



Ministry
of Justice

Criminal Legal Aid: Proposals for Advocates' Graduated Fee Scheme Reform



Government of the United Kingdom

Ministry of Justice

Criminal Legal Aid: Proposals for Advocates' Graduated Fee Scheme Reform

Presented to Parliament by the Lord Chancellor and
Secretary of State for Justice by Command of His Majesty

July 2026



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About this consultation

To:	This consultation is aimed at anyone with an interest in criminal legal aid in England and Wales. This will include, but is not limited to, members of the criminal defence profession and their representative bodies, defendants, academics, and others involved in the criminal justice system.
Duration:	From 15/07/26 to 26/08/26
Enquiries (including requests for the paper in an alternative format) to:	Criminal Legal Aid Team Ministry of Justice 102 Petty France London SW1H 9AJ Email: Criminal.LegalAidPolicy@justice.gov.uk
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Response paper:	A response to this consultation exercise will be published in due course at: https://consult.justice.gov.uk/

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Foreword

Legal aid is fundamental to the rule of law and the effective functioning of our justice system. Criminal legal aid lawyers are a cornerstone of that system, ensuring the right of defendants to a fair hearing, and that justice is served.

Yet in the past decades, the publicly funded professions have come under increasing pressure. This Government inherited a criminal justice system at the point of collapse and a legal aid system at breaking point. In legal aid, digital systems had been starved of investment, processes were slow and morale amongst practitioners was low. At the same time, the Government inherited a record and rising Crown Court backlog, now standing at over 80,000 open cases, with defendants and victims alike facing intolerable delays for their case to be heard.

That is why the Government asked Sir Brian Leveson to undertake an independent review of the criminal courts. And his conclusion was clear: pragmatic, structural reform is essential, alongside financial investment and a programme of modernisation.

Following Sir Brian's recommendations, we are delivering just that – structural reforms to the criminal justice system, backed by record investment and system modernisation. A strong and sustainable criminal legal aid sector is central to our ambitions.

We have already made progress. The Government has increased funding for criminal legal aid solicitor fees, worth around an additional £116m per year once in steady state. That is a significant investment. In December 2025, we announced an investment of up to £34 million per year in additional funding towards criminal legal aid advocate fees. We have also committed to match-fund a number of pupillages to widen access to a career at the Criminal Bar and strengthen the profession pipeline for the future.

Over the next few years, we are investing over £200m in legal aid transformation and moving away from fragile IT systems to a modern and safe technology platform which better serves lawyers and their clients.

This consultation seeks views on how we might invest in criminal legal aid, through uplifts to the Advocates' Graduated Fee Scheme (AGFS). A proportion of the funding has already been allocated, with a focus on preparation fees. This consultation sets out proposals for allocating the remainder of the investment. In total, the package being consulted on represents an over 10% uplift to funding for barristers and solicitor advocates working on AGFS.

The proposals include a general uplift to AGFS fees (excluding daily attendance fees), an increase to the guilty plea to trial basic (brief) fee ratio, targeted increases to basic fees for specific offences, and uplifts to key payments, such as the Plea and Trial Preparation Hearing fee and committal for sentence hearing fees, alongside a range of other focused measures.

These proposed changes are designed to make sure that fees for work carried out at key stages of a case, such as early preparation, reflect the complexity and skill required. The proposals aim to support the efficient progression of cases, in line with our wider programme of criminal court reform.

Taken together, these measures represent a significant investment to support the sustainability of the criminal legal aid sector. They will ensure advocates are better rewarded for the work they do and will strengthen the resilience of the Bar in the years ahead.

We share a common goal: a justice system that delivers timely and effective justice, commands public confidence, and supports the dedicated professionals who make that possible.

I encourage everyone with an interest in legal aid to engage with this consultation and share their views.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sarah Sackman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sarah" and the last name "Sackman" clearly distinguishable.

Sarah Sackman KC MP

Minister of State for Courts

Introduction

1. This consultation paper sets out proposals and their associated next steps for changes to the criminal legal aid Advocates' Graduated Fee Scheme (AGFS). This scheme remunerates criminal legal aid advocates for their work carried out in the Crown Court. The consultation is aimed at anyone with an interest in criminal legal aid in England and Wales, particularly in the work carried out by criminal legal aid advocates.

Background

2. In December 2025, the Deputy Prime Minister announced additional investment for criminal legal aid advocates,¹ providing up to £34 million (including VAT) more a year once fully implemented and in steady state. The purpose of this consultation is to gather views on the ways that £34 million is to be spent through the AGFS.
3. Our intention with the proposed measures is three-fold: to support the sustainability of the criminal advocate sector; to support the Government's wider reform objectives for the criminal courts, recognising the changing nature of criminal advocacy; and to help ensure that fees more accurately represent the complexity, skill, and preparation required in criminal proceedings.
4. The proposals in this consultation paper are based on the recommendations of independent experts, and extensive engagement and collaboration with defence advocates.
5. The first part of Sir Brian Leveson's Independent Review of the Criminal Courts² (IRCC), published on 9 July 2025, proposed targeted adjustments to the AGFS to better reflect the work advocates undertake at key stages of a case, to promote earlier preparation and engagement, and encourage more timely resolution where appropriate.

¹ Deputy Prime Minister Written Statement 2 December 2025 <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2025-12-02/HCWS1123#:~:text=In%20addition%20to%20the%20significant%20investment%20this%20Government,professionals%20do%20in%20delivering%20for%20our%20justice%20system.>

² IRCC Part 1
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/686be85d81dd8f70f5de3c1f/35.49_MOJ_Ind_Review_Criminal_Courts_v8b_FINAL_WEB.pdf

