



Minutes

Legal Services Consumer Panel meeting

Date: 08 May 2019

Time: 13:00-16:30

Venue: One Kemble Street, London WC2B 4AN

Present:

Sarah Chambers	Chair
David Abbott	Member
Adam Cooper	Member
Owen Derbyshire	Member
Michelle Goddard	Member
Mark McLaren	Member
Marlene Winfield	Member
Lola Bello	Consumer Panel Manager
Laurentiu Ciocan	Consumer Panel Associate
Ramandeep Bhatti	Legal Services Board (Minutes)
Steven Jarman	Ministry of Justice (Item 9 only)
John Russell	Ministry of Justice (Item 9 only)

Item 1 – Welcome and apologies

1. The Chair welcomed the Legal Services Consumer Panel ('The Panel'). Apologies had been received from Liz Owen.

Item 2 – Declaration of interests

2. None.

Item 3 – Minutes of 6 March 2019 meeting

3. The Chair presented the minutes from 6 March 2019, which had been agreed via electronic correspondence.

The Panel noted the minutes from 6 March 2019.

Item 4 – Matters arising

4. The Chair presented the matters arising.

5. In relation to item 4, it was noted that Michelle Goddard is attending the Westminster Legal Policy Forum on 13 June. The Secretariat is to check if the Panel can be allocated a further ticket.

The Panel noted the matters arising.

Action Point: The Secretariat to check if the Panel can be allocated a further ticket for the Westminster Legal Policy Forum on 13 June.

Item 5 – Welcome

6. The Chair welcomed new Panel Members David Abbott and Owen Derbyshire. The Panel and the new Members took the opportunity to introduce themselves. The Chair asked all the Members to say a little about their background, a key achievement, what they hope the Panel can achieve and the role they can play.

The Panel noted the welcome.

Item 6 – Chair’s report and Members’ update

7. The Chair presented her report on recent meetings.
8. In addition to her report, the Chair informed the group that she presented at a regulation roundtable for the Centre for Competition and Regulatory Policy (CCRP), CEPA and the Centre for analysis of risk and Regulation (CARR, LSE) on 30 April 2019. The roundtable was about Regulatory Architecture and its Evolution in the UK and Australia.

The Panel noted the Chair’s report and Members update.

Item 7 – Projects and consultations updates

9. The Panel Associate presented the projects update.
10. In relation to the Tracker Survey the Panel Associate said that YouGov will be providing two briefing reports on consumer behaviour by mid-May.
11. In relation to paragraph 4, ‘Work with the regulators to encourage adherence to the success criteria outlined in our Information Remedies Report’, the Chair said that this should be on the agenda for meetings with regulators.
12. The Panel Associate presented the paper on consultation responses.

The Panel noted the following live consultations: the CLC’s consultation on its Accounts Code.

The Panel noted responses had been submitted to the SRA’s rule change application on Professional Indemnity Insurance and Compensation Fund, CILEX Regulation consultation on the proposed changes to its education standards regarding legal technology and emotional intelligence.

The Panel noted the projects and consultations update.

Action Point: adherence to the success criteria outlined in our Information Remedies should be added to each of the agenda of each meeting the Chair has with regulators.

Item 8 – Project plan for 2019/20

13. The Panel Manager presented a paper on the proposed project plan for delivering the Work Programme 2019/20.
14. The Panel discussed and agreed the Working Groups for individual projects outlined in the Work Programme.
15. The Chair took the opportunity to remind the Panel how project leads/working groups ought to operate, and the duties/responsibility of working groups. It was noted that project leads or working groups should feel a sense of responsibility and push things forward when they feel progress isn't being made. Members of working groups should also find the time to give feedback for documents that need to be reviewed and attend external events linked to projects.

The Panel agreed the Working Groups allocation for each Panel Member.

