

Legal Intervention Support

From Obstacle Course to Relay Race

Attendance Network Meetings, December 2025

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Comprehensive Online Support for Schools: Enhancing Attendance Training and Confidence in Legal Intervention

Boosting training, legal
skills, and digital
resources effectively

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Key Focus Areas

- Overview of Attendance Training and Its Importance
- Online Resources for Attendance Training
- Support for Legal Intervention Procedures
- Building Confidence Through Ongoing Support and Community



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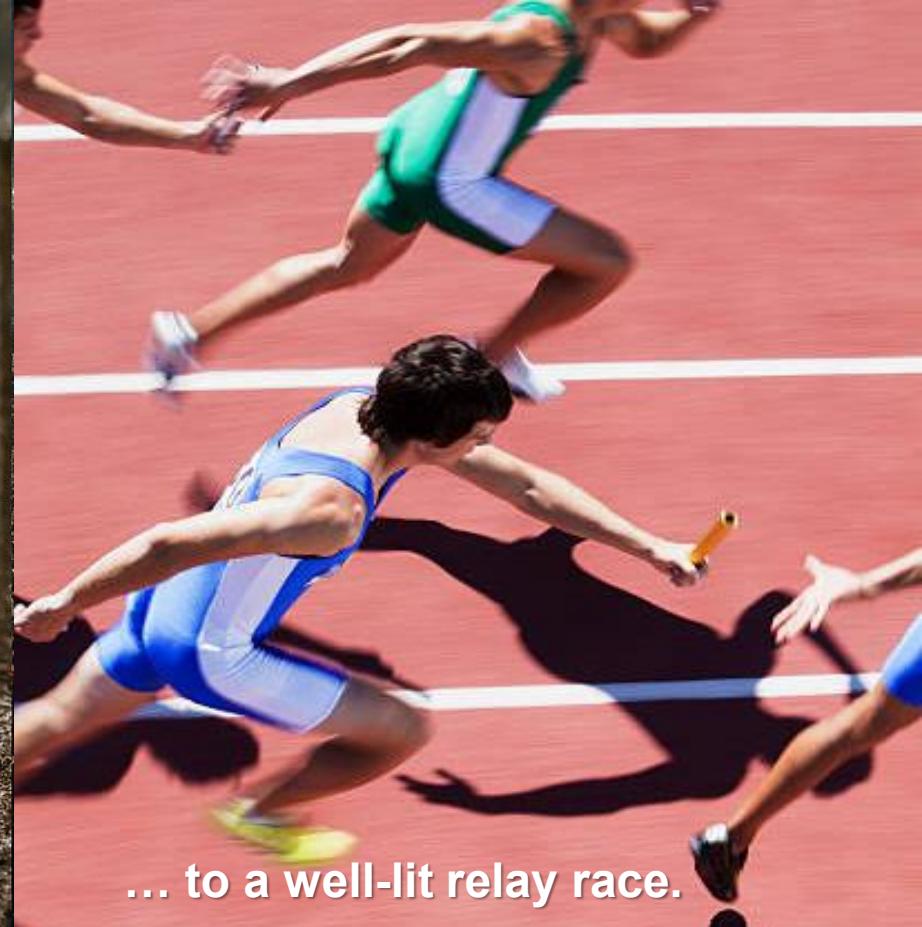




Schoolsnet

attendance@goucestershire.gov.uk

From an unclear obstacle course...



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Four stylized human figures in pink, blue, yellow, and purple, arranged in a row, representing the 'values' mentioned in the text above.

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Integrity



Empower



Respect



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Purpose of Accessing Support

Enhancing Staff Knowledge

Training improves staff understanding of attendance management and related policies.

Ensuring Policy Compliance

Whole school staff training promotes adherence to attendance policies to maintain consistent student monitoring.

Promoting Consistent Attendance

We offer signposting and resources to support regular student attendance.



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Challenges Faced by Schools

Inconsistent Attendance Tracking

Struggles with consistent tracking of attendance: changes in meetings, no-shows, waiting lists and unforeseen changes and challenges. This can lead to lapses in momentum and follow-up actions.

