

Press release

Millions invested in legal aid to boost access to justice and keep streets safe

Criminal legal aid solicitors will receive up to £92 million more a year to help address the ongoing challenges in the criminal justice system.

From: **Ministry of Justice** (</government/organisations/ministry-of-justice>) and **The Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP** (</government/people/shabana-mahmood>)

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- Millions to be invested to address ongoing crisis in the criminal justice system
- Additional £92 million per year invested in criminal legal aid solicitors to help keep our streets safe
- Next step in government's Plan for Change to deliver swifter justice and support legal aid sector

Victims will get swifter access to justice thanks to a multi-million pound investment in the criminal legal aid sector as part of the government's latest step to ensure justice is done and our streets are safe.

Under proposals announced by the Lord Chancellor, Shabana Mahmood MP, today (Thursday 19 December) criminal legal aid solicitors will receive up to £92 million more a year to help address the ongoing challenges in the criminal justice system and get justice for victims.

Access to justice is a cornerstone of our justice system and is fundamental to getting criminal cases through the courts – getting the system moving again for victims. This 12 per cent increase in funding, on top of the 12 per cent announced in response to the Criminal Legal Aid Independent Review, will ensure justice can be done while strengthening the entire sector for the future.

It also lays the groundwork for longer-term reform of the criminal legal aid market. Taking on legal aid cases should be a simple process for solicitors and barristers and those reliant on legal aid need to have quick and effective access to it, no matter where they are.

Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, Shabana Mahmood, said:

“Justice for victims would not be possible without the hard and complex work carried out by criminal legal aid solicitors and barristers up and down this country.

“The criminal legal aid sector has been underfunded for too long. It is a crucial part of this government’s Plan for Change to put the justice system on a sustainable footing now and for the future.

“This further boost of up to £92million will increase access and speed up justice for victims and ensure solicitors are properly compensated for their work.”

Today’s news builds on the decision last month to [increase fees for solicitors who work in police stations and Youth Courts by £24 million](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/24-million-boost-for-criminal-legal-aid-to-support-most-vulnerable) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/24-million-boost-for-criminal-legal-aid-to-support-most-vulnerable>)

Taken together it is a significant investment to reflect the valuable and tough work that is undertaken by those who work in the criminal justice system, helping them to make sure justice is served and that victims get the resolution they need.

This is just one part of the government’s commitment to make sure victims are supported and criminals face justice. Earlier this week (Tuesday 17th December), the [government funded an additional 2,000 sitting days in the Crown Courts](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/2000-extra-sitting-days-to-help-address-courts-crisis) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/2000-extra-sitting-days-to-help-address-courts-crisis>), bringing court capacity to its highest levels in a decade. Ministers are determined to tackle the backlog and will be working

closely with legal professionals, like the Criminal Bar Association and the Bar Council, to deliver swifter justice for victims.

Last week, the Lord Chancellor also [announced Sir Brian Leveson's independent review into the criminal courts](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/courts-reform-to-see-quicker-justice-for-victims-and-keeps-streets-safe) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/courts-reform-to-see-quicker-justice-for-victims-and-keeps-streets-safe>), which will look at major court reform to tackle the outstanding criminal caseload and ensure victims of crimes will see perpetrators face justice more quickly.

Further information

On Criminal Legal aid for solicitors

- In November, the government announced a £24m injection into police station and youth court fees as part of its Crime Lower consultation response. Those uplifts came into force on 6 December 2024, raising solicitor criminal legal aid fees by 12% since the Criminal Legal Aid Independent Review (CLAIR).
- Today's announcement of an additional 12% uplift will therefore take the total uplift to 24% since CLAIR for criminal legal aid solicitors over this Parliament.
- Ministers have committed to working with the Bar leadership through the Criminal Legal Aid Advisory Board on longer-term reform of the criminal legal aid market.

On Civil Legal Aid

- In January 2025, the government will consult on increasing legal aid fees for those working in the housing (housing and debt) and immigration (immigration and asylum) sectors, aiming to increase fees to a rate in the region of £65/£69 per hour (non-London/London), or provide a 10% uplift, whichever is higher. Fixed fees will be uplifted by an amount proportional to the increase in the underlying hourly rate for that work. This will be implemented in 2025-26 with costs scaling up to £20m by 2027-28.
- We will continue to consider the fees paid in other categories of civil legal aid, including as part of the second phase of the government's spending review, due in Spring 2025.



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