

PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICE

REVIEW OF THE SECOND YEAR OF OPERATION



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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The first Public Defender Service (PDS) office to be opened in England and Wales was Liverpool on 14 May 2001 and there are now eight offices in total, three of which are branches of existing offices.
- 1.2 This report reviews the progress of the first six offices in this second year of the PDS. It also gives a preliminary look at the offices recently opened and the decisions that were made which led to their opening. Statistics and budget figures are given for the first full financial year, April 2002 to 31 March 2003
- 1.3 We have built on our successful first year, learning from the experience of the first four offices especially in relation to growing client bases from zero and effective project management when opening new offices.
- 1.4 Recent audit results show, however, that we need to remain vigilant regarding our quality systems as weaknesses were detected in certain areas which we have taken steps to address. Notwithstanding this, our focus is now moving away from the practicalities of developing operational systems to the continuing issues of corporate identity and culture of this new service. Once again, the people working in the individual PDS offices are to be applauded for their commitment and hard work which has ensured the continuance and growth of the service in its crucial second year.

PURPOSE OF THE PDS

2.1 After the first year of operation, we reviewed the reasons for establishing the Public Defender Service (see Annex One) and decided that the service exists for the following reasons –

- to provide independent, high quality and value for money criminal defence services to the public
- nationally, and locally, to provide examples of excellence in the provision of criminal defence services
- to provide us with benchmarking information to be used to improve the performance of the contracting regime with private practice suppliers
- to raise the level of understanding within government and the LCD, (now the Department for Constitutional Affairs), and all levels and areas of the LSC of the issues facing criminal defence lawyers in providing high quality services to the public
- to provide us with an additional option for ensuring the provision of quality criminal defence services in geographic areas where existing provision is low or of a poor standard
- to recruit, train and develop people to provide high quality criminal defence services – in accordance with the PDS's own business needs – which will add to the body of such people available to provide criminal defence services generally
- to share with private practice suppliers best practice, in terms of forms, systems, etc., developed within the PDS to assist in the overall improvement of CDS provision.

2.2 In the context of this clear statement of purpose, we set our business plans for 2002/2003 and focused objectives into three areas –

- growth
- quality
- people.

These were set out in our first annual report as follows.

Growth

- 2.3 The key to the future success of the PDS is the attraction and retention of clients and we, therefore, set each office targets based on the level of business attracted by the end of Year One. Those targets are set out below: -

Workload Targets for Year Two

Office		New files to be opened a month by end of 2002/2003	Files we aimed to open in 2002/03
Birmingham		60	550
Cheltenham		60	600
Liverpool		75	800
Middlesbrough		60	600
Swansea	Swansea	65	750
	Pontypridd	40	250

- 2.4 Rather than just reporting on numbers of matters, we also aimed to give more sophisticated information about the type of cases we were dealing with.

Quality

- 2.5 The quality of service to our clients is not only their entitlement, it is also thought to be “the single most effective tool we have at our disposal to attract and retain clients”. We therefore focused on three main quality areas –

- Maintain full compliance with the Commission’s SQM and CDS Contract quality requirements and develop an approach to these requirements designed to provide us with the maximum benefit from them, in terms of enhancing the quality of service to clients
- Develop and implement a statement of our own definition of a quality criminal defence service
- Develop a fuller understanding of our client’s expectations of our services and their views on the extent to which we meet these expectations.

People

- 2.6 The people who work for the PDS are our most important asset. A range of factors contribute to the delivery of quality criminal defence services, but the most important is for the PDS to be staffed by skilled, experienced and committed people working together in well managed teams.
- 2.7 All existing members of staff will have training and development plans so that we can identify clear objectives for them within the service and what is necessary for them to realise their potential.
- 2.8 We consider that the recruitment of criminal defence solicitors and accredited representatives is likely to be increasingly difficult. Therefore we consider it important that we train and develop our own accredited representatives and solicitors of the future. We have already recruited a trainee solicitor in the Swansea office and one of our accredited representatives in Middlesbrough is also now training to be a solicitor. During the coming year we will be recruiting, or developing existing staff, into trainee solicitors in Liverpool, Birmingham and Cheltenham.

Summary

- 2.9 This section set out the aims that we set ourselves for the last year and in Part 5 'Operation of the Service' we assess the extent to which all of the aims for Growth, Quality and People were met.

PROGRESS OF THE FIRST SIX OFFICES

3.1 The first six offices opened on the following dates -

Liverpool	14 May 2001
Middlesbrough	17 May 2001
Swansea	21 May 2001
Birmingham	11 July 2001
Cheltenham	15 April 2002
Pontypridd (Branch)	2 September 2002

Locations

3.2 The reasons for choosing the locations were detailed in the first annual report. In short, the first five offices were based in areas where we could reasonably expect to build up a client base within the first year so that the researchers could begin to gather data in the second.

3.3 Pontypridd, however, was set up in a smaller town as a branch office of Swansea. As part of the ongoing development of the service, we had decided to examine how major city offices could act as management centres for branch offices. Swansea had been very successful in its build up of a caseload and was a natural choice to have the first branch office; Pontypridd.

3.4 We had also chosen to site the main offices in ground floor “shop front” type premises in order to give us maximum visibility and impact in an area, even though this would clearly affect the initial set up and running costs. They are all located near to main police stations and courts.

3.5 Pontypridd was set up differently as we already had a presence in the area with the main Swansea office so we moved away from the original PDS model of ground floor premises to what is perhaps more traditional for small legal firms; first floor office space. As part of the research, we will see what effect this has had on attracting clients but our initial view is that the office has been very successful in creating a client base.

Management Systems

3.6 All offices were set up using the same management systems that were developed in the first four offices. These link into the Commission’s internal management processes such as IT and financial systems and meet our key quality standards such as the Commission’s quality standard (the Specialist Quality Mark) and those for the General Criminal Contract.

3.7 The PDS computerised Case Management System (CMS) is standard across all of the offices and the purchase and development of the system was explained in the First Annual Report of the PDS.

Business Strategy

3.8 Having established a client base in the first year we set ourselves targets for growth in each office so that our teams were more fully utilised. We had decided to employ sufficient lawyers to provide a 24-hour service from the first day of operation and we needed to build up work to match that capacity.

3.9 As an existing service it was important not only to continue to recruit quality people for both main and branch offices but to develop and retain existing staff. We therefore invested time in consolidating Human Resources procedures (for example appraisals and training plans).

3.10 We had achieved excellent results in Quality Mark and Contract Compliance audits in year one, we had set ourselves high standards and one of our aims had to be maintaining those standards. This was challenging, as we had to manage the transition from manual systems to fully computerised ones together with the huge commitment to train all members of staff on the new processes. The changeover from manual to computerised systems in January 2002 may have had an impact on the second round of audit results as discussed later in Part 5 'Operation of the Service'.

3.11 For three of the original offices (all except Birmingham), a further aim was to open branch offices and extend their management teams across two sites.

