AIMS VERSION 3.0

advice + information management system

AIMS

Pre-Configuration Guide

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AIMS PRE-CONFIGURATION GUIDE

Things to do before you get started

How to Use this document.

The Pre-Configuration guide has been written to help the person responsible for implementing AIMS within the organisation make some of the key decisions concerning its usage and configuration.

The pre-configuration guide asks you to consider your organisations working practices and the implications that your style of service delivery will have on the configuration and set up decisions you will need to make within AIMS. This document is designed to help you with the thinking that is required before commencing that configuration.

The practical steps required to actually configure AIMS are covered in the various guides included on the AIMS CD. You will be referred back to these guides through-out this document, once you have considered the implications of your pre-configuration decisions.

This document should only be read after you have completed the “AIMS Guided Tour”, as you will need some familiarisation with the screens and functions mentioned through-out the discussions. If you have not already completed the AIMS Guided Tour, which can be found on the AIMS Demo CD, you should print off the associated Word document and open the AIMS Demonstration now. The tour will give you an overview of the functionality available within AIMS Franchise. If you have purchased AIMS Core or AIMS Extra your working version of AIMS will look different.

AIMS Core and AIMS Extra and AIMS Franchise

AIMS is available in three versions, AIMS Core, AIMS Extra, and AIMS Franchise. AIMS Core contains all the core elements shared by the other versions and is a fully operative database in its own right. AIMS Extra contains additional case management features, providing increased functionality. AIMS Franchise provides agencies with a means of reporting to the Legal Services Commission on their Not for Profit Contracts. The various features and functions are detailed in the table below.

AIMS CORE / EXTRA / FRANCHISE Features:

Feature / function	Core	Extra	Franchise
Search	✓	✓	✓
Client Details and Person Profile	✓	✓	✓
Subject and Work Details	✓	✓	✓
QDE	✓	✓	✓
Outcome measures	✓	✓	✓
Reports	✓	✓	✓
Client Mailmerge	✓	✓	✓
Conflict of Interest Search		✓	✓
Diary		✓	✓
Action Manager		✓	✓
Global Address Book		✓	✓
Linked Clients		✓	✓
Third Parties		✓	✓
Conversion Tables		✓	✓
Mailmerge Suite		✓	✓
LSC Contract			✓
LSC Special Reports			✓

Agencies can upgrade from AIMS Core to AIMS Extra or Extra to Franchise at any time. All data will be available within the newly upgraded system.

Screen and Function Issues

You will find it useful to have the AIMS Guided Tour demo up and running so that you can follow the discussions by moving to the various screens or functions being talked about. You can do this by locating the feature/function on the demonstration system that matches the icon along side each section.

<u>Search Screen</u>

The Client Name/Organisation field in the search screen is fixed and cannot be changed via configuration. All the others (including what to display in the Show field) can be altered from within Configuration.

You should consider your preferred means of finding existing clients in the database, and what details you will use to retrieve them. The Welcome Screen contains a reference number search/find facility that presumes you have those details to hand. The Search Screen allows you to find a client using their client details and profile information, e.g. part of an address or national insurance number.

<u>Client Details</u>

Will you want to find clients once they have been added to the database and add more work detail their existing subject/s or client record? If so, what will you search on?

On the Welcome Screen there are two Find fields, one for Client data and one for Subject data. The Client Find field will search for a Client Reference or a machine generated Client ID Number. The Subject Find field will look for a Subject Reference, the Subject ID Number, or the LSC Case Reference.

The ID numbers are unique to each client or subject record and are generated by AIMS and cannot be altered, re-used or re-assigned to another client or subject. The other references are input by you each time you create a new client or subject and can be a combination of letters, numbers and slashes.

