

## PRESS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release – 30/11/2006**

**Please forward to your Legal Correspondent as appropriate**

The new Legal Services Bill has the support of many of our MP's, including Bridget Prentice. Many people affected by these long-acknowledged problems of the legal profession, and the failures of its regulators, say that these reforms are many years overdue. Indeed, some people believe that the repeated failures to bring the profession into line constitute a basic breach of Human Rights.

A new web site has been launched to try and bring affected people together, particularly those with Human Rights issues. Details may be found on [www.echr-action.co.uk](http://www.echr-action.co.uk). The web site is in its infancy and will doubtless improve as time goes on. However, the TIMING of this may be very good indeed. It would seem that a number of applications are pending, and, if any one of them is admitted soon, then our Government will get to see the papers – some real-life testimony from some those worst affected. This could perhaps help to shape the future legislation.

Whilst the majority will certainly hope that Parliament finally gets to grips with the problems, there will no-doubt still be opposition. We may still end up with a watered-down bill. Our MP's may still not get everything they want or that Sir David Clementi recommended in 2004. Indeed, it may be that legislation alone will not (in practical terms) be enough. It is after all the enforcement, the use the new and existing powers that will ultimately help the man in the street. Many people and organisation have been hammering at this particular "nut" from the inside for many years. It remains possible that a declaration from the outside, from the Human Rights Courts in Strasbourg, could really crack this nut once and for all. Some selfless people are already trying because, for them, the wait has already been too much. We are trying to unite them because many may succeed where one alone will fail. According to Which? this problem may well affect over 20,000 individuals and their families per year.

Finally, there are many grey areas still to be resolved. How will the LSC, "Legal Aid" and Access to Justice be managed? It seems even the LSC may be confused here. What will happen to those struggling with complaint under the old system? Will they be thrown out with NOTHING? How long will this all take? The new bill is not just about "regulation", either. Opening up the current market will no-doubt carry it's own new problems – and the Government has failed to clear up the older and simpler ones for a VERY long time. Could the next decade be WORSE than the last? There is certainly room for concern, interest and another Internet site.

### **Suggested Reading**

[www.echr-action.co.uk](http://www.echr-action.co.uk) and our links pages.

<http://www.dca.gov.uk/legalsys/lreform.htm> – government news

<http://www.dca.gov.uk/legist/legalservices.htm> – the bill

<http://www.arsefardle.co.uk/LSB.pdf> – copy of the DCA's November 2006 flyer

<http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm200405/cmhansrd/cm050321/debtext/50321-34.htm> – another concerned MP?

[http://www.which.co.uk/reports\\_and\\_campaigns/consumer\\_rights/campaigns/legal\\_services/index.jsp](http://www.which.co.uk/reports_and_campaigns/consumer_rights/campaigns/legal_services/index.jsp)

### **Notes to Editors**

We fully appreciate that many people do NOT sit at a computer screen all day. Many of those affected (including me) will prefer to curl up with the friendly rustle of the media you still use. Having said that, the majority CAN get on-line if they need to. A scant column-inch with our URL could really help someone and help to bring about a fairer and better Britain. If you would like anything further, please call or write. We have additional ideas and article suggestions. Thank you.