RE: File 1 - Simon Cordell - MAAT 900900 URN 01YE1267925 Id:COR10388/00001
From:BirminghamCAT (birminghamcat@justice.gov.uk)
To:re_wired@ymail.com
Date:Friday, 13 February 2026 at 13:21 GMT

OFFICIAL - SENSITIVE

Dear Simon Cordell,

Thank you for your email to the Legal Aid Agency. We have investigated this for you and have spoken to all relevant teams in order to answer all points. I have entered those answers under each relevant question.

1. Representation order documents

1+ Are solicitor firms permitted to create their own representation order certificates/documents using the LAA's address or formatting?
Generally no, however due to the recent Cyber Security Incident, the legislation was amended so that for certain specified case types (these included Summary, Either way matters remaining in the Magistrates Court, and Committals for Sentence where the defendant was on Passported benefits or unemployed with no income) Solicitors were given Delegated Powers to grant their own Representation orders. This contingency period of Delegated Powers started on the 7 May 2025 and came to an end on the 30 September 2025. See also Legal Aid Agency cyber security incident - GOV.UK. They were also permitted to self-grant for cases up to the point they were sent to the Crown Court for trial, at which point their representation order would stop, and they would need to submit an application to the Legal Aid Agency to cover Crown court trials.

2+ Are firms permitted to develop and produce to clients documents resembling LAA certificates where no corresponding records exists on the LAA system?
As above - yes, for certain specified case types and only during the period when Delegated Powers were in force. The Legal Aid Agency provided Firms with templates to use under these circumstances to ensure that they would be following the same format as the ones we create.

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?
No. We only recommended that they complete and had the forms kept on file for those that they were able to self-grant. They did however have to keep IOJ reasoning and full details of means / relevant evidence on file. Specific requirements mentioned in the FAQ document available to Providers (Legal Aid Agency cyber security incident - GOV.UK), were as follows:

What evidence should providers retain on file to evidence that the Interests of Justice (IOJ) test has been satisfied with self-granted applications? [added 21 July 2025, archived 30 September 2025]
Providers should keep a note of IOJ reasoning on file along with full details of the client's means (including all relevant evidence). For all applications as part of the contingency, IOJ justification should be provided in line with the Widgery criteria, whether that is on file or part of an application to LAA.
It is also recommended that providers complete a copy of the CRM14/15 and keep this on file for this purpose, although this is not mandatory.
They were only required to complete CM14/15S for clients that still had to be processed by the Legal Aid Agency.

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?
As per our answer above to Q3 - Firms should keep documents on file. Firms were only required to submit CRM14/15 forms to LAA for certain case types (e.g. for employed and self-employed applicants; for crown court trials and indictable cases; for appeals to Crown Court – N.B. this isn't an exhaustive list).

5+ Does LAA guidance require solicitors to record the correct offence and URN before creating or submitting any CRM14/CRM15 documentation?
On application forms submitted to us we ask that the firm provides the correct Offences as we are unable to grant for any that aren't on the Court system and each offence needs to be considered for the Interest of Justice (IOJ) Test. If we are given a different offence, it may be that the IOJ needs to be relooked at to ensure legal aid is put in place correctly. We ask that firms provide the URN where possible as it helps us quickly match the offences on the court however this isn't currently mandatory.

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?
There is no mandatory requirement for firms to submit a CRM16 hardship at any point of the case as if the means test is passed to the extent we are able to grant legal aid, with or without an income contribution order (ICO), then the Legal Aid is granted and firms can act. We do strongly advise firms to submit a hardship application if the client has any debts or other outgoings that would help make the ICO more manageable or remove it completely. This can either be submitted with the CRM14/15 at the start or submitted separately later.

7+ Are firms permitted to proceed as if legal aid is in place without submitting CRM16 where hardship applies?
As mentioned above, once granted then the legal aid and the ICO work separately so the firm can continue to work even if the ICO is higher than expected or based on an incorrect means assessment. We would be expecting the firms to assist their client in making sure the assessment is correct though.

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?
CRM18 is a Police station exceptional cases claim form that is used for billing police station cases that have gone above the Escape threshold. It doesn't appear to be applicable in this case.
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?
Please see our answer to question 8

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.
Yes, for self-granted orders during the period of Delegated Powers.

11+ No CRM14/CRM15 Are Recorded by the Solicitor Firm Staff For The Matter.
See answer for #10

12+ The Offence Recorded By The Firm Does Not Match The Offence Recorded In The Wood Green Police Station Custody Log Records; And
Grants made by the Legal Aid Agency are determined by the offences showing on court computer systems, rather than on police records.

