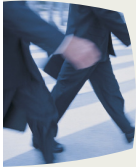


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BlacklawsDavis *focus*

LEADERS IN THE FIELD OF FAMILY LAW.

Legal Services Commission challenged by Law Society in Judicial Review – situation of uncertainty exists

Access to justice – what happens now?

The Law Society, acting on behalf of solicitors across England and Wales, has brought a successful challenge against the Legal Services Commission which threatened access to justice for people seeking family advice.

A tender introduced by the Commission would have resulted in the number of legal practices being able to offer help reducing from 2,400 to 1,300. Lord Justice Moses found in favour of the Law Society, stating that the LSC's process for awarding new family contracts was unlawful and irrational. Moses said the LSC's failure to give adequate notice of the selection criteria meant it had 'arbitrarily and unfairly' distinguished between providers, and

deprived some of those most in need of the opportunity to obtain the services of experienced family lawyers.

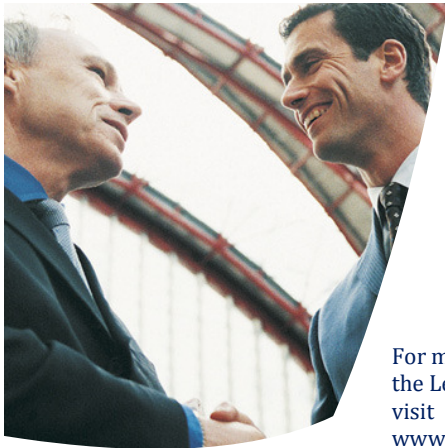
The current contracts are due to expire in November, having been extended for a month. Meanwhile, the government is currently considering cuts to legal aid as part of its spending review, including proposals to restrict legal aid in private law family cases. The Law Society has requested that the LSC extend the original contracts until April 2012, and await the outcome of the government's spending review, to devise a new tender process.

For the moment, however, an uncertain situation exists for both law firms and the public.



LEGAL 500

Blacklaws Davis is delighted to have been included in the list of recommended firms in this year's Legal 500 which was announced in September 2010. The list, comprising the leading lawyers across the United Kingdom, recommends the firm and in particular says Partner **Maud Davis** is "commended for her 'knowledge of children law and clarity of thinking'."



Caring for our clients New Complaints body

From 6 October 2010 a new complaints body will deal with complaints against solicitors

For more information on how the Legal Ombudsman works visit www.legalombudsman.org.uk or call 0300 555 0333.

Timescales

In normal circumstances you are required to register a complaint within one year.

You must then give us 8 weeks to try to resolve your complaint before contacting the Legal Ombudsman.

A complaint to the Legal Ombudsman must normally be made within six months of the date of the conclusion of the Firm's complaints procedure.

In summary:

- You must register your complaint with us within one year
- The Legal Ombudsman expects you to give us 8 weeks to try to resolve your complaint
- After this time, you can contact the Legal Ombudsman (but you must do so within 6 months)"

To obtain a copy of our complaints procedure write to Carol Reimann at 190-196 Deptford High Street, London SE8 3PR or email carol.reimann@blacklawsdavis.co.uk or telephone her on 020 8479 8008.

As Solicitors, we realise that many of our clients are experiencing stressful times. We endeavour to support you and provide the best service possible. If you feel that the service we have provided has failed you, you can make a complaint to us.

Normally, the Legal Ombudsman expects you to give us 8 weeks to try to resolve the matter. If after 8 weeks you are still not satisfied you can then involve the Legal Ombudsman.

Solicitor nominated for Legal Award



Christina Blacklaws, one of the firm's partners, has been nominated in this year's Law Society Excellence Awards for "Legal Personality of the Year 2010".

Christina has, for many years, championed the cause for families and children and is well known as a commentator in the press and on radio and TV. The nomination by the Law Society follows the firm's nomination in the 2009 awards for its innovation in the field of family law.

New offices in Stratford and Bromley

We will be opening new offices in both Stratford, East London and Bromley, Kent in the next few weeks. Work is well underway and we will be relocating experienced staff from our other offices to these locations to provide support for families and children in the London boroughs of Newham and Bromley. Full details will be found on our website www.blacklawsdavis.co.uk

Mediation

Did you know that if you and your partner cannot agree on arrangements for your children after you have parted, or you need to resolve financial matters, you can use mediation to help you reach an agreement?

Court proceedings should only be a last resort for many people. Our experienced mediators can help you and your partner reach an agreement that is more likely to stick and cause much less friction for you both.

Our mediators are all highly experienced in helping couples. Our service, called **Eye to Eye Mediation**, can save you time and help reduce ill feeling. If you do not qualify for legal aid, the rates are much less than the cost of going to court. For more information contact **Heather Thomas** on **020 8479 8008** or email heather.thomas@blacklawsdavis.co.uk



Domestic Violence

Our specialist **Domestic Violence** unit is on hand to help you on those occasions when you need it most. No appointment is necessary and you can drop in to any of our offices during the hours 10.00am to 12 noon and 2.00 to 4.00 pm Monday to Friday. We can take instructions over the telephone, so that you have no problems with child care or needing time off work. For **URGENT HELP** call **Jane Pritchard** on **07786 15 11 66**.