01YE1267925

Email to the Legal Aid Agency (No vague points, fully focused)
Subject: Request for Procedural Clarification on Representation Orders and CRM Forms

Dear Legal Aid Agency,

a) I am requesting clarification on several procedural points relating to representation orders, delegated functions, and the correct use of CRM forms. I would be grateful if you could confirm the LAA's position on each point below.
b) I was provided with a "representation order" document by Tuckers Solicitors for a matter dated **04/08/25**. The document uses the LAA Birmingham Crime Applications Team address and appears in the format of an official LAA certificate, but it contains no LAA reference number and does not appear on your system. When I contacted the LAA, I was informed that no representation order exists for this matter and that the document supplied to me is not recognised as a valid certificate or contingency form. Your latest response also stated: *"The new solicitor would simply produce their own rep order from transferred dated as it's delegated functions case."*
c) I must now understand how this situation should have been handled under LAA rules, I request clarification on the following specific points:

1. Representation order documents

1+ Are solicitor firms permitted to create their own representation order Certificates / documents using the LAA's address or formatting?

2+ Are firms permitted to develop and produce to clients documents resembling LAA certificates where no corresponding records exists on the LAA system?

2. CRM14 and CRM15 – application and means test

During the contingency period:

3+ Were firms required to complete CRM14 and CRM15 for every client, including those on passported benefits, where they intended to rely on legal aid?

4+ Were firms permitted to retain completed CRM14/CRM15 forms without submitting them, or were they required to submit them as soon as practicable after attendance?

5+ Does LAA guidance require solicitors to record the correct offence and URN before creating or submitting any CRM14/CRM15 documentation?

3. CRM16 – hardship

6+ Where a client would fail the means test but cannot realistically fund representation privately, are firms required to submit a CRM16 hardship application if they wish to rely on legal aid?

7+ Are firms permitted to proceed as if legal aid is in place without submitting CRM16 where hardship applies?

4. CRM18 – Crown Court legal aid

8+ Where a case is, or may be, sent to the Crown Court, is a CRM18 required in addition to the original CRM14/CRM15?

9+ Must the offence and URN recorded on any CRM18 match the Police Custody Log Records offence and URN recorded on the original CRM14/CRM15 and on the LAA system?

5. CRM7 – solicitor's claim for payment

a) Can a firm lawfully submit a CRM7 claim for payment where:
   10+ No Representation Order Exists On The LAA System.

   11+ No CRM14/CRM15 Are Recorded by the Solicitor Firm Staff For The Matter.

   12+ The Offence Recorded By The Firm Does Not Match The Offence Recorded In The Wood Green Police Station Custody Log Records; And

   13+ The URN Is Linked To An Incorrect Offence?
b) Does LAA guidance allow any payment to be made in the absence of a valid representation order on your system for the relevant offence and URN?

6. Consistency with LAA procedure

a) Based on LAA rules, would the following sequence of events be consistent with standard LAA procedure:
   14+ **The Custody Record At Wood Green Police Station Shows The Firm Attended to Act on my behalf Only For A Section 4A Offence:** That is the offence they were called for, the offence they discussed with me, and the offence recorded in the police system.

   15+ **After That Attendance, The Firm Later Entered A Completely Different Offence On Their Own System ("Threats To Cause Criminal Damage") For The Same URN**: even though no solicitor ever attended for me for that substituted offence and no fair legal process took place after the no further actioned offence was discontinued!

   16+ **No CRM14, CRM15, CRM16 Or CRM18 Exist On The LAA System For This Matter**: meaning no legal aid application, no means test, no hardship application, and no Crown Court application were ever submitted for either offence.

   17+ **There Is No Valid Representation Order On The LAA Portal For This URN**: for either the original Section 4A allegation or the later substituted offence.

18+ **Despite This, A "Representation Order"-Style Certificate Was Created And Given To Me**: using the LAA's address and formatting, for the substituted Criminal offence Charge and without any fair legal process even though:
   A. I had already signed CRM14/CRM15 for the original Section 4A matter AND SAME URN Number: 01YE1267925 on the 03/08/2025.
   B. And that original matter was later marked "no further action",
   C. and now Tucker Solicitor Firms Staff claims that **no CRM14/CRM15 were even ever completed or required**.

b) This discrepancy appears to be preventing my new solicitors from progressing a legal aid transfer, as the URN is linked to an offence that does not match the Wood Green Police Station Custody Log Records or the solicitors Reasons attendance

c) **I AM REQUESTING THE ANSWERS TO ALL "EIGHTEEN QUESTIONS" OF MINE**: to be able to understand the correct "**LAA**" legal process because the URN in my case is linked to the wrong offence. The custody logs show that Tuckers attended for a Section 4A allegation, and I have a recording of a two-hour meeting with their legal representative, Nichole Widser, which confirms the same. However, the offence later recorded on their system is now wrongly "**Threats To Cause Criminal Damage,**" which is not the offence they attended for. This mismatch appears to be the reason why my new solicitors have been unable to progress a legal aid transfer legally, as all Urn Numbers are to only be useable once and for the correct Criminal Offence charge.

d) I am not asking the LAA to comment on the conduct of any solicitor. I am asking for clarification of the LAA's own procedures so I can understand what should have occurred and what steps are available now.

e) Thank you for your assistance. I look forward to your clarification.

Kind regards,
Simon Cordell

These are the Mandatory Required Legal Aid Agency forms:

- **CRM14** – application
- **CRM15** – means test
- **CRM16** – hardship
- **CRM18** – Crown Court legal aid
- **CRM7** – solicitor's claim for payment