

Greg Lewis
Head of Legal Aid Policy
The Law Society
DX 56 LONDON Chancery Lane

15 May 2006

Dear Greg,

Amendments to General Criminal Contract and Guidance – October 2006

I attach a consultation document on amendments to the General Criminal Contract and the Criminal Guidance Manuals that we propose for October 2006.

We intend that the document will be available on our website from Wednesday and that the consultation period will last until 26 June 2006. Responses should be directed to John Binns.

The document contains explanatory narrative on the amendments from pages 3 onwards, structured as follows:

- A Amendments related to the Criminal Defence Service Act 2006;
- B Other contract amendments;
- C Changes to the guidance manuals;
- D Changes to the Police Station Register Arrangements.

The remainder of the document is a set of appendices containing the proposed amendments in draft. I hope that this structure is clear and helps you to prepare a response, but please let me know if there are improvements that can be made to the process.

The Commission will be making changes to a number of CDS forms in order that equal opportunities data can be collected for clients benefiting from CDS funding. It is intended that data on ethnicity, gender and disability will be collected. It is not necessary for changes to be made to the General Criminal Contract to implement this change but there will be consultation with The Law Society and other representative bodies on amendments to forms and guidance for service providers. It is anticipated that these changes will come into effect from October 2006.

There is one further set of amendments proposed for implementation in October 2006, to revise our arrangements for costs committees. This proposal is the subject of a separate consultation and the details are available on our website now.

It is essential that the consultation period is as effective as possible and opportunities are taken to resolve any issues at the earliest opportunity. In any event, we would be keen to

arrange one or more meetings with the Law Society (and other representative bodies) to discuss any issues as soon as possible, and would be very glad to hear from you regarding the same.

A copy of the consultation pack will also be placed on our website at www.legalservices.gov.uk.

I am copying this letter to Rodney Warren, LAPG, LCCSA, CLSA, the Black Solicitors Network, Society of Asian Lawyers and Association of Muslim Lawyers.

Yours sincerely

Derek Hill
Director, Criminal Defence Service