



**Immigration Appointment Pilot
(North West)
Evaluation**

July – October 2009

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Immigration Appointment Pilot (North West) Evaluation

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1. GLOSSARY

1.1 Terms used in the Evaluation

- **Access date:** the date on which the Operator made the appointment for the client.
- **Adviser:** an Adviser provides legal advice on behalf of their organisation under the terms of the LSC Unified Contract specification.
- **Appointment:** an Appointment is a **booked** Slot.
- **Appointment Booking System (ABS):** this is the Internet based appointment system, which was created for testing in Social Welfare Categories.
- **Appointment date:** the date on which the appointment with the Adviser is scheduled for.
- **Asylum Screening Unit (ASU):** The Asylum Screening Unit is a centre run by the UK Border Agency where a person is registered as an asylum applicant and begins the process of applying for asylum. At the time of the pilot there were two centres in the UK; one in Liverpool (which was subject to the pilot) and one in Croydon.
- **Case Reference Number (CRN):** Unique applicant reference number recorded in the ABS, normally either the Home Office Unique Client Number or the Port reference number.
- **Diary:** each Adviser will have one or more Diaries. Each Diary will have an associated Office, allowing an Adviser to set up different days at different Offices. Diaries 'inherit' their Office's Accessibility Options.
- **First Reporting Event (FRE):** stage in UKBA process in which the applicant is scheduled to meet their caseowner for the first time
- **Liaison Officer:** the individual within each Provider and the LSC who acted as primary point of contact during the pilot.
- **No Shows:** an instance where an applicant fails to attend their scheduled appointment with a particular provider. Under both the Paper Rota and the VAS, the provider is entitled to claim upto 1 hour of attendance time for each No Show.
- **Office:** an office or premises of an Organisation which customers can visit to receive advice. The location of an outreach service is treated as an Office within ABS.

- **Operator:** these were the UKBA ASU staff that met with the clients and offered them the option of booking an appointment.
- **Provider:** A Provider is an advice organisation participating in the appointment-making pilot. A Provider may have more than one Office or location. The Provider holds an LSC Unified Contract and Schedule to undertake publically funded Immigration work.
- **Slot:** a Slot is a period of time defined in a Diary when an Adviser is willing to take an Appointment. Slots 'inherit' all categories of law and Accessibility Options.
- **UK Border Agency (UKBA)** The UK Border Agency is an agency of the Home Office. The Agency brings together the work previously carried out by the Border and Immigration Agency, customs detection work at the border from Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs, and UK Visa Services from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office.
- **Voluntary Appointment Making System (VAS)** The official title of the Internet based appointment system used in Immigration.
- **Wraparound Provider:** The holder of a UKBA contract to provide services for applicants in a NAM region e.g. to assist in applying for NASS support.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 Purpose of the pilot

Between April and June 2009, the Legal Services Commission conducted a pilot in Wales and the South West, of a new online appointment system, based on one also trialled in Social Welfare law. The original intention had been for a single pilot to be run, across two different regions simultaneously – Wales & the South West and the North West. This would then have allowed a comparison between the performances of the system in the two regions, however due to unforeseen circumstances this was not possible and therefore the test proceeded as two separate pilots. The second pilot in the North West ran between July and October 2009. A third pilot of the system, in the Yorkshire and Humberside region, also commenced in September, concluding in December 2009.

All three pilots were designed to test the use of an online appointment making system to potentially replace the paper-based system that exists in each of the UKBA NAM regions.

The specific aims of the pilots were to:

1. Reduce the time between appointments being booked and the date on which they were due to take place, as compared to the previous Paper Rota.
2. Increase the ability of a client to access legal advice prior to their Substantive Interview.
3. Increase client choice in determining which appointment they attended and which provider they chose to instruct.
4. Reduce the number of 'No Show' claims from providers compared to the previous Rota system.

The Wales & South West pilot has been evaluated separately, this report concerns the evaluation of the North West pilot.

In the North West it was observed that under the Paper Rota, only 20% of applicants were able to obtain an appointment within 3 days of the request being made, with an average delay of 6 days; this in turn led to the Substantive Interview taking place on average 1-2 days prior to this first appointment.

It was hoped that a pilot of the system in the North West, if able to achieve the same level of outcomes as in the earlier pilot, would lead to a significant increase in the ability of asylum applicants in the region to obtain legal advice prior to their claim being considered by the UKBA.

Whilst the Wales and South West pilot had clearly demonstrated that the system could indeed function within an Initial Accommodation environment, with the Wraparound contract holder acting as the Operator, the North West offered an opportunity to offer appointments to applicants at the earliest stage possible – at the point at which they register their claim with the UKBA.

This could potentially allow an appointment with a legal representative to take place on day 3-4 of the asylum process, further increasing the chances of legal advice being obtained prior to the Substantive Interview (scheduled by UKBA for day 7-12).

An additional aim of pilot was to demonstrate the suitability of the UKBA ASU staff to act as operators, allowing a direct comparison with the performance evidenced by the Wraparound Provider.

2.2 The Evaluation

The evaluation demonstrated that the pilot was successful in relation to meeting 2 of the 4 targets that were set, despite the low intake observed. Even where the target was not met, significant improvements were made compared to performance under the previous system:

- i. 39% of clients were given an appointment within 3 days, compared to 19% under the previous system, and against a target of 50%.
- ii. 96% of clients were given an appointment within 6 days, compared to 70% under the Paper Rota, and against a target of 90%.
- iii. 92% of clients were offered an appointment for a date prior to their Substantive Interview, compared to 49% under the Paper Rota and against a target of 90%.
- iv. Against a target of 90%, 89% of appointments were deemed effective. This compares to approximately 84% under the previous rota arrangements.

Feedback on the system itself from providers and Operators was mixed.

The evaluation suggests that the system could potentially work within the structure of the Asylum Screening process, however it would require further testing across a greater intake, ideally on a national level to increase the number of applicants eligible to receive an appointment.

