



7 May 2020

MEDIA RELEASE

LOCKDOWN: LEGAL AID SA RESUMES OPERATIONS

Legal Aid South Africa (Legal Aid SA) has, on Wednesday, 6 May 2020, reopened its offices including the Legal Aid Advice Line for operations. As per the directives of the initial national 21-days lockdown announced on 23 March 2020, Legal Aid SA closed its offices, including the toll-free Legal Aid Advice Line, on 26 March 2020 to curtail the spread of COVID-19.

Subsequent to the new directives, the organisation has devised a minimal staff workplace plan which will direct operations to combat the spread of the Coronavirus as it re-opens its doors post the Alert Level 5 lockdown restrictions. Members of the public are encouraged to call their nearest Legal Aid SA Local Office to speak with their Legal Practitioner, as the organisation is not seeing walk-in clients at this time. Alternatively, they can make use of the toll-free Legal Aid Advice Line (0800 110 110) or send a Please Call Me to 079 835 7179 for a call back. The Legal Aid Advice Line will advise if an application for legal aid is permitted during Level 4, and will arrange an office-based consultation. Those with confirmed appointments will be expected to wear a mask, follow social distancing prescripts and other regulations when they visit Legal Aid SA offices. All Legal Aid SA offices and the Advice Line are operational weekdays between 9:00 and 15:00.

“We have put measures in place to ensure the safety of our employees, including deep cleaning and disinfecting of all our offices, health and safety guidelines, staff rotational arrangements, as well as coverage of criminal and civil courts aligned with the staff rotational arrangements. We have COVID-19 Compliance Officers designated at each office to ensure that arrangements are made to screen every employee or visitor seeking entry to our offices,” says Legal Aid SA Spokesperson Mr Mfanafuthi Shabangu.

Legal Aid SA follows the directions as published by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development in terms of Regulation 4(2) of the Regulations published in the Government Gazette of 29 April 2020, which details the permitted services for Alert Level 4. These include first court appearances, bail applications and cases where accused persons are in detention, to mention a few. “All other cases should be postponed as per the court directions and where possible, these postponements will be done using audiovisual tools or other technology-based means,” adds Mr Shabangu.

– Ends –

Issued by the Communications Department of Legal Aid South Africa. For more information, please contact Legal Aid South Africa Communications Executive and National Spokesperson Mr Mfanafuthi Shabangu on 011 877 2056/066 301 6935 or the Media and Marketing Manager Mr Godfrey Matsobe on 011 877 2382/066 481 6792

Visit our website at www.legal-aid.co.za or call the Legal Aid Advice Line on 0800 110 110 or send a Please Call Me to 079 835 7179

Please be reminded that the name of our organisation **Legal Aid South Africa** is correctly abbreviated as **Legal Aid SA** and not as LASA. We respectfully request that you use the correct abbreviation **Legal Aid SA** which is representative of our mission to deliver quality **legal aid** services to the poor and vulnerable in South Africa.