



LEGAL AID ONTARIO
AIDE JURIDIQUE ONTARIO

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Service d'aide à la qualité**

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**MEMORANDUM
NOTE**

TO: Area Offices
FROM: Jawad Kassab - QSO, Lesley Byfield - Client Legal Services Operations
DATE: March 22, 2004
SUBJECT: Interim Progress Report on Area Office Client Service Measures & Surveys

INTRODUCTION

Area offices are to be commended for their commitment to providing quality service to clients and lawyers. The results of this interim report are impressive. In addition, staff are to be commended for their efforts in conducting the surveys and reporting results, tasks that can be time consuming with schedules already heavily burdened. The results speak for themselves. They provide an opportunity for celebrating your successes to date and for identifying areas where improvement may be needed, either locally or provincially. Thank you for your commitment to client and lawyer service on the road to excellence.

This report was prepared jointly by the Quality Service Office and the Client Legal Services Operational Support. It was presented to LAO's Senior Management Committee on March 16. The results represent preliminary findings based on six months of data (April 1 - October 1, 2003). In May 2004, each area office will provide QSO with an Annual Performance and Progress Report containing results for fiscal 2003-2004. QSO and Client Legal Services Operational Support will prepare an AO Annual Progress Report with this data. This Annual Progress Report will provide a more complete picture of area office performance.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

- All area offices exceeded the target of issuing or refusing certificates in 5 business days or less, 80% of the time. AOs met or exceeded the 5-day target on average 95% of the time - provincial average.
- Some area offices did not meet the target for response time to in-custody applications, particularly for federal institutions. AOs met or exceeded the in-custody federal institutions' 2-day target on average 42% of the time - provincial average. The tracking of this measure by the Service Encounter System will be reviewed to determine

effectiveness. This measure may require further consideration to determine whether 2 days is a reasonable target for all in-custody applications (provincial, federal, youth), and, if so, what needs to happen to ensure improvement.

- Appeal decision timelines vary greatly by area office, although most decisions were made between 0 to 30 days. 80 appeal decisions, consisting of 5% of the total, were made between 31 to 41 days or more.
- Authorizations were issued or refused in 6 business days or less, resulting in a provincial average of 81%, which exceeded the 80% target.
- The client surveys point to a 95% 'good', 'very good' satisfaction rate with area office services, exceeding the 80% target. In addition, 91% of responses indicated an interview 'wait time' of an hour or less.
- The lawyer surveys point to a 93% rating of 'good' or 'very good' regarding the timeliness of response by area offices, exceeding the 80% target. This figure is based on a sample of only 14 area offices that submitted their results early, before the February 2004 deadline.
- Telephone spot-checks surveys point to a 95% satisfactory rating for telephone access during hours of public accessibility and a 91% satisfactory rating during outside hours of public accessibility, exceeding the target of 80%.

CLIENT SERVICE MEASURES RESULTS

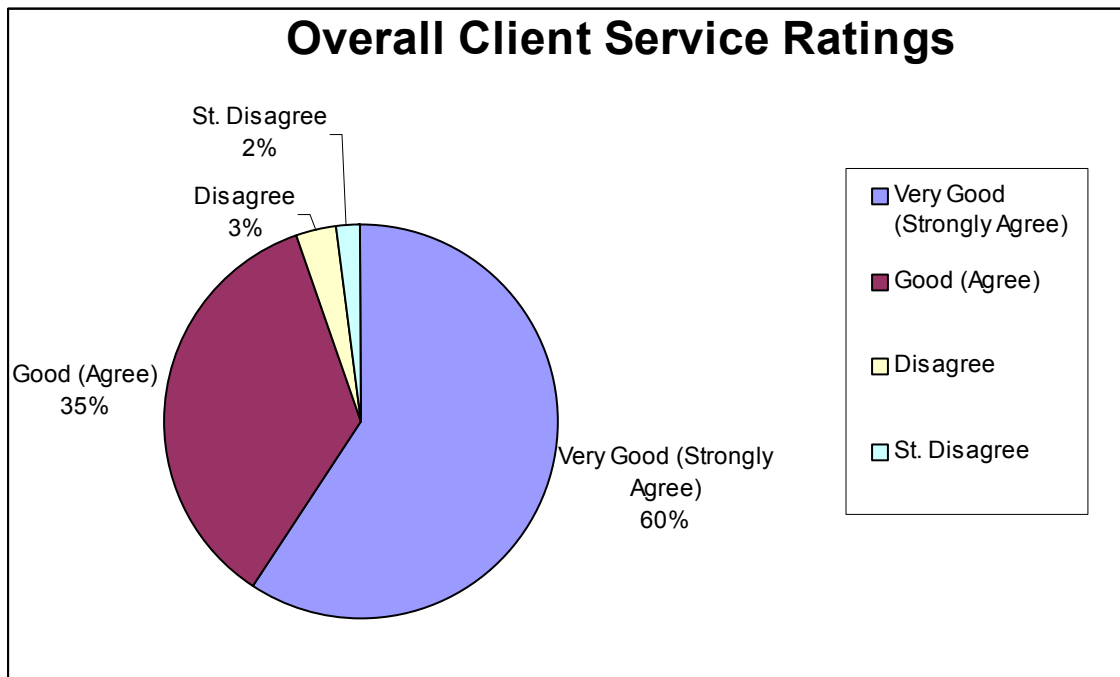
Through the Service Encounter System (SES), client service measures data was collected for April 1- October 1, 2003. The client service measures and results are captured below.

