

Responses from the Lord Chancellor's Department

General

1. *The website at <http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/performance/lcd.cfm> indicates that the Lord Chancellor's Department's PSA targets for Spending Review 2002 and performance data are not yet available. When will they be available?*

Our PSA targets were published by the Treasury in July 2002 and are now available on the Treasury's performance website. We completed publication of the Department's outstanding Technical Notes (which set out how they will be measured) for each PSA target, with the exception of PSA 7, at the end of May. Our next action will be to populate the website with both historical and current performance data (where both are available). This will be achieved by the end of July.

Criminal Justice System

User satisfaction

2. *The survey referred to on page 32 of the Departmental Annual Report for 2002-03 indicated that the number of jurors who were "very satisfied" had fallen. What are the reasons for the fall? Has the Lord Chancellor's Department made any changes to its services as a consequence of the results of any survey?*

Overall juror satisfaction has remained high and is meeting the target, with 95.1% of jurors being satisfied or very satisfied (against a target of 95%). The juror survey that was conducted during January 2000 revealed that 42% were "very satisfied". A repeat of the same survey was carried out in March 2002 and this showed that the figure had fallen to 37.5%. . As the survey did not ask for reasons, it is impossible to say with certainty why there was a fall in the "very satisfied". However, feedback from jurors, during service at court and through correspondence after service, suggests that the reasons we are not seeing an increase in the number of "very satisfied" respondents are most likely due to, poor facilities, lengthy waiting times and lack of information. We are committed to improving satisfaction levels and in order to do that we are currently undertaking several pieces of work for example; reviewing the "You and Your Jury Service" booklet which is sent out to jurors with their summonses and explains what will happen to them when they are at court; we are reviewing the allowances paid; and we are working with the judiciary in looking at giving potential jurors advance notice of long trials.

The 2003 survey is currently underway and the results are due to be published next month (July). As from 2004 the Juror Satisfaction Survey will be incorporated into the national customer service (NCS) survey.

3. *The Departmental Annual Report for 2001-02 reported that unnecessary attendance of witnesses had fallen by 3% (at page 19). Why has this improvement not continued in 2002-03? In addition, what progress has been made against SDA2, which states that the Lord Chancellor's Department would improve the service for witnesses by reducing the average waiting time in the magistrates' courts to one hour or less by March 2002 and reducing the unnecessary attendance of witnesses in the magistrates' courts by 10 per cent over the period 2001-4? Are these still targets for the Lord Chancellor's Department? Are there any other targets in respect of witnesses?*

Magistrates' Courts - We work closely with our CJS partners for both CJS targets; (i) Reducing the average waiting time in the magistrates' courts to one hour or less by March 2002; and (ii) Reducing the unnecessary attendance of witnesses in the magistrates' courts by 10% over the SR 2000 period. The performances have been relatively static (between 1 hour 25 minutes to 1 hour 28 minutes over the last two years [target 1 hour] and between 50 and 53% over the last two years [target 47.7%] respectively) and it has proved difficult to achieve substantive improvement through the old Trials Issues Group arrangement.

The average witness waiting times in magistrates' courts and their unnecessary attendance are still both SDAs under SR2000 (which continue until the end of 2003/4). Witness satisfaction, supporting the 'confidence' PSA (PSA 2), will be measured under SR2002 by new questions in the British Crime Survey.

Crown Court - Under the (SR2000) PSA1 target (level of satisfaction of users of justice system), the Crown Court measures the percentage of witnesses waiting 2 hours or less, from the time which they were asked to attend court to the time they are called or released. The target is 50% and the national average, as of the November 2002 survey, revealed that 53% of crown court witnesses waited less than 2 hours.

Bringing offenders to justice

4. *In Spending Review 2002 the first CJS PSA target, for which the Lord Chancellor's Department shares responsibility with the Home Office and other departments, is to improve the delivery of justice by increasing the number of crimes for which an offender is brought to justice to 1.2 million by 2005-06; with an improvement in all CJS areas, a greater increase in the worst performing areas and a reduction in the proportion of ineffective trials. Between March 2000 and September 2001 the number of crimes for which an offender was brought to justice fell significantly. The Home Office in its Departmental Annual Report suggest that the complexity of the CJS makes it difficult to pinpoint where or why this decline happened, or the reasons for its subsequent reversal. Can the Lord Chancellor's Department throw any light on why the decline happened? What difficulties does this lack of knowledge pose in*

formulating a strategy to meet the target of bringing 1.2 million offences to court each year?

We are no surer than the Home Office as to why there was a decline in the number of offenders brought to justice between March 2000 and September 2001. Our figures show only a 0.7% decrease in cases dealt by the Courts during the period. What is clear however is that a number of key initiatives (for example those on Street Crime and Persistent Young Offenders) since that period have increased the throughput of cases in the courts by over 8%, rising from 75,565 to 81,766. At the same time, the disposal rate increased from .79 cases per day to .82, and the Ineffective Trial rate has declined from 23.9 to 23.09%.

New targets have been set to address this issue. These are joint targets for all criminal justice agencies that will improve joined up working, ensuring that crime is tackled with an end to end approach and which will result in more offenders being brought to justice. The Department's (SR2002) PSA1 agreement to support the target of 1.2m offenders brought to justice will ensure sufficient capacity and a decrease in the number of ineffective trials and the Case Preparation Project (CPP) is the primary national mechanism for the criminal justice system to deliver this. The Department is working to develop more instructive information systems, based on the 42 areas, to monitor progress and provide better-structured evidence for future planning.

Delay

5. *Pages 20-21 of Departmental Annual Report for 2001-02 set out a number of reforms which the Lord Chancellor's Department had instituted to make justice swifter. When that annual report was published the Department had not fully evaluated the reforms but said early indications were that the reform had reduced waiting times in the more serious cases. Can the Department now provide a more detailed report or update?*

It is clear, as the Annual Report stated, that major improvements in Crown Court performance occurred in 2001-02. During this period there was a 3.6% increase in the 'serious cases' (class 1, 2 and 3 cases) workload for the Crown Court. Against this background, the number of cases dealt with increased by 8.2% from 75,565 to 81,766. The figures on waiting times are mixed. There has been an overall increase in waiting times of 0.21 weeks, with an increase in custody cases of 1.72 weeks offset by a decrease in bail cases of 0.26 weeks. At the same time, the Ineffective Trial Rate has decreased from 23.9% to 23.09%.

