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THE PACE OF CHANGE MUST INTENSIFY IN THE CONSUMER INTEREST.

The Panel's latest annual Tracker Survey results show high levels of satisfaction amongst users of legal services. 83% are satisfied with the outcome of their legal matter and 80% of consumers are satisfied with the service they purchased. Trust in lawyers has also increased marginally.

But the story behind these figures reveals little movement towards greater consumer choice as set out in the recent Competition and Markets Authority's (CMA) report on the sector. People using legal services still rely too heavily on reputation to decide on their provider (75%). A key hindrance appears to be the lack of pertinent information to help consumers make informed decisions. The research found that only 2% of consumers use comparison websites. A small number of consumers shop around (27%) and only 6% of consumers find pricing information on providers' websites. It is also concerning to note that the use of fixed fees has declined amongst solicitors and barristers.

It is now essential that the frontline regulators and the Legal Services Board work robustly towards implementing the CMA's transparency remedies.

Key research findings:

- Fixed fees have increased for licensed conveyancers from 71% in 2016 to 73% in 2017.
- The use of fixed fees has however decreased amongst solicitors and barristers from 61% and 37% in 2016 to 57% and 31% in 2017 respectively.
- Reputation and price (75% and 69%) remain the most important choice factors for consumers.
- Local firms remain the most used service providers in many areas of law.
- 49% of dissatisfied consumers did not make a complaint.
- Trust in lawyers has slightly increased this year to 45% from 42% in 2016.

Dr Jane Martin, Chair of the Legal Services Consumer Panel, said:

"The good news is that levels of satisfaction are high for many elements of service delivery.

But our concern remains that a satisfactory service may only be available to those who can successfully navigate the sector. Questions should also be asked about readiness to complain when things go wrong. The market appears to be at a standstill in important areas which are crucial for consumers' decision making and competition. It is clear that

there is a need for more information. We will continue to work with the LSB and the other front line regulators in the consumer interest.

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For more information contact Lau Ciocan, Consumer Panel Associate, on 020 7271 0076.

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. For the last seven years the Panel has commissioned YouGov to conduct an annual survey in two parts: a nationally representative sample (1,822 adults); and a sample of people who have used legal services in the last two years (1,625 adults). The two samples were weighted to be representative of each wider population. All the figures below have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+). The results have been tested to the 95% confidence level – we are 95% confident that these findings are not due to chance. Fieldwork took place during 21 February and 27 March 2017.
3. The briefing notes released today can be found [here](#).
4. The full data set can also be found [here](#)