

Case Officer Survey Results

Investigating the use of Artificial Intelligence in the administration of Legal Financial Assistance Schemes

This survey was sent to case officers who are currently in or have recently left the Legal Financial Assistance Casework team. There were 13 survey respondents, representing all available case officers in the department, at the time the survey was conducted.

Survey responses can be found through this link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-wFprWfN_2F1s9nHO9k34QYpA_3D_3D/

Question 1 – as a case officer, how many cases are you currently managing?

From the caseworker responses **46.15%** were currently managing **6 cases**, **46.15%** were managing **6**, and **7.69%** were managing over **16**.

Question 2 – Do you currently use AI in your job? If so, for what purpose?

84.62% of case officers **do not** use AI in the course of their work.

The remaining **15.38%** use AI for limited desktop research.

Question 3 – What are the key pain points and bottlenecks?

Caseworkers identified inefficiencies are largely systemic and administrative such as outdated or inconsistent guidelines, obsolete or cumbersome systems (especially LAGRS), and the need for excessive manual workarounds. These are compounded by incomplete or incorrect applications, constant follow-ups with applicants, unclear eligibility requirements, and high workloads that stretch both case officers and decision makers.

Question 4 – Which financial assistance schemes do you think would benefit the most from automated or streamlined process?

Of identified schemes, the **Federal Procedures (Costs) Act** was identified in **44.44%** of responses. The **Overseas Child Abduction Scheme** was identified in **16.67%** of responses. The **Disbursement Support Scheme** and **Special Circumstances Scheme** were both identified in **11.11%** of responses. The Commonwealth Public Interest and Test Case Scheme and the **Afghanistan Inquiry Legal Assistance Scheme** were identified in **5.56%** of responses. “All of the statutory schemes” was identified in one response.

Question 5 – Please think about a recent time that you had a particularly challenging or frustrating application or claim?

Common themes among respondents’ stories highlighted difficult mainly due to their complexity, incomplete or unclear information, and external pressures. Issues included large volumes of documents and multiple rule sets to apply, confusing or inconsistent payment details, applicants or third parties who were hard to contact or uncooperative, language barriers, and system limitations (LAGRS). This was often compounded by tight timeframes, high stakes, and the need to navigate unclear guidelines or conditions before payments could be made. Some examples include applicants applying to 20+ schemes at once, applicants

applying on behalf of a family member in overseas detention, or managing large amounts of money across two different currencies.

Question 6 – What was the main challenges of the story you just told?

30.77% of case workers identified **limitations/rigidity of the IT system (LAGRS)** as the main challenge, **30.77%** identified **the complexity or ambiguity of the rules and guidelines**, and **23.08%** identified **the quality or timeliness of information from the applicant**. **15.38%** identified **all of the above**.

Question 7 – What did you spend the most of your professional energy on in that situation?

23.08% of case workers identified **navigating processes** as the main challenge, **46.15%** identified **performing deep analysis**, and **23.08%** identified **communicating with applicants**. **15.38%** identified **all three** as the main challenge in the **other** option.

Question 8 – What is one thing or tool that could have made that process easier?

Suggested improvements focused on better technology and streamlined processes: tools to automatically check and categorise invoices, smarter online application forms that validate data as it's entered, and an upgraded case management system (or LAGRS fixes). Other ideas included AI tools for drafting notes, checking documents, translating communications, and tracking applications, as well as clearer processes and limits on how many applications an applicant can submit at once.

Question 9 – When investigating this issue, would you see more advantage in focusing on the experience of the user in applying for legal financial assistance, or the experience of the case worker in processing an application?

15.38% of case workers suggested focusing on the user experience, **30.77%** of case workers suggested focusing on the case worker experience, and **53.85%** answered with both.

Question 10 – Are there any additional comments you would like to make about the use of AI in administering Legal Financial Assistance Schemes?

Overall, respondents saw potential for AI to reduce administrative burden by analysing bank statements, checking applications for completeness, and processing invoices. Concerns included data privacy, accuracy and hallucinations, transparency for applicants, and ensuring staff retain skills to work without AI. Some suggested improving existing systems (like LAGRS) and staff capability before fully adopting AI or using AI centrally to update forms and processes while keeping human oversight for discretionary decisions.