

# MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CRIMINAL CONTRACT CONSULTATIVE GROUP 7 FEBRUARY 2002

Present: Tim Colliou (Legal Services Commission), Richard Collins (Legal Services Commission), Katherine Pears (Legal Services Commission), Greg Lewis (Law Society), Rodney Warren (Law Society), Steve Wedd (CLSA).

## 1 Apologies

Hilary Moufid (Legal Services Commission), Rob Brown (LCCSA), Shaun Murphy (LAPG)

## 2 Latest Statistics

The latest statistics supplied by the Commission showed a drop off of claims in December, but this was likely to be seasonal and an increase was expected in January. The most recent reconciliation exercise should ensure that payments broadly match bills submitted for the remainder of the first year schedules.

The SMPs for April are unlikely to change, but there will be a further national exercise that will aim to reset the payments in May. Firms will be contacted in March. The aim is to make adjustments on a more regular basis, the initial reset will ensure that all firms are at 90-95%. The Commission will look only at the last 6 months of records to ensure the correct running rate. They will also be redrafting the monthly payment rules and will be consulting on any changes.

## 3. Acknowledgement of CDS 6

The Commission has given consideration to the problem highlighted at the last meeting and proposed a possible solution. In future, if the CDS 6 is not received by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month, the SMP will go out anyway. The Contract Manager will then contact the firm to find out if there was a problem. This compromise will not affect the requirement to submit CDS 6s by the 10<sup>th</sup> in normal circumstances.

## 4. Funding Review Committees

The next of *Focus on CDS* will ask for nominees to sit on Funding Review Committees.

## 5. Age Profiling of Duty Solicitors

There is no specific evidence of migration of members from the scheme and numbers remain at between 5500-6000.

## 6. Public Defender Service

The research methodology for the pilots was due to be published in February. It will be placed on the Legal Services Commission website and distributed to firms in the pilot areas. Researchers will invite these firms to talk to them about their experience of working in the pilot areas.

With regard to the particular problems in Birmingham, it was proposed that the Commission would undertake a review of the rules and the membership of local schemes in a bid to challenge some perceptions of the way the schemes were currently operated.

## 7. Costs Assessment Manual/PACE Bills Assessment Manual

Following the meeting to discuss the consultation responses, the Manuals would go live on 1 April and audits thereafter would be subject to the guidance contained within. It was also hoped to publish them on the Commission website in revision mode

## 8. Crown Court Contracting

At present, the intention would be for firms to use the same UFN for Crown Court cases from April 2003 onwards.

## 9. Revision of Contract

The Group was given a draft consultation paper on proposed changes to the General Criminal Contract and after receiving initial views from the Group, the Commission would aim to publish it more widely.

## 10. Minutes

It was agreed that in future the group would aim to have minutes of these meetings posted on the websites within 7 working days.