

community legal service

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Signposting and Referral

*Quality Mark Briefing No.7
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All Quality Mark levels

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alliance**
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Making the best use of this briefing

We are aware that some of our briefings are fairly lengthy documents. Please do not feel that you are obliged to read the whole briefing from cover to cover – the headings on our contents page will point you towards the major themes under discussion.

Further sources of support and guidance

If you need further guidance on any of the issues covered in this briefing, please contact your network, the Legal Services Commission or the CLS Support consultancy line – see the pages at the back of this briefing for contact details.

You may come across the telephone symbol  at various points in the text which deal with what we regard to be a complex issue. The symbol is there to remind you that we are able to provide further clarification and/or guidance if you need it.

Please note that the What's New pages on ASA's website www.asauk.org.uk provide guidance that highlights and clarifies both new and existing requirements for Quality Mark and General Civil Contract holders.

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Signposting and Referral

1 Introduction

- 1.1 One of the most important concepts underlying the Community Legal Service (CLS) and the Quality Mark is the need to provide members of the public with what the Legal Services Commission (LSC) describes as a “seamless service”. The aim of the LSC’s requirements relating to signposting and referral is to ensure clients receive a timely service (ie a quick enough service given the nature and urgency of their problems) from an appropriate service provider, at whatever point they enter the CLS.
- 1.2 If this objective is attained, any member of the public who approaches a Quality Marked organisation should be confident that, if that organisation cannot provide the particular service needed, they will be directed to a suitable alternative provider where available. This reflects good practice in client care. For the aspiration of a seamless service to become an everyday reality much work remains to be done, but the LSC considers that complying with its requirements for signposting and referral is an important step.
- 1.3 This briefing discusses:
- the key concepts of signposting and referral;
 - the distinction between signposting/referrals and the use of approved suppliers;
 - the Quality Mark requirements for signposting and referral at Assisted Information, General Help (including Casework) and Specialist levels;
 - the ways in which organisations can meet these requirements;
 - the situations where a referral is more appropriate than signposting;
 - the barriers to referrals.
- 1.4 We advise you to consult any guidance provided by your own advice network or Community Legal Service Partnership, as this may contain further practical information. There are also advice-related initiatives you may wish to consider when drawing up your referral arrangements, such as Connexions for organisations working with young people, or Consumer Support Networks for those advising consumers – please refer to section 27 below for more information.
- 1.5 The documents referred to in this briefing are:
- The **Quality Mark Standard** (first edition April 2000) (“QMS”)
 - The **Information Standard Workbook** (first edition April 2000) (“ISW”)
 - The **General Help Standard Workbook** (first edition April 2000) (“GHW”)
 - The **Specialist Quality Mark Standard** (first edition April 2002) (“SQM”)
 - The **Specialist Quality Mark Guidance** (first edition April 2002 (“SQM Guidance”))

2 Requirements

- 2.1 The Specialist Quality Mark (SQM) replaced the Legal Aid Franchise Quality Assurance Standard (LAFQAS) as the LSC’s quality standard for holders of Legal Aid contracts on 30th April 2002. The SQM is now used in place of LAFQAS for all Specialist level Quality Mark applications, whether for contracted work or not.

- 2.2 The LSC has amended the requirements for signposting and referral at Information and General Help levels, so that they are in line with the SQM. The amendments become mandatory from 1st March 2003, but as the new requirements are simpler than existing ones, the LSC allows non-Specialist level providers a choice. They can either implement the new requirements at any time from 19th August 2002, or continue with existing procedures that comply with the “old” requirements for Information and General Help level providers for the time being, as long as their procedures meet the new requirements by 1st March 2003. In September 2002 the LSC sent all relevant organisations a letter that set out the new arrangements (see the appendices at the back of this briefing for a copy of the letter, summary and full details of amended requirements, guidance and revised glossary of terms).
- 2.3 Draft SQM requirements were based on the existing framework used at Information and General Help levels, and proposed that organisations distinguish between three types of activity – signposting, active signposting and referral. During consultation on the SQM, it was agreed that the first two terms would be combined under the term “signposting” in order to simplify matters (see section 4 below).
- 2.4 By generalising the finalised SQM requirements across all Quality Mark levels, the LSC intends to make requirements less, rather than more, onerous for all Quality Marked organisations.
- 2.5 Although this briefing discusses the forthcoming arrangements, we have also retained guidance on the **unamended** requirements, ie the rules that apply to Information and General Help level providers until they actually make the transition to meeting the new requirements. This is to reflect the choice that these organisations have regarding the date on which they adopt the **amended** requirements, ie the simpler rules that must be complied with by 1st March 2003 at the latest.
- 2.6 Requirements for signposting and referrals at Assisted Information, General Help and Specialist levels will be cited as B1.1, B1.2 etc. References to General Help in this briefing relate to both General Help and General Help with Casework.

3 What is signposting?

- 3.1 In the unamended Assisted Information and General Help requirements, the term “signposting” is used to describe the process by which members of the public access information and advice (primarily from the CLS Directory) without direct assistance from a worker. They could also use other information sources such as websites and leaflets. Signposting of this sort normally occurs at Self-help Information level (see ISW B1.1) where, just as at the other levels of the Quality Mark, it is mandatory to provide access to the information in the CLS Directory. Signposting can also take place under the unamended requirements at Assisted Information and General Help levels, where the client similarly does not receive direct help.
- 3.2 The current Specialist level and amended Assisted Information and General Help definition of signposting describes both a member of staff providing an individual with sufficient information to enable them to access the assistance they need from another organisation (previously “active signposting” at Assisted Information and General Help levels) and a client accessing this information for themselves. As an absolute minimum, you can signpost a client to another information or advice provider by supplying the CLS call centre number (0845 608 1122).

- 3.3 Ideally, you would personally help the individual to find a suitable alternative provider and ask them to tell you if they encounter problems with them. You may use a copy of the CLS Directory (or access the online version of the Directory at www.justask.org.uk) and offer assistance in guiding the individual through the entries if they wish. Alternatively, you can provide a list of local information and advice providers or give your own recommendation (as long as preference is given to, or you clearly identify, organisations that hold a Quality Mark). It is good practice to include relevant regional and national organisations, as this provides greater choice to your clients.
- 3.4 In order to signpost, you need to have sufficient awareness to realise when you have reached the limits of your competence.

4 Signposting and active signposting – what is the difference?

- 4.1 The LSC has removed the distinction between signposting and active signposting in the amended Assisted Information and General Help requirements. The term “active signposting” in the original requirements covers situations where members of the public receive direct help from a worker to go through the options for finding further advice and assistance. The word “signposting” at Specialist level and in the amended version of the Assisted Information and General Help levels covers the full range of help described in paragraph 3.2.
- 4.2 There may be times when you offer to make an appointment for someone who requires a service that you do not provide. You may have only had minimal contact with them. Making a first appointment with an alternative service provider can increase the chances of actually connecting the client with the service they need. The fact that you do this does not, of itself, make it a referral.
- 4.3 It is appropriate to signpost where at an early stage it becomes clear that, for example:
- the enquiry concerns a subject area outside your area of expertise;
 - there is a potential conflict of interest;
 - workload will affect your ability to progress the case properly (see page 16 of SQM Guidance).
- 4.4 We suggest you also consider whether:
- another organisation can deal more effectively with the client’s problem;
 - the client requires a level of service you do not provide, eg if you provide an Assisted Information level service but the client wants you to give legal advice, you must signpost;
 - the client comes from outside your catchment area, or another organisation is more conveniently located.
- 4.5 Example – Signposting without initial advice

Femi has lost her job and wants debt advice. She uses a wheelchair and is also hearing-impaired. She goes to the local community centre, which is an Assisted Information point. Max, a member of staff, discusses with Femi possible options for gaining access to advice. They go through the CLS Directory together and find four organisations that can help and are wheelchair-accessible. After further discussion with Femi it is clear that she would really prefer an organisation where she could use sign language. This narrows the choice down to one organisation. Max gives Femi full details about the

organisation, including address and telephone/minicom numbers, but does not contact them himself. Femi arranges the appointment herself.

- 4.6 Where the adviser identifies a number of appropriate organisations, these may be shortlisted on the basis of discussion with the client about the issues in the case, the client's particular needs and/or access requirements.

5 What is a referral?

- 5.1 Referral is the transfer of the whole handling of a client's case or some part of that case to another organisation (except where there is an internal referral – see paragraph 5.4). The second organisation takes over responsibility for continuing the whole case or the transferred part of the case.

5.2 Example

A client needs immigration and employment advice. You begin to perform casework in both matters. After a while it becomes clear that the employment aspect of the case needs specialist input. You discuss this with the client and with their consent arrange for an employment rights organisation to advise the client about their employment problems. That part of the client's case has been referred. You no longer have any responsibility for dealing with the employment problems, as this has been taken over by the employment rights organisation.

- 5.3 In the early stages of dealing with an issue, advisers should consider whether signposting or referral is appropriate, based on an assessment of what level of service the client is likely to require as compared to what your organisation can offer them.

Internal referral

- 5.4 Internal referral takes place when you pass a case or part of a case to another adviser within your own organisation who has the additional skills or competence necessary to progress the relevant matters further. There are no Quality Mark requirements at any level obliging you to cover internal referrals in your procedure. CLS Support recommends that you do so, with the aim of ensuring clarity and consistency about how and when you pass cases to colleagues.

6 What is the distinction between signposting and referral?

- 6.1 It is important to distinguish between signposting and referral, not least because the Quality Mark referral requirements regarding monitoring, case-recording and advising on costs are generally more onerous than for signposting. Under the amended Assisted Information and General Help level requirements, which follow the SQM, the difference lies less in what you do and more in when you do it. Many organisations will assume that if they contact an alternative organisation, give a very basic summary of the issues and arrange an appointment on the client's behalf, this will automatically be a referral. This is not necessarily the case.
- 6.2 One of the practical benefits of being aware of the distinction between the two terms is that to signpost (as in the above scenario), you would not have to fulfil the extra duties associated with referral, such as photocopying all the client's documents and being responsible for forwarding them, merely because you have given some very basic

advice in the course of a primarily diagnostic interview. The following paragraphs explore this distinction further.

