

# Independent review into Criminal Legal Aid to launch in January



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Review will take a look at the whole criminal legal aid market

Diversity, funding, and efficiency of the sector will be considered

Part of ongoing work to reform and improve the criminal legal aid system

Launching in January, the review will be led by former judge Sir Christopher Bellamy. It aims to ensure the legal aid sector can adapt to the changing criminal justice system, while continuing to provide high-quality advice and representation.

Ministers are determined to make sure the criminal justice system is fully equipped to deal with any increase in the number of cases, now and in the future.

The far-reaching review will look at the criminal legal aid market in its entirety, specifically it seeks to ensure that it:

continues to provide high-quality legal advice and representation

is provided through a diverse set of practitioners

is appropriately funded

is responsive to defendant needs both now and in the future

contributes to the efficiency and effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System

is transparent

is resilient

is delivered in a way that provides value for money to the taxpayer.

This is the latest step in the Criminal Legal Aid Review, which has already led to up to £51m per year in new payments for the sector that was announced in the summer. It forms part of wider work to ensure criminal defence remains an enduringly attractive career for practitioners.

The Lord Chancellor, Robert Buckland QC MP, said:

Criminal defence lawyers play a crucial role in upholding the law, representing clients and protecting their right to a fair trial.

This independent review will be wide-ranging and ambitious, ensuring the criminal legal aid market remains effective and sustainable, while reflecting the diverse society it serves.

I am grateful to the sector for its continued cooperation and look forward to this important work commencing in earnest in the new year.

Chair of the Review, Sir Christopher Bellamy, said:

The criminal legal aid sector is a vital pillar of the justice system.

I look forward to engaging with all stakeholders on this review, which aims to give the criminal legal aid sector long-term begin in January and report back later in the year. It will include input from a wide range of criminal defence practitioners who have been providing valuable data and insight for the Criminal Legal Aid Review.

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