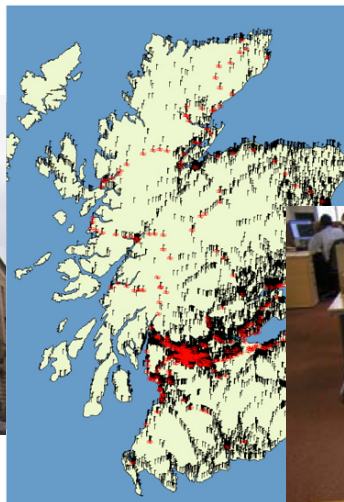


Solicitor Survey 2010

Research with Legal Aid Practitioners

Report for the Scottish Legal Aid Board

October 2010



Contents

1	Introduction	1.1
1.1	Background	1.1
1.2	Scottish Legal Aid Board	1.1
1.3	Recent Changes to Legal Assistance	1.2
1.4	Research Aims and Objectives	1.3
1.5	Report Outline	1.3
1.6	Reporting Protocols	1.4
1.7	Research Caveats	1.4
2	Methodology and Sample	2.1
2.1	Questionnaire Design	2.1
2.2	Fieldwork	2.1
2.3	Sample Profile	2.2
2.4	Responses per Office	2.3
2.5	Responses per Firm	2.4
2.6	Main Case Type	2.4
2.7	Geography	2.4
2.8	Job Role	2.5
2.9	Demographics	2.5
2.10	Summary	2.7
3	Firms and Solicitors	3.1
3.1	Firm Background	3.1
3.2	Solicitor Background	3.9
3.3	Summary	3.10
4	Supply	4.1
4.1	Supply at Firm Level	4.1
4.2	Supply within Local Area	4.3
4.3	Summary	4.8
5	Forms, Processes and Fees	5.1
5.1	Introduction	5.1
5.2	Legal Aid Online	5.1
5.3	Criminal Applications	5.2
5.4	Civil Applications	5.3
5.5	Children’s Applications	5.5
5.6	Criminal Accounts Process	5.6
5.7	Civil Accounts Process	5.7
5.8	Fees	5.8

Contents

5.9	Summary	5.10
6	Communication and Guidance	6.1
6.1	Introduction	6.1
6.2	Use of the Civil Legal Assistance Handbook	6.1
6.3	Mailshots	6.2
6.4	Use of the Internet/Email and the Board's Website	6.2
6.5	Guidance for Submitting Forms	6.3
6.6	Guidance on Account Issues	6.4
6.7	Information on Clawback	6.5
6.8	Opponents	6.5
6.9	Additional Guidance/Communication Required	6.5
6.10	Support from the Board	6.6
6.11	Summary	6.6
7	Summary Justice Reforms	7.1
7.1	Introduction	7.1
7.2	Levels of Legal Assistance Work Since the Introduction of the Reforms	7.1
7.3	Disclosable Summaries	7.2
7.4	Discussing Pleas	7.3
7.5	Appointed Solicitors	7.4
7.6	Changes in Remuneration	7.4
7.7	A Fairer Justice System	7.5
7.8	Communication of the Reforms	7.5
7.9	Summary	7.6
8	Civil Simplification	8.1
8.2	Summary	8.3
9	Civil Quality Assurance	9.1
9.1	Civil Quality Assurance Scheme	9.1
9.2	Summary	9.3
10	Discussion	10.1
10.1	Discussion of Key Results	10.1
10.2	Recommendations for future surveys	10.5
10.3	Final Conclusions	10.6

Tables

Table 2.1	Case Type Quotas	2.2
Table 2.2	Other Sample Targets	2.3
Table 2.3	Number of Respondents per Office	2.3

Contents

Table 2.4	Number of Respondents per Firm	2.4
Table 2.5	Job Title	2.5
Table 3.1	Length of Time Firm has been Carrying out Work under Legal Assistance	3.1
Table 3.2	Types of Cases Firm Currently Handles	3.2
Table 3.3	Legal Aid Caseload of Firms	3.5
Table 3.4	Solicitor Positions Working on Legal Assistance Cases	3.7
Table 3.5	Likely Areas of Legal Aid Work for Trainees	3.8
Table 3.6	Reasons for Not Offering Traineeships	3.9
Table 3.7	Main Case Type Handled by Solicitors	3.10
Table 4.1	Unmet Demands within Local Area	4.5
Table 4.2	Unmet Demand for Work by Case Type and Urban/Rural Geography	4.7
Table 7.1	Ease of Discussing a Potential Plea with the Procurator Fiscal Prior to the Pleading Diet	7.3
Table 7.2	Ease of Discussing a Potential Plea with a Procurator Fiscal	7.4
Table 7.3	Reasons for Not Attending a Roadshow	7.6
Table 8.1	Reasons for Not Attending a Roadshow	8.2

Figures

Figure 2.1	Main Case Type	2.4
Figure 2.2	Location of Respondents by Sheriffdom	2.5
Figure 2.3	Gender by Main Case Type and Job Role	2.6
Figure 2.4	Age by Main Case Type and Job Role	2.6
Figure 3.1	Main Case Type Handled at Firm Level	3.3
Figure 3.2	Percentage of Firm's Work which is privately funded	3.4
Figure 3.3	Number of Solicitors Employed by Firm	3.5
Figure 3.4	Number of Solicitors that Provide Work under Legal Assistance	3.6
Figure 3.5	Likelihood that Firm will Recruit Trainee Solicitors within Next Year	3.7
Figure 3.6	Number of Years Carrying out Work under Legal Assistance	3.10
Figure 4.1	Conducting Legal Assistance Work in Three Years Time (2005 & 2010)	4.2
Figure 4.2	Number of Legal Assistance Solicitors	4.4
Figure 5.1	Method of Application - Legal Aid Online v Paper	5.1
Figure 5.2	Satisfaction with Criminal Application Process	5.2
Figure 5.3	Satisfaction with Civil Application Process	5.3
Figure 5.4	Changes to Civil Forms	5.4
Figure 5.5	Satisfaction with Children's Application Process	5.6
Figure 5.6	Satisfaction with Criminal Accounts Processes	5.7
Figure 5.7	Satisfaction with Civil Accounts Processes	5.8
Figure 5.8	Payment for Legal Aid Cases (2005 & 2010)	5.9
Figure 5.9	Difference in Fees between Legal Assistance Work and Private Work	5.10
Figure 6.1	Frequency of Handbook Use	6.1
Figure 6.2	Ease of Finding Information in the Handbook	6.1
Figure 6.3	Frequency of Reading Mailshots	6.2
Figure 6.4	Frequency of Visiting the Board's Website	6.3
Figure 6.5	Guidance on How to Submit an Application for Legal Assistance	6.4
Figure 6.6	Guidance Regarding Account Issues	6.4
Figure 6.7	Information and Guidance on Clawback	6.5
Figure 6.8	Helpfulness of the Board in Supporting/Providing Work under Legal Assistance	6.6

Contents

Figure 7.1	Levels of Legal Assistance Work Since the Reforms by Sheriffdom	7.2
Figure 7.2	Earlier Availability of the Disclosable Summary	7.3
Figure 7.3	Criminal Legal Assistance Work More Profitable than Before Reforms	7.5
Figure 7.4	Changes Being Made to Legal Assistance as a Result of Reforms	7.6
Figure 8.1	Informed about Changes to the Civil Legal Assistance Application Forms and Processes	8.3
Figure 9.1	Perceptions of the Civil Quality Assurance Scheme	9.2

Appendices

Appendix A	Questionnaire
Appendix B	Data Tables

Executive Summary

Introduction

This report presents the findings from a survey of legal aid solicitors, undertaken by MVA Consultancy, on behalf of the Scottish Legal Aid Board. The survey was undertaken in Spring 2010, using a telephone survey approach.

The overarching aim of the research was to develop the Board's understanding of solicitors' views and experiences of criminal, civil and children's legal aid processes, especially given the recent reforms and changes in both Criminal and Civil Legal Assistance. In doing so, the research sought to canvass the views of solicitors across the country and to speak with staff with different professional experiences, as well as from different demographic backgrounds. Some aspects of the survey results will also be useful to the Scottish Government in their continued evaluation of the Summary Justice Reforms.

A total of 416 solicitors participated in the survey. Overall the refusal rate was low and the most common reason for refusal was that it was felt the survey was not relevant due to the solicitor handling a low number of legal assistance cases. Refusals for this reason acted to enhance the representativeness of the achieved sample in that only those who considered themselves to have relevant experience took part. Respondents were drawn from across the country and represented a wide range of professional interests and firm sizes. The survey included a number of firm level questions that only partners of a firm were asked, providing us with both firm and practitioner views.

Respondents' Experience

Over three quarters (78%, n=175) of partners stated that their firm had been carrying out work under legal assistance for over 10 years. Similarly, nearly three quarters of all respondents (72%, n=298) said that they had personally been carrying out work under legal assistance for over 10 years.

One third of firms (32%, n=73) indicated that they only conducted one type of legal assistance work, while the remainder conducted a mix of case types. Around three quarters (72%, n=163) of firms handled criminal legal assistance cases, 79% (n=177) handled civil legal assistance cases, and 58% (n=131) handled children's legal assistance cases.

Just over half (56%, n=127) of the partners surveyed represented firms who conduct *mainly* civil legal assistance cases, while just under half (43%, n=96) conduct *mainly* criminal legal assistance cases. Only two partners indicated that their firm mainly dealt with children's legal assistance cases. At the individual level, 64% (n=266) of solicitors worked mainly on civil cases, 34% (n=143) worked mainly on criminal cases, and only 2% (n=7) indicated that they mainly worked on children's cases.

Just under half of the partners (46%, n=103) stated that privately funded cases make up less than half of their firm's work. The same per cent stated that more than 50% of their work is privately funded. Civil firms do a higher proportion of private work than criminal.

Almost half of the firms (48%, n=107) employed between 2 and 4 solicitors and 43 partners (19%) were sole practitioners. Nearly two thirds (62%, n=113) of partners indicated that between 2 and 4 solicitors work on legal assistance cases in their firm, with the most common solicitor position working on legal assistance cases being partners themselves (97%, n=177).

Executive Summary

Supply

88% of partners said that their firm was likely to continue undertaking legal assistance work in the next three years.

Just over half of all respondents (55%, n=228) felt that supply within their local area was about right, while almost a third (30%, n=123) felt that there were too few legal assistance solicitors in their local area. Respondents whose main case type was civil were more likely to say that there were too few legal assistance solicitors in their local area (40%, n=106) than those whose main case type was criminal (11%, n=15) or children's (29%, n=2). Conversely, those whose main case type was criminal were more likely to indicate that there were too many legal assistance solicitors in their local area: 15% (n=22) of criminal solicitors thought this compared to only 3% (n=8) of civil solicitors. Grampian, Highland and Islands (63%) contained the largest proportion of respondents that felt there were too few legal assistance solicitors in their local area, while Tayside, Central and Fife had the largest proportion (11%) who felt there were too many.

79% (n=140) of all civil partners reported that their firm's caseload in Advice and Assistance had increased or stayed the same in the last year and 76% said the same about Civil Legal Aid cases. Almost half of all criminal partners reported that their firm's caseload had increased in the area of Assistance by way of Representation (ABWOR), while over half reported a decrease in the area of Advice and Assistance over the last year. 56% (n=92) of criminal partners reported that their firm's caseload in summary legal aid cases had increased or stayed the same in the last year.

Almost a third of respondents (32%, n=133) felt that there was no unmet demand within their local area. However, the most commonly identified areas of work where respondents felt there was an unmet demand included civil legal aid generally, and civil legal aid – family cases, in particular.

Although the majority of partners (83%) stated that their firm had not expanded into new areas of work in the last two years, those who had stated that this had been in the areas of civil legal aid (7%, n=15), and private work (6%, n=13).

Encouragingly, as many as 20% (n=43) of partners indicated that they thought it likely that their firm would recruit a trainee within the next year i.e. one in every five partners interviewed. Many of these partners (63%) also suggested that these trainees would be expected to work on legal assistance cases.

Criminal Applications

Criminal respondents were largely satisfied with the criminal applications process. At least three quarters were satisfied with the application processes for criminal A&A/ABWOR (75%), summary legal aid (78%) and solemn legal aid (77%). The numbers that were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied ranged from between 8% and 13%. There were low levels of dissatisfaction ranging from 4% for solemn to 14% for A&A/ABWOR. For post certificate applications (sanctions) around two thirds (64%) were satisfied with the application process, a further 13% were neutral and 19% were dissatisfied.

Civil Applications

Satisfaction with the civil application processes was also high. Between 59% (for sanction) and 77% (for civil advice and assistance/ABWOR) of civil respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the application process and a further 10% (for A&A/ABWOR) to 18% (for sanction) were neutral with the application process. Levels of dissatisfaction were low at an average of 13%.

Executive Summary

Childrens Applications

All of those respondents who also conducted children's legal assistance work (whether it was their primary or secondary case type) were asked to what extent they were satisfied with the application process for different types of children's legal assistance. Again, most respondents (80%) were satisfied with the process for applications to the court for children's legal aid, 17% were neutral or said they didn't know and only 3% (n=5) reported that they were dissatisfied. Just over half (55%) of the respondents were satisfied with the process for applications to the Board for appeal proceedings, 39% were neutral or didn't know and only 6% said they were dissatisfied. Just over half (54%) were satisfied with the application process for children's sanctions, 14% were neutral and 15% were dissatisfied.

These high levels of satisfaction with the applications processes were mirrored in the high levels of satisfaction with the guidance provided by the Board. Over 80% (n=345) of respondents agreed that the Board provided them with sufficient guidance on how to submit an application for legal assistance, a further 10% were neutral. Very few respondents were dissatisfied with the guidance issued by the Board with only 8% disagreeing that it was sufficient. There were no real differences by case type, with 83% (n=223) of civil and 81% (n=115) of criminal respondents agreeing.

Legal Aid Online

Over half of all respondents (57%, n=233) said that they submit their legal assistance applications to the Board either solely or mostly via legal aid online, while 38% (n=160) submit them either all or mostly via paper forms. Criminal respondents were slightly more likely than civil respondents to submit their applications using legal aid online (59% compared to 54%).

On average respondents that use legal aid online were 20% more satisfied with the applications process than those that did all or most of their applications on paper. For example, 92% of respondents who submit criminal summary applications *solely* via legal aid online were satisfied with the process and a further 4% were neutral compared to 73% of respondents who *solely* submit them via paper forms being satisfied and 6% being neutral. Likewise for civil, 91% of civil respondents who submit civil advice and assistance/ABWOR applications *solely* via legal aid online were satisfied with the process compared to 70% of respondents who submit them *solely* via paper forms.

Criminal Accounts

All respondents were asked to indicate their satisfaction with the accounts process for different types of legal assistance. Views were positive among criminal respondents with around two thirds or more satisfied with the accounts process for criminal. For criminal legal aid 73% were satisfied, a further 7% were neutral and only 13% were dissatisfied. For A&A/ABWOR accounts 66% were satisfied with a further 11% giving neutral response and 11% were dissatisfied. For Solemn 62% were satisfied, 21% were either neutral or didn't know and 14% were dissatisfied.

53% of criminal respondents agreed that the Board provides them with sufficient guidance regarding accounts issues, an additional 13% were neutral, 8% didn't know and 26% disagreed.

Civil Accounts

Civil respondents had more mixed views regarding the accounts process with 38% satisfied with the civil A&A/ABWOR accounts process and 38% satisfied with the civil legal aid accounts process. The number of respondents that said they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied or didn't know enough to comment was high: 21% for civil A&A/ABWOR and 27% for civil legal aid. This is possibly because civil solicitors are

Executive Summary

less likely to prepare their own accounts for civil legal assistance cases and are more likely to use a law accountant. 41% and 35% of civil respondents were dissatisfied with the civil A&A/ABWOR and civil legal aid account processes respectively.

35% of civil respondents agreed that the Board provides them with sufficient guidance regarding accounts issues, an additional 14% were neutral, 11% didn't know and 41% disagreed.

Fees

Mixed views were expressed regarding the fees for legal assistance that are set by the Scottish Government and specifically, whether respondents considered that they were paid better, worse or the same as they were three years ago. For all civil legal assistance cases 17% of respondents felt they were generally paid better than three years ago, 27% said that there was no change and 39% said that they are paid worse than three years ago. However, the number saying that they are paid less is 7% lower than when the same question was asked of a similar group in the Board's 2005 Civil Reform Survey¹. Nearly three quarters of all respondents (73%) felt that the difference in fees between legal assistance work and private work had increased over the last three years, with civil respondents being the most likely to say that the difference had increased.

Communication and Guidance

All civil respondents were asked a series of questions regarding the civil legal assistance handbook. Criminal respondents were not asked comparable questions as the criminal handbook was being updated at the time that the fieldwork took place. 70% (n=185) of civil respondents said that they used the handbook at least monthly and almost two thirds (65%, n=163) said that they found it easy to use some or most of the time.

All respondents (n=416) were asked if they read the mailshots sent to them by the Board. Almost all respondents (95%, n=395) indicated that they read the mailshots all or some of the time, and partners were more likely than non-partners to read them.

All respondents were asked how often they visit the Board's website. Around half (48% n=199) of all respondents said that they visit the Board's website at least once a week, with a further 25% (n=105) visiting at least once a month. This means that around three quarters (73%) are regularly using this facility.

A large proportion of respondents (72%) agreed that the Board was helpful in supporting them to provide work under legal assistance or had no opinion either way in this regard. Only a small number of respondents gave suggestions for improvements to the way the legal aid scheme operates. This included changing the fee structure/increase the fees (although it should be noted that this is decided by the Scottish Government, not the Board), reducing administration and paperwork and providing more information on the accounts process.

Summary Justice Reforms

Just over half of the criminal respondents (53%) felt they were conducting less legal assistance work since the introduction of the Summary Justice Reforms although 63% of criminal partners reported that their firm's criminal ABWOR caseload had increased in the last year.

¹ MORI Scotland, (2005) "Solicitors' Views on the Impact of the Civil Legal Aid Reform". Prepared for the Scottish Legal Aid Board.

Accessed at http://www.slab.org.uk/about_us/research/stakeholders/archive/civil_reform/mori_civil_reform_research.pdf

Executive Summary

Nearly two thirds (64%) found the disclosable summary informative, while three quarters (75%) found the earlier availability of these helpful. 53% said they would find it either helpful (30% n=43) or neither helpful nor unhelpful (23% n=33) if the Board obtained electronic copies of disclosable summaries direct from the Crown while 46% said they would find it unhelpful.

Most criminal respondents (80%) agreed that allowing the appointed solicitor to grant criminal ABWOR in custody cases had succeeded in helping to bring about the earlier resolution of cases.

When asked if they agreed that it has become easier to discuss potential pleas with a Procurator Fiscal prior to the pleading diet 29% agreed, 18% were neutral and 52% disagreed. When asked if they agreed that it has become easier to discuss potential pleas with a Procurator Fiscal at all other stages of a case 22% agreed, 20% neither agreed or disagreed and 57% disagreed that it now was easier to discuss potential pleas.

Almost two thirds of criminal respondents (62%) felt that the changes in remuneration were assisting in the earlier resolution of cases. Over half (57%) felt that legal assistance work was not more profitable than it was before the Reforms. More than half (58%) felt that these changes in fees had not impacted upon the services delivered to clients.

Most criminal respondents (86%) had attended one of the roadshows held by the Board to inform solicitors about the Reforms, and most of these respondents (85%) indicated they had found it useful. Overall, most respondents (86%) felt they were either very or reasonably well informed about the Reforms.

Civil Simplification

Over half of the civil respondents (52%) had heard of the Simplification Programme, with partners being more likely to have heard of it than non-partners. Over one third (36%) had attended a roadshow as part of the Simplification Programme, meeting the Board's expected attendance target and 89% of those that attended found it useful. Those in town/rural locations were more likely not to attend because the location was not convenient (n=13).

Most respondents (89%) felt that the Board kept them well informed about the changes to the civil application forms and processes, however, suggestions for improving communication included supplying more information via email and providing clearer information.

Civil Quality Assurance

Over three quarters (78%) of all civil respondents had been subject to a peer review. Generally, civil respondents felt knowledgeable about the civil quality assurance scheme (66%), and were mostly satisfied with the scheme (59%). 63% of civil respondents were either satisfied (46%) or neutral (17%) that the scheme is an effective means of ensuring the quality of the civil legal aid work conducted by firms. Of the 28% who did not share this view the main reason was because they felt it only takes a snapshot of the work that's being done.

Executive Summary

Conclusions

The survey was successful in canvassing the views and perceptions of a wide range of legal aid solicitors across Scotland, which the Board can draw from in taking forward its work.

Solicitors appear to be generally satisfied with their communication with the Board, and with the various processes and forms that are required in administering legal assistance. Where dissatisfaction was explicitly expressed with some areas of the civil accounting and application processes, this was by a minority of respondents.

In general, the results of the survey show that solicitors continue to engage well with the Board and that there are positive attitudes towards the continuation of legal assistance in the future.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 This report presents the findings from a survey of legal aid practitioners, undertaken by MVA Consultancy, on behalf of the Scottish Legal Aid Board.
- 1.1.2 The overarching aim of the research was to develop the Board's understanding of solicitors' views and experiences of criminal, civil and children's legal aid processes. In doing so, the research sought to canvass the views of practitioners across the country and to include those representing a range of different firm sizes and orientations.
- 1.1.3 The survey was undertaken in Spring 2010, by way of a telephone administered questionnaire. The last major survey of the profession was the 2005 survey on civil legal aid reforms and focused on those practitioners with significant caseload under civil legal aid.