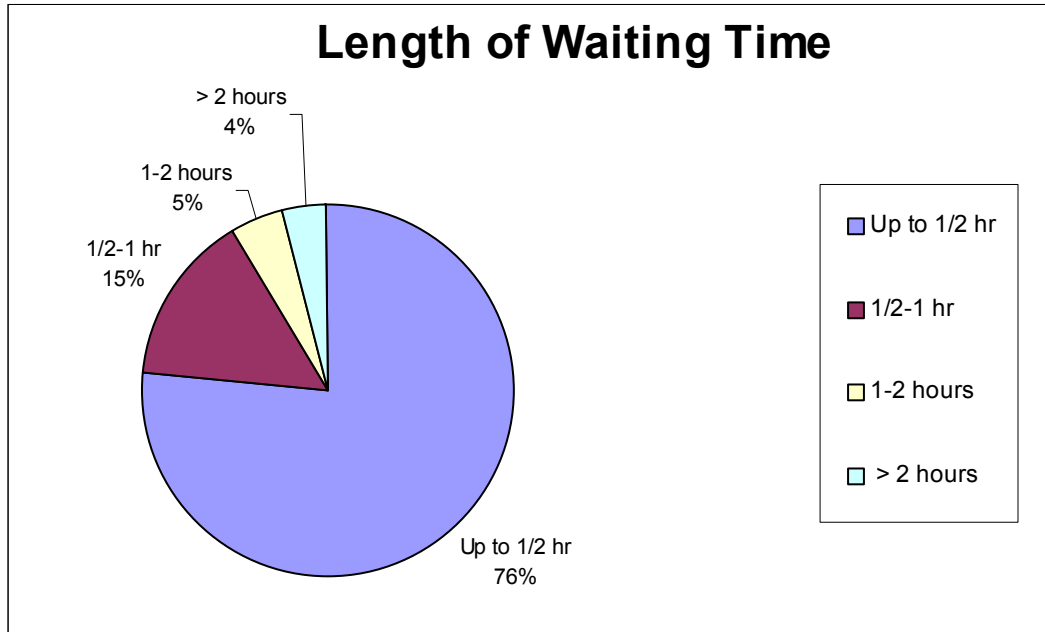
	Measure	Result
1.	Time to issue decision (cert. & refusal) within 5 days of completed application, 80% of time.	All AOs surpassed the target. AOs met or exceeded the 5-day target on average 95% of the time - provincial average.
2.	Appeal decision timelines (in days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1217 appeal decisions made in 0-20 days • 167 appeal decisions made in 21-30 days • 55 appeal decisions made in 31-40 days • 25 appeal decisions made in greater than 41 days
3.	Walk-in client waiting time in Area Office.	Not measured in SES
4.	Time to respond to in-custody applications. (Provincial, Federal, Youth)	
	a. Response time to in-jail applications (provincial); within 2 days of paper application, 80% of the time.	7 AOs surpassed the target 7 AOs met the target 37 AOs did not meet the target AOs met or exceeded the 2-day target on average 68% of the time - provincial average.
	b. Response time to in-jail applications (federal); within 2 days of paper application, 80% of the time.	9 AOs surpassed the target. 1 AO met the target. 23 AOs did not meet the target. 18 AOs results non-applicable. AOs met or exceeded the 2-day target on average 42% of the time - provincial average.

