

Applicant and Opponent Surveys 2007 Summary of Findings

Introduction

1. This paper provides a summary of findings from the 2007 Applicant and Opponent surveys. The overarching aim of the surveys is to ascertain applicants' and opponents' views to inform legal aid practices and procedures. Specific objectives include:
 - to identify knowledge of, and satisfaction with, the work of the Board, the profession and the legal aid system as a whole; and
 - to identify action points to improve services, where necessary.

Methodology

2. George Street Research Ltd, a market research agency, was commissioned to conduct quantitative research among applicants and opponents of legal aid. Two separate methodologies were adopted for the research: a telephone survey with applicants and a postal self-completion survey for opponents. To be as inclusive as possible a cross section of applicant and opponent types were surveyed. Tables 2 and 3 provide further details of survey response by applicant and opponent type.
3. The opponents survey in 2007 achieved an 8% response rate, which is a similar response rate to when the survey was conducted in 2003 (9%). Although, response rates between the postal and telephone surveys are not comparable due to methodological differences between the two approaches, there is some evidence to suggest that the telephone survey was a more 'successful' approach, in that few applicants refused or were not interested in participating in the telephone survey. Some interviews for the applicant survey took place in November 2006. After these interviews, the survey was amended slightly and interviews continued in January/February 2007.
4. Caution should be exercised when interpreting some of the findings, due to some small sample sizes, in particular to the findings from the opponent's survey. Where numbers do not add up to 100%, this may be due to computer rounding, multiple responses, or the exclusion of don't know/not stated categories. Samples for each survey were provided by the Board.
5. Within the two main surveys, some questions were tailored to three main types of applicant and two types of opponent. The applicant's survey included those who received advice and assistance (referred to as *A&A* in the summary), those who applied for civil legal aid (referred to as *CLA*) and those who were required to make a financial contribution (referred to as *C&T*). The opponent's survey was distributed to both organisations and individuals. Throughout the summary, where questions are asked of different types of applicant or opponent, the sample sizes for each question are provided in brackets.

Applicant and Opponent Surveys

Overview

6. Overall, the findings present a positive picture of the Board and the profession, with majorities of applicants and opponents expressing an understanding of, and satisfaction with, the services provided by their solicitor and the Board. This reflects and improves upon previous survey findings reported in 2003. On the whole, only a minority of applicants or opponents expressed dissatisfaction with the work of the Board, the profession or the legal aid system as a whole. In particular, satisfaction levels were generally higher among those who were either granted civil legal aid or who generally won their case, as opposed to being refused civil legal aid or generally losing their case.

7. In particular, a minority expressed a lack of understanding with various stages in the legal aid process, such as: being aware that they could be eligible for legal assistance/aid, that they would need financial documents to make an application, that a refused application can be reviewed/new one submitted, that opponents could make representations to legal aid continuing at any time during a case, that there were alternative methods of funding a case and a lack of understanding with elements of the contributions/payment system and 'clawback'.

Applicant Survey – Summary of Findings

Profile of respondents

8. 406 applicants completed the survey. Table 2 provides a profile of respondents by applicant type. The majority of applicants (67%) applied for legal aid or assistance for matters relating to family problems. The other main problem areas included compensation and damages (12%) and housing and homelessness related cases (5%).

Access to, and information about, legal aid

Ease of use and understanding of the legal aid system

9. The majority of applicants said it was easy to start using the legal aid system to get legal advice/assistance or apply for legal aid (85% *very* and *fairly satisfied*), compared to only 6% who did not (*very* and *fairly dissatisfied*). Although not as high, 65% of applicants were satisfied (*very* and *fairly*) with the ease of understanding of the whole legal aid system, compared to 20% who were dissatisfied. This is consistent with some of the other findings, where a minority expressed a lack of understanding and awareness of elements of the legal aid system.