3.12 Key activities which had to be undertaken in this period were to –

- Continue to build up workloads
- Continue to develop the management systems necessary to provide a quality service, including necessary IT
- Identify the locations for the branch offices for Liverpool and Middlesbrough and prepare office accommodation
- Identify the branch office managers and recruit their teams
- Continue to work with the external research team.

Opening of offices five and six

- 3.13 Due to an election “purdah” around the General Election in 2001, the opening of the first offices tended to be low key but we were able to have more high profile events in later offices, inviting the Press and members of the local Criminal Justice System. Tony Edwards, our Professional Head, opened the Cheltenham office on 10 May 2002.
- 3.14 The Pontypridd office opened on 2 September 2002 with two solicitors and an accredited representative moving from the Swansea office. One of the solicitors manages the office on a day-to-day basis but the Swansea Head retains overall responsibility and his time and that of the Quality Manager is divided between the two offices.

Developing caseloads

- 3.15 When the offices first opened, they obtained clients either from the Duty Solicitor rota or by the reputation of the solicitors and accredited representatives who had joined us. We also began to network with other agencies such as mental health and drug counsellors as well as the wider Community Legal Service suppliers in order to promote the PDS.
- 3.16 Unsurprisingly, the offices that had recruited local solicitors and accredited representatives were able to increase their workloads more quickly than the offices which had not. For example, Middlesbrough took longer to establish but gradually the work from the Duty Solicitor rota became a smaller proportion of the total workload. Actual figures are in Part 5 Operation of the Service.

Recruitment and retention

- 3.17 In the first year, the PDS had zero staff turnover; no-one left. This was during a fairly tense time with new processes being introduced, new culture being faced and uncertainty as to the extent of the work that would be available, so this was a major achievement.
- 3.18 The second year has proved more testing as we began to experience a more normal level of staff turnover but generally, we have been fortunate enough to recruit other very experienced people in their place.
- 3.19 When recruiting in the North of England and South Wales, we had a very good response to our advertisements and were able to fill vacancies easily and quickly. However, it has been more difficult for the offices in the centre of England, (Birmingham and Cheltenham), and we understand that private crime suppliers are experiencing similar difficulties.

- 3.20 Now that the PDS teams are more familiar with the Commission's processes, they are able to undertake the majority of their own recruitment with assistance from the central Human Resources Department. We continue to adopt a two stage process consisting of some level of testing (e.g. numerical, verbal and reasoning) followed by interviews and perhaps presentations. This is not the usual approach in the private sector and it is possible that it may deter some potential applicants. As a public body, the Commission must have a consistent approach to recruitment governed by equal opportunities.
- 3.21 We have operated as any other reputable employer and offered competitive salaries within each local market, based on the level of experience of the applicant. As part of the LSC, the PDS has a national salary framework and the current average salaries for each role are:

Legal	Heads of Office	£54k
	Duty Solicitors	£34k
	Newly Qualified Solicitors	£26k
	Accredited Representatives	£24k
Admin	Quality Managers	£26k
	Senior Administrators	£14k
	Administrators	£11k

REPORTS FROM THE OFFICES

- 3.22 The following reports were prepared by each office in order to highlight what they considered to be their main achievements. They have also given examples of how PDS employees have been encouraged in their personal development.

Birmingham close-up

- 3.23 As we opened without a following or with any lawyers from Birmingham city, our case progression has been more organic and slower than other offices. This is largely unsurprising as Birmingham was chosen because it had the largest number of criminal defence practices outside London and would, therefore, test a PDS office operating within a highly competitive local market.
- 3.24 Added to this, we have found the recruitment of quality staff more challenging here than in the North of England or Wales as mentioned earlier but we now have an effective quality team. There is a different mix of legal people compared to the other offices, as we have no accredited representatives, only solicitors and trainees.
- 3.25 Changes to the local Duty Schemes in Birmingham have made it more difficult to increase our client base but a pleasing number of existing clients have re-instructed us in respect of new matters.

Birmingham PDS office

- 3.26 Taking all of the above factors together, the number of cases that we deal with only reflects the reduced numbers of lawyers in our office compared to the other PDS offices.
- 3.27 We were very pleased that Baroness Scotland came to visit the office and meet the team in October 2002.

Achievements

Casework

- 3.28 We have taken a little time to build up work of a more serious nature but we now have many matters in the Crown Courts in Birmingham, Coventry, Leicester, Wolverhampton and Warwick. These include the usual mix of drugs cases, violence, dishonesty and public order matters but we have currently three cases in which we have briefed a QC. These involve offences of murder, attempted murder and riot.
- 3.29 Additionally, we have dealt with or are involved in a number of cases arising from the National police "Operation Ore", which is aimed at Internet child pornography, as well as a number of other sexual offences. A multiple rape trial is due to start in a few weeks and a similar case is a little further from trial readiness.
- 3.30 We have also been involved in two matters before the Court of Appeal. In the first we successfully defended an Attorney General's Reference and in the second we persuaded the Court of Appeal to the unusual step of holding a full evidential hearing to consider fresh evidence, although that case was eventually unsuccessful.

Reception area in Birmingham

People

- 3.31 Sham Uddin joined the PDS in July 2001 less than 2 years ago, as a police station representative who had passed his LPC [Legal Practice Course] and had nearly qualified as a solicitor. His progress in the PDS has been swift as he qualified as a solicitor in October 2001 and is now one of the busiest advocates in the Service having conducted in excess of 20 trials and many other hearings.
- 3.32 Sham has recently become admitted to Stage One of CLAS [Criminal Litigation Accreditation Scheme], by portfolio and examination and has taken his place as a Duty Solicitor on the Birmingham Duty Solicitor Scheme. He has now qualified as a Higher Courts Advocate and has recently started a two year Masters Degree course, part time, at De Montfort University, Leicester, funded by the PDS.

Liverpool close-up

- 3.33 Our office has attracted a number of very serious offences including two murders and three very high cost cases (VHCC) in the last year. This has enabled us to form links with the VHCC team in Liverpool, taking people in on placements for them to see the inner workings of a criminal supplier.
- 3.34 The Head of Office acts as an external moderator for certain training providers for the accreditation of Duty Solicitors and Accredited Representatives.
- 3.35 As we attracted a high quality team of mainly local lawyers from the outset, we were able to build up a caseload quickly in the first year. Even so, we have managed to attract 62% more new business in the second year and we now have a client retention rate of over 50%.

