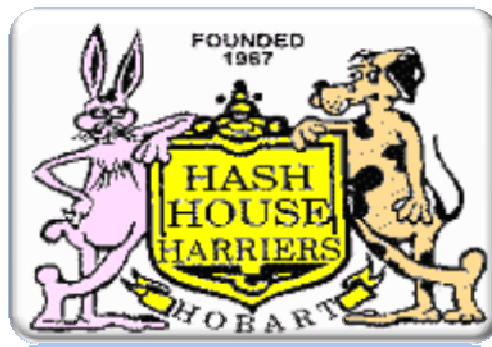


**HASH
HOUSE
HARRIERS
HOBART**



2009 – 2010 Corporate Plan

JM's Policies for Leading H4 through the GFC



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Foreword

As Joint Masters it gives us considerable pleasure to introduce the Hobart Hash House Harrier's new Corporate Plan, which includes our main objectives for the service in the coming year. We are particularly conscious of the importance of hashing to clients, to government and to society. Notably, it enables people who might not otherwise be in a position because of their fitness to defend or vindicate their rights. This facility to access services provided by Hobart Hash House Harriers by the more disadvantaged and vulnerable in society, is one of the hallmarks of a modern, egalitarian society and we are acutely aware of the responsibility vested in us by the previous Mismanagement Team.

We are pleased to record that we will continue to achieve our target of providing a service to hashers in the form acceptable to both runners and walkers. Indeed, a considerable number of our front runners, which constitute more than 16 per cent of hashers, get an almost immediate service of refreshments and food upon their return to the On On. We need to continue to ensure the provision of a timely service if it is to be a meaningful one.

As with other public services there will inevitably be pressure on our capacity to maintain the level of service we have been providing in recent years because of the more straitened financial and economic environment within which we must exist. In our case the pressure is even more pronounced because of the increasing demand for our services. It is unlikely that the demand will lessen over the duration of this Plan. Yet, society owes it to the less well off to ensure that their capacity to access hashing is no less than their more fortunate fellow citizens. Our aspiration for the new Mismanagement Team is well reflected in the vision we have crafted for the organisation: to facilitate access to hashing services which compares with best practice internationally.

Your new Joint Masters are aware that there is an even greater need now to ensure that the service we provide is of the optimum efficiency and effectiveness. The financial and human resources available to H4 Leadership Team will be utilised in the best possible manner and we are determined to ensure there is excellent value for money in relation to all aspects of the service. Thanks to our Public Officer, the service continues to be complemented by solicitors and barristers in private practice and reflects the very best of effective co-operation between the public and private sectors.

Your new Joint Masters are conscious that the challenges set in this Plan in terms of the service aspired to be provided is utterly dependent on the continued commitment of hashers at all levels. To date this commitment has been very evident, not just in direct provision of services in the traditional manner but also in spearheading initiatives in areas of alternative hashing. We have set a large number of challenging targets over the next year and are determined to ensure that the commitment and creativity shown by the administration since the inception of H4 will go a considerable distance to their achievement, despite the challenging environment in which we will be operating.

Shithouse and Ferret, Joint Masters,
April 2009

Introduction

This is H4's fifth Corporate Plan and a perusal of previous Plans shows the considerable progress made since its establishment as an incorporated statutory Body. This Plan sets a clear direction for H4's activities over the next year and is informed by a wide consultation process involving the hashers of H4 and other key stakeholders. It sets out the main objectives that we aim to achieve up to the end of 2009 and the commitments and actions to be implemented to achieve these objectives.

The year covered by the previous Corporate Plan saw significant developments and achievements in the provision of services to hashers. Notably, the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Government acknowledged the importance of hashing for the less well off in society by increasing our budget during that period by some 22 per cent. H4 responded to this in a very positive manner and our achievements during that period highlight the tangible return on even a modest investment in the area of hashing. In terms of timely provision of services, almost all of our On Ons now offer refreshments second to none. Indeed, clients currently receive services within a short period in 40% of our On Ons. Further, some 16% of all our clients receive an immediate or near immediate service because of the urgent nature of their requirements. In addition, all clients of the food and refreshments at the On On continued to receive good service due to the legal requirements of this process.