Criminal Justice Reserve Fund

6. *How much of the Criminal Justice Reserve Fund was spent in 2002-03? Please provide a list of how this money was spent and provide an indication of how much of the CJR will be spent in 2003-04 and on what.*

Some £208m was spent from the CJS Reserve in 2002-03. Exact figures await finalisation of that year's accounts. End-year flexibility (EYF) will be requested to carry forward the estimated £17m balance for use in 2003-04. The activities funded in 2002/03 are shown in the list attached at **Annex A**.

The three CJS Ministers (Lord Chancellor, Home Secretary and Attorney General) have identified allocations for 2003-04 which will fully utilise the £225m available. These are currently with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury for confirmation. Details will be provided to the Committee when confirmation has been received.

How the estimated £17m balance from 2002/03 (for which EYF has been sought) can be used most effectively is currently under consideration .

Complaints against solicitors

7. *In evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee on 23 July 2002 the Permanent Secretary said that the Lord Chancellor's Department had asked for a series of improvements to be made by the Office for Supervision of Solicitors. What improvements were requested? What targets were set? Has Office for Supervision of Solicitors made the improvements or met the targets? What assessment has the Legal Services Ombudsman made of the Office for Supervision of Solicitors' performance?*

The former Lord Chancellor agreed OSS's proposals for a challenging package of performance standards for 2003 that is expected to deliver real benefits to complainants. **(Complete list at Annex B)**

Some of the targets for 2003 have been increased from the level of the previous targets set in 2001 (targets were not set in 2002 because the Law Society could not provide reliable data to make the exercise meaningful). . Complaints must be resolved speedily, but the OSS must also ensure that the standard of quality is not lowered. The OSS's proposal to ensure that the quality standards continue to improve means that the more straightforward cases will be handled quickly and effectively. OSS therefore have a target of 60% of all service and conduct cases to be completed in 3 months, a 10% increase on the previous target set. However, more time will be available for complex cases as they have a target of 75%, for all service and conduct cases to be completed in 6 months, a 5% reduction on the previous target set.

The targets that have been reduced, are reduced for 2003 only. In 2004 they revert to their former level and in 2005 they exceed the former level.

The Legal Services Ombudsman satisfaction marking for the OSS has improved by 10% from 57% in 2001/02 to 67% in 2002/03. The time the OSS takes to turnaround a case has also improved.

The OSS has; attempted to create a model office that includes mediation as more frequently used tool; invested in a new case management system; experimented with outsourcing “low complexity” cases; launched a Client’s Charter; and recruited 60 new staff.

It now has in place; an Independent Commissioner who conducts internal audits of the Consumer Redress Scheme and has made a number of wide-ranging recommendations that have been accepted by the Law Society in principle; clear definitions for complaints and enquiries agreed and reliable data; and elements of the Consumer Redress Scheme that train solicitors in customer care.

We will continue to monitor the situation closely to see whether these measures bring about real benefits for consumers.

Public confidence in the justice system

8. *In building public confidence in the criminal justice system what part does sentencing play in the Lord Chancellor's Department's considerations? What weight does the Department attach to sentencing in contributing to confidence in the criminal justice system?*

The Home Secretary is responsible within Government for sentencing policy. It is the role of Parliament to pass laws that set the sentencing framework within which the courts operate. The judiciary have discretion to decide the sentence in individual cases; they do so in accordance with the judicial oath.

The Department recognises the public concern about sentencing. There is a disparity between public perception that sentences are too lenient and sentencing trend data that shows that sentences are becoming tougher. There is a role for the Department in informing the public of the realities of sentencing and the constraints within which judges operate and we are working with colleagues in the trilateral Criminal Justice Performance Directorate to identify the extent of the link between public perceptions of sentencing and confidence in the criminal justice system.

We are also working in partnership with the Home Office and the judiciary on proposals for a Sentencing Guidelines Council. With colleagues in the Correctional Services, we are working to inform the Sentencing Guidelines Council and make available the best information we can about the effectiveness of correctional services.

Court closures

9. How many courts have closed in the past five years and how many are due to close in 2003-04 and 2004-05? Please supply for each year a list of courts and court buildings which closed, or will close, along with a list indicating the new location of the court and whether it now shares a building with another court.

Since the beginning of 1998, a total of 89 magistrates' courts and 15 county courts have closed (**see Annexes C and D**). There have been no crown court closures. Currently there are plans for Ministers to consider the case for closure of two county courts, Shoreditch and Gravesend, over the next two years. It is not anticipated that any crown courts will close during this period.

Operational control of magistrates' courts, including any plans for closure lie with the 42 Magistrates' Courts Committees. We are only aware of 7 closures due in the next two years, though other closures are contained in the longer-term strategic plans of MCCs.

10. The court room utilisation target on page 37 appears to cover only Crown courts. Is there a target for magistrates' courts? If not, why not? What are the Lord Chancellor's Department's targets for reducing court over-capacity during Spending Review 2002?

The utilisation target on page 37 does only cover crown courts. The target set out on page 36 headed 'Courtroom capacity', which aims 'To reduce courtroom over-capacity by 10% by March 2002' (SDA 46), ranges across the joint estate (covering Magistrates, Crown & County Courts). Up to the year ending December 2002 this figure has not only been maintained, but improved by 3.6% in the magistrates' courts. Furthermore, under SR2002 PSA 4, there is a supporting target to realise 30 estate rationalisation opportunities by 31 March 2006. This will largely be the move of County Courts into Magistrates' Courts with consequent disposal of buildings.

11. In taking a decision (where it is required to do so) to close or relocate a court what weight does the Lord Chancellor's Department attach to access to courts? Will the Lord Chancellor's Department have an SDA target during Spending Review 2002 for access to courts in urban and rural areas?

When deciding to close or re-locate a county court, the likely impact on access for court users is an extremely important consideration. Consideration is given to what public transport is available and the implications of relocation, including whether

additional travelling for some users can be balanced against improved accommodation and facilities for all.

The decision to close or relocate magistrates' courts is currently taken by the local Magistrates' Court Committee. The Department for Constitutional Affairs only has a role if the local paying authority appeals against the closure of a court. In the event of an appeal, accessibility is one of a number of factors considered by the Minister in determining the appeal. Other factors include the standard of accommodation (for example facilities for witnesses), security, courtroom utilisation, value for money and the effect on other criminal justice agencies.

The Department will not have an SDA target for access to the courts for the SR2002 period. Rather than publish Service Delivery Agreements, HMT are giving departments the option of publishing a high level summary of how they intend to deliver PSA targets. We intend to summarise this in the form of a Business Plan. We favour this approach, as it will send out a strong message that delivery of the PSA is fundamental to our business and our key priority for the next three years.

