

CONSUMER WELFARE INDEX

Project description

An extensive reform programme is being put in place to liberalise the legal services market, improve complaints handling and secure independent regulation of lawyers. The Consumer Panel's role is to represent the interests of consumers as these changes are introduced, by providing evidence-based advice to decision-makers.

The success of the reforms should ultimately be judged by their consumer impact. The Consumer Panel has identified five high-level outcomes it wants to see:

- A competitive legal services market where consumers are empowered and have easy access to high quality legal services at a fair price
- All consumers have an equal access to legal services regardless of their personal circumstances
- Regulatory bodies have processes enabling them to take decisions which are in the consumer interest
- Consumers receive legal services from a diverse and competent workforce
- Consumer complaints are resolved quickly, fairly and cost-effectively

The Consumer Welfare Index is a tool to help measure the direction of travel towards these outcomes and highlight issues needing attention. It will consist of a basket of indicators, which will be populated with a mix of existing data and original research. Taken together, and tracked over time, the indicators will form the basis of a report providing an annual 'consumer health check' of the reforms.

The Consumer Panel recognises that measuring outcomes is not easy and that care must be taken to avoid producing indicators that create the wrong behaviours. Therefore, we are forming an Expert Advisory Group of senior figures, with expertise in performance measurement and research, to assist us in developing a set of indicators that meet good practice.

Delivering the reforms is a responsibility shared by many organisations, and so we are keen to develop the Consumer Welfare Index in partnership with stakeholders. For more details, please use the contact point below.

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