- 6.3 Referral: You are expected to make arrangements for the client to see someone from the new organisation and pass relevant information to both the client and the new organisation – including copies of any relevant papers you may hold on file.
- 6.4 Signposting: You may find during your initial interview with a client that you do not have the knowledge or experience to fully deal with an issue. Remember that depending on the nature and extent of the advice you give on this problem, it could still be appropriate to signpost rather than refer.
- 6.5 CLS Support’s understanding is that you need only signpost (rather than refer) if the service you provide is entirely limited to any one or a combination of the following activities:
- interviewing the client, reading relevant documents, providing a diagnosis of their problems;
 - giving information and explaining options;
 - helping to fill in basic forms;
 - contacting third parties to i) seek further information or ii) help the client access the service of the alternative provider by advising them about your client’s special needs.
- 6.6 The requirement to refer only arises where you have an established **client relationship** in a current matter (see SQM definitions B1.1). This also applies to the amended General Help requirements (see appendices I-VII of this briefing). The LSC does not provide a definition of the term “client relationship”. As such, CLS Support suggests that for the purposes of working out whether you should signpost or refer a client, a “client relationship” is entered into when you conduct work that actually carries the matter presented to you forward. In our view, this type of work would usually be one of the activities defined as “casework-related”, such as:
- negotiating on behalf of the client with a third party;
 - providing ongoing support;
 - undertaking work to progress the case after or between appointments.
- (see QMS page 49)
- 6.7 You may well progress a matter even at a first interview, eg if when contacting a third party for information you end up carrying out some form of negotiation that changes the client’s situation. CLS Support’s view is that in these circumstances you would be advised to refer rather than signpost, to ensure that the organisation the client is passed to is made aware of this latest development, which a client may not necessarily be confident about explaining themselves.
- 6.8 A client relationship in the widest sense is, of course, initiated at first contact with a client about an issue, or it already exists because you are working with the client on another matter. The Quality Mark would not require you to make a referral in these cases, unless your own organisation’s policies and procedures use this broader definition of “client relationship” for determining when referrals are appropriate. Busy staff do not necessarily want to go through the formalities of making a referral if they can appropriately signpost instead.

7 How does referral differ from using the services of an approved supplier?

- 7.1 Using the services of an approved supplier refers to situations where your organisation continues to have responsibility for dealing with an issue, but is simply asking someone else to provide an extra service, eg an opinion from a barrister or a report from a surveyor or doctor. You control the service provided and it remains your responsibility to chase up that person for the services being provided and to make sure that what is provided is of good quality.

8 Can Community Legal Service Partnerships help us to develop procedures for signposting and referrals?

- 8.1 For a description of Community Legal Service Partnerships (CLSPs) and their function, please see Guidance and Information for CLSPs. This is available on the LSC website www.legalservices.gov.uk or from your LSC Regional Office.
- 8.2 Almost all areas are now covered by a CLSP. You can check your current CLSP's activities by contacting the Regional Planning and Partnership team at your LSC Regional Office. Contact details are provided at the end of this briefing.
- 8.3 As CLSPs develop a set of standard documentation to facilitate and monitor signposting and referrals, organisations applying for a Quality Mark may find they can adopt some or all of this documentation for their own use and save themselves time and resources.
- 8.4 **NB:** Organisations will still need to write part of their own signposting and referral procedures, even if they adopt their local CLSP protocol. This would be to marry up the details of their own organisation's particular signposting/referral processes with the more general principles of their CLSP referral protocol. It is also wise to check that the protocol fully meets the requirements of the Quality Mark.

9 How do we identify when a client should be signposted or referred?

- 9.1 By definition, in order to refer a client you do not need exhaustive legal knowledge and the ability to give all the answers and advise on all options yourself. You must know enough to realise that a client needs to be put in touch with someone who can advise accurately on the detail.
- 9.2 Supervisors need to be vigilant in ensuring that the advisers they supervise recognise the limits of their competence and signpost or refer as appropriate.
- 9.3 Below we suggest some of the situations when signposting or referral, particularly under the new regime, could form an important part of the service you offer your client.

The client is not a member of the specific client group targeted by your organisation

- 9.4 If you target your service at a specific client group, individuals seeking advice who are not members of that group may sometimes contact you. In these circumstances you would normally signpost the client, ie help them identify an alternative service provider

and leave them to contact that other organisation or assist them to do so, as appropriate. At General Help level and above, LSC auditors will pay particular attention to the operation of signposting and referral procedures where your service targets a specific client group. They will want to ensure that other members of the public contacting your organisation are signposted to appropriate services (see requirement A3.2 in the General Help and Specialist Quality Mark).

9.5 Example

Demetri is a Greek Cypriot who has had problems in persuading the British government to allow his family to reside in the UK. He visits you at Cypriot Options, an organisation giving generalist advice to Turkish Cypriots. You explain with the help of a leaflet what your service is and at whom it is targeted. No organisation in the local CLS Directory provides a service specifically for Greek Cypriots. You look through your list of approved alternative providers and find that the Q Centre has a Greek Cypriot worker who previous callers have said is excellent. Demetri takes a copy of the Q Centre's details and contacts them himself.

This type of help will be signposting, as the nature of the assistance given has not created a client relationship.

The case involves subject areas not dealt with by your organisation

9.6 If a case falls outside the subject areas in which your organisation provides a service then you should refer or signpost the client, as appropriate, to another source of help.

9.7 Example

Anne goes to a local women's centre because she has received a very large income tax bill as a result of not filling out her tax forms correctly. She is worried that she will lose her house if Inland Revenue takes her to court. As you deal primarily with welfare benefits and housing and do not cover debt or tax-related enquiries, you signpost her to an organisation specialising in tax advice.

Signposting is the appropriate response here, as the women's centre has merely established the nature of the client's problem and her preferred outcome. If they had first contacted the Inland Revenue in an unsuccessful attempt to delay enforcement of the bill through negotiation, this would be treated as having carried out casework. Negotiation is a form of casework and so, in CLS Support's view, establishes a client relationship and generates the need to make a referral.

The case involves a conflict or potential conflict of interest

9.8 At both General Help and Specialist levels you must have mechanisms for identifying and dealing with conflicts of interest (see requirement E1.3 in both the General Help and Specialist standards). Such conflicts will not necessarily always lead to the need for a client or clients to be referred/signposted elsewhere. For a detailed discussion about conflicts of interest please refer to CLS Support's Quality Mark briefing no. 6 "Conflict of Interest".

You do not have sufficient time to handle the client's problem properly

9.9 All organisations have finite capacity. They can only handle a limited number of cases before the quality of their work suffers. When your limit is reached, clients will need to be signposted or referred elsewhere.

9.10 Example

Martine comes to your organisation concerned that she has only two days to reply to a letter about her immigration status. She did not realise that she should have brought relevant documentation with her, so you cannot advise her properly there and then. You cannot see her tomorrow and the other member of staff is off sick. You explain the situation to her and identify the local Law Centre as the only alternative service provider. In view of the urgency, you offer to ring the Law Centre, explain the position, and ask if they can see her the next day. Martine agrees and you are able to make an appointment for her to see an immigration solicitor the following morning.

- 9.11 This client is in a vulnerable situation and things may get worse if she does not get legal advice soon. The adviser ensures that someone sees the client promptly even though that means signposting the case elsewhere. In CLS Support's view there is no client relationship, as only an initial diagnostic interview took place, which led to the client being put in touch with another organisation because it was clear from the outset that the first organisation did not have the capacity to take the matter on.

The case is in a subject area in which you offer a service but is or becomes too complex for you to handle

9.12 Example

Paul and Helen live in the countryside. They returned home from work last week and saw a letter from their landlord (who is also their employer) advising them that they would have to leave their home, as he is selling the house. Your advice centre runs an outreach session once a week in the community centre in Paul and Helen's village. They attend your outreach session where you establish what the problem is and advise the couple on their rights. You tell Paul and Helen that you need to do further research and so book another appointment for them. With their permission you consult Shelter in the interim and find that the clients need help beyond your expertise. You explain this to them and refer the case to a Housing Aid Centre (HAC).

- 9.13 Because of the ongoing nature of the assistance provided, a referral is clearly appropriate. In these situations you should use your skill and knowledge to spot complexities, understand your own limits, and consider early referral. If there is simply no other suitable local organisation to which you can refer, then consider working with an organisation that offers second-tier advice.
- 9.14 It is **vital** to be clear where responsibility for the case lies if you set up this kind of working arrangement. The client and the organisations advising him or her should be informed about who performs each individual task and any deadlines for completion. Many specialist agencies and solicitors are prepared to work in this way, so think about looking further afield for specialist support if your client requires it.
- 9.15 **NB:** If the first organisation retains the client and seeks expert assistance and advice from a specialist agency, both organisations may be found liable if this specialist support is found to be negligent following a successful claim by a dissatisfied client. The specialist organisation will be liable for any negligent advice it has given itself, but the first organisation could not simply follow the advice of the expert and expect to be exonerated in every case where that advice was found to be negligent. It will depend on the circumstances in each case. Therefore each organisation will need to maintain indemnity insurance as usual.
- 9.16 When referring a complex case to a specialist, how close the client lives to the specialist

is often not that important. This is particularly true if the non-specialist organisation wants, and is prepared, to remain involved in the case and can act as a local point of contact and effectively work together on the case with the specialist.

