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Respondent



Time to complete



This is a public consultation by the Civil Justice Council.

The consultation is open until 24 December 2021 at 10am. **UPDATE - The CJC's consultation on pre-action protocols has been extended for 4 weeks. The consultation will close on Friday 21 January at 12 noon.**

Consultees do not need to answer all questions if only some are of interest or relevance. This form contains branching so you will be able to skip sections that you do not wish to respond to.

Answers should be submitted through the online form. Please note that responses are limited to 4,000 characters per question (around 650 words). Any individual question response longer than 4,000 characters will be cut off at 4,000 characters. If you want to supply any response not in text form please email cjc.pap@judiciary.uk for details on how to do so.

About the Civil Justice Council:

The Civil Justice Council (CJC) is a non-departmental advisory body, which was established by the Civil Procedure Act 1997, to advise the Government and the Judiciary on the civil justice system in England and Wales.

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Consultation responses are most effective where we are able to report which consultees responded to us, and what they said. If you consider that it is necessary for all or some of the information that you provide to be treated as confidential and so neither published nor disclosed, please contact us before sending it. Please limit the confidential material to the minimum, clearly identify it and explain why you want it to be confidential. We cannot guarantee that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances and an automatic disclaimer generated by your IT system will not be regarded as binding on the Civil Justice Council.

Alternatively, you may want your response to be anonymous. That means that we may refer to what you say in your response, but will not reveal that the information came from you. You might want your response to be anonymous because it contains sensitive information about you or your organisation, or because you are worried about other people knowing what you have said to us.

We list who responded to our consultations in our reports. If you provide a confidential response your name will appear in that list. If you provide an anonymous response we will not include your name in the list unless you have given us permission to do so. [More options for Responses](#)

Please let us know if you wish your response to be anonymous or confidential.

1. My response is: *

- Public
- Anonymous
- Confidential

About you

2. First Name *

3. Last Name *

4. Your location (name of town/city) *

5. Your role *

- Judge
- Lawyer
- Insurer
- Paralegal/Legal Assistant
- Litigant
- Policy maker/civil servant
- Trade Association

6. Your job title

7. If relevant, whose interests do you predominantly represent? *

- Claimants
- Defendants
- Not applicable

8. Your organisation

9. Are you responding on behalf of your organisation? *

- Yes
- No

10. Your email address *

Questions relevant to all protocols

11. Do you agree that the Overriding Objective should be amended to include express reference to the pre-action protocols (PAPs)?

- Yes
- No
- Other

12. Do you agree that compliance with PAPs should be mandatory except in urgent cases? Do you think there should be any other exceptions generally, or in relation to specific PAPs?

13. Do you agree there should be online pre-action portals for all cases where there is an online court process and that the systems be linked so that information exchanged through the PAP portal will be automatically accessible to the court (except for those designated as without prejudice)?

- Yes
- No
- Other

14. Do you support the creation of a new summary costs procedure to resolve costs disputes about liability and quantum in cases that settle at the PAP stage? In giving your answer, please give any suggestions you might have for how such a costs procedure should operate.

15. Do you agree that PAPs should include mandatory good faith obligation to try to resolve or narrow the dispute? In answering this question, please include any views you have about the proper scope of any such obligation and whether there are any cases and protocols in which it should not apply.

16. Do you agree that, unless the parties clearly state otherwise, all communications between the parties as part of their good faith efforts to try to resolve or narrow the dispute would be without prejudice? Invitations to engage in good faith steps could still be disclosed to the court demonstrate compliance with the protocol, and offers of compromise pursuant to Part 36 would still be governed by the privilege rules in Part 36.

- Yes
- No
- Other

17. Do you agree that there should be a requirement to complete a joint stocktake report in which the parties set out the issues on which they agree, the issues on which they are still in dispute and the parties' respective positions on them? Do you agree that this stocktake report should also list the documents disclosed by the parties and the documents they are still seeking disclosure of? Are there any cases and protocols where you believe the stocktake requirement should not apply? In giving your answer please also include any comments you have on the Template Joint Stocktake Report in Appendix 4.

