



Solicitors
Regulation
Authority

Pearn Kandola Disproportionality Audit

Recommendation 10: Referrals to SDT

August 2011

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Introduction

1. The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) commissioned Pearn Kandola, a group of business psychologists specialising in the area of diversity, to research the disproportionality of regulatory actions taken against black and minority ethnicity (BME) solicitors, as reported by Lord Ouseley in 2008.
2. In July 2010, Pearn Kandola's findings were published and a number of recommendations made. The SRA's Risk-Audit team was commissioned to carry out a detailed review of recommendation 10, which states:
"A review is required of the decision-making processes used when responding to conduct cases as fewer BME solicitors have their case not upheld and more are referred to the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal (SDT). Again if the processes are correct, then how closely these processes are followed in practice should also be reviewed."
3. This report focuses on conduct cases referred to the [Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal](#), and how closely the process for doing so has been followed in practice. A separate report titled 'Recommendation 10: Conduct cases not upheld by the SRA' can be found [here](#).
4. The full Pearn Kandola report, including recommendations, can be found [here](#).

Audit scope

5. The scope of the audit was to focus on conduct cases referred to the SDT. It was decided that a review would be conducted of cases closed in 2009 and 2010 as this allowed for a review of the data considered by Pearn Kandola (cases closed in 2007-2009) together with a sample that was representative of the current position (2010). It was requested that a comparative audit be made of White and BME solicitors so representative samples of files were reviewed in respect of these groups.
6. Pearn Kandola's findings of disproportionality were based on statistics relating to the subject individuals investigated by the SRA; "fewer BME solicitors have the case against them "Not Upheld" and more are referred to the SDT." Consequently, case files used for this audit were selected by subject individual identification number as opposed to SRA file reference number.
7. The audit focused not only on compliance with the relevant process but also investigated other factors that may have influenced the outcome of SRA proceedings, including the size of the firm and its geographical location.

Population and sample size

8. The population size for the audit was calculated by distinguishing from the main data sets, conduct cases closed in 2009 and 2010 which resulted in a referral to the SDT. This returned 301 cases, of which 189 related to white

individuals and 112 to BME individuals. Utilising the two figures of 189 and 112 to represent two separate populations, representative audit samples were then selected by ethnicity category, which equalled 134 cases (White 76, BME 58).

9. This provides a confidence level of 95% with an expected error rate not over 3%. Samples were selected at random from the two groups identified above.

Key Headlines

- Reference to following the documented criteria for referrals was clear in 76.9 % of cases
- Explanation of how the test was met was found in 2.3 % of cases
- Reviewer analysis of evidence on file found that the criteria was met on 89.2 % of cases

Referral criteria

10. The Conduct Investigations Unit (CIU) was asked to provide all documented processes, guidance and training materials relating to referrals to the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal (SDT). A single relevant document was provided and a copy of this is available on request. This provides some guidance to caseworkers on when it is appropriate to refer a case to the SDT which is summarised as follows:
11. **WHEN TO RECOMMEND A REFERRAL FROM CIU TO THE SDT?**
If you are considering a recommendation to refer a solicitor's conduct to the SDT ask yourself:-
 - Is the alleged misconduct or regulatory breach sufficiently serious (either by itself and/or taking into account the subject's regulatory history) that it cannot be dealt with by way of an internal sanction?
 - Is there evidence to support the allegation? Very important to be able to say "yes" to this.
 - Are the evidential and public interest tests met?
12. The criteria for referral to the SDT are set out in the [Code for referrals to the SDT](#) which is published on the SRA website. This is summarised below.
13. The conduct of a solicitor will only be referred to the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal if two tests are passed:
 - (1) The evidential test

(2) The public interest test

The evidential test

14. The SRA must be satisfied that there is enough evidence to provide a “realistic prospect” that the solicitor will be found guilty of misconduct, taking into account what the solicitor’s case in response may be and how that is likely to affect the SRA’s case. A realistic prospect of a finding of misconduct is an objective test. It means that the SDT, properly directed in accordance with the law, is more likely than not to make a finding of misconduct against the respondent solicitor.
15. In deciding whether there is enough evidence to proceed, the SRA must consider whether the evidence can be used and is reliable.

