

# *The Quality Mark standard For Websites*

*October 2001*

**Community  
Legal Service**



**Quality Mark**

**Criminal  
Defence Service**



legal services  
COMMISSION

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# The Quality Mark standard for Websites

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This document details the requirements for the first Quality Mark standard for Websites containing relevant subject matter, principally in the legal and advice sectors. The standard intends to promote the development of quality websites for the benefit of users seeking legal information on the Internet.
- 1.2 The initial proposed standards were developed by a sub-group of the CLS Quality Mark Working Group, with significant input from the CLS Website Steering Group. Following consultation of the proposals, a small number of amendments were agreed by the sub-group, resulting in the final draft standard.
- 1.3 In November 2000, the Lord Chancellor's Department published a consultation paper concerning the issue of common standards for relevant websites in this field. In particular, the paper proposed a new metadata scheme for websites in the legal and advice sectors. Section 3 provides an introduction to these issues. The response to the consultation paper was generally supportive of the proposals, and the Metadata and Content Classification schemes have been finalised and piloting will continue until September 2002. The archived consultation and response papers are at [www.open.gov.uk/lcd/consult/meta/metafr.htm](http://www.open.gov.uk/lcd/consult/meta/metafr.htm) and [www.lcd.gov.uk/consult/meta/metaresp.htm](http://www.lcd.gov.uk/consult/meta/metaresp.htm), respectively.

### The Community Legal Service

- 1.4 The CLS, launched in April 2000, is a central part of the Government's programme of legal reform, designed to increase access to quality information, advice and legal services. The CLS is intended to make it easier for the public to get legal help and advice, bringing together current providers of legal and advice services into co-ordinated local networks to achieve better service and better value for money. The aim is to ensure that every geographical area in England and Wales has the legal services most needed by the general public. One of the main ways of achieving these improvements is the "Quality Mark", which is designed to ensure that the services that operate in every community across the country are quality assured.

### The Criminal Defence Service

- 1.5 The Criminal Defence Service (CDS), launched in April 2001, replaced the Criminal Legal Aid scheme and is the responsibility of the Legal Services Commission (LSC). The CDS has a separate budget from the CLS and is a distinct scheme. This separation reflects the fact that the two schemes are responsible for providing different types of service in very different types of case, and that each scheme has its own objectives and priorities. However, it is important that the CLS and CDS operate effectively alongside each other, and the Quality Mark for Websites is applicable to all categories including Crime.

## Just Ask!

- 1.6 It is widely accepted that the Internet provides an extremely powerful medium for the delivery of legal information. The number of websites in this field is increasing rapidly, with new sites being launched almost daily. Just Ask! ([www.justask.org.uk](http://www.justask.org.uk)) was established to provide greater coherence among legal services, and improve ease of access for members of the general public to those legal services. Just Ask! has been designed to serve as the point of entry for any member of the public, lawyer or adviser wanting to access the most up-to-date information about sites which provide different types of legal service.

## The CLS Quality Mark

- 1.7 The CLS Quality Mark<sup>1</sup> was developed by the CLS Quality Task Force, involving the Lord Chancellor's Department, the LSC and a range of key interested organisations. The Task Force was established to define the minimum quality standard for all providers of legal services for membership of the CLS. The Quality Mark is the quality standard for legal information, advice and specialist legal services. It comprises a set of standards designed to ensure that a service is well run and has its own quality control mechanisms that relate to the quality of the information or advice that the service provides. The standards, launched in April 2000, were designed for the more traditional, face-to-face type of service delivery. Since this date, work has been conducted to develop the standards for other types of service provider, such as telephone services<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information see [www.justask.org.uk/public/en/about/quality.htm](http://www.justask.org.uk/public/en/about/quality.htm) and [www.legalservices.gov.uk/qmark/index.htm](http://www.legalservices.gov.uk/qmark/index.htm)

<sup>2</sup> See [www.legalservices.gov.uk/qmark/TelephoneOMv2.pdf](http://www.legalservices.gov.uk/qmark/TelephoneOMv2.pdf)

## 2 Quality-assuring Legal Websites

- 2.1 The proliferation of websites offering legal information represents an unrivalled opportunity for members of the public to increase their understanding of the legal process, and of their rights and responsibilities within it. This development has also brought significant benefits to legal professionals and advisers in being able to locate comprehensive and up-to-date information for the purpose of referral. One of the drawbacks, however, is that users – especially inexperienced users – may be unable to make an informed choice about which sites to access or trust.
- 2.2 During the development of both the existing Quality Mark and the Just Ask! website, it was recognised that some assurance of quality of websites offering legal information was required. Given the increasing use of the Internet as a medium for providing legal information and services – a development which Just Ask! was expressly designed to support – there is a general acknowledgement that some form of quality assurance is required to enable the public to make informed choices and judgements about where to seek information on the Internet.
- 2.3 The development of a set of minimum quality criteria aims to provide online seekers of legal information with a similar degree of informed choice as those seeking information from traditional suppliers of such services. That is, any quality criteria for online legal resources should offer the same advantages as those which the existing Quality Mark standards provide. Users accessing a website which complies with the standard should have confidence that the website provides a quality service.
- 2.4 In addition, the successful development and adoption of these criteria will provide additional benefits. The criteria are intended to support wider initiatives, such as the work of TrustUK<sup>3</sup>, and the RNIB's Web Accessibility Campaign<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> See [www.trustuk.org.uk](http://www.trustuk.org.uk)

<sup>4</sup> See [www.rmib.org.uk/digital](http://www.rmib.org.uk/digital)

### 3 Common Classification Standards

- 3.1 The Just Ask! website currently has two distinct roles: it provides a Directory of all CLS members providing advice or specialist legal help ([www.justask.org.uk/public/en/directory](http://www.justask.org.uk/public/en/directory)), and it provides a portal for websites providing relevant legal information, through its Advice Search function (<http://search.justask.org.uk/en/index.asp>). Using a powerful search engine, the website allows users to search for relevant information across several hundred websites.
- 3.2 Throughout the year 2000, a project ran under the auspices of the Just Ask! Programme 2000 to identify improvements to the Advice Search function. The primary objectives of the project were:
- To ensure that Advice Search provides relevant information and advice to users that enables them to resolve or make progress towards the resolution of queries within the Just Ask! remit.
  - To promote a high level of confidence in the information provided to users of Advice Search.
- 3.3 The research undertaken as part of this project confirmed the need for agreed common standards across relevant websites to allow easier access and to improve the general quality of sites. The Lord Chancellor's Department published proposals for a classification scheme for the content of websites in the Legal and Advice Sectors. The scheme contains a structured list of well-defined terms that are useful in searching for relevant information on the Internet.
- 3.4 The benefits of this scheme are that it will provide both owners and users of websites with a high level of confidence that the content of the website has been accurately described. This means that users find the websites they want to view, and owners receive the users they want to visit them. It will remove the ambiguity inherent in a less formal search where a term such as "drugs" will mean a different thing in the context of different websites.
- 3.5 We set out below an introduction to the issues of common standards that we believe will contribute to raising the quality of websites in this area and, vitally, that will enable members of the public to gain access more readily to the legal information available on the Internet. These issues are explored in more detail in the consultation paper published on 12 November 2000 by the Lord Chancellor's Department. The consultation paper can be found at [www.open.gov.uk/lcd/consult/meta/metafr.htm](http://www.open.gov.uk/lcd/consult/meta/metafr.htm). The response to the consultation can be found at [www.lcd.gov.uk/consult/meta/metaresp.htm](http://www.lcd.gov.uk/consult/meta/metaresp.htm).
- 3.6 The Legal and Advice Sectors Metadata Scheme (LAMS) has been developed since the consultation exercise in 2000. It contains a metadata scheme, a content classification scheme and a thesaurus. Further guidance and materials relating to the implementation of LAMS are included at pages 47–48 and at [www.webstandards.org.uk](http://www.webstandards.org.uk).