Item 9 – Ministry of Justice

16. The Chair welcomed Steven Jarman, Head of UK Legal Services Policy & Stakeholder Relations at the Ministry of Justice accompanied by John Russell, Policy Adviser at the Ministry of Justice (MoJ).
17. Steven Jarman provided the Panel with an update on the Department's current work and advised they have begun work on the Spending Review exercise. Steven said MoJ is looking at a number of areas, but focussed on two areas of interest to the Panel: the criminal legal aid review and maintaining attractiveness of agenda. The following points were raised in the course of the discussion:
 - Steven said the MOJ is keen for lawtech to thrive and it engaging with the businesses to understand needs and potential. The Chair questioned whether MoJ were engaging with consumer organisations at this stage and emphasised the importance of doing so. Steven said they would engage with consumer groups or representative in the future but the MOJ was starting with providers and investors. The Chair emphasised the importance of having a solid consumer perspective. Steven said there is still scope to do this as the programme of work has not been finalised.
 - The Panel said it was important to consider consumers in a climate where litigants in person have less access to justice. In response to the MOJ assurances that the MOJ are engaging with GC100, the Panel highlighted the importance of understanding the needs of small and micro businesses. The Panel suggested that the MoJ should focus on areas of the market that are not working well, and not capable of working without intervention. Steven emphasised that that the consumer perspective is important, but the Government had to start somewhere and this was the starting position.
 - In relation to the criminal legal aid review, Steven confirmed the Post Implementation Review of LASPO had been published. The review does not make specific recommendations. The central purpose of the review was to carry out an assessment of the impact of the changes made under LASPO. MoJ also looked at how legal support should be delivered in the future, and the new approach is outlined in the Legal Support Action Plan.

- Steven said the Department is trying to have a frank conversation with the sector on what is sustainable and they are planning on holding roundtable discussions and working with the different circuits. The Panel confirmed that the upcoming Tracker Survey 2019 reveals a downward trend in legal aid availability and free advice and services. Steven said there are wider conversations to be had with other Government Departments because of the upstream effect of legal aid and the displacement of work to other areas.
- The Panel said they are aware of the cuts to resources at the MoJ, and the issues faced by the department, which could not be tackled by them alone. The Chair offered any help the Panel may be able to give. Steven said the Panel's Tracker Survey is a great tool for showing trends over a long period of time.
- The Panel questioned what the general feeling is in relation to the Spending Review. Steven said its early days at the moment, and they will not be able to restore legal aid to the levels of what it was before LASPO.
- In relation to Stephen Mayson's Review of Legal Services, Steven said that he and his team have met with Stephen Mayson informally.

18. The Panel noted the update from the MoJ and thanked Steven and John for their time.

The Panel noted the update from Steven Jarman.

Item 10 – Annual Report

19. The Panel Manager presented the Panel's draft Annual Report 2018/19. The Chair and Panel Manager will present the approved report to the Legal Services Board at its meeting on 4 June 2019.
20. The Panel commented on the Report and suggested some additional points that should be highlighted. The Chair asked the Panel to flag any detailed comments to the Secretariat by email.
21. It was agreed that the Consumer Principles will be added to all relevant public Panel documents. The Chair was asked to consider adding a standing research question to her meetings with regulators, specifically, what consumer research regulators planned over the coming year.

In line with suggested amendments the Panel agreed the Annual Report 2019/19.

Item 11 – Update on the Ombudsman paper

22. The Chair provided the Panel with an update on the Ombudsman paper. A date has now been agreed for the workshop, 12 June 2019. The paper itself does not provide solutions, but instead asks questions, which will form the basis of discussion at the workshop.

The Panel noted the update on the Ombudsman paper.

Item 12 – Draft agenda 26 June 2019

23. The Panel noted that since the papers were circulated the date of the next Panel meeting had changed to 26 June 2019.

24. The Panel noted the joint meeting with the LSB on 6 November had been cancelled and this needed to be re-scheduled.

The Panel agreed the agenda for 26 June 2019 meeting.

Action Point: Joint meeting with LSB to be re-scheduled.

Item 13 – Any other business

25. The Panel Associate informed the Panel that the LSB and Panel are due to vacate the current office premises. The new office location is still being finalised. The Panel Associate also shared the proposed new website format and design with the Panel.