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## **PANEL PUBLISHES SECOND WORK PROGRAMME**

The Legal Services Consumer Panel today publishes its second work programme covering the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012.

Highlights of the forthcoming year will include:

- Publishing the first Consumer Impact Report – an assessment of progress in delivering the legal services reforms from the consumer perspective;
- Will writing – concluding our advice to the Legal Services Board on whether will writing should be regulated;
- Helping vulnerable consumers – research with small charities on their needs as consumers of legal services and starting a series of studies with groups of consumers at particular risk of disadvantage when using lawyers;
- Quality schemes – developing criteria for robust quality assurance schemes and assessing whether existing schemes meet these standards; and
- Regulatory independence – keeping a watching brief to ensure that regulation is independent in practice as well as on paper.

Dr Dianne Hayter, chair of the Legal Services Consumer Panel, said:

*"Almost three years after the Legal Services Act was passed, the time is right to assess the early impact of these major reforms. The Consumer Impact Report will provide an annual health-check on whether consumers are getting the benefits they were promised in the changing market place.*

*"In the difficult economic climate, access to high quality and affordable legal advice matters more than ever. A key focus of our work this year will be giving a stronger voice to consumers in vulnerable circumstances – including small charities and the disabled – who can struggle to have their interests heard".*

**-ends-**

**For more information, contact Steve Brooker, Consumer Panel Manager, on 020 7271 0077.**

## Notes to editors

1. The Legal Services Consumer Panel was established under the Legal Services Act 2007 to provide independent advice to the Legal Services Board about the interests of consumers of legal services in England and Wales. We investigate issues that affect consumers and use this information to influence decisions about the regulation of legal services.
2. The Panel's work programme can be found on its website:  
[http://www.legalservicesconsumerpanel.org.uk/publications/corporate\\_documents/documents/ourroleandwork2011-11.pdf](http://www.legalservicesconsumerpanel.org.uk/publications/corporate_documents/documents/ourroleandwork2011-11.pdf)