



**Directors of Children's Services
and Association of Directors of Children's Services**

By email only

MoJ ref: 73616

24 October 2019

Dear Director,

LEGAL AID FOR UNACCOMPANIED AND SEPARATED MIGRANT CHILDREN

In July 2018, Lucy Frazer MP announced the Government would lay an amendment to the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO) to bring non-asylum immigration matters for unaccompanied and separated migrant children into scope of legal aid. I am pleased to inform you that this amendment to LASPO will come into force on 25 October.

Under previous arrangements, separated migrant children who were seeking to regularise their immigration or citizenship status in the UK had to apply for Exceptional Case Funding (ECF) to receive legal aid for help with their citizenship application, immigration application, or subsequent appeal.

This amendment now means that separated migrant children will no longer have to make ECF applications to receive legal aid for citizenship and non-asylum immigration matters, or subsequent appeal, and will instead receive legal aid for these cases, subject to normal means and merits testing.

Legal aid is already available for asylum cases and is therefore not affected by this legislative change.

The Civil Legal Advice (CLA) website <https://find-legal-advice.justice.gov.uk/> can be used to search for the closest legal aid immigration solicitors/advisors in your area. The CLA helpline (0345 345 4 345) can also provide the contact details of these providers.

Further information on the CLA is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice>.

Yours sincerely

WENDY MORTON MP