agreement status reached

**count:** This provides the number in each quarter.

**value:** This provides the sum of the value of assessments completed and outcomes of mediations within the category stated in thousands. This value includes VAT.

**Civil Representation: there are four main categories within this scheme:**

| category   | description   |
|--|---|
| Civil Representation applications received         | Volume of applications received   |
| Civil Representation Granted                       | Volume of applications that received a certificate of representation including those granted under emergency provisions |
| Civil Representation Closed - cost met by LAA      | The volumes and expenditure for those receiving Civil Representation with all costs met by LAA                          |
| Civil Representation Closed - cost met by opponent | The volumes and expenditure for those receiving Civil Representation with costs met by the opponent.                    |

**sub\_cat:** The variables **sub\_cat1** and **sub\_cat2** provide extra detail regarding the type of case, and are specific to the preceding category. **sub\_cat3** provides a flag for those cases deemed high cost (over £25k). **sub\_cat4** and **sub\_cat5** provide further information on the outcome of representation and the benefit received by the client

**count:** This provides the workload number

**value:** This provides the sum of the value of claims within the category stated in thousands. This value includes VAT.

**Appeals: there are three main categories within this scheme:**

| category                                | description  |
|---|--|
| Appeals against representation provided | Provides volumes regarding appeals against decisions made to award legal aid representation                  |
| Civil Representation appeals            | Provides volumes regarding appeal decisions whether financial or legal appeals against certification rulings |
| Exceptional Case Funding                | Covers timeliness and volumes of applications received in respect of exceptional case funding.               |

**sub\_cat:** The variables **sub\_cat1-5** provide extra detail regarding the type of case.

**count:** This provides the sum of work completed in each quarter or financial year where appropriate.

**value:** This only applies to exceptional case funding and provides length in days that the decision took.

## **Diversity CSV:**

The diversity data-set provided covers all of the areas of legal aid. This CSV has been specifically developed to support the chapter “Clients of legal aid” in the “Legal Aid Statistics in England and Wales”. It is meant to provide users with information on the diversity of our clients only, it should not be used to look at the workload of the LAA. The age, gender, ethnicity and disability of the client has been provided in the broad categories of crime lower, crime higher, legal help and civil representation. Please see notes below on the specific areas covered.

Data where there is no reported diversity information on the client are excluded from the dataset. The user should note that the number of cases that result from some breakdowns may be quite small. Where the value is actually less than 3, the value is given as 0, to protect the confidentiality of those involved in the claim, order, warrant or repossession. For this reason, the national total number of cases, etc from these data-sets may not match the total shown in the main tables although the differences are generally small.

### **Crime lower:**

Crime Lower data are taken from the Contracted Work and Admin (CWA) system and supported with information from the Means Assessment Admin Tool (MAAT) giving information on the granting of legal aid.

Gender, ethnicity and disability information are collected from the CWA system and reflect all clients in Crime Lower except those from the CDS direct telephone advice scheme. The data from this scheme are taken from a different system and demographic information on these clients are not available. The information on age is reported from MAAT and covers only the subset of clients who are means tested.

As information is sourced from two different systems it is not possible to combine the information. Therefore care must be taken when looking at the diversity of Crime Lower clients as there is an overlap in the way the data is displayed.

### **Crime Higher:**

Crime Higher data are taken from the Means Assessment Admin Tool (MAAT) giving information on the granting of legal aid. Gender, ethnicity and disability and age are reported from MAAT and covers only the subset of clients who are means tested.

### **Legal help:**

Diversity information is only provided on solicitor and NfP clients of Legal help. The information of these two providers are reported from the CWA system and can be broken down by age, gender, ethnicity and disability.

### **Civil Representation:**

Civil Representation data are taken from the Corporate information store (CIS) giving information on the certificates granted for representation in the Civil area. Gender, ethnicity and disability and age are reported from CIS.