



Setting Up Fee Charging Services

Crib Sheet 1: Mapping the client journey

The client journey:

- The first interview; this may be free or for a fixed charge.
- Solicitor/caseworker; provides clients with information about the different services and gives written information on fee structure.
- Solicitor/caseworker; assesses the case in initial interview.
- Finance/reception worker; conducts assessment of client income, when they have to pay, failure to pay, taking payment from them, chasing bad debts.
- **Records:** cases are going to be in different charging streams; files could be colour coded, kept in different rooms, different cabinets. Separate distinct sheets to record money transactions.
- Ensure the **separation between files** for which there are money transactions and those files where there is not.

The fee paying journey:

- A clear procedure for payment to be made before any non-free interview.
- **Money handling procedures;** what needs to change in the Law Centre? To strictly limit the number of those who handle money and have access to it; to review the supervision regime. If there is little accountancy experience amongst staff, take advice from your accountant what constitutes a good practice.
- What will happen when people don't have the money?
- Timing of the client care letter - is this sent before payment or after?
- A clear procedure to ensure that invoices go out at distinct stages.
- Reports and record keeping; clarity as to who is responsible.
- Training for all staff; procedures are in the Office Manual and well understood.
- Supervision; supervision by the supervising solicitor, understanding of their regulatory role for money transactions and client account, decisions as to whether another staff member supervises the financial arrangements.
- A Client Account is required; if not in use already, this will need a new segment in the Office Manual.