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www.legalservices.gov.uk

24 June 2010

From the Chief Executive
Carolyn Downs

Letter to all legal aid providers

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Helping us to process your payments on time

I'd like to ask for your help in keeping us on track to process your payment claims on time. I'll explain the background so that you can understand why I'm asking for your support.

We worked hard in 2009 on a number of finance and processing initiatives. These meant we were able to make payments much more quickly than before. So, many of you were being paid in advance of our published turnaround times.

But during the early months of 2010 our finance and processing staff have been put under pressure for two reasons:

- A significant increase in processing volumes
- Additional checks to eliminate over-claiming and over-payments

These additional checks mean extra work for us. But it means we have a quality process in place that helps to protect the legal aid fund.

The vast majority of our providers are still being paid within published target times. Delays are most likely to occur when we need further information from yourself or from HMCS or CPS about your claim.

So how can you help?

Many enquiries about late payments are for claims that have either already been paid or are still within published target times. So please keep an eye on our website to check the latest possible date when payment should be made by cheque or BACS i.e.

www.legalservices.gov.uk/civil/payrates_schemes.asp

www.legalservices.gov.uk/criminal/payrates_scheme.asp



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Community
Legal Service



community
legal advice

0845 345 4 345

www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk

If you still have concerns after looking at the website then your relationship manager should be your next port of call.

You should also continue to liaise with your relationship manager. This is to make sure you are clear about what is required to enable your bills or applications to be processed with minimal delay. For example, the process is much smoother when all the required supporting information is enclosed with your claims.

It's a simple request that will go a long way to helping us. This will enable us to focus our efforts on making sure everyone gets paid more quickly.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carolyn Downs', written in a cursive style.

Carolyn Downs
Chief Executive