1.2 Scottish Legal Aid Board

- 1.2.1 The Scottish Legal Aid Board has managed legal aid in Scotland since 1987. It is a non-departmental public body, and aims to provide access to justice for those eligible and in need of it, in a cost effective manner.
- 1.2.2 The Board has three strategic aims:
 - to deliver efficient, effective and value for money legal assistance services
 - to broaden access by exploring new ways of providing and supporting quality assured legal advice services
 - to contribute to the improvement and effective operation of the justice system.
- 1.2.3 Legal aid policy and fee rates are set by the Scottish Government. The Board aims to contribute to the improvement and effective operation of the Scottish justice system and contributes to six of the Scottish Government's National Outcomes:
 - tackling significant inequalities in Scottish society;
 - improving the life chances for children, young people and families at risk;
 - helping citizens live lives safe from crime, disorder and danger;
 - developing strong, resilient and supportive communities;
 - ensuring high quality public services; and
 - reducing the environmental impact of consumption and production.
- 1.2.4 Legal aid allows those who would not otherwise be able to afford it to get help for their legal problems. This help comes in the form of solicitors, counsel (advocates and solicitor advocates) and financial help for other court costs.

1.3 Recent Changes to Legal Assistance

Summary Justice Reforms

- 1.3.1 In 2002, a Summary Justice Review Committee was appointed under the chairmanship of Sheriff Principal John McInnes in order to review the provision of summary justice in Scotland in order to make recommendations for the more efficient and effective delivery of summary justice in Scotland. In 2004, the McInnes report recommended a number of Reforms to the summary criminal justice system.
- 1.3.2 In the last few years, a programme of Reforms has been implemented across Scotland's summary justice system. The reforms have been led by the Scottish Government and involved a number of organisations including the Board, the Crown Office, the Scottish Courts Service, the Law Society of Scotland and the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland. These Reforms included significant changes to Summary Criminal Legal Assistance, which were designed to support the Summary Justice Reforms.

Alterations to Summary Criminal Legal Assistance as part of the summary Justice Reforms

- 1.3.3 Alterations to Summary Criminal Legal Assistance came into effect on the 30th of June 2008. Summary Criminal Legal Assistance provides legal advice, assistance and representation for criminal matters to people who would otherwise not be able to afford it, whether or not they have been charged with an offence. There are three types of legal assistance:
- advice and assistance;
 - assistance by way of representation (ABWOR); and
 - criminal legal aid.
- 1.3.4 The changes to Summary Justice affect the way that the police and prosecution deal with less serious cases, by offering a range of 'direct measures' as alternatives to prosecution. The Summary Justice Reforms included the introduction of a single fee level in the Sheriff Summary Courts and the Stipendiary Magistrates Courts in Glasgow for legal aid cases disposed of before trial, in order to encourage early investigation, and where appropriate, the early resolution of cases. In addition, the Reforms aim to encourage and support the resolution of cases as early as possible in the summary proceedings, as evidence suggests that this will lead to fewer late changes of plea and a more efficient criminal justice system.

Changes to Civil Legal Aid

- 1.3.5 The Board has a Simplification Programme underway with the primary aim of reducing the complexity of the civil legal assistance process. This involves working with the legal profession to make the civil legal assistance system less bureaucratic and more efficient. The first phase was implemented in March 2009 and included the introduction of simplified and shortened forms and the ability to submit applications online. The second phase which is now underway looks at improving the way the Board assesses financial eligibility, making better arrangements for dealing with special urgency payments and the development of the supplier support scheme to help firms improve their operations.

- 1.3.6 In April 2009 legal aid rules in eligibility were extended, meaning that anyone with a disposable income of £25,000 or less will be eligible for civil legal assistance.

1.4 Research Aims and Objectives

- 1.4.1 The overarching aim of the research is to develop the Board's understanding of solicitor's views and attitudes towards the Board and the criminal and civil legal assistance processes, especially given the recent reforms and changes in both Criminal and Civil Legal Assistance.
- 1.4.2 To achieve this, three specific objectives were set. These were to provide the Board with:
- an understanding of solicitors' views on the efficiency and ease of use of the legal aid process and the range of services offered by the Scottish Legal Aid Board;
 - solicitors' opinions on key aspects of criminal legal assistance; and
 - solicitors' opinions on key aspects of civil legal assistance.
- 1.4.3 Although a much smaller sample, any views specific to children's legal assistance would also be picked up in the research.
- 1.4.4 To this end, a questionnaire survey was designed to be administered to a representative sample of practising legal aid practitioners across the country.

1.5 Report Outline

- 1.5.1 The remainder of this report presents the findings from the survey, and largely follows the structure of the questionnaire.
- Chapter 2 begins by providing an overview of the methodology utilised and details of the sample profile in terms of job titles, geography and demographics.
 - Chapter 3 details firm information for the partners who took part and practitioner backgrounds.
 - Chapter 4 outlines issues relating to legal aid supply at firm level, as well as practitioners views of current levels of supply.
 - Chapter 5 explores practitioners' views in relation a number of administrative and procedural forms, processes and fees.
 - Chapter 6 explores practitioners' experience and opinions of the communication and guidance issued by the Board.
 - Chapter 7 details criminal practitioners' views of the recent Summary Justice Reforms.
 - Chapter 8 discussed civil practitioners' views of Civil Simplification.
 - Chapter 9 outlines civil practitioners' experience of and opinions of the civil quality assurance scheme.
 - Chapter 10 provides a summary of the key findings and outlines recommendations for the future.

1.6 Reporting Protocols

1.6.1 Throughout the report, basic frequencies are outlined for each question. Analysis also included crosstabulations of each question by a range of key variables, including where possible:

- main case type (either at firm or individual level as appropriate);
- job role (i.e. partner versus all other practitioner levels);
- urban/rural geography;
- gender;
- Sherifffdom;
- length of time providing Legal Aid (either at firm or individual level as appropriate);
- firm size; and
- amount of work privately funded.

1.6.2 Chi-square tests were applied to all crosstabulations to establish where significant differences existed (at the 95% confidence level) between key samples. Only those crosstabulations that were identified as showing a significant difference have been included in this report. A full list of these crosstabulations can be found in Appendix B.

1.7 Research Caveats

1.7.1 Although respondents were located across the country and included solicitors providing the full range of legal aid services, the methodology incorporated an element of self-selection on the part of the respondents, and some groups are represented in relatively small numbers. For example, although the sample sizes for civil and criminal respondents are statistically robust, the numbers providing mainly children's legal assistance are too small to be considered as reliable.

1.7.2 It should also be noted that, when the total sample is disaggregated by some key variables, including Sherifffdom, number of years providing legal aid, firm size, and proportion of work privately funded, small sample sizes are found within one or more category.

2 Methodology and Sample

2.1 Questionnaire Design

2.1.1 The questionnaire was quantitative in nature, i.e. consisting of closed, pre-coded questions. It consisted of core questions applicable to all practitioner groups, and topic specific questions depending on whether a solicitor's main case type was criminal or civil legal assistance work. There were also a number of firm level questions that only partner's of a firm were asked.

2.1.2 The key topics which were covered in the questionnaire included:

- Firm Background (for Partners only);
- Supply at Firm Level (for Partners only);
- Practitioner Background (for all practitioners) ;
- Supply (for all practitioners);
- Forms and Processes (for all practitioners);
- Fees (mixed questions – some for all practitioners and some for Civil Legal Assistance providers only);
- Communication and Information Gathering (mixed questions – some for all practitioners and some for Civil Legal Assistance providers only);
- Summary Justice Reforms (for Criminal Legal Assistance providers only);
- Communication of the Reforms (for Criminal Legal Assistance providers only);
- Civil Simplification Roadshows (for Civil Legal Assistance providers only); and
- Civil Quality Assurance Scheme (for Civil Legal Assistance providers only).

2.2 Fieldwork

2.2.1 Surveys were undertaken via telephone using CATI technology. Contact with each solicitor was undertaken at various times of the day. However, these attempts were capped at a maximum of eight calls per solicitor so that the survey did not become a nuisance to either the firm or the solicitor. Where respondents could not participate at the point of first contact, appointments were made to phone back and complete the survey.

2.2.2 Before the fieldwork period began, the Board included a notice on their website to alert solicitors to the survey and to ask for their cooperation if/when an interviewer telephoned. This notice was also provided in a letter format to allow interviewers to email this to any solicitor who queried the survey. Briefings about the upcoming research were also included in the Law Society of Scotland Magazine, "The Journal" and in the delegate pack at the last Legal Aid Conference in October 2009.

2.2.3 Where a respondent reported that they were unable to complete the telephone survey, they were offered a link to an online version of the survey. This offered solicitors the opportunity to respond to the survey in their own time within a specified consultation period. Despite

offering this option to many solicitors, no responses were received from this element. All responses were, therefore, collected via the CATI telephone approach.

- 2.2.4 The draft final questionnaire was piloted during the week commencing 15 February 2010. A total of ten interviews were completed. This was important for testing the length of the interview, to ensure both interviewers and respondents understood the questions, check that the most appropriate response options were included and to ensure that the routing was accurate.
- 2.2.5 The main survey fieldwork was conducted over a four week period, from 1 March to 26 March 2010, with a further two week extension until 9 April 2010 to capture the remaining interviews.

2.3 Sample Profile

- 2.3.1 To provide a representative sample of solicitors registered to provide legal assistance the research aimed for a return of 400 responses. A total of 416 solicitors participated in the survey and this was met relatively easily within the timescales. There are around 820 firms currently registered to provide legal assistance. The respondents represented 362 firms and as such provide a representative view of the profession working under legal aid. Overall the refusal rate was low and the most common reason for refusal was that it was felt the survey was not relevant due to the solicitor handling a low number of legal assistance cases. Refusals for this reason acted to enhance the representativeness of the achieved sample in that only those who considered themselves to have relevant experience took part. Respondents were drawn from across the country and represented a wide range of professional interests and firm sizes. The survey included a number of firm level questions that only partners of a firm were asked, providing us with both firm and practitioner views
- 2.3.2 Quotas were set against practitioner’s main case type i.e. civil, criminal or children to be representative of each type’s prevalence in the overall population. Although the quota for criminal respondents fell slightly short (due to the difficulty in making and keeping appointments with this group due to their court commitments); the quotas for both civil and children’s respondents were exceeded.

Table 2.1 Case Type Quotas

	Approximate Population (%)	Quotas Set (n)	Achieved Interviews (n)
Civil	58%	230	266
Criminal	42%	168	143
Children’s	<1%	2	7
Total	1669	400	416

- 2.3.3 Data related to the urban/rural location, Sherifdom, and job role of the total population was also provided by the Board, allowing targets (as opposed to firm quotas) to be set as shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Other Sample Targets

	Approximate Population (%)	Target Interviews (n)	Achieved Interviews (n)
Urban/Rural			
Urban	56%	225	202
Town	35%	140	164
Rural	9%	35	50
Sheriffdom			
Glasgow and Strathkelvin	24%	95	80
Grampian, Highland and Islands	12%	48	56
Lothian and Borders	16%	64	63
North Strathclyde	16%	62	80
South Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway	13%	52	54
Tayside, Central and Fife	19%	77	83
Job Role			
Partners	47%	190	225
Trainees	2%	9	0
All others	50%	202	191

2.4 Responses per Office

- 2.4.1 Table 2.3 outlines the number of respondents that were interviewed per office. This is split by partners and all other job roles. In most offices, only one or two respondents were interviewed, indicating that a good spread of interviews was achieved across different firms.

Table 2.3 Number of Respondents per Office

Number of respondents per office	Partners	All Other Solicitors
1	195	152
2	15	18
3	0	1

2.5 Responses per Firm

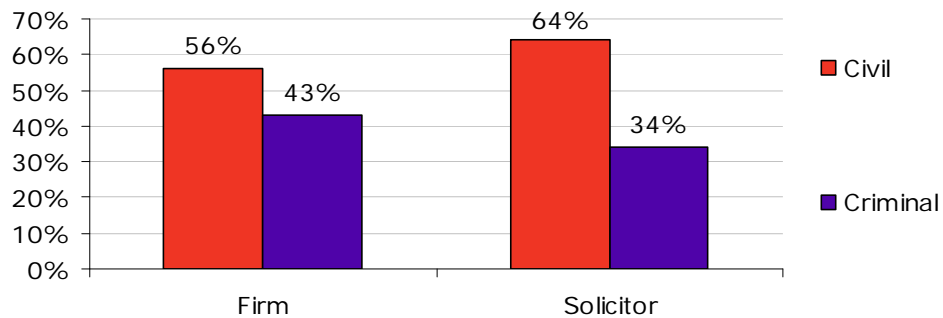
2.5.1 Table 2.4 outlines the number of respondents interviewed per firm (note: this does not take into account the different locations/offices occupied by many individual firms).

Table 2.4 Number of Respondents per Firm

Number of respondents per firm	Partners	All Other Solicitors
1	183	137
2	21	17
3	0	1
4	0	2
9	0	1

2.6 Main Case Type

2.6.1 All respondents (n=416) were asked to specify the case type that they **personally** handled most often under legal assistance. Partners (n=225) were also asked to specify what case type their **firm** handled most often under legal assistance. Figure 2.2 shows that, at both firm and individual solicitor level, over half of the respondents indicated they conduct mainly civil legal assistance.



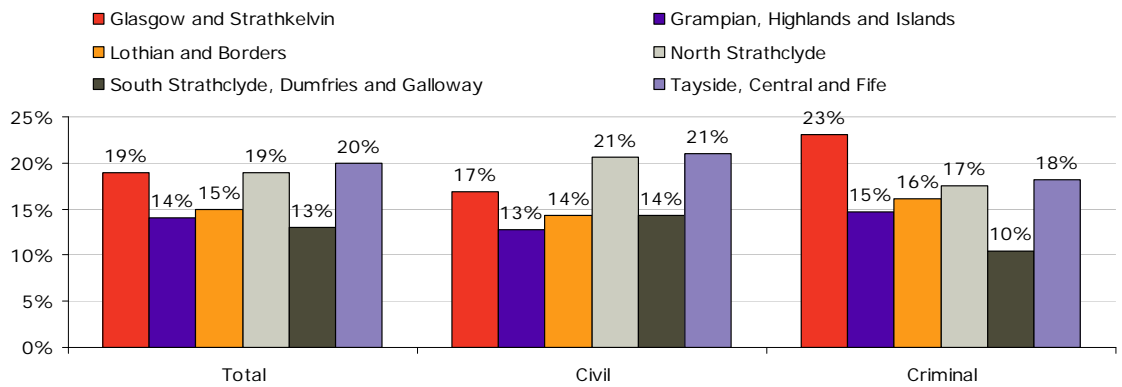
Base: Firm n=225; Solicitor n=416.

Figure 2.1 Main Case Type

2.7 Geography

2.7.1 The location of respondents was also recorded. Almost half of all respondents (49% n=202) came from an urban area, while 39% (n=164) came from a town and 12% (n=50) from a rural location. For analysis purposes, respondents from towns and rural areas were clustered together to produce a relatively even two-way split, i.e. urban (49%) vs. town/rural (51%).

2.7.2 Respondents' location was also recorded in relation to Sheriffdom. Figure 2.3 shows that respondents were fairly evenly spread across the six Sheriffdoms.



Base: Total n=416, Civil n=266, Criminal n=143.

Figure 2.2 Location of Respondents by Sheriffdom

2.8 Job Role

2.8.1 Just over half of all respondents (54% n=225) were partners (see Table 2.5). Responses to this question were used to route respondents to different questions in the questionnaire, with only partners being asked questions at the firm level. All respondents (including partners) were asked questions at the individual practitioner level. Clustering of responses was also applied at this question, to create two categories, namely partners (54%, n=225) and all others (46%, n=191). This breakdown was then used to disaggregate other key questions throughout the questionnaire.

Table 2.5 Job Title

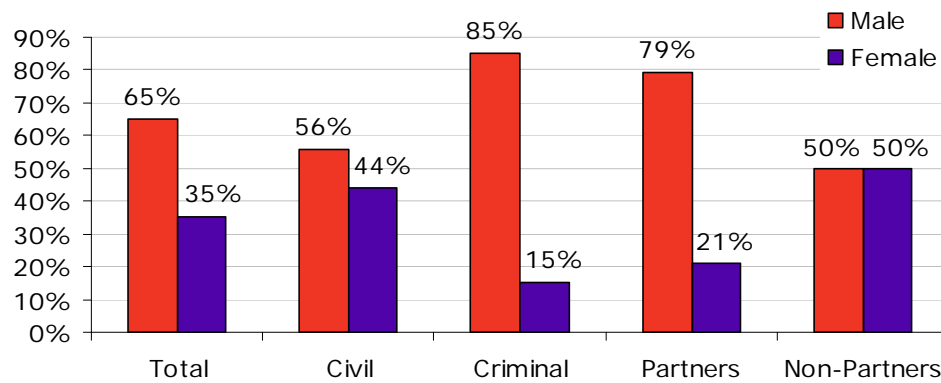
	Number	Percentage
Partner	225	54
Solicitor	94	23
Associate	40	10
Assistant solicitor	38	9
Senior solicitor	18	4
Solicitor Advocate	1	<1

Question OA. Base: n=416.

2.9 Demographics

Gender

2.9.1 Of the 416 respondents, 65% (n=272) were male and 35% (n=144) were female (see Figure 2.4). Civil respondents and non-partners were relatively evenly split between males and females, however a greater proportion of males made up the samples of criminal respondents and partners.

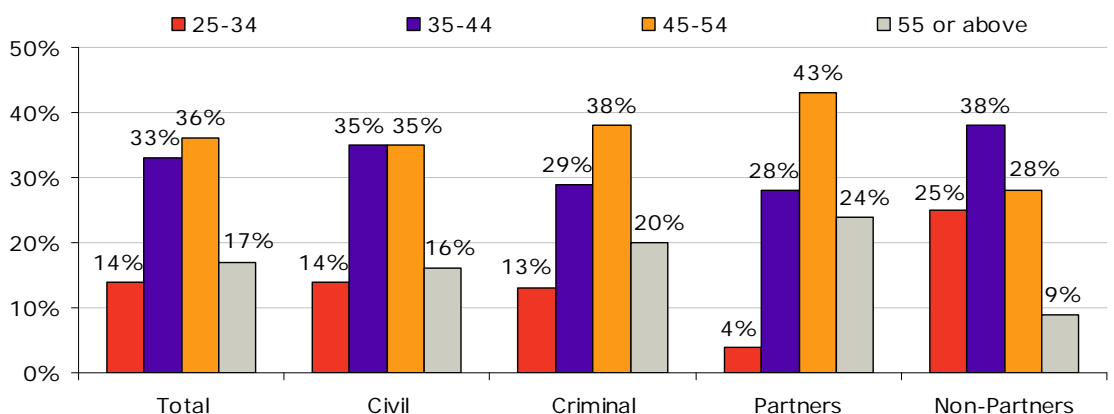


Base: Total n=416, Civil n=266, Criminal n=143, Partners n=225, Non-Partners n=191.

Figure 2.3 Gender by Main Case Type and Job Role

Age

2.9.2 Of the 415 respondents who specified their age, 14% (n=58) were aged between 25-34; 33% (n=137) were between 35-44; 36% (n=150) were between 45-55; and 17% (n=70) were 55 or above (see Figure 2.5). One civil partner did not disclose their age group. Most respondents, therefore, fell in the middle age bands (ages 35-55).



Base: Total n=415, Civil n=265, Criminal n=143, Partners n=224, Non-Partners n=191.

Figure 2.4 Age by Main Case Type and Job Role

Ethnicity

2.9.3 Most respondents (96%, n=399) indicated that they considered their ethnic background to be White; this was made up largely of those who considered themselves to be either Scottish or British. A further 3% of respondents did not disclose their ethnic background, leaving only 1% spread across other ethnic minority backgrounds.

Disability

- 2.9.4 Of the 410 respondents who answered the question, 6 respondents (1%) considered themselves to have a disability.
- 2.9.5 When asked how they would describe their disability responses included visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical co-ordination difficulties, chronic asthma and dyslexia.

2.10 Summary

- 2.10.1 A total of 416 individuals participated in the survey, exceeding the target within the timescale. A good spread of interviews was achieved across different firms and the achieved sample was largely representative of case type, urban/rural geography, Sherifdom and job role.
- 2.10.2 At both firm level and individual practitioner level, over half of the respondents' said their main case type was civil legal assistance. Only a very small minority of respondents said that their main case type was children's.
- 2.10.3 Males accounted for a higher proportion of the total sample than females; respondents were generally aged between 35 and 55, and described their ethnic background as white. Six respondents indicated that they considered themselves to have a disability.

3 Firms and Solicitors

3.1 Firm Background

3.1.1 The 225 respondents who indicated that they were a partner in their firm were asked a series of questions about the work of their firm. These included:

- tenure of provision of Legal Assistance;
- the range of case types handled;
- the extent of private funding;
- any changes to workload;
- the size of the firm;
- number and position of those working on legal assistance cases; and
- the recruitment of trainees.

Tenure of Provision

3.1.2 Table 3.1 shows that just over three quarters (78%, n=175) of partners stated that their firm had been carrying out work under legal assistance for over 10 years.

Table 3.1 Length of Time Firm has been Carrying out Work under Legal Assistance

	Number	Percentage
Under one year	2	1
1 year up to 3 years	12	5
Over 3 years and up to 5 years	10	5
Over 5 years and up to 10 years	23	10
Over 10 years	175	78
Don't know or unsure	3	1

Question A1. Base: n=225.

3.1.3 When analysed by Sheriffdom the South Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway Sheriffdom (90%, n=35) housed the largest proportion of firms that have been carrying out work under legal assistance for over 10 years, followed by Tayside, Central and Fife (81%, n=34) and North Strathclyde (80%, n=37) (see Table B.3.1 in Appendix B).

Range of Case Types Handled by Firms

- 3.1.4 Partners were asked to provide details of all the case types that their firm currently handles. Table 3.2 shows that 79% of firms (n=177) handled civil legal aid cases, 72% (n=163) handled criminal legal aid cases and 58% (n=131) handled children's legal aid cases. One third of firms (32%, n=73) indicated that they conducted only one type of legal aid work, 26% (n=58) conducted two different types and 42% (n=94) conducted all three types.