The public interest test

16. The public interest must be considered in each case when the evidential test has been fulfilled. A case will normally be referred to the SDT if a finding of misconduct is likely to lead to a fine, a suspension, a strike off, or the exercise of any other power vested in the SDT, unless there are public interest factors tending against that course of action which clearly outweigh those tending in favour.
17. The factors for and against pursuing the case to the SDT should be balanced carefully and fairly. Public interest factors that can affect a decision to pursue the case usually depend on the seriousness of the misconduct or the circumstances of the solicitor.
18. The public interest test then lists a number of factors in favour of prosecution, including dishonesty, financial loss, damage to reputation of the profession, abuse of position of trust and a number of factors against prosecution including genuine mistake or misunderstanding,
19. There are two ways that a decision to refer to the SDT can be made. The caseworker can prepare a case note containing recommendations which is forwarded to an adjudicator for a formal decision. If a decision to refer the conduct of the individual to SDT is made, the case is then referred to the Legal department to initiate proceedings, although an advocate in this unit will consider the matter and ensure the criteria in the Code for Referral are met. The other method is that the caseworker may prepare a memo with attached documents and send it directly to the Legal department; an advocate in the Legal department will consider and make a decision to refer to the SDT or send the matter back to the caseworker with advice e.g. as to further investigation required or that the matter is suitable for determination by an adjudicator.
20. Where there are existing legal proceedings to take an individual to the SDT, there is a procedure where a Caseworker can request their case to be “added in” to existing proceedings. An Authorised Officer in the Legal department must sign a decision agreeing to this and the above tests must still be met.
21. There is also a procedure which may be used where no response is received from the subject individual as failure to respond to the SRA alone can merit referral to the SDT. However, the guidance states that this will only be used in rare circumstance and not where there are substantive allegations to be addressed. Audit did not review any files that applied this procedure.

22. The Code for Referral does not apply to unadmitted individuals. Where the SRA wishes to make an application for an order under [Section 43 of the Solicitor's Act 1974](#) it makes its decision in accordance with the criteria set down in Section 43 and in the public interest.
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Results

Data recording

23. In four of the 134 cases (3.0%) reviewed, the subject individual was not referred to the SDT. It appears that the reason for this is that the IT data recording system used by the SRA did not allow separate entries to be made for outcomes in relation to cases involving multiple individuals. Consequently, where a number of individuals are investigated but only one is referred to the SDT, this outcome is recorded against all on the system.
24. In view of the above, the data that Pearn Kandola used to draw its conclusions was not completely accurate. However, as only four of 134 entries reviewed were inaccurate it is unlikely that any such anomalies will have significantly affected the accuracy of the data used by Pearn Kandola.
25. The above issue was addressed in February 2010 when the SRA data recording system was upgraded to allow decisions to be recorded against subject individuals.

Compliance with decision making process

26. Of the remaining 130 instances where the subject individual was referred to the SDT, four related to a section 43 order and, consequently, the Code for Referral was not relevant.
27. Of 126 cases where it was necessary to meet the criteria, the decision to send the solicitor to the SDT included reference to the criteria for doing so in 100 cases. There was no reference to this in the remaining 26 cases (20.6%). Of those cases that referred to the criteria being met, only three provided explanation of how this criteria was met by the facts of the case.
28. It was noted that important documents, sometimes including the decision to refer the subject solicitor to the SDT, were not present on eight of the paper files. However, it was possible to access this information on the electronic file.
29. The wording that was often used by the decision maker was *"I consider that the public and evidential tests have been met"*, sometimes stating *"I have considered the documentation placed before me and I am satisfied that both tests are met"*.
30. In one example of where no reference was made to the criteria the decision maker stated *"I considered a bundle of documents...I authorise the referral"*.
31. Although the majority of decisions referred to the criteria as having been met, in the absence of an explanation of how this was met, it was difficult for the reviewer to be certain of whether this was the case or not. Audit therefore

conducted an independent assessment of whether the evidence on file appeared to meet the criteria. In 116 of 126 cases (92%), the view formed was that these tests had been met based on the evidence on file. The 10 cases where this audit questioned whether the tests had been met are set out in [Annex 1](#). There are nine cases listed in the Annex as the fourth case related to two individuals. Details of these were referred to a Technical Adviser in the Conduct Investigation Unit whose responses are also recorded.