Given that at the time of evaluation there is now only one ASU, in Croydon, the system needs to be tested in that environment, allowing appointments to be booked for applicants across each of the NAM regions (outside of London)

to see whether success along the lines suggested on this small scale test can be achieved nationally.

2.3 Summary of Recommendations

Test the system on a national level

Given the relatively small intake of cases through the pilot and therefore the limited conclusions that can be drawn from any data relating to those cases, the main recommendation of this evaluation is that the system should be tested again in an ASU environment, however this should not be undertaken until the system is also available to all LSC providers throughout those NAM regions outside of London and the South East. This will allow a greater potential intake of applicants, and a truer test of whether the system can operate on a national level with UKBA staff acting as operators.

Further research into the reasons for declining an appointment

From the three pilots that have been undertaken so far, it is apparent that further analysis may be undertaken of those applicants who decline an appointment, particularly as they already have an existing representative. Trends by nationality have been observed, further investigation as to the progress and outcome of these cases compared to those in which an appointment has been offered and made may be of further interest.

Re-design of the system

Amendments and developments have been suggested for the system throughout each of the three pilots undertaken, many of the suggestions are similar and these are being explored as part of the necessary re-design of the system. These amendments should be made prior to any further implementation of the system on a national level.

Engagement and joint working with UKBA

Ensuring that the system meets the certification requirements of UKBA will also be necessary if it is to be further tested; this will allow greater level of information to be recorded on the system and would then negate the need for separate communication of such detail from the operator to the adviser.

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1 Background to the pilot

A detailed background to the Appointment Pilots can be found in the 'Immigration Appointment Pilot (Wales and South West) Evaluation' which is available from the LSC website:

http://www.legalservices.gov.uk/docs/cls_main/VAS_Evaluation_Wales_and_South_West_October_2009.pdf.

Following the introduction of the New Asylum Model (NAM) by the UKBA in 2006/07, a paper based rota system was then organised by the LSC and administered by different organisations in each NAM area.

In the North West, all LSC contracted providers in the region are able to participate in the rota, covering Lancashire, Merseyside, Greater Manchester and Cheshire. The rota takes some account of the location of the applicant when making an appointment, for instance an applicant living in Manchester would if possible be booked an appointment with a provider in the Manchester area.

Whilst the paper rota aided applicants in obtaining legal advice on their asylum claim, it also presented several problems in its practical application.

One criticism of the paper rota from providers was that it did not accurately reflect the size and capacity of each provider, or their availability at any individual moment in time.

The paper rota also had an inherent delay built into its administration, with some necessary communication back and forth between the UKBA, the administrator booking the appointment and the provider. The applicant would only learn of the details of the appointment at their FRE. This immediately led to time being lost at the start of the process.

The primary concern for the LSC was to ensure that access to legal advice was available prior to the client's Substantive Interview with the UKBA. The interview is a key stage in the application process, ultimately assisting the Caseowner to formulate a decision. The LSC believes that it is vital that the client is able to access legal advice prior to their interview with the Home Office, particularly given that an Adviser would not normally be funded to attend the interview.

A review of the paper rota in the region it found that:

- 20% of applicants were able to obtain an appointment within 3 days of the request being made, with the appointment-taking place on average 6 days later.

- 70% were able to access advice in less than 7 days.
- This delay led to the Substantive Interview having taken place prior to the first appointment with a legal adviser in 41% of cases.¹
- On average the Interview took place 1-2 days before the appointment date.

With legal advice being available only 1-2 days before the substantive interview and in 41% of cases after this, there is potentially an impact as a result on the decision reached by the Caseowner and on the progression of the client's case from that point onwards, which would be most likely through the appeal system.

3.2 Selection of Operator and location of the pilot

The North West Appointment Pilot sought to test whether the system could be as effective if operated by staff at the UKBA ASU in Liverpool, as they were able to offer appointments to applicants at the same time as their claim is registered and their initial accommodation address is confirmed. This could potentially allow an appointment with a legal representative to take place on day 3-4 of the asylum process, further increasing the chances of legal advice being obtained prior to the Substantive Interview (scheduled for day 7-12).

This pilot would also test the suitability of the UKBA ASU staff to act as operators, allowing a direct comparison with the performance evidenced by the Wraparound Provider in Wales. The pilot would also allow an examination as to the likelihood of applicants taking up the offer of an appointment from the UKBA, given their role as decision maker in the process, and also the likelihood of them attending such an appointment.

3.4 Geographic limitations of the pilot

Given that applicants who claim asylum at the ASU in Liverpool may already have accommodation anywhere in England & Wales (or indeed Scotland), in order to fully test the system in an ASU environment this would require all providers across all of the NAM regions to agree to be included in the Appointment Booking System. This would allow the operator to offer an appointment to any applicant regardless of their location in England and Wales². However given the scale of such an undertaking it was decided that the pilot should have some regional limitations, sufficient enough to test the basic principles of whether the ASU is a suitable Operator whilst also allowing for closer scrutiny and management of the pilot than would be possible if the system were tested on a national level.

¹ Data obtained from the Paper Rota records from December 2008 to May 2009

² The Legal Services Commission is responsible for the provision of Legal Aid in England and Wales; the Scottish Legal Aid Board administers Legal Aid in Scotland.

The eligibility criteria for the pilot therefore was that the applicant would be offered an appointment if they:

- Claimed asylum at the Screening Unit in Liverpool
- Had accommodation or would be provided with accommodation in the North West NAM region

It was likely that a substantial proportion of intake into ASU would be resident outside of the region, and therefore would in turn be ineligible for the pilot.

Additionally, the pilot also not include applicants who claimed asylum at the ASU in Croydon, at a Port or at a Local Enforcement Office but who may be resident in or routed to, the North West. Whilst the pilot may demonstrate whether the system could or could not operate in the ASU environment in the future it was thought necessary to continue to run the Paper Rota for those applicants who claimed asylum through one of these other routes and would reside in the North West.

