

Legal Aid News

Coming soon - RealMe®, a new way to login to the Resolution Management System (RMS)

Later in the month all users of the Resolution Management System (RMS) will log-in using the RealMe® service.

What is RealMe®?

The RealMe service is an authentication service used by a variety of organisations. The service is designed to protect your privacy and security. Once you have a RealMe login you'll be able to use it in many places, saving you from remembering lots of different logins.

Why is RealMe being introduced for logging into RMS?

By verifying who the users of RMS are, using RealMe, we're better able to protect and secure the information of parties that use the range of out-of-court services such as Parenting through Separation courses, Family Dispute Resolution and the Family Legal Advice Services.

What do I need to do?

In a few weeks we'll write to you again to tell you more about how to create a RealMe login if you don't already have one, and what to do if you currently have a RealMe login. We'll also provide you with more information about who to contact if you have any challenges with setting up a RealMe login.

Where can I find out more about RealMe?

You can find out more about RealMe at <https://www.realme.govt.nz/about-realme/>

Financial Eligibility Compliance Checks

We'll shortly be starting compliance checks on groups of FLAS providers. The aim is to check that only eligible clients are receiving the funded service and that any issues providers have are identified and resolved. Until the service has been fully established, any compliance issues that are identified will be addressed by providing additional training and/or tools to help you administer the test correctly.

If you are chosen for a check you will receive a written request for funding eligibility information for specified clients, including:

- a copy of the Funding Eligibility form
- a copy of the client's proof of financial eligibility
- a copy of the client's proof of identity

- any other information relevant to assessing whether the client is eligible to access funded out of court services.

The details of when and where you need to send this information to will be included in the letter. You can send it to us in a hard-copy or electronic format. Once we have completed the check, we'll write to you with the outcome and advise if future guidance is necessary.

Update to Legal Aid Criminal Assignment form

Info for Criminal Legal Aid providers

We've recently updated the Criminal Case Assignment List Preference form. The new forms allow you to let us know your preferences for rotational assignments for **all** PAL levels (PAL 1-4). They are also [available online](#).

If you wish to be added to an assignment list to receive rotational assignments for PAL 1-4 cases, or you wish to change the lists you are currently on, please complete the form and send to Provider and Community Services.

If you complete the forms electronically, please email to legalaidprovider@justice.govt.nz. Alternatively you can print and complete, and send to:

Provider and Community Services

Legal and Operational Services

Ministry of Justice

Level 6, Justice Centre,

19 Aitken Street, Wellington 6011

(or SX10125, Wellington)

Criminal and Parole Providers – when to apply for an amendment to grant for office costs

Some Criminal and Parole providers have asked us for more information about when to apply for an amendment to grant for office-related disbursements in Criminal/Parole fixed fee cases.

As you will be aware, Office Disbursements for Criminal fixed fee cases are included in the fixed fee. However, an application for an amendment to grant will be considered for specific office-related costs if the provider can demonstrate that this fee is completely inadequate. Examples of when you can apply for an amendment to grant for office-related disbursements are available on the website.

For Criminal Legal Aid Providers- Rotational Assignments

We recently identified an error in our computer system which has meant a small number of providers have been receiving either slightly more or less than the expected number of criminal rotation assignments over the last 2-3 months.

We rectified the problem in our system last week and we're pleased that this is now gradually bringing assignments back into equitability, allowing those of you who were affected providers to receive your correct share of assignments. Please note, however, that it may take time to restore the normal balance since it depends on the number of new cases and any other providers in an assigned court cluster who may also have been affected.

Apologies to those who were affected by this issue. It was useful this was brought to our attention.

Amendments to the Legal Aid Fixed Fees Schedule for Proceedings under the Care of Children Act 2004 from 31 March 2014

After careful consideration of several issues raised by the New Zealand Law Society about the Care of Children Act legal aid fees schedule, we're making the following amendments effective from 7 July 2014:

- a. we will consider requests for payment of the Settlement Conference fees on a case by case basis where providers attend an Issues Conference or a Roundtable Meeting if –
 - i. the case has a Court application date of before 31 March 2014 and has been directed onto a new track by the Judge; or
 - ii. the case has a Court application date of on or after 31 March 2014 and the Judge has directed a hearing or other event (meaning parties may be represented) and counsel attendance is required at either an Issues Conference or a Roundtable Meeting
- b. the existing \$190 for the Pre-Hearing Administration activity for On Notice cases is increasing to \$310 with an additional task included in this activity: "reviewing evidence"
- c. the existing \$190 for the Pre-Hearing Memorandum of Consent is increasing to \$310 with an additional task included in this activity: "negotiations that achieve consent, to be incorporated into the memorandum of consent".

We will monitor the volume of cases claiming for Issues Conferences and Roundtables and if necessary review how this is operating and whether any future schedule amendments are necessary.

Victims Orders against Violent Offender's Act update

The Victims Orders against Violent Offender's Act has received Royal Assent and will come into force on 30 December 2014.

The Act will help reduce the risk of victims of serious violent and sexual offences receiving unwanted contact with their offenders. From 30 December, victims will be able to apply for a new order to help prevent their offender from contacting them

Legal aid will be available for both victims and respondents (including the offender and, potentially any associates) and the schedule for this will be available from the Legal Aid Services/Providers section of the website later in the year.

Thank you to the legal aid providers who have assisted LAS in developing the fixed fee legal aid schedule.

To read more about the Act, click [here](#).