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## **The Panel calls for urgent work to build quality indicator framework for legal services**

The Panel's Consumer Impact Report provides evidence-based insight into how well the legal sector is responding to consumers' needs. This report also measures how the sector is fairing against the recommendations made by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) in 2016.

The Panel found that there is still very little information on quality indicators, both on technical and service quality. This makes it difficult for consumers to make informed decisions when choosing a legal services provider. The dearth of quality indicators also weakens the progress that has been made towards price transparency in recent months. Without quality indicators, there is a danger that consumers will place too much emphasis on price at the expense of other important factors.

We would like to see regulators working together to build a common quality indicator framework and a mechanism to ensure that it is used across the sector. This will improve transparency, help providers understand where they need to improve and help consumers make better informed decisions when choosing a provider.

The Report also notes that there has not been much improvement in the amount of consumer-focused research undertaken by regulators. The voice and experiences of consumers are crucially important for the design of effective regulation that delivers good consumer outcomes. We continue to urge all the regulators to prioritise consumer research. The Panel and the Legal Services Board are currently in the process of setting up a public panel consisting of members of the public and users of legal services. The idea is to use this panel as a sounding board for policy ideas, regulatory objectives and more. We hope that this will be a useful resource for all regulators in legal services, to ensure that the views of the public and consumers inform regulatory decisions.

Sarah Chambers, Chair of the Legal Services Consumer Panel, said:

*"The sector must continue to focus on transparency as a regulatory tool that has the power to empower consumers and enhance effective choice and competition. I am still concerned that very little progress has been made towards establishing quality indicators, considering that we are now in the fourth year since the CMA identified a need.*

*We have had numerous discussions with the regulators about this matter and would now like to see all of the legal services regulators working together to establish a common quality indicator framework to address both service and technical quality, as a matter of urgency."*

**ENDS**

**For more information contact Lola Bello, Consumer Panel Manager, on 020 72710077.**

## Notes to editors

1. The Legal Services Consumer Panel was established under the Legal Services Act 2007 to provide independent advice to the Legal Services Board about the interests of consumers of legal services in England and Wales. We investigate issues that affect consumers and use this information to influence decisions about the regulation of legal services.
2. The Panel is made up of eight lay members whose appointments are approved by the Lord Chancellor. Our members' varied experience and expertise include: charitable, private and public sectors; advice provision; consumer research; trading standards; and complaints handling. Panel members are not permitted to be practising lawyers. More information about the Panel members can be found on our website [here](#).
3. The full report can be found on our website.