18. Do you agree with the suggested approach to sanctions for non-compliance set out in paragraphs 3.26-3.29? In particular please comment on:

- a) Whether courts should have the power to strike out a claim or defence to deal with grave cases of non-compliance?
- b) Whether the issue of PAP compliance should be expressly dealt with in all Directions Questionnaires, or whether parties should be required to apply to the court should they want the court to impose a sanction on an opposing party for non-compliance with a PAP?
- c) Whether the PAPs should contain a clear steer that the court should deal with PAP compliance disputes at the earliest practical opportunity, subject to the court's discretion to defer the issue?
- d) Whether there are other changes that should be introduced to clarify the court's powers to impose sanctions for non-compliance at an early stage of the proceeding, including costs sanctions?
- e) Whether you believe a different approach to sanctions should be adopted for any litigation specific PAPs and, if so, why?

19. Do you agree that PAPs should contain the guidance and warnings about pre-action conduct set out in paragraphs 3.8-3.13?

- Yes
- No
- Other

20. Do you think there are ways the structure, language and/or obligations in PAPs could be improved so that vulnerable parties can effectively engage with PAPs? If so, please provide details.

21. Do you believe pre-action letters of claim and replies should be supported by statements of truth?

- Yes
- No
- Other

22. Do you believe that the rule in the Professional Negligence Protocol giving the court the discretion to impose sanctions on defendants who take a materially different position in their defence to that which they took in their pre-action letter of reply should be adopted in other protocols and, if so, which ones?

23. Do you think any of the PAP steps can be used to replace or truncate the procedural steps parties must follow should litigation be necessary, for example, pleadings or disclosure? Are there any other ways that the benefits of PAP compliance can be transferred into the litigation process?

24. Do you wish to answer questions about Practice Direction - Pre-Action Conduct? *

Yes

No

25. Do you support the introduction of a General Pre-action Protocol (Practice Direction)? In giving your answer please do provide any comments on the draft text for the revised general pre-action protocol set out in Appendix 4.

26. Do you agree parties should have 14 days to respond to a pre-action letter of claim under the general PAP, with the possibility of a further extension of 28 days where expert evidence is required? In cases of extension, the defendant would still be required to provide a reply within 14 days disclosing relevant information they had in their possession and confirming that a full reply would be provided within a further 28 days. Claimants would have 14 days to respond to any counterclaim. If you do not agree with these timeframes, what timeframes would you propose?

No. Having liaised with claims practitioners in our member companies (insurers) and a number of leading law firms, we have some concerns on the proposed change in the Pre Action Protocol to 14 days and defence response would have to be in this timeframe. This in many cases, but particularly in the complex commercial disputes our members are often involved in, seems scant time to properly undertake investigations, drafting and taking of instructions. This would inevitably put undue pressure on defence counsel leading to time constraints and shortened responses and therein in some cases not really achieving the access to justice that the proposal purports to achieve. We think this will be particularly challenging in professional negligence and complex construction cases and would be interested to see the analysis undertaken and evidence to rebut this concern. Moreover, the administrative and operational burden leads to an potential concern from a professional indemnity insurance perspective that in some cases the standard of work undertaken as a result of these constraints may be subject to challenge. Overall, we would support further analysis of the impact of the proposed rules on some of these more complex areas of commercial practice, including further engagement with those law firms and insurance claims practitioners commonly involved. We would be pleased to assist in this process as required.

27. Do you think that the general PAP should incorporate a standard for disclosure, and if so, what standard? For example, documents that would meet the test for standard disclosure under CPR 31, or meet the test for "Initial disclosure" and/or "Limited Disclosure" under Practice Direction 51U for the Disclosure Pilot. In giving your answer we are particularly interested in respondents' views about whether the standard should include disclosure of 'known adverse documents'.

Personal Injury Protocols

The sub-committee were very conscious, as a final point worth stressing, that there is a need for evidence to underpin any changes that might be suggested in response to the questions below.

28. Do you wish to answer questions about the personal injury (PI) protocols? *

Yes

No

29. Do you agree that there should be a generic PI protocol that incorporates relevant general principles from the general PAP but also identifies PI specific objectives not applicable to other litigation (Part A) with users being directed to a subject specific "Part B" rules for each specialist area?

Yes

No

Other

30. Do you agree that all PI protocols should include a good faith obligation more prominently in the introduction to try to resolve or narrow the dispute?