## Metadata Scheme

- 3.7 The difficulty users experience in locating appropriate legal resources on the Internet represents a major limiting factor to the future use of the Internet for the delivery of electronic services to clients. To remedy this, the Lord Chancellor's Department is delivering LAMS. Metadata is "structured data about data"<sup>5</sup> which enables information provided on the Internet to be described in a structured and consistent manner. By adding metadata to a website, the ability of search engines (such as that used in Advice Search) to locate appropriate content to match the user's query is vastly increased.
- 3.8 LAMS is based very closely upon existing Internet standards. These have been developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). The W3C was created in October 1994 to lead the Internet to its full potential, by developing common standards that promote its evolution. W3C has more than 400 members from around the world and has earned international recognition for its contributions to the growth of the Internet.
- 3.9 Under the scheme, the owners of relevant websites will add specified metadata to their web pages. They will use a standard scheme based on the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative (DCMI)<sup>5</sup>. The Dublin Core scheme is approved by the W3C. Statements in this language are accessible to the software that is used to search for relevant Internet sites, but are not generally visible to the user.
- 3.10 To assist with the implementation of the scheme, the Lord Chancellor's Department is developing online software tools to help with the creation of the relevant metadata. The Web Standards Project at London Advice Services Alliance (LASA) is also making extensive guidance and support available ([www.webstandards.org.uk](http://www.webstandards.org.uk)).
- 3.11 It is important to note that the scheme fits alongside any other schemes that website providers may already employ for classification of their material. We believe that the cost of implementing the scheme will be limited, and will be more than outweighed by the benefits such as the increased use that will result.

## Content Classification Scheme

- 3.12 To support the proposed new metadata structure, a new public-facing content classification scheme has been drafted. To be fully exploited, elements of any metadata structure require a "controlled vocabulary". In particular, a consistent approach is needed to describe the content of a web page. Currently, for example, if one organisation uses the term "employment" but another uses the term "work" to describe what is, in fact, the same subject, a search using one term may not reveal pages containing the other term.
- 3.13 The scheme will include a thesaurus that will help users search for information even if they do not know the "official" term used in the content classification scheme and implemented by the website owner. To be effective, the thesaurus has been designed to support the needs of members of the public who will be its users.

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<sup>5</sup> For more information about the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative see <http://dublincore.org>

3.14 A number of content classification schemes exist in the legal and advice sectors. For example, the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux operates a scheme which is used on their [adviceguide](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk)<sup>6</sup> website. DIAL(UK)'s content classification system was professionally created. The Law Society operates its own scheme. It remains an imperative that the content classification scheme developed will fit alongside, and work with, existing schemes, which have often been developed for specific purposes and ought not be disturbed. However, such schemes may not have been designed with the general public in mind. To enable those unfamiliar with legal terminology to get quick and easy access to resources on the Internet, it is vital to create a content classification system that truly meets the end users' needs.

3.15 Therefore, the essential characteristics of the content classification scheme are:

- It complements existing schemes within the legal and advice sectors.
- It focuses on the needs of members of the public who are seeking access to the information provided by the legal and advice sectors.
- It has been developed by an independent expert. Broad consultation with interested parties within the legal and advice sectors has been undertaken.
- It is being tested before implementation.

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<sup>6</sup> See [www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk)

## 4 The Quality Mark standard for Websites

### What is the CLS Quality Mark?

- 4.1 The CLS Quality Mark is the quality standard for legal information, advice and specialist legal services. It comprises a set of standards designed to ensure that a service is well run and has its own quality control mechanisms that relate to the quality of the information or advice that the service provides.
- 4.2 This document forms the Quality Mark standard for legal information and advice provided via websites.

### Structure

- 4.3 The standards cover seven key quality areas, known as the Quality Framework:
- A Access to Service:** Planning the service, making others aware of the service, and non-discrimination.
  - B Seamless Service:** Active signposting and referral to other agencies, and awareness of any appropriate CLS partnership arrangements.
  - C Running the Organisation:** The roles and responsibilities of key staff, and financial management.
  - D People Management:** Equal opportunities for staff, training and development, supervisors and supervision, and casework criteria.
  - E Running the Service:** Client information and case management, independent review of files, and feedback to advisers – there are no requirements in the Quality Mark for Websites.
  - F Meeting Clients' Needs:** Information to clients, confidentiality, privacy and fair treatment, and maintaining quality where someone else delivers part of the service.
  - G Commitment to Quality:** Complaints, other user feedback and maintaining quality procedures.
- 4.4 We believe that the Quality Framework is as applicable to information provided via the Internet as it is to more traditional services. Although the manner in which the seven key areas can be measured will be different for websites, we have concluded that there is no reason to depart from the general Quality Mark approach. This was confirmed through the consultation process.

## Levels

- 4.5 The existing Quality Mark has a range of levels, reflecting the different types of service providers. The levels are:
- 4.5.1 **Self-help Information:** This level is for services that rely on the public accessing information themselves.
- 4.5.2 **Assisted Information:** This is for organisations that have a dedicated information service, although this does not have to be the sole purpose of the organisation. There should be someone who is able to help clients to access information, to identify where a client needs further information or advice and to help clients to select an appropriate service where they will be able to receive this. The service will not provide advice.
- 4.5.3 **General Help:** The Quality Mark defines General Help as services:
- Diagnosing clients' problems.
  - Giving information and explaining options.
  - Identifying further action the client can take.
  - Giving basic assistance, e.g. filling in basic forms, contacting third parties to seek information. This will generally be done in one interview although there may be some follow-up work. The client retains responsibility for further action.
- 4.5.4 **General Help with Casework:** The service may also provide a casework service, i.e. taking action on behalf of clients in order to move the case on. This may include negotiation and advocacy on the client's behalf to third parties on the telephone, by letter or face to face. By definition, most cases will involve follow-up work, with the service provider retaining responsibility for this.
- 4.5.5 **Specialist Help:** Where there is a complex legal problem. Organisations at this level are expected to carry out the full range of legal services including representation where this is permitted.
- 4.6 The key difference between Information (see 4.5.1 and 4.5.2) and General Help (see 4.5.3 and 4.5.4) is the provision of advice, even one-off advice. If any individual in an organisation provides advice to clients, it is not appropriate for that organisation to apply at the Information level. Any form of advice to clients should be given by trained and experienced individuals, with the organisation monitoring the provision of advice.
- 4.7 The Quality Mark standard for Websites is based upon the requirements at the Information level, as this seems to be most appropriate given the nature of most relevant websites.

- 4.8 For websites that go beyond the provision of information alone (such as those sites which provide an e-mail advice facility), we considered two options as part of the consultation process:
- 4.8.1 **Develop a new Quality Mark standard for websites at the General Help level.** It would be possible to build upon the standards proposed in this document to develop a General Help standard, specific to the provision of advice via the Internet. This approach is predicated on the assumption that the delivery of advice via the Internet is significantly different from the provision of advice via more traditional means.
- 4.8.2 **Allow website providers to apply for the existing General Help standard.** This approach is based on the view that the provision of advice via the Internet is sufficiently similar to more traditional methods, and that a new standard is not necessary. It might be that website providers applying for the existing General Help standard would also need to show compliance with the standards proposed in this document.
- 4.9 The views expressed by the respondents to the consultation were evenly divided between options 4.8.1 and 4.8.2. We have therefore decided that at present it is appropriate to launch only the Information level of the Quality Mark standard for Websites, and we undertake to research further whether there is a need to develop a standard applicable to the General Help level.