Achievements

Casework

- 3.36 As well as the number of high cost cases, we also had an interesting matter detailed below, which highlights our interest in reducing re-offending rather than just looking for repeat business.
- 3.37 Our client had no convictions until at age 24 her child suffered a cot death. She turned to drug use and acquired a lengthy record from 1994 onwards with 39 offences and 22 convictions including 20 prison sentences. She attended a meeting at the local magistrates court in December, organised by the probation service bringing together various parties (including a local MP) involved in the criminal justice system to meet and discuss ways forward for drug treatment orders.
- 3.38 She was able to speak and explained how the intervention of the PDS linked her for the first time to a drugs council, which provided a bail support package and she was able to become drugs free. Although in the initial stages of the bail she had committed further offences, she was able to secure bail through the PDS applications.
- 3.39 She believes that it was the PDS who for the first time actually sought to tackle her problem of drug addiction instead of simply securing bail for her to commit more offences. She is still drugs free, 14 months on.

People

- 3.40 Clare Taylor joined the Liverpool office in August 2001 as a solicitor and took maternity leave from April 2002 to September 2002 to have her first child. When the PDS was looking for someone to take on the challenge of opening a new office, she was given the opportunity to manage Chester, which opened on 10 February 2003.

- 3.41 As part of her training plan, she has attended two management courses on top of her continuing professional development.
- 3.42 Tommy Keaney joined us in Sept 2002 as a trainee accredited representative/junior court clerk. Recognising his potential, he now has a training contract in the Liverpool office.

Middlesbrough close-up

- 3.43 We were slow to build up a client base initially as none of the solicitors recruited had existing local followings. However, we have had a successful second year building on the foundations laid in the first. Clients have become repeat clients and told their colleagues about the service offered by the PDS. They too have instructed us and we believe we have become accepted as a respected provider of quality legal advice and representation in the area.
- 3.44 Recruitment continues to be healthy and we have established high calibre teams, both in the main office and the Darlington branch (see Part 4 'Offices 7 and 8').

Inside Middlesbrough PDS office

Achievements

Workload

- 3.45 We have had many serious matters in Middlesbrough this year including two separate cases of people arrested for murder. After our advice and interview, however, the police released them with no further action.
- 3.46 Other cases include a client charged with a serious assault whose previous solicitor, on reading the police summary of interview advised him to plead guilty which he did, the likely sentence being custody. He then consulted us and we listened to the taped interview, which revealed a denial rather than an admission and we successfully applied to vacate his plea; the CPS eventually dropped the case against him.
- 3.47 We also represented a man who was charged with murdering his wife and the case rested on detailed analysis of medical and hospital records. We instructed seven medical experts on different aspects of the case and he was acquitted after a two-week murder trial.

- 3.48 Another client was convicted of rape and sentenced to 14 years. He then instructed us in respect of his appeal. The prosecution's case was based on his journey from W. Yorkshire to Teesside but what the previous solicitors had not investigated was what he had said about this journey, i.e. his alibi. Through a great deal of laborious work we discovered three alibi witnesses and investigated D's use of a credit card 50 miles from the alleged attack 30 minutes before it was supposed to have occurred. The Court of Appeal has now granted leave and his appeal is likely in the summer.
- 3.49 Our final example was a client who was convicted of murder and we were instructed to appeal. A crucial part of the prosecution case relied on analysis of shotgun pellets associated with our client and those which were used in the murder. In his trial it was said that these were identical but we obtained evidence that this was incorrect. The case has now been referred to the Criminal Cases Review Committee.

People

- 3.50 Peter Whelan joined the PDS having been an accredited representative for 15 years. He showed great potential and commitment to criminal defence and we encouraged and funded him to undertake ILEX [Institute of Legal Executives] with the goal of becoming a solicitor.

*Part of Middlesbrough Team
Rob Hutchinson, Nick Darwin (Head of PDS office),
Andy Polley (Head of Procurement and Facilities),
Peter Whelan and Giles Young*

- 3.51 Garry Charlton was with the Commission as a quality auditor and joined the PDS as the office Quality Manager. After a few months, we realised that we needed to devote a person full time to the development of our Case Management System and Garry volunteered.
- 3.52 He took control of the project and had to learn IT development skills, which involved intensive training. The CMS is now an extremely useful tool within every PDS office and still developing.

Swansea close-up

- 3.53 We opened with a team of lawyers, some of whom practised in Swansea but the majority came from other parts of South Wales. Significantly, many clients continued to instruct these lawyers when they joined the PDS. The team quickly developed a new client base as well and as a result the office workload expanded more quickly than any other PDS office in its first year. We became, effectively, a South Wales Criminal Practice representing clients in police stations and courts throughout the area.
- 3.54 As a result of this success we were chosen as the first PDS office to open a branch office in Pontypridd in September 2002. We decided to transfer almost half the legal team to Pontypridd recognising that this would be a significant challenge in terms of client collection and retention, management and supervision and staff recruitment. It was also going to be a significant test of the resolve of our lawyers who were facing their second dramatic change in their careers in just eighteen months. Some six months later the Swansea office continues to thrive and maintain a caseload consistent with the majority of other offices in the PDS.

Swansea PDS office

- 3.55 Swansea was one of the PDS offices able to provided support to Cheltenham earlier this year when they were short of staff. More recently we were assisted by an Accredited Representative from Chester as one of our team was involved in a Very High Cost Case (VHCC).

Achievements

Workload

- 3.56 The office has the usual mix of serious and less serious and complex and less complex cases. These range from homicide to public order. We have continued to maintain and develop our existing client caseload even after the opening of the Pontypridd office. We also maintain an excellent working relationship with the private practitioners in the area, exchanging duty solicitor slots and agency work.

People

- 3.57 Wendy Edmunds is an Accredited Police Station Representative who joined the PDS in March 2001 after many years experience in private practice. She works with the Head of Office on some of the most serious and complex cases.
- 3.58 Nick Stallard is an Accredited Police Station Representative and Legal Executive who is being sponsored through the LPC on his way to qualifying as a Solicitor.

Cheltenham close-up

- 3.59 Cheltenham was identified as an area of the country with a diminishing supply base. We opened on 15th April 2002, with a Head of Office from outside the area, being the only Duty solicitor, 1 other solicitor, 2 Accredited reps, a Quality Manager and 2 administrators.
- 3.60 Recruiting lawyers of sufficient calibre and commitment has proved as difficult for the Cheltenham PDS as it is for private practices locally. We have made an effort to recruit from outside the local area to bring new blood into Gloucestershire. The lack of staff caused a substantial period of difficulty for our small team and yet client care was maintained and the number of new matters opened each week was sustained.

Cheltenham PDS Office

- 3.61 All of this has proved a very valuable learning curve as to how a PDS office can run most effectively. Staff shortages gave opportunities for the PDS to operate as a 'national' service, perhaps for the first time, by using criminal lawyers from other PDS offices. The cross training and familiarity with forms, systems and procedures, made it a seamless service from the client's perspective. It showed that we can operate flexibly and pointed to the advantages of cohesive cross training, systems and procedures.
- 3.62 Good relationships have been established with local practices, agencies and the not-for-profit sector. Gaynor Ogden, Head of Office is a member of the CLSP Steering Group and has been invited to sit on the Speaking up for Justice Multi Agency Partnership.
- 3.63 In June 2003, our office launched an exciting venture into Outreach services in this third year of the PDS. There is little access to criminal defence services in semi-rural and rural areas throughout Gloucestershire and so we aim to establish outreach centres by working with the CLSP, local authorities and the Citizen's Advice Bureau. This will benefit the research by investigating new methods of delivering criminal services.