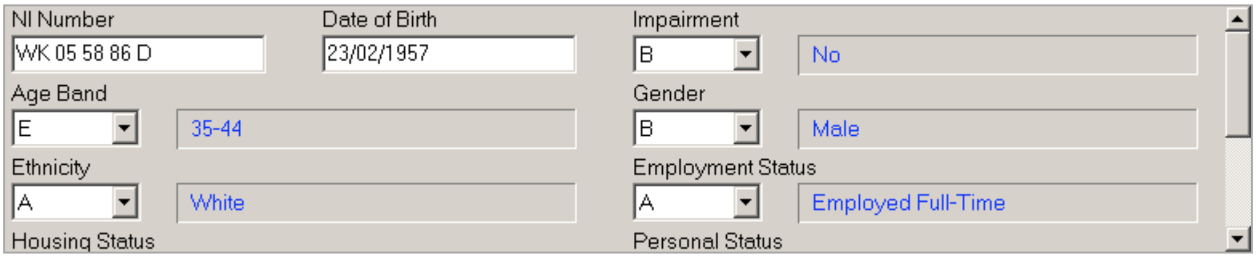
It is possible to configure “default settings” for all reference fields which can be based on a range of AIMS system data, e.g. Client initials, AIMS Id numbers, User Id. In this way your agency can automate the creation of the reference field.

If you cannot find the Client or Subject from the Welcome Screen you will have to go via the Search Screen. What other information will you use to find the client?

Consider how your current referencing system will work in relation to how AIMS holds the data. How many reference numbers do you want or need? Do you want your LSC Cases to share the Subject Reference number or have a different one? When are references generated in your agency and who by? Will automated references be possible for all your services, or are some pieces of information not known until the case is already entered on the system?

Client Profile Information

Client profile information is entered in the Client Detail screen. You can configure all the profile fields, switching them off, or creating new ones. If you want to create new fields and collect further information at the Client Profile level remember that these details will remain with the client until you change them.



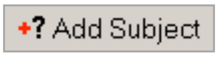
Each subject you subsequently attach to that particular client will use these details for reporting purposes. Try to capture details that will not change over time, and are not specific to a particular subject or piece of work. Obviously this is difficult, as some status's do change over time (e.g. housing tenure, disability status) and if the client returns at some point in the future with a new problem then you may wish to update the previously entered profile details. This will have an impact on what the database reports, as all the subjects attached to that client will now be linked to the updated profiles. AIMS does not keep a record of the profile status's as they were at the time of the client contact.

For instance, if the client seeking help with a benefit problem had described themselves as disabled when they first used the agency but returned a year later with a housing problem and this time they say they are not disabled, then updating their client profile will affect the reporting on the earlier subject. The database will report two subjects presented by a client without a disability, not one subject with a disability and one without.

If historic changes like this are problematic then you should consider entering a new client record and marking that Client Detail as an Old Client and then record their current profile status. For many agencies small alterations to already reported on historic data will have no impact and will not require the creation of a duplicate client record.

Within the Client Detail screen it is also possible to change the display order of the Person Profile fields. It is important to ensure the display order is correct, as only the first two lines (between four and six person profile fields depending on length of field selected) as seen in the Client Detail screen will appear on the QDE screen. When selecting which fields to display, consider how you might use the QDE screen differently from the Full Client Details screen. QDE might be used more for your telephone advice line where fewer details are captured. If so what client profile information would you get from an advice line call that is different from a face to face interview?

Subject Details



Do you want to collect any further information at this level? Up to six user defined fields can be added to the Subject Details screen. Remember that attached to each subject you can have multiple work done records. The most appropriate type of information to attach to the subject are things that tend to happen once in the life of that subject, i.e. the subject is referred in only once, is opened once. If something happens through-out the life of a subject then the Work Done screen is likely to be the place to capture those details.

The Subject screen has a small notes field included. This is configurable and can be switched off if not wanted. The notes field allows you to include a brief description of the subject matter. The description will appear on the Subject Header in the Client History Screen once you have closed the subject details form. The note will also appear on the case in full report.

For those agencies running AIMS Franchise, and using the LSC Contract screen see under the LSC screen the discussion on choosing the SPAN codes as your main classification and reference numbers.

QDE

The configuration choices made in the Client Details screen and Subject Detail screen will affect the QDE screen. In the Client half of the QDE only the first two lines (between four and six person profile fields depending on length of fields selected) will appear in the Client Details screen as available for data entry. In the Subject half of the QDE between two and four of the User Defined fields will be visible. Coded choice fields take up half a screen width and date fields take up one quarter. It therefore depends which fields (if any) you have added to the Subject form.