## 5 The Format of the Standard

- 5.1 The Quality Mark standard for Websites has been structured to make a clear distinction between Requirements, Definitions and Guidance. The Requirements and Definitions are based on the Quality Framework we use for the development of all Quality Standards for the CLS and CDS.
- 5.2 The Requirements are the core mandatory elements of the Standard. The Definitions section provides further explanation and the detail is mandatory where the word “**must**” appears.
- 5.3 Guidance (contained in Section 8) is provided to assist you in complying with the Requirements and Definitions. The Guidance does NOT form part of the Requirements and Definitions, is NOT mandatory and will NOT be audited. Instead, the purpose of the guidance is to provide background information about the Requirements and Definitions, to cover some of the methods that auditors may use to find evidence, and to suggest processes and systems that you may find useful when considering how best to demonstrate compliance. Wherever possible or necessary, we provide links to relevant reference material for further guidance or information.

## 6 The Application and Assessment Process

### Acceptance of the Quality Mark Application

6.1 Only those services as in Section 4 (2) of the Access to Justice Act can be accepted for assessment.

6.1.1 These are:

*“The provision of general information about the law and legal system and the availability of legal services.*

*The provision of help by the giving of advice as to how the law applies in particular circumstances.*

*The provision of help in preventing, or settling or otherwise resolving, disputes about legal rights and duties.*

*The provision of help in enforcing decisions by which such disputes are resolved.*

*The provision of help in relation to legal proceedings not relating to disputes.”*

(Source: Section 4(2), Access to Justice Act, 1999<sup>7</sup>)

6.2 Applicants will be required to complete an application form.

6.3 The application should be submitted to the relevant regional office of the LSC (details in Section 12).

6.4 The application should include the completed application form and any supporting documentation. The application form should contain basic information including website address, contact telephone numbers and the identity of the organisation’s Quality Representative. The applicant should provide information about the service, which will include the nature of the services provided and details of any specific client group(s) served.

6.5 Please note that for fully fee-charging organisations, it is likely that there will be a charge for the application and audit process. Details of this process will be made available on request to the Supplier Development Group on 020 77590383 or e-mail [qualitymark@legalservices.gov.uk](mailto:qualitymark@legalservices.gov.uk).

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<sup>7</sup> See [www.legislation.hmsso.gov.uk/acts/acts1999/90022--a.htm#4](http://www.legislation.hmsso.gov.uk/acts/acts1999/90022--a.htm#4)

## Assessment

- 6.6 An LSC auditor will be assigned to deal with each application, and will act as the main contact with the applicant's nominated Quality Representative.
- 6.7 On receipt of the application, the auditor will conduct a desktop assessment. This is the process whereby the auditor makes a systematic comparison between the requirements of the standard and the documentary evidence provided by the applicant.
- 6.8 An acknowledgement of the application will be issued and the assessment process will commence. The assessment process will involve viewing the applicant's website online to check compliance with those criteria that can be properly assessed in this way. Criteria that cannot be checked online will be assessed on the basis of the information provided on the application form, although note that in some circumstances the auditor may consider that a visit to the organisation is necessary.
- 6.9 The LSC will generally expect to complete the desktop assessment within 28 days. Any clarification about the detailed content of the application will be requested initially by telephone, but the auditor may seek written confirmation of any action to amend procedures, or request additional information in writing. In that event, the process of assessment is likely to take longer.
- 6.10 Following successful completion of the of the assessment process (namely a review of the application documentation and an online check), including verification of any changes, the auditor will make a recommendation to the Regional Director of the LSC to award the Quality Mark for Websites to the applicant. This recommendation will usually be made within 5 working days of completion of the total application and assessment process, including the time specified for receipt of changes highlighted by the auditor.
- 6.11 The terms and conditions of the certificate, and guidance on Advertising and Promotion (see Section 11) are included in the application pack. A certificate for display at the applicant's premises (or on the website) will then be issued, together with a pack of information materials and display/stationery design materials.
- 6.12 There is no formal audit visit for the Quality Mark standard for Websites, but applicants will be subject to audit visits on a randomly selected basis. These audits will not normally be more frequent than annually.
- 6.13 Any service selected for a random audit will be notified in writing at least 14 days prior to the audit visit. The LSC has not fixed a standard for the duration of random audit visits, but would expect that these will usually take less than 1 day.
- 6.14 For the Quality Mark for Websites, the annual submission of a short declaration form, which will be issued by the LSC to each Quality Marked website provider, is required. Continued membership of the CLS will depend upon signing and returning the form and successfully passing an online review of the website.

## 7 Requirements and Definitions

<b>A ACCESS TO SERVICE</b>	<b>The aim of the CLS is to improve access to legal services and to base the delivery of services on local needs and priorities. Members of the CLS should be aware of the environment in which they operate and develop their services to meet the needs of their community.</b>
<b>Requirement A1</b>	<b>Business Planning.</b>
<b>Purpose:</b> To ensure that the service has clearly identified the purpose of the website and future developments and is appropriate to the needs of the target audience.	
<b>Requirements:</b> <b>A1.1</b> A plan or statement of the purpose of the website and the services provided.	

**Definitions:**

*(These qualify the requirements and are mandatory where the word “must” appears)*

**A1.1 Service Definition**

It is important that all services define the purpose of the service and future development in order to review its effectiveness and make best use of any feedback. The plan **must** be for at least a year.

It will not be sufficient to place a mission statement on the website itself; a written plan **must** be provided.

Requirement A2	Service Promotion.
<p><b>Purpose:</b> To raise awareness of the CLS and show that the website has met the Quality Mark standard.</p>	
<p><b>Requirements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="226 589 1066 622"><b>A2.1</b> The CLS logo <b>must</b> be clearly shown on the home page.</li> <li data-bbox="226 674 1409 707"><b>A2.2</b> Links <b>must</b> not be made to other sites by framing them within the original website.</li> <li data-bbox="226 759 1433 831"><b>A2.3</b> Websites <b>must</b> adhere to the mandatory elements of the Legal and Advice Sectors Metadata Scheme (LAMS).</li> <li data-bbox="226 882 1433 954"><b>A2.4</b> Permission <b>must</b> be obtained to use content from other providers and the source acknowledged on the website.</li> </ul>	

## **Definitions:**

*(These qualify the requirements and are mandatory where the word “must” appears)*

### **A2.1 Logo Use**

Logo guidelines are available from the LSC on request and **must** be followed without exception (see also Section 11). Sites meeting the Quality Mark standard will be provided with the relevant graphics file and HTML to enable the logo to be displayed on their website. The logo **must not** be transferred to any other website. The Just Ask! website is at [www.justask.org.uk](http://www.justask.org.uk).

### **A2.2 Framing of Information**

With this type of link, the external website to which the link has been created is viewed in a frame within the original website. There is no reference (URL) to the donor website within the frame that would indicate ownership of the information, and this may have copyright implications. It will be difficult for users to make decisions about the authorship of the information. An exception to this would be when the original website is also responsible for the linked website. Any material **must** comply with F1.4.

### **A2.3 Metadata**

LAMS has been devised so as to promote ease of access for users of legal websites. See Guidance pages 47 and 48.

**Applicants will have 12 months from the date of their application to comply with this requirement.**

### **A2.4 Copyright**

Using unacknowledged content from other sources breaches copyright. It also makes it difficult for users to assess the content based on authorship, therefore permission **must** be clearly visible on the website.