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?
Yes - providers are guided to use the 'dummy' MAAT reference 900900 when submitting their bills for self-granted cases. This ensures that it is clear that the claim rerates to a case from during the contingency phase.

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.
Yes, and this would be covered by Police Station assistance under Legal aid without any application.

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.

As per our answer above in question 1, during the contingency we did not require firms to submit CRM14s or 15s for specific cases to the LAA. These would have been cases which would have automatically passed the means test so no CRM16 would have been needed and would not progress to the Crown Court for trial so the CRM18 would not have been required either. This would mean that we would not have any record, but this does not make them any less valid.
Checking on the court system we can only find two URNs for you, both of which remained in the Magistrates court. Only charges in the courts can be covered by Legal Aid Representation order. Matters in the police station are covered under Police Station Assistance which doesn't require a CRM14/15 application to us. If the S4A Offence is the threat to property under URN 01YE1267925 then the rep order has been created correctly. Attendance by the solicitors would have to be questioned through them though as the Legal Aid Agency cannot help on that matter.

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**.

As above, please note that the Legal Aid Agency can only grant Criminal Legal Aid for each case according to the offences showing on court computer systems. Any discrepancies between court and police records would need to be taken up with the relevant court.
Concerns about criminal Legal Aid providers can be raised here: SRA | Problems with law firms and individuals | Solicitors Regulation Authority

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

As above, steps taken by the Legal Aid Agency are determined by the offences as they appear on the court systems.

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.
The offences that appear on the URN are handled by the Police, CPS and HMCTS. In order to seek clarification on how / what information is being presented on the URN, we suggest contacting HMCTS for further clarification.
e) Thank you for your assistance. I look forward to your clarification.

I hope this helps clarify the LAA position for your questions.

Yours sincerely,

Legal Aid Agency

Martina Aston
Senior Technical Caseworker
National Criminal Applications Team
Office Base 23 Stephenson Street Birmingham B2 4BH
DX post to DX 13041 Birmingham
Tel: 0300 200 2020

All other correspondence send to postal address -
Legal Aid Agency Birmingham, Berkley Way, Unit 8B, Jarrow, NE31 1SF.

If you would like to provide feedback based on your experience in this transaction, please click the link: https://forms.office.com/e/99dnPxps9K

Crime Apply - All new applications for criminal legal aid should be made through the Apply for criminal legal aid service. You can request historic eForms via Online-Support@justice.gov.uk. The team aim to respond to all requests within 5 working days.

Find out more on People Finder
Follow us on Twitter @LegalAidAgency

Progress of Your Application:

- We aim to process the majority of applications within 2 working days following the date of receipt.
- Before calling to check the progress of an application please check our oldest dates by following this link https://www.gov.uk/guidance/crime-processing-dates. Reducing call volumes will allow us to process more applications.

Contacting Us:

- Birmingham CAT: BirminghamCAT@justice.gov.uk
- Liverpool CAT: LiverpoolCAT@justice.gov.uk
- Nottingham CAT: NottinghamCAT@justice.gov.uk
- National Crime Team (NCT): nationalcrimeteam@justice.gov.uk
- Interests of Justice appeals: iojappeals@justice.gov.uk
- Customer Services Team: 0300 200 2020
- Provider Guidance/forms and **Webchat:** Ministry of Justice

(telephone and webchat helpline hours are 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday)

For frequently asked questions and standard pro forma's follow this link https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/simplifying-criminal-legal-aid-processing

Application to transfer legal Aid: **http://www.justice.gov.uk/courts/procedure-rules/criminal/forms-2015** Part 46

PLEASE NOTE: "I am not authorised to bind the Ministry of Justice contractually, nor make representations, or statements which bind the Ministry of Justice in any way via electronic means.

OFFICIAL - SENSITIVE

OFFICIAL - SENSITIVE

From: Rewired Rewired <re_wired@ymail.com>
Sent: 07 February 2026 09:17
To: BirminghamCAT <birminghamCAT@Justice.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: File 1 - Simon Cordell - MAAT 900900 URN 01YE1267925 Id:COR10388/00001

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

On Wednesday, 4 February 2026 at 15:17:08 GMT, BirminghamCAT <birminghamcat@justice.gov.uk> wrote:

OFFICIAL - SENSITIVE

Good afternoon

The new solicitor would simply produce their own rep order from transferred dated as it's delegated functions case.

