



London Regional Office
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December 2004

Dear []

Managed Competition and an Extension to the General Criminal Contract

We announced our intention to introduce managed competition through competitive tendering for criminal lower legal aid services in London last year. This would entail the replacement of the current General Criminal Contract with a new contract across the Greater London region. General Criminal Contracts awarded to all London firms are due to expire on 30 June 2005 while our current estimate of the earliest date when managed competition could be implemented and the new contract introduced is late 2005. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the latest position and to offer you an extension to your existing contract.

Work is now well advanced on the development of a consultation paper on managed competition that will need to be approved by both the Commission and Ministers at the Department for Constitutional Affairs before being published early in the new year. A copy will be sent to all legal aid suppliers and a 12 week consultation period will follow.

The consultation paper will set out a proposed framework for the introduction of managed competition and we are committed to taking sufficient time to ensure a fair and effective tendering process is developed. We will arrange a series of meetings with professional bodies, individual solicitors and other key stakeholders as part of the consultation process and look forward to working closely with interested parties to ensure that the process is managed in an open and constructive way.

This letter constitutes an offer to extend your General Criminal Contract on the terms in force on 30 June 2005. The extended contract will have no specified end date but will have a notice of termination period of three months. However, we will not use this provision to terminate your contract any sooner than 31 December 2005. There is no need to reply to this letter if you wish to accept the extension, as we will treat

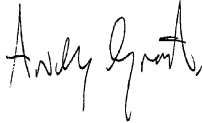
your carrying out work under the contract, after 30 June 2005, as acceptance of the extension.

If you accept this extension, the term in your Contract for Signature that specifies the contract end date of 30 June 2005, is replaced by our right to give three months' notice of termination, not to expire before 31 December 2005.

This offer does not invalidate or affect any contract notice that we may issue, or may have issued to you in respect of the operation of your current contract and is subject to any such specific notice.

In the event that you do not wish to accept our offer of an extension, or if you have any questions about this letter, please contact your CDS Manager in London Regional Office in the new year. If you do not wish to accept our offer of an extension, they will need to consider whether to authorise you to carry out Remainder Work after 30 June 2005.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy Grant". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and a long, sweeping tail.

Andy Grant
Regional Director