Sources of legal advice and information

10. Before seeking advice from another source, half (51%) of applicants tried to resolve their legal problem themselves and half did not (49%). A variety of sources of legal advice and information are available for applicants. However, applicants are likely to use some sources more than others. Solicitors were the most common source for the majority of applicants (91%) in sourcing information on their legal problem. Whereas, using the internet to source legal advice and information proved unpopular (91% of A&A/CLA applicants (286) did not use the internet).
11. The most popular methods for finding a solicitor included having a solicitor *recommended by a friend or relative* (36%), using the *phone book/yellow pages* (12%), or being *referred by another solicitor* (9%). The majority (92%) of A&A/CLA applicants (286) did not have any problems finding a solicitor. However, of those that did experience problems finding a solicitor (23), the main reasons provided included: *difficulty finding a solicitor who specialises in a particular area of law* (30%), *difficulty finding a solicitor who deals with legal aid* (22%) and *no-one wanted to take on the case* (22%).
12. The Board can provide a list of solicitors for those who require help in locating one. A&A/CLA applicants (286) were asked how likely they would be to look for a solicitor using a range of methods. The most likely method people would use to access this information, was contacting an advice service, such as the Citizen's Advice Bureau (50% *very* and *quite likely*), this was followed by the Board's telephone helpline (38% *very* and *quite likely*), the Board's website (27% *very* and *quite likely*), the internet in general (27% *very* and *quite likely*) and finally, by contacting the Law Society of Scotland (22% *very* and *quite likely*).
13. In terms of getting an appointment with a solicitor, the majority of A&A/CLA applicants (286) were satisfied with the time it took (93% *very* and *fairly satisfied*).
14. According to A&A/CLA applicants (286), the main reasons for choosing a solicitor were: *they were conveniently located* (28%), *had a good reputation* (24%), *had done work for the applicant in the past* (17%) and *the firm were specialists in the area of law that was required* (16%).

Levels of satisfaction with the Board, the profession and the legal aid system overall

General levels of satisfaction

15. Overall, only 3% of applicants would not recommend to a friend to seek legal aid if they needed it, compared to 88% who would (*definitely* or *very likely* to). Applicants were asked to think about their most recent experience of the legal aid process and rate the work of the Board, their solicitor and their overall experience of the full legal aid system. Majorities expressed satisfaction with all three. Satisfaction was highest with the work of the Board (82% *very* and *fairly satisfied* vs. 7% *very* and *fairly dissatisfied*), followed by the work of their solicitor (78% *very* and *fairly satisfied* vs. 16% *very* and *fairly dissatisfied*) and finally, their overall experience of the full legal aid system (61% *very* and *fairly satisfied* vs. 21% *very* and *fairly dissatisfied*). Although applicants were told to think of their experience of the legal aid system regardless of whether an outcome had been made, or whether the outcome was good or bad, analysis by outcome shows that in reality, this was not possible: satisfaction was significantly higher with the overall legal aid process, if legal aid had been granted, as opposed to being refused. The following two sections relate to specific aspects of the work of the Board and the profession.

