

legal services

COMMISSION

Improving value for money for publicly funded criminal
defence services in London

Consultation response analysis
Final Report

May 2006

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Part 1: Overview

Introduction

The consultation paper Improving value for money for publicly funded criminal defence services in London was published on 28th January 2005 and the consultation period closed on 27th May 2005. Copies were sent to all suppliers in England and Wales as well as a large number of representative bodies and other interested parties. 350 responses were received.

Respondent Type	No.
London firms	142
Non-London firms	155
Representative bodies	21
Others	32
Total	350

45 respondents provided voluntary equal opportunities data

Responses from representative bodies included those from:

- The Law Society
- Young Barristers Committee
- Legal Aid Practitioners Group
- London Criminal Courts Solicitors' Association
- Criminal Law Solicitors' Association
- Solicitors Association of Higher Court Advocates
- Black Solicitors Network
- Legal Action Group
- Society of Asian Lawyers

This is the final report on the evaluation of responses to the consultation. This evaluation consists of both an analysis of the answers respondents gave to the 33 consultation questions and a broader theme-based analysis of the views expressed in the responses.

Overview of consultation responses

Responses to the consultation tended to be short, many around 1-2 pages in length, and consisted mainly of statements of opinion. Respondents typically did not seek to justify their assertions or develop them past broad areas of concern.

Respondents also frequently endorsed the responses of representative bodies in lieu of making the arguments themselves.

A typical quote from a response to consultation:

'Please accept this letter as confirmation of my strong opposition to the LSC consultation document on price competitive tendering. The basis of my objection is that the proposals if carried out will result in reduced access to justice and will have a detrimental impact on the quality of advice and representation available to legally aided clients.'

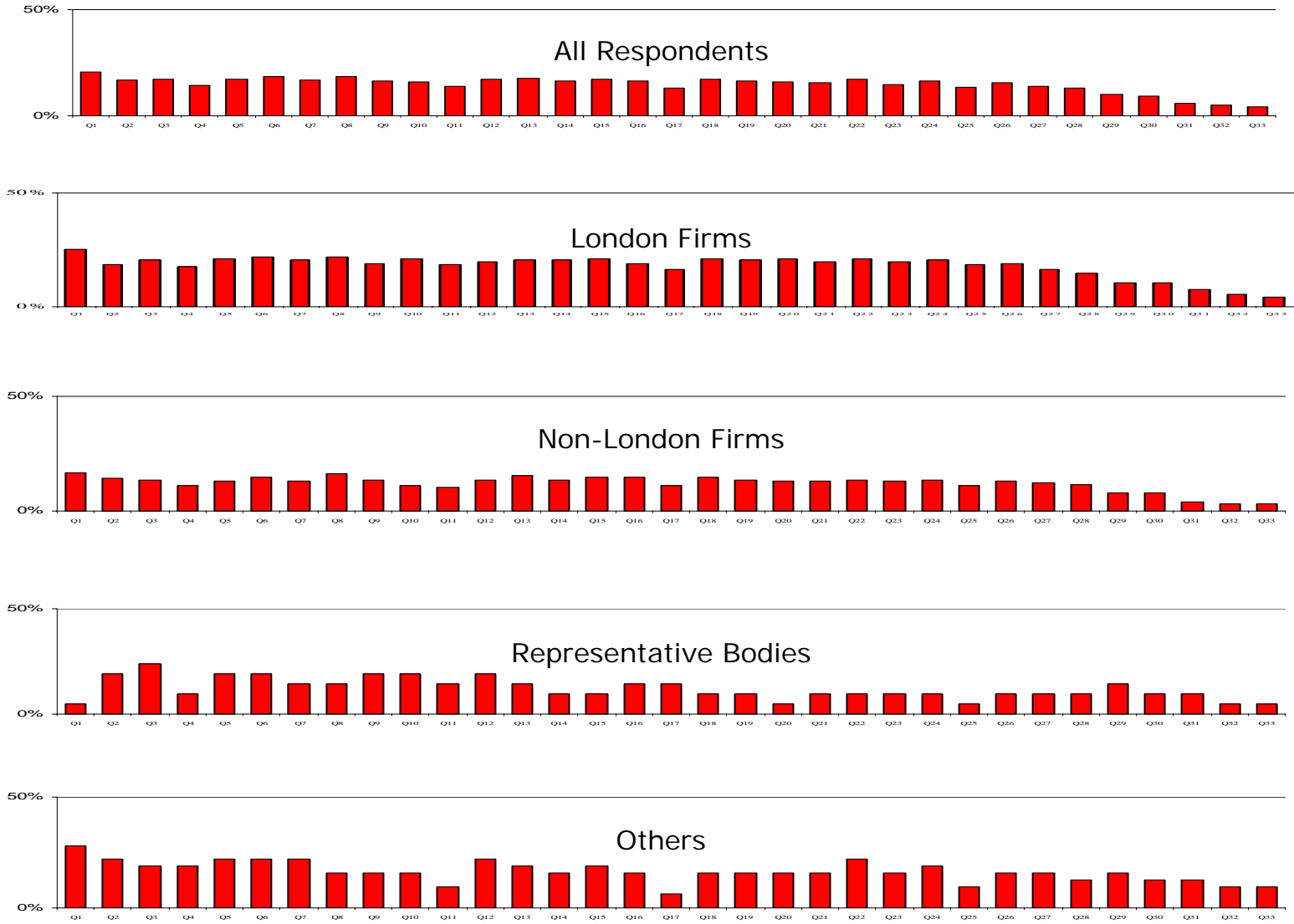
Response rates to the consultation questions were low, reflecting respondents' rejection of the proposals and their fear that any specific response would be presented as an endorsement by the Commission

The majority of respondents to the consultation, including some key stakeholders, did not answer the questions set out in the consultation paper. Around 25% of respondents answered one or more of the questions.

The overall response rate to the consultation questions ranged from 4% - 21%. The average response rate was 15%. London firms responding to the consultation were slightly more likely to answer the questions, with response rates of 4% to 25% (average 18%).

Response rates to consultation questions

Percentage of respondents answering each question



Tone of consultation responses

There was strong anti-competitive tendering sentiment at individual respondent level. Many respondents expressed the view that competition on price could have no desirable effects other than lowering the price, and would necessarily lower quality.

This was reflected in the answers to the consultation relating to aspects of the auction itself, for example, question 5 on size and shape of bid zones, question 7 on basing the competition on duty slots and question 24 on Market Clearing Rate or Pay-As-Bid.

Many respondents also used examples such as hospital cleaning, school dinners and prisoner transport, to oppose tendering as a procurement mechanism.

Textual analysis of responses

Because the response rates to the consultation questions were low the content of responses was examined to identify the opinions and views most frequently expressed by respondents. The results of this analysis are presented in **Part 3** of this report. In summary they are:

Respondents were opposed to the proposals

- 85% of respondents stated that they were opposed to the proposals to introduce competitive tendering; this opposition was uniform across respondent groups
- Of those opposed to the proposals, the majority were also opposed in principle to tendering on price

A negative effect on quality was the most frequently raised concern

- 60% of respondents stated that the proposals would have a negative effect on quality
- A fixed price per case and lower remuneration rates constraining the amount of work done on each case were frequently mentioned by respondents

11 other themes were also identified:

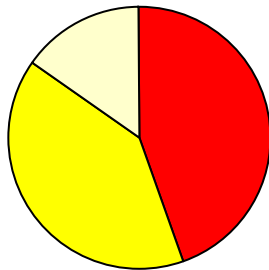
A reduction in client choice	15%	New suppliers will not enter the market	10%
Negative effects on clients with special needs	27%	Current fee levels are too low	27%
A fixed fee for a case is inappropriate	15%	Disadvantage to BME firms	26%
Negative effects on 'Access to Justice'	21%	Disadvantage to small firms	21%
Costs are outside solicitors' control	27%	The budget is under control	33%
Firms will go out of business	27%		

Part 2:

Consultation questions

Analysis of responses to the 33 consultation questions in Improving value for money for publicly funded criminal defence services in London

Question 1 Should we set a minimum volume of work? If so, how should this be determined?



Yes 44%

No 40%

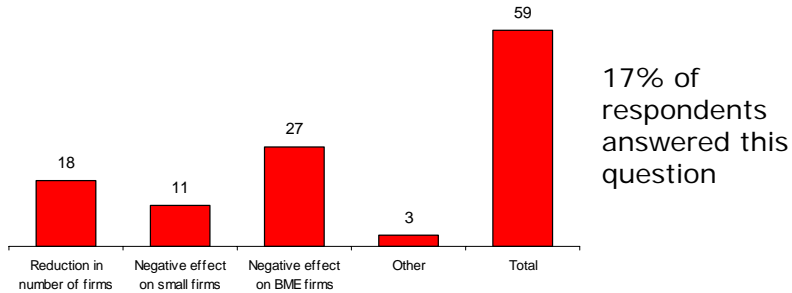
21% of respondents answered this question

Respondent Type	Yes		No		Other		Total	Response rate
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
London Firm	17	47%	17	47%	2	6%	36	25%
Non-London Firm	12	46%	8	31%	6	23%	26	17%
Representative Body	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%	1	5%
Other	3	33%	4	44%	2	22%	9	28%
All Respondents	32	44%	29	40%	11	15%	72	21%

- Of those respondents answering 'yes' to question 1, 53% suggested a specific monetary figure as a minimum volume of work
- Respondents suggested minimum volumes ranging from £15K to £250K a year
- £100K was the figure most frequently mentioned by respondents



Question 2 What would be the effects of a competitive bid round, resulting in either more or fewer suppliers, on current contract holders and in particular black and minority ethnic (BME) firms?