6. The second part of the IRCC,³ published on 4 February 2026, made further recommendations on court efficiency. The proposals in this consultation align with themes across both parts of the IRCC.
7. The investment proposals also build on the recommendations made by the Criminal Legal Aid Independent Review (CLAIR),⁴ chaired by Sir Christopher Bellamy QC (as he then was), and the then Government's interim and full responses.⁵ In response to CLAIR, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) increased all AGFS fees by 15% and subsequently provided further funding for section 28 cases⁶ (those involving the pre-recording of cross-examination and giving of evidence) and special and wasted preparation. We established the Criminal Legal Aid Advisory Board (CLAAB) in October 2022 to support a more joined-up approach to criminal legal aid within the criminal justice system.
8. Under the supervision of the CLAAB, an "AGFS sub-group" comprising experts nominated by the representative bodies,⁷ in addition to MoJ officials, took forward CLAIR's recommendations relating to Crown Court advocacy. CLAIR had specifically called for an in-depth review of AGFS basic ("brief") fees, as well as fees applicable to hearings and ancillary matters, to establish whether they remained reflective of the preparatory work required of the advocate. CLAIR had also recommended that Regulatory provisions governing claims for special and wasted preparation, alongside interim payments, be examined.
9. In December 2024, the CLAAB published its first report,⁸ setting out a series of recommendations to support the sustainability of the criminal legal aid sector. These included a broad recommendation of additional funding, and a specific recommendation for additional investment in fees for Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) to better reflect the complexity and sensitivity of this work. The

³ IRCC Part 2 <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6982095e8c1e89ed1e91bbc7/independent-review-criminal-courts-overview.pdf>

⁴ Independent Review of Criminal Legal Aid – Report
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/104117/clar-independent-review-report-2021.pdf

⁵ Government response to CLAIR
<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6387707d8fa8f5370fc9cbc2/clair-consultation-full-response.pdf>

⁶ The Criminal Legal Aid (Remuneration) Regulations 2013 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2013/435>

⁷ Bodies represented at the 'AGFS subgroup' include the Bar Council, the Criminal Bar Association, the Law Society, and the London Criminal Courts Solicitors' Association.

⁸ CLAAB Report (2024)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6735c97ef6920bfb5abc7ae8/Criminal_Legal_Aid_Advisory_Board_Annual_Report_2024_v3__web__3_.pdf

proposals in this consultation build directly on those recommendations and on the Government's continued engagement with the CLAAB.

10. In line with usual practice, the fee changes proposed in this consultation would apply only to new cases from the point at which the revised rates come into force.
11. Together, the proposals in this consultation represent a coherent and evidence-based investment package. They would distribute the additional funding so all advocates will see a pay increase, across all specialisms and seniority, while also delivering more targeted increases. They respond to clear pressures facing the criminal courts, reflect the advice of independent experts, and target funding where it is most needed to ensure that criminal advocacy remains sustainable, resilient, and equipped to meet the demands of the justice system.
12. A small proportion of the funding has been committed to resolving a shortfall in spending dating back to the 2022 funding settlement with the Bar. To address this, we are implementing a package of expedited measures, including extending eligibility for wasted preparation fees for criminal advocates by reducing the minimum trial length threshold from five days to two days; expanding eligibility for the additional preparation fee so that it is available in cases that conclude by way of guilty plea, in addition to trials and cracked trials; and increasing the additional preparation fee from £62 to £81 (£74.40 to £97.20 inclusive of VAT) per case.
13. The expedited measures are informed by extensive engagement with the sector, including via the CLAAB. They are designed to better reflect the work undertaken by advocates in preparing cases, in a broader range of outcomes, while supporting early engagement and case preparation. Given the level of stakeholder engagement already undertaken, we are not consulting on these expedited measures and a Statutory Instrument was laid on 3 July to implement the changes by the end of July, subject to the will of Parliament.
14. Beyond this consultation and the expedited measures we are delivering, we will continue to work with the CLAAB to explore other, non-fee, ways to support defence practitioners. This will, for example, include continued exploration of opportunities to use further staged payments in the billing of fees where fee structures and operational systems allow.

Very High Cost Cases (VHCCs)

15. The MoJ has also been considering potential reforms to the remuneration of Very High Cost Cases (VHCCs). These reforms would be designed to ensure VHCCs are paid proportionately and fairly, removing some of the least effective aspects of the

current Interim Fixed Fee Offer (IFFO) scheme. This consultation includes a summary of the MoJ's work to date, and asks some high level questions. Any reform to VHCCs would be subject to a fuller, more detailed consultation subsequently.

Timing of the consultation

16. This consultation runs for six weeks and closes on 26 August 2026. We look forward to hearing the views of those with an interest in these changes. We will then analyse the responses to the consultation and publish a government response.

General increase to AGFS fees

Background

17. The AGFS is the scheme by which advocates who represent legally aided defendants in the Crown Court are remunerated for their work. The fee is determined by a basic fee, and various proxy elements to ensure payments reflect the differing demands of individual cases.
18. Advocates are paid a basic fee for preparing and conducting trial. It is intended to reflect the essential work advocates undertake at the outset of proceedings, including all pre-trial preparation, the first day of trial, and conferences before trial. It is calculated using offence group/band (e.g. homicide, drugs, fraud), advocate type (Junior, Leading Junior, or Kings Counsel (KC)), and case outcome (guilty plea, cracked trial, or trial).
19. Daily Attendance Fees (DAFs) are paid for each additional day of trial advocacy after the first day of trial. DAF rates also differ depending on advocate type, and offence category.
20. There are three main case outcomes in the AGFS – a guilty plea, a cracked trial, and a trial. A guilty plea outcome relates to cases where a plea is entered at or before the first hearing, usually the Plea and Trial Preparation Hearing (PTPH). A cracked trial outcome relates to cases where a plea or withdrawal occurs between the PTPH and the first day of trial. A trial outcome relates to cases where the trial begins and until the conclusion of the proceedings, and is counted from its first day.
21. Further, advocates are remunerated separately for each hearing they attend outside of the trial itself, e.g. mention hearings, hearings on disclosure, PTPHs, sentencing hearings. There are additional arrangements for ancillary matters, for example Proceeds of Crime Act proceedings.
22. Additional payments can be made for special preparation (where the advocate had to consider a very unusual or novel point of law or factual issue, or the Pages of Prosecution Evidence (PPE) exceeded the prescribed threshold for cases of the relevant offence category), and wasted preparation (instances where the advocate undertook case preparation but was required to return the brief, through no fault of their own). Cases where the Court has directed application of the Special Measure provided for at s.28 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 also qualify for discrete payment arrangements.

