

OBTAINING LEGAL ADVICE AND GUIDANCE FROM DMA LEEDS

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INTRODUCTION

- 1 DMA Leeds is responsible for providing advice and guidance to DMs in the field. The purpose of this Memo is to
 1. set out the procedures for seeking guidance and our clearance targets
 2. provide information on
 - 2.1 where to find our intranet site
 - 2.2 the DMA Leeds Discussion Group **and**
 - 2.3 the Customer Service Questionnaire process.

Please note: This Memo replaces Memo DMG 18/07 issued in April 2007 which should now be destroyed.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN BEFORE CONTACTING DMA LEEDS

- 2 Before sending a request for advice, you should check

1. the DMG
2. any relevant Acts and Regulations
3. any other relevant benefit specific guidance.

HOW TO APPLY TO DMA LEEDS FOR ADVICE

- 3 Queries should be sent preferably by e-mail, but can also be sent in writing, in a file by courier to DMA Leeds, or by fax. The relevant addresses are given below.

To help us deal with queries we have designed a pro-forma. Please make copies of the form locally. Please use the pro-forma whenever and however you send a query. Responses to e-mailed requests will be e-mailed back to you unless specified.

Please note: We do not operate a telephone guidance service. If your enquiry is urgent, it should be sent by e-mail or fax, stating why the query is urgent and when a response is required by.

Written advice can fall into two categories, priority and non-priority. A case falls into the **priority** category if

1. an appeal submission is outstanding
2. an undecided claim for benefit is outstanding and urgent payment of benefit is required
3. an award of benefit is suspended
4. an MPs enquiry or PCA complaint is involved.

OUR TARGETS FOR CLEARANCE

Guidance cases are now cleared using an Actual Average Clearance Time (AACT)

- 4 Priority cases

The AACT for clearing priority cases is 6 working days.

Non-priority cases

The AACT for clearing non-priority cases is 12 working days.

DMA LEEDS INTRANET SITE

- 5 Details of the services offered by DMA Leeds and our targets are available on our Intranet site: <http://intranet/1/lq/acileeds/index.asp>

DMA LEEDS DISCUSSION GROUP

- 6 The Discussion Group is a forum for DMs to exchange information, discuss decision-making problems, share good practice, seek opinions and share knowledge. It is not intended to bypass, or replace the normal guidance service we offer, and DMs should not assume that DMA Leeds have agreed every piece of advice posted on it. However, where possible and where resources allow, DMA Leeds will intervene and contribute, particularly where there is conflicting opinion.

CUSTOMER SERVICE QUESTIONNAIRES

- 7 DMs who have submitted guidance requests will now periodically be sent a Customer Service Questionnaire. These will be sent separately from the guidance response. We would encourage you to complete this as we use the responses to gauge the level of service that DMA Leeds is providing to our customers. You will receive your questionnaire by e-mail and I would appreciate a response by this method.

CONTACT DETAILS

You can contact DMA Leeds for advice

1. by e-mail sent to either
 - 1.1 Internal address – Legal Group DMA Office Support **or**
 - 1.2 External address – DMA-OFFICE-SUPPORT-L@DWP.GSI.GOV.U
2. by fax addressed as in 3. below. Our fax number is

0113 232 4841.
3. in writing, in a file, sent to DMA Leeds, Office Support, Room GS36, Quarry House, Leeds. LS2 7UB.