Achievements

Workload

- 3.64 Client traffic was slow in the first two weeks as anticipated as neither of the solicitors had a client following in the area. However, client numbers increased dramatically from the third week onwards and we have maintained a very high proportion of new matters from existing clients with the fastest growth of all PDS offices for the first year (**see table at paragraph 5.8**).
- 3.65 We have a solid mix of work with a large number of indictable only matters, including a multi-million pound drugs conspiracy, murder and other very serious offences.

People

- 3.66 Susan Johnson, an experienced and local police station representative, well regarded by the profession and in the local community, has a very sizeable client following.

*Richard Collins, Gaynor Ogden and Tony Edwards
at the Cheltenham opening*

- 3.67 Dean Graham has proved a tremendous asset, since he joined in July 2002 with a background of managing a very busy Crown Court Department. He is now hoping to qualify and is presently studying towards an LLB.

Pontypridd close-up

- 3.68 Pontypridd first opened its doors on 2 September 2002 with two solicitors and an accredited representative from Swansea. It was the first branch office of the PDS.
- 3.69 We chose Pontypridd as the favoured location as it was central to the surrounding Courts to which the Swansea PDS provided services outside of the home Court. This was mainly due to the continued loyalty of clients who had previously instructed the Pontypridd team throughout their transition from private practice to the PDS.
- 3.70 Whilst none of our lawyers in the branch office had practised regularly in the Pontypridd area, we quickly forged close links with other practitioners in the area and continue to maintain such links by carrying out agency work and being flexible in relation to Duty Solicitor allocations. We also enjoy a close working relationship with the Citizens Advice Bureau.
- 3.71 We were unable to install the Case Management System in time for the opening due to technical faults so we had to use manual systems for the first two months. If workload had increased gradually from a cold start, this would not have been a problem, but due to a fast growth of our client base, an administration backlog was created. This proved to be a valuable lesson for other branch offices later established.
- 3.72 We were able to recruit high calibre people as those who applied were of an excellent standard and the continued interest shown by others in the profession in joining the team is encouraging. After only two months in operation we employed a new member of staff to assist with client demand. There have been several occasions when help has been deployed from our team in Swansea.

Achievements

Workload

- 3.73 Our monthly targets have been achieved and improved upon on a regular basis. Client questionnaires continue to show a high level of satisfaction with our service, with a large proportion of new starts coming from existing clients.
- 3.74 Types of cases performed vary from murder to drug trafficking to motoring offences. Clients who have required our services for other non-criminal matters have agreed to be referred to other suppliers. Despite concerns that we would lose clients to providers who practise in a number of areas of the law including crime, we are pleased to report that this has not been the case.

3.75 We have successfully dealt with a number of criminal cases, which have involved immigration issues and as a result have forged valuable links with Immigration Specialist providers.

3.76 We have also successfully dealt with prison adjudication hearings, DSS interviews under caution and Trading Standards matters.

People

3.77 Fraser Stroud joined the Swansea office just after it opened in May 2001. He was given the opportunity to become the Branch Manager in Pontypridd and he oversees the office on a day-to-day basis.

3.78 Lisa Lewis also joined the main office in May 2001 as an accredited representative. She has since begun a part time law degree, sponsored by the PDS.

3.79 Nicola Smith who joined the team in October 2002 is currently training to become a Duty Solicitor at the Cardiff Law School.

OFFICES SEVEN AND EIGHT

4.1 The original consultation paper, Criminal Defence Service: Establishing a Salaried Defence Service and Draft Code of Conduct for Salaried Defenders Employed by the Legal Services Commission, June 2000, specified the aims of the new service which included –

- during the initial period of the start-up phase the Commission will establish salaried defence service offices in six locations.....
-Additionally, the Commission will keep under review the options for expanding the service beyond the six initially selected sites during the course of the start-up phase.

4.2 In the First PDS Annual Report, we identified our need to examine how main PDS offices could be used as centres to directly manage the work of smaller branch offices. For this reason, we decided to go beyond the initial six offices and have branch offices attached to three of our main five PDS sites, making eight offices in total.

Locations

4.3 We chose the Liverpool and Middlesbrough offices as ones which were most able to sustain a branch, by looking at the –

- Size of their client base
- Relative ease of recruitment in the area

4.4 Although Middlesbrough was slower to build up a caseload initially, by the last quarter of the first year the trend was moving upwards and by end June 2002 it was achieving an average of 14 new matters each week, double the first year's average of seven. We, therefore, decided that it would be able to sustain a branch office.

Chester PDS Office

- 4.5 Having decided on the main offices, we then searched for areas that –
- Would give us access to other Duty Solicitor schemes
 - Were close enough to the main offices for us to gain economies of scale in terms of management structure.
- 4.6 We looked for a site outside Liverpool city as we were confident that there was already a good supply of criminal solicitors and so we moved out to Chester. This was thought to have a large enough conurbation to be able to grow a caseload from zero.
- 4.7 We chose to open in Darlington because it satisfied the other criteria above and we could also open an office relatively cheaply due to low property prices in the town.

Main view of Darlington PDS office

Recruitment

- 4.8 The ability to run a main and branch office within the same management structure meant that we did not need to recruit PDS Heads or Quality Managers. Our recruitment was, therefore, confined to lawyers and administrators for Chester, administrators only for Darlington and lawyers in the main offices to replace those who had moved to set up the branches.
- 4.9 As expected, we had no difficulty in attracting high quality people in both the North West and North East of England.

Setting up the offices

- 4.10 Whilst accommodation in Darlington was easy to find and relatively inexpensive, one disadvantage of Chester as a site was the leasing costs. This meant that we have lost some of the advantage of lower management costs.

- 4.11 The project management for acquiring and fitting out the sites was much better than for earlier offices as we now had a corporate look and knew what was needed internally in terms of furniture and IT equipment.
- 4.12 Both branch offices are linked into the LSC network and we were able to install the Case Management System in both offices before the work came through.

***The Chester PDS Team
Sue Capewell, Lisa O'Shea, Mike Lamb,
Clare Taylor and Gina Whittlestone***

Opening the offices

- 4.13 Originally, the offices were planned to open earlier, Chester in November 2002 and Darlington in January 2003. However, it took time to select the right locations. Both offices finally opened on 10 February 2003 to the public and were also officially opened by Tony Edwards; Chester on 14 March 2003 and Darlington on 9 May 2003. Representatives from all parts of the criminal justice system were invited on both occasions and we were able to form useful links with them as a result.
- 4.14 Tony Edwards opened the Darlington office officially on 9 May 2003, shown with Peter Bradford, the Senior Solicitor .