IT and the courts

12. *How much of the £1.1 billion in the Criminal Justice System IT Joint Fund has been spent by the Lord Chancellor's Departments? Has the first report on progress on rollout been issued?*

The £1.1 billion allocated to the fund is for the SR2002 period as a whole. As we are in the first quarter of the first financial year, only a very small percentage of funds have been spent. In terms of allocation of funds across Criminal Justice Organisations, current budgetary estimates are that the LCD will receive funding to deliver; current Libra plans for the Magistrates' Courts, including IT infrastructure and a national case management application; current Crown Court plans, including for IT infrastructure and rollout of the XHIBIT (eXchanging Hearing Information By Internet Technology).

A number of points are relevant to this allocation. The budget breakdown figures have not been made public since this may prejudice commercial negotiations with the IT suppliers who will be contracted to deliver IT services. Budget allocations are subject to ongoing oversight and potential revision throughout the SR2002 period by the 5 'key holders', specifically the Attorney General, Home Secretary, Secretary of State for the Department of Constitutional Affairs, Minister for Criminal Justice IT and Director General of Criminal Justice IT. The allocation for fiscal year 2003/04 is subject to a current Value For Money exercise which will be considered at the next meeting of the Criminal Justice IT Ministerial committee expected in mid July. This may affect budget allocations.

The last of these points may impact on detailed parts of implementation plans for this financial year. For that reason, we understand that the Criminal Justice IT Unit plan to publish the first public progress report as quickly as possible after the examination

of the Value For Money exercise to the Ministerial Committee. It is intended that the first public progress report will be published by the end of July.

13. *Have plans for IT development within the county courts been finalised? If not, when will they be finalised? If they have, please supply a summary of the plans. Has the Lord Chancellor's Department an estimate of the likely costs?*

The Department has recently undertaken an audit of resource usage across all areas. The outcome of that audit is currently being considered to ensure that resources available across the SR2002 period are most effectively targeted to meet agreed commitments. Part of the outcome of that exercise is to confirm the level and profile of funding that can be committed to IT based modernisation in the county courts. Current plans are for this work to conclude during July. Once the financial profile is known, the currently provisional plans will be revised accordingly. Initial costing estimates have been worked up for various potential options. Both the level of available funding and wider priorities will determine which parts are taken forward and so actual costs.

Appointment of magistrates

14. *When will the National Recruitment Strategy (page 40 of Departmental Annual Report for 2002-03) be published?*

We plan to publish the National Recruitment Strategy in the autumn, once implementation details have been finalised.

15. *Would the Lord Chancellor's Department please supply a table setting out for each year from 1999-2000 to 2002-03: the total number of magistrates sitting; the Lord Chancellor's Department estimate of the complement required each year with the complement required for 2003-04; the total recruited each year; the total leaving each year; and the average age of magistrates in each of the years.*

	1/1/99- 31/12/99 ¹	1/1/00- 31/3/00	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Total no. of magistrates	26049 ²	25676 ²	24771	24526	24419
Vacancies³	not recorded	not recorded	1667	1971	1489
Total recruited	1523	180	1366	1474	1410

(excludes re-appointments)					
Total leaving⁴	1448	553	2049	1719	1571

Notes: 1: Figures were not recorded by financial year until 2000/1

2: The pre-2000-2001 figures have since been found to be inaccurate. When the new computer database was validated in March 2001 it was discovered that the earlier manual records were incorrect. The figures for 2000-2001 onwards are accurate.

3: We record the number of vacancies (this includes anticipated losses as well as additional magistrates needed) rather than the complement required. We rely on the local Advisory Committees to tell us how many vacancies they are aiming to fill. We did not start recording this figures until 2000/1

4: This figure represents resignations, removals, retirements and deaths.

We do not have figures for average age. What we can give is a breakdown by age groups as at 1 April 2003:

	Under 30	30-39	40-49	50-54	55-59	60-65	66+
Number	12	907	4035	4234	6764	5997	2470
%	0.05	3.72	16.52	17.34	27.70	24.56	10.11

16. *Are problems in retaining or recruiting magistrates greater in some Magistrates' Courts Areas than others? What is the Lord Chancellor's Department's estimate of the number of additional magistrates which will be required to implement the provisions in the Criminal Justice Bill moving cases from Crown to Magistrates' courts?*

There are regional differences in recruitment and it is harder to attract certain groups of people in some areas than it is in others. The recruitment strategy is intended to address this issue. It has been estimated that up to 3,000 new magistrates will be required to cope with the increase in work likely to arise from the Criminal Justice Bill.

17. *SDA 36 requires the Lord Chancellor's Department to project the numbers of potential appointments from women and people from an ethnic minority background, and to reviewing progress. What were the results of the last review? Does Lord Chancellor's Department plan to carry forward SDA26 into Spending Review 2002? Will it be adjusted in any way?*

The projections cover selected judicial appointments, namely Deputy District Judge, Recorder, District Judge and Circuit Judge, and appointment as Queen's Counsel. They do not cover lay magistrates appointments.

In October 2001 (in the Judicial Appointments Annual Report 2000-2001) the Department published figures showing the projected number of female lawyers who may be appointed to some of the main judicial posts and to Queen's Counsel in 2005

and 2010. Calculations were made using data supplied by the Bar Council and the Law Society and from information and statistics held by the Department. The figures were reviewed for the period 2001-2002 and the outcome published in the Judicial Appointments Annual Report 2001-2002 in October 2002.

The figures were reviewed using a similar methodology to that used to develop the original projections, but additionally took into account the following: the number of women appointed in 2001/2002, a revised set of figures showing the make-up of the profession supplied by the Bar Council and the Law Society, and the net retention rate amongst women moving into the likely eligible experience range (10-29 years in practice). Appointments to the full-time bench are dependent on the number of those on the part-time bench with the necessary experience and the projections reflect this by using age as an indicator of experience. It should be recognised however, that the pool will change as, on the one hand, women are appointed into the ranks of part-timers and, on the other hand, women are appointed out of the ranks of part-timers to the full-time bench.

Having reviewed the figures, progress was being made against the projections for female appointments to Deputy District Judge, District Judge, Recorder and Circuit Judge (see the table below).

Between 1998 - 2002 the proportion of women applicants awarded Queen's Counsel has been greater than the proportion of male applicants awarded Queen's Counsel, but women have constituted only between 8.8% and 11.2% of applicants in that period. Progress against projections for appointment to Queen's Counsel is therefore not as positive. Although the number of awards to female applicants rose in 2002 (from 10 to 12), the percentage of female awards fell in 2001/2002 to 10.6% from around 13% in the preceding three years.