The Subject Note field does not appear on the QDE screen and can only be accessed from the main Subject Screen.

Work Done

Contact information Vs Work Done information

The Work Done screen allows you to capture two different pieces of information within the one screen. They are, i) information concerning any contacts with the client and ii) information about work undertaken on the case. The two pieces of information allow you to say two very different things.

The contact details (how and where you made contact) will enable you to say how many times over a given period you had contact with your clients. You may want to change the current list of types of contact so that it only records physical contacts with the client, i.e. remove letters, emails and telephone calls from the possible types of contact.

Another configuration option might be to switch off both the How and Where contacted fields but leave the overall No Contact/New Contact choice available. This would give you a count of client contacts without providing the detail of where and how they took place.

If you want to be able to identify the number of clients, the number of contacts with those clients, and the work you did for those clients then you will need to capture contact information.

If you do not need to differentiate between the number of clients and the number of contacts (e.g. I know we had 20 clients last month, but I don't want to say how many times we saw them) then you can switch off the contact information data collection altogether, via the Configuration Wizard.

Work Done allows you to capture details of both the action taken (e.g. letter) the quantity of those actions (3 letters) and the time taken. You are not required to capture time information and this can be switched off if desired. Also it is possible to specify a number of actions and quantities, and then provide an overall summary of the time spent on all the activities, rather then break them down individually.

<u>Action Manager</u>

AIMS comes loaded with a small number of example templates that you can use to firstly copy and then amend to meet your particular requirements. Only persons with Administrator level permissions can create or amend the Action Manger templates. However once an Action Manager template list has been "called down" then every worker is able to add their own actions. This will not affect the original template which remains unchanged and available for use in the future.

Action Manager templates can have documents attached to them to assist in the automation of certain tasks e.g. sending out client letters. You may find it useful to develop your use of both the Action Manager and mailmerge facility over time, by reviewing how different workers have adapted the templates and incorporated them into their working practices.

The Action Manager feature can either be switched off altogether so it is not available, or be hidden from individual user's views, via the configuration wizard.

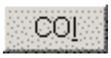
Diary

It is not possible to link the Diary with other software such as Outlook or other handheld personal organiser systems. Where other systems already exist in your office you need to consider the potential impact of running two systems in parallel. AIMS does have the advantage of having all the client details already available when booking rooms or appointments, and also provides an overview of all workers diary appointments.

Within configuration you can specify the existence of User Groups, and ascribe these groups with different members, e.g. Housing Team, Management Team etc. By inviting the Group to a meeting you will invite all members at once.

The Diary feature can either be switched off altogether so it is not available, or be hidden from individual user's views, via the configuration wizard.

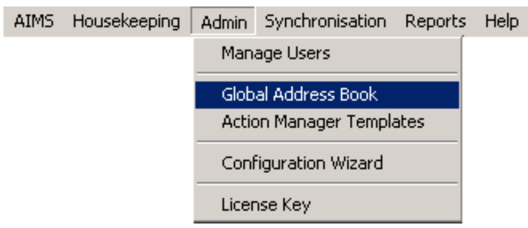
Conflict of Interest



The Conflict of Interest search screen allows you to search for clients and/or organisations that in some way may be associated with the client who is presenting a new problem. Agencies may well have an existing conflict of interest policy and they should identify how this policy can be incorporated into the AIMS search facility.

COI can be switched off if not wanted, in which case it will not be available from the welcome screen but will still be available form the Reports drop down menu. Conflict of Interest can also be configured to be hidden for individual AIMS users.