***Tony Edwards officially opening the Darlington Office,
with Peter Bradford***

- 4.15 Darlington also received a visit from Baroness Scotland on 9 April as she was keen to see how the PDS offices were progressing and was conducting official visits in the area.

*Baroness Scotland with Nick Darwin (Head),
Peter Bradford (Senior Solicitor) and
Giles Young (Accredited Representative from the Middlesbrough office).*

Initial Progress

Chester

- 4.16 Chester office is a completely cold start, similar to the Middlesbrough and Birmingham offices, as it is not close enough to the main Liverpool office to already have a client base. The solicitors are only able to join the one Duty Solicitor scheme, Chester. From 10 February to the end of March, they had 12 new matters although only one of those matters was from the duty scheme.
- 4.17 The people there are spending time raising the profile of the PDS, liaising with local public and charitable agencies such as the CABs, YMCA and Housing offices. They are also assisting other offices at times to cover staff shortages, for example Cheltenham.

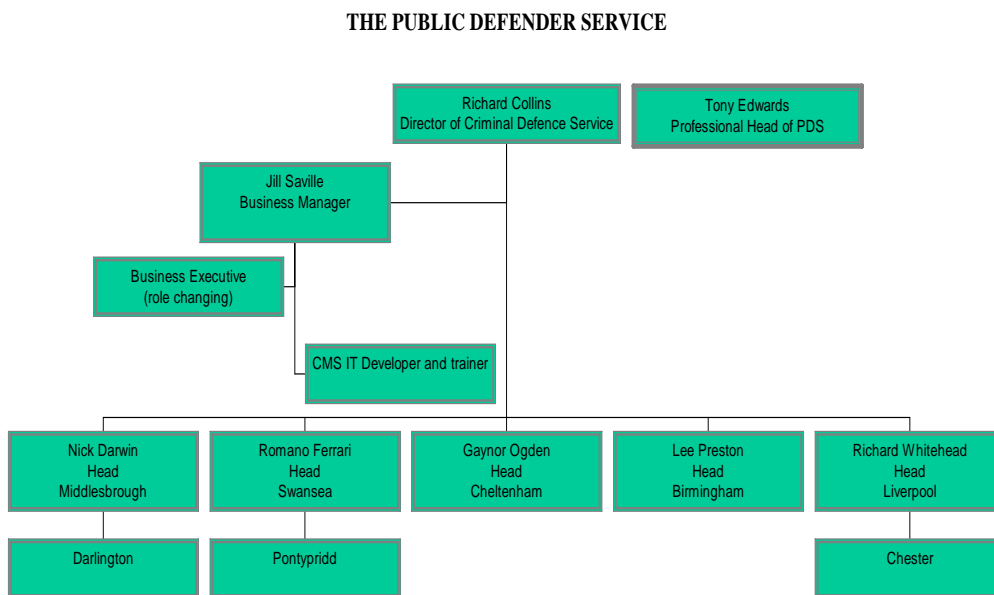
Darlington

- 4.18 This office has the advantage of falling under three Duty Solicitor schemes, Darlington, South Durham and Richmond & Northallerton. From 10 February to the end of March, this office had 27 new matters out of which 25 came from duty work.

OPERATION OF THE SERVICE

Management structure and central support

- 5.1 Although the structure was detailed in earlier reports, it is repeated here to aid the reader.
- 5.2 Each PDS Head is personally and professionally responsible for the management of their office and for the conduct of individual cases in the office. The PDS offices report directly to the Commission's CDS Director, Richard Collins¹. In addition, the PDS offices have a line of accountability to the Professional Head of Service, Tony Edwards, who is a Member of the Legal Services Commission and an experienced criminal defence solicitor.
- 5.3 At the centre, three members of staff assist the CDS Director in his overall management of the service but this will shortly increase to four when we recruit an administrator.



- 5.4 There is a PDS Management Committee that develops policy and the strategic direction of the service which involves the CDS Director, the Heads of the PDS offices and members of the research team. It is chaired by the Professional Head of Service.

¹ Previously known as the Head of the CDS. CDS is now a new Directorate within the Commission and no longer part of the Policy and Legal Directorate.

- 5.5 In addition, there are a number of central support departments within the Commission that assist the PDS. In particular, the Human Resources Department, Procurement and Facilities Department and Information Systems Department have all made valuable contributions to setting up the service and provide ongoing support.
- 5.6 We have just reviewed the present management arrangements to ensure that they continue to meet our needs. The Business Executive role is being enhanced to become a Quality and Performance Manager who will ensure consistency of systems across the offices.

Growth

- 5.7 As in the first year, the offices have all developed at different rates with Liverpool and Swansea continuing to perform strongly as they began with high proportions of people who had previously practised in the area. Middlesbrough did not begin with such an advantage and after a relatively slow first year it is now taking on more new matters in some weeks than other PDS offices.
- 5.8 The targets set out for the service last year are set out in the table below, with the actual performance alongside.

Performance against targets for Year Two

Office		New files being opened a month by end of 2002/2003		Total Yr 1	Total files opened in 2002/03		% rise over Yr 1
		Target	Actual		Target	Actual	
Birmingham		60	42	275	550	512	86%
Cheltenham		60	61		600	668	N/a
Liverpool	Liverpool	75	70	482	800	781	62%
	Chester	30	9		150	12	N/a
Middlesbro'	Middlesbro'	70	78	327	600	715	118%
	Darlington	15	14		40	27	N/a
Swansea	Swansea	65	62	626	750	749	19%
	Pontypridd	40	58		250	384	N/a
Totals				1710		3849	125%*

* included new offices

N.B. Chester's target was based on a November opening and Darlington a January 2003 opening, whereas they actually opened in February 2003.

- 5.9 Birmingham's rate of growth remains linked to the low number of lawyers compared to the other offices whereas Cheltenham more than met its target, indicating that there was a need for more solicitors in the Cheltenham and Gloucester area.
- 5.10 As has been explained in earlier reports, the PDS offices received no special treatment in order to direct clients towards them or to give them an advantage on the duty solicitor schemes.
- 5.11 Workload figures for the year for each office are shown in the following table.

Office	Ave wkly 2001 /02	Average wkly 2002/3	2001/02 % new matters from existing clients*	2002/03 % new matters from existing clients*
Birmingham (open 11/7/01)	7	10	19	31
Liverpool (open 14/5/01)	10	15	40	51
Middlesboro (open 17/5/01)	7	14	28	37
Swansea (open 21/5/01)	14	15	49	51
Cheltenham (open 15/4/02)	N/a	13		48
Pontypridd (open 2/9/02)	N/a	13		65
Chester	N/a	2		N/a
Darlington	N/a	4		N/a

* % of new matters from existing clients of PDS fee-earner or referred by existing clients.