- 9.17 If it becomes apparent that a case may involve representation and this is something you know you are not going to be able to provide, you should consider referral at the earliest possible point, so that the organisation accepting the client has time to prepare the case properly.

9.18 Example

Peter has been dismissed by his employer for theft. He disputes the allegation and the dismissal and has a case pending at a tribunal. He goes to your organisation for assistance. After the first appointment you carry out substantial research into his options. It becomes clear that he needs someone to represent him at the tribunal. You make a referral to the Law Centre as they employ an advice worker who both carries out representation and is available to represent the client on the day of the hearing.

A number of non-solicitor agencies operating at Specialist level may find that their clients' cases reach courts where they have no rights of audience. In these circumstances they may need to refer them to an appropriate solicitor organisation or firm of solicitors.

- 9.19 Courts sometimes allow advisers who are not solicitors or practising barristers to mitigate on behalf of a client, particularly in debt matters (including rent/mortgage arrears and possession actions) in the Magistrates Court or County Court. If you do assist the client in legal proceedings, you must be aware that there may be costs implications for them (please see paragraph 17.3 below for more guidance on providing information on costs).

Cases which cover more than one subject area

- 9.20 Your organisation may specialise in one subject but not be able to provide assistance to the required level on additional issues raised when the case crosses over into one or more related areas. All organisations, whether operating at General Help or Specialist level, should be aware that there might be serious implications for the client and for the organisation if poor or negligent advice is given on these associated issues.

9.21 Example

Ingrid has resigned from her job due to disability discrimination and is now having difficulties with her application for benefits. A local DIAL organisation is able to advise her on her claim for welfare benefits but signposts her to a local employment specialist found in the CLS Directory for the rest of the case.

- 9.22 Where you have an existing client, and that client needs help regarding a "new" issue with which you cannot assist them, it will usually be good practice to provide active assistance in finding an appropriate service. You may wish to arrange an appointment and share relevant information with the alternative service provider. This does not, however, make it a referral. In CLS Support's interpretation, the organisation has not entered into a client relationship on the discrimination issue, and so therefore does not need to make a referral, but can simply signpost. This would be considered signposting.

10 Assisted Information

Unamended requirements

- 10.1 At this level, you help clients access information, identify where they need further information or advice, and help them select an appropriate service where they will be able to receive this. You are not expected to make referrals, and neither will you be expected to do so under the new arrangements. **NB:** The reference to referrals in the workbook was due to a drafting error (ISW page 16).
- 10.2 If you choose not to adopt the simpler requirements until March 1st 2003 (see paragraph 2.2 above), signposting will continue to describe what takes place when a client accesses details of further sources of information/advice for themselves. Active signposting will continue to describe what happens where dedicated staff are available specifically to help clients.

You must provide:

- “up-to-date information about CLS Quality Mark and CDS quality assured services in your local area ie the CLS Directory” (requirement B1.1). The CLS Directory you use can be either the paper or online version. The online version (www.justask.org.uk) will be the most up-to-date.
- “clear policy and procedures for active signposting” (requirement B1.2). The Information Standard Workbook (ISW) asks you to detail in what circumstances you
- will actively signpost, how staff are to recognise these situations and what they should do when they occur.

The procedure needs to be in writing (ISW page14). At audit, the LSC may talk to staff to check how your procedure operates in practice.

- The LSC will want to see “statistics about the number of clients who were directly helped and those who have been actively signposted (this could be obtained via periodic surveys for example)” (requirement B1.3). This does not have to be a survey with a formal questionnaire. You may be able to obtain this data from analysing your records over a given period of time.
 - The ISW makes it clear that the LSC regards it as important that you keep a record of the number of people who use your service and those whom you direct elsewhere for advice and assistance. Although the ISW implies that you must record every instance of active signposting, you do not need to do this. You can sample on a periodic basis. The ISW (page 17) gives an example of a monitoring form. You can use or adapt this as you wish.
- 10.3 At audit the LSC will also look for “records of all instances where no suitable service provider was found when the need for active signposting was identified” (requirement B1.4). This information will help you identify what additional services your area needs and provide much needed evidence for your local CLSP when they plan future service provision.
- 10.4 Finally, you must also participate in or have awareness of CLSP referral arrangements (requirement B2.1). You are not under an obligation to participate in your local CLSP’s referral arrangements, ie follow its protocols for signposting and referrals. They may be too onerous for your organisation. The ISW (page 18) suggests that you contact your local LSC Regional Office so that the LSC is made aware of the service you provide, but

this is not a requirement. The LSC will expect you to know what legal need the CLSP has identified and what other local services are doing to meet that need.

Amended requirements

- 10.5 The distinction between signposting and active signposting disappears and the single term “signposting” covers both types of assistance discussed in paragraph 3.2 above. You must provide a policy and procedures that detail how you will identify when to signpost (see amended General Help requirement B1.2), and must use at least one of the three methods outlined in paragraph 14.6 below. Your signposting procedure must also confirm that you will signpost any individual whom your organisation is unable to help (amended General Help requirement B1.3). You no longer have to monitor signposting. The Quality Mark does not require you to collect statistics about i) the clients you signpost or ii) those you cannot find a suitable provider to signpost to. You still need to record the number of people who use your service.
- 10.6 Please note that at Assisted Information level (and General Help level as amended), you must know what your local CLSP protocol contains where one has been produced. If you do not incorporate the protocol you must now provide a reason for this (see amended Assisted Information and General Help requirements B2.1). It is still not an absolute requirement to adopt your CLSP referral arrangements.

11 Guidance Note: How to use the following sections

- 11.1 The General Help level paragraphs contain advice specifically for that level. Practical differences between meeting the original and amended General Help requirements will be highlighted in the text. The “points in common” paragraphs discuss issues that are relevant for those organisations operating services at General Help and/or Specialist level. Finally, information specific to the Specialist level is also provided. Please note that none of the information contained in the SQM Guidance is binding.

12 How must we describe the service we offer?

General Help level

- 12.1 At General Help level you must clearly describe the service that your organisation is capable of delivering (requirement B1.1). The GHW (page 20) reminds you that this description should be included in your strategic plan.

Points common to both General Help and Specialist levels

- 12.2 At General Help and Specialist levels you must provide a clear written description of what your service is capable of delivering. This should include the main areas of work and any limitations placed on the service. For example, either the objectives of your funders or your own organisation may require you to restrict your service to a particular catchment area or client group.
- 12.3 Caseworkers should be aware of all the areas of work their organisation advises in and the stage to which they can be taken. The description will therefore identify points at which you need to signpost or refer a client to another supplier. Awareness of these limits will need updating from time to time as both the workers and the skills/knowledge base within your organisation change.

Specialist level

- 12.4 You must provide a description of your service in order to meet business plan requirements (see SQM requirement A1.1). You are not **expressly** required to do so to meet section B, although this is implied.

13 Do signposting and referral procedures need to be put in writing?

General Help level (unamended)

- 13.1 The unamended requirement B1.2 states that you must have a clear policy and procedure for (active) signposting and referral. The guidance to B1.2 advises that the procedures should be in writing and available to all staff and should describe what to do if the organisation cannot meet a client's needs (GHW page 17).

General Help (as amended) and Specialist level

- 13.2 The amended requirements specify that "a procedure and process(es) for conducting signposting and referral exist and are in effective operation" (amended General Help requirement B1.2, SQM requirement B1.2). The same definitions and guidance apply to the amended General Help requirements on this point (see amended General Help guidance).
- 13.3 A process describes what you do in practice, and a procedure is the written description of this (see SQM Glossary page 277). So, where the SQM definitions state what your "procedure must include, as a minimum", this refers to what must be in writing, eg "the practical steps to be taken to identify appropriate service providers, including giving first consideration to those with a Quality Mark and the circumstances in which use of a service without the Quality Mark might be appropriate."
- 13.4 The remainder of the referral process need not be in writing. You have the freedom to use other methods to demonstrate that staff know and consistently follow a procedure. In practice, most organisations will prefer to put these procedures in writing, as reference to them will go some way to demonstrating compliance to auditors.

14 What do signposting and referral procedures and processes need to cover?

General Help level (unamended)

- 14.1 At General Help level, the guidance (see GHW pages 17–18) suggests that your procedure covers how your organisation identifies when:
- each adviser has reached the limits of their skills and knowledge, experience and competence;
 - your service or an individual caseworker has enough work to do and cannot take on further enquiries or casework.

We suggest that the use of independent file reviews, one-to-one supervision and team meetings will help you to identify these situations.

- 14.2 This guidance also suggests that you consider highlighting in your procedure the need for advisers to take into account:
- the client's wishes and special needs;
 - the type and quality and range of services provided by other organisations;
 - whether they know that the client will be taken on by the new organisation.

Amended requirements

- 14.3 The guidance in paragraphs 14.1–14.2 above is also relevant for complying with the amended General Help requirements set out and discussed in paragraph 14.6 below.

Points common to both General Help and Specialist levels

- 14.4 At either level staff will need to know:
- when to signpost/refer – eg you must signpost/refer a case when it is beyond your competence;
 - how to signpost/refer – your procedure should describe the practical steps an adviser needs to take in order to signpost or refer effectively;
 - what types of work or levels you take on or are unable to take on, eg your organisation might always have to signpost/refer for advice on criminal matters or in cases likely to involve legal representation;
 - where to look for alternative providers – CLS Directory, call centre or website. The organisation may also have its own list of approved organisations for signposting or referral.
- 14.5 Supervisors must be aware of the level of competence of each caseworker, as they need to ensure that advisers can identify the point at which a client's interests would be best served by referral. This point will vary depending on the complexity of the issues advised on and the adviser working on their case. Your policies and procedures should aim to help in this task (See General Help requirements D3.2 and D3.3 and the guidance on QMS page 46 and SQM definition B1.1). An auditor may wish to talk to workers to establish whether they understand the extent of the service they are competent to deliver.
- 14.6 Your procedure could also discuss induction and/or internal training programmes as they also help to create a common understanding of when to signpost/refer.

