

Minutes

Legal Services Consumer Panel Meeting

Date: 20 June 2011

Time: 11:00 – 15:00 pm

Venue: Legal Ombudsman Office, Baskerville House, Birmingham

Present:

Dianne Hayter	Chair
Jeff Bell	Member
Graham Corbett	Member
Elisabeth Davies	Member
Emma Harrison	Member
Paul Munden	Member
Neil Wightman	Member
Karin Woodley	Member
Steve Brooker	Consumer Panel Manager
Alanna Linn	Consumer Panel Associate
Julie Myers	Legal Services Board

OLC Board and staff (Item 2)

JOINT OLC/PANEL MEETING

Item 1 – Arrival and tour

1. The Panel was given a tour of the Legal Ombudsman's offices

Item 2 – Joint OLC/Panel meeting

2. The Legal Services Consumer Panel ('the Panel') and the Office of Legal Complaints (OLC) board met together and discussed a range of matters, including the Legal Ombudsman's jurisdiction, publishing decisions, and lessons learnt from the first 6 months of operation. Minutes were taken by the OLC secretariat.

PANEL BUSINESS

Item 3 – Welcome and apologies

3. The Chair welcomed the Panel.

Item 4 – Declarations of interests

4. In relation to Item 10, the Panel noted that two members worked for organisations that were involved with will writing: Elisabeth Davies for Age UK and Emma Harrison for Action on Hearing Loss (formerly RNID).

Item 5 – Minutes of the 4 May 2011 meeting

5. The Chair presented the Draft Minutes for the 4 May 2011 meeting.

The Panel approved the Minutes of 4 May 2011, subject to a minor change to the members updates section.

Item 6 - Matters Arising from the Minutes

6. Item 4 – The Panel expressed disappointment at the continuing lack of a reply from the Bar Standards Board, either naming their new user group or responding to other issues on consumer engagement, despite their undertaking in March to supply these. This information was also not available on the BSB website.
7. Item 5 – The Panel has been invited to join the Legal Education and Training Review Consultation Steering Panel. Neil Wightman has been nominated as the Panel representatives, with the first meeting scheduled for 1 July 2011.
8. Item 8 – The BIS consumer landscape review consultation was scheduled for released on 21 June 2011.
9. Item 13 – Elisabeth Davies presented copies of the final Consumer Impact Report (CIR). She noted that input had been useful and thanked the Legal Ombudsman designer for assistance. She advised that the release of the report was scheduled for 24 June.

The Panel noted the matters arising.

Item 7 – Chair’s report

10. The Chair presented her report covering recent meetings, speaking engagements and press coverage.
11. In addition to the written report:
 - The Chair announced that she would be standing down at the end of July due to commitments in the House of Lords. She thanked the Panel members and secretariat for their support and hard work which had

established the Panel as a respected part of the new legal services regulatory environment.

- She reported that the LSB would be seeking expressions of interest from within the Panel for an interim chair.
- The Chair noted that two Panel reports would be released in the coming week: the Tracker Survey and the CIR.
- The Chair noted that a letter from the Master of the Rolls had been received, seeking the Panel's views on a new appointments protocol for the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal. The Panel agreed a draft response would be prepared by the secretariat and circulated to the Panel leads on diversity.

The Panel noted the Chair's report and the additional items raised.

Item 8 – Members' updates

12. Neil Wightman advised that he attended the LSB's May meeting to present the Panel's Annual Report and the final version of the CIR.
13. Karin Woodley reported that she had presented at the Birmingham Law Society conference on 9 June.
14. Emma Harrison noted that she would be talking at the Westminster Forum in September.
15. Graham Corbett advised that he was hoping to arrange further discussions with the TUC.
16. Jeff Bell advised that the Legal Ombudsman Stakeholder Panel had prepared its report for LeO. He noted it was possible the group would have a more ongoing role.

The Panel noted the members' update.

Item 9 – Reflection on Joint OLC/Panel meeting

17. The Panel agreed the meeting was positive. It was useful for building the Panel's relationship with the OLC and for developing a joint understanding of issues.
18. The Panel noted it would consider how best to meet the OLC's needs and how best to input into future policy development.

The Panel agreed to continue with ongoing engagement and to hold another joint meeting in the future.

Item 10 – Will writing

19. The Consumer Panel Manager presented the draft report on will writing, including an update on data from the ‘shadow shopping’ exercise.
20. The Panel members noted the high quality of the report and the research. Panel members suggested a number of changes to the tone and content of the text and final recommendations. Key points raised in discussion included:
- The potential interaction between the cost of wills and regulation.
 - The costs of regulation.
 - The need to raise the overall quality of wills prepared by all practitioners.

The Panel approved the draft report, subject to changes in line with comments made.

Item 11 – Consultation Responses

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

The Panel:

- **noted the letter sent to the SRA in response to its Equality Framework and Engagement Strategy.**
- **agreed to not respond to the Costs Lawyers Standards Board’s consultation on new governance documents.**
- **agreed to respond to the Legal Ombudsman’s second consultation on publishing decisions.**
- **noted the Bar Standards Board’s upcoming consultations on Continuing Professional Development and regulating entities.**

Item 12 – Any other business

22. The Chair noted that the LSB hoped to have an interim chair in place for the Panel’s September meeting.
23. Panel members thanked the Chair for her significant contribution to the Panel. Members noted her important role in leading the Panel and the successful delivery of its reports and projects over its first 20 months.

Item 13 – Draft Agenda for next meeting – 12 September

24. The Consumer Panel Manager presented the proposed agenda for the 12 September meeting.

25. A number of members advised they were no longer to attend on 12 September.

The Panel agreed the proposed Agenda and noted that the Panel Associate would arrange a new September date.