Respondent Type	No.	Response rate
London Firm	26	18%
Non-London Firm	22	14%
Representative Body	4	19%
Others	7	22%
All Respondents	59	17%

A minority of respondents identified possible benefits to changing the current system

Quote from consultation:

'The perceived over-supply is in the number of individual firms rather than in the number of individual solicitors. This results in a daily scenario at courts all over London where twenty firms each send an advocate to court to deal with one defendant...The case in favour of fewer, larger criminal legal aid practices is unarguable.'

Quote from consultation:

'We have real concerns that BME firms shall be disadvantaged. The nature of the bidding process is such that (despite the protestations of the Commission), small firms (and therefore BME firms) shall suffer.'

Textual analysis of all responses

Disadvantage to small and BME firms

- 26% of respondents stated that the proposals would have a negative effect on BME firms
 - Twice as many London firms responding expressed this view (31%) as those from outside London (16%)
- 21% of respondents stated that the proposals would disadvantage small firms
- 27% of all respondents stated that the proposals would put firms out of business

Question 3

How do the following proposals on the bid process as a whole match up against the criteria in section 4.2?

Section 4.2:

We are looking for a bid process that:

- Ensures quality
- Promotes the optimum outcome for the client
- Provides effective competition
- Provides coverage across geographic regions
- Encourages the entry of new firms into the market
- Sets a sustainable price for legal aid

17% of respondents answered this question

Respondent Type	No.	Response rate
London Firm	29	20%
Non-London Firm	21	14%
Representative Body	5	24%
Others	6	19%
All Respondents	61	17%

- 26% of respondents answering this question expressed the view that the proposals did not match any of the stated objectives
- Another common point made by respondents was that a bid process could not ensure quality

Textual analysis of all responses

Detrimental effect on quality

- 60% of respondents stated that the proposals would have a negative effect on quality

New suppliers will not enter the market

- 10% of respondents stated that the proposals would result in either less or no new firms entering the market

Question 4 What would be the most effective way of achieving these (see criteria in section 4.2) results?

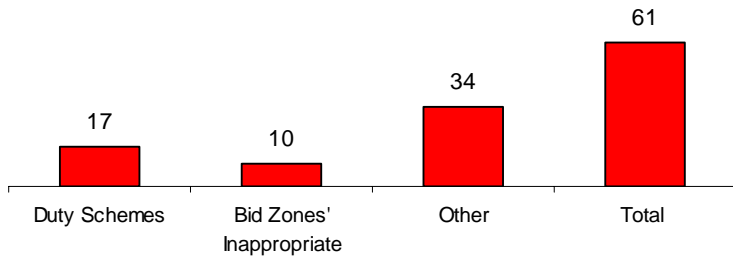
Respondent Type	No.	Response rate
London Firm	25	18%
Non-London Firm	17	11%
Representative Body	2	10%
Others	6	19%
All Respondents	50	14%

- 14% of respondents answered this question
- Only one respondent stated that the proposals represented a sound framework
- The views most frequently expressed by respondents in answer to this question were that abandoning competitive tendering would be more likely to achieve the objectives, and that it would be impossible to meet the objectives within a competitive system.

A minority of respondents preferred a best-value bidding model as more likely to achieve the objectives.

The position of many of the representative bodies was that the proposals for competitive tendering should be dropped, and that the Legal Services Commission should enter into discussion with these bodies to agree a way forward. This position was endorsed by some respondents.

Question 5 What shape and size of bid zones would allow firms to price their bids effectively and provide them with enough certainty for the future?



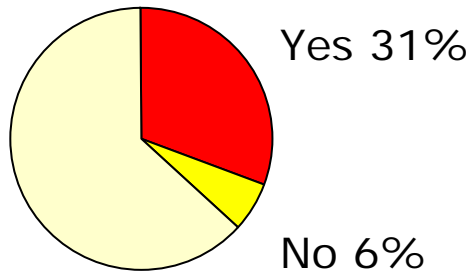
Respondent Type	No.	Response rate
London Firm	30	21%
Non-London Firm	20	13%
Representative Body	4	19%
Others	7	22%
All Respondents	61	17%

- 17% of respondents answered this question
- Many respondents rejected the proposals for competitive tendering when answering this question

Many respondents expressing the view that current duty schemes should be retained as bid zones also expressed the desire to minimise any change from the current system.

Some respondents also dismissed the concept of bid zones as 'irrelevant' and not suited to London.

Question 6 Should an integral part of a quality service require suppliers to have office space to see clients outside police stations and magistrates' courts in each bid zone? If so, should the office be recognised by the Law Society as meeting the society's practice rules?



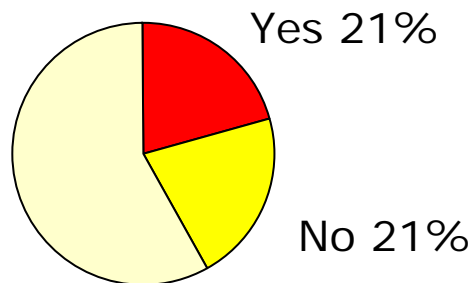
- 19% of respondents answered this question
- 46% of respondents answering this question stated that Law Society rules should apply to suppliers' offices

63% of respondents answering this question did not express a view as to whether a supplier should be required to have an office in each bid zone in which they work

Respondent Type	Yes		No		Other		Total	Response rate
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
London Firm	11	35%	2	6%	18	58%	31	22%
Non-London Firm	8	35%	2	9%	13	57%	23	15%
Representative Body	0	0%	0	0%	4	100%	4	19%
Other	1	14%	0	0%	6	86%	7	22%
All Respondents	20	31%	4	6%	41	63%	65	19%

The point most frequently made by respondents answering this question was that suppliers must have an office 'accessible' to clients; very few of the respondents making this point suggested a definition of 'accessible'.

Question 7 Would basing bids on the duty slots be the best way for allocating access to work as a part of the managed competition process?



18% of respondents answered this question

Respondent Type	Yes		No		Other		Total	Response rate
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
London Firm	7	24%	8	28%	14	48%	29	20%
Non-London Firm	4	20%	4	20%	12	60%	20	13%
Representative Body	0	0%	0	0%	3	100%	3	14%
Other	2	20%	1	10%	7	70%	10	31%
All Respondents	13	21%	13	21%	36	58%	62	18%

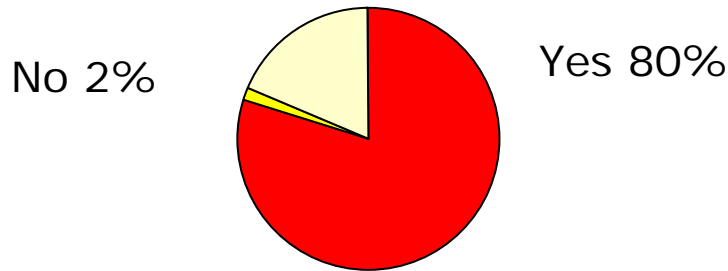
Some respondents acknowledged that basing the competition on duty slots was appropriate as this was the only way that the Legal Services Commission could control access to work.

Some respondents also expressed support for the idea of assigning duty slots to firms rather than individual solicitors.

Quote from consultation:

'In a market where freedom of choice and access to justice have been dominant features, and rightly so, it seems to me that the best way of ensuring a quality service for clients so far as the Duty Scheme is concerned, is to distribute slots evenly amongst the suppliers. Distributing these on a bid basis would bring about an uneven playing field giving the greater market share not necessarily to those who could provide the best service, but [to those who could] provide the cheapest service.'

Question 8 Would it be reasonable to expect suppliers also to take on any Crown Court work that follows on from their police station and magistrates' court work?



- 18% of respondents answered this question
- London firms responding to the consultation were more likely to answer this question than any other respondent group

Many respondents expressed the view that suppliers would want to take on any Crown Court work that follows on from their lower work and do so at present. Respondents also stated that it was important that all suppliers are able to take a case to the Crown Court.

Respondent Type	Yes		No		Other		Total	Response rate
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
London Firm	29	94%	0	0%	2	6%	31	22%
Non-London Firm	19	76%	0	0%	6	24%	25	16%
Representative Body	2	67%	0	0%	1	33%	3	14%
Other	1	20%	1	20%	3	60%	5	16%
All Respondents	51	80%	1	2%	12	19%	64	18%

Question 9 What are your views on these options and any other suggestions for ensuring that Crown Court specialists can continue to work in the police station and at the magistrates' court, while being subject to the same efficiency incentives and quality standards as suppliers that have gone through the bid process?

