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Regulators must not waver on improved transparency.

The figures from the 2017 tracker survey show an unchanged sector, which is slow to respond to consumer need. Consumers cannot engage because the information needed to do so is not readily available. We continue to call on the regulators and the Legal Services Board to work robustly towards implementing the transparency recommended by the Competition and Markets Authority.

The number of consumers who say it was easy to compare providers has fallen by almost 10 percentage points since last year (from 57% in 2016 to 48% in 2017). The data also shows disparities between White British consumers and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) consumers. 72% of White British consumers said it was easy to find information on regulation of services compared to 59% of BME consumers.

The results particularly show low levels of price transparency amongst legal services providers. Only 6% of consumers found the price on the provider's website and 4% found it through a comparison website. 61% of consumers had a conversation with the provider to determine the price. But shopping around does work; 87% of those who did so believe that they have more choice than those who did not (67%).

The Panel also looked at the trends in Wales. Whilst there is little difference in consumer behavior between England and Wales, we can see that at least one-third in both countries are not confident to complain about poor services; 38% in Wales and 30% in England. We shall raise this with the Office for Legal Complaints.

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

"The annual tracker survey is the barometer of consumer opinion on the state of the UK legal services market. It is very disappointing to note that change has been slow and basic information is not sufficiently available to help consumers make a proper choice.

The sector now has both the challenge and opportunity to put this right as all the regulators are working together to implement the recommendations of the Competition and Markets Authority's report. I hope we will see serious improvements when we repeat the survey in the coming years."

Key research findings:

- Out of the 27% consumers who shop around, 66% found it easy to find information on cost. However, 61% have a conversation with the provider to determine the price.
- Consumers who shop around (87%) believe they have more choice than those who do not (67%).

- Only 27% of consumers across England and Wales have a good knowledge of what lawyers do, unchanged since 2015.
- 51% of Welsh residents have made a will compared to just 36% of English.

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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 England and Wales 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 and the full data set can be found [here](#).