

Appendix 6**LCS and SRA Initiatives outlined in the Improvement Plan 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007**

Name of initiative	Planned start date	Planned completion date	Stated Aim
Resolve old cases	April 2006	March 2007	<p>The aim is to reduce the number of cases older than 15 months.</p> <p>Delivery of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improved tracking of older cases; • streamlined procedures to older cases; • formal escalation for older cases; • alternative resources to handle older cases; and • the inclusion of individual case progress in Performance Management.
Timeliness of complaint closure	April 2006	March 2007	<p>The aim is to achieve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 57% of new cases closed within 3 months; and • 94% of current cases closed within 12 months. <p>Delivery of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a reduction in inappropriate delay; • an improved speed of communication with customers, solicitors and third parties; • advanced mediation training for caseworkers; • improved workflow of cases; • standard use of the failure to reply processes; • standard use of all casework management tools.
Casework productivity	April 2006	March 2007	<p>The aim is to increase the number of complaint closures per caseworker by 5% by 28 February 2007.</p> <p>Delivery of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • streamlined caseworking practices; • optimised decision making processes; • removal of temporary closures; and • a reduction in non-caseworking activities by the caseworker.
Unallocated time reduction	April 2006	March 2007	<p>Aim of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing the average age profile time of unallocated files to under 9 weeks by October 2006; • reduce the number of unallocated cases to 600 by 28 February 2007; and • reduce the average age profile of unallocated cases to allocation to 6 weeks or below by 28 February 2007. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Continued over...</i></p>

Appendix 6 continued**LCS and SRA Initiatives outlined in the Improvement Plan 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007**

Name of initiative	Planned start date	Planned completion date	Stated Aim
			Delivery of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • revised criteria for designation and allocation of new cases; • additional resources to support unallocated reduction along with contingencies to deal with fluctuations in receipts; and • streamlined processes for unallocated files.
Quality	April 2006	March 2007	Aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure internal audit results show achievement of the Commissioner's targets; • show quarterly increases in customer satisfaction ratings for service; • put new file review process in place; and • minimise Caseworker Advisor involvement in files reviews. Delivery of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quarterly audits, with feedback training to staff; • staff fully aware of the customer service standards; • a new file review process, linked to performance development; • a new letter receipt and acknowledgement process; • Informants' service standards; • a streamlined special payment policy and staff are fully trained; and • target timescales for report adjudication.
Business planning	April 2006	March 2007	Aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure the total budget to support delivery of the plan will be fully utilised; and • ensure that all resources are fully utilised. Delivery of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a fully resourced business planning team; • a resource database that will track and monitor resources, include information from the HR system and link to the capacity planning tool; • investigation of the benefits of profiling resource skills against incoming work; and • standard use of capacity planning.

Appendix 6 continued**LCS and SRA Initiatives outlined in the Improvement Plan 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007**

Name of initiative	Planned start date	Planned completion date	Stated Aim
Separation of consumer complaints and professional regulation	Ongoing	February 2007	<p>Aims to achieve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • counting rules, which separate redress from regulation; • specialist redress activities handled within LCS; and • Informants Protocol is in operation appropriately. <p>Delivery of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proposals for a change to the counting rules to separate redress from ongoing regulatory action; • separate the work of specialist teams and transfer redress activities to LCS; and • apply Informants Protocol to specialist teams remaining within SRA.
Extension of helpline opening hours	August 2006	April 2007	<p>This project will have achieved its objective when an informed decision has been made by the end of April 2007 on whether to permanently extend the helpline operating hours, based in part on the results of a pilot to be run during the year.</p> <p>Delivery of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • initial research to identify the hours that best meet the needs of consumers; • determination of the resource requirements and costs; • identification and scoping of system changes; • investigation, scoping and roll-out of improved management information to measure customer response and service levels; • investigation of the introduction of shift work; • marketing and advertisement of the extended hours; and • changes to literature and stationery.
Assessment of Informants' Protocol	August 2006	March 2007	Aims to assess the Informants' Protocol by a survey of Informants and to analyse and collate the findings.