General Help (as amended) and Specialist levels

Signposting

- 14.7 To signpost at General Help (as amended) and Specialist levels you must as a minimum signpost any individual whom your organisation is unable to help. At Specialist level this must be part of your written procedure (see SQM definitions B1.2).

“Signposting means that you **must** do at least one of the following options:

- Provide the CLS/CDS Directory and an offer of assistance to guide them through it.
 - Provide a list of local (or specialist) organisations that you have produced by area of law, or provide your own recommendation (as long as, in both cases, preference is given to, or you clearly identify, organisations that hold a Quality Mark).
 - Provide the CLS/CDS (local rate) call centre number (telephone: 0845 608 1122)”
- (see amended General Help guidance and SQM definition B1.2)

The guidance suggests where it is appropriate only to give the call centre number, eg when the service is under particular pressure, and where you should provide more active assistance, eg your client has special needs (see SQM Guidance pages 16–17).

Referrals

- 14.8 “For referrals – your procedure **must** include, as a minimum, the practical steps to be taken to identify appropriate service providers, including giving first consideration to those with a Quality Mark and the circumstances in which use of a service without the Quality Mark might be appropriate.”

SQM definition B1.2 states that “the process you adopt for referrals (usually documented in your procedure) **must** ensure that in *all* instances:

- the client is told what role your organisation will take and what service(s) they should expect from the new service provider (see also amended General Help requirement B1.2);
- any feedback that is later given (by the client) on the service provided by the new service provider is recorded and reviewed (see also amended General Help requirement B1.9);
- information about advice or assistance already given (and any relevant documentation) is forwarded to the new service provider (see also amended General Help requirement B1.11);
- any cost implications identified are discussed with the client (i.e. as a minimum this means explaining the relevant charging information shown in the CLS/CDS Directory) and noted on file” (SQM definition B1.2, and see amended General Help requirement B1.10).

15 Can we use our own knowledge or experience to help clients choose between organisations?

- 15.1 In our view, it is good practice to also consider relevant information not in the CLS Directory when choosing agencies to whom to signpost/refer, such as your own knowledge of another organisation’s experience and expertise in particular areas of work or their approach and manner with clients. To this end your procedure could tell you how best to advise a client on how to choose between a number of organisations shortlisted from the CLS Directory or your list of local alternative organisations. There may be no choice, but where there is, the client will probably want your view on the best organisation to contact.
- 15.2 The Law Society and NACAB have produced good practice guidance, which advocates that organisations should recommend alternative providers whose service best meets the needs of the client, since your main obligation is to put your client’s best interests first (see Thornton. C (1994) *The Referral Guide: Choosing and Using a Solicitor*, London: The Law Society, and NACAB’s Bureau Management Information System).
- 15.3 You do not need to recommend a minimum number of providers who are able to advise on the issue with which the client needs help. If there really is no difference between organisations, we advise that you can say so and leave the choice to the client. The same principle applies when you signpost.
- 15.4 **NB:** None of the guidance in this section forms part of Quality Mark requirements.

16 Can we signpost or refer a client to an organisation without the Quality Mark when there are Quality Marked organisations available?

General Help level (unamended)

- 16.1 Yes, but you must ensure that you are “justified” in using their services (see requirement B1.6). Benchmarks suggested by the LSC for referral or signposting in this situation are that you have evidence that the organisation operates to other quality standards or has a record of recent good service (GHW page 19).
- 16.2 You may find it useful to have wider criteria. CLS Support suggests looking at whether the alternative service provider has:
- independence;
 - respect for client confidentiality;
 - equal opportunities;
 - good client care;
 - the ability to take action within the required timescale;
 - a suitable service available.
- 16.3 In our view it is good practice to monitor these services to ensure that they continue to meet the selection criteria you use. We suggest that you note on the file or other suitable record if you are unable to choose a supplier that meets your selection criteria.

Amended requirements

- 16.4 The guidance in paragraphs 16.1–16.3 is also relevant for complying with the amended General Help requirements set out and discussed in paragraph 16.5 below.

Points common to both General Help and Specialist levels

- 16.5 The LSC expects that Quality Marked organisations would normally be the first choice when selecting suitable services, but bear in mind that the needs of your clients must come first. This is your primary consideration in assisting your client to make a choice, irrespective of whether the alternative organisation is Quality Marked or not. However, you must be able to justify why you chose an organisation without the Quality Mark. Therefore we recommend that your organisation adopts selection criteria for organisations without the Quality Mark.

General Help (as amended) and Specialist levels

- 16.6 You must have a process, usually documented in your procedure, that includes “the circumstances in which use of a service without the Quality Mark might be appropriate” (see amended General Help requirement B1.6 and SQM definition B1.3).

17 What information do we need to provide to clients when we are making a referral?

General Help level (unamended)

- 17.1 The CLS Directory provides the minimum information that the client needs to know, but the guidance recommends that where possible you give more specific information (see GHW page 18). This means that you should try to tailor the information you give according to the needs of the client.

General Help level (as amended)

- 17.2 When you signpost or refer to “an external service provider the client is told what role your organisation will take, and what service(s) they should expect from the new service provider” (see amended General Help requirement B1.8). Please note that under the amended General Help level requirements you no longer need to confirm costs advice in writing for the client (see amended General Help requirement B1.10).

Points common to both General Help and Specialist levels

- 17.3 At both General Help and Specialist levels you must tell the client about:
- what services to expect at the new service provider. This information is found in the CLS Directory, which normally lists the location, telephone number, opening times, costs, and a description of the services available including the subject areas and Quality Mark level;
 - what to do if there are any problems;
 - any cost implications that come from the move to the alternative service provider. This need only be done orally. If there are no cost implications, eg you are referring to an organisation that makes no charge for its services, then all you need to do is explain to your client that this is the case. However, if you are referring in situations where there may be costs, eg to a firm of solicitors, then you will need to explain the cost implications using the charging information provided in the CLS Directory and make a note of this on the file.
- 17.4 CLS Support recommends that for clients with particular access needs, such as those who have limited use of English or a disability, relevant further information is provided regarding these needs, eg availability of interpreters or disabled access arrangements.
- 17.5 You are not expected to brief the client in great detail about how their case will progress after the new provider takes it over, but you should ensure that they understand in general terms what will happen. You may wish to discuss issues such as timescales and whether they will need to appear in court.
- 17.6 There may well be organisations to which you regularly refer. CLS Support considers it good practice to keep a supply of information leaflets describing their services and giving contact details. You can hand these to clients at the point of signposting or referral. Giving the client an appointment slip/card with contact details can help with the take-up of appointments. Consider also whether the client needs further directions to find the alternative provider. The Quality Mark does not, however, require you to carry out these activities.

Specialist level

- 17.7 The SQM states that the process you adopt (usually documented in your procedure) must ensure that for referrals the “client is told what role your organisation will take, and what service(s) they should expect from the new service provider” (SQM definitions B1.2). The SQM Guidance (page 18) suggests that you confirm to the client what your role will be in the referral and tell them about, or give a copy of, any covering letter being passed to the new provider. This is consistent with the client’s right to know about and consent to their private information being passed to another organisation.

18 How do we ensure that we keep information on both Quality Marked and other alternative service providers up to date?

Points common to both General Help and Specialist levels

- 18.1 CLS Support suggests that you nominate an individual worker to carry out this task. You may automatically receive updates on relevant information from some of the organisations on your approved list of alternative providers. You might also want to consider emailing, writing to, or calling them once a year asking them to confirm their details. You will also need to have a method to check that alternative providers still meet your selection criteria. You do not have to update relevant information about alternative organisations to which you signpost clients, but we suggest that to do this would constitute good practice.
- 18.2 The most up-to-date details of Quality Marked organisations are available in the online version of the CLS/CDS Directory at www.justask.org.uk, which is updated every few days. Alternatively, you can contact the CLS call centre (0845 608 1122; minicom 0845 609 6677).

Specialist level

- 18.3 You must be able to demonstrate that you have access to current details of all the non-Quality Marked alternative service providers to whom you refer clients. You may, for example, keep leaflets that contain basic information on alternative service providers. It would be acceptable for you to always rely on ringing the organisations to check disabled access whenever a person with disabilities needed to be signposted or referred (see SQM guidance page 21).
- 18.4 Current details are defined as telephone numbers, types of service offered, opening times, charging information, languages offered and disabled access availability for any alternative service providers used (see SQM definitions B1.4). Additionally, the latest edition of the CLS Directory must contain correct information about your own organisation or steps must have been taken to correct errors, ie notify the LSC (see SQM definitions B1.4).

19 Do we have to pass information about the client’s issue to the alternative service provider?

Points common to both General Help and Specialist levels

- 19.1 The guidance at both levels indicates that it is good practice to pass useful information to the alternative service provider. This means that you may use your own judgement to

decide what information would be helpful to the alternative service provider, but you must obtain the client's consent to transfer it. We suggest that if you are making a referral that you give a summary (oral or written) of the case and supply copies of relevant documents. If you are signposting, you may wish to alert the organisation about any special needs the client might have, but this is not a requirement.

General Help (as amended) and Specialist levels

- 19.2 For referrals you must ensure in your policy that “information about advice or assistance already given and any relevant documentation is forwarded to the new service provider” (amended General Help requirements B1.11 and SQM definition B1.2).

20 What do we need to record if we are referring a client?

General Help level

- 20.1 Guidance on the possible contents of a record suggests recording:

- the date of referral;
- the file number or client's name;
- where they have been referred to;
- the subject area (eg housing, welfare benefits, employment);
- an indication of where a referral has been made that may have cost implications for the client;
- the reason the existing service provision was unsuitable. (GHW page 20)

We suggest adding “who has carried out the referral” so that you can check how well individual workers follow your procedures and so that supervisors can see how this relates to their competence in a given subject.