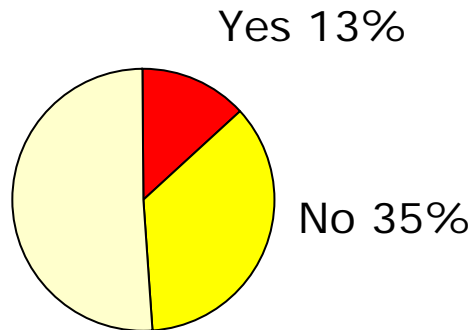
Respondent Type	No.	Response rate
London Firm	27	19%
Non-London Firm	21	14%
Representative Body	4	19%
Others	5	16%
All Respondents	57	16%

16% of respondents answered this question

Two broad themes emerged from the answers respondents gave to this question:

- Some respondents stated that all firms should offer a comprehensive service, doing both lower and higher work
- Some respondents recognised the need for specialist suppliers and acknowledge that they should be allowed to undertake lower work for their clients
 - Some respondents answering in this way favoured the creation of a Crown Court contract, while others expressed the view that Crown Court specialists should be able to undertake own client lower work

Question 10 Should Crown Court specialists be required to bid for duty solicitor schemes?



- 23% of respondents answered this question
- 51% of respondents answering this question did not express an opinion as to whether Crown Court specialists should be required to bid for duty schemes but made other observations about the issue
 - The view expressed most frequently by these respondents was that all suppliers should provide a comprehensive, or 'cradle-to-grave', service

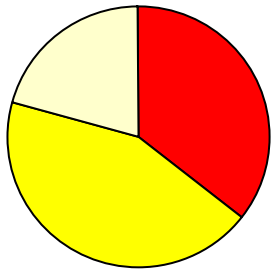
Quote from consultation:

'Yes. If we are to ensure continuing levels of specialisation within the area of criminal defence work then all solicitors participating in these areas must be able to demonstrate a level of knowledge and practical application.

'What the current proposals do not take into account is the possibility that somebody specialising in Crown Court work might only want to carry out a limited number of duty solicitor obligations. There is no reason why the current membership rules could not be amended to incorporate this flexibility...There can not, however, be any exemptions from the basic tenet that all solicitors involved in criminal defence work have a recognised skill level.'

Respondent Type	Yes		No		Other		Total	Response rate
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
London Firm	6	12%	16	31%	30	58%	52	37%
Non-London Firm	5	29%	7	41%	5	29%	17	11%
Representative Body	0	0%	2	50%	2	50%	4	19%
Other	0	0%	4	44%	5	56%	9	28%
All Respondents	11	13%	29	35%	42	51%	82	23%

Question 11 Are special arrangements for specialist firms needed and, if so, what might those arrangements be?



Yes 35%

14% of respondents answered this question

Respondent Type	No.	Response rate
London Firm	26	18%
Non-London Firm	16	10%
Representative Body	3	14%
Others	3	9%
All Respondents	48	14%

No 44%

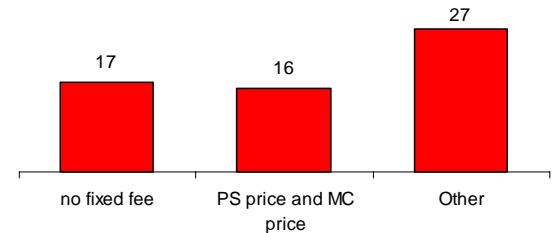
No consensus emerged between respondents answering 'yes' to this question as to what special arrangements might be needed.

Respondents answering 'no' to this question frequently expressed the view that all suppliers should provide a comprehensive service. Some respondents argued that niche areas of law, such as prison law, should be excluded from the proposed scheme.

Question 12 What is the most appropriate option for pricing work, bearing in mind the need for any system to be easily understood and, at the same time, to cover adequately the range of complexity in the work involved?

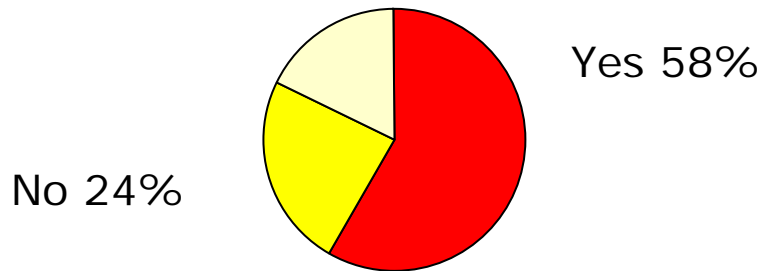
Respondent Type	No.	Response rate
London Firm	28	20%
Non-London Firm	21	14%
Representative Body	4	19%
Others	7	22%
All Respondents	60	17%

17% of respondents answered this question



Respondents expressing the view that there should be a composite case price for police station cases and a separate price magistrates' court cases did not typically differentiate between bidding separate prices and having the magistrates court price set by a multiplier.

Question 13 Should the new contracts continue the requirement that a duty solicitor must provide initial advice in duty solicitor cases?



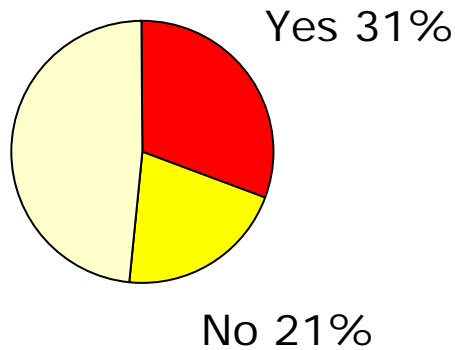
- 18% of respondents answered this question
- Respondents answering 'yes' to this question frequently stated that quality of advice would be reduced if initial advice did not have to be given by a duty solicitor
- Respondents answering 'no' frequently commented that accredited reps were as good at giving initial advice as duty solicitors

Quote from consultation:

'Suggesting areas where an accredited rep can deal in [the] absence of [a] duty solicitor seems to contradict the apparent aim of the consultation, i.e. improving quality...These proposals seem to be driven by price rather than quality and also another example of contradicting existing and established schemes and lead to an erosion of standards of legal advice available for the client.'

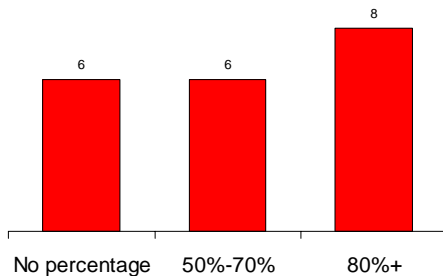
Respondent Type	Yes		No		Other		Total	Response rate
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
London Firm	16	55%	7	24%	6	21%	29	20%
Non-London Firm	13	54%	6	25%	5	21%	24	15%
Representative Body	2	67%	1	33%	0	0%	3	14%
Other	5	83%	1	17%	0	0%	6	19%
All Respondents	36	58%	15	24%	11	18%	62	18%

Question 14 Given the nature of criminal work, should we require a certain percentage of a supplier's work to be done by fee earners who work exclusively for that supplier? And, if so, what might that percentage be?



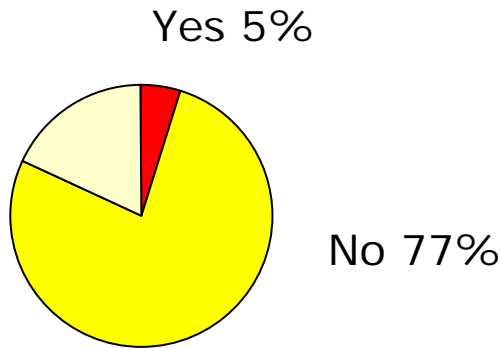
- 22% of respondents answered this question
- Respondents suggested a range of percentages from 50% to 100%
- The figure most frequently mentioned by respondents was 80%

49% of respondents answering this question declined to express an opinion as to whether a certain amount of a suppliers work should be done by registered fee earners but made other comments on the issue. No common themes emerged from these responses however, as they varied widely in nature.



Respondent Type	Yes		No		Other		Total	Response rate
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
London Firm	13	28%	5	11%	29	62%	47	33%
Non-London Firm	8	38%	9	43%	4	19%	21	14%
Representative Body	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	2	10%
Other	3	38%	0	0%	5	63%	8	25%
All Respondents	24	31%	16	21%	38	49%	78	22%

Question 15 Should we require all fee earners to be re-accredited for the Criminal Litigation Accreditation Scheme (CLAS) within a specific period, say 12 months, of the Law Society launching the scheme for London?



