

March Legal Aid News

Payment to providers around Easter

We've made the following adjustments to the payment schedule to accommodate Easter and Anzac Day:

- in the week before Easter payments will be made to providers on Monday 14 April, Wednesday, 16 April and Thursday, 17 April.
- in the week between Easter and Anzac Day, they'll be made on Wednesday, 23 April and Thursday, 24 April.

Payment schedules will return to normal from Monday 28 April.

Responses to Family and Civil Fixed Fees Reviews now published

We have published our response to the review of the Civil (ACC) and Family fixed fees, which aimed to gather information on how they are working in practice and to identify any issues in the schedules.

The main changes include the introduction of several new fees to close gaps in the schedules, and adjustments to fees for some existing activities in the schedules. We have also altered the disbursements policy to include more pre-approved disbursements and provided greater clarity around when and how to apply for Fixed Fees Plus.

Overall the changes will reduce the level of paperwork for lawyers and ensure the payment systems reflect the work done by providers at each stage. Changes will take effect from 31 March 2014.

[Family legal aid fixed fees](#)

[Civil \(ACC\) legal aid fixed fees](#)

Legal aid for reconsideration/reassessment

We're preparing new guidelines that set out the circumstances in which lawyers may be reimbursed for making reconsideration or reassessment applications. This is in response to a recent Legal Aid Tribunal decision on the matter. It was useful that this was brought to our attention.

The new guidelines and policy will be available on the Legal Aid Providers section of the Ministry of Justice website by the end of March.

Changes to criminal policies

Criminal rotational assignment policy

We're amending the criminal assignment policy to include more detail on when you will receive a replacement assignment if the case you are working on is reassigned. The updated Granting Decisions manual will be available on our website from 31 March 2014.

Criminal parole assignment and travel disbursement policies

We've added a new section to the criminal assignment policy to clarify when criminal parole cases may be assigned to providers who are based outside the region where the case will take place.

Legal aid applicants with a criminal parole case can nominate a legal aid lawyer instead of being assigned one. However, if an applicant wishes to use a lawyer who is based outside the region where the case will take place, certain criteria will need to be met.

Please refer to page 8 of the [Granting decisions](#) manual and page 17 of the [Criminal legal aid disbursement policy](#) manual.