



## **Minutes of the Contract Compliance Audit Working Group held on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2008**

## **Present:**

Mike Crowley (LSC / Chair)

Ann Lewis (Advice Services Alliance)

Lucy Scott-Moncrieff (The Law Society)

Linda Lee (The Law Society)

Andrew Caplen (The Law Society)

Matthew Howgate (LSC)

Alex MacDonald (LSC)

Rod Clark (LSC)

Pamela Philips (LSC)

Natalie Pedley (LSC)

Gary Winter (LSC)

Frances Joyce - minutes (LSC)

## **Action**

### **1. Minutes of meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> May**

- Outcome code review – is on work programme. Confirmed owned by Ruth Wayte and Head of Funding Policy.
- File reviews – GW is still liaising on this and will inform this Group once his paper is complete
- Transaction Criteria Audits – these are no longer being undertaken but GW will confirm whether there is a formal agreement on this
- Contract Compliance aide memoire – GW is working on the best way to communicate this to providers.

## 2. Matters arising

The Group discussed the objectives for the Guidance and Process Group which is due to meet on 14 July. MC proposed that paras 2.1 – 2.17 of Appendix 5 of the agreement with The Law Society would be a good starting point though it was agreed that this Group would need to set clear parameters if the G&PG are to deliver on their objectives. A representative of the NAO will also attend the G&PG meetings. PP has already set an agenda for the next G&PG meeting and LL asked if it would be possible to review the terms of reference in advance of that meeting. PP will circulate a draft by the end of this week with a deadline for comments by Tuesday, 1 July. NP reminded the group of the timetable set in the agreement. The main issue in relation to timetable is that if any changes to the contract will be required as a result of the group's recommendations then these must be identified by the end of August.

NP reported that she is compiling a list of all the Groups set up following the agreement with the Law Society, dates of meetings, membership and responsibilities which will be available shortly.

The Group was also keen that clear guidance be given to providers on good file maintenance practice, the use of the on-line reporting system and the factors that might trigger a file review and emphasised that both the guidance and the reporting systems themselves should be as straightforward to use as possible, both to ensure as many people as possible can complete the necessary information accurately and to lessen the bureaucracy for both providers and the LSC. A summary of the key factors are:

- A basic guidance sheet, perhaps one side of A4, with links to where to find more detailed documents if necessary
- Strict control over re-issues of the guidance so that everyone knows what the latest version is
- Change control so that where minor changes are required these can be brought in in one go rather than ad hoc.
- Guidance on what factors may trigger an audit (though it must be remembered that some audits will be entirely random)
- The best way to communicate these guidelines to providers, ie via Focus, email update and whether it

should be a joint LSC/TLS document.

Long term providers will be able to check their performance online, hard copy reports will not be available.

LL asked if the LSC would undertake voluntary audits if requested by firms. GW explained that this was most unlikely given the constraints on resources but, if there is funding available, it may be possible to run some workshops which would enhance the information provided in the guidance sheets.

It was further agreed that:

- this Group will meet monthly - the next meeting will be held on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> July.
- wherever possible, meetings which involve the same individuals should be held on the same day.
- That this Group will receive the minutes of the meeting of the G&PG
- minutes of both meetings will be available on the internet once they are signed off

## **6. Date of next meeting**

Monday 28<sup>th</sup> July at 2pm