

*These notes refer to the Access to Justice Act 1999
(c.22) which received Royal Assent on 27th July 1999*

ACCESS TO JUSTICE ACT 1999

EXPLANATORY NOTES

OVERVIEW

Provision of legal services (Part III – sections 35-53)

13. Part III of the Act reforms the law on lawyers' rights of audience before the courts and rights to conduct litigation; and makes changes relating to complaints against lawyers. It:
 - replaces the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Legal Education and Conduct with a new Legal Services Consultative Panel;
 - provides that, in principle, all lawyers should have full rights of audience before any court, subject only to meeting reasonable training requirements;
 - reforms the procedures for authorising further professional bodies to grant rights of audience or rights to conduct litigation to their members; and for approving changes to professional rules of conduct relating to the exercise of these rights; and
 - gives additional powers to the Law Society and the Legal Services Ombudsman to strengthen the system for handling complaints against lawyers, and creates a Legal Services Complaints Commissioner to set targets for the handling of complaints by the professional bodies.
14. Part III also provides for applicants for appointment as Queen's Counsel to be charged a fee; establishes a system of practising certificates for barristers; amends the law on the fee payable for a solicitor's practising certificate; and abolishes the monopoly of the Scriveners' Company of the provision of notarial services in and around the City of London.