Applicants would be free to decline an appointment and the Operator would record the reasons for this. Where the applicant already had their own legal representative who they wished to continue to instruct, the Operator would ask the client for the regional location of that legal representative. This would provide an element of analysis as to whether applicants had been able to secure representative either in region or outside of the region prior to their claim being registered.

3.5 No-shows and the cost of the Paper Rota

Under the Paper Rota, providers were entitled to claim up to the equivalent of 1-hour of attendance time in the event that a client did not attend their first appointment with the Adviser obtained through the rota system. This cost (up to £52.55) was designed to cover the lost time spent by the Adviser and in the event that an interpreter was instructed, a portion of their lost time also.

The costs of funding “no shows” was also a particular concern.

In addition to the cost of no show claims, the cost of administering the Paper Rota would also be considered as part of the pilot. The pilot would also examine the impact of operating the system on the UKBA staff involved at the ASU and whether this created any additional resource needs.

3.6 The Appointment Booking System (ABS)

The Appointment Booking System itself is an Internet system that was designed and piloted in 2008 by Community Legal Advice (CLA) in the Social Welfare categories of law, in various locations across England and Wales.

Further background to that system and how the Immigration system was developed can be found in the Immigration Appointment Pilot (Wales and South West) Evaluation.

The system had previously been tested in the Immigration category in Wales and South West between April and June 2009, and whilst the system requires some future revision to ensure it is more reflective of the needs of this category, its basic function and use in Immigration was evident.

The system allows an operator to search for available appointments, which have been uploaded by a provider, also giving them the option to list the available appointments by order of proximity to the client's address or by the date/time of the appointment. The system also allows the operator and client to view the individual advisers offering appointments, allowing for the selection of a female adviser if requested or appropriate.

This ensures that the factor most relevant to each client's situation can be accounted for when the client decides which appointment they want e.g. if a selection of appointments with different providers are all for the same date, the client may then decide to attend the one closest to where they live, or vice versa.

3.7 Maintenance of the pilot

During the life of the pilot, every Provider had a dedicated Liaison Officer within their organisation. That individual acted as the primary contact for communicating login and system information, guidance, requesting information and co-ordinating responses from their organisation on the evaluation questionnaires.

The LSC had a similar contact during the pilot for any basic system, process or policy issues. For any technical queries, the system developer BSS, provided a dedicated Helpline and Service Desk email address for providers and the LSC to use.

The Pilot commenced on 20 July 2009 and concluded on 9 October, running for a total of 12 weeks.

3.8 How the pilot worked alongside ASU Liverpool processes

More than half of all asylum applications are registered in ASUs in the United Kingdom and whilst this was a positive reason for testing the ABS in this environment, it also highlighted the need to incorporate the pilot efficiently into existing ASU processes, reducing where possible any disruption to operations and unduly elongating the experience for asylum applicants.

In order to effectively identify a suitable appointment for applicants who wish to make appointments through the ABS it was necessary to slot in the process

at the end of the screening procedure, once the routing location had been established. This particularly enabled those who required UKBA accommodation to have a local appointment arranged with an advisor. It also allowed the Screening Officer to identify the address of applicants with their own accommodation and exclude those from the pilot who already had legal representation.

The process itself then comprised of a number of basic stages:

- Identifying suitability of the applicant (given geographical / routing limitations / existing legal representation)
- Reading a standard introductory script to the applicant to offer some background about the importance of accessing early legal advice on their claim, give reassurance about the UKBA's objectivity and the independent status of the legal representatives involved.
- If the answer is “no” the Officer would log the reasons why the applicant did not want to take the opportunity of an appointment (e.g. already had a representative)
- If the answer is “yes” the Officer would then:
 - Log onto the ABS and insert the relevant details to conduct a search
 - Offer the applicant a choice of representatives based upon date / ease of access from their residence
 - Update the site according to the choice of appointment and insert any relevant additional details (e.g. any special requirements)
 - Print off the details for the applicant and give them a copy with a small map to assist in their journey
 - Send a confirmation email to the chosen representatives

Greater analysis is provided later within this evaluation, however essentially the mainstay of the process could be mirrored in future implementation. Indeed, the very requirement to wait until the routing destination has been established earmarks the point in the process that the ABS can be effectively used.

Timeliness is key in a busy operational ASU and the pilot did not adversely affect the surrounding screening procedures, nor did it impact negatively upon the waiting times for applicants who would otherwise be waiting for the screening process to be concluded. For Screening Officers or “Operators” asking the initial questions and accessing / updating the ABS took an additional 2 – 5 minutes. Further time (approx 10 mins) was accrued by

printing off necessary paperwork, updating manual logs and sending a confirmation email to representatives. In any future system the VAS would have the necessary security accreditation to meet UKBA requirements and thus the need to communicate with the providers via email would be eradicated. In addition to this, potential greater uptake would result in Screening Officers to become more practised with the system. This again would reduce the total time cost.

3.9 Evaluation Aims

As mentioned above, the main aim of the pilot was to improve the ability of clients to access legal advice prior to their Substantive Interview with the UKBA. Three key areas will be evaluated to demonstrate whether that central aim was achieved:

- i. Were sufficient appointments available to meet demand
- ii. Was there a reduction compared to the paper rota in the delay between the date an appointment was made, and the appointment date
- iii. Were the appointments effective

Ultimately, even where appointments were made earlier than under the previous system, their effectiveness i.e. the client attending the appointment and advice being given, would be key to measuring success.

The Evaluation will seek to review each of these areas.