Staff Confidence in Interventions

Limited staff confidence in legal intervention from the beginning affects timely and effective action.

Time constraints and job expectations

Multiple pulls and deadlines in a school day that can affect finding time to complete legal paperwork.



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Benefits of early intervention with legal processes

Proactive Attendance Management

Staff making use of the resources, checklists and models can support preparation from early intervention stages.

Regulatory Compliance

Trained staff ensure adherence to attendance policies and legal requirements in schools. With short timescales, more cases may proceed to court in the event of a penalty notice remaining unpaid.

Ripple-effect with Attendance

Schools' obligation to consider legal intervention is fulfilled and the relationship between the school and families remains open to avoid this pathway; parents and carers are clear about the school's obligations with legal intervention, and the potential ramifications of legal intervention.

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Developments with legal communication with parents

29
Aug

2nd letter
after 28 days
from issue

16
Oct

QR code to
support
payment

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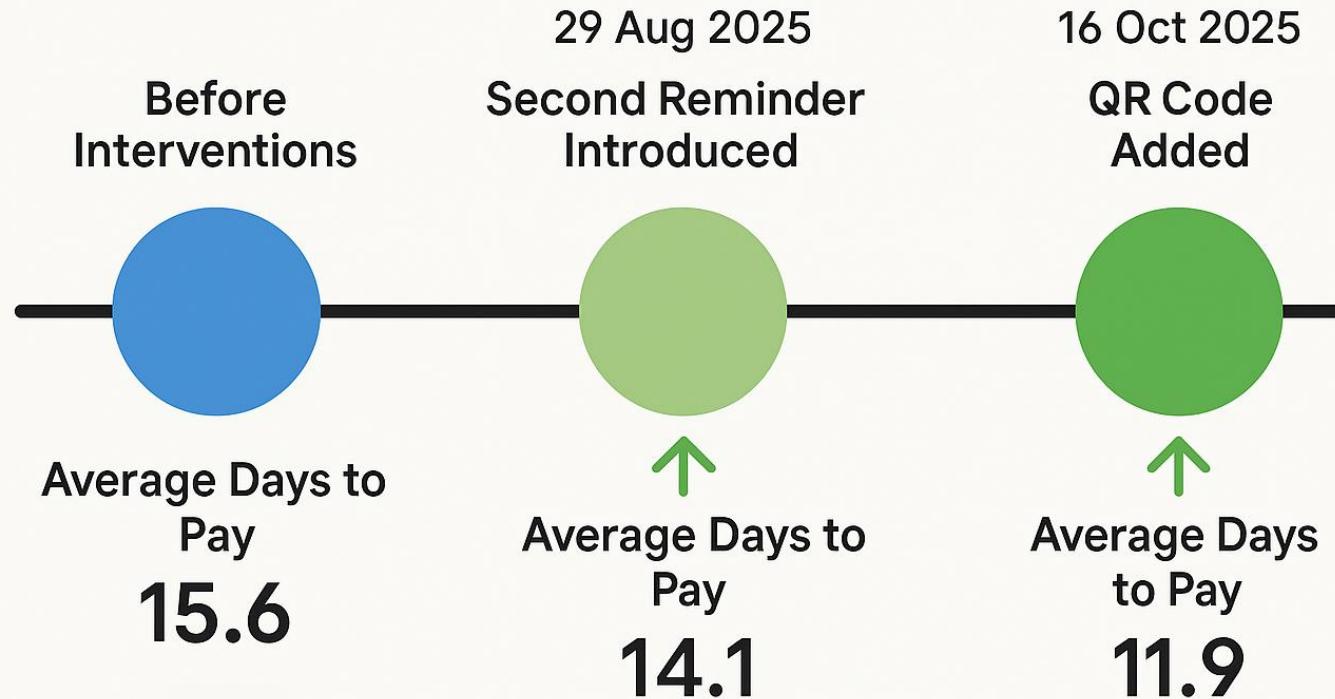
Empower