Appendix 7
The Commissioner's Targets, Recommendations and Key Performance Indicators for LCS and SRA 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008

The 3 strategic priorities set by the Commissioner for 2007/08 provide balanced and complimentary objectives covering all complaints handling activity within LCS and SRA. The strategic priorities continue to address similar areas as those in 2006/07.

- **Strategic Priority 1**
Improving the speed with which complaints are handled by LCS and SRA.
- **Strategic Priority 2**
Improving the quality of complaints handling by LCS and SRA.
- **Strategic Priority 3**
Implementing LCS and SRA's agreed Plan.

The Commissioner's targets set for the period 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008 are as follows.

Timeliness Target T1 - By the end of March 2008, to have no open cases that have been open for 12 months or more. For Redress and Conduct (RDC) matters only, to have no more than 65 cases that have been open for 12 months or more.

Timeliness Target T2 – 67% of cases received are closed within 3 months.

Timeliness Recommendation TR1 – In order to achieve the Commissioner's targets, in all cases where there is delay as defined below, it is recommended that the length of delay needs to be reduced for case receipts during April 2007 to March 2008.

- Allocation
- Failure to respond
- Sickness/other absence
- Reallocation to new caseworker
- No obvious reason
- Report writing

Quality Target Q1 – 93% of complaints are acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt.

Quality Target Q2a - 88% of complaints receive a substantive response from LCS and SRA within 45 calendar days of receipt of the complaint.

Quality Target Q2b – 93% of cases to confirm the following standard information to informants: Law Society powers and processes, internal complaints procedure and confirm to the consumer that their complaint may be copied to the solicitor about whom the complaint has been made.

Quality Target Q3 – 85% of complaints have, at an appropriate stage, the Law Society's Indicative Awards Guidance (IAG) and Reasonable Offer Made (ROM) guidance (where the ROM process is being followed) shared with the consumer and solicitor (this must be sufficiently evidenced on the case).

Quality Target Q4 – 88% of cases to be contacted every 30 days or at key stages.

Quality Target Q5 – In 85% or more of cases closed on or after 1 April 2007, and six months and over:

- consideration and/or award of special payment(s) must be in line with the relevant Law Society special payment policy guidance and evidenced on the case; and
- there must be evidence on the case of a special payment consideration on closure that is in line with policy guidance.

Quality Target Q6 – 73% or more of referrals to the LSO in which the LSO upholds the handling of the case by LCS and SRA.

Quality Recommendation QR1 – To improve quality, LCS and SRA managers should ensure that every case is checked at least once during its lifecycle by someone independent of the caseworker that deals with the case, and lessons learned should be fed back at individual caseworker and team level where necessary.

Quality Recommendation QR2 – LCS and SRA committed in their 2006/07 complaints handling Plan to cease the temporary closure policy. This should have been removed by 1 April 2007 at the latest.

Quality Recommendation QR3 – It is recommended that LCS and SRA undertake a review of their use of outsourcing and develop a long-term strategy on its use, including how they can ensure they receive best value for money from this resource.

Delivery of the Plan Target P1 – The total budget to support the delivery of LCS and SRA's 2007/08 complaints handling Plan to be at least 95% utilised in accordance with the Plan.

Delivery of the Plan Target P2 – All resources (including: staff, outsourcing, Local Conciliation Officers) to support delivery of LCS and SRA's 2007/08 complaints handling Plan to be at least 95% utilised in accordance with the Plan.

Delivery of the Plan Target P3 – Priority initiatives to support the delivery of LCS and SRA's 2007/08 complaints handling Plan are delivered to time and cost in accordance with the Plan, and meet all related milestones and benefits to be realised.