Experience of, and satisfaction with, the Board

16. Majorities were satisfied with the contact they received from the Board, whether it was by letter, e-mail or by telephone. In particular, applicants were satisfied that it *did not take long to get an answer* (68% *very* and *fairly satisfied*), *things were explained clearly in a way they could understand* (68% *very* and *fairly satisfied*) and the *response answered their questions* (66% *very* and *fairly satisfied*). Around 10% expressed dissatisfaction with each of these factors.
17. Applicants were asked a series of questions related to the timeliness of processing a legal aid application. Only CLA/C&T applicants were asked these questions (381). Overall, 74% were satisfied with the speed with which the Board decided if legal aid was to be granted or refused.
18. Applicants were asked unprompted what they felt was a reasonable period of time for the Board to assess their application. The majority of applicants felt that either 3 (12%) or 4 (52%) weeks was a reasonable period. In fact, the Board will make a decision on an application for civil legal aid within 37 days (provided the application has been filled out correctly). When prompted with this information, the majority (79% *very* and *fairly*) were satisfied that 37 days was a reasonable time to wait. In addition, 90% of CLA/C&T applicants (381) were satisfied that a decision to do urgent work was made within 3 days.
19. CLA/C&T applicants (381) were asked to think about the time it took for the Board to process their application for civil legal aid. The majority (76%) said the time it took did not cause them any problems or prevent their solicitor from doing any work on their behalf. However, 19% said they were caused problems by the time it took to process their application. The main problems provided related to *holding up the process* (31% of 72) and their *solicitor being unable to start preparing the case* (14% of 72).
20. The majority (72%) of CLA/C&T applicants (381) did not feel that the Board needed to make any improvements to their service. Of those that did (99), the main suggestion was to *process applications faster* (21%), followed by *improving communication on how the application is progressing* (9%).
21. CLA/C&T applicants (381) were provided with a list of improvements the Board could make to their service and were asked how important they considered each of these to be (*very* and *quite important*). Applicants considered that *receiving more information on why legal aid is refused* to be one of the most important improvements the Board could make (78%). This was followed by *quicker processing of applications* (75%), *clearer information on costs* (71%), *help in finding a solicitor* (66%), *making more people eligible for legal aid* (64%), *receiving clearer letters from the Board* (54%), *treating applicants and opponents more respectfully* (46%) and *longer Board opening hours* (36%). However as respondents were not asked to rate

the current satisfaction with each of these issues it is difficult to interpret these findings. It maybe, that respondents indicated improvement but this is not a direct measure of satisfaction.

Experience of, and satisfaction with, the profession

22. The majority (75%) of A&A/CLA applicants (286) would use the same solicitor again and a similar proportion (78%) would recommend their solicitor to someone else. Although, 22% said they would not recommend a solicitor to someone else, it is not known what the reasons for this are. Some of the reasons may be negative, such as 2% of applicants said their solicitor was not always available and another 2% said their solicitor should listen more to their clients. However, an applicant may also choose not to recommend a solicitor simply because they do not specialise in the type of law the other person requires.
23. All applicants (406) were asked to rate their solicitor's service on a range of measures, with the majority rating the service highly (*very and fairly satisfied*). In particular, 88% were satisfied that their *solicitor listened to them, explained things in a way they could understand* (85%), *helped them understand the legal situation they were in* (83%), *explained clearly what was going to happen next* (81%), *kept them informed of progress* (81%), *dealt with things without delay* (80%), *told them how legal aid works* (79%), *has done his/her best in the situation* (79%) and *clearly explained about any payments (contributions) they may have to make* (76%). However, slightly less (62%) expressed satisfaction with how their *solicitor explained 'clawback'*.
24. On a similar note, applicants (406) were asked a series of questions about the decisions involved in funding their case. The majority (90%) of applicants said their solicitor did not inform them about different ways of funding their case (i.e. 'no win, no fee', paying privately, or paying a fixed fee), whereas 8% said they were informed. Of those who were informed (33), the main reason for considering alternative ways of funding was as a 'back-up', in case they weren't offered legal aid (21%).
25. The majority of A&A/CLA applicants (286) had either no suggestions on how to improve their solicitor's service (71%) or were happy with the service provided (6%). A minority of applicants suggested that solicitors could *communicate* (2%) and *listen more* (2%) to their clients.

