

NORTHERN IRELAND LEGAL SERVICES COMMISSION

BUSINESS PLAN 2004/05

Business Plan 2004/05

Corporate Objectives: To improve our existing services	Key Activities	Business Plan Objectives and Performance Measures	Target dates during 2004/05
Give priority to some critical inherited problems	Address the range of organisational, management and service delivery issues that were identified by the Commission since 1 November 2004	<p>Clear Green Form and other financial backlogs in Criminal and Children's Order services</p> <p>Clear adjudication Decision-making backlog</p> <p>Implement revised Top and Senior Management Structures</p> <p>Develop post-transitional arrangements for review and appeals across all business areas</p> <p>Address outstanding human resource issues</p>	<p>Dec 04</p> <p>Mar 05</p> <p>Jan 05</p> <p>Nov 04</p> <p>Mar 05</p>
<p>Improve the processing of applications, assessments, queries and appeals in relation to legal aid</p> <p>(See Appendix 1 for continuous improvement targets in relation to this corporate objective)</p>	Identify improvements in all areas of the business	<p>Develop and begin piloting new legal aid application forms</p> <p>Develop Fund Efficiency Plan</p> <p>Develop specification for revised case management and financial management systems</p>	<p>Feb 05</p> <p>May 04 Feb 05</p> <p>Jan 05</p>
Develop our existing services		<p>Develop proposals, consult on and implement Phases 2 and 3 of Green Form Project</p> <p>Develop proposals for review of Statutory Charge</p> <p>Develop proposals, consult and implement fees methodology for civil fees under current legislation</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Feb 05</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Corporate Objectives: To reform publicly-funded legal services in Northern Ireland	Key Activities	Business Plan Objectives	During 2004/05
Strive to become an excellent public service organisation (See Appendix 1 for continuous improvement targets in relation to this corporate objective)	Develop and implement best practice business policies, strategies and procedures which deliver high quality customer-focussed services	Develop and implement Business Assurance Framework	May 04
		Develop and implement best practice human resource, information technology, financial management and communications policies	Jan 05
		Develop Equality Scheme	Ongoing
	Develop and implement best practice in communications and stakeholder management	Develop and implement staff, customer and stakeholder surveys	Mar 05
		Develop concordats on the management of complaints, redress and litigation with NI Departments	Dec 04
	Begin process of external accreditation	Establish Quality Steering Group	Nov 04
		Develop and implement ISO 9001 project	Dec 04
		Submit for ISO accreditation	
		Develop customer-focussed performance management framework and performance indicators covering all areas of the business	Ongoing
		Measured indicators of performance in adjudication, assessment, review, appeals and payment processes to improve over the period of the Corporate Plan	Ongoing

Corporate Objectives: To reform publicly-funded legal services in Northern Ireland	Key Activities	Business Plan Objectives	During 2004/05
Examine the strengths and weaknesses of the current arrangements for legal aid	Have critically assessed the provision of civil legal services in conjunction with current and potential providers of services	Identify the scope of the programme of research that we need to conduct Develop proposals for a research programme Develop an evidence-based Targeting Social Need Plan	Sept 04 Ongoing Ongoing
Commission research into the need for, use of legal aid and access to justice	Access and develop appropriate high quality evidence-based research bases to inform policy-making on publicly-funded legal services Develop, implement and evaluate the outcomes of pilot projects on alternative dispute resolution and developing a mixed-economy in the provision of publicly-funded legal services	Identify appropriate research projects Develop appropriate linkages with other research and policy organisations Identify two pilot projects on alternative dispute resolution Examine the use of insurance-based funding models for money-damages cases in Northern Ireland	Mar 05 Mar 05 Ongoing Ongoing
Learn from experience in other jurisdictions	Develop strong links with providers of publicly-funded legal services in the UK and elsewhere	Establish regular communications at all levels with providers of publicly-funded legal services in the UK Organise Conference of Joint Consultative Committee of Legal Aid providers	Jan 05 Ongoing
Participate in Government's Fundamental Review of Legal Aid	Provide membership of the Steering and Project Groups established to take forward this review	Assist NICtS in defining scope of FLAR in Northern Ireland Actively support the achievement of the project milestones and objectives	Nov 04 As agreed with NICtS

Corporate Objectives: To reform publicly-funded legal services in Northern Ireland	Key Activities	Business Plan Objectives	During 2004/05
In tandem with the Fundamental Review of Legal Aid, develop proposals for reform, consult widely on these proposals and present final proposals for reform to Ministers and other stakeholders	Develop proposals and consult on these proposals with all stakeholders on how publicly-funded legal services will be targeted and funded in Northern Ireland	Develop agenda for reform, including AJO reform, for consultation with all stakeholders	Ongoing
Work with others in the justice sector and voluntary and community sector to implement a reform programme	In partnership with the legal profession and other stakeholders, including those in the voluntary and community sector, develop and implement the reforms to publicly-funded legal services set out in the reforms set out in the Access to Justice (NI) Order 2003	<p>Draft proposals, consult on, and implement Article 6 Access to Justice Order</p> <p>Draft a NI Funding Code for civil legal services</p> <p>Draft proposals consult on and implement a registration scheme</p> <p>Develop robust methodologies for fee and other payment structures for the provision of publicly-funded legal services</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

	CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT TARGETS	2004/05
Customer /Stakeholder Satisfaction	Decision on a properly made application will issue within 4 weeks of the Commission receiving it	Ongoing
	95% of payments to suppliers will be made within 30 days of the liability accruing	Ongoing
	People appealing against the refusal of legal aid will receive a decision on the outcome of their appeal within 6 weeks of the appeal being lodged	Ongoing
	65% of all NI citizens who have been in contact with the Commission, or used its services, will know what the mission of the Legal Services Commission is	Ongoing
	The LSC target will be 80% of those asked will express high levels of satisfaction with the services received	Ongoing
Organisational Development	100% of all people who join the LSC will go through induction and a planned and appropriate initial training programme	December 2004
	The LSC will develop a comprehensive training and development programme for all staff, including new entrants	January 2005
	The annual staff turnover at LSC will be no greater than 15%	March 2005
	The % of people who work in LSC who would recommend the LSC as a good place to work will be no less than 75%	March 2005
	Annual % attendance at work of LSC staff will be no less than 85%	March 2005
	Expenditure on training and development will be no less than 5% of total salaries	2004/05
	LSC staff will spend no less than 3% of their available time working on service development projects outside their normal service areas	2004/05
	The LSC will develop a performance management framework based on quality, risk, resources and communications	2004/05

Quality	The LSC will implement counter fraud measures which reduce the evidence based estimate of risk of fraud to less than 2% of criminal and legal fund expenditure	March 2005
	The LSC will implement all aspects of Business Assurance Framework	2004/05
	Conduct a gap analysis of LSC in relation to ISO 9001 (2000) standards	May 2005
	The LSC will develop an action plan for achievement of ISO 9001 (2000)	July 2005
	The LSC will develop a draft Equality Scheme	March 2005