|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Ministry of Justice |  |
| **Lord Bellamy KC**Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice  |
| **To: All MPs in England and Wales** |  **MoJ Ref: TN107716**  1st August 2023 |

Dear Colleague,

**Housing Loss Prevention Advice Service**

I am writing to notify you of the introduction of the Housing Loss Prevention Advice Service (HLPAS), which has launched across England and Wales today, 1st August 2023.

**HLPAS offers free legal advice and representation to individuals facing possession proceedings which could result in the loss of their homes. As of today, individuals who receive a written notice for possession will be eligible to receive this free legal assistance.**

The HLPAS will be delivered by housing law experts and provided in two stages. The first stage will involve the provision of legal advice on housing, welfare benefits, and debt issues to individuals facing possession proceedings, with the aim of resolving problems early and avoiding court proceedings where possible. The second stage will provide in-court legal representation during possession hearings for those individuals whose cases cannot be solved out of court.

To ensure that individuals in this situation are aware of the legal support available to them, the Ministry of Justice has worked in collaboration with other government departments to update the relevant guidance and has launched an awareness campaign. Your assistance in raising awareness of this service would be greatly appreciated. For any constituents facing possession proceedings, please direct them to the HLPAS website for further information and support:

[**www.gov.uk/guidance/legal-aid-for-possession-proceedings**](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/legal-aid-for-possession-proceedings)

Please be aware that in Wigan, Birkenhead, Crewe, Hull, and the Isle of Wight, there is currently no HLPAS provider available. However, the Legal Aid Agency is working closely with local courts and housing legal aid providers to establish services in these areas as soon as possible. In the meantime, residents in these areas can still seek assistance by reaching out to providers in neighbouring areas. They can access early legal advice through the HLPAS scheme, which can be delivered remotely.

HLPAS was introduced through the Civil Legal Aid (Housing and Asylum Accommodation) Order 2023, aligning with the Government's recent consultation on reforming housing legal aid services. The primary goal of HLPAS is to promote early resolution and prevent homelessness, and it secures an additional funding of up to £10 million annually for legal aid.

Kind regards,



 **LORD BELLAMY KC**