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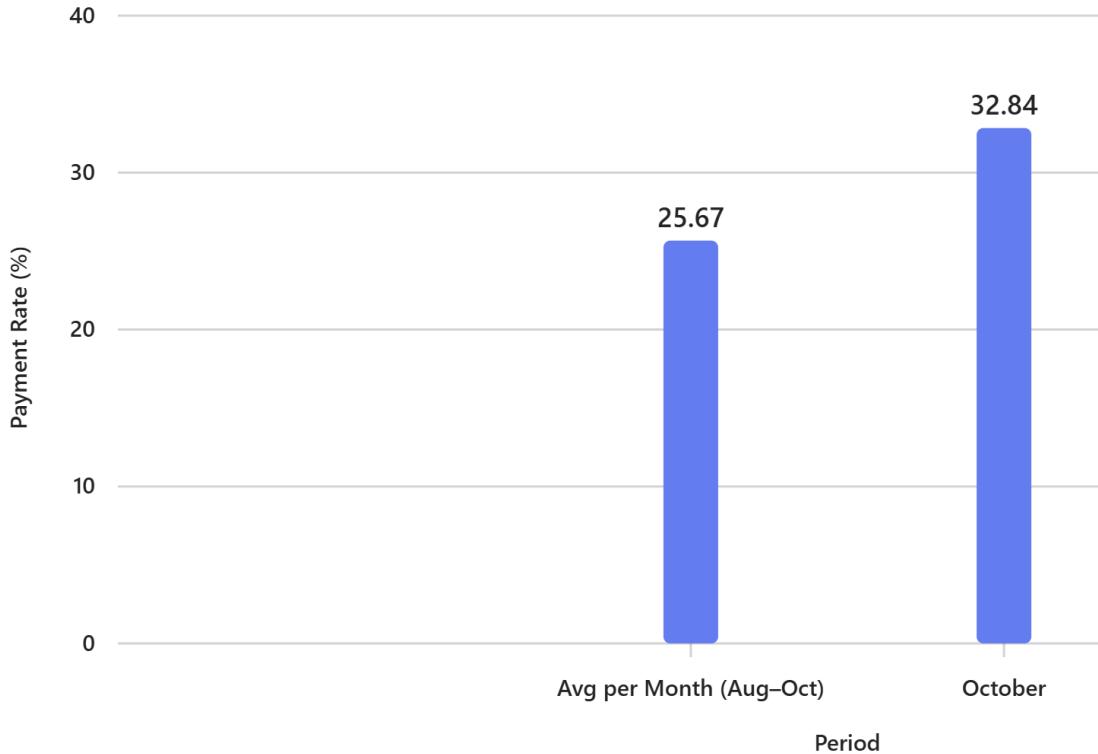


Impact of Penalty Notice Interventions



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Key Insight on Payment Trends

- **Aug–Oct (3 months):** Overall payment rate was 77%, averaging ~25.7% per month.
- **October alone:** Payment rate jumped to 32.84%, which is ~28% higher than the previous monthly average.

October outperformed the earlier period showing that the **QR code intervention accelerated payments and improved efficiency.**

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How Can You Help Encourage PN Payments?

What do you do in your school when a PN has been requested?

Do you contact parents to prompt payments?

Do you remind parents that PNs are issued per parent, per child?

Do you check on cases?

Do you have a set time to log on to the MRI portal?

Do you look at the resources online?

Have you shared feedback about the process with us?

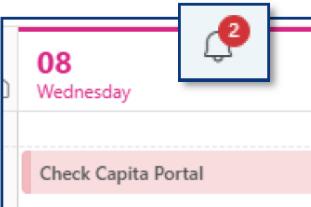
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How can we prevent further legal intervention?



Proceeding to Prosecution



Regular log ins to the Capita portal allow you to see your cases' progress

Actions

- Review submitted requests
- View withdrawn notices
- View declined requests
- Review potential prosecutions
- Review proceeded to prosecution**
- View paid notices

A blue arrow points from the 'Review proceeded to prosecution' option down to the 'Proceed To Prosecution' button on the next screen.

