



*Find out more about legal aid at
www.legalaid60.org.uk*



*Legal aid is marking its
60th anniversary in 2009.
Since 1949, public funding
has provided legal advice,
help and representation
to those who can least
afford it. Legal aid protects
people's rights and
safeguards a just society.*

legalaid
in the Crown Court

legal services
COMMISSION

legal aid – fair access to justice

legalaid

in the crown court

Today legal aid has an annual budget of over £2 billion – and over £1 billion is spent in the criminal courts. To ensure legal aid is there for the future, the Government wants defendants in the Crown Court who can afford it, to pay towards the costs of their defence.

Who pays?

Defendants with a disposable income above a certain threshold will pay a number of fixed monthly contributions. Essential items such as:

- mortgage or rent payments
- council tax
- food and utility bills
- plus allowances based on the size of the family

will be taken into account before deciding whether someone will have to make a contribution.

Convicted defendants with equity or capital assets (e.g. property, savings) above £30,000 may be asked to contribute to the costs of their case once it has concluded.

A safety net

The Government believes that those convicted of a crime should make a contribution if they can reasonably afford to do so. Defendants who are found not guilty will have their contributions refunded, with interest.

A safety net called a hardship review exists for those defendants who genuinely cannot afford to make a contribution, or whose circumstances have changed since the initial order was made.

A saving of £50 million

Under the new scheme, to be introduced across England & Wales from April 2010, it is estimated that 3 out of 4 defendants will continue to receive free representation. If only 1 in 4 defendants

makes a contribution, it is likely that up to £50 million a year can be saved.

This scheme will help ensure the legal aid budget can continue to help people with legal problems, now and in the future, as it has for the past 60 years.

If you would like more information about the new Crown Court scheme, visit:

www.legalservices.gov.uk/criminal.asp