In addition the Evaluation will also review the application of the system in the ASU environment compared to the pilot conducted in Initial Accommodation with the Wraparound provider.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Data

The evaluation will meet its aims by analysing a number of critical factors derived from the following sources of data:

| Data Source | Description |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| UKBA Appointment Log | <p>This record was maintained by the UKBA staff at the ASU during the pilot period and was designed to provide data to summarise the number of applicants they saw at Screening and the proportions who were eligible for the pilot, and then went on to accept or decline the offer of an appointment.</p> <p>Data provided:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Numbers seen 2. Numbers eligible 3. Numbers ineligible and reasons 4. Numbers accepting appointments 5. Numbers declining appointments 6. Reasons for declining appointments 7. Client Case Reference Number 8. Date client seen |
| Summary of Appointment records | <p>Given the limited number of data fields in the system it was necessary for a number of data entries to be recorded in the narrative fields in the system. As a result in order to collate much of this data, the individual records had to be examined and the data extracted into a separate excel form.</p> <p>This data allows comparisons with not only the UKBA appointment log to analysis the effectiveness and timeliness of appointments, but also to then compare this against the previous levels recorded in relation to the NAM Paper Rota.</p> <p>Data provided:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Client name 2. Client Post Code 3. Client CRN 4. Date appointment made |

| | |
|---|--|
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Date of appointment 6. Provider 7. Adviser' name 8. Date of First Reporting Event (FRE) 9. Date of Substantive Interview (SI) 10. Confirmation of whether the following details were recorded on the system: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Client's nationality - Language spoken - Need for interpreter 11. Confirmation of effectiveness of appointment 12. Reason for ineffective appointment |
| <p>Locally sourced unpublished UKBA data</p> | <p>Whilst the UKBA Appointment Log provides an overview of the number of applicants seen and offered an appointment, it was also necessary to obtain locally sourced data to demonstrate what proportion of regional intake this represented. Given that only those applicants who claimed at ASU in Liverpool and who would reside in the North West region would be eligible, there would be a proportion of applicants who claimed elsewhere who would then not be eligible for the pilot.</p> <p>Data provided:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Total intake into region during Pilot 2. Total intake through the ASU in Liverpool |
| <p>Statistics from NAM Paper rota</p> | <p>Records of the previous NAM paper rota were also collated to obtain data on the levels of appointments made and the timeliness of those appointments. This data informed not only the targets set for the pilot but would also then inform any evaluation of the aims of the pilot.</p> <p>Data provided:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Date appointment made 2. Date of appointment 3. Provider |
| <p>No Show data</p> | <p>Confirmation from providers regarding the number of No Shows, which occurred between December 08 and May 09 for comparison with the pilot period.</p> <p>This would be obtained from each of the North West providers.</p> |

4.2 Data accuracy

As with any data recorded on such systems, there is the potential for human error, however where any clear inconsistencies or gaps in data have been identified, this has been flagged and any such data either not included within any analysis, or it has been further investigated to ensure the information is accurate.

4.3 Other information obtained

Feedback from Providers

In addition to the data obtained above, direct feedback was also submitted from Providers as part of the evaluation. The feedback focused on the operation of the system itself, the performance of the Operator and also on the potential improvements and further uses of the system.

The feedback was obtained through a questionnaire, which was to be completed by each of the Advisers who accessed the system through the life of the pilot. Given the varying level of use of the system, and the different roles within the pilot (e.g. Adviser, administrator), each individual's experience of the system would have been different.

Feedback from Operators

Similarly, feedback was obtained from the Operators through a questionnaire regarding the operation of the system, potential improvements and further uses of the system as well as their general comments on the working of the pilot.

4.4 Limitations on the analysis

There are no published UKBA statistics, which can be included within this evaluation, any future monitoring of the system should include where possible comparable statistics regarding size and breakdown of regional intake in the NAM area.

5. ANALYSIS

5.1 Eligibility of applicants

Throughout the duration of the pilot, a total of 746 applicants registered their claims at the ASU in Liverpool, however only 154 of these were eligible for the pilot, equivalent to 21%. The main cause of ineligibility was that the applicant had or would be given accommodation outside of the North West; 44% were excluded for this reason.

The proportion of applicants who matched the eligibility criteria was considerably less than had been anticipated prior to the pilot commencing. As a result, limited conclusions can be drawn on the success of the system compared to the paper rota, but the results can indicate potential future areas of success should such a system be tested on a national level allowing greater intake.

Recommendation 1:

In order to fully explore whether the VAS could be successful within a Screening environment, a further test of the system should be undertaken in the ASU in Croydon. The test should not be undertaken until the system has also been implemented in the following NAM areas:

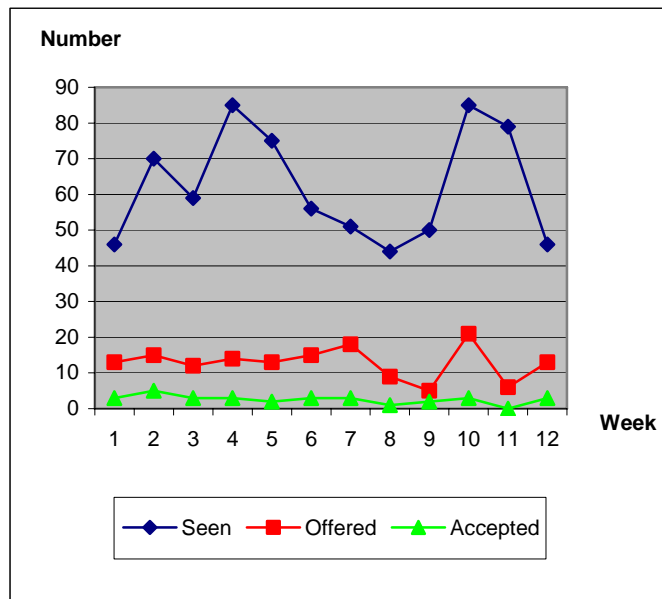
- North West
- North East & Yorkshire and Humberside
- Midlands and Eastern region
- Wales and the South West

Once those providers in those regions, wishing to utilise the VAS have been given access to the system, it will then be possible for UKBA staff within the ASU to offer to book an appointment for an applicant who resides (or will be routed to) one of those regions.

Those applicants who claim asylum at Port or at a Local Enforcement Office and are then housed in Initial Accommodation in one of those areas can then be offered an appointment through the contract Wraparound provider in those areas.