Proposal for fee uplift

23. We are proposing a 6% general uplift to AGFS fees, excluding DAFs. This will mean that all advocates will receive a pay increase, while excluding DAFs from the general uplift will allow us to target more funding at the earlier stages of a case to support preparation engagement between the parties, and pre-trial resolution of disputed legal issues. When combined with the 15% increase implemented in 2022, we consider that this will support the workforce now and into the future, while reinforcing the overall attractiveness of criminal defence work.
24. The most recent published data shows that barrister numbers are increasing, after three consecutive years of growth. The number of “self-declared full practice barristers” (those whose workload is at least 80% criminal work) is the highest since the data became available, at 2,901 in 2024/25 compared to 2,727 in 2017/18, recovering from a low of 2,424 in 2020/21.⁹
25. This data suggests that investment made since 2022 is helping to rebuild capacity, deliver growth in the criminal legal aid barrister workforce, and support a more resilient justice system for the future. This further investment will help to sustain and strengthen this progress.
26. Applying a general uplift ensures that all advocates benefit, regardless of the particular mix of cases they undertake. This will help to support the sustainability of the whole advocate sector, while helping to maintain breadth within the criminal defence profession.
27. This uplift will apply to hourly rates, preparatory fees, trial advocacy, post-trial hearings and sentencing hearings, recognising the full lifecycle of a criminal case. Moreover, the general uplift will support junior barristers, who may be more likely to undertake preparatory work, supporting a resilient pipeline of advocates.
28. Combined with our other proposals, this uplift will support recruitment, retention, and the sustainability of the criminal legal aid advocate sector. Evidence from stakeholder engagement and representative bodies highlights ongoing challenges in the recruitment and retention of criminal advocates, particularly at junior and mid-career levels. A uniform uplift will help retain experienced advocates while improving the viability of criminal practice for those entering the profession.

⁹ Criminal Legal Aid DataShare
<https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiaWJAxNGY2MDU0ODU4Yi00NzE4LTgyNzgtMDdjYjAxMDAyZjlyliwiLCI6ImM2ODc0NzI4LTcxZTYtNDNmZS1hOWUxLTJlOGMzMjc3NmFkOCIsImMiOiJh9&chromeless=1>

Question 1) Do you agree with the proposal to increase AGFS fees by 6%, excluding Daily Attendance Fees? Please state yes/no/maybe/do not know and provide reasons.

Question 2) What do you consider to be the equalities impacts on individuals with particular protected characteristics of the proposal to increase AGFS fees by 6%, excluding Daily Attendance Fees? Are there any mitigations the government should consider? Please include which groups/individuals and explain your reasons. We would welcome examples, case studies, research or other types of evidence that support your views.

Targeted investment

29. The targeted measures proposed in this consultation are in addition to the 6% general uplift we are proposing to implement for AGFS fees. The targeted proposals are informed by detailed policy work, engagement with stakeholders, and draw on evidence on workload and current remuneration levels, as well as aligning with recommendations in the IRCC.
30. The proposals aim to target funding at those areas of the AGFS where current remuneration could better reflect the work involved. By doing so, we seek to strengthen the viability of under-resourced parts of criminal advocacy and, in turn, support the long-term sustainability of the sector as a whole.
31. To support the Government's wider court reform priorities to improve court efficiencies and deliver swifter justice for victims, we have focused investment on preparatory fees, while also recognising stakeholder feedback that additional funding is required for specific offence groups and for post-trial work.
32. The AGFS sub-group of the CLAAB undertook a detailed information-gathering exercise to chart the preparatory tasks typically undertaken by advocates across a broad range of case (offence) and hearing types, and to estimate the time required for these tasks. The findings of this exercise indicated that some fees did not fully reflect the work involved; these findings have shaped the targeted investment proposals in this consultation.
33. We are proposing the following targeted measures:
 - Increasing the guilty plea to trial ratio from 50:100 to 65:100.
 - Uplifting basic fees for particular offences.
 - Uplifting advocate fees for appeals.
 - Uplifting the Plea and Trial Preparation Hearing fee.
 - Increasing committal for sentence hearing fee.
 - Uplifting fees for trial sentencing hearings.
 - Uplifting fees for selected pre-trial hearings.
 - Advice for young people: widening the criteria for bands 1.2 and 1.3, to include cases where the victim or defendant is aged 17 years.

Increasing the guilty plea to trial basic fee ratio from 50:100 to 65:100

Background

34. There are three case outcomes in the AGFS – a guilty plea, a cracked trial, and a trial. Currently, the basic fee for a guilty plea is set at 50% of the basic fee for a trial or cracked trial.
35. Where a guilty plea is entered after the PTPH, the case is treated as a cracked trial (for fee purposes) and attracts the same basic fee as a trial (i.e. 100% of the trial rate). There is no separate fee ratio between cracked trials and trials in the AGFS, as there still is within the Litigator Graduated Fee Scheme (LGFS). As a result, the current structure involves a marked difference between cases that conclude by way of an early guilty plea and those that conclude after the PTPH, which are remunerated at the full trial rate. Increasing the guilty plea fee ratio would narrow this differential, supporting a more graduated fee structure across case outcomes.
36. Decisions about plea are often shaped at an early stage in proceedings. Advocates play a critical role in reviewing and assessing the case, engaging with the prosecution, and advising clients on options for defending the case. This work requires careful consideration of the evidence and charges, as well as clear communication to ensure that any decision to plead guilty is informed, appropriate, and made with a full understanding of its implications.

Proposal for fee uplift

37. We propose increasing the guilty plea to trial fee ratio from 50:100 to 65:100. This would mean that, for all offence categories, the basic fee payable for a guilty plea would increase from 50% to 65% of the equivalent trial fee. This is in addition to the 6% general uplift.
38. While guilty plea cases conclude without a trial, they can involve significant work at the outset, much of which takes place before the decision to plead guilty is reached. This proposed change reflects the substantial preparatory work undertaken by advocates ahead of guilty pleas and recognises the role that early, well-advised resolution plays.
39. Based on the evidence available to us, this adjustment supports earlier and more thorough consideration of cases and may lead to more cases being resolved at an earlier stage, where appropriate, contributing to a more efficient court system.
40. This increase to the guilty plea fee also aligns with recent reforms to the LGFS, ensuring a more consistent approach across fee schemes in recognising the importance of early case preparation and resolution.