Please refer to the 'Information on all Legal Proceedings' page on Schoolsnet for guidance on completing a witness statement and exhibits for a G-coded 'holiday or leisure-related' absence. The page includes:

- A template witness statement under Useful Documents
- A training video
- A model example for other types of unauthorised absence

Schools may wish to contact parents to encourage a late payment, which can only be accepted during the week following our request for a witness statement and exhibits. In most cases, the late payment amount will be £160. Parents must make the payment online using a code provided by the Education Inclusion Service. Please direct them to call 01452 427274 for assistance.

Please send completed documents to attendance@gloucestershire.gov.uk by 19/09/2025.

As soon as a case has proceeded to prosecution, you can request a new penalty notice for the child if the unauthorised absences threshold has been met again.

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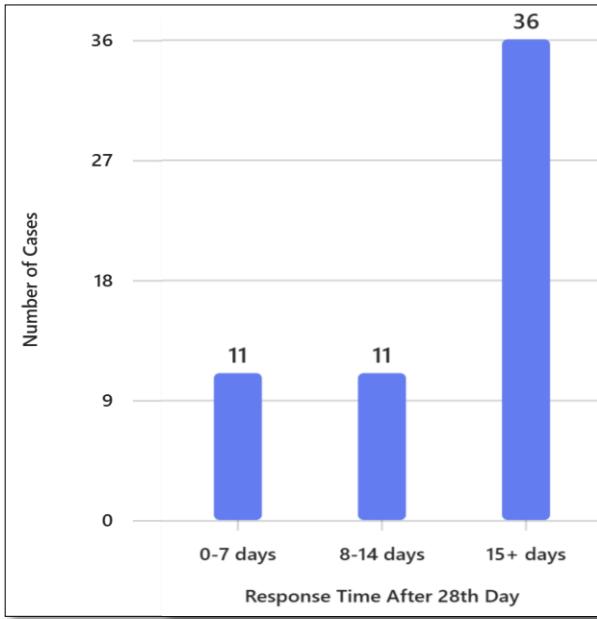
Additional emails to remind schools
will cease in December



Potential prosecutions

Autumn Term 1, 2025

For cases for absences from June 2025 and July 2025



Schools that responded with paperwork following the 28th day payment deadline

Total Cases

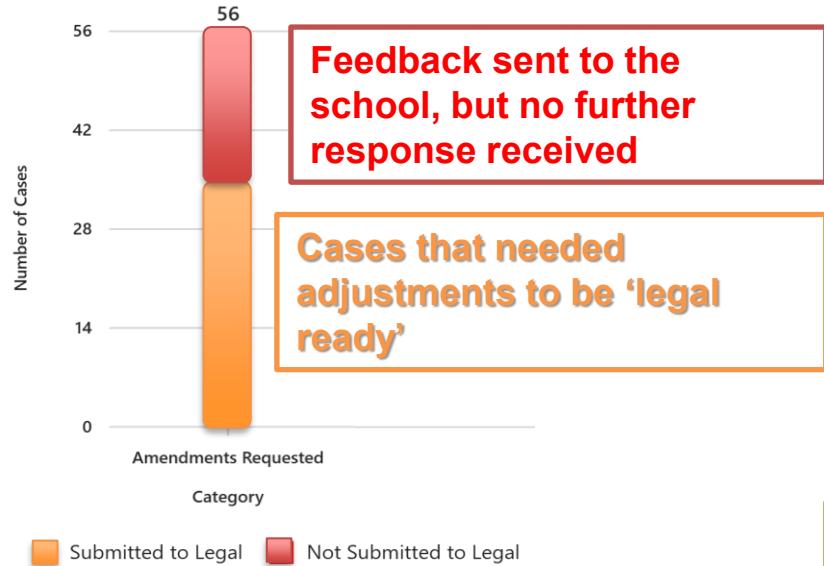
242 cases were unpaid and could have proceeded to court.