- 17% of respondents answered this question
- London firms responding to the consultation were slightly more likely to answer this question than any other respondent group

Respondents answering 'no' to this question mentioned the cost and bureaucracy of accreditation and the short timetable proposed as reasons for rejecting the proposal to require CLAS re-accreditation

Respondent Type	Yes		No		Other		Total	Response rate
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
London Firm	2	7%	26	87%	2	7%	30	21%
Non-London Firm	0	0%	17	74%	6	26%	23	15%
Representative Body	0	0%	0	0%	2	100%	2	10%
Other	1	17%	4	67%	1	17%	6	19%
All Respondents	3	5%	47	77%	11	18%	61	17%

Question 16 Are there any other indicators of quality that we should be considering?

Respondent Type	No.	Response rate
London Firm	27	19%
Non-London Firm	23	15%
Representative Body	3	14%
Others	5	16%
All Respondents	58	17%

- 17% of respondents answered this question
- 67% of respondents answering this question suggested additional quality indicators

Respondents mentioned many other indicators of quality including management standards such as ISO 9000, views of other court users and clients, and client retention rates. Some respondents stated that the existing quality standards should be preserved in full.

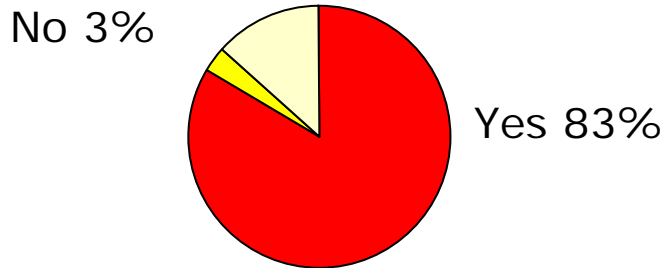
Question 17 How could these quality indicators be monitored effectively and at reasonable cost?

13% of respondents answered this question

Respondent Type	No.	Response rate
London Firm	23	16%
Non-London Firm	17	11%
Representative Body	3	14%
Others	2	6%
All Respondents	45	13%

Respondents gave disparate answers to this question, suggesting many ways of monitoring quality. The most frequently made comments were that quality should be monitored by peer review, and that additional monitoring systems were unnecessary and undesirable.

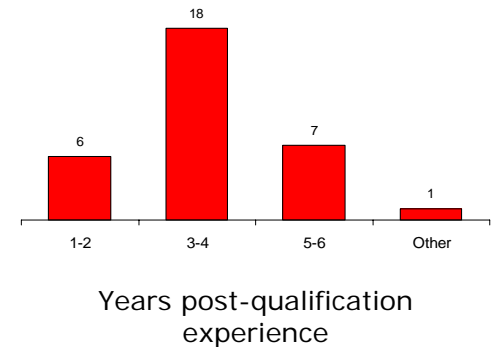
Question 18 Should supervising solicitors be required to have a minimum period of post-qualification experience?



17% of respondents answered this question

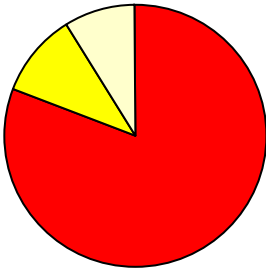
Respondent Type	Yes		No		Other		Total	Response rate
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
London Firm	25	83%	0	0%	5	17%	30	21%
Non-London Firm	20	87%	2	9%	1	4%	23	15%
Representative Body	2	100%	0	0%	0	0%	2	10%
Other	3	60%	0	0%	2	40%	5	16%
All Respondents	50	83%	2	3%	8	13%	60	17%

- Of those respondents answering 'yes' to this question, 64% suggested a minimum period of post-qualification experience
- Respondents suggested minimum periods ranging from 1 to 6 years; the most frequently mentioned period of post-qualification experience was 3 years



Question 19 Should supervising solicitors be expected to undertake a minimum number of hours of criminal defence work, for example, 350 hours per year?

No 11%

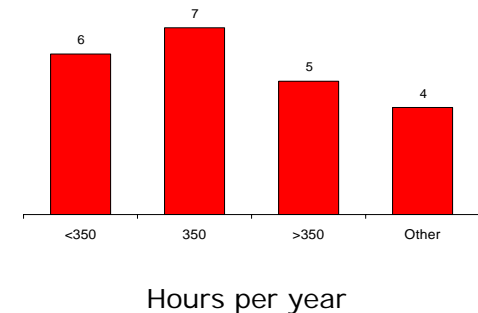


Yes 81%

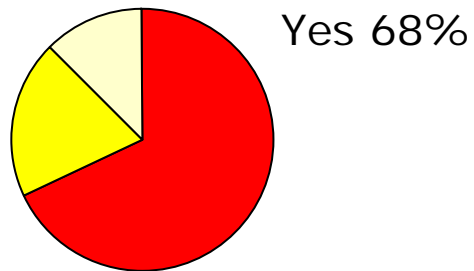
16% of respondents answered this question

Respondent Type	Yes		No		Other		Total	Response rate
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
London Firm	25	86%	1	3%	3	10%	29	20%
Non-London Firm	15	71%	5	24%	1	5%	21	14%
Representative Body	2	100%	0	0%	0	0%	2	10%
Other	4	80%	0	0%	1	20%	5	16%
All Respondents	46	81%	6	11%	5	9%	57	16%

- Of those respondents answering 'yes' to this question, 48% suggested a minimum number of hours of criminal defence work per year
- Suggestions ranged from 100 hours to 1200 hours; the most frequently mentioned number was 350 hours – as suggested in the question



Question 20 Should supervising solicitors be allowed to work as supervisors for only one supplier?

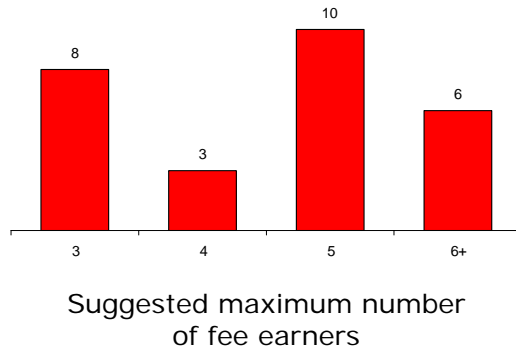
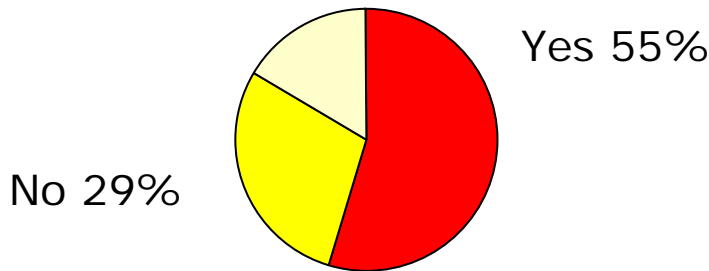


16% of respondents answered this question

Few respondents answering this question made additional comments

Respondent Type	Yes		No		Other		Total	Response rate
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
London Firm	22	73%	3	10%	5	17%	30	21%
Non-London Firm	13	65%	6	30%	1	5%	20	13%
Representative Body	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	1	5%
Other	3	60%	1	20%	1	20%	5	16%
All Respondents	38	68%	11	20%	7	13%	56	16%

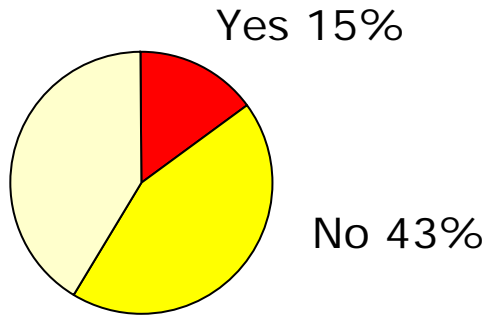
Question 21 Should there be a maximum number of fee earners that a supervising solicitor is allowed to supervise and, if so, what might that number be?



- 16% of respondents answered this question
- Of those respondents answering 'yes' to question 21, 90% suggested a maximum number of fee earners that a supervising solicitor be allowed to supervise
- Respondents suggested numbers ranging from 3 to 12, the most frequently mentioned number of fee earners was 5

Respondent Type	Yes		No		Other		Total	Response rate
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
London Firm	16	57%	9	32%	3	11%	28	20%
Non-London Firm	11	55%	6	30%	3	15%	20	13%
Representative Body	2	100%	0	0%	0	0%	2	10%
Other	1	20%	1	20%	3	60%	5	16%
All Respondents	30	55%	16	29%	9	16%	55	16%

Question 22 Do our proposed quality assessment processes offer protection to clients in terms of service quality?



17% of respondents answered this question

42% of respondents answering this question did not express a view on whether the proposed quality assessment processes offered protection to clients but made other observations relating to the consultation, particularly regarding the use of peer review and questioning whether it will be a robust assessment of quality.