32. In six of the ten cases the audit questioned whether the evidential test had been met, in that it appeared allegations had been raised with the SRA but not then raised with the individual. It was concluded that had these allegations been raised with the individual and a response provided, this may have assisted in determining whether the evidential test was met.
33. Enquiries of the Legal department have elicited an explanation that there is no absolute obligation to seek a solicitor's response e.g. where the evidence is clear, although it will be taken into account what his or her case in response may be; this is especially the case with "added in" cases. It would seem desirable that, even where evidence exists in support of the allegation, the subject individual should be informed and given an opportunity to respond before any decision is reached.
34. It is noted that [Rule 5 \(1\) SRA \(Disciplinary Procedure\) Rules 2010](#), which came into force on 1 June 2010, provides that the SRA will give the regulated person the opportunity to provide an explanation of the regulated person's conduct. [Rule 6 \(10\)](#) clarifies that the SRA is not required to adopt the procedure in Rule 5 to make an SRA finding or an application to the SDT. When the [SRA \(Disciplinary Procedure \) Rules 2011](#) came into force on 6 October 2011, similar provisions were set out in [Rules 5.1](#) and [6.10](#) respectively.

Level of decision maker

35. The decision maker was an Adjudicator in 74 of 130 cases (56.9%) and the Panel of adjudicators sub-committee in a single case (0.8%). In the remaining 55 cases (42.3%) the decision maker was an Authorised Officer (advocate) in the Legal department. This is in accordance with the appropriate, designated level for such decisions as defined in the current [schedule of delegations](#).
36. The recording of who the decision maker was on internal records was not consistent. Where the decision maker was an Authorised Officer, 23 entries (41.8%) were incorrectly recorded on the IT system as a caseworker decision. It is recommended that this can be easily addressed via a technical update to caseworkers within the Casework Investigation Unit.

Consistency of decision making

37. Decisions made by Adjudicators and Panel of adjudicators sub-committee were:
 - consistent with caseworker recommendations in 97.3% of cases (73 of 75 matters)

- rescinded by the legal department or settled by way of Regulatory Settlement Agreement (RSA) in 24.0% of cases (18 of 75 matters)
38. Where the Legal department brought a prosecution following a decision to refer to the SDT and a hearing had taken place, the SDT made a finding of misconduct thereby validating the SRAs decision to refer in 67 out of 69 cases (97.1%).

Training

39. As part of the audit process a request was made for records of Equality and Diversity training.
40. The Conduct Investigation Unit (CIU) confirmed that no specific E&D training had been provided to caseworkers prior to or during the relevant period other than training in relation to Rule 6 (Equality and Diversity) of the Solicitors' Code of Conduct. This has been provided by CIU since the conduct rules were amended in 2007.
41. The need for Equality and Diversity training was addressed by the SRA in April 2011 when all staff completed a compulsory e-learning course on Equality and Diversity in which they were required to undertake and pass an online examination.
42. CIU confirmed that training in relation to referrals to the SDT has been provided at least since CIU began keeping records of training in 2006. Initially there was no training specifically relating to referrals to the SDT but CIU stated that this is encompassed in other training. CIU also advised that further training using the guidance document referred to in this audit was provided in team meetings in 2007 when the document was created.
43. There are no records of training provided to Adjudicators on referrals to the SDT.

Other factors

44. Other factors were considered as part of this audit, the results of which are summarised below. For further information please see [Annex 2](#).

Geographical location of the firm

45. A total of 37 referrals related to subject individuals based in London, There were nine referrals made separately regarding individuals based in Essex and Middlesex and, other than this, the highest number of referrals for one location was 5 in Liverpool.