- 5.12 All offices have shown a steady increase in all areas. Unsurprisingly, those offices that began with people recruited from the locality (Pontypridd) or where there was a shortage of criminal suppliers (Cheltenham) increased their workload more quickly.
- 5.13 We are particularly pleased that our client retention rates are also increasing. Pontypridd started with a particularly high repeat client rate as the main office, Swansea, already had a body of clients from that area.

5.14 The profile of work in each PDS office for the period 1 September to 31 March 2003 is as follows -

Office	Summary %	Either Way %	Indictable Only %
Birmingham	35	58	6
Cheltenham	28	63	8
Chester	42	58	0
Darlington	24	68	8
Liverpool	41	50	8
Middlesbrough	36	58	6
Pontypridd	33	62	5
Swansea	40	50	9

Quality

Specialist Quality Mark / Contract Compliance

- 5.15 All PDS offices must adhere to the same quality standards as private suppliers and the process of setting up manuals and systems to comply with the SQM was extremely useful to see how much time is involved for private suppliers in compliance. Part of the aims of the PDS was to produce documents that could be shared with all criminal suppliers and in July 2002, we published the PDS Office Manual and some of our forms on the LSC website.
- 5.16 These can be found at legalservices.gov.uk/pds/ for any contracted private practice firms that wish to use them as models for their own documentation and systems.
- 5.17 The offices are at differing stages in the audit process which can be seen from the table below. The first six offices have also been subject to the Transaction Criteria and Cost Compliance Audit process as are all contracted private practice suppliers. A Transaction Criteria audit is a detailed assessment of a sample of closed files against a set of quality criteria. The files are scored out of 100 with 70 as the pass mark.
- 5.18 The PDS prepares bills for audit and research purposes only. A Cost Compliance Audit consists of the review of a sample of files against the criteria for assessing costs set out in the General Criminal Contract. This does not have a direct impact for the PDS as offices do not claim or receive payment on a case-by-case basis. However, the process provides an important management check for us in terms of ensuring the accuracy of the “billing” of files for the research into the PDS. At the time of the audits, the allowed variations between reported costs and the assessment of costs for a supplier to be given a certain status are –

Category 1	Up to 10%,
Category 2	10% up to 20%
Category 3	20% and over

5.19 The PDS offices achieved the following results –

Office	TC Average Score Yr 1	TC Average Score Yr 2	2001/2002 Cost Compliance Category	2002/2003 Cost Compliance Category
Birmingham	76	NYA	2	Not yet audited
Liverpool	83	NYA	1	2
Middlesbrough	79	NYA	1	Not yet audited
Swansea	81	NYA	1	3
Cheltenham	N/A	93	N/A	1
Pontypridd	N/A	91	N/A	2

NYA = Not yet audited

5.20 In Year 1, the first four offices provided closed files for cost compliance audits that had operated on manual systems and they achieved the highest category. Our reduced performance in the following audits was caused by a variety of factors:

- Insufficient training on the Case Management System
- Confusion when transferring from manual to computerised systems
- Training needs on GCC and billing
- Lack of profit incentive for staff to complete accurate time records

5.21 We have taken steps to rectify the first three of these by additional training and the fourth by increasing people's understanding of how critical this is to the outcome of the research. One thing that the cost compliance audit results appears to indicate is that any expectation that the PDS would be given some kind of favouritism during the audit process was unfounded.

5.22 As a result of the audit results, we have refocused the business executive role in the centre and created a Quality and Performance Manager who will be responsible for improving consistency across the service.

Case Management System

- 5.23 We have invested a huge amount of time in developing this system and only recently have we begun to see the benefits that justify this investment. The system was chosen for its flexibility and the capacity for changing functionality without going back to the supplier, which saved costs. However, there has been an internal cost relating to the appointment of a full time developer and trainer since July 2002.
- 5.24 As with all technology, there is a period of time in which there appears to be slow progress, which turns into one of rapid results and we have broken into the latter period. The reporting system is now able to give us detailed information about the type of work the offices are undertaking, who does it, where it is done and for how long.
- 5.25 We are about to issue an updated manual showing not only how to use the CMS but what are the workflows involved. Many PDS staff have contributed to the development of this manual, writing "how to" guides on different parts of the system. The main author of this key document however is Sarah Capstick, an administrator in the Middlesbrough office.
- 5.26 The CMS and written guidance will play an enormous role in our push for consistency and quality improvements in the coming year.

Client Measures

- 5.27 We implemented a client feedback mechanism in April 2002 that operates in all PDS offices, with clients receiving a questionnaire (**Annex Two**) when their case is completed. The following table shows the level of satisfaction for the period ending 31 March 2003 with a scale of one to four (one being the most satisfied).

OFFICE	NO	Q1 OVERALL SATISFACTION	Q2 HELPFUL & FRIENDLY	Q3 KEEPING CLIENT UP-TO-DATE	Q4 UNDERSTANDABLE INFORMATION	Q5 RECOMMENDATION	Q6 OUTCOME OF CASE	NAME SUPPLIED?
BIRMINGHAM	112	1.3	1.2	1.4	1.2	1.3	1.9	1.2
CHELTENHAM	61	1.1	1.0	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.9	1.5
LIVERPOOL	56	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.5	1.1
MIDDLESBROUGH	96	1.2	1.1	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.5	1.1
SWANSEA	128	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.5	1.1
PONTYPRIDD	34	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.3	1.1	1.8	1.2

PDS Quality Statement

- 5.28 One of the areas that we are gradually building up is our corporate identity. What are our values; why are we here?
- 5.29 As part of this process, we have developed the PDS Quality Statement that can be found in **Annex Three**. It is separated into what our clients

and our employees have a right to expect from us and over the coming year, we will be refining this and establishing a system of measurement to ensure that we achieve our aims.

People

5.30 From the original structure of Head, 2 Duty Solicitors, 3 Accredited Representatives, Quality Manager and 2 Senior Administrators, each office has developed its own team. The current profiles are as follows—

Office		Head	Duty Sol	*Sol	Trainee	Acc Rep	QM	Snr Adm	Admin
Birmingham		1	1	1	1	0	1	2	1
Cheltenham		1		(2)	1	2 (1)	1	2	
Liverpool	Main	1	3		1	2	1	2	
	Chester		2		0	1		2	
Middlesbrough	Main	1	2			3	1	2	1
	Darlington		1		1			2	
Swansea	Main	1	3			2	1	2	
	Pontypridd		2	1		1		2	

* *Includes Barristers*

() *Recruited and serving notice period*

Costs

5.31 The costs of running the PDS offices for the second year, plus the set-up costs for Cheltenham (partial), Pontypridd, Chester and Darlington are shown in the table below. Central costs include three full time head office staff, ongoing CMS licenses, etc and support from other central departments. Parts of the service which have been funded from the Commission's administration budget (the costs set out below are all Fund expenditure) will be split out and allocated to the PDS for the purposes of the research evaluation.

