

**Not to be used before 0:01 hours, 13 February 2013**

## **REACTION TO LEGAL SERVICES BOARD ANNOUNCEMENT ON WILL-WRITING AND ESTATE ADMINISTRATION DECISION**

Reacting to today's announcement by the Legal Services Board, Elisabeth Davies, Chair of the Legal Services Consumer Panel, said:

*"We're extremely pleased that the LSB has confirmed its view that will-writing services should be regulated. The Panel's research uncovered defective wills on a shocking scale and evidence of bad sales practices. The case for regulation is unarguable and strongly supported by consumer and industry groups alike. We cannot now risk further delay in reserving will writing.*

*"It's very disappointing that the LSB has ultimately decided not to recommend regulation of estate administration activities at this time. While unregulated businesses may currently have a small market share, the damage they can cause to beneficiaries – either through fraud or poor service – is potentially huge. Dealing with an estate can involve life-changing amounts of money, but this decision will leave people without a safety net should things go wrong, and at a time when they are feeling at their most vulnerable.*

*"Fast progress is now needed on self-regulation and measures must be taken to reduce fraud. Having taken this decision the LSB must work with the Legal Ombudsman on an accelerated timetable to create the voluntary jurisdiction built into the Legal Services Act. If consumers are to be protected, voluntary jurisdiction quickly needs to move off the drawing board and into reality."*

**-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. Details of the Legal Services Board's decision can be found on its website:  
<http://www.legalservicesboard.org.uk>
3. The Panel's previous work on the regulation of will-writing, probate and estate administration activities can be found here  
<http://www.legalservicesconsumerpanel.org.uk/ourwork/Willwriting.html>.