

**Embargoed until 10:01am, 20 July 2020**



## **Consumers are shopping blind without quality indicators.**

New consumer research published today by the Legal Services Consumer Panel shows that consumers are struggling to make informed decisions about their choice of legal services provider, because there are few or no quality indicators available.

Our research has revealed that consumers use unreliable proxies such as longevity of service, customer service, and website design prior to deciding which provider to use.

Consumers have also told us about some of the types of information they would find useful when navigating this complex market e.g. customer reviews or testimonials with caveats.

Once again, the Panel would like to urge legal services regulators to begin to build a common quality indicator framework and a mechanism to ensure that it is used across the sector. This will improve transparency, shopping around and ultimately a fairer competitive marketplace which works better for consumers and for good legal service providers.

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

*“There has been a patent lack of strategic direction and a sluggish pace in addressing consumers’ need for reliable, comparable quality indicators, almost four years after the Competition and Markets Authority’s finding that lack of information on price and quality hampered competition.*

*Legal service regulators must now respond by doing two things. Firstly, they must work towards a clear strategic goal of establishing a sector-wide framework for quality indicators. This framework should be rooted in an articulation of what good looks like for consumers. Secondly, regulators must accelerate their pace in this area. The CMA is scheduled to reassess the sector at the end of the year. If they find that little to no progress has been made on this issue, this could create a reputational risk for regulators as it might suggest that consumers are not at the heart of regulation. And of course, consumers will continue to be left without the basic information they need to choose a lawyer.”*

**ENDS**

**For more information contact Lola Bello, Consumer Panel Manager, at [Lola.Bello@legalservicesconsumerpanel.org.uk](mailto:Lola.Bello@legalservicesconsumerpanel.org.uk) or 020 7271 0077.**

### **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.