Table 3.2 Types of Cases Firm Currently Handles

	Number	Percentage*
Criminal Legal Aid	163	72
Summary	154	68
Solemn	143	64
Duty	133	59
Criminal Appeals	136	60
Civil Legal Aid	177	79
Family Cases	160	71
Non-Family Cases	142	63
Children's Legal Aid	131	58
Legal Aid Cases	121	54
Private	178	79
Family	128	57
Commercial	110	49
Conveyancing	123	55
Executries	120	53
Mental Health Cases	57	25
Immigration/Asylum Seeker Cases	22	10
Tribunals	63	28
Any other not mentioned	11	5

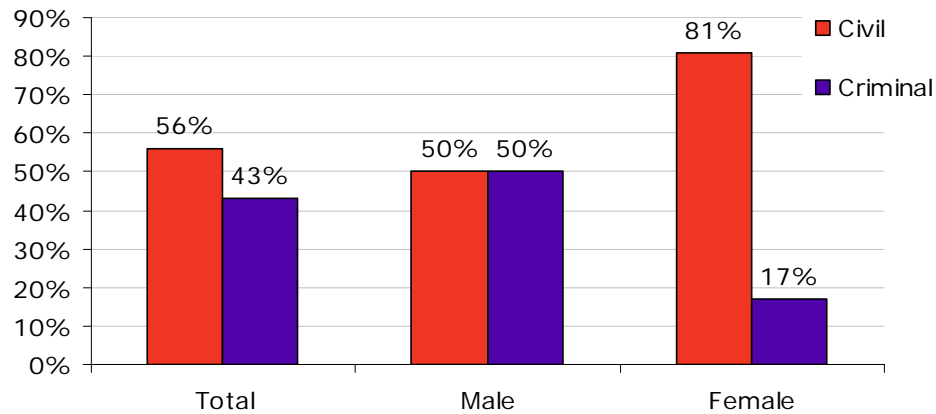
*Note: Totals do not equal 100% due to multiple responses.

Question A2. Base: n=225.

- 3.1.5 The breakdown of all case types were explored by main case type, urban/rural geography and gender (see Tables B.3.2 to B.3.4 in Appendix B).

3.1.6 Taking into account a series of questions relating to case type, partners were categorised into the main case type handled at the firm level. Figure 3.1 shows that just over half (56%, n=127) of the partners interviewed represented firms who mainly conduct civil legal aid cases, while just over two fifths (43%, n=96%) conduct mainly criminal legal aid cases. Only two partners indicated that their firm mainly deals with children’s legal aid cases.

3.1.7 Male partners were more likely to be split relatively evenly between those that conducted mainly civil and criminal cases, while female partners were more likely to mainly handle civil cases (81%, n=39) (see Table B.3.5 in Appendix B).

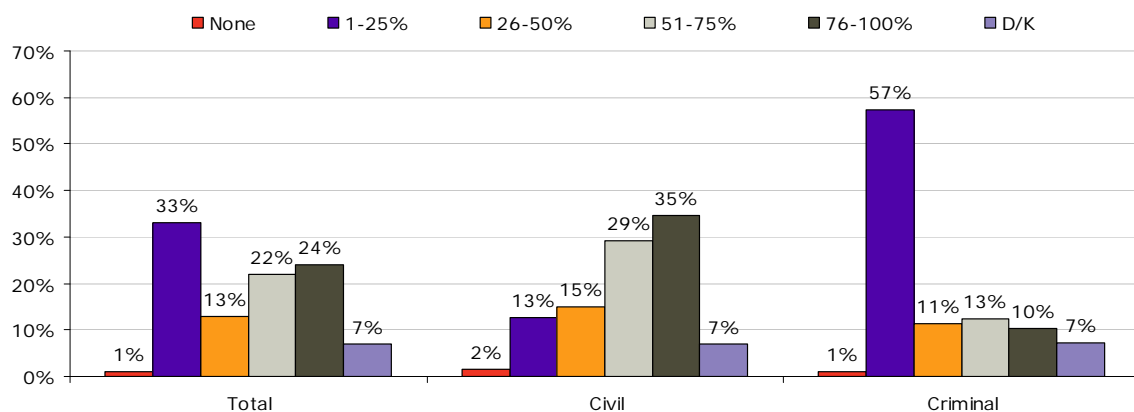


Base: Total n=225, Male n=177, Female n=48.

Figure 3.1 Main Case Type Handled at Firm Level

Private Funding

3.1.8 Partners were asked what proportion of their firm’s work was privately funded (see Figure 3.2). Just under half (46%, n=103) stated that less than half of their firm’s work was privately funded. Equally, 46% (n=103) said that privately funded work made up more than 50% of their work. 7% of partners did not know the proportion of private work their firm undertook.



Question A4. Base: Total n=225, Civil n=127, Criminal n=96.

Figure 3.2 Percentage of Firm's Work which is privately funded

- 3.1.9 Firms with a lower percentage of privately funded work were more likely to be located in urban areas (41%, n=42) whereas firms where more than three quarters of the work was privately funded were more likely to be located in town/rural areas (33%, n=40) (see Table B.3.7 in Appendix B).

Changes to Workload

- 3.1.10 Partners were asked if their firm's legal assistance caseload had increased, decreased or stayed the same over the last year in any of the areas that they work in, i.e. not just for their main case type. Table 3.3 shows that almost half of the partners who conduct criminal legal assistance (48%, n=78) reported that their firm's caseload had increased in the area of Assistance by way of Representation (ABWOR), while over half (58%, n=93) reported a decrease in the area of Advice and Assistance.
- 3.1.11 Table 3.3 also shows that 78% (n=140) of those partners who conduct civil legal assistance reported that their firm's caseload in Advice and Assistance had stayed the same or increased. This was also the case in Civil Legal Aid cases where 75% (n=134) of partners reported that their firm's caseload had stayed the same or increased over the last year.
- 3.1.12 75% (n=95) of partners whose firms also do children's legal assistance work reported that their firm's caseload in Children's Advice and Assistance had stayed the same or increased in the last year and 70% (n=91) said their firms Children's Legal Aid caseload had stayed the same or increased in the last year.

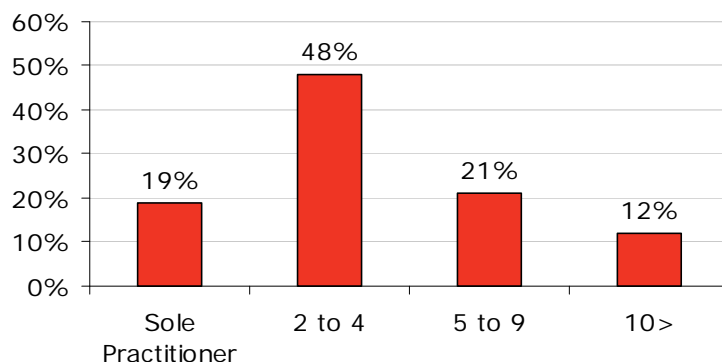
Table 3.3 Legal Aid Caseload of Firms

	Increased (%)	Stayed the same (%)	Decreased (%)	Don't know (%)	N/A (%)	Base (n)
Criminal						
Criminal advice and assistance (A&A)	10	28	58	3	1	163
Criminal assistance by way of representation (ABWOR)	48	30	16	5	1	163
Summary criminal legal aid cases	15	42	40	3	-	163
Summary appeal cases	7	52	23	7	11	163
Solemn criminal legal aid cases	27	44	17	6	6	163
Civil						
Civil advice and assistance (A&A)	39	40	14	6	1	177
Civil assistance by way of representation (ABWOR)	17	34	9	8	32	177
Civil legal aid cases	35	40	16	7	2	177
Children's						
Children's advice and assistance (A&A)	28	45	15	9	3	131
Children's legal aid cases	24	46	18	8	4	131

Question A5.

Number of Solicitors Employed

- 3.1.13 Partners were asked how many solicitors their firm employed across Scotland. Figure 3.3 shows that almost half of the firms (48%, n=107) employed 2 to 4 solicitors. A total of 43 partners (19%) were sole practitioners, with 24 working mainly in criminal legal assistance, 18 working mainly in civil legal assistance, and one working mainly in children's legal assistance.



Question A6. Base: n=225.

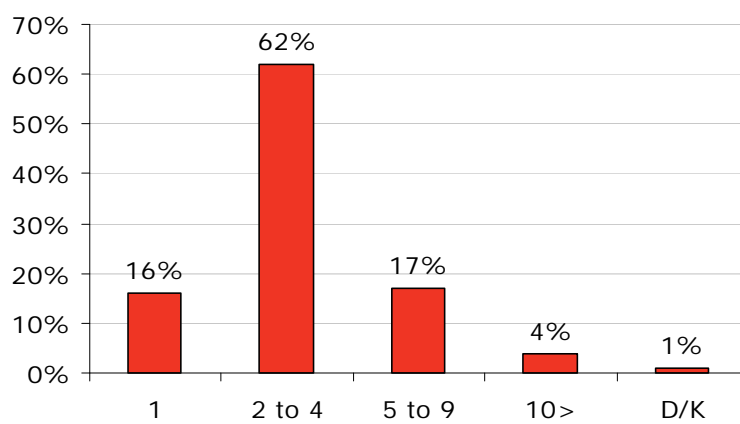
Figure 3.3 Number of Solicitors Employed by Firm

3.1.14 The Sheriffdom with the highest concentration of sole practitioners was Glasgow and Strathkelvin (35%, n=14), while Tayside, Central and Fife had the lowest concentration of sole practitioners (7%, n=3). The highest concentration of firm’s that employ 10 or more staff was in Lothian and Borders (21%, n=7) (see Table B.3.9 in Appendix B).

3.1.15 Firms carrying out work under legal assistance for more than 10 years were the only firms to have more than 10 solicitors in their firm (14%, n=24), and were also more likely to employ more than 5 solicitors (26%, n=46).

Solicitors Providing Work Under Legal Assistance

3.1.16 All partners other than sole practitioners were asked how many of their firm’s solicitors work on legal assistance cases. Two thirds (62%, n=113) stated that 2 to 4 solicitors provided work under legal assistance. Figure 3.4 details all responses to this question.



Question A7. Base: n=181.

Figure 3.4 Number of Solicitors that Provide Work under Legal Assistance

3.1.17 Around half of all firms, regardless of the amount of work which is privately funded, said that 2-4 solicitors provide work under legal assistance. However, firms where over 50% of their business is privately funded were more likely to say that only one solicitor would provide work under legal assistance compared to those where less than 50% of the work was privately funded (see Table B.3.12 in Appendix B).

3.1.18 Partners were asked to indicate all of the solicitor positions their firm had working on legal assistance cases (multiple responses were possible at this question). Of the 182 partners that selected *at least* one position, the most common solicitor position working on these cases were partners themselves (97%, n=177) followed by assistant solicitors (39%, n=71) (Table 3.4 details all of the responses given).

Table 3.4 Solicitor Positions Working on Legal Assistance Cases

	Number	Percentage*
Trainee Solicitor	26	14
Assistant Solicitor	71	39
Senior Solicitor	9	5
Associate	31	17
Partner	177	97
Solicitor Advocate	7	4
Other Solicitor	21	12
Don't know	1	1

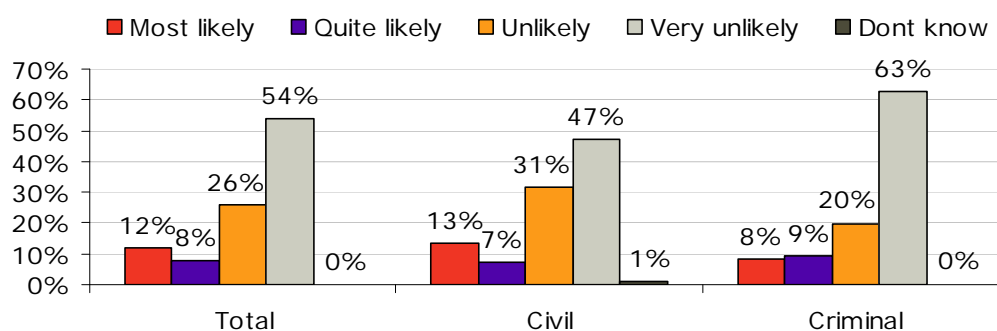
*Note: Totals do not equal 100% due to multiple responses.

Question A8. Base: n=182.

- 3.1.19 Firm's whose main case type is civil were more likely to have partners working on legal assistance cases (84%, n=107) than firm's whose main case type is criminal (72%, n=69) (see Table B.3.13 in Appendix B).
- 3.1.20 Firms in urban areas were more likely to have solicitor advocates working on legal assistance cases than those in town/rural areas (6% compared to 1%). They were also more likely to have 'other' types of solicitors working on legal assistance cases (15% compared to 5%) (see Table B.3.14 in Appendix B).

Recruitment of Trainees

- 3.1.21 20% (n=43) of partner's said that it was likely their firm would recruit a trainee solicitor within the next year (see Figure 3.5).



Question A9. Base: Total n=225, Civil n=127, Criminal n=96.

Figure 3.5 Likelihood that Firm will Recruit Trainee Solicitors within Next Year

- 3.1.22 Firms employing 10 or more solicitors were more likely to recruit a trainee within the next year (62%, n=16). Not surprisingly, sole practitioners were the least likely to recruit a trainee with 93% (n=40) saying it would be unlikely (see Table B.3.16 in Appendix B).

- 3.1.23 Those partners that said it was likely that their firm would recruit trainee solicitors within the next year (n=43) were asked if the trainee would be expected to provide work under any type of legal assistance, and if so, which ones. Table 3.5 shows that 35% of firms would expect their trainee to work on civil legal aid cases, while 23% of firms would expect them to work on criminal legal aid cases. 19% of partners stated that they would not expect their trainee to work on any kind of legal aid cases.

Table 3.5 Likely Areas of Legal Aid Work for Trainees

	Number	Percentage
Civil	15	35
Criminal	10	23
Children's	2	5
No area of legal aid	8	19
Maybe/Don't know	8	19

Question A10. Base: n=43.

- 3.1.24 As would be expected, over half of those firms whose main case type was civil (58%, n=15) stated that trainees would be expected to provide work under civil legal assistance and over half of those firm's whose main case type was criminal (59%, n=10) stated that trainees would be expected to provide work under criminal legal assistance. Just under one quarter (23%, n=6) of firms whose main case type is civil stated that they would not expect a trainee to provide work under any type of legal assistance (see Table B.3.17 in Appendix B).
- 3.1.25 Partners that indicated it was unlikely that they would recruit trainee solicitors within the next year were asked to explain why their firm was not offering traineeships. The most common reason was that they couldn't afford to do so (56%, n=102). Table 3.6 details all of the reasons that partners gave for not offering traineeships.

Table 3.6 Reasons for Not Offering Traineeships

	Number	Percentage*
We never have	12	7
Can't afford to	102	56
Don't have time to train them	15	8
Don't have the office space	16	9
Don't have the facilities	8	4
No need for a trainee	37	20
Not been successful in filling past trainee vacancies	3	2
Employ paralegals to cover	6	3
Other	61	34
Total	260	143

*Note: Totals do not equal 100% due to multiple responses.

Question A11. Base: n=181.

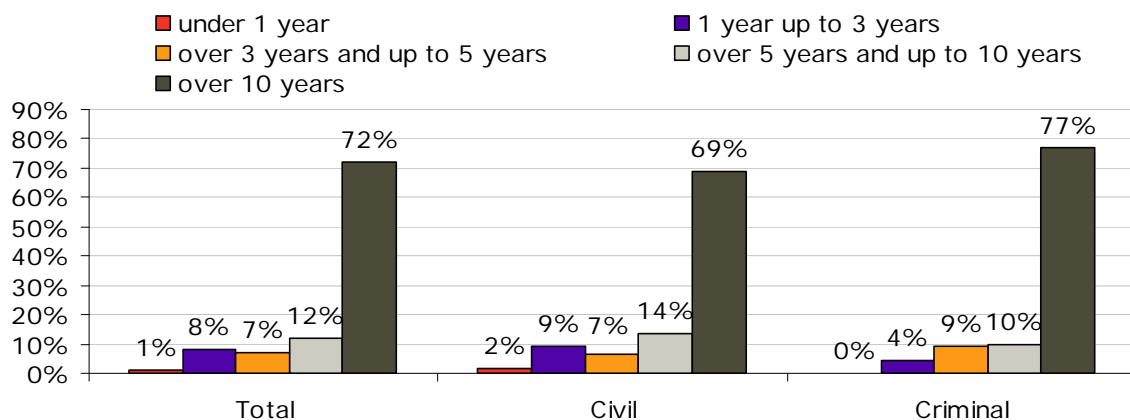
- 3.1.26 The main 'other' reasons cited were that the firm already employed a trainee (n=16) and that they could not take on a trainee due to the economic downturn (n=5).

3.2 Solicitor Background

- 3.2.1 All respondents (n=416) were asked to provide some details of their background in providing legal assistance. This included the number of years they had been carrying out work under legal assistance, as well as a series of questions to determine the main case type they work on.

Tenure of Legal Aid Provision

- 3.2.2 Figure 3.6 shows that nearly three quarters of all respondents (72%, n=298) had been carrying out work under legal assistance for over 10 years.



Question C1. Base: Total n=416, Civil n=266, Criminal n=143.

Figure 3.6 Number of Years Carrying out Work under Legal Assistance

3.2.3 In general, male respondents had been carrying out work under legal assistance for longer than females. 90% (n=245) of males reported that they had been carrying out work under legal assistance for over 5 years compared to 72% (n=104) of females (see Table B.3.19 in Appendix B).

3.2.4 Partners were more likely than non-partners to have been carrying out work under legal assistance for more than 10 years (89%, n=200 to 51%, n=98 respectively) (see Table B.3.20 in Appendix B).

Case Type Handling

3.2.5 Respondents were asked a series of questions around what case types they personally handled under legal assistance. These allowed the main case type to be identified (as shown in Table 3.7). This classification was used to route respondents to particular questions within the questionnaire.

Table 3.7 Main Case Type Handled by Solicitors

	Number	Percentage
Civil	266	64
Criminal	143	34
Children's	7	2

Base: n=416.

3.2.6 Females were more likely than males to handle civil cases (81%, n=116 compared to 55%, n=150). However, males tended to dominate where the main case type handled was criminal (45%, n=121 compared to 15%, n=22) (see Table B.3.21 in Appendix B).

3.3 Summary

3.3.1 Just over three quarters of partners stated that their firm had been carrying out work under legal assistance for over 10 years.

- 3.3.2 One third of partners said their firms (32%) conducted only one type of legal assistance work while the remainder (68%) conducted a mix of case types. Over half of all firms' main case type was civil (56%); a further 43% indicated their main type was criminal and only 1% worked mainly on children's legal assistance. Female partners were more likely to handle civil cases, while male partners were more likely to be split evenly between those that conducted mainly civil and criminal cases.
- 3.3.3 Almost half of all criminal partners (48%) reported that their firm's caseload had increased in the area of Assistance by way of Representation (ABWOR), while over half (58%) reported a decrease in the area of Advice and Assistance over the last year. Meanwhile, around three quarters of all civil partners reported that their firm's caseload in Advice and Assistance (79%) and in Civil Legal Aid cases (75%) had either stayed the same or increased.
- 3.3.4 20% of partner's said that it would be likely that their firm would recruit a trainee solicitor in the next year. Where firms did expect to recruit trainees, around one third (35%) would expect them to work on civil legal assistance cases, and around a quarter (23%) would expect them to work on criminal legal assistance cases; this was largely driven by the main case type conducted by the firm. Those firms that did not expect to recruit a trainee indicated this was generally because they couldn't afford to do so (56%).
- 3.3.5 Nearly three quarters of all respondents (72%) had personally been carrying out work under legal assistance for over 10 years, and in general, males had been carrying out work under legal assistance for longer periods than females.
- 3.3.6 Nearly two thirds (64%) of all practitioners indicated that their main case type was civil legal assistance, while a third (34%) indicated it was criminal legal assistance. Only a small minority (2%) indicated that they mainly practiced children's legal assistance.

4.1 Supply at Firm Level

- 4.1.1 Partners were asked more specific details about the types and extent of legal services they supply, including identifying any areas where they have expanded the type of work they do in recent years. They were also asked to consider whether their firm was likely to still be conducting legal assistance work in three years time, and to outline their firm's status on accepting new clients.

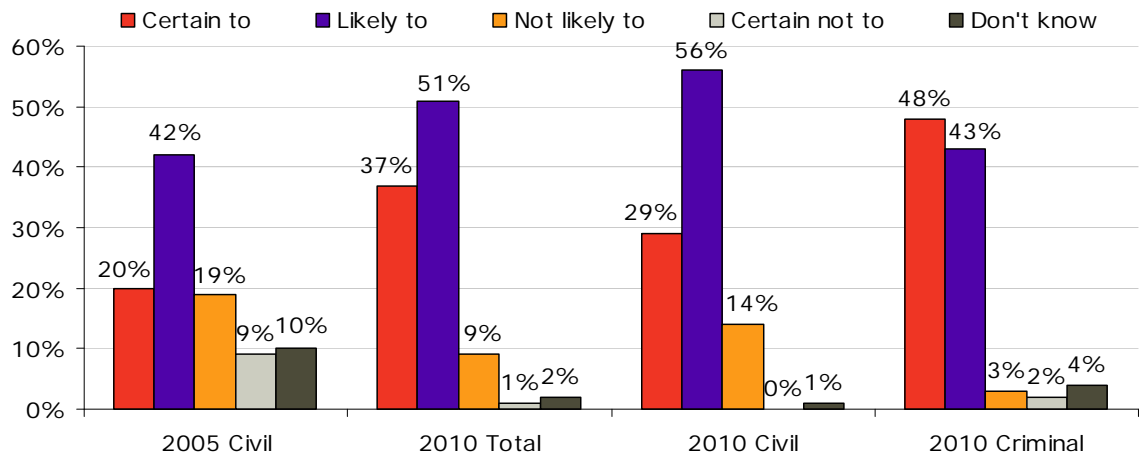
Expansion within the Last Two Years

- 4.1.2 Partners were asked if their firm had expanded the type of legal assistance or private cases it worked on in the last two years. The majority of partners (83% n=186) stated that their firm had not expanded in the last two years.
- 4.1.3 Although the numbers were small, areas where expansion had occurred were civil legal assistance (7%, n=15), made up of family cases (n=9) and non-family cases (n=7) and private work (6%, n=13) made up mainly of family cases (n=8) and commercial cases (n=4). There were small mentions (ranging from 2-4%) of expansion into criminal legal assistance work, children's legal aid, mental health cases, and tribunals.
- 4.1.4 Where civil firms had expanded, the main reason was because it was more lucrative/because of finances (n=5).
- 4.1.5 The main reasons for criminal firms expanding their coverage was because of a growing client demand/wider client base (n=6).