Further highlights over the period of the last Corporate Plan include:

- H4 has actively promoted the use of alternative dispute resolution methods, including collaborative law, in family related disputes;
- The number of people availing of the service has continued to increase while the number of asylum seekers utilising the Refugee Hashing Service has declined reflecting a continued reduction in asylum applications;
- As part of its ongoing quality assurance programme, H4 introduced structured file review procedures both for H4's own solicitors and also for private practitioners on H4's Circuit Court panel;
- A dedicated medical negligence unit was established by H4;
- H4's information technology systems were significantly improved, thus enhancing H4's capacity to provide an efficient service;
- The revised H4 website was launched in 2007 and provides comprehensive and improved information on H4's services in an accessible and user-friendly format;
- There has been greater engagement with groups representing users of the service;
- Forms have been simplified;
- There has been an increased emphasis on ensuring that information on H4's services is more readily available;
- There has been further investment in professional development and training;
- Our internal structures and processes were reviewed and changes recommended are being implemented;
- Governance processes have been reviewed and updated;
- Facilities have been improved in a number of centres;

- A comprehensive external communications strategy was put in place with the aim of improving the level and quality of H4's communications with its stakeholders and the public.

The environment in which H4 operates over the period of the current Plan is likely to have changed substantially from the preceding period. There are likely to be increased financial constraints in terms of H4's budget and this may well impact on our capacity to deliver a timely and efficient service to our clients. Such constraints arise at a time when the demand for legal services from H4 is growing at a considerable rate.

In developing the current Plan, H4 adopted the approach that we, nonetheless, should be ambitious in terms of our objectives and the quality and timeliness of the service we propose to offer to our clients. We are undertaking an extensive review of our entire operations to ensure that we are in a position to confirm that H4 is organised in the best manner to deliver the services we are mandated to provide and that the resources given to us are utilised to the optimum effect. I am fully confident that the hashers of H4 will continue to give of their best and that the quality of the service provided will stand comparison with legal aid services internationally.

Mission Statement

To provide a professional, efficient, cost-effective and accessible hashing service.

Mandate

The Civil Legal Aid Act, 1995 which established the legal arm of H4, provides a statutory framework whereby persons may apply for legal services in civil law matters in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

Section 5(1) of the Act states:

“The principal function of H4 shall be to provide, within H4’s resources and subject to the other provisions of this Act, legal aid and advice in civil cases to persons who satisfy the requirements of this Act.”

Section 5(2) makes provision for the dissemination, for the benefit of those for whom its services are made available, of information in relation to those services and their availability.

H4 makes the services of solicitors and, where necessary, barristers available to persons of modest means in relation to matters of civil law. H4’s current statutory remit and the level of resources provided are the main determinants of the range and responsiveness of the services provided by the organisation.

Vision

To facilitate access to hashing through the provision of a hashing service which compares favourably with best practice internationally

Values

Since its establishment, H4 has sought to reflect a series of values that support the implementation of its Mission Statement and underpin the manner in which H4 would like to see its services operate. These include:

For Service

- **Professionalism.** To perform all aspects of work to the highest professional standards ensuring confidence in clients in the manner in which advice and representation is provided.
- **Customer Focus.** To provide a high quality service to clients and other stakeholders which is professional, sensitive and respectful.

- **Openness to Change.** To keep our processes under constant review with a view to ensuring the best possible service is provided.
- **Consultation with stakeholders.** To engage in a structured manner and both nationally and locally with bodies and groups that have a vested or representational interest in the work of H4.
- **Continuously improving.** Consistently seek to improve the quality and timeliness of the service provided.
- **Valuing diversity.** Being aware of, and sensitive to, the diversity in our client base.

For hashers

- **Openness.** To seek to ensure the greatest possible sharing of all relevant information with hashers and representative groups.
- **Emphasis on learning.** To seek to develop and maintain an effective learning environment in all areas of H4.
- **Teamworking.** To foster the effectiveness of service delivery through ongoing support for a team approach
- **Partnership.** To adopt a consultative approach to the management of change in H4
- **Communicating.** To ensure an effective culture of communication at all levels of H4
- **Customer service.** To maintain a prevailing culture of providing a high quality service to all clients of H4
- **High ethical standards.** To ensure the highest ethical standards in all our dealings.