Size of firm

46. Of 130 cases reviewed, 97 referrals (74.6%) related to individuals at firms of two partners or less. Of these, 53 were sole practitioners. In 63 cases the firm

consisted of 2 fee earners or less. On this basis, it appears that small firms or sole practitioners are more likely to be referred to the SDT.

Length of investigation

47. The length of investigations is an issue that has been raised previously on behalf of BME solicitors where being subject to an ongoing SRA investigation is a bar to obtaining indemnity insurance.
48. When a conduct case is referred to Legal to commence proceedings before the SDT, the associated conduct investigation matter is closed at the point of final involvement by the investigating casework unit. This audit concentrated on the length of time cases were open in the investigating casework unit and does not account for any additional time between conduct case closure and tribunal hearing. The audit found that 15 cases were concluded within three months, 48 in three-six months, 49 in six-twelve months and 18 over twelve months. Periods of delay were identified in 34 of the 130 cases reviewed.

Name of caseworker and adjudicator

49. Of the cases reviewed, 32 involved caseworkers recommending referral to the SDT. The highest number of referrals for one caseworker was 12. There was no evidence of a significant number of referrals of BME solicitors being made by the same caseworker.
50. The same adjudicator was responsible for 62 referrals to the SDT (47.7%). Even so, there was no evidence of a disproportionate number of referrals being made by this individual. Audit contacted the head of unit to establish whether there was an explanation for why one person was responsible for so many referrals. For example, certain types of cases may have been allocated to the same adjudicator. However, Adjudication was unable to provide an explanation for this as the current head of unit did not manage the unit at the time and the adjudicator who dealt with these cases has since left the organisation.

Informant ethnicity

51. The SRA began collecting data on informant ethnicity in January 2009. However the provision of this information is optional and less than 9% of informants have provided this to the SRA ie. 1492 out of 17220 records.
52. In order to make full use of the data available all cases closed in 2009 and 2010 were analysed as well as those cases where the individual was referred to the SDT.
53. The main trend identified was that, in the majority cases, the ethnicity of the informant was the same as the ethnicity of the subject solicitor.

Area of law

54. Data was also collected in relation to areas of law practised by firms in which individuals referred to the SDT between 2009 and 2010 were employed. This data was not available in 71.9% of cases and where it was provided a number of practice areas were listed. There was no clear correlation between the area of law being practised by the firm and referral to the SDT.

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

55. Principle 1 of the SRA 11 principles of regulatory decision making states:
Decisions should be based on the application of guidelines or criteria, which should be (a) fair to all individuals and groups regardless of any of the protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010, (b) published and transparent, and (c) applied consistently. The SRA has published criteria for use when deciding whether to make a referral to the SDT. Records held in respect of all decisions made by the SRA show that these criteria were identified as high risk and requiring a full impact assessment for completion in June 2011. The equality impact assessment has been completed and will be published shortly.
56. Based on a review of the complete file it appeared that the published criteria were applied consistently by the decision maker in the vast majority of cases. However, this was difficult to assess as, 21% of decisions did not contain reference to meeting the criteria, and of those 79% that did, there was rarely any evidence of application of the criteria to the facts.
57. There was no apparent evidence of discrimination in respect of the way in which cases were handled by caseworkers or decision makers. In the minority of cases where the criteria did not appear to be met or were not expressly referred to, this applied to both BME and White individuals and there was no significant occurrence of this in relation to BME individuals. Even so, there are some actions that can be taken to ensure that SRA investigations are more consistent, accurate and robust in preventing any possibility of discrimination.

Recommendations

58. The following recommendations have been made which, if implemented, will improve transparency and our ability to demonstrate consistency in approach to considering whether a case is suitable for referral to the Solicitors' Disciplinary Tribunal (SDT).

Recommendation 1

59. Although the audit found that in the majority of cases consideration had been given to the evidential and public interest tests, establishing this required manual intervention and judgement. It is recommended that:

- The application of the criteria should be referred to in both case note and decision document, and
- Case work staff should explain specifically in the case note how the two tests have been met.