Future Commitment to Legal Assistance Work

- 4.1.6 All partners were asked how likely they thought it was that their firm would still be doing any type of legal assistance work in three years time. This question was also asked in a similar survey of civil practitioners in 2005², and the results have been compared in Figure 4.1. Only 10% (n=23) of partners said they would probably not be doing any type of legal assistance work in three years time, compared to 28% in 2005. Meanwhile, 88% (n=197) of partners said that they were either likely or certain to still be conducting legal aid work, compared to 62% in 2005, a 26% increase.
- 4.1.7 There has been a large increase in the number of civil partners that said their firm would be conducting legal assistance work in three years time since the Board's last survey of civil practitioners in 2005: in this survey 85% of civil partners (n=108) said they were likely or certain to, compared to 62% of civil solicitors in 2005, a 23% increase.

² MORI Scotland, (2005) "Solicitors' Views on the Impact of the Civil Legal Aid Reform". Prepared for the Scottish Legal Aid Board. Accessed at http://www.slab.org.uk/about_us/research/stakeholders/archive/civil_reform/mori_civil_reform_research.pdf



2010: Question B3. Base: Total n=225, Civil n=127, Criminal n=96.
 2005: Question 3. Base: n=300.

Figure 4.1 Conducting Legal Assistance Work in Three Years Time (2005 & 2010)

- 4.1.8 Firms where less than 75% of their work is privately funded were more likely to say that they would be doing legal assistance work in three years time (between 92% and 94%). Firms where more than three quarters of their work is privately funded were less likely to say that they would be doing legal assistance work in three years time (24% said it was unlikely compared to 3% of respondents where private work made up less than a quarter of their workload, see Table B.4.1 in Appendix B).
- 4.1.9 The main reason given by respondents as to why they are unlikely to provide work under legal assistance in the future was because it is not economically viable/the firm cannot afford it (n=18).

New Civil Legal Assistance Cases

- 4.1.10 Civil partners **only** (n=127) were asked which of the following statements best described their firm's current status on accepting new civil legal assistance cases:
- accepting all clients who are likely to be eligible for civil legal assistance;
 - only accepting pre-existing clients who are likely to be eligible for civil legal assistance; or
 - not accepting any new clients on a civil legal assistance basis but will accept them on a private basis.
- 4.1.11 Over half of civil partners (57%, n=72) said that 'accepting all clients who are likely to be eligible for civil legal assistance' best described their firm's current status on accepting new civil legal assistance cases, while 10% (n=13) said that they were 'only accepting pre-existing clients who are likely to be eligible for civil legal assistance'. Only two respondents said they were 'not accepting any new clients on a civil legal assistance basis but will accept them on a private basis'. A further 31% (n=40) of civil partners said that another way best describes their firm's current status on accepting new clients, most of whom indicated that they decide on a case by case basis.

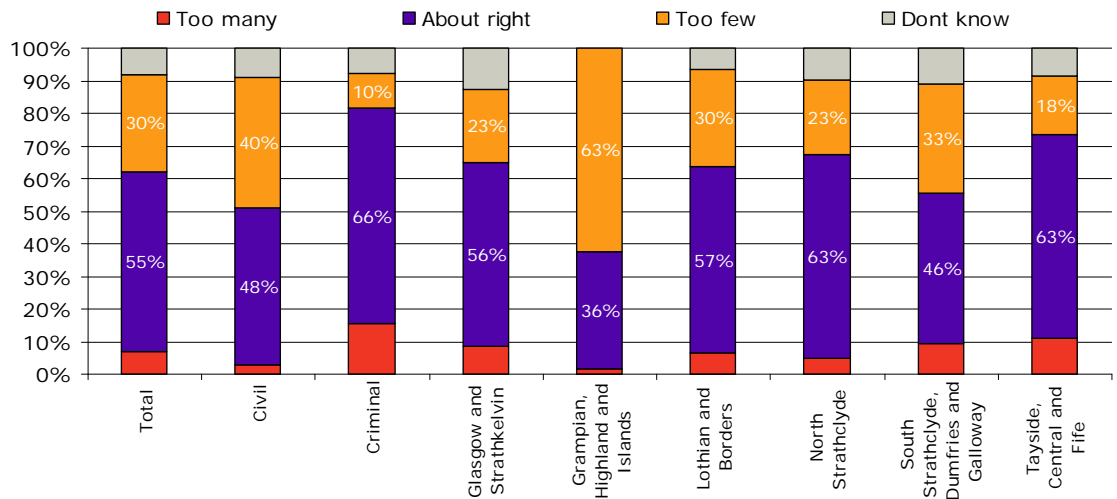
- 4.1.12 This is a large reduction in the number of respondents who said they had stopped taking on new cases compared to the results of the 2005 Civil Reform Survey³. In 2005 43% (n=128) of respondents indicated that they had stopped taking on new cases, compared to 12% (n=15) currently not accepting new civil legal assistance clients in the 2010 survey (and 13 of them will continue to accept pre-existing clients for legal assistance cases).
- 4.1.13 Civil partners (n=127) were asked if their firm had turned away clients who may have qualified for civil legal assistance since the extension to the rules for eligibility last year. Over half (58%, n=73) said that they had not turned away clients who may have qualified for civil legal assistance, while 37% (n=47) said that they had, and 5% (n=7) said that they didn't know or couldn't remember.
- 4.1.14 Those civil partners who had turned away clients were asked to explain why their firm did not accept these cases. Many said it was because the case was not financially viable (n=18) or simply not one they wanted to work on (n=9). It should be noted that individual solicitors indicating that they had turned away clients, does not mean that those clients did not subsequently find another solicitor to represent them. Indeed the Boards 2009 Applicants Survey results indicated that 95% of respondents had not encountered any difficulties in finding a legal aid solicitor and that 82% had been represented by the first solicitor they contacted⁴.
- 4.1.15 Smaller firms (i.e. those with up to 4 solicitors) were more likely to report that they had not turned away clients who may have qualified for civil legal assistance since the extension of the rules for eligibility for civil legal aid (between 67% and 69%) compared to larger firms (i.e. those with 5 or more solicitors) (between 39% and 41%) (see Table B.4.2 in Appendix B).
- 4.1.16 Almost half of those respondents (45%, n=33) located in town/rural areas stated that they had turned away clients who may have qualified for civil legal assistance since the extension to the rules for eligibility compared to only a quarter of those located in urban areas (26%, n=14) (see Table B.4.3 in Appendix B).
- 4.1.17 Grampian, Highland and Islands was the Sheriffdom that was most likely to have turned away clients who may have qualified for civil legal aid assistance (67%, n=8), while North Strathclyde was the most likely to say they had not turned away clients who may have qualified for civil legal aid assistance (71%, n=20) (see Table B.4.4 in Appendix B).

4.2 Supply within Local Area

- 4.2.1 All respondents (n=416) were asked to indicate what they thought about the number of legal assistance solicitors in their local area. Figure 4.2 shows that 7% (n=30) said there are too many legal assistance solicitors in their local area, just over half (55%, n=228) said it is about right and almost a third (30%, n=123) felt that there are too few.

³ MORI Scotland, (2005) "Solicitors' Views on the Impact of the Civil Legal Aid Reform". Prepared for the Scottish Legal Aid Board. Accessed at http://www.slab.org.uk/about_us/research/stakeholders/archive/civil_reform/mori_civil_reform_research.pdf

⁴ Progressive Partnership, (2009) "Scottish Legal Aid Board Applicants Survey 2009". Prepared for the Scottish Legal Aid Board. Accessed at http://www.slab.org.uk/about_us/research/documents/LegalAidApplicantsFINALreport.pdf



Question D1. Base: Total n=416, Civil n=266, Criminal n=143, Glasgow and Strathkelvin n=80, Grampian, Highland and Islands n=56, Lothian and Borders n=63, North Strathclyde n=80, South Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway n=54, Tayside, Central and Fife n=83.

Figure 4.2 Number of Legal Assistance Solicitors

- 4.2.2 Respondents whose main case type was civil were more likely to say that there were too few legal assistance solicitors in their local area (40%, n=106) than those whose main case type was criminal (11%, n=15) (see Figure 4.2). Conversely, those whose main case type was criminal were more likely than civil respondents to indicate that there were too many legal assistance solicitors in their local area; 15% (n=22) of criminal solicitors compared with only 3% (n=8) of civil solicitors (see Table B.4.5 in Appendix B).
- 4.2.3 Females were more likely than males to say that there were too few legal assistance solicitors in their local area (37%, n=53 compared to 26%, n=70). There were, however, more women working in the civil field (see Table B.4.6 in Appendix B).
- 4.2.4 The Sheriffdom with the largest proportion of respondents that felt there were too few legal assistance solicitors in their local area was Grampian, Highlands and Islands (63%, n=35) (see Figure 4.2). Meanwhile, Tayside, Central and Fife had the largest proportion of respondents (11%, n=9) who felt there were too many legal assistance solicitors in their local area (see Table B.4.7 in Appendix B).

Unmet Demand

- 4.2.5 Respondents were also asked if they felt there was any unmet demand in their local area within specific areas of work. Almost a third of respondents (32%, n=133) felt that there was no unmet demand within their local area. However, the most commonly identified areas of work where respondents felt there was an unmet demand included civil legal aid generally, and civil legal aid – family cases in particular.
- 4.2.6 Although on average levels of unmet demand was low for criminal legal aid higher than average levels were reported in South Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway (17%, n=9) and Grampian, Highland and Islands (13%, n=7) although the numbers are very small (see Table B.4.9 in Appendix B).

Table 4.1 Unmet Demands within Local Area

	Number	Percentage*
Criminal Legal Aid	26	6
Summary	20	5
Solemn	16	4
Duty	11	3
Criminal Appeals	9	2
Don't know	2	1
Civil Legal Aid	156	38
Family Cases	108	26
Non-Family Cases	94	23
Don't Know	7	2
Children's Legal Aid	55	13
Legal Aid Cases	46	11
Don't Know	9	2
Private	25	6
Family	17	4
Commercial	9	2
Conveyancing	9	2
Executries	8	2
Don't know	1	<1
Mental Health Cases	67	16
Immigration/Asylum Seeker Cases	63	15
Tribunals	31	8
Any other not mentioned	26	6
No unmet demands	133	32
Don't know	39	9

*Note: Totals do not equal 100% due to multiple responses.

Question D2. Base: n=416.

- 4.2.7 Although results are not statistically significant, the highest levels of unmet demand for immigration/asylum seeker cases were recorded in Tayside, Central and Fife (18%, n=15), and North Strathclyde (18%, n=14), followed by Grampian, Highland and Islands (16%, n=9) and Glasgow and Strathkelvin (15%, n=12). Both Lothian and Borders and South Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway felt there was less unmet demand in this work area (11%, n=7 and 11%, n=6 respectively) (see Table B.4.9 in Appendix B).

- 4.2.8 Civil respondents were slightly more likely to identify unmet demand in Children's legal aid and private case types compared to criminal respondents. However, there were no statistically significant differences between those who considered there to be unmet demand in criminal and civil legal aid by case type.
- 4.2.9 Table 4.2 shows that, although still a minority, those in town/rural areas were more likely to indicate that there was unmet demand in criminal legal aid for duty and criminal appeals cases, and mental health cases.

Table 4.2 Unmet Demand for Work by Case Type and Urban/Rural Geography

	Case Type (%)			Geography (%)	
	Civil	Criminal	Children	Urban	Rural
Criminal Legal Aid	6	6	-	5	8
Criminal Legal Aid - Summary	5	5	-	4	6
Criminal Legal Aid - Solemn	4	4	-	3	5
Criminal Legal Aid - Duty	3	3	-	1	4
Criminal Legal Aid - Criminal Appeals	2	2	-	1	4
Criminal – Don't know	<1	1	-	1	-
Civil Legal Aid	37	41	14	37	38
Civil Legal Aid – Family Cases	26	27	14	28	24
Civil Legal Aid - Non-Family Cases	23	24	-	21	24
Civil – Don't Know	1	3	-	3	1
Children's Legal Aid	16	7	29	12	15
Children's Legal Aid – Legal Aid Cases	14	6	29	10	12
Children's – Don't Know	1	-	-	1	1
Private	8	2	14	4	7
Private - Family	5	2	14	3	5
Private - Commercial	3	1	-	3	2
Private – Conveyancing	3	1	-	3	2
Private – Executries	3	1	-	2	2
Private – Don't know	<1	-	-	1	-
Mental Health Cases	17	15	14	11	21
Immigration/Asylum Seeker Cases	15	16	-	17	13
Tribunals	9	6	-	5	10
Any other not mentioned	9	1	-	5	7
No unmet demand	31	32	57	28	36
Don't know	9	10	-	14	5
Base (n)	266	143	7	202	214

Note 1: Totals do not equal 100% due to multiple responses.

Note 2: Shaded cells indicate where statistically significant differences were identified.

Question D2.

4.3 Summary

- 4.3.1 Although the majority of partners (83%) stated that their firm had not undertaken any expansion in the last two years expansion was reported in civil legal aid by a minority of firms (7%).
- 4.3.2 Most partners (88%) said that they were either likely or certain to still be doing legal assistance work in three years time while a small minority (10%) thought it unlikely due to the fact that it was perceived as not being economically viable for the firm.
- 4.3.3 Over half of all civil partners (57%) said that 'accepting all clients who are likely to be eligible for civil legal assistance' best described their firm's current status on accepting new civil legal assistance cases. Only two respondents said they were 'not accepting any new clients on a civil legal assistance basis but will accept them on a private basis'. Similarly, over half of all civil partners (58%) said that they had not turned away clients who may have qualified for civil legal assistance since the extension of the rules for eligibility. Those civil partners who had turned away clients generally said this was because the case was not financially viable.
- 4.3.4 Almost half of those civil partners (45%) located in town/rural areas stated that they had turned away clients who may have qualified for civil legal aid assistance since the extension of the rules for eligibility for civil legal aid, compared to only a quarter of those located in urban areas (26%). Meanwhile, Grampian, Highland and Islands was the Sheriffdom that was most likely to have turned away clients (67%), while North Strathclyde was the most likely to say they had not turned clients away (71%).
- 4.3.5 Just over half of all respondents (55%) felt that supply was about right, while almost a third (30%) felt that there are too few legal assistance solicitors in their local area. Respondents whose main case type was civil were more likely to say that there were too few legal assistance solicitors in their local area (40%) than those whose main case type was criminal (11%). Meanwhile, criminal respondents (15%) were more likely than civil respondents (3%) to say that there were too many legal assistance solicitors in their local area. Further, Grampian, Highland and Islands (63%) had the largest proportion of respondents that felt there were too few legal assistance solicitors in their local area, while Tayside, Central and Fife had the largest proportion (11%) who felt there were too many.
- 4.3.6 A large proportion of respondents felt that there were no unmet demands within their local area. However, the most commonly identified areas of work where respondents felt there was an unmet demand included civil legal aid generally, and civil legal aid – family cases, in particular. This was considered to be an area of unmet need by practitioners across all case types.

5 Forms, Processes and Fees

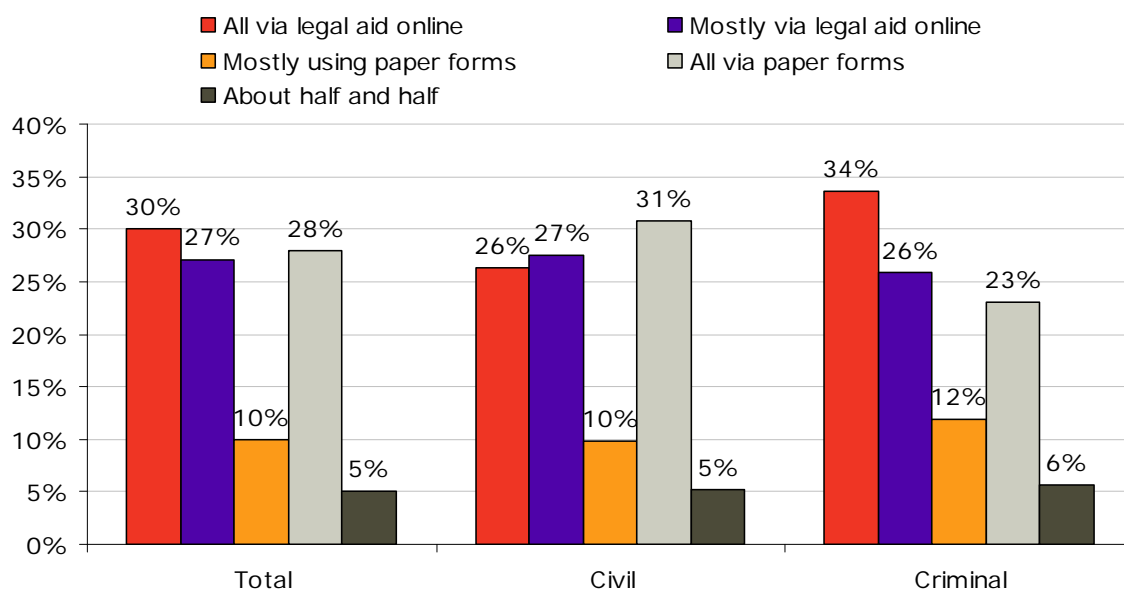
5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This section explores respondents' views on the Board's forms and processes:

- criminal applications;
- civil applications;
- children's applications;
- criminal accounts;
- civil accounts; and
- fees.

5.2 Legal Aid Online

5.2.1 Over half of all respondents (57%, n=233) submit their legal assistance applications to the Board either solely or mostly via legal aid online, while 38% (n=160) submit them either all or mostly via paper forms (see Figure 5.1).



Question E1. Base: Total n=416, Civil n=266, Criminal n=143.

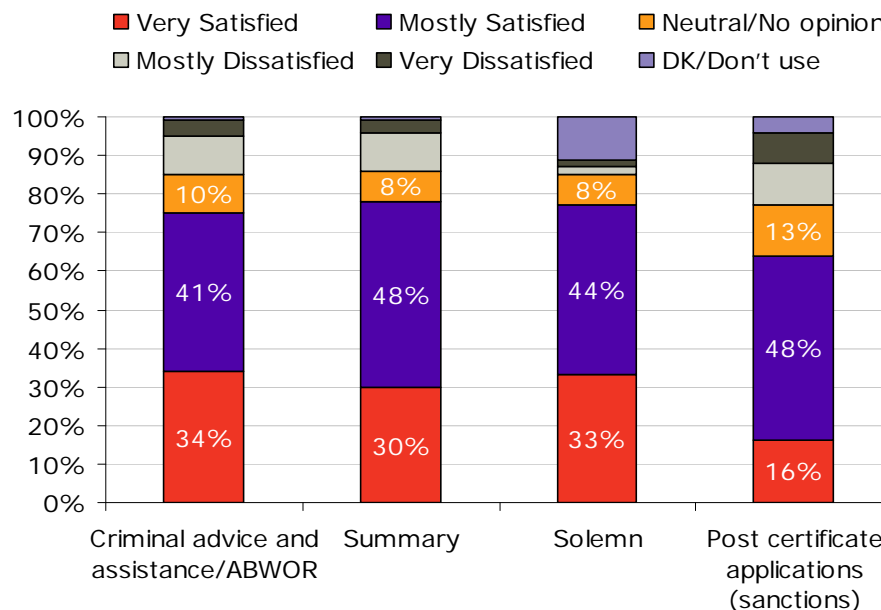
Figure 5.1 Method of Application - Legal Aid Online v Paper

5.2.2 Criminal respondents were slightly more likely than civil respondents to submit their applications using legal aid online (59% compared to 54%).

5.2.3 As illustrated in greater detail below satisfaction is higher amongst those that use legal aid online compared to those using paper forms. On average those that submitted all or most of their applications using legal aid online were 20% more satisfied with the application process than those that did all or most of their applications on paper. The overall number of people who were dissatisfied in either area was small.

5.3 Criminal Applications

5.3.1 All criminal respondents (n=143) were asked to what extent they were satisfied with the application process for different types of criminal legal assistance. Figure 5.2 shows that, for most application processes at least three quarters of respondents were satisfied and a further 8-13% were neutral. Post certificate applications (sanctions) were slightly lower with 64% satisfied and 13% neutral. Dissatisfaction rates were low at 4% dissatisfied with the solemn application process, 13% dissatisfied with the criminal A&A/ABWOR application process and 19% dissatisfied with the post certificate applications (sanctions) application process.



Question E2, Criminal Section. Base: n=143.

