

LSC Circular 09/05

10 July 2009

Dear Practitioner

Amendment to the General Authority under the Green Form Scheme

The Commission has become aware of the increasing number of requests for extensions under the Green Form Scheme to engage the services of interpreters in Immigration and Asylum cases and to exceed the advice limit of £88.00.

Regulation 15 of the Legal Advice and Assistance Regulations (NI) 1981 requires practitioners to provide an estimate of the costs to be incurred. The Commission recognises the difficulty encountered by practitioners in providing an estimate of the hours required in support of extension requests to engage the services of interpreters, and also recognises that it is in the applicant's interest to access legal advice at the earliest opportunity.

To facilitate access to justice in Immigration and Asylum cases, the Commission has decided to extend the General Authority issued by the Legal Aid Committee in June 1992. This amendment will enable practitioners to engage the services of an interpreter without the need to obtain prior authority from the Commission, provided the costs do not exceed the levels set out in the attached amendment.

The amendment will also enable practitioners to provide advice and assistance up to a financial limit of £300 without seeking prior approval from the Commission. If you feel your costs are likely to exceed £300, you should write to the Commission to seek an extension in the usual way.

For the avoidance of doubt, practitioners are advised that the amendment applies to interpreting services only and that prior authority is still required to have documents translated.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gerry Crossan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

**Gerry Crossan
Chief Executive**

AMENDMENT TO GREEN FORM GENERAL AUTHORITY

TYPE OF CASE	STEPS AUTHORISED	MAXIMUM LEVEL OF EXPENDITURE AUTHORISED
Immigration and Asylum	Engaging the services of an interpreter, if deemed necessary by the solicitor.	£30.00 per hour interpreting time + travel time and mileage as reasonably incurred.
	Provision of advice and assistance up to but not exceeding the amount of £300.00	Fees will be assessed and paid at the current Green Form hourly rates of; £43.25-advice and assistance £24.25-travel and waiting time £3.35-letters sent and telephone calls 35.7p per mile mileage