The Assessment Process: Eligibility and Procedures

Experience of, and satisfaction with, the financial forms

26. Methods for completing the financial forms varied from applicant to applicant. Forty-four per cent of CLA/C&T applicants (381) completed the financial form with the help of their solicitor, 27% completed all of the form themselves and 26% had their solicitor complete all of the form for them. As might be expected, applicants were more likely to express difficulty in filling in the form if they had completed the form themselves (33% *agree* forms were difficult), rather than if they had the help of a solicitor (21% *agree* the forms were difficult).
27. Around half of CLA/C&T applicants (381) felt the forms were clear and easy to understand (56% *strongly agree* and *agree*) and were not difficult to fill in (49% *strongly disagreed* and *disagreed*). In contrast, a quarter of applicants expressed some level of difficulty in either understanding the form (21% *strongly disagree* and *disagree*) or completing it (27% *strongly agree* and *agree*).
28. The majority (73%) of CLA/C&T applicants (321) sent financial documents in with their application, 17% did not and 10% could not remember. The main reasons provided for not sending in the financial forms included: *not being aware that they had to* (24% of 55), *their solicitor did not tell them to* (20% of 55) and that they were *unemployed and on benefits* (20% of 55).
29. Of those that sent in their financial documents (235), 89% found it easy to get hold of the documents, whereas 11% did not. For those who found it difficult (25), *bank statements* were the hardest to get a hold

of (44%), followed by *statements of earnings* (24%). The main reasons applicants found it difficult to get hold of these documents included, *having to pay for them* (28%) and *being self-employed* (12%).

30. Only 3% of CLA/C&T applicants (381) contacted either the Board or another organisation (such as an advice agency) to get help on how to fill out the financial form. When asked in future, who they would contact if they had a question regarding the financial information on the forms, 70% of applicants would most likely approach a solicitor, 17% would approach the Board and 10% would approach the Citizens Advice Bureau or similar organisation.
31. To make the process of filling out financial forms easier and more flexible, applicants were asked how likely they would be to use alternative methods for completing the forms. Sixty-one per cent of CLA/C&T applicants (381) showed a preference for completing the financial form over the *phone with a member of the Board's staff*. Whereas, completing the form *on-line using the Board's website* proved to be less popular (32% *very or quite likely* to use).
32. Asked if they could change anything about the forms, 45% of CLA/C&T applicants (381) said the *forms were fine*, 32% said they *didn't know*, 7% said the forms should be *easier to understand* and 6% said the forms *contained too much information/too many questions*.

Eligibility and outcome

33. A&A/CLA applicants (286) were asked if they thought they would be eligible for legal aid before they spoke to anyone about their legal problem. Opinions were mixed, in that 51% said they thought they would be eligible, 34% thought they would not and 15% were unsure. In actual fact, of those that were asked (201 CLA applicants), 70% were granted legal aid, 26% were refused and 3% of applications were still in progress. For those who were refused legal aid (53), 43% asked for a review of the decision, 26% did nothing else about the problem and 15% paid a solicitor privately.
34. As stated previously, a minority of applicants have experienced a lack of understanding with elements of the legal aid system. This is further highlighted by the information applicants received with regard to information about eligibility and the legal aid process. In particular, at the first meeting with their solicitor, 66% of all applicants (406) were informed by their solicitor that they may be eligible for legal assistance, whereas in 26% of cases they were not and raised the issue themselves. Furthermore, 23% of applicants who were refused legal aid were not informed by their solicitor that they could ask the Board to review its decision or apply again later if circumstances changed.
35. Although 70% of applicants were granted legal aid, 6% decided not to go ahead. Of the nine applicants who decided not to go ahead, the main reasons provided were: that it was going to *cost too much* (33%), they *decided not to bother* (33%) and their *situation had changed* (33%). Of those who were granted legal aid and decided to go ahead (132), 83% felt their situation would be *worse* without legal aid, 8% felt it would be *about the same* and 2% felt their situation would be *better*.

Contributions/payments system and 'clawback'

Understanding and experience of the contributions/payments system

36. Applicants who were required to make a financial contribution to the Board were asked a series of questions about their experiences. This section of the survey was asked of 120 applicants (C&T).
37. Sixty-four per cent of applicants were required to pay something towards the cost of their legal help from the start of their case, compared to 36% who were not. Of those who were required to pay something from the start of their case (77), 47% were told by their solicitor that they might get back some of the money that they paid in contributions, if the cost of the case was less than originally expected. Whereas, 48% were not provided with this information. Although, these applicants (77) received conflicting information from their

solicitors about money that could be owed to them, satisfaction with the information provided by the Board on this matter was high, with 76% of these applicants expressing satisfaction.

