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## **TRANSPARENCY NEEDED TO IMPROVE CHOICE AND INCREASE THE PACE OF CHANGE FOR CONSUMERS**

Consumer choice is still being hampered by a lack of information, research from the Legal Services Consumer Panel shows.

Six years' worth of data demonstrates that while there has been some progress in the use of fixed fees and improved consumer confidence, the pace of change is disappointingly slow. There is a clear gap between those consumers who are confident and knowledgeable and those who are not, with the consequences being lower levels of satisfaction and trust in legal services.

### **Key findings:**

- Just one in four consumers shopped around for their service
- Reputation and price are the most important choice factors
- Fixed fees are used in almost half of all transactions
- Local firms remain the most used service providers in many areas of law
- Satisfaction remains lower for BME groups than white British
- Trust in lawyers has declined to 42%, previously 47% in 2012

Elisabeth Davies, Chair of the Legal Services Consumer Panel, said:

*“Over the last six years we’ve seen some positive improvements, but we are at a stage now where we should all expect more. Regulators should be doing more to better equip consumers with the information they need about costs and quality to make informed choices. In what other market would we expect consumers to make a purchasing decision with such limited information on how much it will cost them?”*

*The recent CMA report highlighted the negative impact of opaque pricing structures and costs across the market and the need to be able to demonstrate quality before purchase. Now is the time for all the Approved Regulators to take stock of what they can do to improve this situation and to commit to taking action. In the absence of effective information we’re not going to have effective competition.”*

**-ends-**

**For more information, contact Stephanie Chapman, 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 six years the Panel has commissioned YouGov to conduct an annual survey in two parts: a nationally representative sample (1,864 adults); and a sample of people who have used legal services in the last two years (1,523 adults). Booster samples were obtained for Wales and BME groups. 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 12 February - 4 March 2016.
3. The CMA's interim report can be found [here](#).
4. The briefing notes released today can be found [here](#).