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Legal Aid News is your official regular communication from Legal Aid Services on all matters related to legal aid. *Legal Aid News* is generally published in the last week of every month.

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Claiming hearing time for Family Violence Courts

The criminal fixed fee schedule has been updated to include an exception for hearing time in Family Violence Courts. The granting notes on page 4 now explain that providers may claim actual hearing time (in half hour blocks) when the provider is required to be in the courtroom.

If you have any questions about this, please contact your legal aid office.

Improved Grants handbook

Based on feedback we have received, the various grants manuals, disbursement policies, fixed fee information packs and debt guidelines have been condensed into a Legal Aid Services Grants [handbook](#).

This means that all the information on granting, eligibility, invoicing and instructions for specific areas of law are now located in one document. The content has not changed and you will find what you are looking for by clicking the relevant title on the contents page, or searching for a keyword using Ctrl + F.

The new grants handbook and other legal aid manuals can still be found on the same legal aid provider manuals page on the Ministry website.

If you have any questions, please contact your legal aid office.

New criminal disbursement: Photocopying of trial file

Where 'trial counsel error' is a ground of a criminal appeal, the appellate counsel (where legally aided) may claim a preapproved fee for the costs of photocopying the trial file.

This is to ensure both trial and appellate counsel have access to the relevant file information.

The [Disbursements Policy](#) has been updated to include this new disbursement for 'Photocopying of a trial file'.

The following applies to this disbursement:

- This disbursement is preapproved for appellate counsel in criminal appeal cases
- The preapproved amount is \$0.10 per page
- This disbursement is in addition to the disbursement for photocopying, printing and binding
- A GST receipt is required to support a claim for reimbursement where the photocopying has been provided by a third party, otherwise a GST receipt is not required
- This disbursement can be claimed even where only an interim grant of aid has been made for the appeal.

The disbursement is available from 1 March 2016 for new and existing appeals.

Specialist report defined

The definition of a specialist report for purposes of family fixed fees has been clarified to avoid doubt. In Care of Children Act matters the specialist report fixed fee is for considering a report requested by the Court under sections 132 or 133, or a Judge directed lawyer for child report. In Children, Young Persons, and their Families Act matters the specialist report fixed fee is for considering a report requested by the Court under sections 178, 186 or 187, or a Judge directed lawyer for child report. There may be multiple other types of reports that lawyers need to consider and report on to their clients. However, these tasks in relation to reports not defined as specialist reports are covered within the existing fees (eg pre-hearing matters). If the relevant fee is shown to be inadequate for a particular activity, an amendment to the legal aid grant may be sought. You can see the updated schedule [here](#).

Queries?

If you have queries about any article in this newsletter, please contact legalaidnews@justice.govt.nz.