Points common to both General Help and Specialist levels

- 20.2 You must clearly note:

- each time that a referral has taken place – on the client file and on the central record if you have one (see paragraph 20.4 below);
- all instances where no suitable service provider was found when the need to refer was identified (General Help requirement B1.4, SQM requirement B1.3);
- any feedback from the client on the services provided by the organisation to which clients have been referred (General Help amended requirements B1.7 and B1.9, SQM definitions B1.2).

You may record the last two pieces of information on the case file and on any central record. At General Help level you must pass this data on reasonable request to the LSC and your local CLSP.

NB: You must note on the file itself any costs implications of a referral.

Specialist level

- 20.3 At this level you must have “a process (usually documented in your procedure) to ensure that:
- records for all referrals identify, as a minimum, the client or case, who made the referral, the matter type, to whom the client was referred (justifying the selection of

- any service without a Quality Mark), and the reason for the referral (eg related to the scope of the matter type, to case capacity or to the limits of the adviser's competence)." (SQM definitions B1.3)
- "Records are kept every time a suitable service provider could not be found when the need for referral had been identified, and these records include the subject matter and what (if anything) was done to progress the client's case further." (SQM definitions B1.3)
- "Any feedback that is later given (by the client) on the service provided by the new organisation is recorded and reviewed." (SQM definitions B1.2)

It is not a requirement to document your process but doing so may prove the easiest way to ensure that you comply with the requirements and helps you to demonstrate this to auditors. The SQM Guidance (page 19) recommends that you cover in your procedure what details you collect, how often, how you store records and the frequency of the review.

Why keep a central record?

- 20.4 You are not required to keep a central record but it will often be easier to review records at least once a year (as required by the Quality Mark) if you store records together in a central place. If you do keep a central record, it would be sensible to identify who updates it every time a client is referred.

How do we store referral records centrally?

- 20.5 Possible methods include:

- writing referral details in a central book;
- storing standard referral forms in a central file and ensuring workers complete and file individual forms on each occasion;
- using a central book of file references with full details on the case files (see SQM guidance B1.3);
- integrating your record-keeping of referrals (or signposting) with your regular statistics system so that you do not have to invent a separate system (referral/signposting could be recorded as an outcome and particular codes could be given to agencies regularly referred to; this allows for monitoring);
- recording referral records on a proforma on a computer and saving to a referrals folder. If your organisation is networked, a folder that everyone can access will make referrals easier to record and monitor.

What records do we need to keep if we are signposting a client?

- 20.6 The recording requirements do not apply to signposting at General Help (as amended) and Specialist levels. Under the unamended General Help requirements you had to keep records of and monitor your active signposting including where no suitable service provider was found (see General Help requirements B1.3 and B1.4).

21 How do we monitor referrals?

General Help level

- 21.1 In order to monitor referrals, you will need to collect basic information during or after referrals are made. You may use central records or client files to monitor client feedback

and lack of suitable alternative providers. Monitoring helps to ensure that signposting and referrals are made “at the level of the adviser’s competence, to an appropriate organisation and according to the needs of the client”, and also allows you to check whether advisers are taking a consistent approach to the procedure. “The organisation will need to prove evidence of the monitoring exercise to the auditor.” (See QMS page 39).

- 21.2 It may be useful to consider what implications your findings have for the services being delivered, or for services that you would like to offer in the future. You may identify that you regularly signpost or refer clients with a certain issue when an individual within your organisation could be trained to deal with that issue. Alternatively, you may identify a need for advice in areas of law that are not being provided elsewhere.

General Help level (as amended)

- 21.3 Requirement B1.3 stipulates that “records of referrals are maintained (including instances where no suitable provider could be found) and reviewed at least annually.”

Points common to both General Help and Specialist levels

- 21.4 For effective monitoring you will need to collect the following information as a minimum:

- to whom the client was referred;
- the subject area;
- feedback from client;
- where there was no suitable alternative provider.

- 21.5 Your CLSP may design its own forms or request that you record and monitor particular information above and beyond the requirements of the Quality Mark. You do not have to do this if it is not practical or appropriate.

- 21.6 You do not have to use statistics, but they can help you to make systematic comparisons, eg you can compare how many referrals different organisations accept from you in a year. You can also identify trends, eg there may be a rapid increase in the number of referrals you make in immigration matters. Statistics can reduce the need to rely on anecdotal evidence.

- 21.7 You must be able to demonstrate to auditors that you have monitored the records. You can do this by showing the conclusions drawn from the monitoring and providing confirmation of the procedure followed including who collects the information, how often they do this, what is being collected and where it is stored.

Specialist level

- 21.8 It is not a requirement to collate statistics but you may find these very basic ones useful:

- number of clients referred during the year;
- most popular receiving organisation or agencies (in terms of numbers of cases referred);
- most popular matter type(s) referred;
- the number of times where no suitable service provider could be found, and most frequent matter type for such cases.

You can find these and other suggested statistics at page 20 of the SQM Guidance.

- 21.9 The SQM states that you must review records (or statistics based on them) annually for business planning purposes (SQM requirements B1.3 and A1.2). When you come to review the overall business plan (see A1), the SQM Guidance suggests a number of areas you should consider.
- 21.10 Recording statistics, such as all occasions where no suitable provider was located, helps your CLSP consider access issues and planning supply of services. It will be able to collate these statistics with similar information from other organisations delivering legal services in your locality to see if any patterns of under-provision emerge.

22 Do we have to monitor signposting?

Points common at General Help and Specialist levels

- 22.1 There is no obligation to monitor signposting at Specialist level and therefore neither is there in the amended General Help requirements, although your CLSP may ask you to keep records. If you do choose to monitor, you could do so on a sample basis, eg you could collect information relating to all instances of signposting carried out during one month in every twelve. Any records you keep can be very simple, eg identifying only the matter type (usually by Quality Mark category) for which help was sought (see SQM Guidance page 20).

23 How do we monitor feedback about alternative service providers?

General Help level

- 23.1 You need to monitor the quality of service of organisations without the Quality Mark in order to justify continuing to use their services. The guidance suggests that you could go further and undertake monitoring exercises on the quality of all the agencies you signpost/refer to. In practice, however, many organisations have difficulty in obtaining feedback from clients. CLS Support Quality Mark briefing no. 2 “Client Feedback” outlines a number of ways of tackling this problem.

Points common to both General Help and Specialist levels

- 23.2 The guidance at both levels suggests that as a minimum you should ask clients to return to your service if they find problems with the organisation referred or signposted to. You must have a mechanism for recording this feedback (see original General Help requirement B1.7, General Help amended requirement B1.9, SQM definitions B1.2).
- 23.3 You may well get informal feedback from clients where you are continuing to advise them on one matter but have signposted/referred them to another provider for assistance with other issues. The client may talk to you about how well they think they are being kept informed about the progress of the issue being dealt with by the other organisation and whether that information is communicated to them in a way they can understand etc. You will need to take care to comply with the law relating to defamation, discrimination, and data protection in any feedback notes you keep.
- 23.4 Although it is not a requirement, you may find it useful to record feedback alongside or on the record of the referral. This may help you to:
- access information if the LSC or your CLSP requests it;

- identify any repetition or pattern in the comments made;
- justify actions you take after considering the feedback.

23.5 Some organisations ask the new provider to tell them whether the client turns up for their first post-referral appointment, and with the client's consent, to feed back information about the options the client decides to pursue. It would also be useful to ask the new provider for their view on whether the referral was made too early or too late and to use this feedback to re-examine the limits of your own competence. Your local CLSP may have designed forms for this purpose. The Quality Mark does not require you to do this but you may choose to adopt this as good practice.

Specialist level

23.6 The SQM stipulates that “any feedback that is later given (by the client) on the service provided by the new organisation is recorded and reviewed” (SQM definitions B1.2). At Specialist level the requirement regarding feedback relates specifically to referrals. It might also be useful to request, record and review feedback from organisations to which you have only signposted clients.

24 Does our procedure have to comply with CLSP referral arrangements?

24.1 CLSP referral arrangements are usually summarised in protocols that are agreed codes of local general practice and shared principles. The content of individual referral protocols may vary from one CLSP to another. In addition, some CLSPs have published directories of local suppliers and/or proforma referral forms.

General Help level

24.2 Many CLSPs have developed or are in the process of developing their own signposting and referral arrangements based on local needs and priorities. You should contact your local LSC Regional Office's Planning and Partnership team to see if your area is covered by a CLSP, and if so request copies of protocols on local referral and active signposting arrangements.

24.3 There is presently no obligation to comply with partnership arrangements at General Help level. Where a CLSP exists in your area and a local referral process has been developed, you should familiarise yourself with it and take it into account when developing your own procedures. This will give you an opportunity to decide whether the CLSP referrals procedure is an appropriate one for your organisation and also to contribute to its development:

- “Referral or (active) signposting should be undertaken having regard to the local Community Legal Services Partnerships (CLSPs).” (General Help requirement B2)
- “As Partnership arrangements are agreed, service providers know what arrangements are in place.” (General Help requirement B2.1)

24.4 In this area things evolve very rapidly but you will still be expected to keep up to date with developments. LSC guidance states that where partnerships exist, organisations will be expected to be aware of the approach and strategy and ensure that they actively participate in the delivery of that strategy (see QMS page 40).

General Help level (as amended)

- 24.5 At General Help level you must know what your local protocol contains where one has been produced by your CLSP. If you do not incorporate the protocol you must now provide a reason (see General Help amended requirement B2.1). Therefore, you are still not under an absolute obligation to adopt your CLSP referral arrangement protocol, but must provide a reason for not doing so.

