

LEGAL AID NEWS

November 2016

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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Update on changes to the administration of legal aid

Dates for the first two Legal Aid offices to close in the New Year have been confirmed.

The Napier and Waitakere offices will both close on Friday 27 January.

Local providers will be advised of new contact information in due course.

For general legal aid enquiries you should phone 0800 2 Legal Aid (0800 253 425).

New Contract for Services

Thanks to all those legal aid providers who have returned their signed contract. You can expect your completed contract to be returned to you this week. The recent earthquake in Kaikoura led to some delay in processing the received contracts. However there will be no impact on business-as-usual as the new contracts are noted in our system.

For those that have not yet returned a signed contract please either send it to legalaidprovider@justice.govt.nz, or email us to let us know whether you wish to remain available for legal aid.

Christmas Payments

The last date for direct credit payments to providers for 2016 is Thursday, 22 December. Payments will resume on Wednesday, 4 January 2017.

Criminal Case Assignment Christmas and New Year availability

The end of the year is fast approaching! Remember, if you have leave planned over the festive season for a period of more than 10 working days, please complete the Criminal Case Assignment availability form and email it to legalaidprovider@justice.govt.nz. This will allow us to identify any areas where provider coverage may be limited and will ensure that you do not get disturbed unnecessarily during your break.

Charge discussions

The 'Charge discussions' fixed fee in the criminal fixed fee schedules is for engaging in charge discussions and/or resolution with the prosecution, including diversion or charges withdrawn. Any discussion with the legally aided person about their charges is covered under the fee for 'Preliminary work'.

Upcoming RMS changes for FLAS providers

We are making some changes to RMS, which will go live on 1 December. The changes will not have any significant impact on FLAS providers – there will mainly be a few general usability improvements and a couple of new fields that you will need to fill in for reporting purposes. You can see a list of the changes [here](#).

Sending physical documents to Legal Aid Services

This article is to confirm our current process with respect to documents sent to Legal Aid Services. Where a document such as an application, invoice or amendment to grant has been emailed or faxed to a legal aid office, it is not necessary to also send a physical copy. The emailed or faxed copy is all that is necessary for the legal aid office to process the document.

Queries?

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