Requirement A3	Equality of Access.
<p><b>Purpose:</b> Legislation and good practice promote services being delivered to members of the community without discrimination at the point of service delivery. This does not preclude providers from identifying particular client groups, but those that do must signpost clients who are not in the target audience.</p>	
<p><b>Requirements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="225 645 1449 719"><b>A3.1</b> There <b>must</b> be a written non-discrimination policy that precludes unlawful or unreasonable discrimination in the provision of services to clients.</li> <li data-bbox="225 757 1449 792"><b>A3.2</b> If the website is intended for a particular target audience, this <b>must</b> be made clear.</li> <li data-bbox="225 831 1449 866"><b>A3.3</b> Sites <b>must</b> pass the “Bobby” test (at priority 1/A-rating).</li> </ul>	

## Definitions:

*(These qualify the requirements and are mandatory where the word “must” appears)*

### A3.1 Equality of Access

The written non-discrimination policy **must** be in effective operation. It **must** address accessibility guidelines and the Disability Discrimination Act.

**Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).** Part III of the DDA makes it unlawful for a service provider to treat disabled people less favourably for a reason related to their disability. According to the Act, service providers **must** consider making reasonable adjustments to the way that they deliver their services where disabled people find the service impossible or unreasonably difficult to access. There are provisions in the Disability Discrimination Act (Section 19 (3)) that state that “... access to and use of means of communication ...” and “... access to and use of information services ...” are both examples of services which would be covered by Part III. This clearly includes websites.

Further information on the DDA is available from [www.disability.gov.uk/dda/index](http://www.disability.gov.uk/dda/index).

**Accessibility Guidelines.** The W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

([www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT](http://www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT)) explain how to ensure that web pages are accessible. The RNIB ([www.rnib.org.uk/digital/hints.htm](http://www.rnib.org.uk/digital/hints.htm)) provides advice on designing fully accessible websites.

Some practical hints are provided in paragraphs 5.31–5.32 of the code of practice on Rights of Access to Goods and Services ([www.disability.gov.uk/dda/codethree/chapfive.html](http://www.disability.gov.uk/dda/codethree/chapfive.html)).

### A3.2 Target Audiences

If all the information on the website relates to the same audience, this **must** be clearly displayed at every point of entry to the website, effectively every page. A target audience may be a particular client group (such as benefit recipients or the elderly) or a certain geographic community (such as the residents of a local authority). It is not necessary to explain, although it is good practice, when a website is aimed at a general audience. (See also F1.3)

*Example:*

*“The information on these pages applies only to people over pension age.”*

## **Definitions cont'd:**

*(These qualify the requirements and are mandatory where the word “must” appears)*

### **A3.3 The Bobby Test**

The Bobby tool, created by the Centre for Applied Special Technology (CAST), provides a simple method of checking whether your website meets the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, and guidance on how to rectify any problems. The Bobby tool is available at [www.cast.org/bobby](http://www.cast.org/bobby) and can be accessed online or downloaded and installed locally for running offline. Failure of the test at Priority 1 level (see Guidance) indicates that the website is inaccessible to visually impaired people and, as such, does not meet the spirit of the text of the Disability Discrimination Act.

In order to be compliant, organisations **must** pass all Priority 1 issues of the Bobby test. The LSC reserves the right to carry out the manual checks required by the Bobby test as part of its auditing process.

**As experience of developing accessible sites is relatively limited at this stage, applicants will have 12 months from the date of their application to comply with this requirement.**

<b>B SEAMLESS SERVICE</b>	<b>Where a member of the CLS cannot provide the particular service needed by the client, they must inform the client and direct them to an alternative service provider, where available.</b>
<b>Requirement B1</b>	<b>Signposting.</b>
<p><b>Purpose:</b> In order for individuals to receive the right information at the earliest opportunity, it is important that information is available about the scope of other services and how they can be accessed. The use of the service should be monitored to provide information about the need for different types of services.</p>	
<p><b>Requirements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>B1.1</b> There <b>must</b> be a link on the home page to the CLS Directory on the Just Ask! website.</li> <li><b>B1.2</b> The content <b>must</b> be written and presented in a way that makes it clear that the website does not give legal advice, including a disclaimer.</li> <li><b>B1.3</b> Signposting information <b>must</b> include names, addresses, telephone and fax numbers, e-mail and web addresses, where applicable.</li> </ul>	

## **Definitions:**

*(These qualify the requirements and are mandatory where the word “must” appears)*

### **B1.1 Just Ask!**

The CLS Directory can be accessed from the Just Ask! website at [www.justask.org.uk/public/en/directory](http://www.justask.org.uk/public/en/directory).

Other organisations produce directories which are useful for signposting, such as the Law Society’s Directory ([www.solicitors-online.com](http://www.solicitors-online.com)).

### **B1.2 Disclaimer**

A website is limited in its ability to convey the complexities and variations in how the law may be interpreted. A quality legal website makes this limitation clear; therefore, to obtain the Quality Mark, websites **must** have a disclaimer that emphasises the need for those facing legal problems to speak with a lawyer or adviser. Users should be given information on how and where to obtain legal advice or further information.

Providing signposting information directs people to sources of advice relevant to the area of law that they are investigating. It also adds weight to the notion that the Internet itself is not a one-stop shop for information, and that it has limitations when legal advice is required. The disclaimer can also encompass the question of jurisdiction, mentioned at requirement **F1.3**.

*Example of disclaimer:*

*“The information contained on this page is not legal advice. If you do have a legal problem, you should talk to a lawyer or adviser before making a decision about what to do. You may wish to use the CLS/CDS Directory ([www.justask.org.uk/public/en/directory](http://www.justask.org.uk/public/en/directory)) to locate an adviser. The information on this page is written for people resident in, or affected by, the laws of England and Wales only.”*

### **B1.3 Signposting Information**

Signposting information should include names, addresses, telephone and fax numbers, e-mail and web addresses, where applicable. This information need not be contained in its entirety on the website so long as a direct link to full contact details is provided, e.g. on the other website’s home page.

Requirement B2	Links to other sites.
<p><b>Purpose:</b> Providing links to related quality sites improves the ability of users to understand the issue they are researching, and reach sources that contain related and relevant information.</p>	
<p><b>Requirements:</b></p> <p><b>B2.1</b> There <b>must</b> be a process in place to ensure that all links are checked on a regular basis to ensure their accuracy. The maximum frequency between checks <b>must not</b> exceed 3 months.</p> <p><b>B2.2</b> If sites provide links to primary legislation and case law, the correct form of citation <b>must</b> be used.</p>	

## **Definitions:**

*(These qualify the requirements and are mandatory where the word “must” appears)*

### **B2.1 Checking Links**

Links that have been assessed for their relevance increase the likelihood of people finding the information they are looking for. This will help users to judge whether the link may be relevant for their needs. Wherever possible, try to link to CLS Quality Marked sites. If the link is to a non-Quality Marked website, there **must** be a disclaimer to this effect.

### **B2.2 Correct Form of Citation**

As well as reading explanatory material, many people want to find legislation and case law relevant to their problem. This may not be easy for members of the general public to locate. For example, a person wanting to read the law relating to divorce would need to know to search on “Family Law Act”, not “divorce”. The addition of hypertext links will give the public an easy way to locate legislation and case law on databases such as those gathered under the British and Irish Legal Information Institute (BAILII) system ([www.bailii.org](http://www.bailii.org)).

It may not always be appropriate to make such links. The decision would need to be made based on the intended audience for the website.