Uplifting basic fees for particular offences

Background

41. The aim of any fixed or graduated fee scheme is to balance proportionate remuneration with administrative simplicity. All basic fees within the AGFS's banding structure should be set at a level which is a) reflective of the work involved in preparing average cases of the offence type remunerated by the relevant band; b) appropriate relative to fees for offences of similar type (be they more or less serious); and c) broadly proportionate to fees across all other offence areas (which may be more or less complex).
42. The AGFS is now over 20 years old, and the banding structure was last substantially revised in 2018. CLAIR found that the nature of the advocate's role had changed significantly since the fee scheme's inception, with greater emphasis now being placed on written and wider preparatory work. It also found that the relativities between the fees across offence classes might have become out-of-kilter, and therefore recommended that the MoJ should work with the professions to undertake a deeper review of basic fees.
43. The work of the CLAAB AGFS sub-group has demonstrated that basic fees in certain offence classes are less effective than others at reflecting the amount and complexity of preparation required of the advocate. We are therefore proposing to implement targeted increases to fees for selected offence classes, with the scale of the increases varying according to the sub-group's findings.

Proposal for fee uplift

44. We propose raising the basic fees for select offence classes. Table 1 shows the percentage uplift to select offence classes.
45. Working in collaboration with the Bar, we have found that in certain offence categories the basic fees could better reflect the number of hours typically required to prepare cases, compared to other offence types. These categories are Homicide (bands 1.3 and 1.4 only), Serious Violence, Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO), Offences Against the Public Interest, Driving Offences, Burglary & Robbery, Firearms, Kidnapping, False Imprisonment, & Blackmail, Exploitation/Human Trafficking.
46. There is a smaller number of offence categories for which we are not proposing a targeted basic fee uplift, though these would still benefit from the general 6% increase proposed across AGFS fees. In some instances (notably fraud offences), the CLAAB found that current fees were already effective at reflecting the preparatory workload. For category 17 ("Standard" offences), it was not possible to identify a "typical" case to analyse as the category spans a very diverse cohort of offences.

47. One-off increases for targeted offence bands would help ensure the fees better reflect the work undertaken and attract more advocates to cases of these types, potentially alleviating advocate supply issues (notably in RASSO matters).
48. Uplifting RASSO fees will also align with the Government's mission to reduce serious harm and halve Violence Against Women and Girls in a decade.
49. The increase to basic fees is on top of the 6% general increase we are proposing. For example, the current basic fee for a trial at junior level for offence band 1.3 is £2,961 (excl. VAT). Applying the proposed 6% general increase raises this to £3,138.66 (excl. VAT). A further 9% increase is then applied to this already uplifted figure, producing a revised fee of £3,421.14 (excl. VAT).
50. Tables 3 and 4 in the accompanying Impact Assessment sets out the current and proposed new basic fees for trials and guilty pleas respectively, showing the impact of all the consultation proposals combined.

Table 1: Proposed increase in basic ("brief") fees

Offence Bands	Offence Description	Proposed targeted percentage uplift (on top of the general 6% uplift)
1.3	All other cases of murder	9%
1.4	All other cases of manslaughter	9%
Offence Band 3 (3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5)	Serious Violence	7%
Offence Band 4 (4.1, 4.2, 4.3)	Sexual Offences (children) – defendant or victim a child at the time of offence	8%
Offence Band 5 (5.1, 5.2, 5.3)	Sexual Offences (adult)	7%
Offence Band 8 (8.1)	Offences Against the Public Interest	8%
Offence Band 10 (10.1)	Driving Offences	5%
Offence Band 11 (11.1, 11.2)	Burglary & Robbery	6%

Offence Bands	Offence Description	Proposed targeted percentage uplift (on top of the general 6% uplift)
Offence Band 12 (12.1, 12.2, 21.3)	Firearms Offences	5%
Offence Band 13 (13.1)	Other offences against the person	8%
Offence Band 14 (14.1)	Exploitation / human trafficking offences	8%
Offence Band 15 (15.1, 15.2, 15.3)	Public Order Offences	5%

Uplifting advocate fees for appeals

Background

51. Advocates are remunerated for appeals against conviction or sentence from the magistrates' courts, and appeal proceedings in the Court of Appeal. These fixed fees apply to appeals against conviction or sentence and to advocacy in the Court of Appeal, with rates detailed separately from the graduated fees that apply to trials. In cases where the standard fixed fee is not appropriate due to the nature of the appeal, advocates may seek reasonable remuneration under the provisions of the Funding Order, which sets out the legal framework governing criminal legal aid fees and provides discretion for non-standard or exceptional payments where fixed fees are not suitable.

Proposal for fee uplift

52. We are proposing a 10% uplift to advocate fees for appeals from the magistrates' courts and in the Court of Appeal. This is in addition to the 6% general uplift. These fees play a critical role in ensuring that defendants have access to high-quality representation when seeking to challenge decisions made at first instance or on indictment.
53. The CLAAB reviewed the fixed fees for appeals to the Crown Court against conviction (currently £380 per day excluding VAT for a Junior Alone or Led Junior, for example) and sentence (currently £288 per day excluding VAT for a Junior Alone or Led Junior, for example). Evidence gathered indicated that the fee for an appeal

against conviction is currently set at a level that is low relative to the amount of preparation typically required, whereas the fee for an appeal against sentence better reflects the work involved on average. However, advocates who contributed to the research reported wide variations in the amount of time needed to prepare for appeals, which could be significantly higher where the defendant has changed solicitor following conviction.

54. Introducing a 10% uplift would help strengthen remuneration for appeals work, helping to make these cases more attractive for advocates to take on, which will help meet anticipated future demand. Increases to fees for appeals to the Crown Court could also foster wider sustainability, as this work often constitutes an important part of a junior's caseload.
55. The Government has also implemented a 10% uplift to appeals fees for criminal legal aid solicitors and, as such, we are considering an equivalent uplift for advocates to ensure that fees remain fair, balanced and aligned across the system.