Regards

Legal Aid Agency

Luke Atkins
Caseworker

National Criminal Applications Team

Office Base 23 Stephenson Street Birmingham B2 4BH.
Tel: 0300 200 2020 |

All correspondence postal address - Legal Aid Agency Birmingham, Berkley Way, Unit 8B, Jarrow, NE31 1SF, DX 742 350 Jarrow
Find out more on People Finder
Follow us on Twitter @LegalAidAgency

Progress of Your Application:

- We aim to process the majority of applications within 2 working days following the date of receipt.
- Before calling to check the progress of an application please use the tracking function within the eForm system and check our oldest dates by following this link https://www.gov.uk/guidance/crime-processing-dates. Reducing call volumes will allow us to process more applications.

Contacting Us:

- **Birmingham CAT: BirminghamCAT@justice.gov.uk**
- **Liverpool CAT: LiverpoolCAT@justice.gov.uk**
- **Nottingham CAT: NottinghamCAT@justice.gov.uk**
- **Interests of Justice appeals: iojappeals@justice.gov.uk**

- **Customer Services Team:** 0300 200 2020
  (telephone helpline hours are 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday)

Crime Apply - The e-Forms service will be unavailable to providers from early August 2024.
All providers have now been onboarded onto the Apply for criminal legal aid service. If you are yet to use the service, or have any questions to help you get started, please get in touch with your contract manager or email LAAapplyonboarding@justice.gov.uk.

For frequently asked questions and standard pro forma's follow this link https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/simplifying-criminal-legal-aid-processing

Legal Aid Agency

PLEASE NOTE: "I am not authorised to bind the Ministry of Justice contractually, nor make representations, or statements which bind the Ministry of Justice in any way via electronic means.

OFFICIAL - SENSITIVE

From: Legal Aid (Shared) <legalaid@tuckerssolicitors.com>
Sent: 02 February 2026 13:32
To: re_wired@Ymail.com; BirminghamCAT <birminghamCAT@Justice.gov.uk>
Subject: File 1 - Simon Cordell - MAAT 900900 URN 01YE1267925 Id:COR10388/00001

Good afternoon

Mr Cordell has contacted the LAA in respect of legal aid for this matter and I am writing to clear up any misunderstanding as Mr Cordell has suggested that Tuckers have fraudulently issued ourselves a rep order - Refer to the attached, however I have tried to explain to him that legal aid was self-granted during the period of the LAA contingency and that is a template of what the LAA issued to all providers to use and that his legal aid on this file had all been carried out exactly as per the LAA protocol at that time.

We represented Mr Cordell at Highbury Magistrates court on 4th August 2025 as the duty solicitor. There is NO record that we represented Mr Cordell at the police station in these proceedings prior to the 4th August 2025.

It appears that we have withdrawn from representation with the courts in this matter and the file closed.

I understand that Mr Cordell has instructed another firm to represent him, however they appear to be having issues with legal aid Its unclear why.

Please can the LAA kindly respond to Mr Cordell with the procedure that his new firm should follow under the circumstances as stated above as this would not be a usual transfer given the legal aid was granted under the contingency.

Kind Regards
Rosie Yates

This e-mail and any attachments is intended only for the attention of the addressee(s). Its unauthorised use, disclosure, storage or copying is not permitted. If you are not the intended recipient, please destroy all copies and inform the sender by return e-mail. Internet e-mail is not a secure medium. Any reply to this message could be intercepted and read by someone else. Please bear that in mind when deciding whether to send material in response to this message by e-mail. This e-mail (whether you are the sender or the recipient) may be monitored, recorded and retained by the Ministry of Justice. Monitoring / blocking software may be used, and e-mail content may be read at any time. You have a responsibility to ensure laws are not broken when composing or forwarding e-mails and their contents.

This e-mail and any attachments is intended only for the attention of the addressee(s). Its unauthorised use, disclosure, storage or copying is not permitted. If you are not the intended recipient, please destroy all copies and inform the sender by return e-mail. Internet e-mail is not a secure medium. Any reply to this message could be intercepted and read by someone else. Please bear that in mind when deciding whether to send material in response to this message by e-mail. This e-mail (whether you are the sender or the recipient) may be monitored, recorded and retained by the Ministry of Justice. Monitoring / blocking software may be used, and e-mail content may be read at any time. You have a responsibility to ensure laws are not broken when composing or forwarding e-mails and their contents.