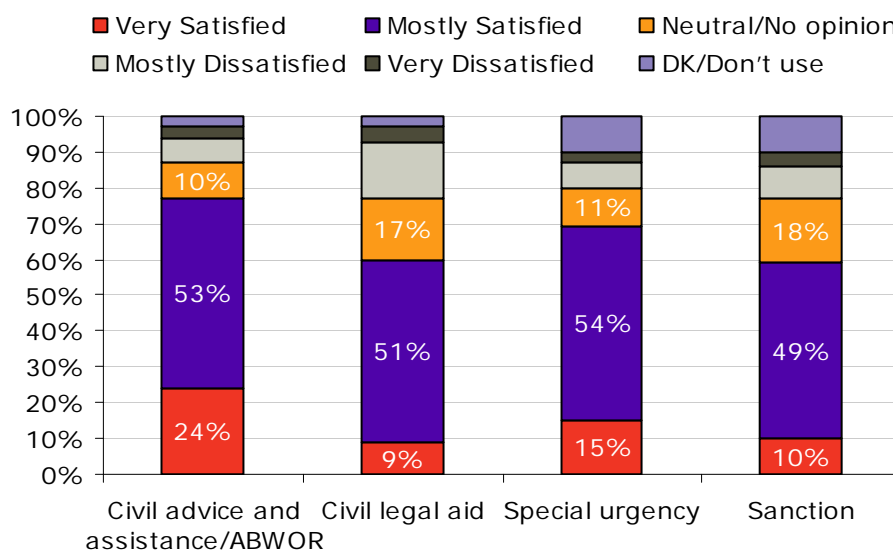
Figure 5.2 Satisfaction with Criminal Application Process

- 5.3.2 Respondents who submitted criminal advice and assistance/ABWOR applications via legal aid online were more satisfied with the process than those who submitted them by paper forms. Of the respondents who submit their forms *solely* by legal aid online 88% were satisfied with the process, a further 6% were neutral and only 6% were dissatisfied compared to 58% of respondents who *solely* submit via paper forms being satisfied, 15% were neutral and 24% were dissatisfied. (See Table B.5.1 in Appendix B).
- 5.3.3 Similarly, 92% of respondents who submit criminal summary applications *solely* via legal aid online were satisfied with the process, a further 4% were neutral and only 4% were dissatisfied compared to 73% of respondents who *solely* submit them via paper forms being satisfied, 6% being neutral and 21% being dissatisfied. (See Table B.5.2 in Appendix B).
- 5.3.4 Respondents that submit post certificate applications (sanctions) *mostly* using paper forms reported the highest level of dissatisfaction with the process although this was still only 9 respondents. Respondents who submit *all* post certificate applications via legal aid online were the most satisfied with only 4% (n=2) of respondents stating they were dissatisfied (See Table B.5.3 in Appendix B).

- 5.3.5 Levels of dissatisfaction are low with the criminal applications process but where respondents were dissatisfied they were asked to explain why. The main reasons were that the forms were too time consuming to complete (n=15) and forms were too complex (n=14).

5.4 Civil Applications

- 5.4.1 All civil respondents (n=266) were asked to what extent they were satisfied with the application process for the different types of civil legal assistance. Figure 5.3 shows that between 59% (for sanction) and 77% (for civil advice and assistance/ABWOR) of respondents were satisfied. On average across all types 14% of respondents were neutral and 13% were dissatisfied.



Question E2, Civil Section. Base: n=266.

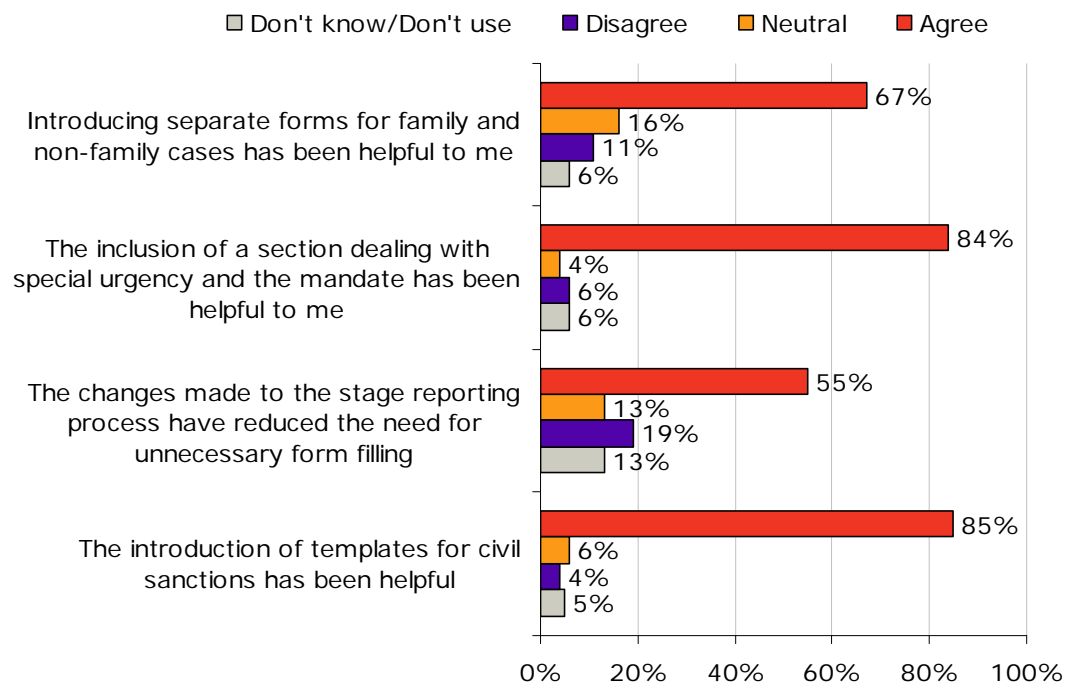
Figure 5.3 Satisfaction with Civil Application Process

- 5.4.2 Those who submit civil advice and assistance/ABWOR applications *solely* via legal aid online were more satisfied with this process (91% satisfied and an additional 3% were neutral), compared to 70% of respondents who submit them *solely* via paper forms (with an additional 17% being neutral about the process). (See Table B.5.4 in Appendix B).
- 5.4.3 Of those respondents who submit civil special urgency applications *solely* via legal aid online, over three quarters (79%) were satisfied with the process and a further 9% were neutral, compared to 65% of those who submit them *solely* via paper forms being satisfied and 17% neutral. (See Table B.5.5 in Appendix B).
- 5.4.4 Levels of dissatisfaction are low but where respondents were dissatisfied they were asked to explain why - main reasons given included that the forms were too time consuming to complete and too complex.
- 5.4.5 The high levels of satisfaction with the applications process were mirrored in the high levels of satisfaction with the guidance provided by the Board. Over 80% (n=345) of respondents agreed that the Board provided them with sufficient guidance on how to submit an

application for legal assistance and a further 10% were neutral. Very few respondents were dissatisfied with the guidance issued by the Board with only 8% disagreeing that it was sufficient. There were no real differences by case type, with 83% (n=223) of civil and 81% (n=115) of criminal respondents agreeing.

Civil Forms/Templates

5.4.6 All civil respondents (n=266) were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements relating to changes the Board has made to some of its civil forms (see Figure 5.4). Agreement was high with over 80% of civil respondents agreeing that the introduction of templates for civil sanctions and the inclusion of a section dealing with special urgency and the mandate had been helpful, an additional 4-6% were neutral and only an average of 5% disagreed that the changes were helpful. Two thirds agreed that introducing separate forms for family and non-family cases had been helpful, 16% were neutral and 11% disagreed. 55% agreed that the changes to the stage reporting process had reduced the need for unnecessary form filling, a further 13% were neutral while 19% disagreed.



Question E6. Base: n=266.

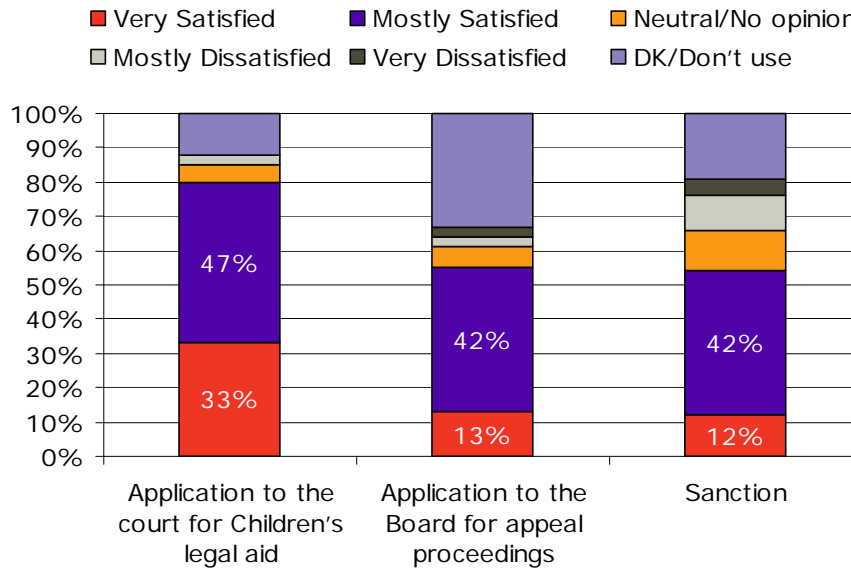
Figure 5.4 Changes to Civil Forms

5.4.7 Female civil respondents were more likely to say that introducing separate forms for family and non family cases has been helpful to them, with 72% (n=84) of females either tending to agree or strongly agreeing with this statement compared to 62% (n=93) of males. (See Table B.5.6 in Appendix B). This may be because women are more likely to work on family cases, however, the questionnaire did not ask for detail regarding the type of criminal/civil/children's cases each practitioner worked on, therefore this potential relationship cannot be explored.

- 5.4.8 Civil respondents were asked if they used the templates that are available in civil legal assistance cases. Almost all civil respondents (93%, n=248) said that they did use them, while 7% (n=18) said that they did not.
- 5.4.9 The main reason that respondents gave for not using the templates was that the templates did not apply to their area of work, or they did not need to (n=8).
- 5.4.10 Finally, civil respondents were asked if there were any other templates they would like to see introduced. Some respondents stated that the templates were sufficient as they were and that no other templates were needed (n=28), some stated that they could not think of anything (n=42), and some people had no response (n=38).
- 5.4.11 Templates that were suggested included:
- children's cases (n=3);
 - personal injury work (n=2);
 - co-habitation (n=2);
 - immigration (n=2); and
 - child psychologist (n=2).

5.5 Children's Applications

- 5.5.1 All of those respondents who also conducted Children's legal assistance work (n=154) (whether it was their main case type or in addition to their main case type) were asked to what extent they were satisfied with the application process for different types of children's legal assistance. Figure 5.5 shows that most respondents (80%, n=123) were satisfied with the process for applications to the court for children's legal aid, a further 5% (n=7) were neutral and only 3% (n=5) were dissatisfied. Just over half of the respondents were satisfied with the process for applications to the Board for appeal proceedings (55% n=84), 7% (n=10) were neutral and 6% (n=9) were dissatisfied. For applications for sanctions 54% (n=82) were positive, 12% (n=19) were neutral and 15% (n=23) were dissatisfied.



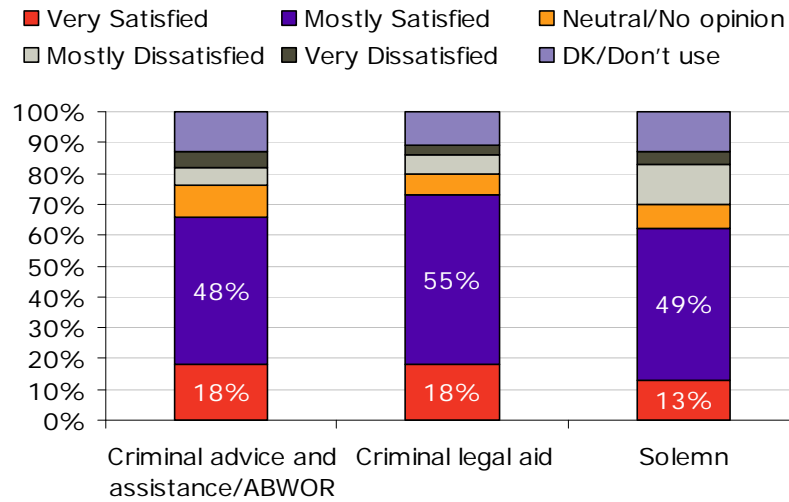
Question E2, Children's Section. Base: n=154.

Figure 5.5 Satisfaction with Children's Application Process

- 5.5.2 Of the respondents who also worked on children's legal assistance, those located in town/rural areas (45%, n=39) were more likely to say they were very satisfied with the process for 'application to the court for children's legal aid' compared to those in urban areas (16%, n=11). (See Table B.5.7 in Appendix B).
- 5.5.3 The Sheriffdom of Tayside, Central and Fife had the largest proportion of children's respondents who were very satisfied with the 'application to the court for Children's legal aid' (48%, n=21) (See Table B.5.8 in Appendix B).
- 5.5.4 Levels of dissatisfaction are low but where respondents were dissatisfied with the application process for any type of children's legal assistance, they were asked to explain why. Of the 29 respondents who gave a reason the two main reasons were that the form is too complex or it is too difficult to get sanctions.

5.6 Criminal Accounts Process

- 5.6.1 All criminal respondents (n=143) were asked to what extent they were satisfied with the accounts process for different types of criminal legal assistance (see Figure 5.6). Around two thirds or more of criminal respondents were satisfied with the accounts process for criminal advice and assistance/ABWOR (66%), summary criminal legal aid (73%) and solemn criminal legal aid (62%) and there was an average of 8% neutral responses across the 3 areas. Levels of dissatisfaction were low at an average of 12%.



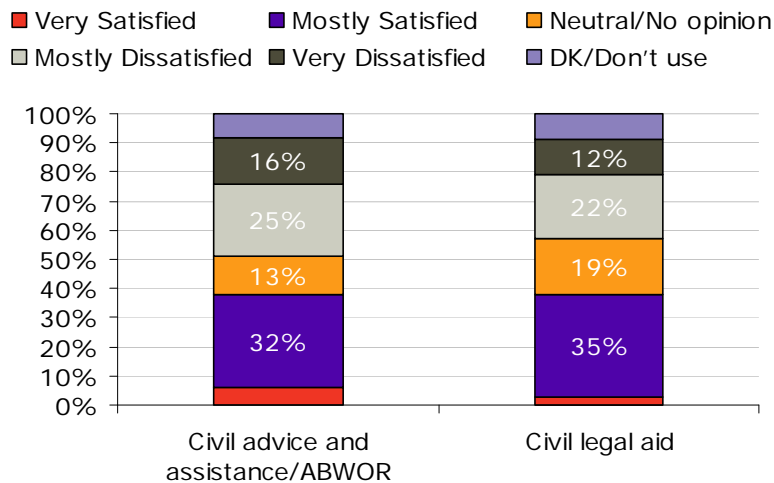
Question E4, Criminal Section. Base: n=143.

Figure 5.6 Satisfaction with Criminal Accounts Processes

- 5.6.2 Criminal respondents in Glasgow and Strathkelvin were the most satisfied with the accounts process for summary criminal legal aid with 89% (n=29) of respondents in this Sheriffdom reporting that they were satisfied with the process (see Table B.5.9 in Appendix B).
- 5.6.3 Levels of dissatisfaction are low but where respondents were dissatisfied with the accounts process for criminal legal assistance, they were asked to explain why. Only 28 respondents gave a reason for their dissatisfaction, the main ones being that they felt the process was too time consuming and that solemn cases were particularly problematic when it came to the accounts process as they took too long and were difficult.

5.7 Civil Accounts Process

- 5.7.1 Civil respondents had more mixed views regarding the accounts process with 38% satisfied with the civil A&A/ABWOR accounts process and 38% satisfied with the civil legal aid accounts process. The number of respondents that said they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied or didn't know enough to say either way was high: 21% for civil A&A/ABWOR and 27% for civil legal aid. This may be because civil solicitors are less likely to prepare their own accounts for civil legal assistance cases and are more likely to use a law accountant. 41% and 35% of civil respondents were dissatisfied with the civil A&A/ABWOR and civil legal aid account processes respectively.



Question E4, Civil Section. Base: n=266.

Figure 5.7 Satisfaction with Civil Accounts Processes

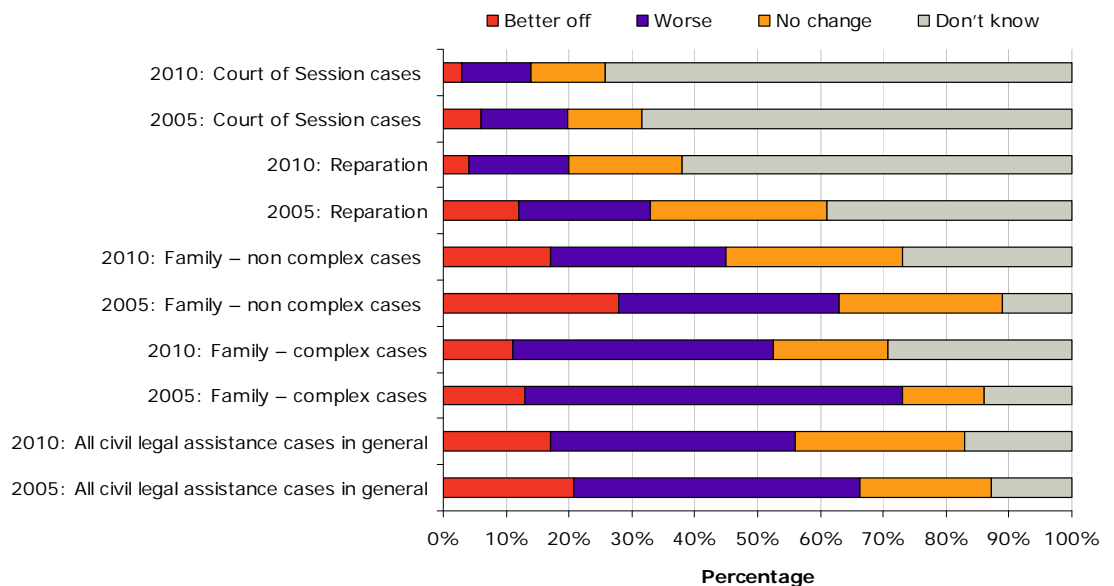
- 5.7.2 Where respondents were dissatisfied with the accounts process for civil legal assistance they were asked to explain why. The main reasons given were that the process is too time consuming, or that the turnaround time is too long. Some respondents said that issues with abatements had driven their dissatisfaction.

5.8 Fees

- 5.8.1 The fees for legal assistance are set by the Scottish Government. A number of questions were asked about fees, including whether respondents felt that they were paid better, worse or the same as they were three years ago. The first question was asked only of civil respondents as criminal respondents are asked similar questions in the Summary Justice Reforms section (Chapter 7).
- 5.8.2 Figure 5.8 compares civil respondents' opinions on payment from this survey with the results of the same question when it was asked in the 2005 survey⁵. This shows that for all civil legal assistance cases in general 17% (n=45) of respondents felt they were generally paid better than three years ago and 27% (n=72) said that there was no change. 39% (n=103) of respondents in 2010 stated that they were paid worse than three years ago, compared to 46% in 2005.
- 5.8.3 For family – complex cases, 41% (n=110) in 2010 stated that they were paid worse than three years ago, a reduction from 60% in 2005. For family – non complex cases, 28% (n=75) in 2010 said that they were paid worse, compared to 35% in 2005. For reparation cases, only 16% (n=43) said that they were paid worse, a reduction from 21% in 2005. Only 11% (n=28) of respondents in 2010 felt they were paid worse for Court of Session Cases, lower than the 14% who felt this way in 2005. Therefore, there has been an overall reduction in the number of respondents who feel they are paid worse since the last survey.

⁵ MORI Scotland, (2005) "Solicitors' Views on the Impact of the Civil Legal Aid Reform". Prepared for the Scottish Legal Aid Board.

Accessed at http://www.slab.org.uk/about_us/research/stakeholders/archive/civil_reform/mori_civil_reform_research.pdf

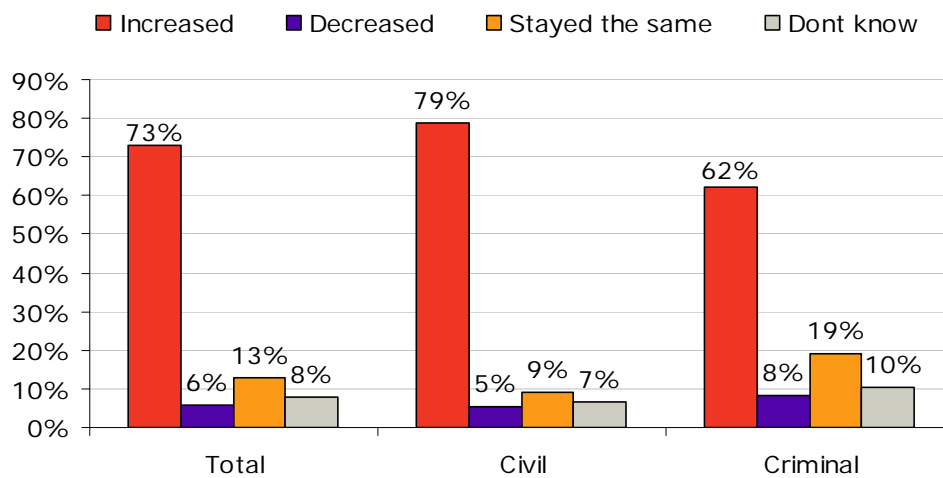


2010: Question F1. Base n=266. 2005: Question 19. Base: n=300.

Figure 5.8 Payment for Legal Aid Cases (2005 & 2010)

- 5.8.4 For “all civil legal assistance cases in general”, those located in urban areas (50%, n=61) were more likely than those located in rural/town areas (29%, n=42) to state that they were paid worse than they were three years ago. (See Table B.5.10 in Appendix B).
- 5.8.5 Respondents in Glasgow and Strathkelvin and North Strathclyde generally felt that they were worse paid for “family - non-complex cases” compared to three years ago (see Table B.5.11 in Appendix B). Meanwhile, those in Grampian, Highland and Islands, and South Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway were equally likely to indicate that they considered that they were either worse paid or that there had been no change in fees for “family - complex cases” (see Table B.5.12 in Appendix B).
- 5.8.6 For “family - complex cases”, those located in town/rural areas (15%, n=22) stated they were paid better than they were three years ago compared to those located in urban areas (6%, n=7) (see Table B.5.13 in Appendix B). Further, for “family - non complex cases”, 38% (n=47) of those located in an urban area stated that they were paid worse than they were three years ago compared to 20% (n=28) of those respondents located in town/rural areas. (See Table B.5.14 in Appendix B).
- 5.8.7 For “reparation”, those in urban areas (22%, n=27) were more likely to state that they were paid worse than they were three years ago compared to those in town/rural areas (11%, n=16). (See Table B.5.15 in Appendix B).