*Example:*

*“The [Human Rights Act 1998 c. 42](#) came into effect on 2 October 2000. It makes the European Convention on Human Rights a full part of domestic law. Section 6 of the Human Rights Act makes it unlawful for a public authority to ‘act in a way which is incompatible with a Convention right.’”*

The link used in the example can also be found at  
[www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts1998/19980042.htm](http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts1998/19980042.htm)

<b>C</b> <b>RUNNING THE ORGANISATION</b>	<b>Members of the CLS must have structures and procedures that ensure effective management of the organisation and its resources.</b>
<b>Requirement C1</b>	<b>Responsibility for the website.</b>
<b>Purpose:</b> Statements of authorship help users to make judgements about the authority of the legal information that they find on the website.	
<b>Requirements:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="229 748 1447 824"> <b>C1.1</b>      Contact details of the person(s) or organisation(s) responsible for the information on the website <b>must</b> accessible from <i>all pages</i> of the website. </li> <li data-bbox="229 860 1447 965"> <b>C1.2</b>      A website should be a member of a recognised representative body. Where the service is not regulated or overseen by another body, the LSC will consider whether it is appropriate to be a member of the CLS. </li> <li data-bbox="229 1001 1447 1077"> <b>C1.3</b>      Providers of websites <b>must</b> make clear to users whether they are regulated or overseen by an umbrella body. </li> </ul>	

**Definitions:**

*(These qualify the requirements and are mandatory where the word “must” appears)*

**C1.1 Authority**

Authority can be implied when the information comes from a recognised organisation, such as a government department. When the information comes from an individual or less well-known organisation, stating the credentials of contributing authors will assist users to make a judgement. This can be achieved simply by including qualifications or position held. A corporate logo or e-mail address on all pages will meet this requirement, so long as full details are provided on the home page. Alternatively, a clear single link to contact details at any entry point to the website will meet this requirement.

**C1.2/3 Umbrella Bodies**

The LSC has compiled a list of authorised umbrella bodies in the legal information and advice sectors. Website providers belonging to any of these bodies **must** make this clear on the website and provide details of how to contact them.

Website providers that are not regulated or overseen by another body, and/or for which there is no external complaints facility, are not excluded from the Quality Mark scheme. However, sites falling into this category **must** make this clear to users. (See also G1.1.)

<b>D PEOPLE MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>Members of the CLS must ensure that staff possess or acquire the skills and knowledge required for meeting the clients' needs.</b>
<b>Requirement D1</b>	<b>Induction Procedures.</b>
<b>Purpose:</b> For a service to be used to its potential, attention needs to be given to staff knowledge and skills, including issues of customer care in the service they deliver.	
<b>Requirements:</b>  D1.1 If there is more than one person in the organisation, there must be an induction process which <b>must</b> cover awareness of the CLS and CDS and how the service operates	

**Definitions:**

*(These qualify the requirements and are mandatory where the word “must” appears)*

**D1.1 Induction Procedures**

Most organisations already have induction procedures in place and it should, therefore, be relatively simple to include awareness of the CLS and CDS. Induction procedures **must** include awareness of the CLS and CDS. These **must** also include awareness of the importance of confidentiality (see F3.1). The LSC will provide a fact sheet which could be used as part of the induction process. Copies of this fact sheet will be available at [www.legalservices.gov.uk](http://www.legalservices.gov.uk).

<b>E</b>	<b>RUNNING THE SERVICE</b>	<b>Members of the CLS must have processes and procedures that ensure an effective and efficient service to their clients.</b>
<b>Requirement</b>		<b>There are no requirements for this standard.</b>

<b>F</b> <b>MEETING CLIENTS' NEEDS</b>	<b>Clients using a CLS provider are entitled to receive advice and information relevant to their needs.</b>
<b>Requirement F1</b>	<b>Clients receive information relevant to their needs.</b>
<p><b>Purpose:</b>      Users should be able to check whether the information on a website is up to date and likely to reflect current law, to give them confidence as to its accuracy.</p>	
<p><b>Requirements:</b></p> <p><b>F1.1</b>      There <b>must</b> be a process to ensure that information is up to date, and there must be a written record of the date when the information was last checked and deemed to be accurate.</p> <p><b>F1.2</b>      Every page on the website <b>must</b> include the date when the information on that page was current.</p> <p><b>F1.3</b>      The legal jurisdiction of all information <b>must</b> be clear.</p> <p><b>F1.4</b>      There <b>must</b> be a written procedure to ensure that the legal content is correct.</p>	

## **Definitions:**

*(These qualify the requirements and are mandatory where the word “must” appears)*

### **F1.1 Keeping Information up to Date**

Written procedures and systems **must** be in place to ensure that all information is valid and up to date.

### **F1.2 Update Information**

As a user can access the website at any point, it is important that the date when the information was current **must** be on every page.

*Examples:*

*“The law as at 4 July 1998.”*

*“This information current when last updated on 13 June 2000.”*

### **F1.3 Legal Jurisdiction**

Many members of the general public are unaware of the concept of legal jurisdiction and do not realise that the law can differ from area to area. When information is found via a search engine, there is no guarantee that it will lead a user to material relevant to that person’s geographic situation. A statement **must** be included on the website explaining the jurisdiction to which the information applies. It is *not* sufficient to include this only on the home page.

*Examples:*

*“This guide is for people who want to find out about the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants. The information applies to people who live in, or are affected by, the laws of England and Wales.”*

*“The information on these pages applies only to residents of Blankshire Local Authority.”*

### **F1.4 Ensuring the Accuracy of Information**

The written procedure to ensure that information is accurate **must** include the allocation of responsibility to an individual. The role of the nominated person will depend on whether the website produces original legal information or draws text from a recognised source (see below).

For information that is drawn from a recognised source, e.g. a government department, a public body, a Quality Marked supplier in the particular area of law (usually at the Specialist or General Help with Casework levels) or an organisation listed in the CLS/CDS Directory, the nominated person may well do no more than ensure that the information is kept up to date as in F1.1.

However, if the website contains original legal information, the nominated person **must** be competent to confirm the accuracy of that information. Competence must be demonstrated by meeting either the supervisor requirements at the Specialist Quality Mark level (in that area of law), the caseworker or caseworker supervisor requirements at the General Help with Casework levels (in that area of law), or by having at least 2 years’ experience of that area of law, which may have been gained in any relevant environment, e.g. academic, or practitioner.

<b>Requirement F2</b>	<b>Costing structures are transparent and explained at the outset.</b>
<p><b>Purpose:</b> The cost of obtaining legal information is a concern to most people. Where there is a charge involved for any services offered by a website, this must be made clear before any costs are incurred.</p>	
<p><b>Requirements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="240 577 1447 651"><b>F2.1</b> If there is a financial charge for any of the services provided via the website, then the charges <b>must</b> be clearly set out before the chargeable services are accessed.</li> <li data-bbox="240 689 1447 763"><b>F2.2</b> There <b>must</b> be a clear way for the user to cancel or continue the process that incurs a charge.</li> <li data-bbox="240 801 1447 875"><b>F2.3</b> If a charge is made for a service, clients <b>must</b> be told where they may be able to get the service free.</li> <li data-bbox="240 913 1447 987"><b>F2.4</b> Websites <b>charging</b> for a service <b>must</b> be members of an organisation which has been accredited by TrustUK and complies with the relevant code of practice.</li> </ul>	

**Definitions:**

*(These qualify the requirements and are mandatory where the work “must” appears)*

**F2.1 Services**

The term “service” excludes products (e.g. books, periodicals) under F2.1 and F2.3.

**F2.4 TrustUK**

The purpose of TrustUK is to set a standard for the conduct of e-commerce between business and consumers. TrustUK is a non-profit organisation endorsed by the government to enable consumers to buy online with confidence. Most reputable companies are members of trade associations or subscriber bodies which operate codes of practice to which their members are required to adhere – for the purposes of TrustUK, they are known as code owners. Websites bearing the TrustUK e-hallmark are provided by companies that subscribe to a strict code of practice approved by TrustUK. Details of TrustUK can be found at [www.trustuk.org.uk](http://www.trustuk.org.uk).