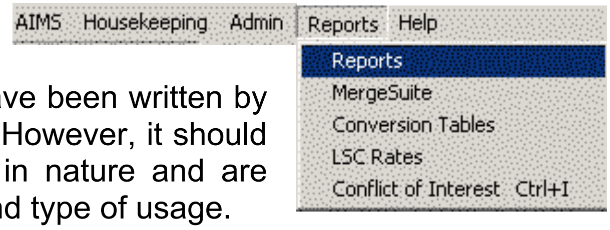
Global Address Book (GAB)



The GAB is a database within the database, providing you with ability to hold up to 250 contact details for organisations or other individuals you work with on a regular basis. GAB details are available to each Subject and through them to the merge documents facility making it easy to write to your frequently used addresses.

In addition GAB provides you with a way to keep a list of your Referral Agencies, which can be attached to the subject record via the work done referred to field.

<u>Reports</u>



AIMS includes a number of reports that have been written by Lasa and are ready and available for use. However, it should be noted that these reports are general in nature and are based on a guesstimate of configuration and type of usage.

Any changes you make to the database during configuration could have an effect on how these reports run. By switching off a field for instance that has been included in a report layout or adding a new field which has a specific meaning for your agencies data collection.

It is important to keep notes of the changes you make to the system and in conjunction with the Report Layout Wizard and Using Reports sections of the full help guide, check to see that the system reports incorporate any configuration changes where necessary.

Decisions affecting configuration choices.

Which Classification scheme?

AIMS contains a number of different classification schemes which can be used to classify the subjects (or client problems) brought to the agency. The system comes with the Lasa STATS classification as well as a number of alternative classification schemes e.g. Youth Access, Dial UK, LSC SPAN, AIAC and the old Nacab Social Policy Codes (no longer being used by Citizen's Advice). You can also build your own scheme either from scratch or by adapting one of the pre-existing ones.

You will need to decide on your preferred subject classification before you start inputting data, as once you have selected your classification scheme, it cannot be altered subsequently.

Although the Subject classification can be selected by you, AIMS does not offer a range of alternative work and person profile codes. If you want to amend the work and person profile codes to match your current usage you will need to look at the Configuration

Guide for more details. The only exception to this is the Legal Services Commission SPAN reporting codes that are held in the system for reporting to the Commission.

The system also has a conversion table facility. This facility is specifically designed to enable agencies needing to report to multiple funders who require information in different classification formats. Once set-up the conversion tables allow for the collection of data using one format which can then be reported on in the converted format.

The various Classification schemes are available in Word format on the AIMS CD for viewing.

Legal Service Commission (LSC) Franchise Contract holders.

AIMS Franchise users with an LSC Not for Profit (NfP) Contract holders need to make a slightly different decision before they get started.

If you have an LSC NfP Contract and want to use the SPAN codes then you have two options. You can select the SPAN codes to be the only classification scheme available inside AIMS. This would mean that any other work you did outside the contract would have to use the LSC Matter 1 and Matter 2 types and you would have to use the profile information in the format prescribed by the LSC.

Alternatively you could operate with either STATS codes or one of the other classification schemes as your main classification and leave the SPAN codes solely for reporting to the LSC. The Demo database uses the AIMS Stats codes for the main classification and work details and reserves the LSC SPAN codes for reporting in the LSC screen and on the LSC reports.

When you adopt the LSC SPAN codes as the main classification scheme then both the Subject and the LSC screen use the same coding structure. If you adopt one of the other classification schemes then the Subject displays your chosen scheme and the LSC screen displays the SPAN code.

Who will be inputting the data, who will be viewing the data?

Your organisation will already have developed a method of collecting client profile information and recording associated work details. To a large extent AIMS will be able to reflect that system if you want it to. For instance, you may use a day book to record client contacts which one person then inputs every week. Caseworkers may keep paper records of the time spent or clients seen which they pass on to someone else to input.

You will need to consider how your organisation currently inputs data when setting up the "Manage Users" function. You will need to identify which system users require which level of permission. Permissions are the clearance levels that can be ascribed to each person using AIMS, which allows them to perform only designated functions, such as adding and editing records, deleting records or simply viewing data only. See the Managing Users guide for further details.

In addition to setting permissions you should also be aware of the "hide" function, which allows you to remove certain features or functions from the sight and therefore use of certain users. Switching certain functions off for particular users helps provide them with a clearer screen where they only have access to the parts of the system they need to work with. See the Configuration Guide for more details.