Specialist level

- 24.6 The requirement states that “where a protocol has been produced by your local CLSP, you know what it contains and are able to show how it has (or give reasons why it has not) been incorporated into your own procedures and processes” (SQM requirement B2.1).
- 24.7 Where CLSP procedures or processes fit with your own needs, you will need to clearly document how and/or where you have incorporated them (see SQM definitions B2.1). If you decide after having considered the protocol that you are not going to adopt or incorporate it in any way then you must provide reasons for this to the auditor (see SQM definitions and guidance B2.1). The SQM Guidance makes it clear that the circumstances in which it will be considered appropriate by auditors for organisations not to incorporate local CLSP arrangements are limited, as the LSC clearly wishes as many organisations as possible to be involved in their local referral network and in partnership developments.

NB: Although the SQM is restrictive as regards your discretion not to follow your local protocol, the LSC has not adopted this stricter approach in the amended General Help requirements.

- 24.8 As a minimum, the SQM Guidance suggests that you need to show that you are aware of the protocols or have established contact with the Regional Legal Services Committee (RLSC) or Regional Planning and Partnership Manager (RPPM) so that you can be included in the regional plans (SQM guidance B2.1).

25 What are the potential benefits of an effective signposting and referral procedure?

- 25.1 For you and your organisation an effective signposting and referral procedure can:
- allow you to concentrate on your own area of expertise;
 - provide some level of assurance about alternative providers’ organisational competence if you choose Quality Marked organisations;
 - improve case monitoring and quality within the organisation – this can be through having a procedure that encourages a more systematic approach to looking at and recording issues around the competence and limits of your organisation and individual workers;
 - help you to identify appropriate alternative service providers to offer your clients a service that you cannot provide.
- 25.2 For clients it can:
- speed up access to appropriate alternative service providers because your organisation can promptly refer or signpost where appropriate;

- give some level of assurance of organisational competence where the alternative service provider has the Quality Mark or has been chosen because it meets your organisation's selection criteria;
- reduce the need to go over old ground in cases where the client consents for you to pass information about the case to the alternative service provider.

The presence of organisations with comprehensive procedures can assist CLSPs in collecting information on unmet need, which can benefit clients generally.

26 Barriers to referral

- 26.1 Research shows that organisations can be reluctant to refer clients. The barriers to referral are explored in some detail in Richard Moorhead's research report "Pioneers in Practice: The Community Legal Service Pioneer Project" (March 2000, pages 121–23) and in the LSC's "Guidance and Information for CLSPs" (chapter 3, paragraphs 12–19).
- 26.2 Richard Moorhead's report identifies that referral:
- can be perceived as failure;
 - takes place within a competitive environment and can be perceived as a commercial risk;
 - can be inhibited by negative perceptions of other providers' services;
 - can be inhibited by client perceptions of the referral process;
 - can be inhibited by lack of knowledge of other providers, or by lack of appropriate provision in an area.
- 26.3 If you have a Legal Aid Not-for-Profit contract you must meet a set target of contract hours. Your organisation must resist any temptation this creates to hold on to cases where signposting or referral is in the best interests of the client. It may be appropriate to contact an alternative service provider as soon as a client raises an issue, for example in an asylum case where there are very short deadlines. In other subject areas it may be appropriate to try to resolve the matter first and transfer the case only if your own intervention fails. The needs of the client, the working arrangements of the alternative provider and the nature of the legal solution will be relevant factors in this decision.
- 26.4 You need to be aware that there are other barriers to referral. You may not realise that the client's problem involves a legal issue requiring advice or you may not know that it has a potential legal solution. Advisers also risk hearing the case from the angle they know best. For example, if you are a welfare benefits adviser you may focus on that angle and miss the possible housing law implications tied up in a client's problems.
- 26.5 If you refer little or not at all because your organisation is genuinely competent enough to deal with every aspect of a client's case, using internal referral where appropriate, then that is fine – otherwise consider whether any of the barriers discussed above could be affecting the service your clients are getting.
- 26.6 In light of the above research it is clear that even if every member of your CLSP has a well-written signposting and referral procedure, this in itself will not automatically lead to the effective operation of a referral network. For guidance on the issues that may need resolving before your CLSP's network operates effectively, please see the LSC's "Guidance and Information for CLSPs", pages 37–48.

27 Other relevant initiatives to consider when drawing up your procedure

Connexions

- 27.1 Connexions is a Department for Education and Skills (DfES) initiative that has been established to provide integrated information, advice, guidance and access to personal development opportunities for all young people aged 13–19 in England. Connexions does not apply to Wales. The support young people will receive will vary according to their needs. Central to the Connexions Service is a network of personal advisers who will act as an “information broker” for each young person and ensure that someone has an overview of each young person’s needs.
- 27.2 Personal advisers, who will be based in a range of settings, including Connexions One Stop Shops and voluntary organisations, may provide information or advice on some legal matters, for example around housing and benefit issues, but should make referrals or signpost to “specialist” providers, such as advice centres, where appropriate.
- 27.3 Connexions Partnerships are required to track young people and will hold and share detailed and sometimes sensitive personal information on those young people assessed as being in most need of support. Connexions Partnerships are developing information-sharing agreements and protocols governing the sharing of information between partner agencies and external agencies.
- 27.4 For further information, contact: James Kenrick at Youth Access (contact details at end of this briefing); your regional Government Office; or the Connexions website www.connexions.gov.uk, or refer to: "Rights to Access: meeting young people's needs for advice", Youth Access, 2002; "Working together: Connexions with Voluntary and Community Organisations" "Partnership Action Note: Connexions Customer Information System - Information Sharing Guidance". Both of these latter documents are available on the Connexions website.

Consumer Support Networks

- 27.5 Consumer Support Networks (CSNs) are partnerships between organisations that offer consumer advice. Members will be certified to their level of competence under a recognised quality scheme (the CLS Quality Mark or the NACAB Membership Scheme in England and Wales). CSNs aim to put in place effective referral systems, which will benefit consumers who may in the past have been sent from one agency to another before finding the help they needed. For more information on CSNs see *Adviser* magazine, Jan/Feb 2002 edition.

Other initiatives

- 27.6 Please note: Your CLSP is likely to have useful links with a number of other relevant bodies and initiatives, eg Sure Start, Supporting People, LawWorks, Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner and the Court Service. It makes sense to work with your CLSP when devising your referral arrangements so that you can take these initiatives into account.

Appendix I: LSC letter notifying changes to Quality Mark referral and signposting requirements at Information and General Help levels

16th August 2002

Dear Quality Mark representative

Notice of Changes to the Quality Mark

Following the change from the Legal Aid Franchise Quality Assurance Standard (LAFQAS) to the Specialist Quality Mark (SQM), which took effect on 30th April 2002, we have reviewed the requirements relating to seamless service in the Information and General Help standards. The SQM requirements have been simplified when compared with the requirements at all other levels and consequently, it is our view that the Information and General Help standards should be changed to reflect the changes made to the SQM.

Within the SQM, the term "active signposting" is no longer applicable, nor is the requirement for sample recording of signposting, and so, these are no longer mandatory at the other Quality Mark levels. This streamlining should assist organisations achieve the aims of a seamless service.

In accordance with the terms and conditions of the Quality Mark Standard Agreement, this letter constitutes the required six-month notice period of a change to the requirements. The enclosed changes will therefore not become mandatory at the Information and General Help levels until 1st March 2003. Prior to this date, you may choose which set of requirements to meet. From 19th August 2002, organisations that are Quality Marked at the Information and General Help levels have the option of either meeting the attached requirements for signposting and referral (which replace the existing requirements), or the existing requirements of the Quality Mark at their level. We will audit against whichever set of requirements you have chosen to implement within your organisation.

In order to facilitate making the necessary amendments to your procedures, there is a brief overview of the changes that have been made to both the Assisted Information and General Help standards.

In addition to the amendments to the requirements of the Information and General Quality Marks, the definitions of signposting and referral have been changed and, therefore, a copy of the Amendment to the Glossary of Terms is enclosed.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact your LSC Regional Office.

Yours faithfully



Peter Watson
Director, Supplier Development Group

Appendix II: Overview of Amendments

Assisted Information

- B1.1 remains unchanged.
- B1.2 has been amended to clarify the requirement.
- B1.3 and B1.4 remain unchanged but have been renumbered B1.4 and B1.5 respectively.
- B1.3 of the amended standard is a new requirement.

General Help

- B1.1 and B1.4 remain unchanged.
- B1.2 and B1.3 have been amended to clarify the requirements.
- B1.5 has been amended to clarify the requirement and has been renumbered B1.8.
- B1.6 has been amended to clarify the requirement and has been renumbered B1.7.
- B1.8 has been amended to clarify the requirement and has been renumbered B1.10.
- B1.7 remains unchanged but has been renumbered B1.9.
- B1.5, B1.6 and B1.11 of the amended standard are new requirements.

NB: As per the enclosed letter, there is no longer a requirement for “active” signposting in either the Assisted Information or General Help standards. Please see the enclosed Amendment to the Glossary of Terms for the new definitions of signposting.

Appendix III: Amended Information and General Help requirements

Assisted Information

B. SEAMLESS SERVICE	Where a member of the Community Legal Service cannot provide the particular service needed by the client, they must inform the client and direct them to an alternative service provider, where available.
Requirement B1	Clients should receive timely service from an appropriate source.
<p>Purpose: In order for individuals to receive the right advice at the earliest opportunity, it is important that information is available about the scope of other services available and how they can be accessed. It is also important to monitor the use of the service, as this will help to make improvements and refinements as well as providing accurate information about the need for different types of service that can be fed into the local Community Legal Service Partnerships.</p>	
<p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> B1.1 Up-to-date information about CLS Quality Mark and CDS quality assured services in the local area i.e. the CLS Directory. B1.2 A procedure and process(es) for conducting signposting exist and are in effective operation and staff must be able to demonstrate how they identify when to signpost. B1.3 Your signposting procedure must confirm that you will signpost any individual whom your organisation is unable to help. B1.4 Statistics about the number of clients who were directly helped and those clients who have been signposted (this could be obtained via periodic surveys for example). B1.5 Records of all instances where no suitable service provider was found when the need for signposting was identified. 	