5.8.8 All respondents (regardless of case type) were asked for their views on how the fees for legal assistance work and private work had changed in the past three years. Figure 5.9 shows that nearly three quarters of all respondents (73%, n=304) felt that the difference in fees between legal assistance work and private work had increased over the last three years.



Question F2. Base: Total n=416, Civil n=266, Criminal n=143.

Figure 5.9 Difference in Fees between Legal Assistance Work and Private Work

5.8.9 Figure 5.9 also shows that individuals whose main case type was civil were most likely to say that the difference in legal fees between legal assistance work and private work had increased in the last 3 years (79%) (see Appendix B).

5.9 Summary

- 5.9.1 Over half of all respondents (57%) submit their legal assistance applications to the Board either solely or mostly via legal aid online. Satisfaction levels are on average 20% higher for those who use legal aid online compared to those who submit via paper.
- 5.9.2 Satisfaction with the Board's application processes is high. At least three quarters of respondents were satisfied with the criminal applications processes and between 59% and 77% were satisfied with the civil applications processes. Most respondents who also conducted children's legal assistance were satisfied with the process for applications to the court for children's legal aid (80%), whereas just over half of the respondents were satisfied with the process for applications to the Board for children's appeal proceedings (55%) and children's sanctions (54%) with higher proportions of don't know/no opinion responses.
- 5.9.3 The minority that were dissatisfied with the applications processes said it was because the forms are too time consuming to complete or too complex.
- 5.9.4 Over four fifths of civil respondents agree that the introduction of templates for civil sanctions and the inclusion of a section dealing with special urgency and the mandate has been helpful. Over two thirds of civil respondents felt that the various changes to civil forms had been helpful. Two thirds agreed that introducing separate forms for family and non-family cases has been helpful and over half agreed that the changes to the stage reporting process had reduced the need for unnecessary form filling.

- 5.9.5 Around two thirds or more of the criminal respondents were satisfied with the various criminal accounts processes with low levels of dissatisfaction. Civil respondents had more mixed views regarding the civil accounts processes with a higher level of those that were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied or didn't know enough to comment either way. Several respondents mentioned that they use law accountants to complete their legal aid accounts and this may explain the high number of neutral and don't know responses. The main reasons for dissatisfaction with the civil accounts processes were that it is too time consuming and that the turnaround time is too long. Some respondents mentioned abatements as a factor in driving dissatisfaction.
- 5.9.6 Mixed views were reported regarding whether civil respondents considered that they are paid better, worse, or the same for the different civil legal assistance case types compared to three years ago. However for all civil legal assistance cases the proportion who perceive that they are paid worse (39%) has reduced since 2005. Meanwhile, nearly three quarters of all respondents (73%) felt that the difference in fees between legal assistance work and private work had increased over the last three years, with civil respondents being the most likely to say that the difference had increased.

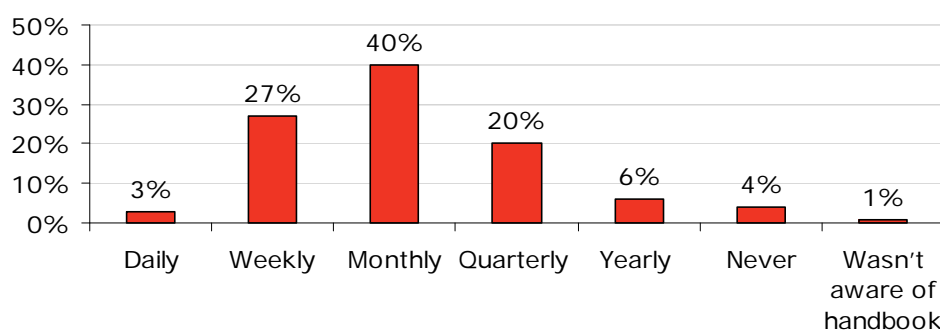
6 Communication and Guidance

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 All respondents were asked a number of questions related to communication with the Board. These included questions about their use of the civil legal assistance handbook, the Board's mailshots, information technology and use of the Board's website and guidance documents.

6.2 Use of the Civil Legal Assistance Handbook

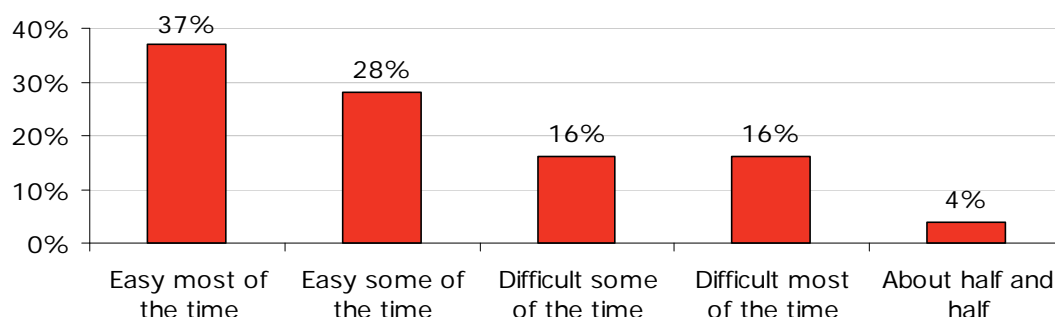
- 6.2.1 All civil respondents were asked how often they used the civil legal assistance handbook. Figure 6.1 shows that 40% (n=105) of respondents used the handbook monthly, while 30% (n=80) used it more often, and a further 30% (n=79) used it less often. Two respondents stated that they had never heard of the civil legal assistance handbook. Criminal respondents were not asked this question as the criminal handbook was being updated prior to the fieldwork taking place.



Question G1. Base: n=266.

Figure 6.1 Frequency of Handbook Use

- 6.2.2 Respondents were then asked how easy it was to find the information they were looking for in the handbook. Of the 253 respondents who answered the question, Figure 6.2 shows that 37% (n=93) stated that it was easy most of the time, with a further 28% (n=70) stating that it was easy some of the time.



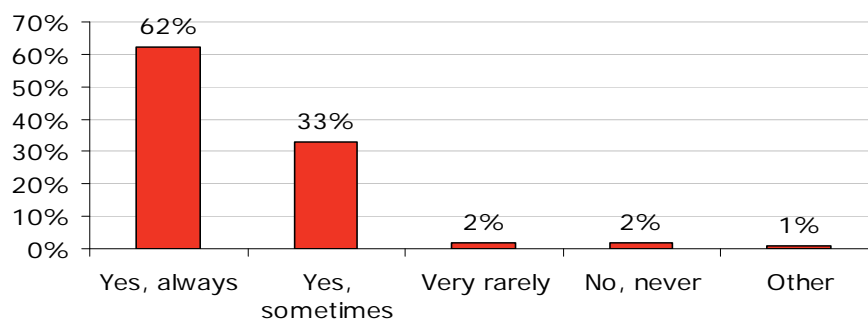
Question G2. Base: n=253.

Figure 6.2 Ease of Finding Information in the Handbook

- 6.2.3 65% (n=173) of civil respondents in all Sheriffdom's reported that they found it either easy some or most of the time to find the information they were looking for in the handbook. However, over half (56%, n=20) of the respondents in Lothian and Borders felt it was easy most of the time, compared to only 25% (n=9) of those in South Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway. Conversely, 29% (n=10) of respondents in South Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway indicated that they found it difficult most of the time (See Table B.6.1 in Appendix B).
- 6.2.4 As most civil respondents who use the handbook also use the internet (97%, n=246 compared to only 3%, n=7 who do not) no statistical relationship was noted between these variables.

6.3 Mailshots

- 6.3.1 All respondents (n=416) were asked if they read the mailshots sent to them by the Board. Almost all respondents (95%, n=395) indicated that they always or sometimes read the mailshots, compared to only 4% (n=19) who said they rarely or never read them (see Figure 6.3). Two respondents (1%) said 'other' because they "hadn't had them recently" or because they "hadn't had any yet".



Question G3. Base n=416.

Figure 6.3 Frequency of Reading Mailshots

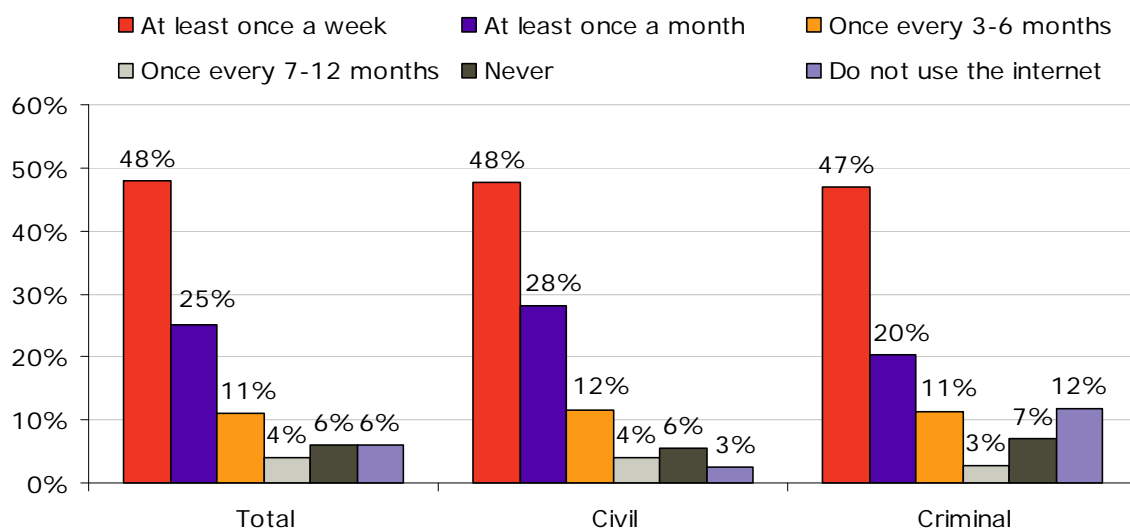
- 6.3.2 Partners were more likely than non-partners to always read mailshots that were sent to them by the Board (68%, n=152 to 55%, n=104) (see Table B.6.2 in Appendix B).

6.4 Use of the Internet/Email and the Board's Website

- 6.4.1 When asked if they used internet and/or email in their role, most respondents (93%, n=388) said that they used both. Only 3 respondents stated that they used the internet only, 1 stated that they used email only, and 24 did not use internet or email.
- 6.4.2 A greater proportion of civil respondents indicated that they used both the internet and email in their role compared to criminal respondents, (97%, n=257 compared to 87%, n=125). (See Table B.6.3 in Appendix B).
- 6.4.3 Women were slightly more likely to say that they used both compared to males (98%, n=141 compared to 91%, n=247) (see Table B.6.4 in Appendix B). As women are more

prevalent in conducting civil cases, this could be related to the above difference reported by civil and criminal respondents.

- 6.4.4 All respondents were asked how often they visited the Board's website. Figure 6.4 shows that 48% (n=199) of all respondents visit the Board's website at least once a week, with a further 25% (n=105) visiting at least once a month. Figure 6.4 also shows that there was very little difference in responses by respondents' main case type.



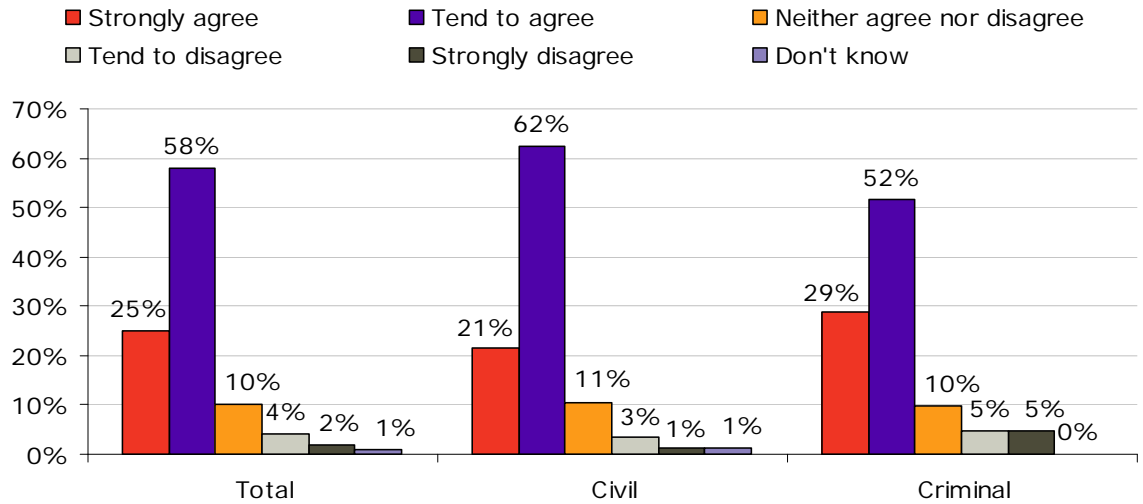
Question G5. Base: n=416.

Figure 6.4 Frequency of Visiting the Board's Website

- 6.4.5 Over half of the respondents who had been carrying out work under legal assistance for up to 10 years stated that they visited the board's website at least once a week. This figure decreased slightly for respondents who had been carrying out work under legal assistance for over 10 years. (See Table B.6.5 in Appendix B).
- 6.4.6 As the Board are developing a new website, respondents were asked if there was anything they would suggest putting on the website that would be particularly useful to themselves or their clients. Respondents recommended a better search engine (n=12), eligibility limits and a calculator giving clients an indication whether they will qualify (n=11) (although it should be noted that the Board already has this on its website).

6.5 Guidance for Submitting Forms

- 6.5.1 83% (n=345) of respondents agreed that the Board provided them with sufficient guidance on how to submit an application for legal assistance, 10% neither agreed nor disagreed and only 6% disagreed (see Figure 6.5). There were no real differences by case type, with 83% (n=223) of civil and 81% (n=115) of criminal respondents agreeing. This high level of satisfaction with the guidance from the Board mirrors the high satisfaction rates with the Board's application processes.

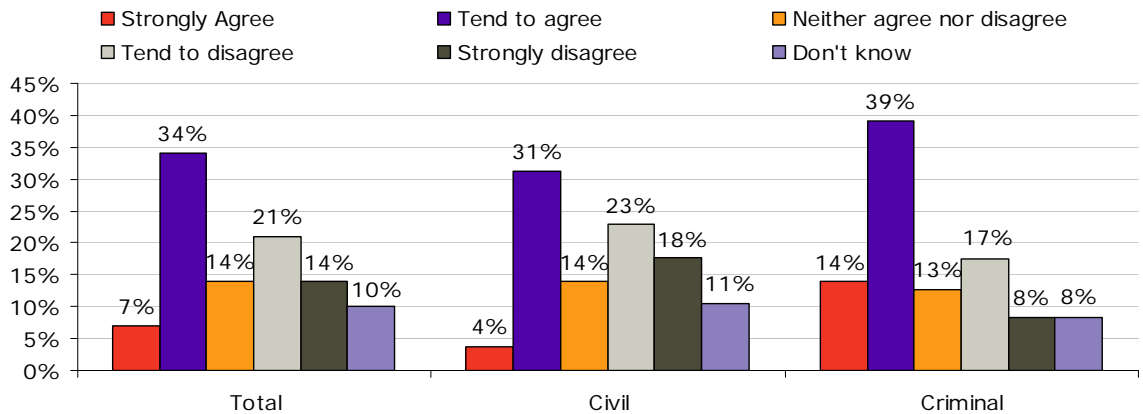


Question G7. Base: Total n=416, Civil n=266, Criminal n=143.

Figure 6.5 Guidance on How to Submit an Application for Legal Assistance

6.6 Guidance on Account Issues

6.6.1 Overall, 55% (n=231) of all respondents either agreed or neither agreed nor disagreed that the Board provides them with sufficient guidance on account issues while 35% (n=147) disagreed (see Figure 6.6). 66% (n=94) of criminal respondents agreed or were neutral compared to 49% (n=130) of civil respondents. 25% (n=37) of criminal respondents were dissatisfied with the guidance issued on the accounts process compared to 41% (n=108) of civil respondents (See Table B.6.6 in Appendix B).



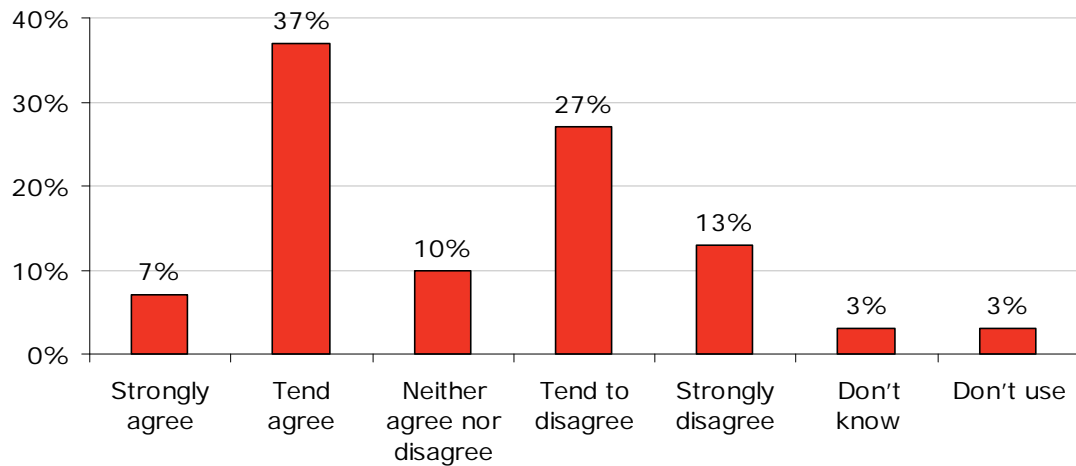
Question G8. Base: Total n=416, Civil 266, Criminal n=143.

Figure 6.6 Guidance Regarding Account Issues

6.6.2 Males were more likely than females to agree that the Board provides them with sufficient guidance regarding account issues with almost half of males (48%, n=131) agreeing compared to 29% (n=42) of females (see Table B.6.7 in Appendix B).

6.7 Information on Clawback

- 6.7.1 All civil respondents (n=266) were asked how strongly they agreed that the information and guidance the Board provides on clawback is sufficient. Figure 6.7 shows that 44% (n=115) of respondents agreed, 10% (n=26) neither agreed nor disagreed and 40% (n=108) disagreed.



Question G9. Base: n=266.

Figure 6.7 Information and Guidance on Clawback

6.8 Opponents

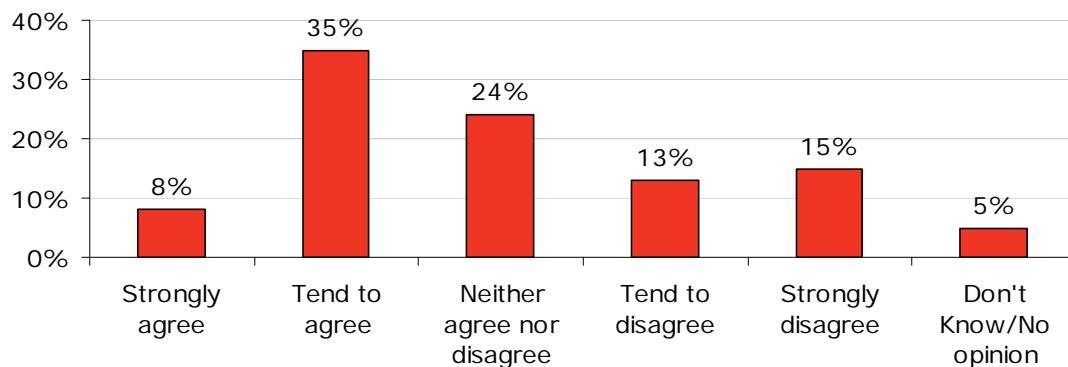
- 6.8.1 Civil respondents were asked if any of their clients had come to them to seek advice because they were an opponent in a civil legal aid application. 78% (n=208) stated that their clients had come to them to seek advice as an opponent.
- 6.8.2 Civil respondents who had been carrying out work under legal assistance for more than 10 years were more likely to state that clients had come to them to seek advice as an opponent (85%, n=155), presumably because they had more years experience (see Table B.6.8 in Appendix B).
- 6.8.3 Again, all civil respondents were asked if there was enough guidance for those opposing cases on how and when to make representations to the Board. Over half of the respondents (57%, n=151) stated that they did think there was enough, while 27% (n=73) did not think there was enough guidance, and 16% (n=42) stated that they didn't know or couldn't remember.

6.9 Additional Guidance/Communication Required

- 6.9.1 Respondents were asked if there were any areas where they would like additional guidance from the Board or where they would like to see changes in the way the Board communicates with them. The main suggestions were to provide updated guidance on accounts (n=18) and for the Board to use email more often to communicate with solicitors (n=10).

6.10 Support from the Board

- 6.10.1 All respondents (n=416) were asked how strongly they agree or disagree that the Board is helpful in supporting them to provide work under legal assistance. Figure 6.8 shows that 72% of respondents (n=300) agreed that the Board is helpful in this regard or neither agreed nor disagreed/had no opinion while 28% (n=116) disagreed. While differences are not statistically significant, a slightly higher proportion of partners (31%), those in urban areas (31%), and those from Lothian and Borders (32%) indicated that they disagreed.



Question L1. Base: n=416.

Figure 6.8 Helpfulness of the Board in Supporting/Providing Work under Legal Assistance

- 6.10.2 Results here compare well with those reported in the Legal Services Commission's (LSC) 2009 National Audit Survey of criminal providers⁶, where 42% indicated that they found the LSC unhelpful in supporting them (14% more than the 28% in this survey who disagreed that the Board was helpful), while 32% said that LSC were helpful (11% lower than the 43% in this survey).
- 6.10.3 When asked if respondents had any suggestions on how to improve the way the legal aid scheme operates, the main responses given across all case types were to change fee structure/increase fees⁷ (n=38) and reduce administration and paperwork (n=23). It is worth noting that it is the Scottish Government, not the Board that is responsible for setting the fees and also that there has been a large reduction in the proportion of respondents who mentioned administration, with only 6% (n=23) of all respondents identifying this currently, compared to 21% (n=63) in the 2005 Civil Reform Survey⁸.