60. This will assist the decision maker in understanding the caseworker's logic and the facts of the case, whilst ensuring reasons for referral for a decision are captured.

Recommendation 2

61. Decision maker details were incorrectly recorded on 23 cases (17.7%). In particular, where a matter was referred to the Legal department to be 'added-in' to existing proceedings, the decision maker was invariably recorded as 'Caseworker' instead of 'Authorised Officer'. As a consequence, related IT data is inaccurate, unreliable, and may suggest that decisions are being taken by personnel without appropriate delegated authority.

62. Greater care and attention should be paid to the recording of key information in any SRA database (DOXiS) field from which data might be extracted. The casework units provide regular technical updates and it is proposed this issue be covered here and agreement reached as to the appropriate procedure for ensuring such details are captured accurately.

Recommendation 3

63. Where decisions made by an Adjudicator or Adjudication Panel to refer an individual's conduct to the SDT are subsequently rescinded by the Legal department, or where a Regulatory Settlement Agreement (RSA) preferred, a study into reasons why alternative outcomes were preferred should be undertaken and the findings, subject to professional legal privilege, shared with the Adjudication function.

64. Furthermore, a formal feedback system should be introduced to enhance the initial decision maker's understanding of factors which may influence whether a matter is rescinded or not, or an RSA preferred. The capture of this information will be useful for training and development purposes.

Recommendation 4

65. The average amount of time a conduct investigation case was open for, from initial creation to the point of final involvement by the investigating casework unit, was approximately 7.68 months. This audit did not consider additional time between conduct investigation case closure and tribunal hearing.

66. Delays were identified on 56.6% of conduct cases reviewed, ranging from two weeks to 12 months, including allocation and progression delay. Whilst the audit cannot comment on the time taken from conduct case creation to SDT hearing, removing avoidable delay would reduce the average life span of a matter referred to the SDT. Regular quality assurance audits identify and report on issues such as delay and relevant units should implement appropriate recommendations to address such matters.

Recommendation 5

67. Almost three quarters (74.6%) of the cases reviewed concerned firms consisting of two managers or fewer and 28.5% of the 130 cases involved firms based in London. Further analysis of the relationship between smaller firms, many based in London, and the types of conduct issues which result in referral to the SDT should be investigated further.

Annex 1: Cases where it was unclear that the criteria had been met

Case 1

Ethnicity: White

Conduct issue: Conflict of interest

Facts: Solicitor “advised” informant over dinner about purchase of a property. Informant found out that solicitor had an interest in the property and complained to the SRA that the solicitor had given advice where the solicitor’s interests conflicted with the informant’s interests. The solicitor argued that the informant was not a client and that he was not acting as a solicitor when the discussion took place. The adjudicator could not make a decision on the evidence and referred it to SDT for a decision

Why reviewer questioned whether the test had been met:

No documentary evidence of a retainer. Question of whether there was enough evidence to result in a finding at the SDT.

SDT finding?

SDT found insufficient evidence to show that the solicitor was acting in a professional capacity

Legal Directorate comment:

There was sufficient evidence to merit a referral to the SDT under the Code for Referral. Sometimes oral evidence has to be tested before the Tribunal.. In this case, the informant failed to establish that there had been a solicitor/client retainer. The Tribunal made a costs order as the solicitor made limited admissions that he had misled the SRA.

Case 2

Ethnicity: White

Conduct issue: Breach of undertaking

Facts:

130 files transferred from firm A to firm B. Firm B gave an undertaking to complete the work and obtain costs on behalf of Firm A for their contribution to the work. Delayed in doing this for approximately 1 year. In response to SRA the firm admitted that they had delayed on completing the work and that they had been dealing with the aftermath of an employee stealing client funds. The firm was taken over and the successor firm agreed to the same undertaking although it had not at this stage been completed.

Why reviewer questioned whether test had been met:

Not a deliberate breach or deliberate withholding of funds. New firm had agreed to meet undertaking. Was treated as a failure to reply by the solicitor when the caseworker refused an extension of time (despite solicitor explaining that there was a delay in her mail being forwarded by the new firm and requesting it to be sent to her home address). Solicitor then provided a lengthy response when they received the case note.