The following table shows the projections published in the Judicial Appointments Annual Report in October 2002 for the percentage of female appointments in 2005 and 2010.

Percentage of Female Appointments

	Deputy District Judge	Recorder	District Judge	Circuit Judge	Queen's Counsel
Performance in 2001/2002	35%	20%	50%**	25%	10.6%
Projections for 2005	38%	20%	38%	20%	17%

Projections for 2010	42%	24%	45%	25%	20%
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** Only 2 appointments were made for the Reserve List, one of whom was female.

In October 2002, in addition to reviewing the figures for female appointments, the Department was able to produce projections for number of appointments of minority ethnic lawyers to some judicial posts and to Queen’s Counsel. These are the best calculations that can be made using the information available and any estimates of the position in 2005 and 2010 must be treated with great caution.

Percentage of Minority Ethnic Appointments

	Deputy District Judge	Recorder	Queen’s Counsel
Performance in 2001/2002	5.4%	1%	6%
Projections for 2005	6%	5%	6.5%
Projections for 2010	10%	8%	7%

SDA 36 is not specifically carried forward in the plans. However, the proportion of women and minority ethnic candidates appointed to judicial office and Queen’s Counsel in 2003 will continue to be monitored as part of the Lord Chancellor’s report to Parliament on Judicial Appointments. The Department will compare appointments in 2002-2003 to the projections and report in the Judicial Appointments Annual Report to be published in October 2003.

Legal Services/Legal Aid

18. What are the “priority areas of law” to which PSA 6a refers? What milestones been set for this target?

“Priority areas of law” are defined for the purpose of PSA 6a as cases involving the welfare of children; proceedings where the client is at serious risk of loss of life or liberty; family and relationship difficulties; help with social welfare issues such as welfare benefits; housing and the homeless; debt and money problems; education; community care; diversity issues; and employment rights. Of these, cases involving the welfare of children and where the client is at serious risk of loss of life or liberty

involve fundamental rights, whilst the other priorities have a direct impact on social exclusion.

In respect of milestones the first Periodic Survey of Legal Need reported this year that 31 people per thousand received “suitable assistance”¹ in priority areas of law per annum, which equates to around 1,300,000 people receiving acts of “suitable assistance”. To be certain (within a confidence level of 95%) of achieving PSA 6, a figure of 34 per thousand needs to be reached. This requires an increase of approximately 120,000 people receiving acts of “suitable assistance” by the end of the SR 2002 period. This target covers England and Wales only.

19. *Are lawyers increasingly withdrawing from publicly funded work? For example, at 31 March 2002 within the Community Legal Service there were 4,932 contracts with solicitors' firms (and 380 with not-for-profit agencies) but at January this had reduced to 4,681 contracts with solicitors' firms (and 414 with not-for-profit organisations). Is the problem worse in particular parts of the country, or in rural areas?*

As of May 2003, there were 4352 CLS contracts with solicitors' firms. That represents a reduction of around 330 contracts since January this year.

The position on the CDS shows a much smaller loss. At 31 March 2002, 2909 solicitors' offices had Criminal Defence Service contracts with the Legal Services Commission in England and Wales. At 31 March 2003, there were 2897 solicitors' offices with CDS contracts, a net fall of 12.

A reduction in the numbers of lawyers does not necessarily cause access problems. In some areas, notably metropolitan areas, there is a surplus of lawyers prepared to do legal aid work. But there is cause for some concern in some limited areas, particularly family lawyers in non-metropolitan areas in the South of England. Together with the LSC we are monitoring developments and the LSC is working to remedy difficulties locally. We are also carrying out a review of supply, demand and purchasing arrangements with the aim of establishing what rates are necessary to attract sufficient lawyers of the right quality to do publicly-funded work. This was announced by PQ in the House of Lords and by written statement in the Commons. Full details are in the Departmental press notice of June 5th announcing the review (No.236-05).

We are currently consulting on proposed measures we intend to introduce to eliminate duplication and waste in the legal aid system. Two separate consultation papers were launched on the same day - a criminal package and an asylum package. The deadline for receipt of responses to the asylum package is 27 August 2003.

¹ “Suitable assistance” means support from a professional advice provider or Quality Marked organisation, proportionate to the importance of the problem. These include lawyers, solicitors, law centres, trade unions or professional bodies, Citizens advice bureaux or other similar organisations, local councils and other public bodies.

In addition to this the Department has contracted independent consultants, Frontier Economics, to undertake a review of Supply, Demand and Purchasing arrangements within the legal aid system, which is ongoing at this time.

20. *According to the Departmental Annual Report for 2001-02, planned expenditure for criminal legal aid in 2002-03 was £900 million. But the Departmental Annual Report for 2002-03 records estimated outturn as £1,142 million. What measures are being taken to control the criminal legal aid budget? To what extent is the Department able to control these costs, and to what extent is it at the mercy of human rights considerations, decisions taken by the courts, and other factors?*

Much of the increase was caused by factors outside the Department's control. For instance, we have found that a change in policy by the Probation Service, which now brings back to court more offenders who breach their probation orders, has increased the number of people getting representation because of the risk of imprisonment. Other factors include higher tariffs for sentencing and the greater speed at which the criminal justice system operates.

Article 6 of the Human Rights Act requires us to provide legal assistance free if people do not have the means and if assistance is required in the interests of justice. There is at present no means test but defence costs can be recovered in the Crown Court through RDCOs. The courts decide against a long-standing test which cases should receive legal aid in the interests of justice. We do not control volumes of cases and the test applied by the courts has to be consistent with the ECHR, which we believe it is.

The Lord Chancellor recently published a consultation paper on ways of getting better control over costs. One of the most important measures is the rolling out of contracts for all criminal high-cost cases [see question 23]. The paper also includes proposals for: restrictions on police station advice (where CDS services cannot advance a suspect's case); the removal of duplicated services, such as not allowing representation by a court duty solicitor where the case would not pass the interests of justice test for receiving representation; tightening up the interests of justice test or the way it is applied; and limiting courts' discretion over the making of Recovery of Defence Costs Orders.

Consultation closes on 1 August and the government hopes to announce its decisions shortly after that.

21. *Why did the costs of the Community Legal Service reduce from £789.5 million in 2001-02 to £781.6 million in 2002-03 (estimated outturn)? To what extent is the Criminal Defence Service squeezing the Community Legal Service budget?*

Expenditure on the Community Legal Service has, with the exception of asylum, been falling since the implementation of the Access to Justice Act 1999 which took certain

categories of case out of scope. The decline has now bottomed out and expenditure is likely to increase in future.

