

## **Purpose and Function of The Legal Aid Application Forms (Civil and Criminal Proceedings – England and Wales)**

This document sets out the purpose and operational use of all Legal Aid Agency application forms recently obtained, covering both civil and criminal legal aid. It explains how each form is used within the Legal Aid process and clarifies their respective roles in securing public funding.

### **1. CIV AP – Application for Civil Legal Aid Certificate**

The CIV AP form is the principal application form for civil legal aid where Legal Representation is sought. Its purpose is to apply for a legal aid certificate that authorises a solicitor to act for a client in civil proceedings, such as housing, public law, community care, immigration (where in scope), and other civil matters covered by the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012. The form records client details, the legal issue, the scope of funding sought, and confirms that both the merits test and means test are met. This form is mandatory where full legal representation is required and is usually submitted via the Client and Cost Management System (CCMS) or by email where permitted.

### **2. CIV AP – Legal Help, Help at Court, and Family Help (Lower)**

This version of the CIV AP form is used to apply for lower-level civil legal aid services, including Legal Help, Help at Court, and Family Help (Lower). Its purpose is to allow early-stage legal assistance, advice, and limited representation without the need for a full legal aid certificate. It is commonly used for advice, correspondence, negotiation, and advocacy at early hearings. It confirms client eligibility and funding scope but does not authorise full proceedings. This form allows faster access to legal aid support before escalation to Legal Representation where necessary.

### **3. Application for Legal Aid in Family Proceedings – Family Help (Higher) and Legal Representation (Emergency)**

This application form is used in urgent family law matters where immediate legal aid is required, such as domestic abuse cases, child protection issues, or emergency injunctions. Its purpose is to enable emergency funding where delay would cause serious risk to the client or children involved. The form allows legal aid to be granted urgently, subject to later confirmation of full eligibility. It is sent by email only and is critical in time-sensitive family proceedings.

### **4. CRM14 – Application for Legal Aid in Criminal Proceedings**

Form CRM14 is the primary application form for criminal legal aid. Its purpose is to request public funding for legal representation in criminal cases before the Magistrates' Court or Crown Court. The form sets out the nature of the criminal charges, the court, the legal provider, and applies the Interests of Justice test. This test assesses whether the seriousness or complexity of the case justifies legal aid. CRM14 is required in all criminal legal aid applications and forms the legal basis of the funding request.

## **5. CRM15 – Financial Statement for Legal Aid in Criminal Proceedings**

Form CRM15 is the accompanying financial assessment form used with CRM14. Its purpose is to assess the client's financial eligibility for criminal legal aid by examining income, benefits, savings, property, and outgoings. The Legal Aid Agency uses this information to decide whether the client qualifies financially and, in Crown Court cases, whether the client must make financial contributions. CRM15 is essential unless the client is exempt from means testing.

## **6. CRM15C – Continuation of Financial Statement**

Form CRM15C is a supplementary continuation form for CRM15. Its purpose is to allow full disclosure of financial information where CRM15 alone does not provide sufficient space. It ensures completeness and accuracy in the financial assessment and must always be submitted together with CRM15 where used.

## **7. Guidance for Completing CRM14 and CRM15**

The guidance documents for CRM14 and CRM15 provide official instructions issued by the Legal Aid Agency. Their purpose is to explain how each section of the forms should be completed, what evidence is required, and how eligibility is assessed. These documents are not submitted as part of the application but are essential for compliance, accuracy, and avoiding delays or refusals.

## **8. Controlled Work Application Forms (Civil)**

Controlled work forms are used for specific categories of civil legal aid that do not require prior Legal Aid Agency approval, such as certain immigration, asylum, mental health tribunal, and emergency housing matters. Their purpose is to allow authorised providers to start work immediately while recording eligibility and compliance. These forms still require correct evidence and are subject to later audit by the Legal Aid Agency.

## **9. Relationship Between All Forms in Practice**

Together, these forms create the full framework for accessing legal aid funding. Civil forms govern non-criminal matters and are largely processed through CCMS, while criminal forms are submitted via the criminal legal aid system or paper applications. In all cases, a legally authorised provider holding a Legal Aid Agency contract must be named as the acting solicitor. Administrative or legal support organisations may assist with onboarding, evidence gathering, and drafting, but funding approval, compliance, and payment rest with the authorised legal practitioner.

## **10. Compliance and Payment Implications**

Legal aid payments are made only to authorised legal practitioners or firms contracted with the Legal Aid Agency. All forms must accurately reflect the solicitor on record, the funding scope, and compliance with statutory requirements. Errors, omissions, or misrepresentation may result in refusal, recovery of funds, or regulatory action.