Although AIMS will be able to reflect your current approach to data collection and input, you may want to consider how your data input protocols might need to change to reflect how your organisation might optimise use of the additional functionality offered in AIMS.

If AIMS is available over your network caseworkers may wish to start making use of the Action Manager, Merge Letter or Diary functions. They will therefore need both to have the functions visible and the correct log-in permissions. Once they start using these functions for their day to day casework it might not make sense to then ask someone else to update the work details for those clients.

This highlights how a new computerised recording system might interact with existing office protocols and how management of the integration process will be required. It is important to realise that the process goes two ways, so that even though AIMS can be configured to meet the agencies working style, that style may change in response to the opportunities presented by the software.

Different ways of describing the work you do with clients

AIMS has been designed to reflect the different working practices within advice agencies and the different approaches to client data recording.

It does this in two ways. Firstly by permitting users to configure various elements within the system. AIMS allows users to switch certain functions on or off, to add new fields, and to create their own codes and descriptions to better reflect the work you do.

The second way in which the system assists you to reflect your own working practices is in the flexibility of the design of data structures, and how information can be captured.

To illustrate the flexibility of AIMS we will use different agency working practices based around what they know of their clients and how they record the work they do with them.

What do you know about your clients? Some clients can be identified each and every time they contact the agency because of a unique piece of information, e.g. National Insurance number or via a series of identifiers, e.g. postcode plus surname. At the other end of the spectrum are those clients who you either deliberately do not wish to identify (Anonymous) or those about whom you have insufficient information to find their original entry in the database.

What sort of work do you do with them? The work you do with clients may also range between on-going in depth detailed case work through to one off pieces of information giving. Some of the cases may comprise of several different strands, where multiple problems (or subjects) make up the whole. Other cases could be single matters.

What can be said by the three agencies is displayed in the table below. The table shows how exactly the same "client/agency" interaction could be captured within the AIMS database.

Agency A:

> Clients are seen by appointment only and workers know the name and address of each client. When using AIMS they would expect to be able to identify each client once in the database and find them every time that client returns to the agency. That client may come for advice on one subject and may return to the agency several times concerning that one subject. Each time the client approaches the agency they identify the unique Client Detail in the database, and, using the Subject record created the first time the client came for interview, add to the existing subject record further information about the next contact and the work undertaken.

Agency B:

> Workers never ask clients for more than a first name. Every time a client calls the workers have to input another Client Detail (rather than finding the original) and add a further Subject, saying what work happened as a result of that one contact.
>
> Agency B will have to decide how they complete each Client Detail (i.e. "have you used our service before?" = New/Old Client, and each Subject record ("have we helped you with this problem before?" = New/Repeat Subject). Without this additional information, any Person Profile data collected by Agency B will be misleading.

Agency C:

> Workers at Agency C identify the client in the database uniquely as in Agency A, but after each contact they close the Subject. On the return of the same client

about the same subject they find the Client Detail in the database, and open a second Subject and say what they did at that contact.

AIMS facilitates the different styles of work and data recording. Note the different number of client details and subject records created by the different approaches. Also note that the number of Contacts and the total amount of time spent working on the subject are the same whichever approach is taken to data recording.

	Client Details	**New/Old Clients**	**Subject records**	**New/Repeat Subjects**	**Contacts/ work details**	**Time in minutes**
Agency A	1	1 new	1	1new subject	10	100
Agency B	10	1 new / 9 Old	10	1new subject / 9 Repeat	10	100
Agency C	1	1 new	10	1new subject / 9 Repeat	10	100

Agency's A B, and C will each be able to say slightly different things about the number of individuals they saw, the person profile of their user group, the work they did with their clients and the outcomes relating to those problems.

In reality one organisation might well have all three types of data capture. Some clients receive in-depth casework and can be uniquely identified, others use the telephone helpline and minimal details are taken but each call is opened and closed on the same day. Some clients come in about a series of small issues, have several Subjects recorded against their Client History before one of the issues becomes complex and turns into in-depth case work requiring multiple contacts and extensive follow-up work.