6.11 Summary

- 6.11.1 Most civil respondents (70%) refer to the civil legal assistance handbook at least monthly, and nearly two thirds (65%) generally find it easy to find the relevant information they need.

⁶ National Audit Office: Solicitor Survey for criminal legal aid. November 2009

⁷ It should be noted that the fee structure is set by the Scottish Government and not the Board.

⁸ MORI Scotland, (2005) "Solicitors' Views on the Impact of the Civil Legal Aid Reform". Prepared for the Scottish Legal Aid Board.

Accessed at http://www.slab.org.uk/about_us/research/stakeholders/archive/civil_reform/mori_civil_reform_research.pdf

Nearly two thirds of all respondents always read the Board's mailshots, compared to only 4% who rarely or never read them, with partners more likely to always read these.

- 6.11.2 Almost all respondents (93%) use both the internet and email in their role, while over three quarters (78%) visit the Board's website at least once a month. The main requests for improving the website included a better search engine and eligibility limits and a calculator giving an indication of whether a client will qualify (it is worth noting that the Board already has this facility on its website).
- 6.11.3 Most respondents (83%) felt that the Board provides sufficient guidance on how to submit applications for legal assistance. Mixed views were expressed in terms of the guidance provided for account issues and civil clawback; however, criminal respondents were more positive about the guidance for account issues than civil respondents.
- 6.11.4 Over three quarters (78%) of civil respondents had experience of clients coming to them as an opponent, while just over half (57%) felt that there was sufficient guidance for those opposing cases on how and when to make representations to the Board and an additional 16% had no opinion while a fifth disagreed.
- 6.11.5 Suggestions for improvements to communications from the Board included using email more often and providing updated guidance on accounts.
- 6.11.6 72% agreed that the Board is helpful in supporting them to provide work under legal assistance or had no opinion either way on it. The main suggestions for improvements to the way the legal aid scheme operates included changing the fee structure/increase the fees (this is controlled by the Scottish Government, not the Board) and reduce administration and paperwork.

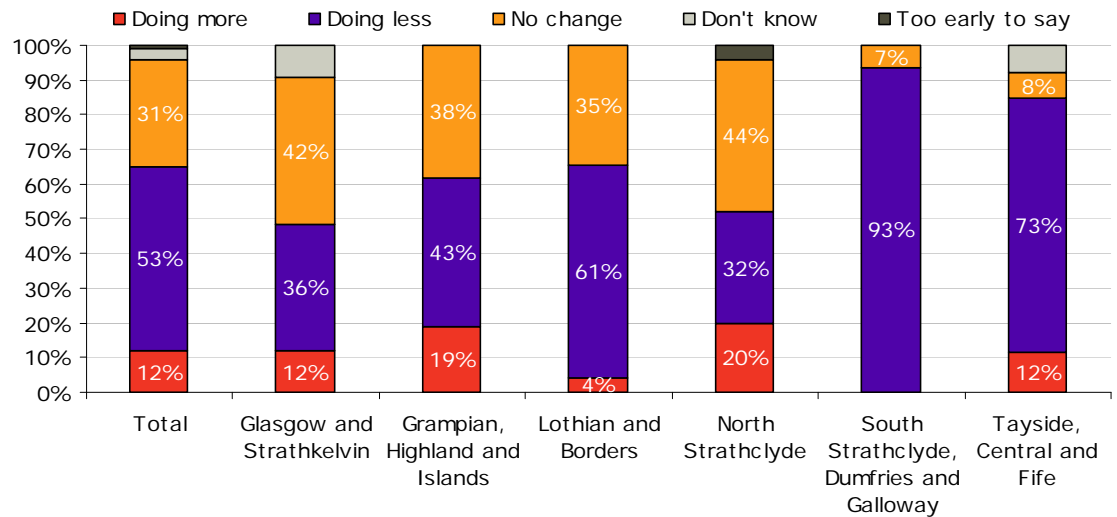
7 Summary Justice Reforms

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 Reforms to the Scottish summary justice system were introduced in 2007 by the Scottish Government and involved a range of justice agencies including the Board, the Crown Office, the Scottish Court Service, the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Law Society of Scotland and the profession in general. The package of reforms included reforms to direct measures, criminal legal assistance, disclosure, bail, undertakings, fines enforcement and lay justice. The specific reforms affecting criminal legal assistance were introduced in 2008 and included the introduction of a single fee level in the Sheriff Summary Courts and the Stipendiary Magistrates Courts in Glasgow for cases disposed of before trial, in order to encourage early investigation, and where appropriate, the early resolution of cases.

7.2 Levels of Legal Assistance Work Since the Introduction of the Reforms

- 7.2.1 All criminal respondents (n=143) were asked if they were undertaking more or less criminal legal assistance work since the Reforms to Summary Justice were introduced. 12% (n=17) stated that they were doing more criminal legal assistance work, 53% (n=76) stated that they were doing less and 31% (n=44) stated there had been no change (See figure 7.1). A further 4% (n=5) stated that they didn't know, while one respondent said it was too early to say. This is similar to the responses given when partners were asked if they were conducting more or less summary criminal legal aid cases in the last year (see Table 3.3) where 15% of firms indicated that their caseload had increased while 42% indicated it had stayed the same and 40% stated it had decreased. 63% (n=60) of criminal partners also reported that their firm's criminal ABWOR caseload had increased in the last year.
- 7.2.2 Criminal respondents in South Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway and Tayside, Central and Fife were most likely to say that they were doing less criminal legal assistance work since the Reforms (93% and 73% respectively) (see Figure 7.1 and Table B.7.1 in Appendix B). However, the base numbers here are small (all below 20) and therefore cannot be used to generalise.

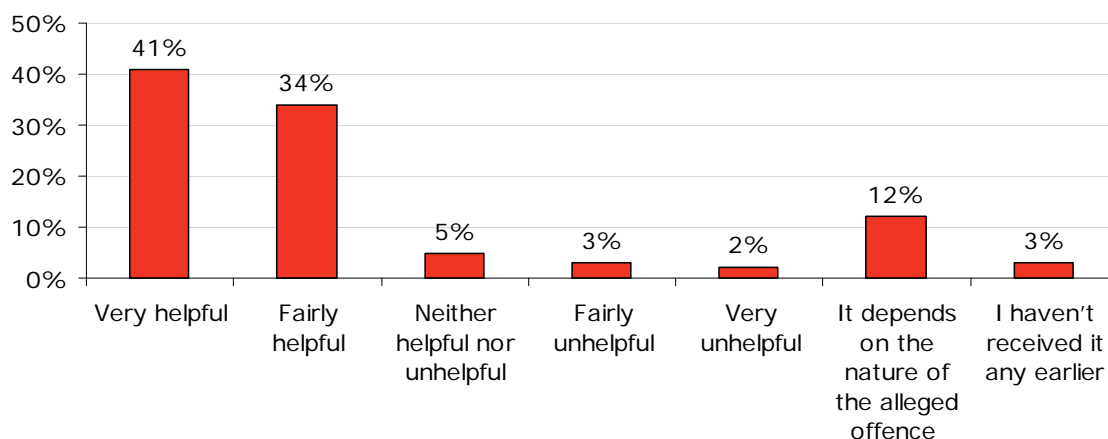


Question H1. Base: Total n=143, Glasgow and Strathkelvin n=33, Grampian, Highlands and Islands n=21, Lothian and Borders n=23, North Strathclyde n=25, South Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway n=15, Tayside, Central and Fife n=26.

Figure 7.1 Levels of Legal Assistance Work Since the Reforms by Sheriffdom

7.3 Disclosable Summaries

- 7.3.1 Criminal respondents were asked how informative they found the disclosable summary. Nearly two thirds (64%, n=91) stated that they found it informative, while 28% (n=40) found it not very informative and 4% (n=5) said it was never informative. 5% (n=7) stated that they did not know.
- 7.3.2 Figure 7.2 shows that three quarters of criminal respondents (75%, n=108) found the earlier availability of the disclosable summary when initially advising clients on how to proceed helpful, 5% were neutral and 5% found it unhelpful. 12% said it depended on the nature of the alleged offence and 3% had not received it any earlier since the Reforms were introduced.



Question H3. Base: n=143.

Figure 7.2 Earlier Availability of the Disclosable Summary

7.3.3 53% of criminal respondents said they would find it either helpful (30% n=43) or neither helpful nor unhelpful (23% n=33) if the Board obtained electronic copies of disclosable summaries direct from the Crown while 46% (n=66) said they would find it unhelpful and one respondent said they didn't know.

7.4 Discussing Pleas

7.4.1 Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed that, following the Summary Justice Reforms, it was now easier to discuss a potential plea with the Procurator Fiscal prior to the pleading diet. 29% (n=41) of respondents agreed with this statement, while 18% (n=26) were neutral and 52% (n=74) disagreed.

Table 7.1 Ease of Discussing a Potential Plea with the Procurator Fiscal Prior to the Pleading Diet

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	16	11
Tend to agree	25	18
Neither agree nor disagree	26	18
Tend to disagree	29	20
Strongly disagree	45	32
Haven't tried/don't know	2	1
Total	143	100

Question H5. Base: n=143.

7.4.2 Respondents were then asked to what extent they agreed that it had become easier to discuss a potential plea with a Procurator Fiscal at all other stages of a case. Table 7.2 shows that 22% (n=32) of respondents agreed with this statement, 20% (n=29) neither agreed nor disagreed and 57% (n=81) disagreed.

Table 7.2 Ease of Discussing a Potential Plea with a Procurator Fiscal

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	9	6
Tend to agree	23	16
Neither agree nor disagree	29	20
Tend to disagree	36	25
Strongly disagree	45	32
Haven't tried/don't know	1	1
Total	143	100

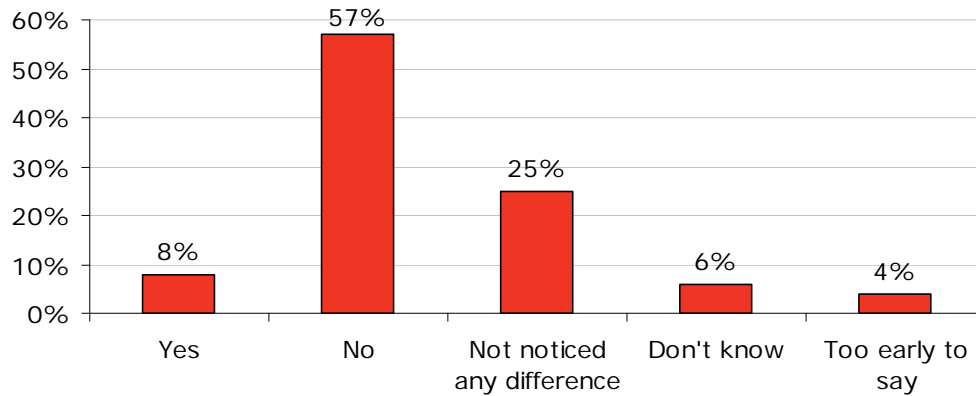
Question H7. Base: n=143.

7.5 Appointed Solicitors

- 7.5.1 All criminal respondents (n=143) were asked if allowing appointed solicitors to grant criminal ABWOR in custody cases has succeeded in helping to bring about the earlier resolution of cases. 80% (n=115) felt it had succeeded in helping to bring about the earlier resolution of cases, while 15% (n=21) thought it had not, 4% (n=5) stated that they did not know, and 2 respondents felt it was too early to say.
- 7.5.2 When asked what changes they would like to see made to the appointed solicitor arrangements most respondents stated that they either felt that no changes were required or that they could not think of any.

7.6 Changes in Remuneration

- 7.6.1 Almost two thirds of criminal respondents (62%, n=89) felt that the changes in remuneration, introduced as part of the changes to Summary Criminal Legal Assistance, were assisting in the earlier resolution of cases. 31% (n=44) felt that the changes in remuneration were not assisting in the earlier resolution of cases, while 6% (n=8) stated that they did not know and 2 respondents felt it was too early to say.
- 7.6.2 Respondents were asked if Summary Criminal Legal Assistance work was now more profitable than it was before the Reforms (see Figure 7.3). 8% (n=11) of respondents said yes, while 57% (n=82) of respondents said no. A further 25% (n=36) said they had not noticed any difference.



Question H11. Base: n=143.

Figure 7.3 Criminal Legal Assistance Work More Profitable than Before Reforms

- 7.6.3 When asked if the changes in criminal legal assistance fees had impacted on services delivered to clients (they were not asked if it was a positive or negative impact) 33% (n=47) of respondents said that they felt it had, 58% (n=83) said that it had not, 6% (n=9) said they did not know, and 3% (n=4) felt it was too early to tell.
- 7.6.4 Those located in urban areas (44%, n=33) were more likely than those located in town/rural areas (21%, n=14) to state that changes in criminal legal assistance fees had impacted on services delivered to clients (see Table B.7.2 in Appendix B).

7.7 A Fairer Justice System

- 7.7.1 Respondents were asked if they thought that the Summary Justice Reforms introduced by the Scottish Government were on course to achieving a fairer justice system for all. In total, 18% (n=25) of respondents stated that the Summary Justice Reforms were on course to achieving a fairer justice system for all, while 16% (n=23) said that they did not know, 54% (n=78) felt that they were not and 12% (n=17) said that it was too early to say.

7.8 Communication of the Reforms

- 7.8.1 In 2008 the Board held a number of roadshows to tell the profession about the legal aid changes associated with the Summary Justice Reforms. All criminal respondents were asked if they attended a roadshow. 86% (n=123) had attended a roadshow, 13% (n=19) had not and one respondent (1%) could not remember.
- 7.8.2 Of the 123 respondents who stated that they had attended a roadshow, the vast majority (85%, n=104) said that they found the roadshow useful, 15% (n=18) said that they did not find the roadshow useful, and one respondent said that they could not remember.
- 7.8.3 The 19 respondents who did not attend a roadshow were asked why not and the most common reason for not attending was that the respondent did not have the time. Table 7.1 details all the responses to this question.

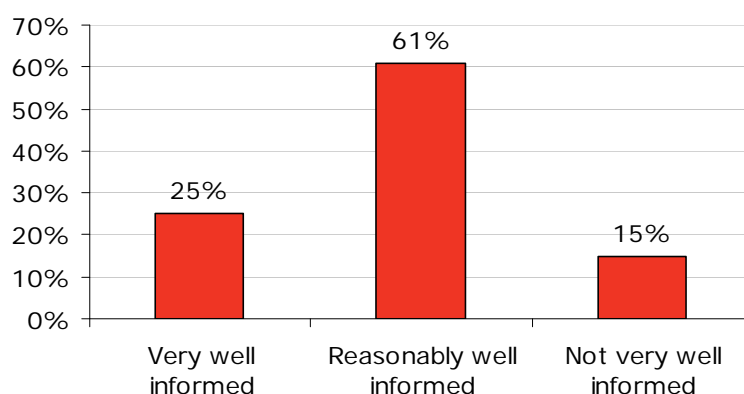
Table 7.3 Reasons for Not Attending a Roadshow

	Number	Percentage*
Someone else from the firm attended and passed on the information	1	5
Location was not convenient	3	16
Time was not convenient	4	21
Didn't know about it	1	5
Did not think it would be useful	2	11
Didn't have the time	7	37
Received information through other means	2	11
Other	5	26

*Note: Totals do not equal 100% due to multiple responses.

Question 13. Base: n=19.

- 7.8.4 Respondents were asked, overall, how well informed they felt about the changes being made to summary criminal legal assistance as a result of the Summary Justice Reforms. Figure 7.4 shows that a quarter of respondents (25%, n=35) felt very well informed about the changes being made, while 61% (n=87) felt reasonable well informed, and 15% felt not very well informed about the changes.



Question 14. Base: n=143.

Figure 7.4 Changes Being Made to Legal Assistance as a Result of Reforms

7.9 Summary

- 7.9.1 12% of criminal respondents said that they were doing more criminal legal assistance work since the changes as a result of the Summary Justice Reforms while 53% stated that they were doing less and 31% stated there had been no change. This is similar to the responses given earlier in the survey when partners were asked if their firms caseload for summary criminal legal aid cases had increased or decreased in the last year where 15% of firms indicated that their caseload had increased while 42% indicated it had stayed the same and

40% stated it had decreased. 63% (n=60) of criminal partners also reported that their firm's criminal ABWOR caseload had increased in the last year.

- 7.9.2 Nearly two thirds (64%) found the disclosable summary informative, while three quarters (75%) found the earlier availability of these helpful. 53% of criminal respondents said they would find it either helpful (30% n=43) or neither helpful nor unhelpful (23% n=33) if the Board obtained electronic copies of disclosable summaries direct from the Crown while 46% (n=66) said they would find it unhelpful.
- 7.9.3 Just over half of all criminal respondents felt it had not become any easier to discuss a potential plea with the Procurator Fiscal prior to the pleading diet (52%), or at any stage of a case (54%)
- 7.9.4 Most criminal respondents (80%) felt that allowing the appointed solicitor to grant criminal ABWOR in custody cases had succeeded in helping to bring about the earlier resolution of cases.
- 7.9.5 Almost two thirds of criminal respondents (62%) felt that the changes in remuneration were assisting in the earlier resolution of cases. Over half (57%) felt that legal assistance work was not more profitable than before the Reforms. However, more than half (58%) also felt that these changes in fees had not impacted upon the services delivered to clients.
- 7.9.6 Most criminal respondents (86%) had attended a roadshow to inform them about the Reforms, with most of these respondents (85%) indicating they had found it useful. Overall, the majority of respondents (86%) felt well informed about the Reforms.

8 Civil Simplification

- 8.1.1 The Board has a Simplification Programme underway with the primary aim of reducing the complexity of the civil legal assistance process. This involves working with the legal profession to make the civil legal assistance system less bureaucratic and more efficient. This has included the introduction of simplified and shortened forms and the ability to submit applications online. In early 2009 a number of roadshows were held across the country to communicate these changes to the profession. It was not expected that every firm or solicitor should attend these road shows.
- 8.1.2 All civil respondents (n=266) were asked if they were aware of the Board's Simplification Programme. Over half of these respondents (52%, n=137) stated that they had heard of the Simplification Programme, while 46% (n=123) had not and 2% (n=6) were unsure.
- 8.1.3 Partners were more likely than non-partners to say that they were aware of the Simplification Programme (61%, n=82 and 42%, n=55 respectively) (see Table B.8.1 in Appendix B).
- 8.1.4 Respondents were then asked if they attended any of the roadshows held by the Board as part of the Simplification Programme. Just over a third of respondents (36%, n=97) stated that they did attend a roadshow and this is broadly in line with the Board's expected attendance rate as not all solicitors were expected/asked to attend. 61% (n=161) said they had not attended any roadshows and 3% (n=8) said they could not remember.
- 8.1.5 Of the 97 respondents who had attended a roadshow 89% (n=86) found it useful, only 10% (n=10) did not and 1 respondent could not remember.
- 8.1.6 Respondents who did not attend the roadshow (n=161) were asked why they did not attend. Reasons why are shown in Table 8.1 below.

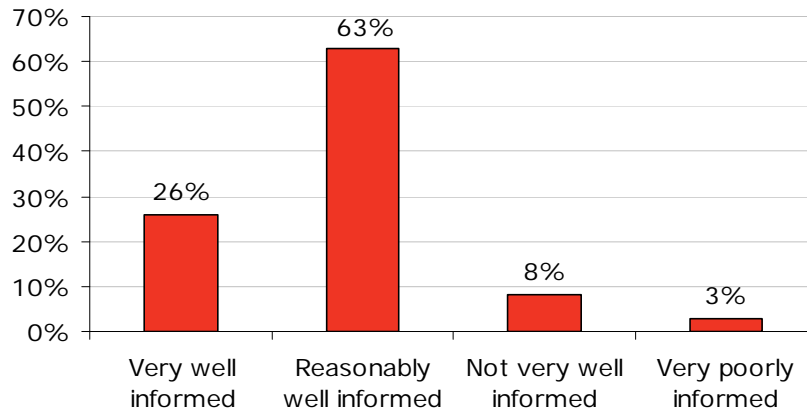
Table 8.1 Reasons for Not Attending a Roadshow

	Number	Percentage*
Someone else from the firm attended and passed on the information	17	11
Location was not convenient	16	10
Time was not convenient	41	25
Didn't know about it	38	24
Did not think it would be useful	4	2
Didn't have the time	37	23
Received information on the subject through other means	11	7
Other	22	14
Don't know/can't remember	9	6

*Note: Totals do not equal 100% due to multiple responses

Question J4. Base: n=161.

- 8.1.7 The most common reason for not attending a roadshow was that the time was not convenient followed by not knowing about it and not having the time to attend.
- 8.1.8 The main 'other' reason for not attending the roadshow was that they did not have enough involvement in legal aid to merit attending (n=8).
- 8.1.9 Town/rural respondents (16%, n=13) were more likely than urban respondents (4%, n=3) to say that they did not attend a roadshow because the location was not convenient (see Table B.8.3 in Appendix B).
- 8.1.10 All civil respondents (n=266) were then asked if they thought the Board kept them well informed about the changes being made to the civil legal assistance application forms and processes. The vast majority of respondents (89%, n=238) felt they were well informed (see Figure 8.1).



Question J5. Base: n=266.