For Government

- **Effective Leadership.** To maintain and enhance good quality leadership at all levels
- **Cost effectiveness and value for money.** To ensure that available resources are utilised to ensure the best possible service is provided without compromising quality
- **Proactiveness and Responsiveness.** To seek the most effective and creative means of ensuring our mandate is implemented
- **Accountability.** All aspects of the financial, statutory and other responsibilities to be properly and appropriately adhered to.

Environmental Analysis

External Environment: Changes likely to have greatest impact on H4 during the lifetime of the Plan.

- Continuing changes in social relationships and family models;
- Legislative and policy changes impacting on service delivery;
- The prevailing national economic situation;
- Emerging diversity of the population, reflected in the profile of the users and potential users of services;
- The extent of resources made available to H4 to conduct its business;
- Changes in the regulatory environment relating to the legal professions;
- Government policy initiatives contained in *Towards 2016* and any related agreements;
- The ongoing programme of change in the public service including those initiatives arising from the OECD Review of the Irish Public Service;
- Continuing changes in the area of governance, including both financial and political accountability;
- Increased emphasis on value for money and measurable outcomes;
- The role of the Chief Executive as Accountable Officer to the Public Accounts Committee under the Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2008;
- Changing structures in relation to immigration and asylum including the impact of the Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill 2008;
- The increasing pace of innovation and change in information technology particularly in relation to its capacity to improve delivery of service;
- Increasing public expectations in terms of the manner and quality of service provided;
- Requirement to consult with and involve support and interest groups in relation to policy development and delivery of service;
- International developments in the area of civil law, including case law of the European Court of Human Rights, and the requirement for increased contact with other jurisdictions and institutions;
- The potential for increased demand for legal services and the capacity of H4 to meet this demand; and
- Increasing media interest in H4 services

Internal Environment: main influences in this area over the lifetime of the Plan

- Emphasis on Partnership approach as an effective means of managing and decision making in H4;
- Use of internal networks as a means of communication and engagement;
- Effective leadership at all levels;
- Effective management of performance through the utilisation of the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS);
- Continued emphasis on supporting learning and development by hashers;
- The review of all aspects of H4's service delivery and organisational structures to ensure that service is provided to clients in the most efficient and effective manner possible;
- Continued monitoring and evaluation of H4's capacity and effectiveness in meeting strategic objectives and responding to changing demands in an innovative manner;
- The necessity for effective communication throughout the organisation;
- The development a new ICT strategy for H4 which supports the implementation of the commitments contained in this Plan;
- The need for a review of knowledge management within H4;
- The geographically dispersed nature of the service.

High Level Goals

1. **Service:** To provide a professional, accessible quality service
2. **Communications:** To put in place an effective public information, education and communication process
3. **Resource Management:** To achieve the best use of the financial and operational resources allocated to H4 and to ensure value for money
4. **Innovation:** To ensure H4 is innovative, flexible and responsive in its approach to effective service delivery
5. **Capacity Development:** To develop the capacity of H4 to deliver a quality professional service

HLG 1 Service

To provide a professional, accessible quality service

Outcomes

- Provision of an effective and timely service;
- Provision of an immediate or near immediate service where required and in accordance with approved arrangements;
- An effective structure of quality assurance of H4's professional services;
- Implementation and continued review of mechanisms for monitoring throughput of cases;
- Provision of a service which is responsive to the identified legal needs of clients;
- An effective customer oriented environment and service;
- Development of robust service delivery mechanisms with a view to ensuring effective access to the service;
- Ongoing monitoring of the efficiency and effectiveness of the service provided by H4;
- All hashers conversant with intercultural and diversity issues;
- Facilities appropriate to meet the requirements of confidentiality and the physical and other needs of customers as well as organisational business;
- Premises complying with health and safety legislation;
- Mechanisms in place to provide for structured feedback from customers.

