



HANDY HINTS FOR MERITS ASSESSMENTS IN CCMS

CLIENT DETAILS	
Entering client details	How you enter a clients name is how it appears on the certificate and any client letters. If, for example, you enter the clients name all in lower case, the clients letters will be sent out addressed as 'Dear joe bloggs'. Similarly, if you enter the clients name as 'jOE bLOGGS', the letter will be sent with the clients name in this format.
Client middle name	Any middle names for the client need not be entered unless the client commonly goes by their full name.
Client DOB	Once you have entered the clients DOB and have submitted the application the system will not allow you to amend the DOB field. You must contact the Customer Services Team (CST) or submit a case enquiry requesting a change if you have made an error.
Client records	Each client should only have one client record. You may submit more than one application for a client but this must be submitted on the same client record. When searching for your clients details the system will indicate whether there is an existing client record. If there is you should select the option to use the existing record.

DOCUMENT REQUESTS	
The initial document request task is automatically generated by the system. As a result, it may be possible to complete the assessment without all the documents initially requested. For example:	
Initial document requests (substantive)	When submitting a substantive application the initial document request task is generated by the system; it may be possible to complete the assessment without all the documents listed on the Document Request Task.
Initial document request (emergency)	When submitting an emergency application the initial document request is generated manually by the caseworker processing. Documents requested will only be in relation to the merits of the case and means evidence will be requested on submission of your substantive amendment request.
If the majority of documents are available, it is best to submit them so that we can begin the assessment. If further documents are required, they will be requested via	

the document request task.

UPLOADING DOCUMENTS

Uploading documents as detailed below can help to ensure efficient completion of means and merits assessments, as the caseworker is expected to avoid printing documents if at all possible.

Upload documents separately	For example, upload the statement of case, pleadings, the gateway evidence and any viability reports in different uploads, giving each uploaded document an appropriate title. This makes each document easier for the caseworker to find.
Double sided documentation	Check if the documents are single or double sided. Scanning only the front of double sided documents will result in a request for the full documents. Scanning the back of single sided documents results in larger uploads and, 'extra pages' for the case worker to scroll through to identify the relevant information. Please try to ensure all documents are scanned the same way up, as we often get some pages of a document scanned upside down.

SUBMITTING DOCUMENTS

Documents not sent	<p>If you update the document request task to, 'documents not sent' (with an accompanying note advising that the client is in the process of obtaining the documents required):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This closes out the document request task, so you are unable to upload the documents when they are provided. You then have to call CST to have the document request task reset or submit a case enquiry for the task to be reset.• If a means assessment has been completed (or is not required) and documents relating to merits have been requested, the trigger to place the assess merits task in the queue for a caseworker to process is the document request task being updated to, 'documents received'. Updating the task to 'documents not sent' prevents the merits task moving into the universal work queue.
Documents sent	When the documents have been uploaded, you need to ensure that the task is also updated to 'documents sent'; this ensures that the documents are noted as received by the system, moving the assess

	merits task into the queue for processing.
Submitting documents via CCMS, rather than by post, ensures that the documents are noted as received by the system as soon as they are submitted, moving the merits task into the queue for processing.	

PROVIDER DETAILS	
Provider contact details	Sometimes it may be necessary for a caseworker to contact you regarding a case, so you should always ensure an email address is provided for a contact at the firm. Phone numbers are only available for caseworkers if a supervisor is listed at the firm.
Provider contact updates	You should also update CCMS if a fee earner leaves and another person takes over the management of the file. New contact and e-mail details should be entered.

NON MEANS NON MERITS TESTED APPLICATIONS	
Substantive applications	Special Children Act (SCA) cases should always be submitted as substantive applications and never as emergency applications. Caseworkers cannot change an application from an emergency to a substantive, and the application will have to be withdrawn if it is submitted incorrectly. You should use the SCA quick guide available on the CCMS website if you are unsure.
Delegated functions	When submitting a SCA application you must delegate functions. In order to do so you must initially say, 'no' to the first delegated functions question. You will be asked again in the merits assessment if you wish to delegate functions and at this point you say, 'yes' and input the date.
Special Children Act (SCA)	To submit a non means none merits application you must always select the matter type of SCA.
Child abduction cases	Child Abduction cases following instruction from the International Child Abduction and Contact Unit (ICACU) should also be submitted as non means tested substantive applications and not as emergency applications, although you do not have delegated functions to grant funding to backdate the grant of certificates in these cases.

