



Dear Advocate,

Solicitors up and down the country have considered the concerns raised by of the LCCSA and CLSA as to the effect of legal aid cuts and are taking action. By individually deciding to refuse to act for defendants claiming legal aid from the 1st July they are bravely lending support for a national movement. Within a short space of time the Ministry of Justice will have no choice but to reverse their destructive policies.

We ask that you carefully consider whether you can afford to continue to act in criminal legal aid cases.

When you arrive at court today you will no doubt notice more unrepresented defendants than usual. It is inevitable they will approach lawyers seeking representation. We urge you to think of the long term effects of agreeing to act in those circumstances.

Solicitors will continue to attend their court duty slots to represent all who qualify under the scheme. After that first appearance they are also unlikely to be willing to continue to act under legal aid. We ask you to refer any unrepresented defendant to the duty solicitor as you normally would.

Magistrates' and Crown Courts, already under extreme pressure from cuts of their own, will soon grind to a halt and the action will be lifted when the government finally listens to those who care about the criminal justice system.

When you return from court please discuss the possibility of individual action with other decision makers in your organisation. If you have not done so please read an article by Steve Bird¹ listed below. If you are concerned as to you contractual responsibility, useful information has been published on Crimeline². Finally a protocol for action in the London area has been drafted and agreed by hundreds of professionals and can also be found on the LCCSA website³

Yours in solidarity,

Jonathan Black
President of the LCCSA

¹ <https://www.lccsa.org.uk/the-new-contract-fees-considered-the-real-cost-of-the-cuts-steven-bird-birds-solicitors/>

² <https://www.crimeline.info/news/withdrawal-from-new-legal-aid-work-on-1st-july-2015-contractual-implications>

³ <https://www.lccsa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/PROTOCOL-FINAL.pdf>