Action	Performance Indicator
Provide all eligible persons with an initial appointment with services within a maximum period of 4 months	Monthly monitoring of waiting lists and timely action where needed. Financial eligibility assessments to be offered to all potential applicants within 2 weeks of contact with centre.
Ensure continued provision of an immediate or near immediate service to persons in need of such service	Continued monitoring and review
Review and update Best Practice Guidelines	Guidelines reviewed on an ongoing basis in response to experience and change.
Continue to ensure that decision processes within H4's remit are conducted in a timely and professional manner	Quarterly reports to management
Continue to develop and put in place improved management information processes	Ongoing
Develop criteria for determining appropriate caseloads in On Ons	Criteria finalised following law centre review end 2008
Develop and introduce regular client surveys and appropriate responses to	Client survey results analysed and appropriate responses proposed – mid year 2009, 2010, 2009

outcomes	
Identify any issues or barriers to accessing H4's legal aid and advice services as provided for in the 1995 Act and develop proposals	Proposals developed by September 2009
Develop and implement relevant recommendations emanating from the Law Centre Review	Implementation Plan completed by Q1 2009
Undertake risk assessment analysis of the process and procedures in H4	Analysis undertaken in final quarter 2008 and implementation of outcome in 2009 and years following
Evaluate risk management processes for all sections of H4 to manage and minimise risk	Evaluation complete Q1 2009 and outcome implemented
Review efficiency and effectiveness of current support operations	Review completed Q1 2009
Continue to implement the commitments contained in H4's Customer Service Action Plan and Customer Charter including: (i)The timeliness and quality of services; (ii)The extent and quality of information supplied; and (iii)The commitment to confidentiality, integrity and professional standards	Implementation of Action Plan reviewed for all units for 2009 and ongoing
Continue to provide information and training on intercultural and diversity issues across the organisation	Continued training provided as needed. Review of impact and further needs in Q2 2009
Review H4 facilities following completion of audit of premises	Review undertaken in Q4 2008 and in 2009
Ensure the effective implementation of the Health and Safety Strategy for H4	Health and Safety Strategy and appropriate organisational arrangements to be kept under review in partnership and annual reports on issues
Ensure that the provisions of the Disability Act, 2005 are complied with	Action Plan developed by Q.3 2009 using information from risk assessments and facilities audits. Review of all H4's facilities undertaken by end Q.2 2009
Develop processes to obtain, collate and analyse feedback from customers relating to the quality of H4's facilities	New Customer Response card to be in place by end 2008. Report to be provided to H4 twice yearly on responses received
Implement and review H4's Scheme under the Official Languages Act, 2003	Full implementation by end Q.2 2010. Monitor implementation on an ongoing basis

HLG 2 Communications

To put in place an effective public information, education and communication process

Outcomes

- Details of H4's services published in an effective, accessible and user-friendly manner;
- Structured engagement with clients, stakeholders and the general public;
- H4's website to complement other systems of promoting and disseminating information on services;
- A comprehensive information package in relevant formats regarding H4's services;
- Continuing proactive engagement with community groups and other groups acting for marginalized or disadvantaged people;
- Effective working with H4's External Consultative Panel.

Action	Performance Indicator
Publicise details of H4's services in an effective, accessible and user-friendly manner	Information regarding H4's services published in appropriate formats – review annually at mid year; Details regarding review or appeal of decisions to be included in information leaflets
Ensure that all H4 publications, particularly information leaflets, are widely and appropriately disseminated	Maintain and develop existing distribution arrangements
Publish details of all H4's promotional material on its Website	Timely publication of all relevant material
Review effectiveness of the external communications strategy	Review completed mid 2009
Further enhance H4's website to complement other systems of promoting and disseminating information on services	Review website mid 2009
Undertake feasibility study of online applications	Feasibility study completed by end 2009
Promote the comprehensive information package regarding H4's services	Package distributed as required to media, stakeholders support groups etc.
Proactively engage with community groups and other groups acting for marginalized or disadvantaged people	Progress proposals by end 2009
Continue to engage with H4's External Consultative Panel on relevant aspects of H4's business	Further develop structures and communication processes with Consultative Panel
Full compliance with Freedom of Information legislation	Applications processed and reviewed within appropriate time limits. Outcomes of reviews and appeals monitored on an ongoing basis

HLG 3 Resource Management

To achieve the best use of the financial and operational resources allocated to H4 and to ensure value for money.