	Measure	Result
	c. Response time to in-jail application (youth); within 2 days of paper application, 80% of the time.	15 AOs surpassed the target. 1 AO met the target. 28 AOs did not meet the target. 7 AOs results non-applicable. AOs met or exceeded the 2-day target on average 67% of the time - provincial average.
5.	Authorization / Authorization refusals following receipt of opinion letter; within 6 days of receipt, 80% of the time	26 AOs surpassed the target. 7 AOs met the target. 18 AOs did not meet the target. AOs met or exceeded the 6-day target on average 81% of the time - provincial average.

CLIENT SURVEY RESULTS

As of January 31, 2004, 47 area offices submitted client survey reports. 2,046 clients responded to the surveys. Summary results are found in the chart below. Clients rated AO service as good (agree) or very good (strongly agree) in 95% of responses (excludes *no response* and *n/a* responses). The survey addressed the indicators of office accessibility, reception courtesy and information, and interview courtesy, information and wait time. Of particular note is the length of wait time before being interviewed. 91% of responses (excludes *no response* and *n/a* responses) indicated an interview 'wait time' of an hour or less. The target/standard of 'good' or 'very good' in 80% of responses was exceeded.



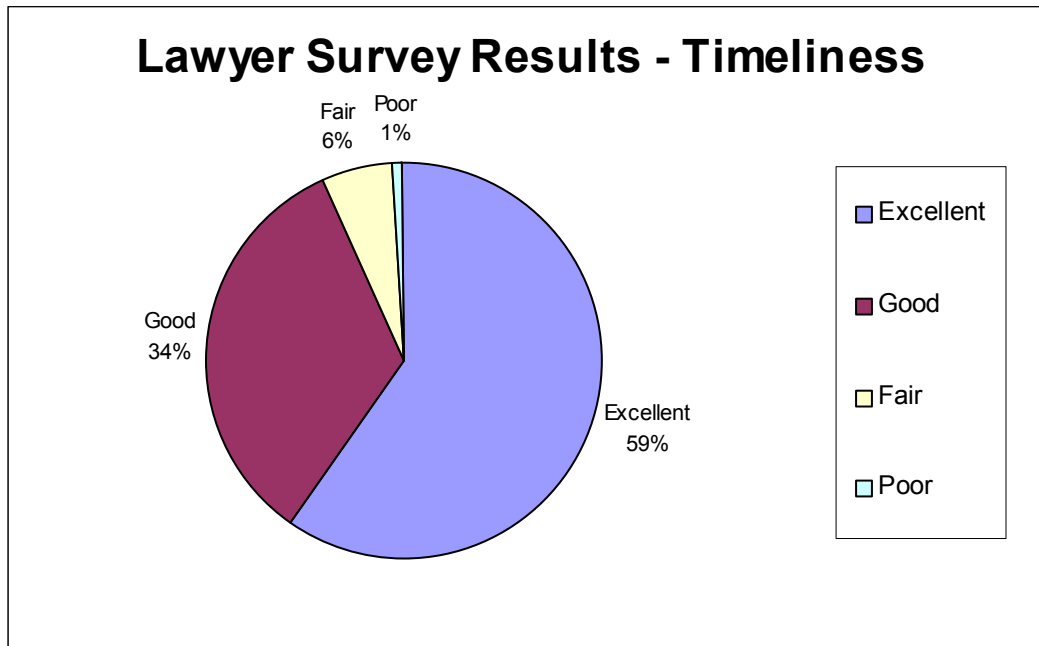


The chart below captures the wait time responses of clients to surveys in nine area offices with significant client volumes.

LENGTH OF WAITING TIME				
Area office	Up to 1/2 hr	1/2 Hour – 1 Hour	1 – 2 hrs	Over 2 Hours
Hamilton	79	23	8	5
Brampton	50	0	8	1
Etobicoke	84	13	1	0
Toronto	146	75	3	0
Scarborough	41	17	13	13
North York	87	23	11	5
Ottawa	9	8	7	2
Windsor	100	25	1	1
London	35	19	5	0

LAWYER SURVEY RESULTS

Although area offices were not required to conduct their annual lawyer surveys and submit their results until February 2004, 14 area offices have done so. Summary results are highlighted in the chart below. 93% of lawyers surveyed (excludes *no response* and *n/a* responses) rated the timeliness of response by area offices to general inquiries, opinion letters, authorizations, area committee scheduling, BCM scheduling, and settlement conference availability, as 'excellent' or 'good'. The target/standard of 'good' or 'very good' in 80% of responses was exceeded.



