

Proclaim provides the right platform for CLS to move forward in the new era of legal services

Following the widely-publicised 2006 Legal Services Bill, The Co-operative Group was the very first organisation to react, launching a dedicated legal services division of its own.

The Co-operative Group – which employs almost 123,000 people, and has a membership base in excess of 5 million – formed Co-operative Legal Services (CLS) to take advantage of the proposed liberalisation of the legal services marketplace.

At its formation, CLS selected Eclipse's Proclaim Case Management Software solution, considering it the system of choice for an organisation with ambitious growth plans. The system currently supports 250 users at the firm's Bristol office. Jonathan Gulliford (pictured), Sales & Marketing Director at CLS, explains the firm's decision to select Proclaim and his experience of the system since implementation.



Why did you initially select Proclaim?

In entering the legal services market, it was vital for us to select the right core software system. Our requirements were based firmly upon functionality, scalability, ease of use and timeliness. Speed of implementation was critical to enable us to hit the ground running and begin processing personal injury cases (the first sector we wanted to establish a presence in) immediately.

We analysed the legal marketplace for vendors with a track-record of providing volume systems for large operations, and – following an intensive review – Eclipse's Proclaim solution stood out as a firm favourite.

Eclipse's track record of fast implementations and its consistent high ratings for customer satisfaction made the firm a natural choice for us. Its

Proclaim system is heavily used in successful large-scale service providers – not only in personal injury, but also in transactional business areas such as will writing, conveyancing and remortgage. It was this experience that helped CLS in making its final decision.

How does Proclaim help you to meet your business objectives?

Our objective is to provide access to legal services for Co-operative members and the wider consumer market. We aim to keep these services transparent, welcoming, and effective – breaking down the traditional barriers and images of stuffiness, expense and complexity!

CLS provides a full suite of services including accident management (with a legal advice line), conveyancing, will writing, probate and estate administration, and employment advice.

By using Proclaim for every service we provide, we can deliver an effective and consistent response to our customers' needs, whether it be sending updates via SMS text message to our PI customers, providing written updates on a particular conveyancing issue or helping to manage the complexities of a Probate case.

How does the system assist you in building relationships with your clientbase?

Proclaim is used to maintain all case data and provide in-depth workflows to enable fast case progression with maximum levels of accuracy and resilience. The software is remarkably easy to use, and this key benefit should not be underestimated – it enables our case handlers to move cases through without wasting time and energy getting to grips with complex interfaces and tools.

This ease of use allows us to liaise more effectively with customers. Because Proclaim includes a raft of usable communication tools, we can set up workflows with the primary aim of keeping our clients informed and aware of how their case is progressing. For example, when a key case stage is reached Proclaim will trigger the automatic production of documentation which is sent to customers to keep them up to date with proceedings. As previously mentioned, we also generate automated SMS text messages to our customers' mobile phones to remind them of upcoming dates, for example attending a medical appointment.

Taking this further, our corporate clients benefit from fast access to accurate case information. Proclaim's reporting toolset allows us to set up scheduled reports which can be sent to our Corporate Accounts team who can then choose how to communicate the information, either in person or via email. The reports can be fine-tuned and tailored on the fly, ensuring that our partners enjoy full transparency and the very latest data.

How well does the system suit your ongoing and future needs?

CLS is very much expanding, and we see no limit to how large we can become. Therefore scalability and stability are absolutely critical if we are to build upon our successful entry into the market. Proclaim's structure makes it simple to upscale our usage – extra staff and departments can be added very simply, so there is no disruption when it comes to growing our system.

Given the way the market is changing, there are also opportunities to expand the type of work that we bring onboard. We intend to make full use of Proclaim's toolkits which enable our in-house administrators to manage and enhance the system in real-time, building upon our services as and when demand dictates.

Looking to the future, technologies such as 'Web Services' are already available within Proclaim, and this sort of communication may well be the key to further streamlining our services and broadening our reach. For example, 'Web Services' makes it possible for systems to communicate seamlessly with each other and share data instantaneously – paving the way for more advanced, even faster ways to provide our services both directly and via other commercial organisations.

In my opinion, Proclaim is the market-leading case management solution. It provides us with the confidence that no matter how our business grows and transforms, it can ably cope with whatever we throw at it!

The **co-operative** legal services

www.co-operative.coop/legalservices