Uplifting the Plea and Trial Preparation Hearing (PTPH) fee

Background

56. As with other pre-trial and ancillary hearings, the PTPH attracts a discrete fee under the AGFS. As an example, this currently stands at £145 per day excluding VAT for a Junior Alone or Led Junior. The fee is intended to include the time spent providing advocacy at the hearing, in addition to hearing preparation.
57. The PTPH plays an important role in the justice process as it normally represents the first opportunity for a plea to be taken at the Crown Court, generally taking place at 28 days and not more than 35 days after sending to trial. In cases where a guilty plea is not appropriate, the PTPH is a key point for case efficiency, as the judge can set deadlines for completion of the pre-trial "stages" and issue directions for the settling of legal issues. In either scenario, the effectiveness of a PTPH can be influenced by the level of preparedness of the parties and the extent of any prior engagement between them.
58. Part 1 of the IRCC noted that the PTPH is pivotal to early case resolution and case progression at the Crown Court, and recommended that "any future reform to legal aid fee schemes should be adjusted to recognise the work advocates do in order to prepare for the PTPH".¹⁰

¹⁰ Part 1 Recommendation 5

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/686be85d81dd8f70f5de3c1f/35.49_MOJ_Ind_Review_Criminal_Courts_v8b_FINAL_WEB.pdf

59. CLAAB research indicated that PTPH fees were modest when compared to the preparation hours typically required and against other hearings (particularly those relating to legal argument). While a PTPH may only involve one to two hours of advocacy, to give the court the best understanding of the defence position and contested issues, a defence advocate may need to spend a considerable amount of time preparing for detailed completion of the PTPH form.
60. The CLAAB also noted that the relative lack of emphasis in the AGFS on fees intended to remunerate early-stage Crown Court preparation might be related to the historical approach of prosecuting agencies, which were accustomed to serving their full case after the PTPH. However, in 2023 the Crown Prosecution Service completed roll-out of its revised Crown Court operating model, the central feature of which was a commitment to early provision of case material to the defence ahead of the PTPH in Full Code Test cases.

Proposals for fee uplift

61. We are proposing a 25% uplift to advocate PTPH fees. This is in addition to the 6% general uplift.
62. The CLAAB's work to chart the activities undertaken by advocates in case preparation indicated that most PTPHs conclude at court between 20 minutes and two hours, depending on factors such as case complexity, judicial approach, and the preparedness of the parties. PTPHs very seldom attract a second daily fee (e.g. of £145 for a Junior Alone or Led Junior). Qualitative evidence from defence advocates suggested that there has historically often been a lack of opportunity to engage with the prosecution ahead of the hearing, and a limited amount of case material to consider. In combination, these factors may create negative expectations amongst the defence relating to the likely effectiveness of the PTPH, and deter detailed completion of the PTPH form beyond required minima. The current hearing fee, equating to just over three hours of work, yet intended to cover both preparation for and advocacy at the PTPH, further disincentivises preparation for this key hearing.
63. The IRCC acknowledges that procedural court reforms must be underpinned by changes in practice, if they are to successfully reduce the volume of outstanding cases, and emphasises that legal aid fees should better reward early case preparation and engagement. The IRCC made two PTPH-specific recommendations. Recommendation 25 of Part 1 invited the MoJ to adjust legal aid fees to recognise the work advocates do in order to prepare for the Plea and Trial Preparation Hearing. Recommendation 105 of Part 2 urges the MoJ to "amend fee structures so that attendance by the advocate at the pre-Plea and Trial Preparation Hearing advocates meeting qualifies for an early-engagement payment, irrespective of when paid".

64. We think that an increase to the PTPH fee of 25% (on top of the 6% general uplift), taking the Junior Alone or Led Junior fee from £145 (per day) to £192 excluding VAT, as an example, will promote earlier preparation and engagement (although it is not a direct payment for attendance at a pre-PTPH meeting, as described in IRCC Recommendation 105) and support the Government's wider aims for Court Reform.

Increasing committal for sentence hearing fee

Background

65. Under the current AGFS arrangements, committals for sentence are remunerated by way of a per-day fixed hearing fee (e.g. £175 for a Junior Alone or Led Junior, excluding VAT). Committal for sentence hearings do not regularly exceed one hour and, therefore, the majority of the fee should be considered as remuneration for associated preparation. CLAAB research suggested that an advocate could expect to spend several hours preparing for the hearing, accomplishing such tasks as familiarising themselves with documentation from the trial, drafting a sentencing note, and conferencing with their client, meaning that the existing fee could be assessed as being comparatively low.
66. The IRCC (Part 1, Recommendation 20), endorsing CLAIR's earlier recommendation, found that the current difference between legal aid fees for either-way cases tried in the magistrates' courts (and committed to the Crown Court for sentence only), and the same cases where the defendant had elected for Crown Court trial before pleading guilty at the first hearing, could create a financial disincentive to early resolution. To eliminate that disincentive, the IRCC recommended that committal for sentence fees should be aligned with Crown Court guilty plea fees.

Proposal for fee uplift

67. We are proposing a 25% uplift to advocate fees for committal for sentence hearings. This is in addition to the 6% general uplift.
68. When taken together with the other proposed uplifts in this consultation, the effect is substantial. By way of illustration, the Junior Alone or Junior Led daily fee would increase from £175 (excluding VAT) to £231.88 (excluding VAT). This represents an overall increase of approximately 33%.
69. Table 7 in the accompanying Impact Assessment sets out current and proposed new committal for sentence hearing fees, showing the impact of all the consultation proposals combined.
70. We have found no evidence that existing legal aid remuneration structures create a financial incentive for lawyers to promote election for Crown Court trial to their clients.

Practitioners are duty-bound to act in their clients' best interests. Encouraging a client to elect for Crown Court trial where the presenting case facts indicate a guilty plea at the earliest opportunity risks a loss of sentence credit, and would clearly not be in the client's interests.

71. Even if the evidence for a financial disincentive to early resolution were strong, it would be difficult to justify increasing AGFS committal for sentence fees to the level recommended by the IRCC (an increase of at least 240%, depending on offence class) as an effective and proportionate remedy. It is rare for an advocate to be instructed on a case while it remains in the magistrates' court's jurisdiction, and therefore election decisions are made by the defendant following consultation with their solicitor, without advocate involvement.
72. Nonetheless, we recognise that the existing AGFS fee for committal for sentence hearings could be more reflective of the preparatory work involved, and consider that an increase of 25% is appropriate.
73. We also acknowledge that court reforms are expected to result in a higher overall caseload in the magistrates' court, and an associated increase in the number of cases committed to the Crown Court for sentence only, notwithstanding the planned increase to magistrates' courts sentencing powers. There is therefore a need to ensure committal for sentence fees continue to attract sufficient numbers of advocates to this work. Similar to appeals to the Crown Court, committals for sentence represent a crucial source of fee income for juniors of limited years of call, so uplifting fees should help to foster greater sustainability.
74. This is an area we will continue to keep under review, however, for the reasons set out, we consider that implementing a substantial uplift of 25% to committal for sentence fees, on top of the 6% general increase, is likely to support the IRCC's aims, whilst also providing a better reflection of the intrinsic amount of preparation typically required for this important work.

