



Minutes

Legal Services Consumer Panel Meeting

Date: 28 January 2013

Time: 13:00-17:00hrs

Venue: Victoria House, Southampton Row, London WC1B 4AD

Present:

Elisabeth Davies	Chair
Jeff Bell	Member
Graham Corbett	Member
Emma Harrison	Member
Paul Munden	Member
Neil Wightman	Member
Karin Woodley	Member
Steve Brooker	Consumer Panel Manager
Harriet Gamper	Consumer Panel Associate
Ramandeep Bhatti	Legal Services Board

Item 1 – Welcome and apologies

1. The Chair welcomed the Legal Services Consumer Panel ('the Panel').

Item 2 – Declarations of interests

2. No declarations.

Item 3 – Minutes of the 12 December 2013 meeting

3. The Chair presented the draft minutes for the 12 December 2013 meeting.

The Panel approved the minutes of the 12 December 2013 meeting.

Item 4 – Matters arising from the Minutes

4. Item 9 – The Chair advised the Vanilla Research report had been finalised and would be published on 13 February 2013.
5. The Chair advised the ‘Chair’s Blog’ had gone live on the Panel website.
The Panel noted the matters arising.

Item 5 – Chair’s report

6. The Chair presented her report covering recent meetings, speaking engagements and press coverage.
7. In addition to the written report:
 - The Chair advised candidates had been interviewed for the position of the new Panel Member and a recommendation had been made to the LSB Board for it to consider at its next meeting on 30 January. The recommendation would then need to be approved by the Lord Chancellor (as required by the Act).
 - The Chair advised positive discussions with approved regulators to establish an informal Regulators’ Forum had taken place earlier that morning.
 - The Chair invited Paul Munden to comment on the issue on admitting journalists to Panel seminars following a blog post on the Law Society Gazette website. The Panel agreed that the policy should remain to consider the suitability of media presence on a case by case basis. It was further agreed that in this instance, the purpose of the event was to encourage the approved regulators to explore openly their thinking with the Panel at an early stage of policy development and having journalists present would likely have inhibited discussions on this basis.
 - The Chair advised two major reports had been published this month – a study commissioned by the OFT on progress since the Legal Services Act and a research study by LSB, Ministry of Justice and Law Society on high-street solicitors. Copies of these reports were distributed to members.

The Panel noted the paper and additional items raised.

Item 6 – Members’ updates

8. Jeff Bell advised he had arranged a meeting with Wendy Martin, Programme Director for the National Trading Standards Board. He also advised he had written an article on the work of the Panel for the monthly journal of the Trading Standards Institute *TS Today*.
The Panel noted the members’ update.

Item 7 – Consumer Impact Report Review

9. Graham Corbett presented a paper on the review of the Consumer Impact Report and welcomed feedback from the Panel.
10. The Panel discussed the recommendations put forward in the paper. It was agreed the Consumer Impact Report should be published every other year with the third edition being published in summer 2014. It was also agreed that the Tracker Survey should continue to be commissioned annually.

The Panel noted the paper and agreed the recommendations.

Item 8 – Shaping our work programme 2013-14

11. The Chair invited Panel members to discuss the approach to the 2013-14 work programme.
12. Overall, Panel members agreed with the proposed narrative, subject to a couple of amendments, including the need to include a wider context for the narrative.
13. Panel members indicated levels of support for the various project ideas which the Panel Secretariat would use when drafting the work programme document.

The Panel agreed the proposed narrative for the work programme and noted the Panel Secretariat would prepare a draft document for approval at the February Panel meeting in line with comments made.

Item 9 – Projects update

14. In addition to the projects update:
 - Karin Woodley and Neil Wightman advised they attended the Panel's stakeholder meeting *Choosing and Using Legal Services* on the morning of 28 January. Neil advised there was a willingness from stakeholders to engage but they now needed to reflect on implications in their own contexts.
 - The Panel Manager and Associate advised they attended a meeting hosted by the SRA on comparison websites. The SRA and the Panel wish to encourage the websites to voluntarily adhere to the Panel's standards as contained within its report of February 2012. The Panel Manager advised he is working with the SRA to amend the standards in response to feedback.

The Panel noted the Projects update.

Item 10 – LSB Business Plan

15. The Chair invited Panel Members to identify areas of discussion with Chris Kenny at the next Panel meeting.
16. In addition to the discussion the Panel indicated holding another session with LSB colleagues would be welcome.

The Chair noted the Panel's comments.

Item 11 – Consultation responses

17. The Panel Associate presented a paper on recent and upcoming consultation responses.

The Panel:

- noted the live ICAEW licensing authority application and live Legal Ombudsman's draft strategy and business plan consultation
- noted the submissions made to the ILEX Professional Standards *Proposed application for various legal activity rights* consultation; to the LETR *Developing the detail* consultation; to the Trading Standards Institute *New codes approval criteria* consultation; to the SRA *co-operation agreements* consultation
- noted the LSB had published an independent study on the cab rank rule.

Item 12 – Draft agenda for next meeting - 27 February 2013

18. The Chair suggested an update on the Consumer Impact Report should be added to the work programme discussions.

The Panel agreed the draft agenda in line with the suggested update.

Item 13 – Any other business

19. None.