PROCEEDINGS

Incorrect proceedings	Please take care when submitting proceedings as if an incorrect proceeding is submitted the caseworker does not have the functionality to change them. If it is found an incorrect proceeding has been submitted the caseworker will reject the application for you to amend.
Duplicate proceedings	Do not add the same proceeding twice when submitting applications / amendments as duplicate proceedings will be refused.
Additional scope	If an extra scope limitation is required on a proceeding which has already been granted, this should be added onto the existing proceeding. You should not apply for a duplicate proceeding in order to add an additional scope limitation.
Housing Act proceedings	In Housing Act cases, you should not use the wording HO11A for first instance S204 Housing Act Appeals (HO011 should be used instead) and you should not use appeal versions of wordings generally, as proceedings are not intended to cover an appeal. 'Enforcement' (HSO11E) should be selected to enforce an original County Court Order.

CASE DETAILS

Sufficient justification	You should remember that, in all cases subject to a merits test, adequate information must be provided in order to allow the merits of the case to be assessed. Caseworkers know nothing about the case other than what is included in the application, and if insufficient information is provided to justify the grant of an application or amendment there could be a delay in processing the application due to further documents having to be requested. Alternatively, the application or amendment may be refused. Please therefore ensure a full statement of case is available, either by separate upload or within the merits assessment.
Gateway evidence	Some providers have attempted to bypass certain questions asked by the system on family cases which require gateway evidence (e.g. by erroneously stating that the client is a child). Failure to submit gateway evidence where required will lead to rejection or refusal so it is important that you answer the questions correctly. If you indicate you possess relevant gateway evidence the system should send a document request and allow you to attach information without further delay. If you bypass the question a further document request will

	need to be sent at a later date which will cause a delay.
Provider transfer	The amount of information required is also applicable on requests to transfer providers. If, for example, the client is wishing to move firms due to dissatisfaction with his / her previous firm, we will need to know whether the complaints procedure has been followed in full. If this is not provided we do not have the ability to request further information through the system, and the application to transfer may be refused.

AMENDMENTS

Means / merits amendments	Other than when you apply to amend the emergency to create a substantive, amendments should either be means reassessments or merits amendments only, and the two should not be combined. If both are applied for this creates problems with the letters sent out, and merits information will, in many cases, not be included in the letter. If, for example, you require a cost increase but the client's means have not changed, you should not enter the means assessment section as no reassessment is required.
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URGENT FLAG

Correct use of urgent flag	You should only use the urgent flag if there is work which it is necessary to undertake within the next 48 hours which is not already covered by Legal Aid, and where delegated functions cannot be used. Abuse of the urgent flag means longer delays for those with truly urgent work to undertake.
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LIMITATIONS

Hearing limitation	The hearing limitation requires the date of the hearing to be entered; otherwise the limitation comes through to our system as, 'all steps up to and including the hearing on [see additional limitation notes]'. You should specify the date of the hearing(s) you need cover for. You should also try to avoid adding unnecessary limitations wherever possible. For example, limitations such as 'FHH children' or 'trial' already cover Counsel opinion and this does not need to be added on separately.
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Default scope	The system will automatically provide a default scope based on the proceeding you choose. If you don't require this scope add additional scope then always delete the original default scope limitation before submission.
Substantive scope	You should remember to request an extra substantive limitation on an amendment from emergency to substantive. Failure to do this will mean the amendment will be rejected for the required limitation to be added on. You will not be covered for any further work if no further limitation is requested. If you finish work under the emergency certificate and no extra limitation is required this should be made clear within the amendment request statement of case

LINKED CASES

Linking cases	You should ensure that cases are appropriately linked where two or more clients are being represented together. If this is not done when the application is submitted a delay could be created. You should refer to the linking cases quick guide on the website for assistance with this.
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LINKED CASE TRANSFERS

Transferring linked cases	If you are acting for more than one client in a case and the lead case client transfers to another firm, a cost limit amendment will be required on the remaining case as it will probably be at nil. If there is still more than one client remaining, a new lead case will need to be nominated and costs apportioned accordingly to the relevant certificate reference.
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