



## Craig Whittaker MP

CALDER VALLEY

[www.craigwhittakermp.co.uk](http://www.craigwhittakermp.co.uk)

### **Legal Aid**

Thank you for contacting me about legal aid.

In 2016 £1.6 billion was spent on legal aid, which is just under a quarter of the Ministry of Justice's budget. Maintaining access to justice remains absolutely vital and continues to be at the heart of reforms to the justice system.

In October 2017, the post-implementation review of the legal aid changes made by, and following, the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO) was announced. The review will consider the effect of the major changes to legal aid fees made by LASPO as well as recent policy changes on access to legal aid. The Government has committed to review a number of areas, including the changes made to the scope of legal aid for family, civil and criminal cases and the introduction of the Exceptional Case Funding scheme, as well as changes to the rules on financial eligibility, including the application of the capital eligibility test to all legal aid applicants.

Our legal aid system is a fundamental pillar of access to justice. The reforms within the Act were founded on delivering better value for money for taxpayers by reducing the cost of the scheme and discouraging unnecessary and adversarial litigation, while ensuring that legal aid continues to be available for the highest priority cases, for example where life or liberty is at stake, where someone faces the loss of their home, in domestic violence cases, or where their children may be taken into care.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig Whittaker'.

Craig Whittaker MP