Delivery of the Plan Target P4 – Progress against LCS and SRA's 2007/08 complaints handling Plan, the Commissioner's targets and supporting KPIs is reported to the Commissioner each month showing monthly and year-to-date information (dates have been agreed for the Commissioner's monthly performance report during 2007/08). This report should also show, at least on a quarterly basis, the findings of LCS and SRA's own internal quality audit report.

Delivery of the Plan Recommendation PR1 – LCS and SRA should ensure that they have consistent guidelines for their project managers to ensure that all changes are managed in a structured and controlled way.

Delivery of the Plan Recommendation PR2 – LCS and SRA should better assess the feasibility of their improvement work before inclusion in their work programme and also before implementation commences.

Delivery of the Plan Recommendation PR3 – LCS and SRA should improve their use of evaluation techniques, to ensure they understand where their change work has resulted in improvements and where they need to do more.

Additional recommendations being made by the Commissioner, to improve LCS and SRA's handling of complaints

AR1 – To support this work and ensure that action is taken now, particularly in the context of LCS and SRA's development of new IT systems, the Commissioner recommends that LCS and SRA:

- improve their collection and analysis of information about the people who complain to them;
- improve their collection and analysis of information about the solicitors being complained about, including identification of the solicitors responsible for the majority of complaints; and
- take action to ensure that these findings are translated into improved access to their own service, and address the training and needs of their members.
- LCS and SRA to report their progress on implementation of this recommendation monthly, including their plans for developing regular reporting on this to all stakeholders.

Key Performance Indicators for 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008**Target Strategic Point 1 – Improving the speed with which complaints are handled by LCS and SRA**

Ref	Title	Frequency of Law Society reporting
Timeliness KPI 1	Age profile (in months) of carry over to 2007/08 as at 1 April 2007	One-off information requirement
Timeliness KPI 2	Age profile of closures in months	Monthly
Timeliness KPI 3	Age profile of receipts after 1 April 2007 in months	Monthly
Timeliness KPI 4	Number of receipts by type	Monthly
Timeliness KPI 5	Number of closures by type	Monthly
Timeliness KPI 6	Number and age profile of unallocated cases	Monthly
Timeliness KPI 7	Number of closures per FTE caseworker	Monthly
Timeliness KPI 8	Number of case transfers and average age of case at transfer	Monthly
Timeliness KPI 9	Timeliness by outcome type	Monthly
Timeliness KPI 10	Age profile of, and number of helpline and written enquiries received and closed	Monthly
Timeliness KPI 11	Number of cases rolling over 9 months old at end of the previous month	Monthly

Target Strategic Point 2 – Improving the quality of complaints handling by LCS and SRA

Ref	Title	Frequency of Law Society reporting
Quality 2 KPI 1	Number and percentage of cases where heads of complaints are correctly identified and addressed during confirmation to the client/informant	Monthly
Quality 2 KPI 2	Number and percentage of cases where heads of complaints are correctly identified and addressed with the solicitor	Monthly
Quality 2 KPI 3	Number and percentage of cases where heads of complaints are correctly identified and addressed at case closure	Monthly
Quality 5 KPI 1	Number of and average size of special payments made by LCS and SRA	Monthly
Quality 6 KPI 1	Referrals to LSO by outcome, case type, method of decision	Monthly
Quality 6 KPI 2	Complaints upheld by LSO by outcome, case type, method of decision	Monthly
Quality 6 KPI 3	Breakdown of numbers referred and sanctions imposed by the Solicitors' Disciplinary Tribunal	Monthly

**Other Key Performance Indicators –
Customer Satisfaction**

Ref	Title	Frequency of Law Society reporting
Customer Service KPI 1	Satisfaction with service	Monthly
Customer Service KPI 2	Satisfaction with outcome	Monthly
Customer Service KPI 3	Proportion of complaints about LCS and SRA handled under their internal complaints procedure	Monthly

**Other Key Performance Indicators –
Report Writing**

Ref	Title	Frequency of Law Society reporting
Report Writing KPI 1	Average time taken to write a report for adjudication	Monthly