Fig 1.

| Intake by week | | | |
|----------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Week | Seen | Offered | Accepted |
| 1 | 46 | 13 | 3 |
| 2 | 70 | 15 | 5 |
| 3 | 59 | 12 | 3 |
| 4 | 85 | 14 | 3 |
| 5 | 75 | 13 | 2 |
| 6 | 56 | 15 | 3 |
| 7 | 51 | 18 | 3 |
| 8 | 44 | 9 | 1 |
| 9 | 50 | 5 | 2 |
| 10 | 85 | 21 | 3 |
| 11 | 79 | 6 | 0 |
| 12 | 46 | 13 | 3 |
| Total | 746 | 154 | 31 |



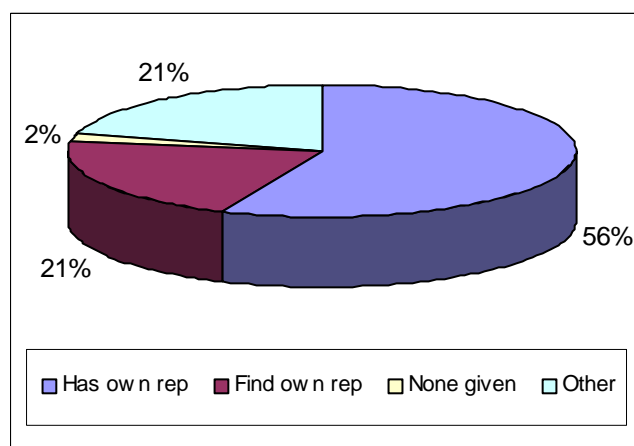
5.2 Uptake of appointments

Across the 12 weeks of the pilot, from the 154 eligible applicants, 31 (20%) accepted the offer of an appointment (see Fig 1 above). It should be noted that 3 of those appointments booked related to applicants who had already had an appointment booked or were duplicate entries into the system. In total 28 applicants were given an appointment, equal to 18% of eligible intake.

Of the remaining applicants, the majority (56%) declined an appointment as they already had a legal representative. It was unclear from the information recorded whether the representative necessarily had a contract with the LSC or the location of that representative. A further 21% of applicants stated that they would find their own representative. The remainder either did not give a reason or the reasons were varied.

Fig 2.

| Reason declined | | |
|-----------------|------------|-----|
| Has own rep | 62 | 56% |
| Find own rep | 23 | 21% |
| None given | 2 | 2% |
| Other | 23 | 21% |
| Total | 110 | |

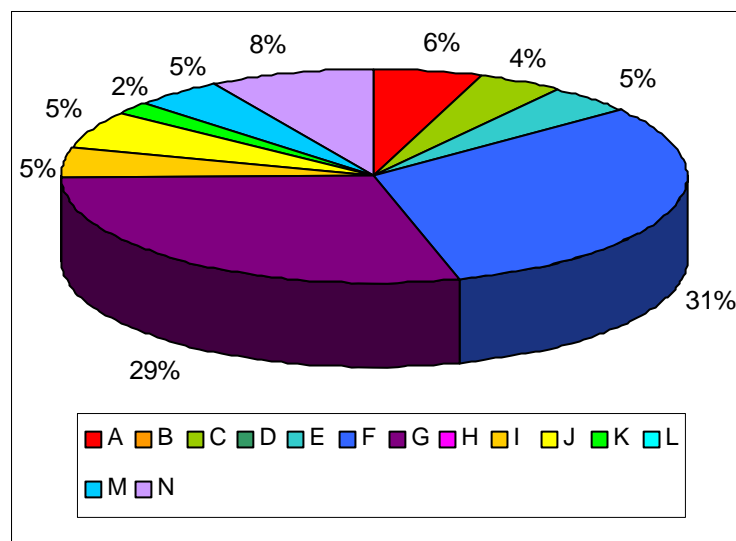


5.3 Provider Share of appointments made

Throughout the pilot, 10 of the 14 providers who were given access to the system went on to offer appointments. The remaining 4 providers were unable to offer appointments during the course of the pilot, as they did not have sufficient capacity to do so. 2 providers contributed almost two thirds of the appointments available; one of these was based in Liverpool (Provider F), the other in Manchester (Provider G).

Fig 3.

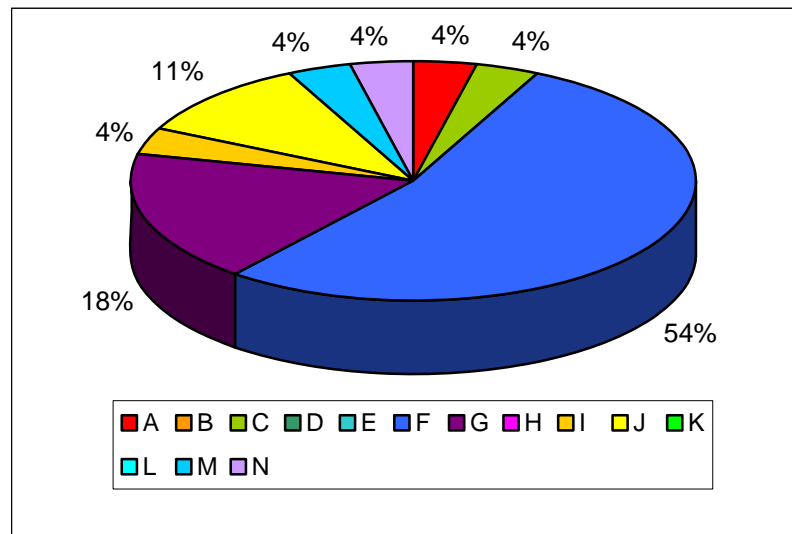
| Available | | |
|--------------|------------|-----|
| Anon | Total | % |
| A | 31 | 6% |
| B | 0 | 0% |
| C | 24 | 4% |
| D | 0 | 0% |
| E | 25 | 5% |
| F | 172 | 31% |
| G | 161 | 29% |
| H | 0 | 0% |
| I | 27 | 5% |
| J | 30 | 5% |
| K | 11 | 2% |
| L | 0 | 0% |
| M | 25 | 5% |
| N | 47 | 8% |
| Total | 553 | |



However, Provider F received a greater share of the appointments that were then booked, this would appear to be due to their geographical location and the fact that they were the only provider in Liverpool itself that offered appointments during the pilot.