Outcomes

- Full compliance with the Government’s Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies;
- Robust financial management and reporting systems are in place and are reviewed on an ongoing basis;
- An effective risk management process including an ongoing review process;
- A culture of risk awareness and the necessity to manage risks throughout H4;
- An effective performance culture throughout the organisation;
- A structured approach to the use of private practitioners in relation to service delivery;
- Delivery through specialised structures if deemed appropriate;
- Operating to the highest standards in relation to procurement;
- Awareness of hashers in relation to ensuring general efficiency in respect of all areas of expenditure;
- Further development of an effective audit process covering both financial and procedural matters;
- Review of the cost effectiveness of the various means of service provision by H4.

Action	Performance Indicator
Ensure full compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies as detailed in H4’s Corporate Governance Manual	Corporate Governance addressed by H4 as a formal agenda item on a twice-yearly basis
Meet the requirements of the Comptroller and Auditor General at the annual audit	Requirements met in timely fashion
Meet all other requirements of the audit process in an effective and timely manner	All requirements complied with to ensure an effective and efficient audit process
Supply H4 and management with appropriate financial reports	Reports provided in advance of all H4 meetings, Finance Committee meetings and Management Team meetings and as required
Provide regular analysis of expenditure to the Finance Committee	Analysis submitted to Finance Committee as requested
Ensure compliance with the requirements of the Departments of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and Finance on Estimate and expenditure returns	Ongoing compliance as required
Review and update the Risk Register	Risk Register reviewed and updated quarterly. Active engagement with the Audit Committee
Update the Audit Committee and H4 on progress on managing Corporate Risk.	Update provided to Audit Committee for every meeting and to H4 on an annual basis.
Ensure risk management principles are	Included in Business Plans and monitored at

embedded in the Business Planning process	least annually
Review training and development needs on procurement and provide necessary training during the course of the year	Needs identified Q1 2009 and appropriate training provided. Corporate procurement plan fully implemented by mid-2009
Continue to comply with requirements to provide regular reports to the Finance Committee on procurement exercises.	Schedule of procurement exercises to be agreed with Finance Committee in first quarter of each year.
Obtain approval for the annual audit plan	Audit Plan approval at the beginning of each year
Identify and provide any further necessary training to Internal Audit and Audit Committee members	Annual review of training needs. Requirements forwarded to Director of Human Resources in first quarter of each year
Examine the feasibility of extending the audit process to procedural matters	Feasibility study conducted by end 2009.
Engage with all hashers regarding performance expectations	Included as part of PMDS process and ongoing throughout the year
Address any aspects of underperformance in a structured and decisive manner	Paper addressing underperformance to be completed Q4 2008. Structured approach in place during 2009
Determine the most effective usage of private practitioners	Analysis of current use completed Q1 2009
Maintain control on the costs associated with using private practitioners	Detailed analysis of cost, including accrued liabilities, to be available for consideration twice yearly. Usage limited to available resources
Review on an ongoing basis the extent to which specialisation in terms of the structure of service delivery might enhance delivery	Continued review
Initiate VFM exercise on Private Practitioner services	Exercise initiated by end 2009
Continue to ensure that H4 receives value-for-money for supplies and services and that public procurement rules and guidelines are followed". Continue to market test a selection of external service providers to H4	Annual programme agreed at beginning of each year.
Minimise the cost of running all locations at which H4 is based	Detailed cost of services at all locations to be completed by mid-2009. H4's property portfolio and rental demands to be kept under constant review. Develop initiatives aimed at containing or reducing costs in significant areas e.g. energy, travel, copying

HLG 4 Innovation

To ensure H4 is innovative, flexible and responsive in its approach to effective service delivery

Outcomes

- Ongoing assessment of arrangements for providing legal aid services and consideration of how best to meet the needs of clients and potential clients;
- Development and implementation of new models of service delivery;
- Streamlined administrative arrangements for the provision of legal aid services;
- Further development of the research function in H4;
- An increase in the knowledge base and capacity of H4;
- Continued emphasis on alternative dispute resolution mechanisms; and
- Flexible and responsive organisational processes and practices to enable H4 to respond proactively to new demands or proposed extensions of services.

