

**LAW SOCIETY PLAN FOR COMPLAINTS HANDLING  
FROM 1 APRIL 2006 TO 31 MARCH 2007**

Over the last few months we have been working very closely and have had a number of constructive meetings to discuss the Law Society's proposals for a new Plan for the period 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007. I have been pleased with the willingness of the Law Society to engage in this, which can only be for the good of the consumer. It is therefore encouraging to have received on 27 July a new complaints handling Plan from the Law Society.

Having considered carefully the content of this Plan I am able to confirm that I consider it to be adequate in accordance with the Access to Justice Act 1999. If complaints are handled in accordance with this Plan it will move the Law Society closer towards securing effective and efficient complaints handling. I am pleased that we now have an adequate Plan in place. The Law Society can now focus on implementation. I will be able to monitor and assess performance against this Plan as I did last year.

It is right also to acknowledge the efforts of the Law Society since I made my decisions about its Plan submitted in March. It was not satisfied with an inadequate Plan and came to me with new proposals with a view to getting an agreed Plan. I have always been confident that the targets I had set were realistic and achievable. The Law Society has now included in its Plan targets that we both believe will contribute to securing effective and efficient complaints handling for the consumer:

- 57% of cases closed within 3 months
- 94% of cases closed within 12 months
- No more than 65 cases over 15 months old
- In 80% of cases providing a substantive response to consumers within 55 days of receiving the complaint.
- Providing an option of appropriate 30 day contact.
- Include initiatives, which are measurable and have clear objectives.

It is of benefit to the consumer and the profession to have such a Plan in place. It is out of recognition for these efforts and the cooperation the Law Society has shown since my decision to fine that I have decided not to recover the £250,000 imposed but to adjust the penalty and to require payment of £220,000. I trust that the Law Society is now able to respond to the letter of 6 June with regards to payment of the penalty. I would be grateful if the Law Society could respond to this matter by 4 August.

Although the process for achieving an agreed Plan for this year has at times been difficult and lengthy our determination to improve complaints handling means we can now move forward and deliver the much needed improvements.

I look forward to continued closer working with you and other staff at the Law Society over the coming year.