Fig 4.

| Booked | | |
|--------------|-----------|-----|
| Anon | Total | % |
| A | 1 | 4% |
| B | 0 | 0% |
| C | 1 | 4% |
| D | 0 | 0% |
| E | 0 | 0% |
| F | 15 | 54% |
| G | 5 | 18% |
| H | 0 | 0% |
| I | 1 | 4% |
| J | 3 | 11% |
| K | 0 | 0% |
| L | 0 | 0% |
| M | 1 | 4% |
| N | 1 | 4% |
| Total | 28 | |



The appointments that were booked represent a conversion rate from those available of 5%, effectively therefore there were 20 appointments available for every appointment that was actually made.

5.4 Timeliness of the appointments

From reviewing the NAM Paper Rota in the pilot area, it was possible prior to the start of the pilot to confirm the average time scales between the dates on which the appointment was made (access date); and the date of the appointment itself (appointment date) under this previous rota system. The NAM timetable is in calendar days; the analysis therefore mirrors this.

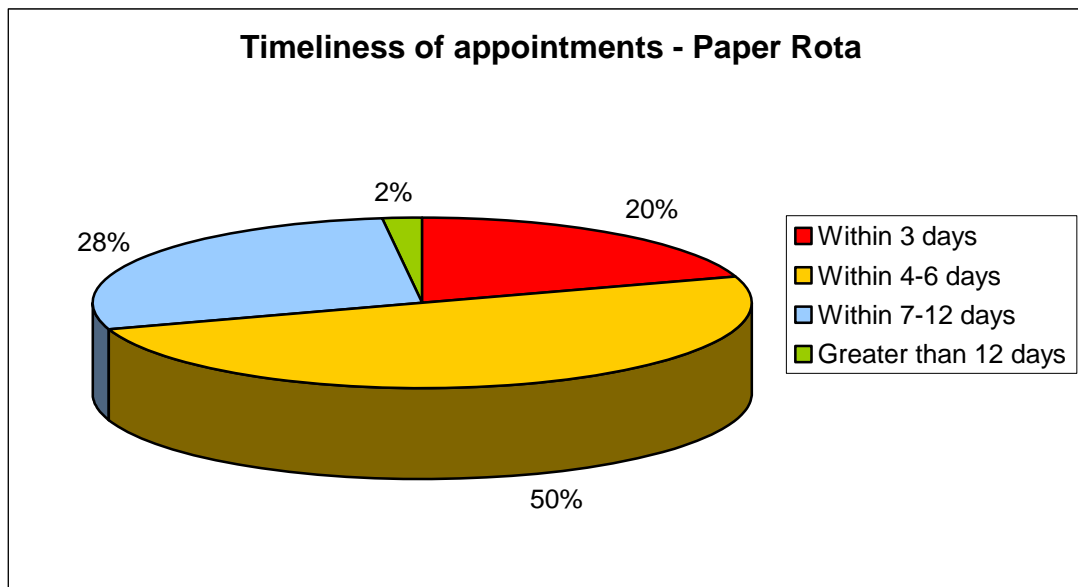
a) Paper Rota

The period reviewed was December 2008 to May 2009, totaling 27 weeks.

Across the 902 appointments, the average time delay between the Access date and the Appointment Date was 6 Calendar days

- 20% of appointments were within 3 calendar days of the access date
- 50% were between 4-6 days after the access date
- 70% were within 6 days of the access date
- 28% were between 7-12 days after the access date
- 2% were over 12 days after the access date

Fig 5.



Whilst data relating to the Substantive Interview was not available in every instance, where it was known it suggested that in 41% of cases the Interview had taken place prior to the Appointment date, on average 1-2 days beforehand.

b) Targets for the Pilot

Three targets were set for the pilot relating to the timeliness of the appointments. The meeting of these targets would assist in demonstrating the success of the pilot in improving the timeliness of appointment making process compared to the previous paper rota.

All of these targets relate to cases in which the relevant data was available.

The targets were:

1. For an appointment date to be within 3 days of the access date in at least 50% of cases
2. For an appointment date to be within 6 days of the access date in at least 90% of cases.
3. For an appointment date to be before the Substantive Interview date in 90% of cases.

Given that the date on which the applicant would access the system would be Day 1 of the UKBA asylum process, if all applicants could obtain an appointment by Day 7 of the process it was extremely likely that the applicant

would be able to access legal advice prior to their Substantive Interview, which is normally scheduled for day 7 to 12 of the process.

Where the Access Date had not been recorded on the system, this was obtained from UKBA post pilot.

Similarly, as the Substantive Interview is not booked during the Screening Process, the caseowner booking the appointment with the legal adviser would not have been aware of the date and therefore this data has been obtained from UKBA after the pilot for the purposes of evaluation.

c) Performance of the Pilot

Target 1: For an appointment date to be within 3 days of the access date in at least 50% of cases

This target was not met during the Pilot; in actuality clients were able to secure a first appointment with a provider within 3 days of the access date in 39% of cases, an improvement of 19% compared to the Paper Rota.