See also details of the Which? Web Trader Scheme at [www.which.net/webtrader/code\\_of\\_practice.html](http://www.which.net/webtrader/code_of_practice.html), which has been approved by TrustUK.

<b>Requirement F3</b>	<b>Clients are entitled to confidentiality, privacy and fair treatment.</b>
<p><b>Purpose:</b> To maintain the confidence of clients, it is essential that services are provided in a private, confidential and fair manner.</p>	
<p><b>Requirements:</b></p> <p><b>F3.1</b> Client information must be treated confidentially. Where access to information is required to be given to a third party, the client <b>must</b> be informed that this may happen.</p> <p><b>F3.2</b> There <b>must</b> be a written policy to ensure client privacy.</p>	

**Definitions:**

*(These qualify the requirements and are mandatory where the work “must” appears)*

**F3.2 Client Privacy Policy**

Such policies **must** include the following:

- 1 Collection and use of personal information **must** comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 and any other relevant legislation.
- 2 The user should be informed before or at the time of collection, what personal information will be collected and how it will be collected. **N.B.** This **must** include specific reference to “cookies” or other tracking technology.
- 3 The user **must** also be told what use would be made of any personal information. Personal information **must** not be used for any other purpose subsequently, without contacting the user for permission.
- 4 Sensitive personal information **must not** be collected, used or disclosed without the express *consent* of the user.
- 5 Personal information **must** be accurate and stored securely.
- 6 The user **must** be able to end the contact with the website before information is collected.

N.B. Information relating to individuals, either published on websites or collected from individuals who visit those sites, falls within the scope of the Data Protection Act. Further guidance and advice is available from the Data Protection Registrar’s website, [www.dataprotection.gov.uk](http://www.dataprotection.gov.uk).

Useful guidance can also be found in the Guidelines for Government Websites ([www.e-envoy.gov.uk/publications/guidelines/webguidelines/websites/index.htm](http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/publications/guidelines/webguidelines/websites/index.htm)).

In addition, website providers **must** use a disclaimer warning users that personal information sent by e-mail may not be confidential.

<b>G COMMITMENT TO QUALITY</b>	<b>All members of the CLS are committed to improving the quality of their service.</b>
<b>Requirement G1</b>	<b>There must be a clear complaints procedure in effective operation.</b>
<p><b>Purpose:</b> If a person is unhappy with the service they receive, they may want to complain. Complaints are important as they tell you how well the service meets user expectations and provide important information that could improve the service.</p>	
<p><b>Requirements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>G1.1</b> Details of how to complain about the service offered <b>must</b> be clearly displayed, including contact details of the person responsible for handling complaints.</li> <li><b>G1.2</b> A written procedure describing the action to take when a complaint is received <b>must</b> be provided.</li> <li><b>G1.3</b> Records <b>must</b> be kept of each complaint, including the date and a brief description of any action taken.</li> <li><b>G1.4</b> Websites <b>must</b> make the CLS complaints leaflet available to the public, usually by a hyperlink to the LSC’s website at <a href="http://www.legalservices.gov.uk">www.legalservices.gov.uk</a>.</li> </ul>	

**Definitions:**

*(These qualify the requirements and are mandatory where the work “must” appears)*

**G1.1 External Complaints Facility**

Providers of websites **must** make clear whether they are regulated or overseen by a body and provide details of any external complaints facility. Complaints information for users **must** also include how to register an objection to the website holding the CLS Quality Mark standard for Websites. The following wording is suggested:

*“The Quality Mark standard for Websites is awarded to those websites which have complied with the requirements of the quality standard. Details of this standard can be found at [www.legalservices.gov.uk](http://www.legalservices.gov.uk). If you are dissatisfied with this website, complaints should be made in the first instance to [insert site complaints officer details]. If the complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction, and you wish to register an objection to the award of this logo to this website, you should contact the LSC.”*

An e-mail address will suffice for contact details for complaints, even if not personalised.

<b>Requirement G2</b>	<b>The website must provide a facility for users to offer comments on the service provided.</b>
<p><b>Purpose:</b> In order to continually improve the service provided to clients, the gathering and monitoring of user feedback is essential.</p>	
<p><b>Requirements:</b></p> <p><b>G2.1</b> There <b>must</b> be a procedure for obtaining feedback, including complaints, from clients about the service they received.</p>	

**Definitions:**

*(These qualify the requirements and are mandatory where the work “must” appears)*

**G2.1 Obtaining Client Feedback**

This requirement can be met either by way of an online feedback form or a facility to e-mail the organisation. All comments **must** be recorded and reviewed at least annually to inform developments of the website.

## 8 Guidance

**Please note that the guidance does not cover all the requirements.**

### A1.1 Service Definition

Some of the issues that you may wish to consider in developing your plan are:

- What client group do you serve?
- What are the legal information needs of this group?
- How do you aim to develop your service in the forthcoming year?
- What services do you currently provide?

It should be clear that you are providing an information service, not an advice service. The written plan should lay down your aims for the forthcoming year in a way that is clear to all members of your organisation.

One possible way of developing a business plan centres around the question “why does the website exist?” This is an overarching principle, and may be contained in a mission statement, e.g. “to ensure that the local community has information about the law to enforce its rights, to ensure that disabled people get access to central and local government services or to improve the information available on a particular area of law.”

The aims of the organisation (including a website) should be built on the mission statement. (Please note that a mission statement on the website itself will not suffice for compliance with this requirement.) This makes it clear to stakeholders inside and outside the organisation what the remit is, and provides a sense of purpose. The aims are a general statement of the organisation’s direction and priorities, rather than the practicalities of how and when an organisation will do something. You could undertake a SWOT analysis. This involves examining:

- Strengths and weaknesses of the organisation. What is unique about your website (e.g. type of service, client group served, area of law covered)? What do you do well and badly?
- Opportunities and threats facing the organisation. This could include looking at changes in legislation or social policy, social trends, developments in information technology, local changes including the work of other relevant organisations, demand for the service and the resources required to maintain or develop the website.

From analysing the answers to these questions, you should be able to identify what the priorities for the organisation over the next 12 months should be. Priorities may be things such as targeting particular client groups to use your service, implementing a training strategy for staff, recruiting more staff or expanding to a new area of law, and so on.

## A2.2 Framing of Information

Search engines sometime use frames. These make it possible to include the content of other websites (“donor websites”) within the website using the search engine (the “original website”). The URL of the donor website may not be available. This is potentially confusing for web users, since they may not realise that the material they are accessing is not part of the original website. In addition, websites which work this way cannot be quality assured through the Quality Mark auditing process, as authorship and other quality issues cannot be verified on the donor sites. Instead of using frames, websites should use hyperlinks to external sites. This will make it clear to all web users who has responsibility for which content.

## A2.3 Metadata and the Content Classification Scheme

Search for “housing” on the Internet and you’ll be presented with around a bewildering 2,500,000 pages. Search engines have no sense of meaning: all they do is mechanically retrieve all the pages containing the required text. They can’t distinguish between underwater video camera **housing** and the Bank of **Housing** and Finance in Korea.

*Metadata* solves this problem. It sounds like technical jargon, but it works in a straightforward way: it allows pages to be consistently classified. The information (metadata), invisible to the user, is used by search engines like Just Ask!, the website of the CLS.

So, when a user searches for “rent” or “markets”, Just Ask! will find articles in those categories, whether they contain those actual words or not. Users don’t have to know the names of the categories: if a user enters “car boot sales”, the system knows that articles on this subject are classified under “markets”; if they look for “deposits”, they will see articles about “rent”.