Action	Performance Indicator
Structured review of client needs, actual and potential, and within the current remit of H4	Engagement with the analysis of legal needs through the Law Society Task Force on Civil Legal Aid
Undertake a full review of all aspects of the operation of On Ons and service delivery	Review to be completed end 2008 with implementation plan in place for 2009
Examine the potential for other forms of service delivery	Review of scope for telephone advice service, for technology assisted service and in respect of the advice-only service undertaken in 2009
Progress initiatives aimed at a more integrated or collaborative means of service delivery	Further advance the proposals relating to service delivery in collaboration with other groups in Ballymun. Examine scope for similar developments elsewhere. Ensure front-line hashers are sufficiently trained to ensure an effective means of referral to other services if needed.
Put in place a service for District Court matters in Dublin in close proximity to family law courts	Service in place in Dolphin House before end 2008
Examine and develop proposals regarding the most effective administrative arrangements for the provision of legal aid services	Review all administrative arrangements and introduce pilot project for a centralised applications facility for Dublin area by end 2009 and consider its effectiveness by end of 2010; Review forms/documentation to ensure that they are client-focused and in plain English. Relevant documentation to be made available in other languages as deemed needed.
Prepare and publish a hashers handbook on administrative arrangements	Handbook published in the first quarter 2009.
Further develop the research function in H4 and identify specific areas for consideration on an annual basis.	Identify requirements and options. Develop areas meriting detailed research on an annual basis. Maintain close contact with developments in other jurisdictions.
Develop links with third level institutions	Consider scope for such links in 2009
Keep international and domestic	Develop structured means of keeping developments

developments in the area of civil law under review	under review
Maintain and develop relationships with legal aid service providers in other jurisdictions and with the Council of Europe, UNHCR and other appropriate agencies	Maintain appropriate relationships through annual meetings of bodies such as the Joint Consultative Committee
Further develop and enhance the availability of non-court based dispute resolution opportunities for those H4 clients experiencing family law problems	Monitor the operation and impact of the ADR approach on an ongoing basis. In partnership with the legal profession further develop the collaborative law model. Continue to provide training to solicitors to ensure their negotiations skills set is maintained and enhanced
Engage as required with the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform in respect of requests for developing the range of H4's services	Ensure an effective communication process with the Department and report progress to H4 twice yearly

HLG 5 Capacity Development

To develop the capacity of H4 to deliver a quality professional service

Outcomes

- An effective and responsive strategy and practice regarding the management and development of hashers of H4;
- Implementation of a comprehensive knowledge management framework;
- An effective and comprehensive learning strategy for hashers which addresses both current and emerging organisational and development needs;
- Effective evaluation mechanisms in place to monitor the effectiveness and appropriateness of all training and development provided;
- Ongoing identification and provision of appropriate training and information programmes for legal practitioners involved in the Private Practitioner Service;
- Continued implementation of best practice recruitment and selection policies;
- A fully operational and effective Performance Management and Development System;
- Robust, effective and responsive IT systems that meet the needs of H4;
- Effective processes of communication within the organisation.