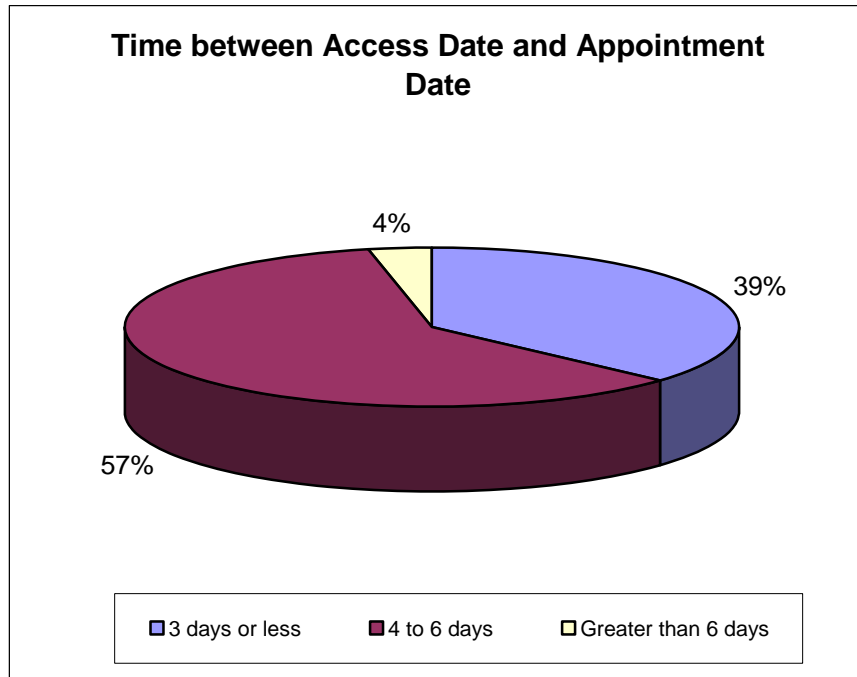
It should be noted however that within the first few days of the process applicants would also be transported to their initial accommodation, have appointments with the Wraparound Provider in the region (in this case Refugee Action) and have various other commitments which may prevent an appointment being possible or practical in all instances during this timescale.

Target 2: For an appointment date to be within 6 days of the access date in at least 90% of cases

This target was exceeded within the Pilot, with 96% of clients able to secure an appointment with a provider within 6 days of the access date, a significant improvement compared to 70% achieved under the Paper Rota.

Fig 6.

| Timescale | Number | % |
|---------------------|---------------|----------|
| 3 days or less | 11 | 39% |
| 4 to 6 days | 16 | 57% |
| Greater than 6 days | 1 | 4% |
| Total | 28 | |



Whilst Target 1 was not met, given that all applicants were able to receive an appointment by no later than Day 7 of the process, this would suggest that such appointments were significantly earlier in the process than under the previous system. The average wait between dates being 4 days compared to 6 under the previous system, with the appointment on average scheduled for Day 5.

As the appointment was made around 3 days earlier in the process (Day 1) than would be the case under the Paper Rota, the actual time saving may be closer to 4 days rather than 2.

Target 3: For an appointment date to be before the Substantive Interview date in 90% of cases.

Given that the Interview date is not scheduled by the screening officer at the point the client claims asylum, this information was not available for them to record on the system at the time of access. We have however obtained confirmation from UKBA subsequently of the interview dates for each applicant.

75% of Interviews took place between Day 7-12 of the NAM process as expected, in these cases the appointment with a legal representative had been scheduled to take place on average 4 calendar days earlier. This demonstrates a significant improvement compared to the paper rota where the reverse was true; with interviews taking place on average 1-2 days before the appointment.

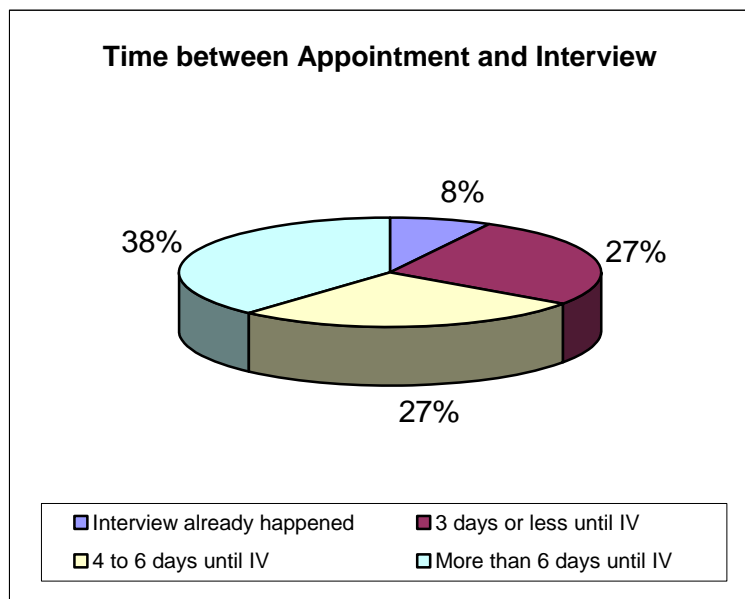
Against the stated target, 92% of appointments took place prior to the interview date with only 2 taking place after that date.

In both of those instances, the applicants had returned to the ASU having already claimed asylum there 9-10 days earlier. On attending at ASU for the second time, they requested an appointment with a legal representative. There were other instances in which applicants initially declined an appointment but returned to ASU, in those instances appointments could still be arranged prior to the Interview.

Unfortunately in the two cases mentioned above, the Interview dates had already been set for the next day and it was not possible to arrange an appointment until 2-3 days later.

Fig 7.

| Timescale | Number | % | % Excluding Unknown |
|---------------------|-----------|-----|---------------------|
| Already past | 2 | 7% | 8% |
| 3 days or less | 7 | 25% | 27% |
| 4 to 6 days | 7 | 25% | 27% |
| Greater than 6 days | 10 | 36% | 38% |
| Unknown | 2 | 7% | |
| Total | 28 | | |



Recommendation 2:

In any future test of the system in ASU Croydon, the UKBA and the LSC should ensure that regular monitoring of the proximity of the scheduled Appointment Date and the Substantive Interview date is undertaken. Given that this information will not be available at the time the appointment is made, this data should be subsequently obtained within an agreed timeframe.