38. Of the applicants who were required to pay something from the start of their case (77), 39% said they had experienced problems paying and contacted the Board. However, only 17% (of 77) actually had their legal aid suspended or stopped. Of the small proportion who had their legal aid suspended or stopped (13), 46% were aware that this could happen and 46% were unaware.
39. Most of the applicants who contacted the Board about the problems they were experiencing, paying (n30), were satisfied with the service provided by the Board. In particular, they were satisfied that staff were *polite and friendly* (97% very and fairly satisfied), *helpful* (90% very and fairly satisfied), *listened to what they had to say* (87% very and fairly satisfied) and *tried their best to solve their problem* (87% very and fairly satisfied).
40. Of the applicants who were required to pay something from the start of their case (77), the most popular methods of payment were by *Bank Giro Credit* (43%) and *Direct Debit* (25%). The majority of these applicants (77), found the method of payment they chose easy to use (92% very and fairly easy).
41. Of the applicants who were paying something from the start of their case (77), were asked to suggest any ways to improve the system. The majority felt the system *could not be improved* (77%) however a minority suggested that the *Board could provide more information about contributions* (4%) and *what it is for* (3%).

Understanding and experience of 'Clawback'

42. As mentioned previously (Para. 23), 15% of all applicants surveyed (406) were dissatisfied that their solicitor had clearly explained what is known as 'clawback'. 'Clawback' can occur when an applicant gets money or property at the end of their case and they may be asked to pay some or all of their solicitor's costs from that money or property.
43. Twenty-eight per cent of all C&T applicants (n120) were trying to get or keep money or property from someone else. However, knowledge of 'clawback' among this group was mixed; with 48% aware and 52% unaware that this could happen. Furthermore, 72% of applicants were unaware that if an opponent agrees to pay, that they may be entitled to a refund on any contribution or 'clawback' payments they have made to the Board.
44. Only in 10% of cases did an opponent agree or were ordered to pay the costs of the applicants case. However, 26% of applicants' cases were still on-going or they couldn't remember. In these 10% of cases (12), 33% experienced problems in getting costs back from their opponent and in these cases, the solicitor was the main mediator in trying to recover payment.
45. As with the contributions/payments system, the majority (77%) of applicants had no suggestions for improving 'clawback' or the payment of costs. Minorities suggested that *clearer information should be provided at the beginning of the process* (7%) and that *payments should be made by both parties* (3%).

Suggestions for improvement

46. At the end of the survey applicants were asked to make 2 recommendations on how to improve the legal aid process. Half (49%) of applicants were either *happy with the process* or had *no suggestions*, this was followed by *quicker processing of applications* (15%) and *clearer explanations of the process at the beginning* (7%). Minorities made more specific suggestions, such as *making the forms clearer to understand* (3%), *making more people eligible* (3%), *improving communication from the Board to the applicant* (3%), *clearer information on eligibility* (2%) and *providing details of a specific point of contact* (2%).

Opponent Survey – Summary of findings

1. For consistency and where possible, the opponent’s summary follows a similar structure to the applicant’s summary. Due to small base sizes for the majority of questions, only the key findings are highlighted in this section. Many of the key findings replicate the findings from the applicant’s survey. A possible reason for this is that 59% of individual opponents were also legal aid applicants, in that they too, applied for legal aid to fund their case.

Profile of respondents

2. 75 opponents completed the survey. The majority of questions were relevant to both individuals and organisations. As with the applicants survey, most opponents (47%) were involved in cases relating to family matters. The other main case types were children’s hearing cases and appeals (13%), housing and homelessness (12%) and compensation and damages related cases (11%).