CDS expenditure has inevitably increased as a result of Government policy to tackle crime. Criminal legal aid is in most cases a requirement under Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights. We have a single budget for criminal and civil legal aid. There is clearly a risk that we would have to curtail schemes to pay for crime and it is a possibility to which we are alert. So far, however, entitlement to civil legal aid has not been reduced in any way since the changes flowing from the implementation of the Access to Justice Act.

22. *Table 2 on page 20 of the Departmental Annual Report for 2002-03 shows planned expenditure on both the Criminal Defence Service and the Community Legal Aid Service for the years 2003-04 to 2005-06 at a level below outturn in 2002-03. Are the figures for 2003-04 to 2005-06 robust?*

The table does not include all funding for immigration matters for 2003-04 to 2005-06. A separate "single asylum fund" is to be established for this for both LCD and the Home Office. Currently legal aid expenditure on immigration is approximately £170 million per annum. Nevertheless, the SR2002 settlement for legal aid overall is a challenging one.

23. *Has the use of specific contracts for Very High Cost Criminal Cases had any impact on the number of expensive cases or on the proportion of the CLS budget which the most expensive 1% of cases absorbs? Is it still the case that 46% of criminal legal aid goes on 1% of cases?*

We do not expect that the introduction of individual case contracts for very high cost criminal cases will have an impact on the numbers of those cases. Rather contracts are intended to introduce greater efficiency, certainty, control and savings. To date relatively few cases have been brought under contract, but on 5 June 2003 the Lord Chancellor announced that all eligible cases will be brought under contracts from 1 April 2004. Currently the most expensive 1% by volume of cases absorb 50% of the legal aid, criminal higher, budget (25% of the total criminal budget), but we expect to see that proportion fall over the coming years.

24. *How many bills are awaiting taxation? Has the number increased since 1 April 2002?*

At end of March 2003, there were 8,158 bills awaiting taxation. That is an increase on March 2002 of 201 bills. The National Taxing Team can process all these bills within its published targets.

25. *How does the Lord Chancellor's Department define "the reduction of cost inflation to 0.5%"? Does this mean inflation plus 0.5%? What were baselines for each of the categories in the bullet points on page 17 of Departmental Annual Report for 2002-03 and what were the figures for each item in the bullet points at December 2001?*

Cost inflation is defined as the increase in costs after allowing for the effect of general inflation. SR2000 PSA 9 relates to a comparison of the average costs in 2002/03 and 2003/04 only, so the baseline for the average cost of cases for each of the categories will be the position at 31 March 2003.

The figures for each of the bullet points for 2001/02 (i.e. the period including December 2001) were £585 for all CDS representation (excluding very high cost cases), £193 for all non-immigration Legal Help work, which is carried out by both solicitors and NFP agencies. The average claim figure for immigration was £683. This is not the same as the average case cost, because claims can be made at the conclusion of a number defined stages in the life of an immigration case. The average figure for very high cost criminal case was £229K.

The average figure reported for a very high civil case on page 17 of the Annual Report was the most recent annual figure available, i.e. that for 2001/02. We report the high cost case figure annually because it measures a relatively small number of cases and so a year's worth of data is required to provide a reliable indicator. Therefore, the mean average very high cost civil case figure for the period 2002/03 (i.e. the period including December 2002) was £41,700 and the mean figure was £28,800.

Private legal services

26. *Did the Department make any assessment of whether any additional costs to public funds might result from the introduction of "no win, no fee" agreements, because of a greater number of successful cases against public authorities? Has the Department assessed whether such additional costs have in fact occurred?*

The Government's objective in the Access to Justice Act 1999 was to make justice affordable to all, to discourage weak claims and encourage early settlement. Allied to this was the desire to ease the administrative burden on those providing and purchasing legal services. The provisions in the Act gave effect to Parliament's intention to increase access to justice by making it easier and more affordable to use conditional fee agreements, insurance policies and equivalent forms of funding. The Act amongst other things made recoverable from the paying party the success fee, specific insurance premiums and the self-insurance costs of membership organisations. The previous inability to recover these costs had been seen as a major barrier to accessing the courts.

The Government assessed that businesses and public authorities would benefit from the wider availability of conditional fee agreements through being able to pursue or defend legal claims and from the increased deterrents to the bringing or defending of weak claims. Under legal aid claimants are protected from liability for their opponent's costs and the fact that their lawyers get paid win or lose. Under a CFA the losing lawyer does not get paid and the winning defendant can recover their costs. The Government also assessed that business and public authorities would benefit in general from the stronger incentives for parties to settle cases early and cheaply because of their increased potential liability in costs.

It is too early to say whether legal costs have increased directly as a result of the introduction of recoverable success fees and After The Event (ATE) insurance premiums. Recent research on the cost of road traffic accident cases up to £15,000 in value shows that data on costs and damages from around April 2002 is highly unstable due to fluctuations in the volume and duration of settled claims and cannot be relied upon. The research also showed that there is little difference between CFA and non-CFA claims with respect to agreed base costs and disbursements, and that success fees and ATE premiums remain a relatively small part of overall costs recovered from insurers – and that would apply equally to public authorities.

The OFT in its recent fact finding study of the liability insurance market concluded that it seemed unlikely that the cost of individual claims has risen substantially as a result of the reforms and it was unclear whether they have had a significant impact on the frequency of claims. The OFT said that it had frequently been suggested that the number of claims (especially for trivial injuries) has risen because the reforms have made the claiming process easier and the associated publicity has drawn more attention to the availability of compensation for accident victims, but the evidence for this seems largely anecdotal.

The Department has not assessed the additional cost to public authorities as a result of the introduction of no win no fee arrangements increasing the number of successful claims. Any such assessment would be very difficult and of doubtful value. First, the data is not available, with cases settling without resort to formal court proceeding or even a formal claim in some cases. Secondly, the number of claims may depend on a range of factors including the varying level and quality of the services provided by public authorities; increasing or decreasing public awareness of the right to compensation; the severity of harm caused to members of the public over any given period; and changes in the complaints arrangements to satisfy members of the public short of their seeking compensation. With so many variables, even if increases and decreases in successful claims and the amounts recovered could be measured, it would not be possible to say to what extent that was attributable to the introduction of no win no fee agreements.