However, there were a number of other issues in relation to the same firm being sent to the SDT and it may be that the allegation was considered to be more serious in light of the other issues with the firm

SDT finding?

Yes-Upheld

Legal Directorate comment:

This was referred for failure to reply to SRA. This has been a common approach by Adjudicators where no adequate response is received from a solicitor. It is important that regulated persons co-operate with their Regulator.

Case 3

Ethnicity: White

Conduct issue: Dishonesty/failure to account, failure to reply to regulator

Facts:

Why reviewer questioned whether the test had been met:

SRA raised allegation with solicitor 15 months after receiving information but would not allow solicitor extension of time to respond when their colleague had returned from leave. The evidential test did not therefore seem met in respect of the allegation of failure to reply and also in terms of obtaining any evidence the subject solicitor might have in relation to the allegations

SDT finding?

Not known: SDT decision not yet published

Legal Directorate comment:

The allegations included serious ones of Breach of Rule 1 in costs issues, discrimination, fail to comply with Adjudicator's decision and fail to deal with SRA in a co-operative way. Whilst it would have been courteous to the legal representative to wait for his response, he had sought the extension after the date set to for response. In any event any response received at a later date would be considered by the Legal team member.

Case 4

Ethnicity: White x 2 individuals

Conduct issue: Failure to account

Facts:

Why reviewer questioned whether the test had been met:

Solicitor initially failed to account but then did account in the end. Was it in the public interest to refer this to the SDT?

SDT finding?

Not yet heard

Legal Directorate comment:

This was an add-in and may have been added to provide further context to the scale of the misconduct issues. There were already 12 'failure to comply with the Adjudicator's decision' matters which were the subject of proceedings.

Case 5

Ethnicity: White

Conduct issue: Breach of undertaking

Facts:

Why reviewer questioned whether the test had been met:

The SRA requested evidence from the informant and did not receive any. The case was then referred to SDT without putting the allegation to the solicitor.

The allegation was serious enough to meet the public interest test; breach of undertaking and 12 other open SRA matters, including matters of a similar nature and existing Tribunal proceedings. However on this allegation alone there was insufficient evidence to meet the evidential test.

SDT finding?

Yes- solicitor was struck off.

Legal Directorate comment:

This was an add-in decision. It is not essential to raise allegations with a subject solicitor especially if there are ongoing disciplinary proceedings. File correspondence shows that the informant indicated that she would be sending further information and the Legal team member who made the decision may have thought that there was sufficient information to make the referral in the light of the ongoing proceedings.

Case 6

Ethnicity: BME

Conduct issue: Failure to comply with Legal Complaints Service (LCS) decision

Facts:

Why reviewer questioned whether the test had been met:

Solicitor responded to the caseworker stated that they had contacted the LCS and had agreed to comply with the decision. The caseworker did not address this and did not attempt to establish whether this had now been complied with. Requested for the case to be added to SDT proceedings.

SDT finding?

Yes- solicitor struck off

Legal Directorate comment:

This was an add-in decision. The Respondent was required to co-operate with LCS during their investigation. His agreement to comply once the matter was referred to SRA is mitigation and it would normally be a ground for considering not to pursue further. If there were a lot of similar cases, then the cumulative effect of several "failure to comply" matters is an issue of misconduct and is of concern and would justify referral

Case 7

Ethnicity: BME

Conduct issue: Failure to comply with court order

Facts:

Why reviewer questioned whether the test had been met:

There was evidence in relation to this allegation but the SRA did not allow the solicitor adequate time to respond after a 12 month delay on the part of the SRA. The reviewer questioned whether the evidential test had been met in absence of allowing the subject solicitor to provide evidence.

SDT finding?

The case did not reach the SDT as it was rescinded by the Legal Team

Legal Directorate comment:

The Adjudicator's decision was short and possibly insufficient reasons given. Legal considered that the matter was more appropriate for in house sanction.