Outcomes

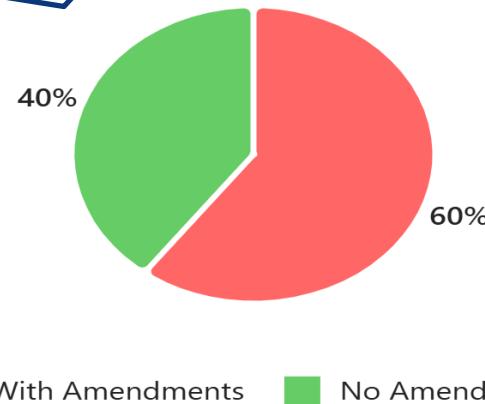
- No response from school: 132 cases
- Submitted to Legal: 58 cases
- Late Payment Authorised: 43 cases
- Withdrawn: 8 cases

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Thank you so much for your help with the witness statements - I do really appreciate it :)



Schools that are regularly referring to the support material have said that it has helped them prepare 'legal ready' paperwork

That's great, thanks so much for your response :)

I will sort today and make the amendments needed. Thank you for all your help

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Paperwork Feedback

for witness statements and exhibits

Thank you for completing the witness statements and supporting documents for the unpaid penalty cases.

I have reviewed the materials and would like to share some suggested improvements to help ensure your documents meet legal requirements and reflect best practice. Please consider the following points when completing your paperwork:

ALL UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

Witness Statement

Legal and Procedural Accuracy

- The witness statement must be legally compliant (support documents and examples are available on Schoolsnet).
- Each parent must have a separate witness statement, and the children are listed together. Parents are tried separately.
- The witness statement should only reference the parent it concerns, e.g. "CHILD lives with PARENT," rather than "CHILD lives with PARENT and PARENT."
- If the parents are separated, the parent of the witness statement must be identified as a parent of the witness. Refer to the wording in the template.
- All references to signatures must include a written signature (electronic is acceptable). N.B. There is one at the bottom of the declaration and when the witness statement is complete; there is also a space for a signature in the footer of each page.
- Show the child(ren)'s date of birth when introducing them e.g. CHILD is # years old (DOB DATE)
- Distance from the school should be in miles and to one decimal place e.g., 1.2
- The definition of *regular attendance* must be a direct copy from the attendance policy and included as a full sentence.
- The attendance percentage cited should reflect the whole academic year, as shown on the attendance certificate.
- Schools should not include expected attendance percentages in policies or witness statements e.g. 97% attendance (as per guidance since 2023).
- The witness statement should include a summary of what each exhibit

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Paperwork Feedback

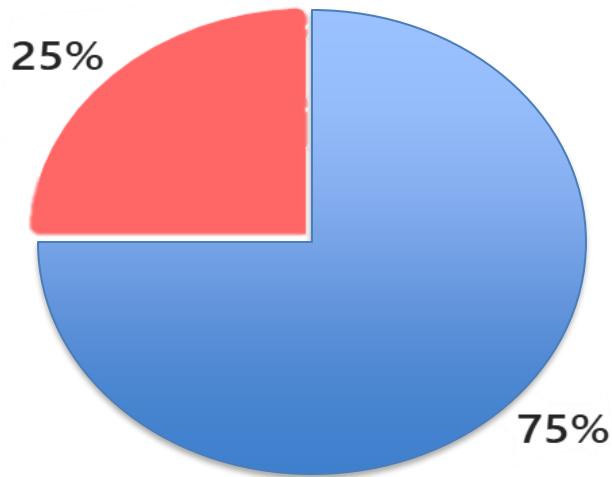
We have made this available for schools to review in conjunction with the templates and checklists.

Please refer to this before writing your witness statements and collating your exhibits.

Available on Schoolsnet



Autumn Term 1



Could Have Proceeded but Did Not



Submitted to Legal

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Empowering Schools through Comprehensive Online Support

We aim to strengthen schools' confidence in preparing paperwork, enabling timely progression of cases to court.



Accessible Resources

Providing easy access to online resources supports staff in managing attendance and training efficiently.

Expert Guidance

Expert advice and legal support build confidence in handling attendance and compliance issues.

Supportive Community

A connected community offers collaborative support, enhancing problem-solving and motivation.