Uplifting fees for trial sentencing hearings

Background

75. Within the AGFS, sentencing that takes place "on-the-day" after a Crown Court trial or guilty plea is included within the basic fee for the case. Where the court lists the case for a separate sentencing hearing, to allow for further information to be gathered, a discrete hearing fee (currently £145 per day for a Junior Alone or Led Junior excluding VAT, for example) becomes payable.

76. Evidence from the CLAAB suggests that, while the hearing itself might not require more than one hour's advocacy, the volume of preparation required has increased significantly. Defence advocates are routinely expected to draft a detailed sentencing note, which demonstrates consideration of the prevailing sentencing guidelines as well as providing mitigation for their client. CLAAB representatives expressed concern that the current fee is particularly low in instances where the client has been authorised by the court to change their legal team following conviction, and the incoming advocate must familiarise themselves with the case particulars in a short space of time. This view is corroborated by Public Defender Service (PDS) advocates and clerks, who described during interviews how solicitors are increasingly seeking to instruct the PDS in sentencing hearings in this scenario, as AGFS fees for sentencing hearings are seen as uneconomic by the private Bar.

Proposals for fee uplift

77. We are proposing a 25% uplift to advocate fees for post-Crown Court trial sentencing hearings. This is in addition to the 6% general uplift.
78. This is a substantial increase, designed both to reflect the increasing levels of preparation now demanded of defence advocates by the court, and to promote the supply of advocates willing to undertake sentencing work. The Crown Court will be sitting at record levels, and the volume of sentencing hearings is expected to increase as caseloads grow.
79. Improved remuneration will enable advocates to dedicate the necessary time to prepare sentencing submissions, enhancing the quality and timeliness of sentencing hearings. This will support the efficient conclusion of cases in the Crown Court.

Uplifting selected pre-trial hearings

Background

80. Under the Criminal Legal Aid (Remuneration) Regulations 2013,¹¹ pre-trial and ancillary hearings attract discrete fees over and above the relevant basic fee, as prescribed in the table following paragraph 24 in Schedule 1. These are generally per-day fees though a half-day fee is set for some types of work.
81. Findings from the CLAAB research suggested that fees for pre-trial/ancillary hearings were generally perceived as low relative to the hours of work typically required in preparation, and the complexity of that work. This was felt to be particularly the case for hearings involving legal argument, for example applications concerning

¹¹ Criminal Legal Aid (Remuneration) Regulations 2013
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/435/contents>

admissibility and disclosure. These hearings often deal with matters of case importance which, if not settled early, must be argued during the trial itself. Yet fees for this complex work are often less than half of trial Daily Attendance Fees.

82. The PDS reported that remuneration for hearings concerning the withdrawal of a guilty plea can cause challenges. While this type of work is uncommon, it is almost always preceded by the client applying to the court for permission to change their legal team. A replacement advocate is required to familiarise themselves with all aspects of the case from scratch ahead of attending the hearing, for which a fee of £276 excluding VAT is payable (for a Junior Alone or Led Junior, as an example). The PDS observes that the fee is not reflective of the preparation involved, and leaves many independent advocates unwilling to take on cases of this type.
83. The Independent Review of Disclosure and Fraud¹² emphasised the importance of early engagement with disclosure and the need for robust pre-trial resolution of evidential issues.

Proposal for fee uplift

84. We are proposing uplifts to advocate fees for selected pre-trial hearings, including legal argument (abuse of process hearings, hearings related to disclosure, hearings related to admissibility of evidence) and other pre-trial hearings (ground rules hearings, hearings on withdrawal of guilty plea, further case management hearing, proceedings related to breach of Crown Court order, adjourned appeals, committals for sentence, breach hearings, second and subsequent days of an application to dismiss, and noting brief). Table 2 shows the percentage increases proposed. This is in addition to the 6% general uplift.
85. As an example, to illustrate the impact on pre-trial hearing fees when the investment proposals are combined, a Junior Alone in an abuse of process hearing currently receives £276 per day (excluding VAT). When all proposed uplifts are applied, this fee would increase to £438.84 per day (excluding VAT). This represents an overall increase of approximately 59%.
86. Table 8 in the accompanying Impact Assessment sets out current and proposed new pre-trial hearing fees, showing the impact of all the consultation proposals combined.
87. Many pre-trial hearings can determine the shape of the trial and can resolve key disputes that would otherwise occupy considerable court time at the start of the trial. Increasing remuneration in this area therefore may support more efficient case

¹² Independent Review of Disclosure and Fraud Offences
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67e279b64fed20c7f559f558/Disclosure_in_the_Digital_Age_-_Independent_Review_Report_CP1285_WEB_0.1.pdf

management by encouraging advocates to address legal issues earlier. A targeted uplift also aligns with recommendations in the Independent Review of Disclosure and Fraud Offences.

88. Judicial feedback indicates that timely directions on disputed legal issues can prompt earlier guilty pleas, reducing unnecessary trial listings and improving overall court efficiency.¹³ Similarly, hearings on withdrawal of a guilty plea require particularly nuanced preparation and advocacy, and the PDS has reported an increasing number of requests from courts to “step in” when privately instructed advocates decline these hearings due to their uneconomic nature. An uplift for these hearings is therefore aimed at ensuring sufficient availability of suitably experienced advocates.
89. Together, these changes are expected to improve the efficiency of Crown Court proceedings, support earlier and more effective engagement by advocates, and address evidenced gaps in the current AGFS structure.

