



The Law Society

Impact of pay structures on civil legal aid work

Results of an online survey open from 25 July to 08 August 2006

Law reform and legal policy

09 July 2006

Introduction

According to the Department for Constitutional Affairs and the Legal Services Commission the new scheme for civil legal aid has been devised to be cost neutral. The Law Society's online survey gathered estimates from practitioners of the effects of the proposed fees on civil work.

Total responses: 436

Detailed results

1. The consultation paper proposes introducing fixed fees to replace tailored fixed fees in civil-controlled work. How do you think this will affect the level of fees your firm receives per annum?

Option	Number of answers	Percentage of total answers
Less in fees overall	404	95%
More in fees overall	4	1%
About the same in fees overall	17	4%

2 a) If less in fees overall, please estimate the percentage drop you expect?

Option	Number of answers	Percentage of total answers
Up to 10% less	15	4%
11% to 25% less	140	35%
26% to 50% less	150	38%
51% to 75% less	73	18%
Over 75% less	17	4%

2 b) If more in fees overall, please estimate the percentage rise you expect?

Option	Number of answers	Percentage of total answers
Up to 10% more	2	50%
11% to 25% more	2	50%
26% to 50% more	0	0
51% to 75% more	0	0
More than 75% more	0	0

3. Do you think the proposed new payment rates for civil-controlled work will make it more or less likely that your firm will undertake publicly-funded work?

Option	Number of answers	Percentage of total answers
Less likely	371	88%
More likely	6	1%
Don't know	43	10%

4. The consultation paper recommends more than one model for community legal advice centres. Would your firm consider bidding for contracts put forward for tender in your area?

Option	Number of answers	Percentage of total answers
Yes	77	18%
No	183	44%
Don't know	158	38%

5. The LSC are proposing a new unified General Civil Contract, both solicitor and NfP from 1 April 2007. Providers failing to meet a minimum fund take requirement, calculated against all their legal aid work will not be automatically awarded the new contract. It is proposed to fix the minimum income level at either £25,000 or £50,000 per annum.

a) Do you agree there should be a minimum income level requirement?

Option	Number of answers	Percentage of total answers
Yes	162	39%
No	218	52%
Don't know	40	10%

b) If yes, what minimum income level do you think should be fixed?

Option	Number of answers	Percentage of total answers
£25,000	79	38%
£50,000	84	40%
Other	45	22%

6. Do you agree with the proposal that the fee for tolerance work should be 15% less than the standard fee?

Option	Number of answers	Percentage of total answers
Yes	26	6%
No	363	86%
Don't know	35	8%

7. The consultation paper proposes allowing the LSC to introduce contract amendments at times other than April and October. How will this affect the level of administration for your firm?

Option	Number of answers	Percentage of total answers
More administration	387	91%
Less administration	2	<1%
Don't know	37	9%