Requirement B2	Signposting should be undertaken having regard to the local Community Legal Service Partnerships.
Purpose:	Community Legal Service Partnerships (CLSPs) have developed signposting and referral arrangements based on local needs and priorities. These should be used to guide signposting arrangements for individual services.
Evidence:	<p>B2.1 Where a protocol has been produced by your local CLSP, you know what it contains, and are able to show how it has (or give reasons why it has not) been incorporated into your own procedures and processes.</p>

General Help

B. SEAMLESS SERVICE	Where a member of the Community Legal Service cannot provide the particular service needed by the client, they must inform the client and direct them to an alternative service provider, where available.
Requirement B1	Clients should receive timely service from an appropriate source either by signposting or referral.
Purpose:	<p>In order for individuals to receive the right advice at the earliest opportunity, it is important that information (about the scope of services and how they can be accessed) is available.</p> <p>It is also important to monitor the use of the service, as this will help to make improvements and refinements as well as providing accurate information about the need for different types of service that can be fed into the local CLSPs.</p>
Evidence:	<p>B1.1 The service provider will need to describe clearly the service that it is capable of delivering.</p> <p>B1.2 A procedure and process(es) for conducting signposting and referral exist and are in effective operation and staff must be able to demonstrate how they identify when to signpost.</p> <p>B1.3 Records of referrals are maintained (including records of all instances where no suitable service provider could be found), and reviewed at least annually.</p>

- B1.4** Records of all instances where no suitable service provider was found when the need for referral was identified. This information is made available on reasonable request to the Legal Services Commission and the Community Legal Service Partnerships.
- B1.5** For signposting, your procedure must confirm that, as a minimum, you will signpost any individual whom your organisation is unable to help.
- B1.6** For referrals, your procedure must include, as a minimum, the practical steps to be taken to identify appropriate service providers, including giving first consideration to those with a Quality Mark, and the circumstances in which use of a service without the Quality Mark might be appropriate.
- B1.7** The latest edition of the CLS/CDS Directory is available, and there is a process to ensure that details about alternative service providers are kept up to date.
- B1.8** When signposting or referral to an external service provider is used, the client is told what role your organisation will take and they know what service to expect at the new service provider
- B1.9** A means of recording feedback on the services provided by the organisation to which clients have been referred or signposted and, on reasonable request, to provide this information to the Legal Services Commission and the Community Legal Service Partnership.
- B1.10** Discussion with the client, where relevant, of the cost implications of them being signposted or referred elsewhere. This discussion is subsequently noted on the file.
- B1.11** Information about advice or assistance already given (and any relevant documentation) is forwarded to the new service provider.

Guidance:

The referral and signposting process is paramount in maintaining a seamless service of legal providers in the community, hence the importance of operating a robust referral and signposting system. The policy should include guidance as to when the advisers / caseworkers are expected to signpost and the circumstances when referral may be more appropriate (e.g. service has undertaken a significant amount of work, information needs to be passed on, they are unsure about whether the second agency can accept new clients etc.).

The need for signposting will usually arise when the individual first provides information about the type of legal problem they have and you realise they require a service that your organisation cannot provide. Although it is not a requirement for you to decide which alternative provider they should see, or to offer assistance in making arrangements for them, you are likely to consider this appropriate in certain circumstances. You should at least offer to guide clients through the CLS/CDS Directory, provide a list of local (or specialist) organisations that you have produced by area of law, provide your own recommendation (as long as Quality Marked organisations are identified and/or given preference) or provide the CLS/CDS (local rate) Call Centre number (0845 608 1122).

The need for referral arises only where you have an established client relationship in a current matter. Good referral practice means that you will usually identify the need for, and make, a referral before you reach the point where you cannot offer further help. In the case of referrals (unlike signposting), you are expected to make arrangements for the client to see someone from the new organisation.

It is important that an organisation not only operates the referral and signposting mechanism correctly but also is able to identify when the adviser has reached the limit of their experience, knowledge or competence. Referral or signposting can be internal to a more experienced adviser prior to referring or signposting externally. The ability to understand the competence of an individual is a key skill required of the supervisor. The audit process will look carefully for evidence that the point of referral or signposting has been correctly assessed.

Records for all referrals should identify the client or case, who made the referral, the matter type, to whom the client was referred (justifying the selection of any service without a Quality Mark), and the reason for the referral (e.g. related to the scope of the matter type, to case capacity or to the limits of the adviser's competence). Records should be kept every time a suitable service provider could not be found when the need for a referral had been identified, and these records include the subject matter and what (if anything) was done to progress the client's case further. Organisations needing to use referral or signposting must be confident that the client will receive a quality service from the new provider. This is a key aspect of the Quality Mark. The CLS Directory (provided by the Commission) will detail all local Quality Mark services and they would normally be the first choice when selecting suitable services. Where no Quality Mark services exist, other providers may be used but organisations should ensure they are justified in using them. Evidence of other quality standards or a record of recent good service would be satisfactory. The CLS Directory will include CDS quality assured suppliers.

Guidance:

The CLS/CDS Directory should contain correct information about your organisation (or steps should have been taken to correct errors). You will have to demonstrate that you have access to current details (i.e. telephone number(s), type(s) of service offered, opening times, charging information, languages offered and disabled access availability) for any alternative service providers used (i.e. ones not in the CLS/CDS Directory).

There should be a procedure for recording feedback on the services provided by external referral organisations, which you may need to provide to the Legal Services Commission or the Community Legal Service Partnership on reasonable request. As a minimum you should ask the client to return to your service should there be any problems and have a mechanism for recording this feedback. You should also undertake monitoring exercises on the quality of agencies to which you have signposted or referred clients.

The purpose of monitoring is for the organisation to ensure that referrals are made at the level of adviser's competence, to an appropriate organisation and according to the needs of the client. This is best achieved by maintaining records of referrals including to whom and the subject area. The detailed monitoring can be carried out periodically (for example 1 month in every 6). These records can also be used to record any client feedback and identify trends for the review of service. The organisation will need to prove evidence of the monitoring exercise to the auditor.

Requirement B2	Referral or Signposting should be undertaken having regard to the local Community Legal Service Partnerships (CLSPs).
<p>Purpose: It is the role of the CLSPs to develop effective signposting and referral arrangements based on the needs of the local community. These should be used to guide referral and signposting arrangements for individual services.</p>	
<p>Evidence:</p> <p>B2.1 Where a protocol has been produced by your local CLSP, you know what it contains, and are able to show how it has (or give reasons why it has not) been incorporated into your own procedures and processes.</p>	
<p>Guidance:</p> <p>The need for referral and signposting procedures is not new. It has been recognised as an important part of the legal service provision within a community and is at the heart of Community Legal Service Partnerships. The aim of the partnerships is to assess the local community's needs and to plan how best to meet them. This approach between key funders and providers of legal services will ensure the provision of a comprehensive, value for money service that addresses the needs of the local community.</p> <p>If a CLSP exists in the area you usually serve and has produced a protocol for signposting and/or referral, you must be able to demonstrate awareness of its existence and content. CLSP protocols contain recommendations about arrangements for referral and often also signposting and each protocol is unique to the local CLSP. If, having considered the protocol, you decide not to adopt it and not to incorporate it in any way, you must provide reasons for this to the auditor. If you are a member of your local CLSP, and have adopted its protocol, you need only make reference to that protocol and need not repeat what the protocol says in your procedure. However, if you use a protocol, or parts of it, to support or complement a procedure or processes tailored to your own needs, you will need to document this so that it is clear how and/or where it has been incorporated.</p>	

Appendix IV: Amendments to the Glossary of Terms

Term	Self-Help/Assisted Information/General Help	Definition
Signposting	Self-Help	The service will provide the CLS/CDS Directory and/or the information to the client who is then responsible for identifying other providers.
	Assisted Information	If the client requires legal advice, they are given help in finding a suitable provider (e.g. by identifying organisations whose details are in the CLS/CDS Directory). The client will then be responsible for contacting the other provider.
	General	<p>If the client's type of problem is outside of your organisation's field of knowledge, they should be signposted to an alternative provider. This should involve at least one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide clients through the CLS/CDS Directory • Provide a list of local (or specialist) organisations that you have produced by area of law. • Provide your own recommendation (as long as Quality Marked organisations are identified and/or given preference) • Provide CLS/CDS (local rate) Call Centre number (0845 608 1122).
Referral	Self-Help	No referral requirements.
	Assisted Information	No referral requirements.
	General	If your organisation is unable to help further in a current matter where a client relationship has already been established, a referral is necessary. The organisation should identify a suitable alternative provider and is expected to make arrangements for the client to see someone from the new organisation.

Appendix V: National sources of second tier/specialist support (including referral)

The National Homelessness Advice Service (NHAS) offers specialist housing advice to CABx and certain other organisations via its network of fieldworkers throughout England. They can accept cases on referral if they meet certain criteria. Further information is available from Shelter Housing Aid Centres. NHAS is a partnership between Shelter and NACAB.

The LSC is piloting a system where second-tier organisations offer free specialist telephone advice and will accept complex cases on referral. These services are presently only generally accessible to organisations with a General Civil Contract, but the LSC is considering extending access to these services to organisations Quality Marked at General Help with Casework level. For further information contact Kylie Kilgour on 020 7759 0475 or email kylie.kilgour@legalservices.gov.uk

National/regional telephone advice services to the public

The LSC is running a telephone advice pilot. Ten new contracts were let whilst three others continued unchanged from the first phase of the pilot. They provide another referral opportunity where accessibility is a problem. The contracts commenced at various dates from April and run for an initial twelve-month duration. Each telephone advice line is available only to people living in specific parts of the country. For more information contact Peter Jones on 0207 759 0478 or email peter.jones@legalservices.gov.uk. Further details will be added to the CLS website www.justask.org.uk (see also Focus 38).

