

Civil news: providers praise new online 'Apply' tool

A pilot group of providers are testing a new modern digital services platform designed to improve the efficiency of submitting legal aid applications.

The system will be used by both law firms and other providers of legal aid to process applications on behalf of clients. It will also be used by clients to progress their part of any legal aid application.

What are the other benefits?

It will 'trail-blaze' open banking and improve means testing by enabling clients to give us access to their bank statements online instead of on paper.

In future, we intend that the service will automatically access data from other government departments about an applicant's income and remove the need for scanned payslips.

Typical comments from the test group of providers working on domestic abuse applications, include:

new system is dynamic and smart.

Apply asked only necessary questions.

Generally, a much quicker and efficient way of doing it.

Apply is great, we've got it down to 6 minutes.

It's really good that you can edit the 'check your answers' page. I really like that I can edit just one section.

Providers on the trial say that they can spend more time helping clients rather than filling in forms.

What does this mean for CCMS?

Apply is part of our efforts to put the user first when we look at how we work with our contracted providers.

But we will also continue to maintain and improve the Client and Cost Management System (CCMS) for the submission of other proceedings, amendments and bills. See below for how to access CCMS training and resources.

How will the LAA roll out Apply?

A small number of providers in the pilot group working on high volume domestic abuse applications have started testing Apply on live cases. So far, we have received more than 70 applications using Apply.

The feedback they have provided will enable us to make further improvements before we increase the number of users and case types.

In the future, we aim to expand the test group of providers working on domestic abuse cases – see below for details if you are interested in applying to take part.

Further information

ATP@justice.gov.uk – email the transformation team with questions or register an interest in taking part in the trials if you work on domestic abuse cases