Case 8

Ethnicity: BME

Conduct issue: Failure to redeem mortgage/dishonesty

Facts:

Why reviewer questioned whether the test had been met:

There was evidence in support of the allegation however the allegation was not raised with the subject solicitor prior to referral to the SDT, despite the Legal team within the SRA stating that it should be.

SDT finding?

Upheld

Legal Directorate comment:

This was an add-in decision. It is not essential to raise matters with a subject solicitor before referral. The caseworker acknowledged the recommendation from Legal and said in her memo to Legal that she had since had the LCS report which showed that LCS had conducted a thorough investigation and did not think it appropriate to further investigate.

Case 9

Ethnicity: BME

Conduct issue: Failure to comply with LCS decision

Facts:

Why reviewer questioned whether the test had been met:

There was evidence of the failure to comply but the allegation was not raised with the solicitor before being referred to the SDT.

SDT finding?

Yes- solicitor struck off

Legal Directorate comment:

This was an add-in decision. It is not essential to raise matters with a subject solicitor before referral. They would have been aware of ongoing disciplinary proceedings and the matter which had been raised by LCS. They would have been informed after the decision.

Annex 2: Additional factors considered

Geographical location of firms

Location	Frequency	Location	Frequency
Birmingham	3	Manchester	1
Bolton	2	Merseyside	4
Cardiff	1	Middlesex	9
Chatham	1	N/K	4
Cheshire	2	Newcastle	1
Chester	2	Northumberland	1
Cornwall	2	Oxfordshire	1
Devon	3	Reading	1
Dorset	1	Salisbury	1
Durham	1	Scarborough	1
Essex	9	Sheffield	1
Gloucestershire	1	Smethwick	1
Hampshire	4	Southampton	1
Kent	3	Sunderland	3
Lancashire	2	Surrey	5
Leicester	2	Sussex	2
Liverpool	5	West Yorkshire	2
London	37	Worcestershire	5
Loughborough	1	Yorkshire	4

Number of managers and fee earners

Number of managers	Frequency
0	39
1	14
2	44
3	7
4	4
5	8
7	1
9	1
11	1
13	1
15	3
24	1
92	1
641	3
N/A- lay organisation	1

Number of fee earners	Frequency
0	4
1	35
2	24
3	12
4	5
5	8
6	11
7	5
8	4
11	9
14	1
16	2
17	1
18	1
20	1
40	1
82	1
122	1
457	3

Length of investigation/ delay

Number of months file was open	Frequency
2	5
2.5	5
3	4
3.5	4
4	10
4.5	3
5	16
5.5	3
6	12
6.5	2
7	14
7.5	1
8	6
8.5	1
9	9
10	3
11	5
12	6
13	2
13.5	1
14	3
15	1
16	3
16.5	1
17	2
18	2
20	1
23	1

Delay (months)	Frequency
None	53
0.5	5
0.75	4
1	20
1.5	5
1.75	2
2	9
2.5	2
3	1
3.5	1
3.75	1
4	3
4.5	2
5	3
6	5
7	1
8	1
9	1
11	1
12	2

Area of law

Areas of practice on record	% firms
No practice areas listed	71.9%
N/A	0.9%
One or more practice area recorded	27.2%

Area of practice in firm's records	%
Business Affairs	4.8%
Cannot ascertain - Regis issue	0.3%
Charity Law	0.9%
Commercial Property	6.8%
Consumer Problems	4.3%
Conveyancing Residential	7.1%
Crime - General, Motor, Juvenile	5.7%
Debt and Money Advice	5.1%
Employment	7.1%
Family	6.6%
Fraud	0.3%
Housing	0.3%
Immigration and Nationality	3.7%
Insurance	0.3%
Intellectual Property	0.6%
Landlord and Tenant - Residential	6.3%
Liquor Licensing / Gambling	3.1%
Litigation - Commercial	5.1%
Litigation - General	5.7%
Medical Negligence	2.3%
Mental Health	1.1%
Neighbour Disputes	4.0%
Personal Injury	5.1%
Taxation	1.1%
Trusts	2.3%
Welfare Benefits	3.7%
Wills & Probate	6.3%