Appendix VI: Situations where clients seeking advice on one topic may need help on related matters

The table below is purely illustrative and does not attempt to provide an exhaustive list for any of the subject areas.

Subject client initially approaches organisation for advice on:	Client may also have need for legal advice on:
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • debt • welfare benefits • mental health issues • Council Tax • family law following relationship breakdown etc
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal injury claim where a client has been dismissed but was injured at work • prosecution for fraud associated with a dismissal • welfare benefits issues arising on dismissal etc
Welfare Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal injury claim for a client who is claiming Incapacity Benefit, or Statutory Sick Pay • tribunal application for a client claiming unfair dismissal consulting you about benefit entitlement • debt/housing advice for a client contesting possession proceedings for rent or mortgage arrears where you are dealing with their benefit entitlement • criminal prosecution for benefit fraud • matrimonial advice for a client consulting you about benefits following relationship breakdown etc
Debt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • security of tenure in housing • family law following relationship breakdown • mental health law where a client is mentally ill and incapable of managing his or her affairs etc
Immigration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • benefits for individuals subject to the immigration rules • employment rights of those subject to the immigration rules • housing rights of those subject to the immigration rules

Appendix VII Situations where non-solicitor agencies may need to consider making a referral since they have no rights of audience

The table below is purely illustrative and does not attempt to provide an exhaustive list for any of the subject areas.

Subject area:	Proceedings:
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • judicial review of allocation decisions • appeal to the Court of Appeal against a possession order or homelessness appeal decision made in the County Court
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appeal from the Employment Appeal Tribunal to the Court of Appeal
Welfare Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appeal from Social Security Commissioners to the Court of Appeal
Debt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appeal to the Court of Appeal against County Court decisions, eg on rent, mortgage, consumer credit or water charge arrears • appeal to the Court of Appeal against decision relating to administration orders • judicial review of local authorities or Magistrates Courts relating to council tax, etc • judicial review of fuel companies
Immigration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appeal from an Immigration Appeal Tribunal to the Court of Appeal • judicial review of some immigration decisions

Getting further help

Network contacts

Management Helpline DIAL UK St Catherine's Hospital Tickhill Road, Balby Doncaster DN4 8QN 01302 310123	James Kenrick Youth Access 1a Taylors Yard Alderbrook Road London SW12 8AD 020 8772 9900
John Mulligan Federation of Information and Advice Services 12 th Floor, New London Bridge House 25 London Bridge Street London SE1 9ST 020 7489 1800	Citizens Advice Myddelton House 115-123 Pentonville Road London N1 9LZ Bureau Management Consultancy Line 0845 120 2035 CLS Consultancy Line 020 7833 7046/7134
Law Centres Federation 18-19 Warren Street London W1P 5DB 020 7387 8570	Tricia Euston Shelter 3 rd Floor, Ludgate Chambers Ludgate Hill Leeds LS2 7HZ 0113 2455030
JJ Costello Shelter Cymru 25 Walter Road Swansea SA1 5NN 01792 469400	John Edwards Age Concern England 1268 London Road London SW16 4ER 020 8765 7468

Legal Services Commission contacts

You can also contact your regional LSC office. If you aren't sure which area you are in, any regional office should be able to direct you to the one for your area. For queries about the Quality Mark **only**, you can email the LSC at sdg.issues@legalservices.gov.uk.

London Regional Office 29/37 Red Lion Street London WC1R 4PP 020 7759 1500	North Western Regional Office 2nd Floor, Elisabeth House 16 St Peter Square Manchester M2 3DA 0161 244 5000
South Eastern Regional Office 3rd/4th Floor Invicta House Trafalgar House Brighton BN1 4FR 01273 878800	North Eastern Regional Office Eagle Star House Fenkle Street Newcastle NE1 5RU 0191 244 5800
Southern Regional Office 80 King's Road Reading RG1 4LT 0118 955 8600	Yorkshire & Humberside Regional Office City House New Station Road Leeds LS1 4JS 0113 390 7300
South Western Regional Office 33/35 Queens Square Bristol BS1 4LU 0117 302 3000	East Midlands Regional Office Fothergill House 16 King Street Nottingham NG1 2AS 0115 908 4200
Wales Regional Office Marland House Central Square Cardiff CF1 1PF 029 2064 7100	Eastern Regional Office 62-68 Hills Road Cambridge CB2 1LA 01223 417800
West Midlands Regional Office City Centre Podium 5 Hill Street Birmingham B5 4UD 0121 665 4700	Merseyside Regional Office Cavern Walks 8 Mathew Street Liverpool L2 6RE 0151 242 5200

Project Adviser: Kem Herbert
Project Consultant: Audrey MacDonald
Project Consultant: Patrick Torsney



Advice Services Alliance
12th Floor, New London Bridge House
25 London Bridge Street
London SE1 9ST

www.asauk.org.uk
Fax: 020 7407 6822

Telephone and email consultancy

Consultancy line: 0870 7700 447

Email: cls.support@asauk.org.uk

The line will be open at the following times:

Monday	3 pm – 5 pm
Tuesday	10 am – 12 pm
Wednesday	10 am – 12 pm
Thursday	10 am – 12 pm

Consultancy will be provided to individual agencies on issues relating to Quality Mark and Community Legal Service Partnerships. We will be able to advise agencies that have applied, or are considering applying for the Quality Mark, with the focus being on issues relating to the General Help level and above. We will also be able to advise on CLS General Civil Contracts. Our intention is to tailor our support as closely as possible to the nature and requirements of individual agencies.

The consultancy line is operated by the project staff, who will answer enquiries at first contact wherever possible. Where further research needs to be carried out in order to answer an enquiry, callers will be informed when they are likely to receive a reply and will be contacted at that time for an update if a full response is still not possible. The project advisers will aim to send any further written information to enquirers within five working days.

Training and Seminars

CLS Support provides training and seminars on both Quality Mark and contracting issues. For further information, including details of costs, please either contact us on the consultancy line or log on to our website.

Briefings

Our current programme of briefings is listed on the following page. Quality Mark briefings will deal with requirements at all Quality Mark levels to which the briefing topic relates. The order of priority of briefings is subject to consultation with subscribers – please complete and return the attached briefings feedback form to give us your views.

The LSC has agreed to subsidise the cost of briefings initially. Currently therefore, briefings will be free to Not-for-Profit organisations who are members of the major advice networks, while private solicitors, non-networked organisations and local authorities will be required to pay a subscription fee.

Email and Internet

You can also send your enquiries by email. A project adviser will respond to you within five working days. We request that you include a contact telephone number with your enquiry so we can call you back to obtain further information if necessary.

The ASA website includes a What's New page with Quality Mark and contracting updates, access to electronic versions of a limited number of our briefings, and details of our current training courses.

Briefings

Series 1: The Quality Mark

1	Introduction to the Quality Mark
2	Client Feedback
3	Independent File Review
4	Conflict of Interest
5	Service Planning
6	People Management – Sample Procedures
7	Signposting and referral
	<i>Case management and client care</i>
	<i>File Management</i>

Series 2: The General Civil Contract

1	Separate matters and Work that can count against contracts
2	Contract reporting arrangements – SPAN
3	Changes to Eligibility
4	Disbursements
	<i>Employing a solicitor for the first time</i>
	<i>The Contract</i>
	<i>Cost Assessment</i>
	<i>Time Standards</i>
	<i>Sufficient Benefit Test</i>

Please note that the titles in italics are not yet published. Both the running order and the titles themselves are subject to alteration. We aim to respond to the changing priorities and needs of our readers as identified from any feedback received. We will also take into account any new developments in the Quality Mark.

Franchising Support Project Briefings

A limited number of the following briefings published by the Franchising Support Project are still available. When current stocks run out, they will not be reprinted, as they will be superseded by the CLS Support briefings listed above.

Not for Profit Sector Briefings – all of these are correct as at date published

- No. 7 The Contract Rules**
- No. 9 General Civil Contract: the Framework – The Access to Justice Act 1999
- No. 10 Funding Code and Other Levels of Service

New Agency (Phase Two Pilot) Briefings – although out of date these still contain relevant points

- No. 22 Designating contract work and time recording**
- No. 24 The Contract**
- No. 26 Survey Findings: the transition to block contracting and BriefCase

** These briefings are only applicable to agencies that have, or are applying for, the Specialist Help Quality Mark*

*** These briefings are only applicable to agencies who have, or are applying for, a CLS fund contract*

BRIEFING FEEDBACK SHEET
CLS Support Project Quality Mark Briefing No. 7



Please let us have your views on this briefing and whether there are other aspects of the Quality Mark , General Civil Contracts or the Community Legal Service on which you would like more briefings. Feedback from your organisation will help us make future briefings as relevant and easy to follow as possible.

Did you find this briefing helpful?.....
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.....
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.....

Do you have suggestions for any changes that might have made it more useful to you?
If yes, please specify:

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.....

Were there issues that you expected to be covered in this briefing and about which you want to know more? If yes, please say what these are:

.....
.....
.....

Are there other aspects of the Quality Mark, General Civil Contracts or the Community Legal Service on which future briefings would be useful?
If yes, please list below in order of importance:

.....
.....
.....

Your name:..... Tel:

Email:.....

Name/address of your agency:

.....
.....
.....

Please return to: Advice Services Alliance, CLS Support Project, 12th Floor New London Bridge House, 25 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9ST or email cls.support@asauk.org.uk subject line " Quality Mark Briefing No. 7 Feedback"