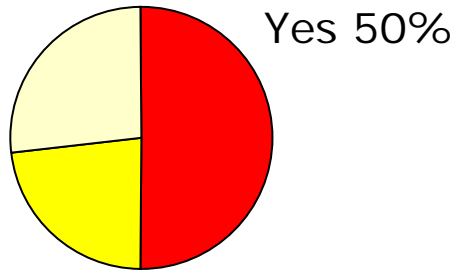
Quote from consultation:

'The Legal Services Commission want Legal Aid on the cheap and tendering unfortunately cannot guarantee quality. No matter what the consultation paper states if Solicitors receive a fixed fee then consciously or sub-consciously that will effect their advice and decisions on how long they should for example be at a Police Station.'

Respondent Type	Yes		No		Other		Total	Response rate
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
London Firm	3	10%	14	47%	13	43%	30	21%
Non-London Firm	5	24%	11	52%	5	24%	21	14%
Representative Body	1	50%	1	50%	0	0%	2	10%
Other	0	0%	0	0%	7	100%	7	22%
All Respondents	9	15%	26	43%	25	42%	60	17%

Question 23 Although peer review is based on files and records from a single office, the Commission wishes the results to be applicable to the firm whose office was reviewed. This should encourage firms to ensure that high professional standards are applied across all their offices, is this reasonable?

15% of respondents answered this question

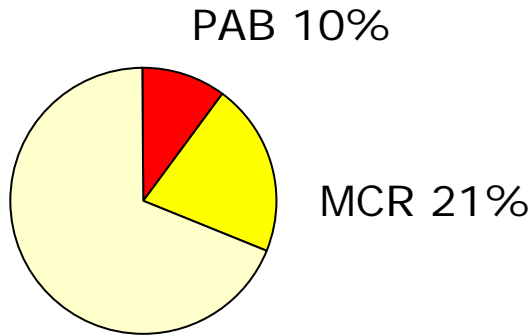


No 23%

Respondent Type	Yes		No		Other		Total	Response rate
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
London Firm	13	52%	3	12%	9	36%	25	18%
Non-London Firm	12	60%	5	25%	3	15%	20	13%
Representative Body	1	50%	1	50%	0	0%	2	10%
Other	0	0%	3	60%	2	40%	5	16%
All Respondents	26	50%	12	23%	14	27%	52	15%

In answering this question some respondents raised issues over the peer review methodology and how the process would work in practice. A small number of respondents objected to basing a quality assessment on files.

Question 24 What is the most appropriate option, pay-as-bid (PAB) or market clearing rate(MCR), and are there any other suggestions as to how the price should be established?



- 17% of respondents answered this question
- Of these respondents, only 31% (5% of all respondents) stated a preference for either pay-as-bid or the market clearing rate as methods of establishing price

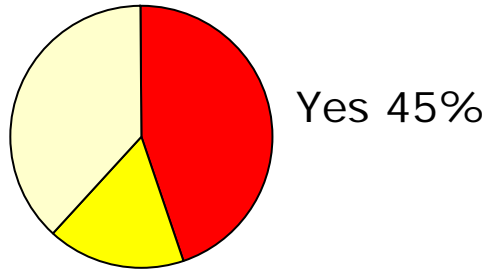
Quote from consultation:

'The market clearing rate. Such a system rewards efficiency and should encourage quality as the majority of work will be done by those who bid lower than the market clearing rate and allows these same efficient-providers room for expansion.'

Respondent Type	PAB		MCR		Other		Total	Response rate
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
London Firm	1	3%	7	24%	21	72%	29	20%
Non-London Firm	3	14%	4	19%	14	67%	21	14%
Representative Body	0	0%	1	50%	1	50%	2	10%
Other	2	33%	0	0%	4	67%	6	19%
All Respondents	6	10%	12	21%	40	69%	58	17%

Respondents frequently used this question as an opportunity to recapitulate their opposition to the proposals. Many of those responding to this question stated that neither option was appropriate. However, very few alternatives were suggested and these also rejected the principle of competition on price.

Question 25 Should expansion-based bids be limited and, if so, should the expansion be limited to, say, 25%, 50% or 100% of current work volumes?



No 17%

- 13% of respondents answered this question
- Of those respondents answering this question, 95% suggested a percentage limit on expansion
- Suggested limits ranged from 10% to 50%
- The most frequently suggested limit was 25% of current work volumes (7 respondents)

Quote from consultation:

'I do not believe that there is any criminal practitioner who has a significant capacity for taking on more work. This is not to say, however that firms may see the tendering process as an opportunity to do much more work than they are now doing, and cover this work by employing under qualified support staff who are paid a relatively low wage. The net result of course would be a drop in the quality of services being provided...Expansion based bids should most certainly therefore be limited'

Respondent Type	Yes		No		Other		Total	Response rate
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
London Firm	13	50%	4	15%	9	35%	26	18%
Non-London Firm	7	41%	3	18%	7	41%	17	11%
Representative Body	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%	1	5%
Other	1	33%	1	33%	1	33%	3	9%
All Respondents	21	45%	8	17%	18	38%	47	13%

Question 26 What should be the arrangements for existing suppliers who decide not to participate in this managed competition?

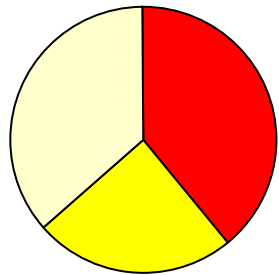
Respondent Type	No.	Response rate
London Firm	27	19%
Non-London Firm	20	13%
Representative Body	2	10%
Others	5	16%
All Respondents	54	15%

15% of respondents answered this question

The majority of respondents answering this question suggested longer transition periods than those proposed in the consultation paper. Suggestions for length of transition period ranged from 6 to 24 months and some respondents stated that firms not awarded a contract should be allowed to continue with own client work indefinitely.

Some respondents expressed the view that transitional suppliers should be able to complete work on existing cases but not start work on new ones.

Question 27 Would it be appropriate to pay the suppliers' own tendered rate for magistrates' work outside the suppliers' bid zones irrespective of where the court work takes place, or to pay the average rate applicable in the relevant bid zone?



Own rate
39%

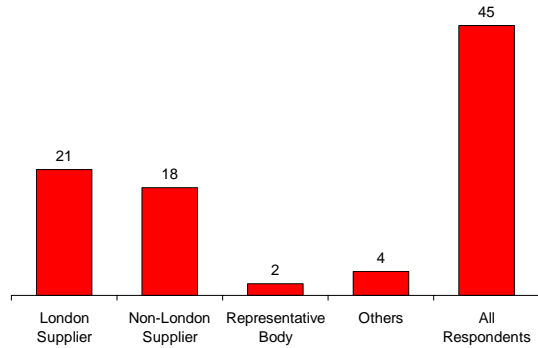
Relevant rate
24%

14% of respondents answered this question

Respondent Type	Own rate		Relevant rate		Other		Total	Response rate
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
London Firm	10	43%	6	26%	7	30%	23	16%
Non-London Firm	6	32%	5	26%	8	42%	19	12%
Representative Body	0	0%	0	0%	2	100%	2	10%
Other	3	60%	1	20%	1	20%	5	16%
All Respondents	19	39%	12	24%	18	37%	49	14%

Respondents stating that suppliers' own rates should be paid for magistrate court work outside their bid zone often expressed the view that this would be the simpler of the two options.

Question 28 What effect would the proposal that solicitors make payment to assigned counsel have on barristers?



- 13% of respondents answered this question
- Respondents answering this question commonly interpreted it as asking what would be the effect on barristers of the entirety of the proposals to introduce competitive tendering
- 30% of respondents answering this question stated that the proposals would have a negative effect on barristers

Respondent Type	No.	Response rate
London Firm	21	15%
Non-London Firm	18	12%
Representative Body	2	10%
Others	4	13%
All Respondents	45	13%

The views most frequently expressed by respondents answering this question were:

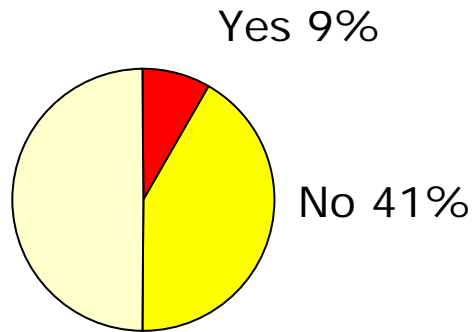
- That the proposals would have a negative or disastrous effect on barristers. The main point made in support of this assertion was that reducing the remuneration for solicitors would result in less work and lower rates for barristers at the magistrates' court – who are predominantly young barristers;
- Conversely that the effect on barristers would be minimal; and
- This is a question for the bar to answer.

Respondents also stated that the young bar were more likely to be adversely affected by the proposals, or to be affected to a greater extent, than more senior barristers

Quote from consultation:

'Including all advocacy services within the unit price will inevitably make the position for the young Bar intolerable. There will be significant further shrinkage in available work. This will have an effect upon unit price as solicitors are forced to provide all lower court advocacy in-house, even the most complex and/or distant cases.'

Question 29 Do you agree with the preliminary equalities impact assessment on clients?