- Yes
- No
- Other

31. Do you agree that all PI protocols should include an obligation to complete a joint stocktake report/list of issues and should this be:

- a) before or after ADR, and/or
- b) filed with the Directions Questionnaire?

32. Do you agree that any revisions to the PI protocols need to be approached with great care to ensure workstreams for multi-track cases are clearly separated out from fast-track work? If so:

- a) How could there be effective, referencing to and integration with the Serious Injury Guide where appropriate?
- b) How can the current protocols be updated to reflect moderately severe cases as well as catastrophic injury cases despite workflows for each being significantly dissimilar?

33. Do you agree that there should be better integration of each protocol with the Rehabilitation Code? If so, should the protocols require a claimant to identify any rehabilitation they consider would be beneficial, with estimated costs if possible and should it require a defendant to supply reasons if they refuse, or fail to provide assistance with rehabilitation?

Yes. We would support the better and earlier integration of rehabilitation in the protocols, where applicable. On the specifics, the proposals seem prima facie reasonable and supportable but would defer to views from rehabilitation experts.

34. Do you agree the transitional integration clauses for injury claims exiting fixed recoverable processes and slotting into the main injury protocol require greater clarity?

- Yes
- No
- Other

35. Is there value in being more specific within protocols about the level of quantification work to be undertaken without a route map agreed with the other party and the timetable for commencing proceedings following an admission of liability?

- Yes
- No
- Other

36. Do you agree the management of disclosure pre-issue needs to be strengthened to encourage greater compliance with the protocol? Paragraph 7.1 of the protocol expects the claimant to identify which documents are relevant and why. Should there be equal obligations on defendants to give reasons why they consider a document is not relevant/why they will not disclose a document?

37. Should the claimant's letter of claim state what medical records have been obtained and are available for disclosure and what medical records are still to be obtained?

- Yes
- No
- Other

38. Do you agree that a working group should be established, as a priority, to consider a specific protocol for abuse claims?

- Yes
- No
- Other

39. Do you agree that a working group should be established to consider a specific protocol for foreign accident cases?

- Yes
- No
- Other

40. Should initiatives with third party organisations such as the expert witness community and HMRC be considered to reduce delays in the resolution of injury disputes?

- Yes
- No
- Other

41. Should the PI PAPs deal with the question of what to do where a Claimant obtains medical evidence prior to issue but elects not to serve, and if so, what steps should be open to the Defendant?

42. Prior to commencement of proceedings by the Claimant should the Defendant be entitled to obtain a medical report on the Claimant if the Claimant does not disclose a medical report?

- Yes
- No
- Other

43. Do you agree that the protocol should include provision that for the purposes of rehabilitation the claimant solicitors should give reasonable access for medical assessment when requested by the defendant insurer?

- Yes
- No
- Other

44. If you consider any change to the PI PAP expert evidence process in multi-track cases would be beneficial what would the new process look like?

45. Would an ability to have pre-litigation court case management help dispute resolution in multi-track PI cases?

- Yes
- No
- Other

Housing Protocols

46. Do you wish to answer questions about housing protocols? *

- Yes
- No

Judicial Review Protocol

47. Do you wish to answer questions about the judicial review (JR) protocol? *

- Yes
- No

Debt Protocol

48. Do you wish to answer questions about the debt protocol? *

- Yes
- No

Construction and Engineering Protocol

49. Do you wish to answer questions about the construction and engineering protocol? *

- Yes
- No

50. Would you support aligning the time limits for responding to the pre-action letter of demand to those suggested for the revised general PAP (14 days with a right to extend for a further 28 days to obtain further information?)

- Yes
- No
- Other

51. Do you support the retention of the referee procedure?

- Yes
- No
- Other

52. Would you support the formal incorporation of a standard of disclosure and, if so, which standard?

Professional Negligence Protocol

53. Do you wish to answer a question about the professional negligence protocol? *

- Yes
- No

54. Would you support aligning the time limits for responding to the pre-action letter of claim to those suggested for the revised general PAP (14 days with a right to extend for a further 28 days to obtain further information?)

- Yes
- No
- Other

Proposed low value small claims track

55. Do you wish to answer a question about the proposed low value small claims track protocol? *

- Yes
- No

Any other comments

56. Please include here any other comments you wish to make not covered by the questions already posed.