Appendix 8

LCS and SRA's Initiatives outlined in the Improvement Plan 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008

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Name of initiative	Planned start date	Planned completion date	Stated aim
Undertake an equality and diversity assessment	April 2007	March 2008	<p>To assist in embedding a culture of equality and diversity and support working towards becoming a model of good practice on equality and diversity.</p> <p>Will deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • baselined audit of policies and procedures with regard to equality and diversity; • improved gathering and recording of equality and diversity information from customers, informants and solicitors; • identified policies and procedures for impact assessment; and • findings, recommendations and implementation plan.
Review of complete process for handling complaints	April 2007	March 2008	<p>To highlight areas for improvement in both speed and quality to enhance overall performance.</p> <p>Will deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • process model with responsibilities and accountabilities; • how each step interacts with others to develop existing processes; and • an online process manual, accessible to caseworkers.
Review to assess implications and requirements of publishing solicitors' complaint records	April 2007	March 2008	<p>To scope the feasibility of publishing data on solicitors' complaint records to inform consumers when selecting legal services.</p> <p>Plans to deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recommendation to both Boards; • subject to Board approval, implementation; • improved information for consumers of legal services; and • improved quality of service offered by the legal profession.

Appendix 9
Key facts and figures

- At 31 July 2006 there were 104,543 solicitors in England and Wales.²⁷

Below are some key facts and figures relating to legal complaints handling in the period 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007:

- LCS and SRA received 18,434 new complaints against solicitors. During 2005/06 they received 18,299 new complaints;
- of the 18,434 new complaints received in 2006/07, 4,917 were conduct cases received in SRA;
- LCS and SRA received 476 miners' cases that had been handled under the Coal Health Compensation Scheme;
- the total Law Society expenditure was just over £1.38m²⁸;
- LCS and SRA budget shown in their Improvement Plan was £36.122m;
- LCS and SRA employed 426.64 (full time equivalent) staff in their complaints handling operation;
- there were 282 sanctions against solicitors imposed by the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal. Of these, 74 were struck off, 90 were fined, 37 suspended and 11 no order. There were 70 sanctions in other categories, including reprimands, applications granted and refused, appeals and costs only decisions;
- the OLSCC budget was £1.63m;
- the average number of whole time equivalent persons employed by the OLSCC was 18.83 and 1 self-employed to support the Commissioner in regulating LCS and SRA;
- the OLSCC audited in excess of 4,300 Law Society casefiles.

²⁷ Trends in the solicitors' profession Annual statistical report 2006 published by the Law Society

²⁸ The Law Society's Management Accounts Figures for the period ending 31 March 2007

**Appendix 10
Glossary**

This section provides a glossary of useful words, terms, acronyms, abbreviations and phrases used within this Annual Report.