13% of respondents answered this question

Respondent Type	Yes		No		Other		Total	Response rate
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
London Firm	1	4%	10	38%	15	58%	26	18%
Non-London Firm	2	17%	6	50%	4	33%	12	8%
Representative Body	0	0%	1	33%	2	67%	3	14%
Other	1	20%	2	40%	2	40%	5	16%
All Respondents	4	9%	19	41%	23	50%	46	13%

50% of respondents answering this question did not indicate agreement or disagreement with the preliminary equalities impact assessment but made other points in relation to the issue

Quote from consultation:

'The proposals will greatly reduce access to justice for some of the most vulnerable members of society. On 1st April 2001 3500 solicitors firms provided Criminal legal aid. At December 2004 that figure was 2463 and falling.'

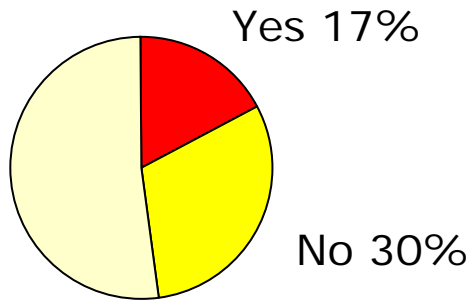
Question 30 What additional support measures (if any) for suppliers should the Commission consider establishing?

Respondent Type	No.	Response rate
London Firm	15	11%
Non-London Firm	12	8%
Representative Body	2	10%
Others	4	13%
All Respondents	33	9%

- 9% of respondents answered this question
- 52% of respondents answering this question stated either that they were against competitive tendering or that no support measures could mitigate the negative effect it would have

A minority of respondents suggested practical measures such as business support training, access to Legal Services Commission data, and training support.

Question 31 Do you agree with the conclusions drawn by the Commission about the ethnicity of CDS clients and the CDS supplier base? We are also interested in comparing our information with any data sources that you may have.



- 7% of respondents answered this question
- 52% of respondents answering this question did not directly address the question but made comments in relation to the issues
- Respondents did not identify any sources of data on the ethnicity of either CDS clients or suppliers

Respondent Type	Yes		No		Other		Total	Response rate
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
London Firm	2	18%	5	45%	4	36%	11	8%
Non-London Firm	1	17%	0	0%	5	83%	6	4%
Representative Body	0	0%	1	50%	1	50%	2	10%
Other	1	25%	1	25%	2	50%	4	13%
All Respondents	4	17%	7	30%	12	52%	23	7%

Quote from consultation:

'The proposals do discriminate against small firms and BME firms. The reason why there are so many small black BME firms is because this is the only way in which ethnic minorities can progress due to discrimination. The whole competitive tendering scheme is based around economies of scale and the smallest firms, and therefore a large proportion of black BME firms will be hit hard by these proposals.'

Question 32 What are your views in what elements of the Commission’s current contracting arrangements create barriers for BME firms and why. When responding please indicate whether you would be prepared to discuss your response in more detail with the Commission.

Respondent Type	No.	Response rate
London Firm	8	6%
Non-London Firm	5	3%
Representative Body	1	5%
Others	3	9%
All Respondents	17	5%

- 5% of respondents answered this question
- Only one respondent identified barriers for black and minority ethnic firms in the current contract arrangements when answering this question

One respondent suggested that BME firms are more likely to face problems of contract retention than non-BME firms.

Question 33 Can you identify other barriers to the growth of BME firms that are not within the control of the Commission?

4% of respondents answered this question

Respondents identified a range of barriers to the growth of black and minority ethnic firms including barriers within the legal profession and a lack of access to capital and existing networks.

Respondent Type	No.	Response rate
London Firm	6	4%
Non-London Firm	5	3%
Representative Body	1	5%
Others	3	9%
All Respondents	15	4%

Part 3:

Theme analysis

Textual analysis to identify themes emerging from the consultation responses

Themes emerging from responses to consultation

This section of the report is structured around 13 themes that were identified in the consultation responses and were the subject of formal analysis. These are:

1. Opposed to competitive tendering
2. Detrimental effect on quality
3. A reduction in client choice
4. Negative effects on clients with special needs
5. A fixed fee for a case is inappropriate
6. Negative effects on 'Access to Justice'
7. Costs are outside solicitors' control
8. Firms will go out of business
9. New suppliers will not enter the market
10. Current fee levels are too low
11. Disadvantage to BME firms
12. Disadvantage to small firms
13. The budget is under control

Several additional themes identified during the process, but not subject to formal analysis, are then considered. These are:

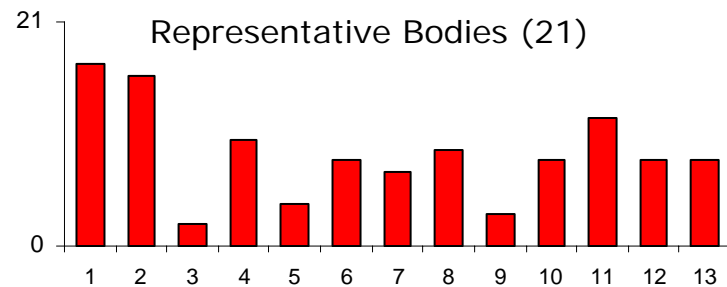
14. Training contracts and future Legal Aid lawyers
15. Legal Aid spend is driven by legislation
16. Knock-on effects to civil Legal Aid

Comparison of responses by respondent type



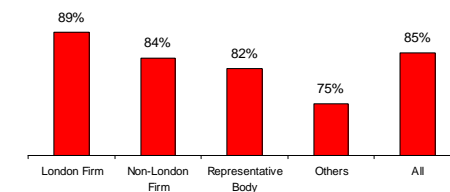
1. Opposed to competitive tendering
2. Detrimental effect on quality
3. A reduction in client choice
4. Negative effects on clients with special needs
5. A fixed fee for a case is inappropriate
6. Negative effects on 'Access to Justice'
7. Costs are outside solicitors' control
8. Firms will go out of business
9. New suppliers will not enter the market
10. Current fee levels are too low
11. Disadvantage to BME firms
12. Disadvantage to small firms
13. The budget is under control

As can be seen from the above graphs the relative frequency with which each of the themes is mentioned does not vary considerably between respondent types. In the case of representative bodies the fact that more of the themes were mentioned a greater number of times could be explained by their role in representing the interests of a broad membership and their greater resources for responding to a consultation.



1. Opposed to competitive tendering

- 85% of respondents stated that they were opposed to the proposals to introduce competitive tendering; this opposition was uniform across respondent groups
- Of those opposed to the proposals, the majority were also opposed in principle to tendering on price



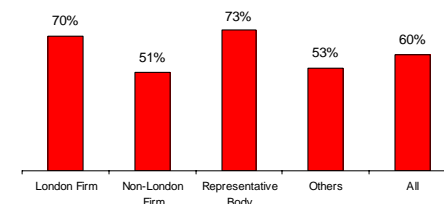
Respondent Type	No.	%
London Firm	127	89%
Non-London Firm	128	84%
Representative Body	18	82%
Others	24	75%
Total	297	85%

Quote from consultation:

'I have read the Consultation paper, and discussed it with a number of my colleagues. I regret that I cannot find anything of value in the proposals put forward in the paper. I must therefore put on record my complete opposition to the introduction of a competitive bid process.'

2. Detrimental effect on quality

- 60% of respondents stated that the proposals would have a negative effect on quality
- A fixed price per case and lower remuneration rates constraining the amount of work done on each case were frequently mentioned by respondents



Respondent Type	No.	%
London Firm	100	70%
Non-London Firm	78	51%
Representative Body	16	73%
Others	17	53%
Total	211	60%

Quote from consultation:

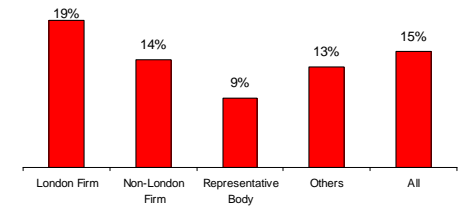
'The problem that we foresee is that, in order to maximise profit on a given matter, there will be greater pressures on a firm to allocate the minimum amount of time possible to that matter, and to assign the most junior member of staff as possible – all at the expense of the quality of service.'

3. A reduction in client choice

- 15% of respondents expressed the view that competitive tendering would result in less choice for clients

Quote from consultation:

'It is inevitable that if the proposals became effective a number of firms would not be able to survive, thus leading to less choice for clients. Access to solicitors is also likely to be limited, as it would seem that Solicitors may be out of the office more at Court and police stations, leaving clients to see more junior members of staff.'