5.5 Effective appointments and No-Show claims

Having reviewed LSC claim data for the Rota period analysed³, it appears that at least 144 of the 902-recorded appointments resulted in a No Show and were ineffective. This equates to a maximum of 84% of appointments being effective. The actual figure maybe lower as providers may not have reported the claims to the LSC within the submission periods reviewed (December 2008 to July 2009).

Only 19 appointments made within the pilot period contained feedback concerning their effectiveness, with 17 being rated as effective, equivalent to 89%.

Given the incomparable size of the two samples it would be difficult to place any weight to conclusions drawn from this data.

5.6 Distance travelled to the appointment

Having compared the client's postcode and that of the providers with available appointments at the chosen time on the system, in every instance the client seemingly chose the provider closest to their location. 20 of the 28 applicants had to travel less than 5 km from their location to that of the chosen provider. The average distance travelled was 4.8 km; the furthest travelled was 13.2 km from Altrincham in Cheshire to Manchester.

5.7 Existing representatives

Whilst the level of appointments booked may have been disappointing, the number of eligible applicants who declined an appointment as they already had a legal representative significantly affected this. 46% of eligible applicants stated that they already had their own legal representative and did not require an appointment, a further 15% stated that they wished to find their own. It was not clear from the information retained at the ASU as to the location of the existing representative, whether the client was receiving legal aid or in those instances where they wished to find their own representative whether they were able to do so.

If any such system were to be utilised in the ASU environment then further information should be routinely recorded confirming the location of the representative and whether the client is publically funded or not. Work undertaken elsewhere has suggested trends in particular nationalities obtaining representatives outside of their locality early in the asylum process, the affect of this on the outcome and progression of their case compared to those applicants accepting an appointment with a local representative would be an interesting area of further investigation.

³ Claims submitted between December 2008 and July 2009 with a start date of 1/12/08 to 31/05/09 using the code combinations required for No Shows, valued at £52.55/£53.60 each.

Recommendation 3:

In any further pilot of the system in ASU Croydon, further detail should be obtained from UKBA staff regarding any applicants declining an appointment, particularly as a result of them already having a representative. Where possible the location and details of the representative should be obtained.

5.8 Feedback on the system

Only 5 advisers provided feedback on the pilot out of over 30 of whom such feedback was requested; similarly only 2 operators provided feedback on their experience of the pilot.

3 of the 5 advisers believed the system was easy to navigate; 4 believed it was easy to populate and 2 believed it was easy to amend. The remainder had mixed experience in relation to each aspect of the system. In comparison 1 of the 2 operators suggested the system was very difficult in all three aspects, this was reflected also in their comments regarding the training they had received prior to the pilot. The other operator did not comment.

Between operators and providers only one instance of technical difficulty was raised and that had been satisfactorily addressed quickly by the helpdesk.

5.9 Feedback on the Operator

Feedback was mixed.

In relation to the level and accuracy of information provided by the operator, 1 adviser was unable to positively or negatively comment, as they had not received a booked appointment. Of the remaining 4 advisers, 2 believed the accuracy was satisfactory, 1 believed it to be excellent and 1 to be poor.

The adviser who believed the information to be inaccurate suggested that 2 of the 3 appointments they received were not effective as the client had an interview with UKBA scheduled for the same date and was unable to attend their appointment as a result. As the date of interview was not available at the time of booking this would be something outside of the control of the screening officer, however having checked with UKBA it would appear that the applicant's FRE date had been subsequently scheduled for the same date as the appointment, the actual substantive interview was between 4-7 days after this.

The same advisers gave identical marks in relation to the level of information provided on the system. The adviser who scored this as poor also suggested that client contact details were not provided on the system, which made it difficult to then contact the client and re-arrange their appointments. Having

checked the records on the system however this information was provided in both instances in the Client Details section of the system, including a contact number. This would suggest an issue with the awareness of the adviser(s) of where to find this information on the system.

As for whether key dates were routinely highlighted on the system or whether confirmation as to a date being known was provided, again the same advisers scored this the same as the earlier questions.

The adviser who asserted that the information provided was inaccurate and not sufficient also suggested no information was provided, however having checked the system again it was clear that the client's nationality, language and where available FRE date were listed.

1 adviser commented that the substantive interview date was not provided, however as mentioned earlier this was not an error on the part of the operator as the interview date would not have been available at the point at which the appointment was made.

All advisers suggested that as much information as possible would be helpful at that early stage in the process, 2 advisers particularly suggested the interview date, nationality of the applicant and the language of the applicant should be provided. From reviewing the records of the appointments made, it appears that the nationality and language were recorded in 21 and 19 of the 28 bookings respectively. This information should however be provided in every instance and it may be due to lack of familiarity with the system that led to this not being the case.

Recommendation 4:

Prior to any further test of the system in ASU, the system will be redesigned, taking account of feedback obtained from all three pilots conducted to date. A key development should include the introduction of individual specific fields allowing the client's nationality, age, language (and second language) and Interview date to be recorded as a minimum.

5.10 Feedback on the supporting materials and training

Feedback from the Operators was mixed, 1 felt that the User Guides were sufficient but had gone on to produce a separate guide more tailored to UKBA staff; the other operator believed that the guide was not sufficient but did not suggest what further information or training may have been of use.

All of the providers that submitted feedback on the pilot suggested that the User Guide was sufficient to allow them to undertake the necessary work on the system.

Operators were also provided with details to allow them to practise booking appointments in the two weeks prior to the pilot starting, however given the limited numbers of appointments that were booked on the system many of the operator were unlikely to have had to actually use the system on many occasions. This would have prevented them from becoming as familiar with the system as would have been the case had uptake been higher.

Recommendation 5:

In any further pilot of the system in ASU, training will be given to system users. System users feedback will then also feed in to any amendments to User Guides to more accurately reflect the needs of ASU staff.

Recommendation 6:

Ensuring that the system meets the certification requirements of UKBA will also be necessary if it is to be further tested; this will allow greater level of information to be recorded on the system and would then negate the need for separate communication of such detail from the operator to the adviser as was required in this pilot.