Table 2: Proposed increase to pre-trial hearings

Pre-trial hearing	Proposed targeted percentage uplift (on top of the general 6% uplift)
Abuse of process	50%
Hearing relating to disclosure	50%
Admissibility of evidence	50%
Ground rules hearings	50%
Hearings on withdrawal of a guilty plea	100%
Further case management hearing	25%
Proceedings related to breach of Crown Court order	10%
Adjourned appeals, committals for sentence and breach hearings	10%
Second and subsequent days of an application to dismiss	50%
Noting brief	10%

¹³ The Better Case Management Revival Handbook <https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/BCM-Revival-Handbook.pdf>

Advice for young people

Background

90. Advocates in the youth justice system require specialist procedural knowledge and experience to deal with the increasingly complex and vulnerable cohort of children coming into courts.
91. Since December 2024, an additional £5.1m of funding has been injected into a new youth court legal aid fee scheme. Representing a child in the youth court is now much better remunerated, reflecting the added complexity of youth legal work and the vulnerability of child clients.
92. However, under the AGFS structure, the highest-gravity homicide bands (1.1 and 1.2) apply only in cases where the victim is a child under aged 16 (1.1), or where the defendant is a child aged 16 years or younger (1.2). Currently, when a defendant or victim is aged 17 in bands 1.1 and 1.2, they are recognised as an adult for the purposes of advocate remuneration.

Proposal for fee uplift

93. We are proposing widening the criteria for bands 1.1 and 1.2, to include cases where the victim or defendant is aged 17 years. This aligns with internationally accepted definitions of child defendants and victims and recognises that their involvement in a homicide case, whether as a victim of defendant, raises comparable issues of vulnerability, seriousness and safeguarding to those already recognised within the current banding framework. This position is also consistent with the youth justice system, which deals with children up to the age of 18 years.
94. Extending the criteria would also help ensure that advocacy in homicide cases involving older children is properly remunerated, aligning payment with the level of complexity, preparation and specialist skill required in such cases.
95. This change aims to promote fairness and better reflect the realities of practice where child victims or defendants aged 17 present needs and challenges equivalent to those captured by the current 16-and-under rule.

Question 3) Do you agree with the targeted investment proposals listed in this chapter? Please state yes/no/maybe/do not know and provide reasons.

Question 4) What do you consider to be the equalities impacts on individuals with particular protected characteristics of the targeted proposals? Are there any mitigations the government should consider? Please include which groups/individuals and explain your reasons. We would welcome examples, case studies, research or other types of evidence that support your views.

Very High Cost Cases

96. Very High Cost (Criminal) Cases (VHCCs) are cases which are estimated to last more than 60 days at trial. They are paid using a different scheme to the LGFS and AGFS. For advocates, VHCC fees are based on the Interim Fixed Fee Offer (IFFO) model. Under this model, a fixed fee for the whole case is negotiated in advance with the Legal Aid Agency (LAA), calculated by feeding case-based proxies through an IFFO calculator. The fee is paid in three instalments, and can be adjusted upwards or downwards only in some circumstances at the conclusion of the case.
97. The IFFO model was developed at speed in 2014 and was not intended to be a permanent solution. In the period since then, it has become clear that certain aspects of the model can lead to fees that do not accurately reflect the amount of work required or undertaken on a case, whether that be over- or under-estimating. The difficulties include:
- The calculator used to set the fee level relies on a number of case proxies, including a heavy reliance on PPE. This can be driven up significantly by digital material, which currently needs to be incorporated into the calculator as PPE. Cases where there is significant consideration of unused material (as compared to served material), or where there is relatively little digital material, may receive a lower fee that does not accurately reflect the complexity of a case, or the work required.
 - The IFFO contract only allows for additional fees to be claimed where more than 30% of the original agreed PPE figure is served during the life of the case.
 - Several provisions in the IFFO contract are inadequately defined. This includes whether counsel needs to attend a particular trial day in order for that to count towards their final fee, with the contract referring to 'working days' and 'sitting days' interchangeably.
 - There is also a limited appeals process, and lack of a pre-contract dispute resolution mechanism. The IFFO model can therefore lead to lengthy and difficult negotiations between the LAA and counsel, which it would benefit all parties to avoid. In 2025, it took on average 364 days to agree a fee per case.
 - It is arguably anomalous that solicitor advocates are not remunerated through the IFFO model like barristers, given all are paid through the AGFS for other Crown Court work.
98. The MoJ is therefore interested in potential reforms to advocate remuneration in VHCC cases. The objective of such reform will be to ensure the scheme pays advocates fairly and proportionately for VHCC work; is straightforward to use for

advocates and to administer for the LAA; and provides clarity to advocates as to remuneration.

99. There are different ways in which we could make reforms; two broad options are outlined below.

Option 1: Reform of the current IFFO model

100. One option would be to retain the structure of the IFFO model, but to make adjustments intended to support the policy aims described above. The benefit of this approach is that it minimises the amount of change for advocates, as much of the structure will be retained, while still addressing the aspects of the current model that can cause challenges. However, the approach to remuneration would still be distinct from how cases are paid through the AGFS, with PPE playing a substantial role in determining the fee. The changes made in this option could include:
- Reasonable blocks of hours to be negotiated for considering non-documentary evidence, including digital material, removing the need to convert electronic evidence into pages.
 - All additional material to be remunerated, removing the need to reach a threshold of 30% of the material originally served.
 - Introducing payment for pre-trial reviews, interlocutory hearings, s. 28 cross-examination hearings and ongoing trial preparation.
 - Paying for the actual number of trial days attended, rather than paying for non-sitting days or days when counsel does not attend trial (clarifying definition of "trial day" in the contract).

Option 2: Moving to an adjusted AGFS style scheme

101. An alternative option would be to reform the model more fundamentally, so that payment for VHCCs is based much more on the graduated fee model. This could help simplify remuneration, combining AGFS for core preparation and advocacy with hourly rates for exceptional tasks: reflecting modern VHCC realities without reverting to pure hourly billing. This would mark a more substantial shift for advocates, but bring VHCCs conceptually in line with how most Crown Court cases are paid.
102. This model would also remove the need for negotiation before a case has started between advocates and the LAA, while still providing certainty as to the base fee for that case. In this model, as with option one, we would still pay the fee in three instalments. In this model:
- Fee would be calculated on similar lines to the graduated fee, with a basic fee, plus estimated trial days multiplied by the daily attendance fee (DAF).

