

SaBC data validation exercise – Fee Codes and nil claims

The Submit a Bulk Claim (SaBC) service introduced new claim codes (Fee Codes) and guidance to support this: [Submit a Bulk Claim \(SaBC\) - GOV.UK](#).

The LAA expected that there would be potential for errors, particularly early in its use. They have undertaken a review of the initial data submitted via SaBC. During this process, they have identified some errors related to the Fee Codes used and the amounts recorded for profit costs by a minority of providers.

In this initial instance, the LAA will not be taking contract action against providers, as they recognise that everyone is still adapting to the new system. They emphasise that their aim is to support providers through this transition by offering further guidance and, where possible, seeking to add extra validation in the system. Some examples they have found:

- Incompatible combinations of Fee Codes with other claim codes

In some cases, Fee Codes are being reported with incompatible combinations of matter type, stage reached or case/stage level codes. This may result in the wrong fee being triggered. Further guidance is available as to reporting combinations that should be used – all Fee Codes have been “mapped” to specific, existing codes: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/submit-a-bulk-claim-sabc#guidance-documents>

Both the [Guidance for Reporting Legal Help and Mediation Work](#), and the [Guide to reporting Crime lower](#) list the available Fee Codes and associated other types of codes that should be used with them.

There are also recorded webinars and slides available on the Legal Aid Learning website on Crime, Immigration, Family and Mental Health Fee Codes: [Submit a Bulk Claim – Civil – Legal Aid Learning](#) & [Submit a Bulk Claim – Crime – Legal Aid Learning](#)

- Reporting of claims containing no profit costs

It is not possible to submit nil bills in SaBC (i.e. a claim for £0) – any claim that has a Fee Code, which all claims must have, will generate a fee even if that claim has no profit costs or disbursements recorded against it.

If for any reason you do not need to submit a claim for costs, then you should retain a note for audit and not include a line in your submission.

If you have submitted a claim in error that has generated a fee, please complete the claim amendment form and send it to PA-ClaimAmend@justice.gov.uk. You will need to request that each claim is voided.

See page 4 of [SaBC Common Issues and FAQs](#)

- Potential stage disbursement claims in Immigration, Mental Health and Education matters reported using the wrong Fee Codes

These claims should be made using specific, Stage Disbursement Fee Codes (e.g. MHLDIS for Mental Health) – these will ensure that a standard fee is not paid, but just the value of the disbursements (plus any VAT reported on them).

If a provider uses any other Fee Code, a standard fee may also be triggered even if no profit costs were reported; the provider would not be entitled to claim such a fee at that point.

These codes can be found in the category-specific sections of the [Guidance for Reporting Legal Help and Mediation Work](#).

The LAA says these issues will have led to instances of providers being overpaid or underpaid, depending on the nature of the error. While in some instances the LAA can make an educated assumption as to what the correct claim should have been, not all instances are clear, and their assumptions may be incorrect.

Therefore, the LAA says they need to contact you to confirm the correct data, make any necessary amendments to the claims and identify how they can help prevent further errors.

The LAA will be contacting those affected in the coming weeks. They will highlight the specific issues identified from the claims data and what further action may be required.