

[News story: Funding available for professionals testing extended court hours](#)

- Participation fee for publicly funded legal professionals
- This will help fund additional financial burdens for legal firms
- Flexible Operating Hours pilots to commence by the summer

A small amount of funding will be made available by HM Courts and Tribunals Service for publicly funded practitioners taking part in Flexible Operating Hours pilots, with a fee of £100 for attendance at a housing duty solicitor slot and £50 for attending a single hearing. This decision has been made to reflect the short term change in arrangements for participating legal professionals and the potential financial burden for firms involved. It will only apply to those who attend court outside the hours of 9am and 5.30pm.

HMCTS announced its plans to test early and late sittings in civil and family courts in November last year, to give people greater access to hearings that can fit around their busy lives.

Manchester Civil Justice Centre and Brentford County Court will run the pilots for six months, testing whether civil and family buildings can be used more effectively; the benefits of making it possible for people to attend court outside of the traditional 10am – 4pm sitting day; and what more flexibility means for staff and legal professionals.

For more information see the [Flexible Operating Hours pilots prospectus](#).

Notes to editors

1. Participation fees will be funded by HMCTS and administered by the Legal Aid Agency (LAA) and would be separate to any normal legal aid claims practitioners would make to the LAA.
2. Pilots are expected to begin by the summer.
3. Any future decision regarding the future of Flexible Operating Hours will be subject to a full and independent evaluation.