Table 1: Profile of opponents

INDIVIDUALS		%	ORGANISATION		%
Gender	Male	54	Type of organisation	Private sector	24
	Female	44		Public sector	43
				Voluntary sector	24
Age	Up to 24 years	6	No. of employees	Less than 50	43
	25-44 years	50		50-249	24
	45-64 years	37		250+	29
	65+ years	6			
Disability	Yes	22			
	No	76			
Ethnic origin	White	69			
	Asian	4			
	Other	2			
	Not stated	26			

Access to, and information about, legal aid

Ease of use and understanding of the legal aid system

3. Two in five (38%) opponents were satisfied (*very* and *fairly*) with the ease of understanding of the whole legal aid system, compared to 15% who were dissatisfied (*very* and *fairly*), 25% who were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 21% who gave no response. Only a few opponents provided a reason as to why they were dissatisfied. Some of the reasons included: the *legal aid system was complicated* (1 person) and *inadequate explanations were given as to why legal aid was granted* (1 person).

Sources of legal advice and information

4. Similar to the applicant's survey, opponents showed a preference for seeking legal advice and information from a solicitor (73%), rather than via the internet (85% did not use the internet for legal advice and information). Of the opponents who looked for a solicitor (54), the majority did not experience problems trying to find one (93%) nor had problems trying to get an appointment (85% *very* and *fairly satisfied*).
5. As with the applicant's survey, the most popular methods for finding a solicitor included having a solicitor *recommended by a friend or relative* (43%) or being *referred from another advisor/agency* (22%) or *solicitor* (15%). The choice of solicitor was also based on similar reasons to the applicant's survey, these were: they *had a good reputation* (39%), they *had done work for them in the past* (30%) and they were *conveniently located* (22%).
6. As in the applicant's survey, opponents were asked how likely they would be to look for a solicitor using a range of methods. Less than a third of opponents would be likely to use any of the following methods: an advice service such as the Citizen's Advice Bureau (32% *very* and *fairly likely*), the internet (27% *very* and *fairly likely*), the Board's telephone helpline (24% *very* and *fairly likely*), the Board's website (24% *very* and *fairly likely*) or contact the Law Society of Scotland (16% *very* and *fairly likely*).

Satisfaction with information provided by the Board

7. Majorities of opponents received (63%) and understood (72% *very* and *fairly satisfied*) the information from the Board on what the applicant's application meant to them. Only 2% expressed dissatisfaction (*very*) with the clarity of information received. However, the majority of opponents (60%) were not aware they could make representations to legal aid continuing, at any time during a case.
8. Half (47%) of opponents recall seeing the Board's information leaflets, 29% said they have not and 23% couldn't remember. Of those who have seen the Board's leaflets (35), 77% were both satisfied (*very* and *fairly*) that the leaflets were *useful* and *easy to understand*.
9. The majority (91%) of opponents did not require the information they received from the Board in any other language or format. Only 1 person requested another format, which was Visayan or Cebuano (Philippines).

Levels of satisfaction with the Board and the legal aid system overall

General levels of satisfaction

10. Around half (45%) of opponents expressed satisfaction with the work of the Board, only 15% were dissatisfied and 25% gave a neutral response.
11. Over half (55% *very* and *fairly*) of opponents were satisfied with their overall experience of the legal aid process, compared to 20% who were dissatisfied. Reasons for dissatisfaction (15) included: *insufficient proof* (20%) and *reasons* (13%) *for legal aid to be granted* (20%).