5.32 When the first annual report was published, we were in the process of identifying any additional central costs and the final budget for 2001/2002, which was £2.824m can be found in **Annex Four**.

5.33 Our budget for 2002 to 2003 was £4m but as the new PDS offices were not opened as early as expected, our final spend was £3.478m.

5.34 **PDS Budget for 2002 to 2003**

PDS costs April 2002 - March 2003.			
Office.	Running costs	Set up Costs	Totals
Central	142,770	109,185	251,955
Birmingham	479,658	0	479,658
Liverpool	488,927	0	488,927
Middlesbrough	523,166	0	523,166
Swansea	502,900	0	502,900
Cheltenham	424,840	161,201	586,042
Pontypridd	162,944	108,754	271,697
Chester	37,509	175,225	212,733
Darlington	34,298	126,867	161,165
Totals	2,797,012	681,231	3,478,243

* All central set up costs are recruitment, induction and training

5.35 There are ongoing costs of the research programme which for 2003/04 will be £182,380. The contract was awarded to the research team after a tendering exercise in 2000.

Role of the Professional Head

5.36 Tony Edwards, a Commission Member and an experienced private practice defence lawyer, is our Professional Head of Service. He has specific responsibilities for the professional standards and independence of the service in the way it, and the staff within the offices, represent clients.

- 5.37 In particular he is responsible for ensuring that staff comply with the Code of Conduct for Public Defenders, for issuing Guidance under that Code and for monitoring, and if appropriate addressing, any complaints made about the professional services provided by the PDS. During the second year he has issued no formal Guidance under the Code.
- 5.38 Fourteen complaints were referred to the Professional Head, 4 from clients and 8 from competing private practice firms and two from third parties. Six out of the 8 complaints from private suppliers related to business rather than client issues. Out of the total complaints, 4 were categorised as justified and 10 as unjustified.

The Wider Impact of the PDS Within the Commission

- 5.39 The presence of a legal services supplier within the Legal Services Commission has been a unique experience for both parties. The PDS has been able to bring direct experience of being audited to the Commission. As the PDS offices cover areas throughout England and Wales and are audited by different LSC regional offices they can, therefore, be used to check the consistency of the audit process.
- 5.40 We have also been involved in the current CDS Simplification Project, which aims to reduce unnecessary processes when doing criminal work under the contract and should cut down bureaucracy for all suppliers.
- 5.41 One of the things that the Commission needs to be able to do is to assess the cost implications of suggested changes to the Criminal Justice System on the legal aid budget. The PDS Management Committee will be able to look at future consultation papers from other bodies and give its view.
- 5.42 The Human Resources, Information Services and Procurement and Facilities departments in the Commission have worked very hard to open four new PDS offices this year, for which we are grateful.
- 5.43 **Equal opportunities:** monitoring the client base
As a service provider, the Legal Services Commission has specific duties under anti-discrimination legislation to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups. In providing criminal defence services, the PDS undertook to monitor the profile of eligible clients by ethnic origin, gender and disability status for all matters opened between 1 April 2002 and 31 March 2003. The results of the monitoring will be published in the Commission's annual equalities report later in 2003.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SERVICE

- 6.1 We do not intend to open any more PDS offices in the coming year but we will be looking at different ways of delivering criminal legal services to enable the Commission to respond appropriately if there is a sudden loss of supply in an area. We intend that the third year of the PDS will build on the firm foundations of the previous years and develop the PDS into a more unified service.
- 6.2 Our Cheltenham office will be working with suppliers in the local Community Legal Service Partnership operating an outreach scheme from June 2003.
- 6.3 There needs to be a period of consolidation to ensure that we can demonstrate our success and feed into a positive outcome of the research.

At the end of this second year, we consider that the reasons for the Public Defender Service to exist, as listed in paragraph 2.1 of this document, remain valid and we have set our plans for 2003/04 accordingly. They remain focused in the three areas of Quality, People and Growth.

Quality

- 6.4 We have changed the emphasis for the coming year towards quality to ensure that we regain our former successful audit record. Our quality targets will be focused on the following areas –
- Compliance with the Commission's new audit process
 - Development of an assessment process of our internal Quality Statement (Annex Three).
 - Development of an internal system of Peer Review
 - Development and implementation of an assessment process against the PDS Quality Statement
 - Review of our client feedback system

People

- 6.5 In our first annual report, we said that the recruitment of criminal defence solicitors and accredited representatives was likely to become increasingly difficult and we are starting to experience this in some areas of the country. We have, therefore, ensured that we have at least one trainee solicitor in each of our first six offices, either by giving existing staff the opportunity to train or by direct recruitment.

- 6.6 We will continue to ensure that all members of staff have training and development plans so that we can recognise potential early.
- 6.7 As part of our commitment to enhance quality, we will ensure that all staff will be given the necessary training and support to do their job, through rigorous induction, clear objectives and performance management.
- 6.8 We also aim to begin a change culture programme to ensure that we address the issues of corporate identity and culture of this new service.

Growth

- 6.9 Although we are changing the emphasis from growth to quality, the attraction and retention of clients remain fundamental objectives of the PDS. Based on the volume of business for 2002/03, the following targets have been developed –

Office		New files being opened a month by end of yr 2003/2004		Total Yr 01/02	Total Yr 02/03	Target 03/04
		02/03	Target			
Birmingham		42	60	275	512	600
Cheltenham		61	70		668	700
PDS N.W.	Liverpool	70	75	482	781	800
	Chester	9	35		12	300
PDS N.E.	Middlesbro'	78	120	327	715	1200
	Darlington	14			27	
Wales	Swansea	52	65	626	749	800
	Pontypridd	58	60		384	650
Totals				1710	3849	5200

RESEARCH PROGRAMME

- 7.1 We have commissioned an extensive programme of research into the PDS, starting in 2001, which runs for four years. The research is being jointly directed by Professor Lee Bridges, of Warwick University and Professor Avrom Sherr, of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies.
- 7.2 In the first year, they produced a Methodology paper after consultation with the profession for the four-year programme, which can be found on the Commission's web site. In years two, three and four they planned to research the different stages of criminal work namely Investigation, Magistrates' Court and Crown Court and the investigation stage is nearing completion.
- 7.3 Under the research contract, there are regular meetings with the research team which also produces progress reports to the Research Review Group.
- 7.4 At the end of the pilot, the results will be published.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PDS