27. *What effect will the collapse of Accident Group have on the legal services market?*

The move into administration of The Accident Group (TAG) represents a significant business failure but its collapse will not prevent people obtaining access to justice who can do so either by approaching solicitors firms direct or via other accident intermediaries. We believe the personal injury market is able to absorb the loss of TAG as it did Claims Direct and to pick up the bulk of the business. Leading industry commentators have confirmed that people with genuine claims will have no problem in securing assistance in bringing those claims. Many solicitors are forming large marketing networks to pool expertise and raise awareness amongst consumers as part a drive to compete with claims managers more effectively and provide a better service to clients.

We do not believe the commercial practices and health of one company is a reflection of the state of the personal injury claims industry generally, or of the so called 'no win no fee' regime or how companies and individuals operating within it are regulated. Claims management companies can help provide an efficient and affordable means of handling claims for compensation, provide excellent service and help provide access to justice to people who might not otherwise be able to afford it.

The Department is keeping under review the general operation of the claims management market. The Department is working with a range of organisations including the Law Society, the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers, the General Insurance Council, consumer groups and other organisations including claims management companies to encourage improved standards in accident compensation including a voluntary code of practice. There is already considerable activity by the personal injury industry to set standards and draw up codes for intermediaries. There are a number of initiatives at various stages of development, demonstrating the clear desire on the part of most intermediaries to bring about a step change in behaviours.

28. *What were the characteristics and effects of the "relatively unsettled period" referred to on page 57 of the Departmental Annual Report for 2002-03?*

The Access to Justice reforms brought in significant changes to the funding of personal injury litigation. The Government expected there would be a period of 'adjustment' and that some challenges to the new regime were inevitable as new legislation is invariably scrutinised and its parameters tested. However, the liability insurance industry launched an extensive campaign of satellite litigation first concerning the primary legislation and then taking a series of technical challenges against solicitors' individual conditional fee agreements (CFAs).

The legal challenges had the effect of delaying the costs settlement on hundreds of thousands of cases, causing cash flow problems for many legal firms, increased costs for some winning clients who had taken out loans to finance after the event insurance (interest on the loan continues to accrue whilst the costs remain unsettled and that interest is not recoverable). It also took up a good degree of court time in cases where the only point at issue was costs and led to a breakdown in relations between claimant and defendant parties.

CFAs have increased and will continue to increase access to justice as the market develops and consumer awareness grows. Hundreds of thousands of personal injury cases have been and are being run on a CFA basis, many with after the event insurance cover. The satellite litigation around costs has been unhelpful but through a series of Government and industry measures - fixed recoverable costs in low value road traffic accident claims, tackling the indemnity principle and simplifying the CFA regime, facilitating mediation between the industry on success fees, combined with recent Court of Appeal judgments - the current system is being made to work for the benefit of all.

29. *Does the Department have any plans to introduce similar arrangements in Northern Ireland?*

There are no immediate plans to introduce Conditional Fee Agreements in Northern Ireland but we will be working with the new Legal Services Commission when it is established in November 2003 to look at the options for the way forward in Northern Ireland.

Children and Families

30. *What is the Department's assessment of the extent of non-compliance with court orders requiring contact between a child and a non-resident parent? What measures are available to deal with such non-compliance?*

On our behalf, the Office of National Statistics has carried out a study to measure the extent and frequency of contact, as well as trying to understand why non-compliance with court contact orders occurs. The results will be known in the summer. Earlier research has suggested that contact works best, and is more likely to be sustained, if the arrangements are agreed between parents. The evidence from this small study suggests that court proceedings often make matters worse. Where contact orders are not complied with, the courts can impose a fine or a term of imprisonment or alter the residence of the child. Understandably, the courts are often reluctant to impose such penalties, as they may not be in the best interests of the child.

The Children Act Sub-Committee (CASC) of the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Board on Family Law published a report last year called '*Making Contact Work*'. The report made a number of recommendations in relation to enforcement of contact orders. As part of the Government's work on responding to the report's proposals, a stakeholder group on facilitation and enforcement of contact was established in June 2002. The group has been considering ways in which parents can be supported to reach workable agreements, how contact might positively be achieved, as well as how enforcement mechanisms can be made more effective. It is anticipated that a full response to the CASC report's recommendations will be published later this summer, informed by the work of that group.

31. *Is the in-depth analysis on the quality of contact between children and non-resident parents and the report on the FAINs interim pilots available? What findings and conclusions were reached?*

We are currently studying the findings of the survey that we commissioned from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) on contact between children and non-resident parents. The ONS is expected to publish the findings in the summer. A key issue that emerged is that where parents are able to make their own arrangements – either themselves or facilitated by mediation or alternative dispute resolution processes – they are more likely to be satisfied than those who have contact arrangements imposed by the court. We are, therefore, encouraging the use of family mediation by providing public funding through the Community Legal Service for eligible people using family mediation services following divorce or separation. The number of mediations has increased from 400 in 1997/98 to over 12,000 in 2001/02

The report on the interim pilots of the Family Advice and Information Service (FAInS), formerly called Family Advice and Information Networks, is being completed and the Legal Services Commission will arrange for its publication later this year.

32. *What is the interface between SDA 19 and PSA 8? Is SDA 19 wider and therefore more important than PSA 8?*

Service Delivery Agreements (SDAs) contain detailed objectives which support the delivery of Public Services Agreement (PSA) targets. SDA 19 supports SR 2000 PSA8. SDAs provide the detailed underpinning to the targets that the Department set in its PSA. Each SDA and PSA helps contribute to the achievement of Departments' Strategic Objectives (SOs). SOs themselves define a Department's long term goals and the general scope of its work.

33. *What is the timetable for the implementation of s122 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002? What conditions have to be fulfilled before it is implemented?*

The Government is committed to ensuring that children and young people have the opportunity to make their views known in decision-making concerning their future. We wish to carry out a consultation on s122 in advance of full implementation of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 which, subject to available resources, will be implemented as soon as practicable. Later this year, we plan to consult key stakeholders, children's organisations and children directly. One of the purposes of the consultation will be to ensure that the legislative framework will work in practice and that it will be flexible enough to meet the varying needs of children. This work forms part of broader cross-government work on how the voice of the child is heard in the development of policy and services for children.

Public Guardianship Office

34. *On the Public Guardianship Office's recovery plan, can the Lord Chancellor's Department update the figures provided on page 66 of the Departmental Annual Report for 2002-03?*

The good news is that the PGO's position is now stable. As at 31 March 2003, there were 3,067 outstanding items of work (i.e. those carried forward into the following month) with 217 being over 15 days old. Most recent figures to 8 June 2003, show that 2,934 items of work were outstanding, of which 43 were over 15 days old. To put this in context, the PGO's Client Services Division receives between 7,000 and 8,000 items of correspondence a week.