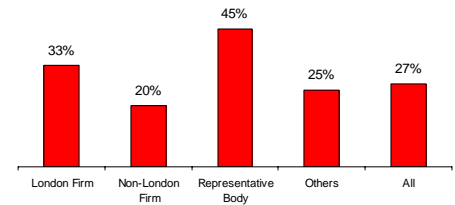
Respondent Type	No.	%
London Firm	27	19%
Non-London Firm	21	14%
Representative Body	2	9%
Others	4	13%
Total	54	15%

4. Negative effects on clients with special needs

- 27% of respondents stated that the proposals would have a particular negative effect on clients who require a greater amount of time to be spent on their cases, such as clients with mental health problems and those requiring the services of an interpreter

Quote from consultation:

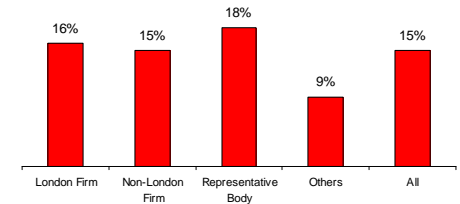
'It is the clients with mental health problems or language barriers that will suffer as these are the clients that require extra time and client care for proper representation. The proposals do not take into account these types of cases.'



Respondent Type	No.	%
London Firm	47	33%
Non-London Firm	30	20%
Representative Body	10	45%
Others	8	25%
Total	95	27%

5. A fixed fee for a case is inappropriate

- 15% of respondents expressed the opinion that a standard fee for a case was inappropriate – this view was mainly expressed with regard to cases in the police station
- The main point made to support this view was that all cases are necessarily different as all clients face a unique situation



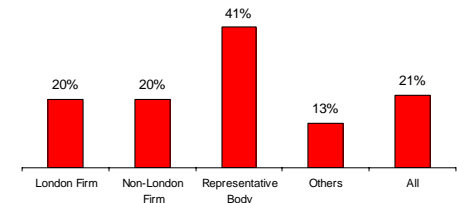
Respondent Type	No.	%
London Firm	23	16%
Non-London Firm	23	15%
Representative Body	4	18%
Others	3	9%
Total	53	15%

Quote from consultation:

'Within this system it is simply not possible to assess what resources will need to be devoted to each case without knowing each and every aspect of the matter including taking clear and sensible instructions from an informed client.'

6. Negative effects on 'Access to Justice'

- 21% of respondents stated that the proposals would have a negative effect on 'access to justice'
- 41% of representative bodies responding to the consultation expressed this view



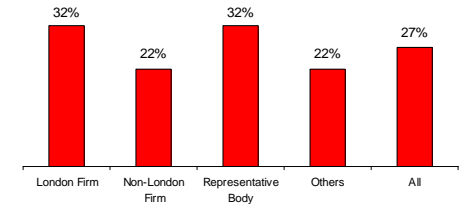
Respondent Type	No.	%
London Firm	28	20%
Non-London Firm	31	20%
Representative Body	9	41%
Others	4	13%
Total	72	21%

Quote from consultation:

'We are of the view that these proposals are wholly wrong and unworkable. They will devastate access to justice, decimate a generation of talented and committed criminal lawyers, lead to a sharp rise in miscarriages of justice and the collapse of public confidence in the criminal justice system.'

7. Costs are outside solicitors' control

- 27% of respondents stated that costs under the current system are outside of the control of defence solicitors
- Commonly mentioned costs drivers included the working practices of the police and the Crown Prosecution Service as well as inefficiencies in the working of the courts
- Respondents gave many examples of how the involvement of defence solicitors can reduce the costs of the Criminal Justice System



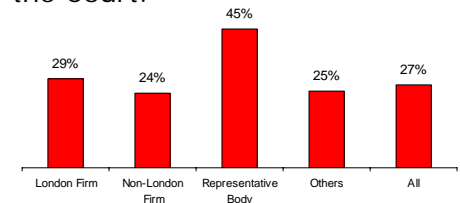
Respondent Type	No.	%
London Firm	46	32%
Non-London Firm	34	22%
Representative Body	7	32%
Others	7	22%
Total	94	27%

Quote from consultation:

'Defence lawyers are unanimous in their belief that the huge preponderance of delays flow from inefficiency in the Crown Prosecution Service in serving documents, conducting reviews and complying with orders of the Court.'

8. Firms will go out of business

- 27% of all respondents and 45% of representative bodies responding to the consultation expressed the view that the proposals would put firms out of business



Respondent Type	No.	%
London Firm	42	29%
Non-London Firm	36	24%
Representative Body	10	45%
Others	8	25%
Total	96	27%

Quote from consultation:

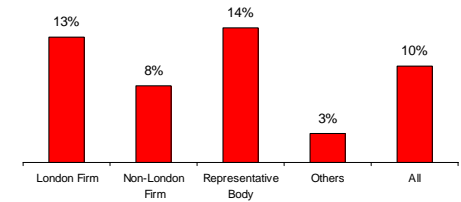
'To announce a "cull" of London Legal Aid Firms...represents a new low point in this sorry tale; to propose a system by which firms will be eliminated from business as a result of having to bid for work on a lowest price basis is a potential disaster, it is entirely devoid of principle and does not address the real problems faced by the Commission or the suppliers or clients.'

9. New suppliers will not enter the market

- 10% of respondents stated that the proposals would result in either less or no new firms entering the market
- Some respondents questioned the desirability of allowing new firms to enter the market

Quote from consultation:

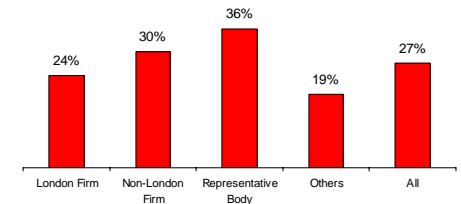
'If competitive tendering is in operation, then no sane person will go to the expense of setting up a business where they can only tender to one supplier and, if that tender fails, they will have no work.'



Respondent Type	No.	%
London Firm	19	13%
Non-London Firm	13	8%
Representative Body	3	14%
Others	1	3%
Total	36	10%

10. Current fee levels are too low

- 27% of respondents stated that current fee levels are too low
- This was mentioned more by representative bodies (36%) and firms from outside London (30%) than London firms
- Respondents compared fee levels with those charged by solicitors in family law and commercial practice



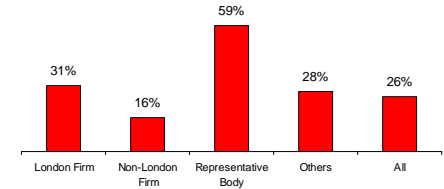
Respondent Type	No.	%
London Firm	34	24%
Non-London Firm	46	30%
Representative Body	8	36%
Others	6	19%
Total	94	27%

Quote from consultation:

'For many years there has been no overall increase in the rates claimed for work carried out. Only recently rates at the police station have increased in relation to serious cases and rates in the Magistrates' Court have not increased for several years. It is even longer since hourly rates for Crown Court work have increased. Many suppliers are already carrying out work at a loss...'

11. Disadvantage to BME firms

- 26% of respondents stated that the proposals would have a negative effect on black and minority ethnic firms
- Twice as many London firms responding expressed this view (31%) as those from outside London (16%)



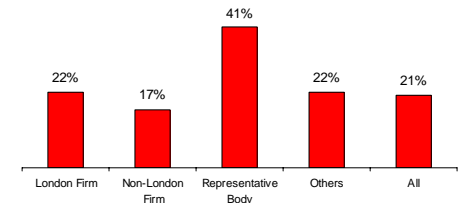
Respondent Type	No.	%
London Firm	45	31%
Non-London Firm	25	16%
Representative Body	13	59%
Others	9	28%
Total	92	26%

Quote from consultation:

'The proposals do discriminate against small firms and BME firms. The reason why there are so many small black BME firms is because this is the only way in which ethnic minorities can progress due to discrimination. The whole competitive tendering scheme is based around economies of scale and the smallest firms, and therefore a large proportion of black BME firms will be hit hard by these proposals.'

12. Disadvantage to small firms

- 21% of respondents stated that the proposals would disadvantage small firms
- Respondents frequently associated issues regarding small firms with those facing black and minority ethnic firms



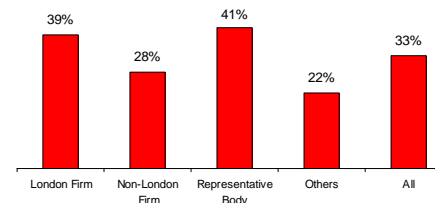
Respondent Type	No.	%
London Firm	31	22%
Non-London Firm	26	17%
Representative Body	9	41%
Others	7	22%
Total	73	21%

Quote from consultation:

'Tendering will not provide effective competition because it will inevitably drive out smaller firms since proportionately those firms will have higher overheads.'

13. The budget is under control

- 33% of respondents stated that the budget for criminal lower is 'under control'
- Common points made by respondents in relation to this theme included that there was no need for tendering in lower work and that high cost cases should be the primary focus for budget savings
- Many respondents quoted the Legal Services Commission Executive Director Richard Collins at a London Criminal Courts Solicitors' Association meeting



Respondent Type	No.	%
London Firm	56	39%
Non-London Firm	43	28%
Representative Body	9	41%
Others	7	22%
Total	115	33%

Quote from consultation:

'It is neither correct nor fair to say that spending on 'lower' legal aid is out of control. Richard Collins confirmed as much when addressing a recent meeting of London solicitors in Euston.'