In addition to area office responsiveness to lawyers, the survey asked lawyers questions regarding the kinds of client complaints about area offices most commonly heard. Some of these complaints are captured below:

- *Too much paperwork/difficult to understand what documentation is required by Legal Aid*
- *Qualifications for getting legal aid*
- *Difficulty getting to the office in the times provided. Perhaps take applications at the courthouse or by telephone*
- *No coverage offered for some services that are required by the clients*
- *Difficult telephone access*
- *Long waiting time for the interviews*

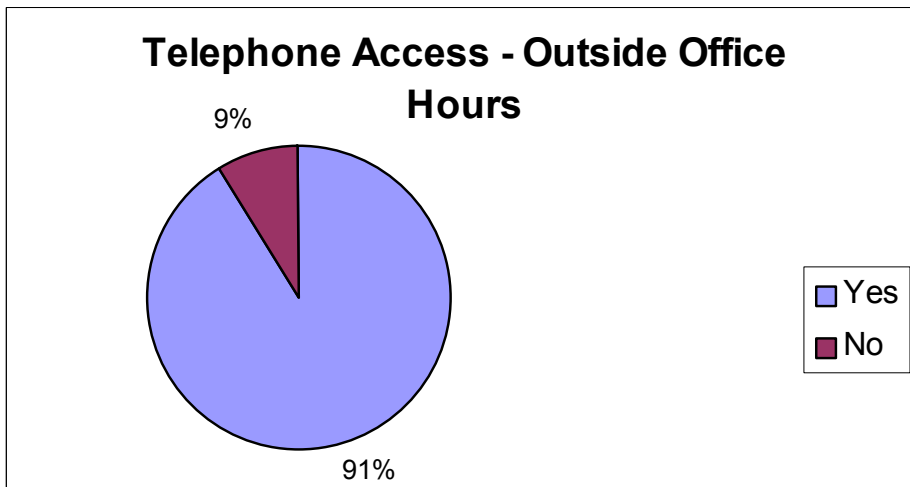
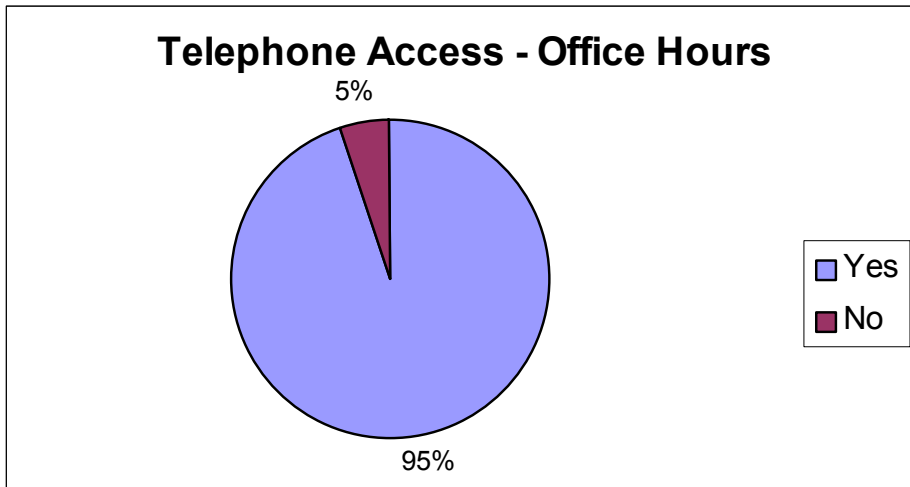
In addition to the responses to the survey questions, some lawyers made specific comments. Some of the comments include:

- *Difficulty getting to the office at the times provided.*
- *I have only positive experiences with the X Legal Aid Office. Staff is eager to help and extremely courteous. I have had success with Legal Aid Settlement Conferences. My only concern is that there is not enough time (2hrs) on opinion letter certificates. Need at least 4-5 for meeting with client, research, and writing the opinion letter.*

TELEPHONE SPOTCHECK SURVEY RESULTS

As of January 31, 2004, 47 area offices submitted telephone spot-check reports. QSO received 86 telephone spot-checks conducted during hours of public accessibility and 78 telephone spot-checks conducted 'after office hours'. Area offices received a 95% satisfactory rating for telephone access during hours of public accessibility and a 91% satisfactory rating during

telephone access outside hours of public accessibility. The target/standard of 'good' or 'very good' in 80% of responses was exceeded.



In addition to responses to the survey questions, some 'spot-checkers' made the following comments:

- *Receptionist was helpful, understanding and friendly.*
- *After hours voicemail does not indicate the office is now closed.*

Should you have any questions arising from this report, please do not hesitate to contact Jawad Kassab, QSO, kassabja@lao.on.ca , or Lesley Byfield, Operational Support, byfieldl@lao.on.ca.