35. *How many accounts are reviewed by the Public Guardianship Office within 4 weeks? Will Public Guardianship Office develop a quality measure on reviews? Has the shortcoming in the quality of reviews identified at page 66 of the Departmental Annual Report for 2002-03 resulted in vulnerable people being put at risk or loss of money or interest?*

During 2002/03 the target was to review 100% of accounts, or request further information, within 5 weeks of receipt. This was achieved. (In fact of 15,258 accounts received, 14,524 – 95% - were reviewed within 4 weeks of receipt).

For 2003/4, the target is to review 100% of accounts received or have requested further information within 4 weeks of receipt. There were concerns about setting a target of 4 weeks overall as the small percentage of accounts which in 2002/3 took longer to review were resource intensive, and such cases could impact on the scope of the initiative to extend the review field and deliver enhanced quality checks. The situation is being closely monitored: figures for April 2003 show a 100% performance with 1,139 accounts received, of which 1,088 were reviewed within 4 weeks and 51 required further information.

The PGO is not developing a quality measure on reviews as such. The thinking behind the statement in the annual report was that it was not necessarily in the best interest of clients to accelerate the target for review of accounts to four weeks. In fact the PGO has built new checks into its accounts review procedure to enhance the quality of the reviews. The new checks include; ensuring Panel Receivers visit their clients at least once a year; and checking medical evidence to see if there is any likelihood of recovery from mental incapacity.

In addition, the PGO has decided that it can complete reviews of all accounts within 4 weeks. So reviews this year should be quicker and of higher quality.

There is no evidence to suggest that reviews carried out before the introduction of the new processes in 2003/4 put the client at risk or resulted in loss of money or interest. The PGO has reviewed all accounts to ensure that the finances of clients were in order and has conducted case reviews to monitor the welfare of the client.

36. *What progress has been made on the implementation of the Public Guardianship Office's MERIS case management system? When will it become fully operational? How much will it cost?*

MERIS is an integrated electronic case management, document management, workflow and accounting system being developed for the PGO. It will replace PGO's current legacy systems and will reduce the dependency on paper files.

The PGO had hoped to implement a large part of the system by the end of the 2002/03 financial year, but this has not proved possible. This is largely because the system is proving more complex to specify and develop than originally envisaged and the PGO had to reorganise its Client Services last year to deal with the work arrears. This delayed progress on MERIS, as it is necessary to engage people from the business areas in order to get the system right.

The current position is that the PGO intends to implement those parts of the system already built and close to being ready, but will consider the options available for implementing the remaining part of the system.

Piloting of Phase 1 (which deals with Enduring Powers of Attorney) started at the beginning of June 2003 and subject to a successful evaluation, full implementation is planned for Autumn 2003. This is later than the originally planned date of November 2002 because in the first instance, the PGO needed to concentrate its efforts on the recovery of Client Services. Secondly, the PGO decided to pilot Phase 1 before implementation. The pilot began on 9 June and will last for six weeks, before a thorough evaluation of lessons learned is undertaken.

Phase 3 of the system, to replace the PGO accounting system, has kept broadly to the original timescales. The system is expected to be ready for implementation by Autumn 2003.

The main part of the Case Management system, Phase 2, which impacts on most of the PGO's operational staff, is, however, still some way from being ready.

The most important consideration is that the PGO should be capable of giving effective service to its customers, while the system is flexible enough to meet developing needs of the business. A decision on the way forward for Phase 2 will be made shortly. The current plan envisages that this stage will be implemented in Spring 2004.

The costs originally forecast were £6.3m to March 2004, including payments to LogicaCMG, Liberata and staff costs. Annual running costs were estimated to be £825k. Revised costs are now estimated at £8.3m to March 2004, but with slightly lower running costs, at £751k thereafter. The increase in costs has been largely due to additional LogicaCMG costs proposed for developing Phase 2 (these costs are still subject to negotiation), increased charges by Liberata, who provide the IT platform for

the Department and the PGO, compared with early budget estimates, and increased project running costs for the PGO.

Publication of 1911 census records

37. *Can the Department confirm that there are no plans to make 1911 census records available in advance of the scheduled 2011 publication date? Is the Committee's understanding that there was no guarantee of 100-year confidentiality at the time this census was taken correct? If so, can the Department explain why these records are to remain confidential? Are there any legislative constraints on publication? What part do reasons of storage space and public expenditure on making such material available play in the decision not to publish these records before 2011?*

Responsibility for the administration of the decennial census lies with the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Decisions about public access to historical census records are a matter for agreement between ONS and the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs/Lord Chancellor. The National Archives also plays a role as the custodian of these records.

It is government policy that census returns are closed to public inspection for 100 years. This was restated in the White Paper *The 2001 Census of Population* (Cm 4253) para 121, March 1999: -

'Public confidence in the security and confidentiality of the census is paramount. Consequently, it is not intended that the Government's plans to revise legislation relating to greater access to public records, set out in White Paper proposals for a Freedom of Information Act, should affect the current period of closure for census records.'

There are, therefore, no plans to make the 1911 census records generally available before the first working day in January 2012.

The Householders Schedule, which formed part of the 1911 census returns, clearly stated that; -

'The contents of this Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used...for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.'

The clear implication of this undertaking was that the census returns would be closed in perpetuity. In 1966 the Lord Chancellor relaxed this absolute restriction by signing Instrument 12 under S.5 (1) of the Public Records Act 1958, which closes all decennial census returns for 100 years. In this way a careful balance has been struck between the rights of the individual not to have personal details divulged prematurely and the use of census returns for the purposes of genealogical and sociological research.

