

Press release: Housing possession advice service to be re-examined

- Views on housing possession advice in courts sought
- three-week engagement begins today (20 May 2019)
- [online survey](#) will help inform future policy approach

A three-week engagement period was launched by the Ministry of Justice today to better understand the experience of anyone involved in the provision of advice and assistance at housing possession proceedings. This includes professional representative bodies, the judiciary and legal service regulators.

Responses will help to inform the future of the scheme and ensure any concerns are raised at an early stage. In parallel, stakeholders will be consulted and the needs of people using the service examined to help widen understanding and inform discussions with potential providers.

A Ministry of Justice spokesperson said:

Legal aid plays an important role in supporting access to justice for the most vulnerable in society. That's why we spent £1.6 billion on it last year and are making changes to ensure it continues to be available to everyone who needs it in the future.

We want to better understand the delivery of these housing advice schemes and speaking to those directly involved is the best way to do that.

Legal aid is available for people facing housing repossession through the Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme (HPCDS). This covers on-the-day emergency advice and advocacy to anyone facing possession proceedings and is accessed directly at courts in England and Wales. Anyone in danger of eviction or having their property repossessed can get free legal advice and representation on the day of their hearing, regardless of their financial circumstances.

The service is currently provided under contracts with the Legal Aid Agency, with each aligned to single or multiple courts and awarded following a competitive procurement process. The survey therefore seeks to better understand stakeholder experience of HPCDS in advance of any further legal aid tender.