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53
Cases

84.9% Defendants
did not attend

Average Total Cost
£790.50

Did not attend and
no plea submitted

Average Total Cost
£466.10
Submitted a
Guilty Plea

Highest cost: £1 174
Lowest cost: £181

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Court outcomes

Financial Impact

£80 Penalty Notice for first offence
vs £790 average court cost

Additional costs: travel, time off
work, childcare

Non-payment – bailiffs, deductions
from wages



Legal and Record Implications

Criminal Conviction Duration

Convictions under Education Act 1996 remain on record for 12 months impacting individual's legal history.

Disclosure and Barring Service Checks

Convictions appear on DBS checks required for jobs in education, healthcare, and regulated sectors.

Employment Restrictions

Parents with convictions may face job disqualifications and must disclose convictions to employers.

Need for Clear Communication

Continue to clearly communicate conviction risks to families to prevent underestimation of consequences.

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Consequences Beyond Financial Penalties

Employment and Career Impact

Criminal convictions can require disclosure to employers, risking job loss and limiting career opportunities.

Emotional and Family Stress

Court proceedings and stigma cause significant emotional distress affecting family dynamics and mental health.

Importance of Awareness in Schools

Schools must highlight long-term consequences to families to improve understanding and early intervention.

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Upcoming Court Dates

Next Court Dates

January 2026
April 2026

These court dates are for absences from April 2025. We are awaiting outcomes for cases in the Single-Justice Procedure System.

Should there be no improvement following a penalty notice, you may request a second one:

- once the threshold has been met,
- and the first penalty notice has passed the 28-day payment period.

'Continuing, Relentless Support' Formalising Attendance Intervention

not prosecuting as a punitive measure

- What are the first things we can do?
- How can we support a pupil whose attendance is nearing persistent levels?
- What supportive measures are available to us inside and outside of school?
- What else is going on for this child? Is poor attendance a symptom rather than the cause?
- What happens when there is no engagement?
- How do we record what has been done?



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Key Takeaways

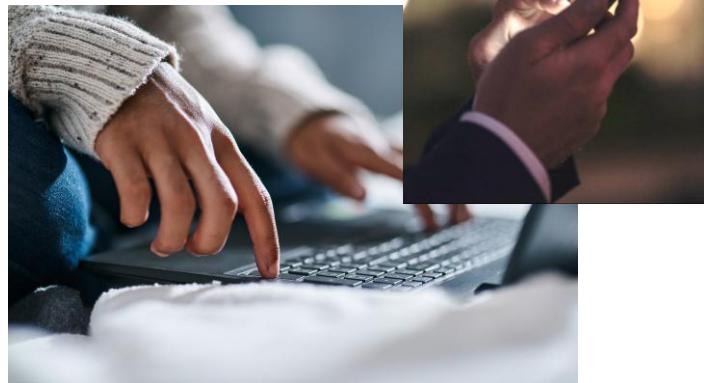
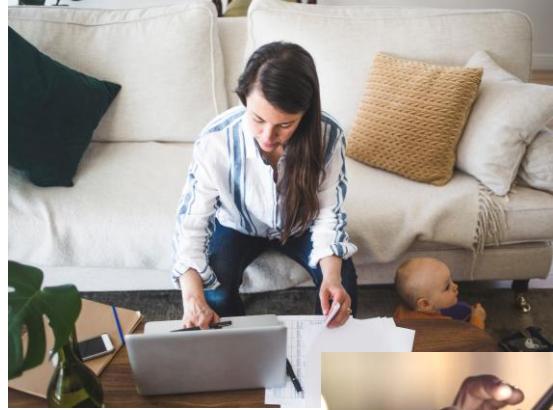
Regularly check the MRI portal for updates – Action Needed and Proceeded to Prosecution

Review the Paperwork Support document before writing the witness statement

Proof-read your work so it is 'legal ready'

For unpaid Penalty Notices, **or for third offences within a rolling three-year period**, submit your legal pack to attendance@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Maintain the momentum of support and speak to your Inclusion Officer rather than waiting for a court date.



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Any
questions?

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Thank you

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