The costs of storing the 1911 census returns and providing public access to them have not influenced the decision to make them generally available on the first working day of 2012. The paramount consideration is to maintain the public's confidence in the protection of census information, which can be done by maintaining the existing closure period of 100 years. If assurances about the confidentiality of past censuses are not honoured, then this may discourage some people from completing future census returns and undermine the public's trust in other government guarantees of confidentiality. As the 1999 White Paper observed, *'there is a well established tradition of maintaining census confidentiality which the Government intends to uphold'*. (para 117)

Department for Constitutional Affairs
July 2003

Annex A

Allocations from the CJS Reserve in 2002-03 funded the following initiatives:

- ◆ £89m towards the Street Crime initiative
- ◆ £33m for the costs to the three CJS departments of the attrition target and increased court sittings
- ◆ £23m on Criminal Justice Information Technology
- ◆ £22m for Victim and Witness initiatives including direct communication with victims, introducing victim personal statements, help for vulnerable and intimidated witnesses and Witness Support
- ◆ £15m for CPS costs
- ◆ £12.5m to improve case progression/timeliness in the magistrates' courts
- ◆ £5m for persistent offender initiatives
- ◆ £3m for CPS cross-border crime and Casework Directorate
- ◆ £2.5m for extended sittings in the magistrates' courts
- ◆ £2m for improving joint working across the CJS nationally and locally
- ◆ £1m to CPS for the unified fee scheme

Annex B

Office of the Supervision of Solicitors (OSS): **Reporting period 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2003**

1. Quality of cases

- a) The Legal Services Ombudsman to be satisfied in an average of 75% of cases over the 12 month period.

2. Service and Conduct complaint turnaround

- a) 60% cases closed within 3 months.
- b) 75% cases closed within 6 months.
- c) 85% cases closed within 12 months.
- d) 97% cases closed within 18 months.
- e) 100% cases closed within 21 months. Additionally, an exception report will be provided for cases older than this target.

3. Remuneration Certificate Applications turnaround

- a) 85% cases closed within 3 months.
- b) 95% cases closed within 6 months.
- c) 100% cases closed within 12 months.

4. Compensation Fund Applications turnaround

- a) 70% cases closed within 6 months.
- b) 80% cases closed within 12 months.
- c) 95% cases closed within 18 months.
- d) 98% cases closed within 24 months.

100% cases closed within 48 months. Additionally, an exception report will be provided for cases older than this target.

Annex C

County Court Closures, 1998 - 2003

Court	Date of Closure	New location
Rochdale	7 September 1998	Oldham and Rawtenstall
Holywell	7 September 1998	Rhyl and Chester

Camborne & Redruth	24 December 1998	Penzance
Hemel Hempstead	24 December 1998	Aylesbury, Luton and Watford
West Bromwich	24 December 1998	Birmingham, Dudley and Walsall
Loughborough	31 December 1998	Derby, Leicester and Nottingham
Corby	1 March 1999	Kettering and Peterborough
Bridgwater	20 December 1999	Taunton
Great Yarmouth	31 January 2000	Lowestoft and Norwich
Grays Thurrock	31 January 2000	Basildon
Lichfield	3 July 2000	Burton On Trent, Stafford, Tamworth and Walsall
Caerphilly	30 November 2000	Cardiff and Blackwood
Workington	2 January 2001	Whitehaven
Chepstow	1 April 2002	Newport, Hereford and Gloucester
Monmouth	1 April 2002	Newport, Hereford and Gloucester

Annex D

Magistrates' Courts closures 1998-2003		
Court	Date Closed	
Malton	06-Feb-98	
Marlborough Street	31-Mar-98	
Bishop's Stortford	31-Mar-98	
Hatfield	31-Mar-98	
Hitchin	31-Mar-98	
Market Rasen	31-Mar-98	
Chertsey	31-Mar-98	
Farnham	31-Mar-98	
Oxted	31-Mar-98	
Lutterworth	31-Jul-98	
Ripon	01-Aug-98	
Barnard Castle	31-Dec-98	
Clerkenwell	31-Dec-98	
Sheerness	31-Dec-98	
West Malling	31-Dec-98	
Lytham	31-Dec-98	
Diss	31-Dec-98	
Corwen	31-Dec-98	
Felixstowe	31-Dec-98	
Haverhill	31-Dec-98	
Saxmundham	31-Dec-98	
Stowmarket	31-Dec-98	

Newmarket	31-Dec-98	
March	31-Dec-98	
Saffron Walden	31-Dec-98	
Christchurch	31-Mar-99	
Abingdon	31-Mar-99	
Henley on Thames	31-Mar-99	
Windsor	31-Mar-99	
Morley	31-Mar-99	
Pudsey	31-Mar-99	
Stow on the Wold	30-Jun-99	
Apmthill	01-Jan-00	
Biggleswade	01-Jan-00	
Dunstable	01-Jan-00	
Leighton Buzzard	01-Jan-00	
Lichfield	31-Mar-00	
Keighley	01-Apr-00	
Keswick	30-Apr-00	
Windermere	31-May-00	
Wigton	31-May-00	
Appleby	31-May-00	
Gravesend	09-Jun-00	
Wootton Bassett	02-Oct-00	
Abergele	31-Dec-00	
Alfreton	01-Jan-01	
Ashbourne	01-Jan-01	
Bakewell	01-Jan-01	
Matlock	01-Jan-01	
Leigh	31-Mar-01	
Middleton	31-Mar-01	
Leek	31-Mar-01	
Worcester	31-Mar-01	
Warrington Patten Hall	01-Apr-01	
Macclesfield Park Green	01-Apr-01	
Bideford	30-Apr-01	
Exmouth	30-Apr-01	
Kingsbridge	30-Apr-01	
South Molton	30-Apr-01	
Teignmouth	30-Apr-01	
Tavistock	30-Apr-01	
Axminster	04-May-01	
Tiverton	04-May-01	
Newquay	30-Jun-01	
Southampton (Commercial Road)	31-Aug-01	
Womborne	01-Sep-01	
Gillingham	30-Sep-01	
Bridlington	09-Nov-01	
Brough	09-Nov-01	
Driffield	09-Nov-01	
Hull (Guildhall)	09-Nov-01	
Hull (Lowgate)	09-Nov-01	

Pocklington	09-Nov-01	
Withernsea	09-Nov-01	
Droitwich	01-Nov-01	
Arundel	01-Dec-01	
Bridgenorth	31-Jan-02	
Leominster	31-Jan-02	
Fakenham	01-May-02	
Tunbridge Wells	02-Jun-02	
Beaconsfield	01-Jul-02	
Buckingham	01-Jul-02	
Evesham	30-Nov-02	
Thame	31-Jan-03	
Machynlleth	31-Mar-03	
Chester Le Street	31-Mar-03	
Rugeley	31-May-03	
Lampeter	09-Jun-03	
Camberley	30-Jun-03	
Magistrates Courts Due to Close		
Court	Due to close	Relocating to
Long Sutton	2003	Spalding
Whitchurch	2003	Market Drayton
Barking & Dagenham	Sep-03	Stratford
Swadlincote	Sep-03	Derby
Caistor	Dec-03	Lincoln (with Crown/County Court)
Horncastle	Dec-03	Louth
Sutton (London)	2003	Croydon