

Access to Justice

Improving access to justice is one of the [regulatory objectives](#) set out in the [Legal Services Act 2007](#), which all Approved Regulators - and the oversight regulator, the Legal Services Board - are required to uphold and promote. As part of the [Licensing Authority designation process](#), applicants are required to demonstrate how the objective will be taken into account in connection with a licence application. The CLC elected to require individual firms to provide an Access to Justice Statement as part of their Alternative Business Structure (ABS) application. Provided below is a thematic matrix of these statements.

Area		
Service offers	Both conveyancing and probate (and related) services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>One-stop shop</u>: a couple of applicants advised they, or the group of which they were part of, would provide, or would look to provide, a full range of services, be they all property related, or probate, wills and estate administration related • <u>Specialists</u>: whilst others referred to particular client groups, such as social housing clients with particular emphasis on shared ownership transactions, or designated probate handlers • <u>Review</u>: another declared a regular review of the products and pricing of search and insurance providers to ensure value and good legal quality for customers
Accessibility to..	Service/ transaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Contact menu</u>: many applicants declared a wide range of communication methods were offered to clients, including meeting in person, interview, telephone, email and text • <u>Case management</u>: nearly as many mentioned provision of case management and online tracking systems and instruction processes • <u>Opening hours</u>: these included being open Saturdays, open all day and later than 5, out-of-hours and weekend appointments/availability of conveyancers • <u>Telephone availability</u>: operate a bounce phone system and direct dial numbers to each team
	One-on-one contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Location</u>: one applicant advised that home visits are standard options for clients (at no additional cost), another that they visit clients outside of office (and outside of 'office' hours) upon request, at home or agents' office, or other • <u>Open-door policy</u> – no appointments needed

	Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Clear explanation</u>: a number of applicants referred to this, citing the importance of using the Plain English method to promote and practise conveyancing without recourse to complex legal terms or definitions • <u>Informed consent</u>: providing easy-to-understand analogies, so any decision required by the client (or a third party) is based upon full knowledge and understanding of advice given • <u>Plain English Guide</u>: another provides clients with an accessible guide to the conveyancing process, highlighting and reinforcing the steps within the process, areas of risk and the importance and consequence of the instructions they give to their lawyer
Costs	Transparency & fixed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Clear costs</u>: several mentioned the importance of costs being transparent from the outset, as well as being fairly priced • <u>Fixed costs</u>: as well as being clear, several recognised the importance of costs being fixed; a probate provider made clear that the cost charged to the client is fixed and not linked to the price of the assets involved) • <u>No charge payable</u>: a client will not be charged where a transaction is aborted at an early stage
Customer Focus	Treating Customers Fairly (TCF) & consumer feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>TCF Champions</u>: appointed across firm, required to demonstrate where positive action has been taken • <u>Service improvements</u>: continually monitor customer service feedback and tailor service as a result