

Lexcel assessment report

Last updated: November 2007

Practice details

		Regis number(s)/Address(es)
Name of organisation	Thurrock BC Legal Services	Grays, Essex RM17 6SL
Number of offices	1	65039

Non-compliances

Number of major non-compliances	0
Number of minor non-compliances	0
Number of areas for improvement	2
Number of areas of good practice	8

Assessment summary

The Service was able to demonstrate excellent control of the legal services provided to the client departments.

The staff interviewed were all knowledgeable of the processes and there were excellent records of the file reviews and one-to-ones carried out with all the staff.

There were good records of training for staff, including the temporary staff.


Continued accreditation to the Lexcel V4 requirements is recommended.

The staff and management are thanked for their co-operation, openness and hospitality during this Renewal Visit.

Assessors overall recommendations

	Yes/No
Certification premature, full re-assessment required	No
Re-visit required within three months of last on-site date	No
Documentary evidence of corrective action to be sent to assessor within 21 days of last on-site date	No
Continue certification	Yes

Assessor declaration

Name of Assessment Body	SGS UK Ltd		
<p>Lead assessors declaration</p> <p>I confirm that I/we have had no other involvement with the implementation of the Lexcel Practice Management Standard at the above organisation apart from the assessment and have carried out the assessment on behalf of the above named assessment body.</p> <p>I further confirm that the content of this report has been explained to the above organisation.</p>			
Signature (or Tick Box)			
Print name	Brian PG White	Date	05/05/09
Internally verified			
Signature (or Tick Box)			

Lexcel assessment report

Assessment details

Onsite date(s)	05/05/09
Duration of assessment (days)	1.5
Number of assessors	1
Name of lead assessor	Brian PG White
Name of other assessor(s)	N/A
Total cost payable to Assessment Body	

Type of assessment

Initial assessment	
AMV	Year 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Year 2 <input type="checkbox"/>
Full re-assessment	Yes

Other quality standards

Lexcel only	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Joint - Lexcel & Investors in People	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Joint - Lexcel & ISO9001:2000	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Credit given for liP/ISO9001	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Does the organisation hold an SQM franchise?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If yes, state date awarded	
Date of last full audit	
Please state areas covered	
Credits given for SQM	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Categories of law offered

Non-Contentious	Yes/No	Contentious	Yes/No
Non Commercial Conveyancing	Yes	Medical Negligence	
		Personal Injury	
Probate		Crime	
Wills		Family/Matrimonial	Yes
Trusts		Debt Collection	
Company/Commercial	Yes	Welfare Benefits	
Financial Services		Child Care	Yes
Corporate	Yes	Employment	Yes
Commercial Conveyancing Other (please specify) Planning Contract Licensing Highways Local Government Law	Yes	Company/Commercial	
		Corporate	Yes
		Other (please specify) Housing Education Adult Social Care	Yes

Office report

Assessment statistics

Total number of fee earners	14	
Number of fee earners in sample	9	
Name(s) of fee earners in sample	<u>Management Aspects</u> Gwen Bankole-Jones David Lawson Chantelle Whithead Baljit Bhandal Susan Hewitt <u>File Management</u> Danista Appadoo Helen Graydon Rosalie Bryan Kevin Williams	
Total number of support staff	5	
Number of support staff in sample	2	
Name(s) of support staff in sample	Lynette Young Amber Robinson	
Total number of open files	Information not available.	
Number of open case files in sample	20	
Number of closed files in sample	4	
Total number of case files in sample	Direct access [<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>]	Access via fee earner [<input type="checkbox"/>]

Section one: structures and policies

Major / Minor non-compliances
None
Areas for improvement / Areas of good practice
<p>The Service had a well developed Office Manual that met all the requirements Lexcel V4 PMS.</p> <p>The annual reviews required by the Lexcel V4 PMS had been carried out with detailed records of the reviews available.</p> <p>The Service was required to comply with a number of corporate policies.</p> <p>The Service was undertaking a reorganisation which will possibly require an update to the Office Manual</p>

Section two: Strategy, the provision of services & marketing

Major / Minor non-compliances
None
Areas for improvement / Areas of good practice
<p>Service Planning documents for the Directorate, Service and individual teams are comprehensive and are reviewed on a regular basis.</p> <p>The Service was able to demonstrate good controls over the level of service provided to client departments.</p> <p>4B.3 The Office Manual would benefit from a cross-reference matrix to the Lexcel V4 requirements.</p>

Section three: Financial management

Major / Minor non-compliances
None
Areas for improvement / Areas of good practice
<p>The requirements of Lexcel V4 have been comprehensively addressed. There are very good management reporting systems. The financial information is detailed clearly documented with good use of executive summaries.</p> <p>Time is regularly recorded on the Galaxy Authority Legal system.</p>

Section four: Information management and facilities

Major / Minor non-compliances
None
Areas for improvement / Areas of good practice
<p>The facilities used by the Service were well controlled by the corporate provider.</p> <p>The Council has an Information and Communications Technology Usage Policy that covers the requirements of Lexcel V4 as regards IT.</p> <p>The Service had a comprehensive library and also made use of on-line resources.</p> <p>The Office Manual was well controlled and was reviewed on an annual basis. The Office Manual was available to all staff via the shared drive on the network.</p>

Section five: People management

Major / Minor non-compliances
None
Areas for improvement / Areas of good practice
<p>The Service was able to demonstrate excellent controls over these requirements of the Lexcel V4 PMS.</p> <p>The appraisal process was well developed but did not include the temporary staff that had been with the service for some time.</p> <p>The training needs for all staff was assessed on a periodic basis and the training either provided in house or through partner authorities.</p> <p>The Service had included a process for checking the disciplinary records of locum staff.</p>

Section six: Supervision and operational risk management

Major / Minor non-compliances
Nil
Areas for improvement / Areas of good practice
<p>There were excellent processes in place for supervision of staff through file reviews and one-to-one supervisions.</p> <p>In addition the Service carried out file audits on a planned basis to ensure that the files were being managed as required by the Office Manual.</p> <p>The Service had a well developed bring forward system for files so that the files were reviewed on a monthly basis to ensure that the matters were progressed in a timely manner.</p> <p>There was a good understanding of the risk management requirements with the annual review of risk being undertaken.</p> <p>There was also the Council wide Risk Management Strategy that covered the other aspects of risk required by Lexcel V4 requirements.</p>


Section seven: Client care

Major / Minor non-compliances
None
Areas for improvement / Areas of good practice
<p>The Service had a well developed process for acknowledging instructions received from client departments.</p> <p>The Service monitored the client satisfaction surveys for items that required investigation which were reported to the Legal Management Team for action as required.</p>

Section Eight: File and case management

Major / Minor non-compliances
None
Areas for improvement / Areas of good practice
<p>The file management was to a high standard with the status of the matter readily determined.</p> <p>The Service had an excellent process for linking files where two sections such as Housing and Social Services were involved.</p> <p>There were good processes in place for monitoring the level of service provided external providers such as experts and counsel.</p> <p>There were detailed processes in place for file closure which identified the retention times for the files in accordance with the guidance issued by the Records Management Society.</p> <p>8.10 The Service should amend Section 12 of the Office Manual to show that files are reviewed by a fee earner before destruction.</p>

Confirmation of office assessment report understood

Practice Representative	
Signature <i>Gwen Bankole-Jones</i>	Date 05/05/09
Print Name Gwen Bankole-Jones	Job Title Interim Head of Legal
Assessor	
Signature 	Date 05/05/09
Print Name Brian PG White	Job Title Lexcel Assessor SGS UK Ltd.