- 1 The Government first announced its intention that a proportion of CDS services should be provided by lawyers directly employed by the Legal Services Commission in the White Paper, *Modernising Justice*, published in December 1998.
- 2 The statutory framework within which we are able to deliver services direct to the public in this way is provided by the Access to Justice Act 1999. This legislation defines some important characteristics of the new service which have had a direct impact on the way in which we have established the service.
- 3 First, there is no power in the Act for the Commission to require clients to instruct only a Public Defender if they are to receive CDS services. Clients have a choice of any CDS supplier, whether a contracted private practice firm or a PDS office. This is a different approach to that taken in the early phase of the Public Defender Solicitors Office (PDSO) service in Edinburgh, where certain clients were required to use the PDSO if they were to receive publicly funded assistance. However, we believe it is right that clients should have a choice of quality assured suppliers and that the PDS in England and Wales should compete for clients on the basis of the quality of service provided. Nevertheless, it was recognised that this would have an impact on the speed with which the PDS offices would be able to establish a client base from scratch.
- 4 Second, a requirement was put on the Commission to prepare a code of conduct to be observed by those providing PDS services and that this code be approved by the Lord Chancellor and Parliament. The code must include duties –
 - to avoid discrimination
 - to protect the interests of the individuals for whom services are to be provided
 - to the court
 - to avoid conflicts of interest
 - of confidentiality.
- 5 In June 2000 the Lord Chancellor's Department published a consultation paper, *Criminal Defence Service: Establishing a Salaried Defence Service and Draft Code of Conduct for Salaried Defenders Employed by the Legal Services Commission*. This paper set out the Department's and the Commission's specific plans for the establishment and operation of the PDS.

6 The key elements of the planned approach were summarised in the paper as follows –

- the initial period of the operation of the service will be a start-up phase, which will coincide with the research programme, of four years. During and at the end of this period the Government will review the service and make decisions on its future development.
- the salaried service will consist of individuals employed by the Commission, but in a structure wholly separate from its existing network of regional offices. The salaried service will be an independent, stand-alone, service within the Commission, responsible solely for delivering criminal defence services to the public.
- the salaried defence service offices will be staffed and established so that they can represent their clients from the police station through to the Crown Court. As the service expands, lawyers with higher rights of audience will be directly employed, as well as those who can only operate in the lower courts. Salaried defenders would also utilise a budget from which they would purchase the services of specialist advocates, whether solicitors or barristers.
- as a minimum requirement, salaried defence offices will have to meet the quality and performance standards set for private practice contracted firms operating under the general CDS contract.
- during the initial period of the start-up phase the Commission will establish salaried defence service offices in six locations. At the outset, the majority of these sites will be in large conurbations. This is because the offices will need access to a relatively large supply of work in order to establish a meaningful caseload quickly. However, at least one of the first six pilot offices will be in a smaller town.
- during the start-up phase the Commission will seek to extend the geographic scope of the service provided outwards from the initial geographic locations in order to test the provision of salaried services in suburban and rural areas. Additionally the Commission will keep under review the options for expanding the service beyond the six initially selected sites during the course of the start-up phase.
- individuals seeking criminal defence services will not be required by the LSC to choose a salaried defender rather than a lawyer in private practice.

- salaried defenders will be allocated slots on relevant police station and court duty solicitor schemes.
 - The heads of the salaried service offices will be responsible for managing their own budgets from which they will cover direct costs (staff, accommodation, etc) and purchase services from others (advocates, experts and disbursements).
 - individual salaries will be set at a level to attract individuals of the necessary calibre in the context of prevailing local salary conditions, but within a national framework
 - overall management of the salaried service will be initially with the Commission's Head of Criminal Defence Services.
 - the research will compare the PDS to services being provided through private practice and will test it against the most commonly voiced criticisms – independence, choice of representative, underfunding, case overload, guilty pleas and restriction of access.
- 7 In March 2001 the Lord Chancellor's Department published the Government's conclusions following consultation on the code of conduct. As a result of the consultation a number of key amendments were made to the code. The code was subsequently approved by the Lord Chancellor and by Parliament and published in April 2001.
- 8 In April 2001 the Lord Chancellor's Department published the Government's conclusions following consultation on the plans for the establishment of the PDS. Some 30 responses to the consultation paper were received. None of the major proposals for the establishment of the service, as set out in paragraph 2.5 above, were changed as a result of the consultation response

First Year of Operation

- 9 The first annual report of the PDS can be found at www.legalservices.gov.uk/



Your Comments

*To improve our service, please help us by completing this form and returning it in the enclosed envelope (**you do not need a stamp**). Your answers are anonymous unless you tell us your name and address at the end.*

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX TO ANSWER EACH QUESTION **Date Issued** /
/2003

The person that dealt with your matter was _____

1. Were you satisfied with what we did for you?
 1Very Satisfied 2Fairly Satisfied 3Fairly Dissatisfied 4Very dissatisfied

1a. Comments?

2. Were we approachable and friendly?
 1Very friendly 2Fairly friendly 3Fairly unfriendly 4Very unfriendly

2a. Comments?

3. Did we keep you informed of all progress?
 1Very well 2Fairly well 3Not too well 4Poor
 5Not Applicable – only seen once

4. Was the information easy to understand (for example our letters)?
 1Very easy 2Fairly easy 3Fairly difficult 4Very difficult

4a. How might we improve?

5. Would you recommend us to someone else if they needed legal help or advice?
 1Definitely 2Likely 3Unlikely to 4Certainly not

5a. Please give your reason(s)

6. Was the result of your case better, worse or the same as we had advised you?
 1Much Better 2Better 3Same 4Worse

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Your responses are completely confidential.

If you wish to tell us, please complete your name and address below.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Do you have any further comments or suggestions that may help us to improve our level of service?

Do you want us to reply to your comments? Yes No



Client based not profit based

PDS QUALITY STATEMENT

PDS Clients' Charter:

- Clients will receive professional advice and representation from expert lawyers whose interests are solely to ensure the best result for the client
- We will be available 24 hours a day every day of the year to provide legal advice
- Clients will receive appropriate, prompt and timely professional advice at all times whether at court, police station, our offices or in prison
- We aim to provide continuity of client care. You will have a named contact from beginning to end of the case
- Where necessary to assist in your defence we will instruct the appropriate experts and advocates
- We will consult you and keep you informed about your case, progressing matters as swiftly as court procedures allow
- If you have a non-criminal matter we will refer you to other Quality Marked lawyers
- When your case is concluded, you will be told what has happened and we will ask you for your views about our service

PDS Employees Charter:

- All lawyers will be fully trained and receive continuing legal education
- All Quality Managers and administrators will be able to develop their management skills
- Advice and support will be available to all staff who will be given opportunities for personal career development
- Staff will not be expected to work excessively. Regard will be had to their work-life balance
- No-one will be expected to deal with any case outside their training and experience
- Wherever possible, we will provide all employees with opportunities to be involved in the development of the PDS and wider Criminal Justice System

ANNEX FOUR

Final budget for 2001/02

PDS costs April 2001 - March 2002.			
Office.	Running costs	Set up Costs	Totals
Central	74,532	419,346	493,878
Birmingham	309,406	214,998	524,404
Cheltenham	22,359	59,853	82,212
Liverpool	385,332	164,348	549,680
Middlesbrough	338,404	185,002	523,406
Swansea	374,664	276,287	650,951
Totals	1,504,697	1,319,834	2,824,531