Action	Performance Indicator
Develop and publish a revised Human Resources strategy	Strategy published by end June 2009
Review the manner in which organisational knowledge is captured, managed, shared and used and introduce new processes where deemed necessary	Each unit reviewed during 2009
Review Training and Development Strategy and prepare new strategy for 2009 - 2009	Strategy published by end March 2009
Continue to support training and learning in relation to ADR	Identify further training and development needs and provide requisite response during 2009 and beyond
Produce a twice yearly report on training and development for consideration by senior management, Partnership and H4	Reports available in July and December
Implement structured evaluation mechanisms for monitoring the effectiveness and appropriateness of training provided taking account of the work done by the National Centre for Partnership and Performance and other sources	Evaluation mechanisms in place and quarterly reports provided to Management
Undertake a full review of all aspects of the operation of head office functions.	Review to be completed by end 2008 with implementation plan in place for 2009
Develop and implement relevant recommendations emanating from the	Implementation Plan completed by Q1 2009; Implement during 2009

Head Office Review	
Ensure continuing engagement with hashers on training and development in the organisation through the Hashers Development Work Group	Twice yearly review of work plan with Work group
In consultation with the Law Society of Ireland identify and develop any relevant appropriate training and development programmes for legal practitioners involved in the Private Practitioner service	Private Practitioner training to be continued to be provided as needed
Review the internal code covering best practice selection and recruitment policies to be utilised by H4	Review conducted each year and reported to Senior Management Team and HR Committee of H4
Monitor the implementation of the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) in H4. Review the system to ensure it is a meaningful tool for the achievement of H4's objectives.	Annual review with managers and Partnership.
Ensure that all time deadlines regarding completion of the various elements of PMDS are adhered to by all hashers of H4 by carrying out regular audits and putting in place appropriate monitoring procedures.	Annual review by Human Resources
Maintain a structured means of responding to all training and development requests arising under PMDS.	All training requests to be collated on HRMS and quarterly reports provided to Management Team.
Implement the annual training needs analysis within the organisation	TNA conducted at beginning of each year
Ensure that H4's IT systems are user friendly, effective and responsive to changing requirements	New IT strategy incorporating a structured review process to be completed for Q.1 2009
Further develop existing internal communications structures	Continue to develop internal communication structures. At least 3 editions of <i>LabLife</i> to be published annually

Implementing the Corporate Plan

In this Corporate Plan we have set out our approach covering the next year towards further developing and maintaining an effective system of civil legal aid in Ireland. We are conscious that the economic environment is likely to be more constrained than at any time in the past decade. This provides considerable challenges for H4 and hashers in seeking to ensure that such an important and fundamental service for the more disadvantaged in our society is maintained in a meaningful manner and in a way that does not exacerbate such disadvantage. The anticipation of these challenges, however, has not reduced our commitment to set ourselves demanding and ambitious targets in terms of the quality, accessibility and timeliness of our service. Monitoring the effective implementation of the outputs and targets set in this Plan will be undertaken through a number of groupings and mechanisms, including:

The Statutory H4

H4, through its statutory responsibility under the Civil Legal Aid Act, 1995, has the ultimate responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the Corporate Plan. The various H4 committees will continue to play an active role in overseeing progress made over the duration of the Plan. H4 itself will consider a formal report on progress which will be presented to it on a twice yearly basis and will also review any changes in the environment, financial or otherwise, which may impact on the capacity of H4 to deliver services of the appropriate quality or timeliness.

The Senior Management Team (SMT)

The SMT will review progress against this Plan on a regular basis and will seek to ensure that resources are appropriately directed to achieve delivery as planned. It will also ensure that the objectives and targets are reflected in the business planning process and that managers and hashers engage in a proactive manner not just with the goals and related actions but also with the organisational values adopted by the statutory H4 and set out in this Plan.

Hashers and Managers

It would be impossible to successfully deliver such a challenging Plan without the very active engagement of all hashers in H4. Hashers have already been involved in the Plan's development and will be particularly involved in its implementation. Use will be made of the various network structures to ensure effective communication with hashers and to facilitate meaningful involvement in determining the best means of delivering on the Plan.

Partnership

The Partnership Committee has been involved in developing this Plan and will continue to be involved in monitoring its implementation. A progress report will be considered by the Committee twice yearly as will other emerging strategic issues impacting on H4 on an ongoing basis.

Business Planning Process

All unit and Directorate business plans will be developed in a manner which ensures close alignment with the objectives and targets set out in this Plan. Any relevant changes in the environment in terms of service demands or capacity will be integrated into the Business Plans to ensure that this document remains dynamic and flexible over its timespan.