2005/06	This covers the period from 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006.
2006/07	This covers the period from 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007.
2007/08	This covers the period from 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008.
Adjudication	The process used when a formal decision is required if a caseworker cannot help a consumer and solicitor reach agreement on the case
Complaints	Means both complaints, in which solicitors' customers seek redress, and allegations about solicitors' conduct, whether made by solicitors, consumers or by third parties. The term 'complaint' does not include enquiries where LCS and SRA provide information, clarification, or explanation of jurisdiction. These are counted separately and recorded as 'enquiries'.
Commissioner	Legal Services Complaints Commissioner.
Conciliation	This is a process leading to the resolution of the complaint by agreement between the consumer and solicitor without the need for a formal decision by LCS.
Conduct cases	A complaint that relates to the actions/behaviour of an individual solicitor rather than the service received from the firm of solicitors as a whole.
Consumer	Anyone who uses LCS and SRA's service. This is both people who have a complaint about their solicitor, and solicitors against whom a complaint has been received.
Counting Rules	The counting rules are those agreed with LCS and SRA as set out in the Legal Services Ombudsman's definitions document and determine whether correspondence received from the consumer is categorised as either an enquiry or a complaint.
FTE	Full-time equivalent (with relation to staff).
Informant	Someone who informs the SRA of an allegation of misconduct.
KPI	Key Performance Indicators - a measure used to assess the effectiveness of a particular process, system or service.
LCO	Local Conciliation Officers - these are solicitors who have received complaints handling training to enable them to investigate complaints on behalf of LCS.
LCS	Legal Complaints Service – (from 22 January 2007) the complaints handling body of the Law Society of England and Wales. This is the organisation handling service related complaints about solicitors. Formerly known as the Consumer Complaints Service (CCS).
Legal Services Consumer Board	Established to advise the Commissioner on consumer issues, and assist in identifying what the consumer expects from complaints handling in legal services provision.
LSB	Legal Services Board – under the Government's legal reforms it is proposed that the LSB will become responsible for the oversight of all the legal front-line regulators including the Law Society.
LSO	Legal Services Ombudsman appointed by the Lord Chancellor to oversee complaints about solicitors, barristers, legal executives, licensed conveyancers and patent agents by the six professional bodies responsible for setting and maintaining standards of conduct and service within the legal profession. The Ombudsman cannot be a qualified lawyer and is completely independent of the legal profession.
MI	Management Information supplied by LCS and SRA.
OLC	Office for Legal Complaints – under the Government's legal reforms it is proposed that the OLC will become responsible for handling all complaints about the legal profession and will be independent of the legal professional bodies.

OLSCC	Office of the Legal Services Complaints Commissioner.
Outside Law Society jurisdiction	There are certain categories of complaint, which fall outside LCS and SRA jurisdiction to handle – for example some types of negligence cases.
PSU	Practice Standards Unit, the part of the Law Society's SRA responsible for monitoring standards amongst members of the Law Society, including the quality of complaints handling processes that all solicitors are required to have in place to deal with complaints.
Redress case	A case where allegation(s) of poor service are raised and require possible investigation leading to possible payments of compensation.
Regulation case	A case where allegation(s) of misconduct are raised and require possible investigation leading to possible regulatory sanctions by the SRA.
RDC	Redress and regulatory case. A complaint which starts as a customer redress complaint with the LCS, then suggests aspects of misconduct which requires separate investigation leading to possible regulatory sanctions by the SRA.
Resolved without Law Society intervention	The consumer and solicitor have reached agreement on the complaint without the need for any intervention on the part of LCS.
Rule 15	This is the rule governing the complaints handling procedures which solicitors should have in place. LCS and SRA will generally only consider cases where the consumer has first registered the complaint with the solicitor in question. This has now been revised and is termed Rule 2.
SDT	The Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal is a statutory tribunal whose primary function is to consider and adjudicate upon allegations of professional misconduct or breaches of professional rules by solicitors and solicitors' employees. It is constitutionally independent of the Law Society although its administration is funded by the Society. The SDT may order: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the striking off the Roll of the name of the solicitor to whom the application or complaint relates; • the suspension of the solicitor from practise; • the payment by the solicitor of a penalty.
Special Payments	These are used to compensate the consumer for loss, inconvenience or distress caused by failings in LCS and SRA service, (previously known as ex-gratia payments).
SRA	The Solicitors Regulation Authority – the regulatory body of the Law Society of England and Wales. Formerly known as Conduct Assessment and Investigation Unit (CAI).
Temporary Closures	A case file can be temporarily closed when matters outside of LCS and SRA's control, as outlined in their procedures, are ongoing which may have a bearing on the outcome of the complaint. In these cases, once the matter is resolved, the onus is on the consumer to resume contact with LCS and SRA.
The Act	Access to Justice Act 1999 except where specified.
Upheld	Case has been investigated and found to be valid and no conciliation has been involved. Such cases could then be passed forward for further action – e.g. a misconduct case.
Within jurisdiction but investigation declined	This is where the size and type of investigation that would be involved versus the benefit of undertaking such a process, deems the process not viable or unwarranted, e.g. very minor conduct cases or complex negligence.

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