- Time for electronic prosecution material is agreed as an additional block of hours at AGFS hourly rates (for special/ wasted preparation) either prospectively or retrospectively.
- Time for third party, expert and defence-generated evidence can be agreed in addition if reasonable, at AGFS hourly rates, either prospectively or retrospectively.
- Similar to the AGFS, fee to include an allowance of hours for unused material, with the option to agree more hours at AGFS hourly rates either prospectively or retrospectively.

Question 5) Are there aspects of the current VHCC model that you think lead to inappropriate levels of remuneration? Please state yes/no/maybe/do not know and provide reasons.

Question 6) Do you agree that we should change the way VHCC cases are currently remunerated? Please state yes/no/maybe/do not know and provide reasons.

Question 7) From the descriptions provided, do you prefer adjustments to the IFFO model, or a move towards more of a graduated fee structure model? Please provide reasons.

Following your feedback, the MoJ will consult again on any proposed changes to VHCCs. This will include an impact assessment, including consideration of the Public Sector Equalities Duty.

Financial Summary

103. The Impact Assessment accompanying this consultation document provides a monetised statement of the anticipated impacts of implementing the detailed proposals provided in the chapters above.
104. The proposals in this consultation, as well as the expedited measures which, subject to the will of Parliament, will come into force at the end of July, currently amount to a best estimate total of around £34 million per year, within a range of £31 million to £40 million per year, that reflects the uncertainty in the estimate, as changes in volumes and case mix could lead to higher or lower spend than the central estimate. The table below shows a breakdown of the proposed expenditure in steady state. The accompanying Impact Assessment provides the full details behind these estimates. A final allocation will be confirmed in our response to this consultation exercise.
105. We will publish a response to this consultation in due course which will set out the reforms we intend to implement. At this stage, we will also publish a revised Impact Assessment setting out updated estimates in light of any changes to the proposals following consultation and any updates to the underlying data. Based on the existing proposals, we intend to allocate the full amount announced in December 2025.

Table 3 – Steady state annual expenditure summary, best estimate including interactions and VAT, £m

Summarised proposals	Estimated steady state annual costs based on latest available data (£m)
6% increase across AGFS fees (excl. DAFs)	11
Introducing a fixed fee ratio of 65:100 between guilty plea and trial basic fees	7
Increase the basic fees for particular offences	5
Uplift the PTPH fee by 25%	1.9
Uplift fees for post-Crown Court trial sentencing hearings by 25%	1.7
Increase fees for appeals from magistrates' courts and appeals to the Court of Appeal by 10%	0.3

Summarised proposals	Estimated steady state annual costs based on latest available data (£m)
Increase committal for sentence hearing fee by 25%	1.0
Targeted uplifts of some pre-trial hearings	1.0
Widen criteria for bands 1.1 and 1.2 to include cases where the victim or defendant is aged 17 years	1.4
Expedited measures (summer 2026 implementation)*	3.6
Total	34

Figures do not sum due to rounding

Figures include VAT

* Expanding the availability of wasted preparation fees and expanding and increasing the additional preparation fee is not being consulted on, however the total referenced in the table above incorporates the investment in wasted and special preparation fees, announced on 3 July 2026.

Equality Statement

106. The Equality Statement accompanying this consultation document considers the likely equality impacts on legal practitioners who deliver criminal legal aid services from the proposals set out in this consultation. Practitioners can broadly be categorised as 'advocates' which includes barristers and solicitor advocates. The Equality Statement also considers the equality impacts on defendants affected by the proposals.
107. For each proposal we have indicated, on the basis of the latest available evidence, what the likely impacts on equality are. Our analysis considered the impacts of our proposed changes on people with particular protected characteristics in relation to the specific proposals we plan to implement.
108. The specific equalities questions, included in the chapters above, are designed to invite feedback on each of the proposals and their impacts in this consultation. Following the results of the consultation, we will review the impacts and update this Equality Statement where necessary.

Questionnaire

We would welcome responses to the following questions set out in this consultation paper.

Question 1) Do you agree with the proposal to increase AGFS fees by 6%, excluding Daily Attendance Fees? Please state yes/no/maybe/do not know and provide reasons.

Question 2) What do you consider to be the equalities impacts on individuals with particular protected characteristics of the proposal to increase AGFS fees by 6%, excluding Daily Attendance Fees? Are there any mitigations the government should consider? Please include which groups/individuals and explain your reasons. We would welcome examples, case studies, research or other types of evidence that support your views.

Question 3) Do you agree with the targeted investment proposals listed in this chapter? Please state yes/no/maybe/do not know and provide reasons.

Question 4) What do you consider to be the equalities impacts on individuals with particular protected characteristics of the targeted proposals? Are there any mitigations the government should consider? Please include which groups/individuals and explain your reasons. We would welcome examples, case studies, research or other types of evidence that support your views.

Question 5) Are there aspects of the current VHCC model that you think lead to inappropriate levels of remuneration? Please state yes/no/maybe/do not know and provide reasons.

Question 6) Do you agree that we should change the way VHCC cases are currently remunerated? Please state yes/no/maybe/do not know and provide reasons.

Question 7) From the descriptions provided, do you prefer adjustments to the IFFO model, or a move towards more of a graduated fee structure model? Please provide reasons.

Thank you for participating in this consultation exercise.

Contact details/How to respond

Please send your response by 26/08/26 to:

Criminal Legal Aid Team

Ministry of Justice

102 Petty France

London SW1H 9AJ

Email: Criminal.LegalAidPolicy@justice.gov.uk

Complaints or comments

If you have any complaints or comments about the consultation process, you should contact the Ministry of Justice at the above address.

Extra copies

Further paper copies of this consultation can be obtained from this address and it is also available on-line at <https://consult.justice.gov.uk/>.

Alternative format versions of this publication can be requested from Criminal.LegalAidPolicy@justice.gov.uk

Publication of response

A paper summarising the responses to this consultation will be published in due course. The response paper will be available on-line at <https://consult.justice.gov.uk/>.

Representative groups

Representative groups are asked to give a summary of the people and organisations they represent when they respond.

Confidentiality

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA), the General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Ministry.

The Ministry will process your personal data in accordance with the DPA and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Consultation principles

The principles that government departments and other public bodies should adopt for engaging stakeholders when developing policy and legislation are set out in the Cabinet Office Consultation Principles 2018 that can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/691383/Consultation_Principles__1_.pdf

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