Experience of, and satisfaction with, the Board

12. Half (47%) of opponents have had contact with the Board. Of those who have had contact with the Board (35), the most common form of contact was by letter; this included both contact from the Board to opponents (89%) and contact from opponents to the Board (40%). In addition, 26% were contacted the Board by telephone. On the whole, opponents were generally satisfied with the way in which the Board responded to them. Of the few who expressed dissatisfaction over a range of measures, the main issues were: *letters were unsigned with no contact name provided* (1 person), *staff were sharp and unfriendly* (1 person), *staff were reluctant to track progress of claims/application* (1 person) and that the *Board could not provide a list of specialist solicitors* (1 person).
13. Half (49%) of opponents were satisfied that 14 days was enough time to make representations to the applicant's application for legal aid, 29% were dissatisfied and 21% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. A quarter (24%) felt that this time period for making representations caused them problems, with the main problems being that there was *not enough time to seek advice and assistance* (28% of 18) and they *did not get information in time* (28% of 18).
14. Opponents were also asked unprompted, what they thought would be a reasonable amount of time for the Board to assess an application. The findings were similar to the applicants survey, in that the majority of opponents felt that either 3 (33%) or 4 (41%) weeks was a reasonable period to wait. The majority of opponents (58% *very* and *fairly*) expressed satisfaction with the 37 day and 3 day special urgency (63% *very* and *fairly*) time periods and satisfaction (56% *very* and *fairly*) with the speed with which the Board decided if legal aid was to be granted or refused to the applicant.
15. The length of time from when an opponent was first notified of the case, to the end of the case/its current stage, varied. A quarter (25%) of opponent cases are still ongoing, 15% lasted between 1 and 6 months, 13% between 1 to 2 years, 12% between 1 to 6 months and 19% couldn't remember. Overall, there was a perception among opponents that solicitors and the Board could have done little to speed up the process, however, half (48%) of opponents felt the applicant could have *definitely/probably* done more to speed up the process.

Suggestions for improvements to the Board's service

16. As with the applicants survey, opponents were provided with a list of improvements the Board could make to their service and were asked how important they considered each of these to be (*very* and *quite important*). Opponents considered quicker *processing of applications for Legal Aid* to be one of the most important improvements the Board could make (61%). Comparable to the applicant's survey, opponents considered more *information on why legal aid is refused* to be important (59%).
17. A lower proportion than in the applicant's survey expressed interest in *longer Board opening hours* (19% vs. 36% respectively). However, opponents were asked two additional questions, asking them whether the Board's opening hours were convenient to them and what changes they would like to see, if any. Only 3% of opponents said the hours were currently not convenient. However, a couple of suggestions were made,

these were: *longer opening in the afternoon between 5pm-7pm* (12%) *an on-line application service* (11%), *an on-line information service* (8%) and a *24- hour telephone enquiry service* (7%).

18. Half (49%) of opponents felt the Board did not need to make any improvements to its service. Of those that did (24), the main suggestions included *quicker processing* (13%), *vet claims more closely to prevent abuse of the legal aid system* (13%) and *examine all the evidence and representations in a case* (13%).

Outcomes and the payment system

19. Thirty-seven per cent of opponents cases are still ongoing, 19% won/largely succeeded, 7% lost/largely lost and 17% neither won nor lost, as an agreement was either reached or the judge made a decision.
20. Of the small proportion of opponents who agreed or were ordered to pay money where the other person was granted legal aid (8), 3 opponents felt the Board set up reasonable payment arrangements and 3 did not. The majority (92%) had no suggestions on how to improve the payment process.

Table 2: Survey response by type of applicant

	No. responding Nov 06	No. responding Jan/Feb 07	Total
ADVICE & ASSISTANCE TOTAL	7	18	25
FULL CIVIL LEGAL AID			
Form 1		50	
Form 2		51	
Rural		25	
Special Urgency		24	
Rejects		26	
Refusals		25	
TOTAL	60	201	261
CONTRIBUTIONS AND TREASURY			
No arrears		27	
Arrears		25	
Terminated		25	
Not paid 1 st installment		18	
Clawback		25	
TOTAL	0	120	120
TOTAL APPLICANTS SURVEY	67	339	406

Table 3: Survey response by type of opponent

	No. responding	Response rate
Individuals	54	9%
Organisations	21	8%
TOTAL OPPONENTS SURVEY	75	8%