### How will it Work for Users?

The user will enter the subject they need information about. They will then see a list of relevant pages; each will have a plain English title, and a short description of its contents. The user should be able to select relevant pages easily.

### What Metadata will be added?

The Quality Mark standard for Websites proposes that the metadata added to web pages adheres to the “Dublin Core” scheme, an accepted international standard. For the Quality Mark, three “elements” of metadata will be mandatory:

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Title</b>       | Many pages have titles already. This is the text that appears at the top of the screen when you use a browser to look at the page. Ideally, every page will have a title, so that Just Ask! can include them in the list shown to users when they search for pages on a particular topic. |
| <b>Description</b> | This is a 2-3 sentence summary of the contents of the page. It will also appear in the list shown to users when they search for pages on a particular topic.  |
| <b>Subject</b>     | The Lord Chancellor’s Department has commissioned a new Content Classification Scheme. Special software, the metadata editor, has been commissioned to allow the  |

addition of “subject” metadata to web pages. The metadata editor uses the subject areas of the Content Classification Scheme.

## The Content Classification Scheme and Thesaurus

The Content Classification Scheme and its accompanying thesaurus have been specially commissioned by the Lord Chancellor’s Department. The scheme builds on best practice within the advice and legal sectors and reflects the language and perspectives of the general public. The scheme allows legal information on web pages to be classified in a consistent way. This ensures that users of the Just Ask! website can find appropriate pages more easily.

### The Content Classification Scheme

The Content Classification Scheme contains 14 main subject areas, divided into over 300 sub-categories.

The scheme allows the content of a page to have more than one classification. So a page called “Single Parents – Can You Still Claim Benefits if You Go to University?” might have classifications for *benefits*, *separation and divorce* and *higher education*. A user would find the page if they searched for any of these three topics. This is made possible by the presence of a thesaurus.

### The Thesaurus

Underpinning the Content Classification Scheme is a thesaurus. This means that the person responsible for classifying the content on a web page (or a user of the Justask! website) need not know the “official” or “preferred” term in the Content Classification Scheme.

- | Main Classification Scheme Areas |
|----------------------------------|
| Benefits                         |
| Communications and Media         |
| Consumer Affairs                 |
| Education and Training           |
| Employment                       |
| Environment and Countryside      |
| Families                         |
| Government, Law and Rights       |
| Health and Social Care           |
| Housing and Homelessness         |
| Immigration and Nationality      |
| Leisure, Transport and Travel    |
| Money and Tax                    |
| Police and Crime                 |

The Content Classification Scheme and Thesaurus will be kept up to date to reflect any changes in the law. Both will also reflect the search terms employed by people classifying web page content via the metadata editor, and the search terms used by people trying to find information on the Justask! website.

(Source: Web Standards Project team, London Advice Services Alliance.)

## A2.4 Copyright

This requirement supports A2.2 in that it is seeking to ensure that the validity (and authorship) of the information accessed is clear to the end user, and that copyright law is correctly adhered to. Applicants will be asked to certify whether or not information from any other source is used on their website, and provide proof of permission to use the information where this is necessary.

## A3.1 Equality of Access

To meet this requirement, the written non-discrimination policy will also be in effective operation, i.e. evidence may be found in improvements on the website. In addition to the statutory requirements for non-discrimination, your organisation may wish to consider further grounds for non-discrimination so that an exhaustive list would read “race, colour, ethnic or national origins, sex, marital status or sexual orientation, disability, age, creed or political beliefs.”

### Types of Discrimination

In precluding discrimination, ideally your policy will consider:

**Direct discrimination (including harassment):** Where a person is treated less favourably on the basis of one of the grounds listed in your policy.

**Indirect discrimination:** Where a requirement or condition, which cannot be justified, is applied equally to all groups, but has a disproportionately adverse effect on one particular group.

**Victimisation:** Where a person is treated less favourably on the basis of action they have taken against the organisation (including grievances) under one of the grounds listed in your policy.

### Legislation and Codes of Practice

It is unlawful to discriminate against individuals either directly or indirectly in respect of their race, sex or marital status, or to treat a person who has, or who has had, a disability less favourably without reasonable justification. The Race Relations Act 1976, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (both as subsequently amended) and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 provide the *relevant legislation*.

### Auditing the Policy

Auditors will look for evidence of non-discrimination when they consider the approach you have taken to deciding *what services to offer to whom*. In particular, they will consider the extent to which you have explored the particular needs of certain groups of clients (e.g. the disabled), taking into account and/or overcoming factors that would otherwise have denied them access to the service.

The LSC accepts that an effective non-discrimination policy for a website may differ from that required for a face-to-face organisation. You may have implemented a non-discrimination policy across the whole organisation, and you may wish only to adapt the policy in relation to the website, so that it addresses usability and accessibility guidelines and the Disability Discrimination Act.

## A3.3 The Bobby Test

Accessibility and ease of navigation for all potential users of websites is the best practice goal which organisations should be aiming at. Requirement A3.3 uses the Bobby test to determine objectively whether a website is likely to be accessible to most people seeking to view the website. Organisations need only be approved at Priority 1 rating. However, in order to meet best practice

for website accessibility, organisations may wish to consider addressing priority 2 and 3 accessibility issues.

The Bobby test is divided into five sections, Priority 1 Accessibility, Priority 2 Accessibility, Priority 3 Accessibility, Browser Compatibility Errors and Download time. For each of these sections the Bobby Test provides guidance on how to rectify any issues that are identified by the tool.

**Priority 1 Accessibility:** The minimum level of accessibility that a website must achieve in order to be “Bobby approved”. It covers those “problems that seriously affect the page’s usability by people with disabilities” ([www.cast.org/Bobby/index.cfm?I=325](http://www.cast.org/Bobby/index.cfm?I=325)).

**Priority 2 Accessibility:** Addresses less vital issues than those covered by Priority 1. You may choose to meet this standard in order to make your website more accessible.

**Priority 3 Accessibility:** Defines access levels which, if met, comply with best practice for website accessibility.

**Browser Compatibility Errors:** Best practice states that web pages should be written so that they are as compatible as possible with different web browsers. A website will not fail the Bobby Test simply because of compatibility errors; however, they may make the website inaccessible to many users and should be avoided if possible.

**Download Time:** Estimates how long a web page will take to download. Whilst not an accessibility issue, lengthy download times affect usability.

Further details on the Bobby test can be found at [www.cast.org/Bobby/index.cfm?i=426](http://www.cast.org/Bobby/index.cfm?i=426).

## **B1.1 Just Ask!**

There are numerous search engines and websites that offer Directories of legal services providers. We reserve the right to monitor links to sites to ensure that these do not breach the spirit of the CLS by advertising services at a cost, without making clear to web users that the same service may be available elsewhere free.

## **B2.1 Checking Links**

Software is available which will automatically check links on a website to ensure that they are still in use. This has the advantage of being much quicker than manually checking all links but will not be able to ensure that the sites being linked to are appropriate in terms of content. An annotation that briefly indicates the authorship, content or relevance of these sites enhances the usefulness of these links.

## **D1.1 Induction Procedures**

In designing an induction procedure, you may wish to consider the following best practice outline:

Induction should begin within 2 months of joining (unless justifiable reasons have been recorded), and the process should cover all of the areas listed below:

- The organisation's aims.
- The management/staff structure and where the new post fits into it.
- The recruit's role and the work of their department or team.
- The organisation's policies on non-discrimination, complaints and customer care, and quality.
- The office procedures manual and/or other work instructions relevant to the post.
- Terms and conditions of employment, and welfare and safety matters.

Records confirming induction (content and date(s)) for each individual should be kept. Note that these records may be kept on individuals' personal files (i.e. not necessarily in a central file).