Figure 8.1 Informed about Changes to the Civil Legal Assistance Application Forms and Processes

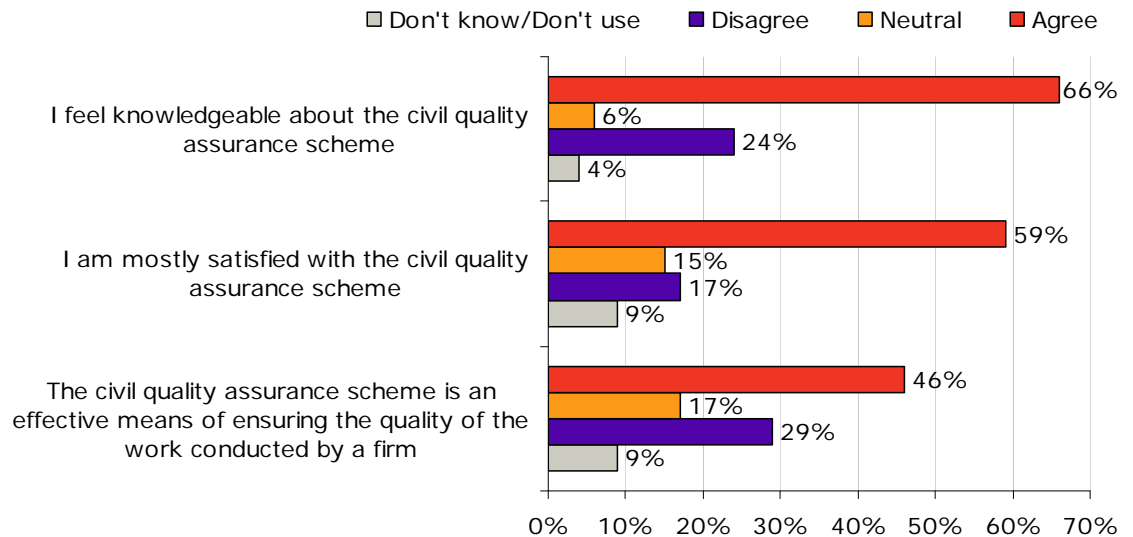
8.2 Summary

- 8.2.1 Over half of the civil respondents (52%) had heard of the Simplification Programme, with partners being more likely to have heard of it than non-partners (61% compared to 42%). Around one third (36%) had attended a roadshow as part of the Simplification Programme and 89% found it useful. Those in town/rural locations were more likely not to attend because the location was not convenient.
- 8.2.2 A high percentage of respondents (89%) felt that the Board did keep them well informed about the changes to civil legal assistance application forms and processes.

9 Civil Quality Assurance

9.1 Civil Quality Assurance Scheme

- 9.1.1 Quality assurance for civil legal aid practitioners was introduced in October 2003. Any firm that provides civil legal assistance must be on the Board's civil legal assistance register. Firms are subject to 'peer review' which is carried out by the Law Society and involves the inspection of files to ensure that they meet agreed quality standards. The peer review takes place at least once every three years and will involve looking at a sample of a firm's files against agreed and tested criteria. The purpose is to review the quality of the work carried out on behalf of the client and the Board based on evidence contained within the file. It is intended primarily to help firms meet the required standard
- 9.1.2 All civil respondents (n=266) were asked if their work had been subject to a peer review as part of the civil quality assurance scheme. 78% (n=208) of respondents stated that their work had been subject to a peer review, 16% of respondents (n=41) stated that it had not, while 6% of respondents (n=17) stated that they did not know or could not remember.
- 9.1.3 Those respondents who have been carrying out work under legal assistance for over 3 years were more likely to say that their work been subject to a peer review than those who have been carrying out work under legal assistance for under 3 years.
- 9.1.4 More males than females reported that their work had been subject to a peer review as part of the civil quality assurance scheme (84%, n=126 compared to 71%, n=82) (see Table B.9.1 in Appendix B). This is perhaps to be expected however, given that a greater proportion of men have longer tenure in providing legal assistance compared with women (see Chapter 3, paragraph 3.2.3).
- 9.1.5 Over half of all civil respondents in all Sheriffdom's reported that their work has been subject to a peer review as part of the civil quality assurance scheme. However, higher proportions were noted in North Strathclyde (91%, n=50), Lothian and Borders (87%, n=33), and South Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway (84%, n=32). (See Table B.9.3 in Appendix B).
- 9.1.6 Nearly all partners (90%, n=121) stated that their work had been subject to a peer review compared to 66% (n=87) of non-partners (see Table B.9.4 in Appendix B).
- 9.1.7 Respondents were then asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with a selection of statements. Figure 9.1 details their responses.



Question K2. Base: n=266.

Figure 9.1 Perceptions of the Civil Quality Assurance Scheme

- 9.1.8 Respondents generally agreed with the statements above. 67% (n=177) of respondents stated that they feel knowledgeable about the civil quality assurance scheme, 6% (n=16) were neutral and 24% (n=63) disagreed. 59% (n=157) agreed that they were mostly satisfied with the civil quality assurance scheme, 15% (n=40) were neutral and 17% (n=45) disagreed. 63% (n=168) either agreed or were neutral that the civil quality assurance scheme is an effective means of ensuring the quality of the work conducted by a firm and 28% disagreed (n=75).
- 9.1.9 Partners (76%, n=102) were more likely than non-partners (57%, n=75) to state that they felt knowledgeable about the civil quality assurance scheme. In addition, partners were slightly more likely than non-partners to agree that they were mostly satisfied with the civil quality assurance scheme (67%, n=90 to 51%, n=67 respectively). (See Tables B.9.5 and B.9.6 in Appendix B).
- 9.1.10 The majority of civil respondents (68%, n=142) whose work had been subject to a peer review process agreed that they were mostly satisfied with the civil quality assurance scheme and a further 11% were neutral (n=23). 17% (n=40) of respondents disagreed that they were mostly satisfied with the civil quality assurance scheme (See Table B.9.8 in Appendix B).
- 9.1.11 Of those respondents whose work had been subject to a peer review, just over half (51%, n=106) agreed that the civil quality assurance scheme is an effective means of ensuring the quality of the work conducted by a firm, 15% were neutral (n=31) and 34% (n=70) disagreed (See Table B.9.9 in Appendix B).

- 9.1.12 Respondents who were not satisfied with the civil quality assurance scheme generally indicated this was because it takes only a snapshot of the work that is being done (n=12).

9.2 Summary

- 9.2.1 Over three quarters (78%) of all civil respondents have been subject to a peer review, with more males, partners, and those with over three years experience of providing legal assistance work being more likely to have been subject to this.
- 9.2.2 Generally, civil respondents feel knowledgeable about the civil quality assurance scheme, (66%), and are mostly satisfied with the scheme (59%). 63% of civil respondents were either satisfied (46%) or neutral (17%) that the scheme is an effective means of ensuring the quality of the civil legal aid work conducted by firms. Of the 28% who did not share this view the main reason was because they felt it only takes a snapshot of the work that is being done.

10 Discussion

10.1 Discussion of Key Results

Sample Profile

- 10.1.1 A total of 416 individuals participated in the survey, exceeding the target within the timescale. A good spread of interviews was achieved across different firms and offices, and the achieved sample was largely representative of case type, urban/rural geography, Sherifdom and job role.
- 10.1.2 At both firm level and at individual practitioner level, over half of respondents' said their main case type was civil legal assistance, and only a very small minority reported their main case type was children's, although a large proportion did conduct a mix of case types to include children's legal assistance. All other respondents were criminal practitioners.
- 10.1.3 Nearly three quarters of all respondents (72%) had personally been carrying out work under legal assistance for over 10 years, and in general, males had been carrying out work under legal assistance for longer periods than females.

Key Results

- 10.1.4 Overall, results of the survey were largely positive, both in terms of the responses provided, and when compared to previous survey results.

Supply

- 10.1.5 Although the majority (83%) of partners stated that their firm had not undertaken any expansion in the last two years, expansion was reported in civil legal aid by 7% of firms.
- 10.1.6 Around three quarters of all civil partners reported that their firm's caseload in Advice and Assistance (79%) and in Civil Legal Aid cases (75%) had either stayed the same or increased.
- 10.1.7 Encouragingly, most partners (88%) said that they were either certain or likely to still be doing legal assistance work in three years time. There has also been an increase in the proportions of civil respondents who indicated they were likely to still be conducting legal assistance work in three years time since the 2005 survey; currently 85% of civil partners said they were likely or certain to, compared to 62% of civil solicitors in 2005, i.e. a 23% increase.
- 10.1.8 In addition, there has been a large reduction in the proportions of civil solicitors who indicated that they are not taking on any new legal assistance clients compared to the 2005 survey results. In 2005, 43% of the civil respondents said they had stopped taking on new cases, yet this has dropped to only 12% of civil partners in the 2010 survey, i.e. a 31% decrease.
- 10.1.9 20% of partners indicated that their firms were likely to recruit a trainee within the next year, and most of these also indicated that the trainee would be expected to work on legal assistance cases, thereby ensuring the future supply of legal aid provision.

- 10.1.10 Just over half of all respondents (55%) felt that the number of legal assistance solicitors in their local area was about right, while almost a third (30%) felt that there were too few legal assistance solicitors in their local area. Civil respondents were more likely to say that there were too few legal assistance solicitors in their local area (40%) than those whose main case type was criminal (11%). Grampian, Highland and Islands contained the largest proportion of respondents that felt there were too few legal assistance solicitors in their local area (63%), while Tayside, Central and Fife had the largest proportion who felt there were too many (11%).
- 10.1.11 A third of respondents (32%) felt that there were no unmet demands within their local area. However, the most commonly identified areas of work where respondents felt there was an unmet demand included civil legal aid generally, and civil legal aid – family cases, in particular. This was considered to be an area of unmet need by both criminal and civil practitioners.

Forms and Processes

- 10.1.12 Satisfaction with the Board's application processes are high with at least three quarters of respondents being satisfied with the criminal applications processes and between 59% and 77% satisfied with the civil applications processes. Satisfaction was also high with the children's legal assistance application process with 80% of respondents who worked on children's cases to some extent satisfied with the process for applications to the court for children's legal aid. Just over half of the respondents were satisfied with the process for applications to the Board for children's appeal proceedings (55%) and children's sanctions (54%) with a larger proportion of respondents saying they didn't know or had no opinion on these forms. The minority that were dissatisfied with the applications processes said it was because the forms are too time consuming to complete or too complex.
- 10.1.13 Over four fifths of civil respondents agreed that the introduction of templates for civil sanctions and the inclusion of a section dealing with special urgency and the mandate had been helpful. Two thirds agreed that introducing separate forms for family and non-family cases has been helpful and over half agreed that the changes to the stage reporting process had reduced the need for unnecessary form filling.
- 10.1.14 Around two thirds or more of the criminal respondents were satisfied with the various criminal accounts processes with low levels of dissatisfaction. Civil respondents had more mixed views regarding the civil accounts processes with a higher level of those that were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied or didn't know enough to comment either way. Several respondents mentioned that they use law accountants to complete their legal aid accounts. The main reasons for dissatisfaction with the civil accounts processes was that it is too time consuming, that the turnaround time is too long or that there was an issue with abatements.

Legal Aid Online

- 10.1.15 Over half of all respondents (57%) currently submit their legal assistance applications to the Board either solely or mostly via legal aid online. Those who submitted their applications/accounts via legal aid online were on average 20% more satisfied with the application process than those who submitted paper forms. 92% of respondents who submit criminal summary applications *solely* via legal aid online reported that they were satisfied with the process and a further 4% were neutral compared to 73% of respondents who *solely*

submit them via paper forms being satisfied and 6% being neutral. Likewise for civil: 91% of civil respondents who submit civil advice and assistance/ABWOR applications *solely* via legal aid online were satisfied with the process compared to 70% of respondents who submit them *solely* via paper forms. Online applications had very low levels of dissatisfaction at around 4%.

Fees

- 10.1.16 The fees for legal assistance are set by the Scottish Government. Mixed views were reported from civil respondents on whether they are paid better, worse, or the same for the different case types of civil legal assistance compared to three years ago. For all civil legal assistance cases in general 17% of respondents felt they were generally paid better than three years ago and 27% said that there was no change. Overall 39% of respondents in 2010 stated that they were paid worse than three years ago, compared to 46% in 2005. In all instances the proportion of respondents who said they are paid worse than they were 3 years ago is less than it was in the 2005 Civil Reforms Survey.
- 10.1.17 Nearly three quarters of all respondents (73%) felt that the difference in fees between legal assistance work and private work had increased over the last three years, with civil respondents being the most likely to say that the difference had increased.

Communication and Guidance

- 10.1.18 Most civil respondents (70%) refer to the civil legal assistance handbook at least monthly, and nearly two thirds (65%) generally find it easy to find the information they need. Nearly two thirds (62%) of all respondents always read the Board's mailshots, compared to only 4% who rarely or never read them, with partners being more likely to say that they always read them.
- 10.1.19 Almost all respondents (93%) use both the internet and email in their role, while over three quarters (78%) visit the Board's website at least once a month. The main requests for improving the website included a better search engine and eligibility limits and a calculator to indicate if clients will be eligible (although the Board already has this on its website).
- 10.1.20 A high percentage of all respondents (83%) felt that the Board provides them with sufficient guidance on how to submit applications for legal assistance and a further 10% were neutral. Mixed views were expressed in terms of the guidance provided for civil accounts and civil clawback. Criminal respondents were significantly more positive about guidance for account issues than civil respondents with 66% satisfied or neutral compared to 49% for civil. 54% of civil respondents were either satisfied or neutral about the Board's guidance on clawback while 41% were dissatisfied.
- 10.1.21 Over three quarters (78%) of civil respondents had experience of clients coming to them as an opponent. Just over half (57%) felt that there was sufficient guidance for those opposing cases on how and when to make representations to the Board while 16% didn't know and 27% disagreed.
- 10.1.22 Suggestions for improvements to communications from the Board included using email more often and providing updated guidance on account issues.

Summary Justice Reforms

- 10.1.23 Just over half of the criminal respondents (53%) felt they were conducting less legal assistance work since the introduction of the Summary Justice Reforms although 63% of criminal partners reported that their firm's criminal ABWOR caseload had increased in the last year.
- 10.1.24 Nearly two thirds (64%) found the disclosable summary informative, while three quarters (75%) found the earlier availability of these helpful. 53% of criminal respondents said they would find it either helpful (30%) or neither helpful nor unhelpful (23%) if the Board obtained electronic copies of disclosable summaries direct from the Crown while 46% (n=66) said they would find it unhelpful.
- 10.1.25 Most criminal respondents (80%) felt that allowing the appointed solicitor to grant criminal ABWOR in custody cases had succeeded in helping to bring about the earlier resolution of cases. Almost two thirds of criminal respondents (62%) felt that the changes in remuneration were assisting in the earlier resolution of cases. Over half (57%) felt that legal assistance work was not more profitable than it was before the Reforms, while a similar proportion (58%) felt that these changes in fees had not impacted upon the services delivered to clients.
- 10.1.26 Most criminal respondents (86%) had attended a roadshow to inform them about the Reforms, and most of these respondents (85%) said they found it useful. Overall, most respondents (86%) felt either very or reasonably well informed about the Reforms.

Civil Simplification

- 10.1.27 Over half of civil respondents (52%) had heard of the Simplification Programme, with partners being more likely to have heard of it than others. Over one third (36%) had attended a roadshow as part of the Simplification Programme and most of those that attended (89%) had found it useful. As with criminal respondents in town/rural areas, those civil respondents in town/rural locations were more likely not to attend the roadshows because the location was not convenient.
- 10.1.28 A high percentage (89%) felt that the Board kept them well informed about the changes being made to the civil legal assistance application forms and processes.

Civil Quality Assurance

- 10.1.29 Over three quarters (78%) of all civil respondents have been subject to a peer review, with more males, partners, and those with over three years experience of providing legal assistance work being more likely to have been subject to this.
- 10.1.30 Generally, civil respondents feel knowledgeable about the civil quality assurance scheme, (66%), and are mostly satisfied with the scheme (59%). 63% of civil respondents were either satisfied (46%) or neutral (17%) that the scheme is an effective means of ensuring the quality of the civil legal aid work conducted by firms. Of the 28% who did not share this view the main reason was because they felt it only takes a snapshot of the work that's being done.

Overall Opinions of the Helpfulness of the Board

- 10.1.31 72% of respondents agreed or were neutral that the Board is helpful in supporting them to provide work under legal assistance and 28% disagreed.
- 10.1.32 Results here compare well with those reported in the Legal Services Commission's (LSC) 2009 National Audit Survey of criminal providers⁹ where 42% indicated that they found the LSC unhelpful in supporting them (14% higher than the 28% in this survey who disagreed that the Board was helpful), while 32% said that LSC were helpful (11% lower than the 43% in this survey).
- 10.1.33 The main suggestions for improvements to the way the legal aid scheme operates included changing the fee structure/increase the fees, and further reducing administration. However, it should be noted that fees are outwith the Boards control and set by the Scottish Government. It is also noteworthy that the number of respondents mentioning the need to reduce the levels of administration has decreased since the 2005 Civil Reform Survey¹⁰, from 21% in 2005 to only 6% in this survey.

10.2 Recommendations for future surveys

- 10.2.1 The survey methodology and materials worked well. Respondents engaged with the survey and the telephone approach. Although an online option was offered, no respondents completed this; therefore, this is likely not to be necessary in future.
- 10.2.2 It was beneficial to indicate to solicitors in the introduction that the research was being conducted on behalf of the Board, and this is an approach we would advocate in the future. This encouraged participation and buy-in to the survey.
- 10.2.3 Although partners were asked to indicate all types of work which their firm undertakes, individual solicitors were not asked a similar question. Case type questions for individuals were centred around identifying the main case type and did not include a comparative question on all types (both legal assistance and private) of work undertaken.
- 10.2.4 Greater consideration should perhaps be given to the clarity of questions relating to fees/payment, particularly where factual information is known. It may be wise to provide a short factual introduction before asking respondents for their views/opinions.
- 10.2.5 Pre-coded options were used to gain insight into reasons for dissatisfaction with specific service elements (including application forms and accounts processes). This may, however, have led respondents to overstate high level reasons for dissatisfaction without providing enough detail, context or more specific reasons. It may be more appropriate in future to use open ended questions in such situations to gain a more accurate/detailed insight into the reasons for responses.
- 10.2.6 Although a large number of respondents indicated that they conducted children's legal assistance in combination with other case types, the proportion of solicitors who conduct

⁹ National Audit Office: Solicitor Survey for criminal legal aid. November 2009

¹⁰ MORI Scotland, (2005) "Solicitors' Views on the Impact of the Civil Legal Aid Reform". Prepared for the Scottish Legal Aid Board.

Accessed at http://www.slab.org.uk/about_us/research/stakeholders/archive/civil_reform/mori_civil_reform_research.pdf

mainly children's legal assistance is too low to set meaningful quotas against and/or to achieve robust data. However, the total length of the survey did not allow for questions to be repeated for each legal assistance case type that respondents worked upon. This should be considered when designing surveys in the future.

- 10.2.7 Further, due of the overall length of the survey, solicitors were asked to respond based upon the case type they work on most often. As such, different responses may have been provided if solicitors had been asked about each of the case types they work on, i.e. those who work mainly on civil cases may have different views of civil processes compared to those who occasionally work on civil cases.
- 10.2.8 Finally, the results of this survey provide a snap-shot of the current views and attitudinal position of those who responded. It may be useful to repeat the survey in the future to keep the data contemporary and to monitor trends over time.

10.3 Final Conclusions

- 10.3.1 The survey was successful in canvassing the views of a wide range of solicitors across Scotland and has provided useful evidence on which the Board can draw from in taking forward its work.
- 10.3.2 Solicitors appear to be satisfied with the communication from the Board, and with the various processes and forms that are required in administering legal assistance. Where dissatisfaction was explicitly expressed with some areas of the civil accounting process this was by a minority of respondents.
- 10.3.3 Use of legal aid online is strongly associated with higher satisfaction levels for the application process. For both civil and criminal and across all application types there are significant increases in satisfaction (averaging around 20%) for those who use legal aid online compared to those who submit solely via paper. This is very encouraging as the Board will be moving all legal aid applications online from April 2011.
- 10.3.4 Finally, the results of the survey show that solicitors continue to engage well with the Board and that there are positive attitudes towards the continuation of legal assistance in the future.

MVA Consultancy provides advice on transport, to central, regional and local government, agencies, developers, operators and financiers.

A diverse group of results-oriented people, we are a strong team of over 500 professionals worldwide. Through customer research, strategy development, transport modelling, business planning and operational implementation we create solutions that work for real people in the real world.

For more information visit www.mvaconsultancy.com

Abu Dhabi

AS Business Centre, First Floor, Suites 201-213, Al Ain Road, Umm al Nar, P.O. Box 129865, Abu Dhabi, UAE
T: +971 2 558 9809 F: +971 2 558 3809

Birmingham

Second Floor, 37a Waterloo Street
Birmingham B2 5TJ United Kingdom
T: +44 (0)121 233 7680 F: +44 (0)121 233 7681

Dubai

Office 402, Building 49, Dubai Healthcare City
PO Box 123166, Dubai, UAE
T: +971 (0)4 433 0530 F: +971 (0)4 423 3613

Dublin

First Floor, 12/13 Exchange Place
Custom House Docks, IFSC, Dublin 1, Ireland
T: +353 (0)1 542 6000 F: +353 (0)1 542 6001

Edinburgh

Stewart House, Thistle Street, North West Lane
Edinburgh EH2 1BY United Kingdom
T: +44 (0)131 220 6966 F: +44 (0)131 220 6087

Glasgow

Seventh Floor, 78 St Vincent Street
Glasgow G2 5UB United Kingdom
T: +44 (0)141 225 4400 F: +44 (0)141 225 4401

London

Second Floor, 17 Hanover Square
London W1S 1HU United Kingdom
T: +44 (0)20 7529 6500 F: +44 (0)20 7529 6556

Lyon

11, rue de la République, 69001 Lyon, France
T: +33 (0)4 72 10 29 29 F: +33 (0)4 72 10 29 28

Manchester

25th Floor, City Tower, Piccadilly Plaza
Manchester M1 4BT United Kingdom
T: +44 (0)161 236 0282 F: +44 (0)161 236 0095

Marseille

76, rue de la République, 13002 Marseille, France
T: +33 (0)4 91 37 35 15 F: +33 (0)4 91 91 90 14

Paris

12-14, rue Jules César, 75012 Paris, France
T: +33 (0)1 53 17 36 00 F: +33 (0)1 53 17 36 01

Woking

Dukes Court, Duke Street, Woking
Surrey GU21 5BH United Kingdom
T: +44 (0)1483 728051 F: +44 (0)1483 755207

Email: info@mvaconsultancy.com

Offices also in

Bangkok, Beijing, Hong Kong, Shenzhen and Singapore

mvaconsultancy