

The Panel's policy on working with providers

Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to provide guidance in relation to the type and nature of external partners that we will and will not work with in order to ensure there is no undue influence on our work and to maintain public confidence in our independence.

As one of our objectives is to change the behaviour of legal services providers, we welcome and actively seek engagement with the sector, but do so within a clear operating framework based on agreed principles.

This policy covers legal services providers including businesses but also other types of organisations delivering legal services, e.g. government, third sector, unions etc.

Engagement with providers helps us to build our understanding of the sector, raise awareness of our role and policies, and to influence the policies and practices of providers. Engagement can take place with representative bodies and individual entities and can take a number of forms, e.g. meetings, events, distribution of reports etc.

Principles

The Panel needs to act, and be seen to act, independently of providers in order to maintain public confidence that we are representing the interests of consumers.

Policy commitments

The Panel will:

- Never endorse individual providers or products;
- Be transparent, e.g. we will continue to publish details of all formal meetings and partnership work in our annual report. Details of all hospitality will continue to be published on the LSB website;
- Ensure any activity will not bring the Panel into disrepute;

- Ensure that we and our partners act consistently with any appropriate and associated national or international standards;
- Undertake appropriate due diligence;
- Discuss with the Panel members, and log any concerns, about proposed partnerships; and
- Review this policy statement every two years.

September 2012