## **E Running the Service**

There is no section E in the Information standard because the quality criterion centres on managing case files, which is not applicable to the Information level.

## **F1.4 Ensuring the Accuracy of Information**

It is very important that the information on Quality Marked websites is accurate, especially where the content is original legal information, i.e. not attributed to a recognised source. At audit we will expect to see that the procedure to ensure that the legal content is correct is in effective operation. Auditors will expect to see evidence of competence, to confirm the accuracy of legal information at the application stage.

The Quality Mark and the Specialist Quality Mark standards provide the primary means of evidencing the competency of the individual nominated to verify the legal content of the website. It is anticipated that most organisations will demonstrate compliance with requirement F1.4 by meeting either the casework breadth in the relevant categories of law in the General Help standard, or the supervisor standard for the relevant categories in the Specialist Quality Mark. Please note that where original legal information is provided in several areas of law, the content of the website may be verified by more than one person, but one individual will take overall responsibility for maintaining the process.

The Quality Mark standards at the Information, General Help and Specialist levels are available at [www.legalservices.gov.uk](http://www.legalservices.gov.uk).

## **F3.2 Client Privacy Policy**

Item 5 under the client privacy policy ensures that personal information is accurate and stored securely. The onus in terms of accuracy remains with the user, but you could consider whether to offer the facility on your website for users to change/update the information that you hold.

## 9 Refusal, Withdrawal and Suspension Policy

### Refusal

- 9.1 At the assessment stage, it will be within the auditor's authority to refuse to process the application further or refuse to recommend an award of the Quality Mark.
- 9.2 A refusal to process the application further will be on the basis of:
- 9.2.1 Incompleteness of the application form/documentation. The grounds for the refusal will be that either the application form is incomplete in some material aspect or has been completed in such a way as to be misleading or incorrect in a material sense.
  - 9.2.2 Insufficient or inadequate evidence of meeting the standards. This applies to any required supporting documentation that has either not been submitted, despite being a requirement, or is insufficient/inadequate to demonstrate meeting the standards.
  - 9.2.3 The application is out of the scope of the work of the CLS or CDS or the Quality Mark for Websites, as developed.

*Notification of the decision to refuse an application will be within 28 days of receipt of the application.*

### Withdrawal

- 9.3 At any stage after the award, it will be possible either for the provider to give notice of withdrawal or for the LSC to withdraw the award.
- 9.4 The decision to withdraw the award may be on the following grounds:
- 9.4.1 The provider fails to meet the quality standard at an audit (whether online or at the organisation), and effective corrective action cannot be agreed.
  - 9.4.2 The LSC deems them to be an inappropriate provider.
  - 9.4.3 The provider ceases to provide services within the scope of the work of the CLS or CDS.
  - 9.4.4 The provider commits a material breach of the contract.
  - 9.4.5 The provider unreasonably withholds consent for inclusion in the CLS/CDS Directory and Just Ask! search engine.
  - 9.4.6 The provider brings the Quality Mark into disrepute.

- 9.4.7 Complaints from the public or other sources upon investigation demonstrate that the quality standard is not being met and that the provider failed to instigate corrective action that would bring the service back in line with the standards.

## **Suspension**

- 9.5 The CLS and CDS have the option to suspend the Quality Mark. This unlikely event would only happen if the LSC believed there was a risk to the integrity of either the CLS or the CDS.

# 10 The Appeal Process

## Grounds for Appeal

- 10.1 An appeal process is available to all providers facing a refusal, suspension or withdrawal of an award at any stage in the process following the submission of an application.
- 10.2 The provider may appeal on the following grounds:
  - 10.2.1 The auditor did not take full account of all the evidence available.
  - 10.2.2 The decision taken by the auditor/Regional Director was unreasonable.
  - 10.2.3 The provider can take corrective action within a reasonable time so as to bring the service up to standard.
- 10.3 An appeal on the grounds of unreasonableness will need to demonstrate that the information provided had been misinterpreted, or had been given undue weight in the context of the audit process, or that the auditor had failed to take into account material evidence/facts in existence at the time of the audit.
- 10.4 In the event of this occurrence, providers will be sent a copy of the appeal process.

# 11 Logo Guidance on Advertising and Promotion

- 11.1 If you are an applicant, unless we grant you prior written permission, you must not in any way imply that you are, or will be, Quality Marked. If we grant you prior written permission, you must comply with any conditions that we specify.
- 11.2 You may publicise and promote your status as Quality Marked, in any reasonable manner consistent with the spirit and intention of the CLS Quality Mark Agreement.
- 11.3 You must not say or do anything that is, or is likely to be, misleading to clients or potential clients regarding your status as Quality Marked, or advertise or associate with any other services that could in any way imply that they are endorsed, associated or otherwise part of the CLS.
- 11.4 If we consider that you are publicising or promoting in a manner that is not consistent with the spirit and intention of the CLS Quality Mark Agreement, or may be misleading to clients (or potential clients), we may direct you to cease such publicity or promotion. If we do direct you to cease such publicity or promotion, you must comply with the direction without delay.
- 11.5 You acknowledge that we own all rights in any Promotional Items.
- 11.6 You must not alter or amend any Promotional Items without our prior written permission.
- 11.7 You acknowledge that any Promotional Items that are owned by us, and designated as such, at all times remain in our ownership.
- 11.8 You must use Promotional Items in accordance with any guidelines that we issue about them.
- 11.9 Further guidance about the use of the CLS logo (permitted colour; size, etc.) is provided as part of the logo pack issued by the LSC upon grant of the Quality Mark.

## Definitions

“Promotional Items” means any logos, certificates, display materials, information, literature and other items supplied, or approved in writing, by us for use in connection with the Quality Mark.

## 12 LSC Regional Offices

### Address List

<b>Regional Office</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Postcode</b>	<b>DX Number</b>	<b>Telephone Number</b>
London Regional Office	29–37 Red Lion Street LONDON	WC1R 4PP	DX LDE 170 CHANCERY LANE	020 7759 1500
South Eastern Regional Office	3 <sup>rd</sup> –4 <sup>th</sup> Floor Invicta House Trafalgar Place BRIGHTON	BN1 4FR	DX 2752 BRIGHTON 1	0127 387 8800
Southern Regional Office	80 King's Road READING	RG1 4LT	DX 4050 READING	0118 955 8600
South West Regional Office	33–35 Queens Square BRISTOL	BS1 4LU	DX 7852 BRISTOL	0117 302 3000
Wales Regional Office	Marland House Central Square CARDIFF	CF1 1PF	DX 33006 CARDIFF	0292 064 7100
West Midlands Regional Office	City Centre Podium 5 Hill Street BIRMINGHAM	B5 4UD	DX 13041 BIRMINGHAM	0121 665 4700
North West Regional Office	2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Elisabeth House 16 St Peter Square MANCHESTER	M2 3DA	DX 14343 MANCHESTER 22	0161 244 5000
North East Regional Office	Eagle Star House Fenkle Street NEWCASTLE	NE1 5RU	DX 61005 NEWCASTLE	0191 224 5800
Yorkshire & Humberside Regional Office	City House New Station Road LEEDS	LS1 4JS	DX 12068 LEEDS	0113 390 7300
East Midlands Regional Office	Fothergill House 16 King Street NOTTINGHAM	NG1 2AS	DX MDX 10035 NOTTINGHAM	0115 908 4200
East Regional Office	62–68 Hills Road CAMBRIDGE	CB2 1LA	DX 5803 CAMBRIDGE	0122 341 7800
Merseyside Regional Office	Cavern Walks 8 Matthew Street LIVERPOOL	L2 6RE	DX 14208 LIVERPOOL	0151 242 5200