Additional themes

14. Training contracts and future Legal Aid lawyers

- Some respondents stated that the proposals would have a negative effect on recruitment into legal aid
- Several respondents stated that they had ceased to recruit trainees
- Lower fee levels and long term uncertainty over contracts were points made in support of this view

Quote from consultation:

'There is a clear recruitment crisis for young criminal solicitors. The average age of the profession is increasing all the time. This is because of the very poor financial rewards on offer to criminal solicitors as opposed to other parts of the profession. These proposals do nothing to assist this dire situation.'

15. Legal Aid spend is driven by legislation

- Many respondents, including representative bodies, made the point that legal aid expenditure is driven by the 'torrent' of legislation that affects criminal law
- The majority of respondents making this point expressed the view that it was inappropriate to seek savings from criminal defence, especially in lower work, in such an environment
- Many respondents called for 'Joined-up' thinking across government

Quote from consultation:

'The Legal Services Commission expenses increase as the Government introduces rafts of new legislation and new offences, increasing the complexity of criminal work. The Legal Services Commission should be looking to the Government Departments who promote that legislation to also promote sufficient funds to deal with the work, rather than trying to trim the existing bill.'

16. Knock-on effects to civil Legal Aid

- Respondents suggested that a reduction in the number of criminal contracts would have a 'knock-on' effect to civil legal aid - many respondents expressed the opinion that firms that were not awarded a criminal contract would be likely to pull out of legal aid work entirely
- Respondents identified a tension between the proposals and the concept of a 'holistic' service, catering for all of a client's needs

Quote from consultation:

'They [the proposals] will lead to the closure of small to medium size firms that deal with other legal aid disciplines such as family law. If a criminal legal aid contract was not issued to such practices this could potentially undermine the stability of such firms and thus lead to a further crisis within the publicly funded sector.'

List of Respondents

A. Patrick Keogh	Charles S Maidstone	Enoch Evans	Harrow Solicitors & Advocates	Lewis Nedas & Co.	Peter Kandler & Co.	Supreme Court Costs Office
Advice Services Alliance	Chebsey & Co.	Eric Robinson Solicitors	Harters Solicitors	Linda Filby	Peter Ward & Associates	T S Law
Ahmed & Co.	Chivers Walsh Smith and Irvine & Co.	Evans-Roberts Solicitors	Hayes-Burcombe & Co. Solicitors	London Criminal Courts Solicitors' Association	Peters & Peters	T V Edwards
Alan Edwards & Co.	Christian Gottfried & Co.	Ewing Hickman & Clark	Henscott Solicitors	Lound Mulrenan Jefferies	Police Federation of England and Wales	Talbot Walker
Alexander Britton	Christian Khan	Ewings & Co.	Hickman & Rose	Mackesys	Porter Dodson	Tanburghs
Andrew Port	Christmas and Sheehan	Fairweather Willis & Toghill	Hodge, Jones & Allen	Maidments Solicitors	Porters Solicitors	Tanburghs O'Brien Lohase
Andrew Storch	Christopher Toms	Farrell Matthews & Weir	Holts Solicitors	Marchants Criminal Law Defence Solicitors	Powell Spencer & Partners	Taylor Goodchild
Anglia Crime Team	Claude Hornby & Cox	Favell Smith & Lawson	Howard Cohen & Co.	Mark & Co.	Prisoners' Advice Service	Taylor Nichol
Appleby Hope & Matthews	Clinton Davis Pallis	Fiona Chronopoulos	Howard League	Martin B. Jackson	R George Davies & Co.	Teresa Brennan
Ashton Morton Slack	Clive Gomes Solicitors	Firth Lindsay	Howell Emery Hall	Martin Murray & Associates	Rabinder Singh QC	The Black Solicitors Network
Associate & Co.	CMHT Solicitors	Fisher Jones Greenwood LLP	HSR Solicitors	Matthew Gauntlett	RFB Solicitors	The Law Society
Association of Major London Criminal Law Firms	Cobleys	Fisher Meredith	Hullock Miller Partnership	McMillen Hamilton McCarthy	Robert Lizar Solicitor	Thomas & Co.
Aston Clark	Commission for Racial Equality	Forbes Solicitors	Ian Duckworth & Co.	Mehra & Co.	Robin Murray	Timothy Greene
Atteys Solicitors	Conninghams Solicitors	Foreman & Co.	Ian Henry & Co.	Menon & Co.	Rothera Dowson	TMK
Bagshaws for Crime	Constanti Shah	Foresters Solicitors	Ian Whitbread	Michael Fisher Solicitors	Rowe Sparkes Partnership	Toussaint & Co.
Bains Cohen	Corlett, A, Paul, S, Manek, R, & Henry, G	Francis Lovett	Institute of Legal Executives	Mike Pryor	Russell Jones & Walker	Tranter Criminal Law Solicitors
Bankside Law	Cousins Tyrer	Frank Brazell & Partners	Ivine Thanvi Natas	Mohan Gandhi	Saeed Hafezi	Tuckers
Bark & Co.	Criminal Appeal Lawyers Association	Franklins	Isherwood & Hose	Morlings	Sandra Keen	Vickers Chisman & Wislade
BCL Burton Copeland	Criminal Law Solicitors' Association	Freemans	Jackie Phillips	Morris and Warren	Sansbury Campbell Solicitors	Vicky Ling
Bedwell Watts & Co.	D A Clarke	G T Stuart	Jefferies Solicitors	Morrison Spowart	Scott-Moncrieff, Harbour & Sinclair	Walker & Co.
Berri's Solicitors	Dalia Naaman	G V Hale & Co.	Joanne Lee	Moss & Co.	Sears Blok Solicitors	Walkers
Bhatt Murphy	Dalton Homes Gray	Galbraith Branley	John Boyle & Co.	MPP Solicitors	Shabnam Rahnama & Co	Waltham Forest Criminal Defence Solicitors Group
Bindman & Partners	David Clark & Co.	Gammon Bell & Co.	John Smith	Mullender Packer	Shakeel Jamil	Warner Goodman & Street
Birds Solicitors	David Phillips & Partners	Garstangs	Jonas Roy Bloom	Mureeham Shahban	Shaw Graham Kersh Solicitors	West London Criminal Solicitors Practitioners Group
Birmingham Law Society	David Rubie, Mitchell & Company	Gattas Denfield	Joseph Danios	Murrays Partnership	Sheaman Bowen & Co.	Whitlock & Storr
Birberg Peirce and Partners	David Street & Company	Gavin Burrell	Jung & Co.	Nyiles & Co.	Sheratte Caleb & Co.	Wilks Price Hounslow
Bishop & Light	Davies Gore Lomax	Gilbert Turner Coomber	Kalber Struckley & Co.	Nelson Guest & Partners	Shulmans Solicitors	Wilson & Co.
Blatch & Co.	Dawn La-Borde	Gies & Hammond	Keith Hill	Nicholls & Co	Simons Muirhead & Burton	Wilson Houlder
Blavo & Co.	Dean Thomas & Co.	Gordon, Shine & Co.	Keppe & Partners	Nornie Waite & Slater	Smithson Hinds Morris	Wiseman Lee
BMV	Dent Abrams	Gotelee and Goldsmith	Kingsley Napley	O'Keefe Solicitors	Society of Asian Lawyers	Wood Awdry & Ford
Boothroyds	Devon & Exeter Law Society	Grahame Stowe Bateson	Kirkpatrick's	Omerods	Solicitors' Association of Higher Court Advocates	Young Barristers Committee
Bostals	Dexter Montague & Partners	Grayson Willis Bennett	Kitson Hutchings	Owen White & Catlin	Soni & Kaur	Young Legal Aid Lawyers
Brady Eastwood Pierce & Steward	Dobson Hillman	Gregsons	Knight & Co.	P.E.P Honke	Sonn Macmillan	
Brent Law Practice	Donnelly Adamson	Guney Clark and Ryan	Lansbury Worthington	Patterson Solicitors	Steel & Shamash	
BSB Solicitors	Doughty Street Chambers	H R Rowland	Laurence J Smith	Paul Morgan	Stephanie Dale	
Bullivant and Partners	Dowse & Co.	Hallmark Atkinson Wynter	Lawrence & Co.	Payton's Solicitors	Stephen Ritter	
C R Burton & Co.	Dundons	Hannett Osborne Tisshaw	Leeds Law Society	Peach Grey & Co.	Stephen Willmer	
Campbell Chambers	Eddowes Perry and Osbourne	Hansford & Co.	Legal Action Group	Penny Mackinder	Stephens & Son Solicitors	
Canwright King Solicitors	Edward Fall Bradshaw and Watson	Haringey Criminal Defence Practitioners' Group	Legal Aid Practitioners Group	Percy Short & Outhbert	Stokes	
CGM Solicitors	Edward Hayes	Harrison Bunday	Lester Morrill	Peter Bonner & Co	Stokoe Partnership	
Charles Kiri & Co.	Edwards Vaziraney	Harrow Law Partnership	Levenes	Peter Clarke Solicitors	Sumitra Rao	