



Annual Report 2020

August 2020

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1 About us

Our purpose

- 1.1. The Legal Services Consumer Panel is a central feature of a regulatory framework in England and Wales, which is designed to transform the legal services market around the needs of its users.
- 1.2. Created by the Legal Services Act 2007 (The Act), we are an independent arm of the Legal Services Board. As a permanent, discrete champion for consumers, we have an essential responsibility to ensure that regulators are able to consider and act on the user perspective, putting the consumer interest at the heart of regulation.

Our vision

- 1.3. A market where everyone can access legal services that meet their needs, and where consumers are placed at the heart of regulation.
- 1.4. Our remit is to represent the interests of the many different consumers of legal services, including small businesses and charities. A core emphasis is on the needs of vulnerable consumers.

How we work

- 1.5. The Panel provides high quality, evidenced-based advice and

challenge to the Legal Services Board and front-line regulators, in order to help it make decisions that are shaped around the needs of users. We do this within a very limited budget.

- 1.6. The Panel's geographic remit is England and Wales. The Panel will remain alert to any differences in needs and tailor our policy advice accordingly.

Who we are

- 1.7. 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; technology; and complaints handling. Panel members are not able to be practising lawyers. More information about the Panel members can be found on our website [here](#).

Our approach to regulation

- 1.8. We support regulation which creates the right balance between access to justice and consumer protection. We will challenge and support regulation to enable consumers to benefit from high quality services.

2 Chair's Foreword



- 2.1. When I presented my first annual report as Chair of the Consumer Panel last year I never expected that my second year would end in quite the way it has done, with large parts of the legal sector closing down, many to re-emerge quite rapidly in a different form with almost everyone working from home, and consumers facing a whole new set of challenges.
- 2.2. I have been hugely impressed by the energy that so many individuals and organisations have put into adapting their services to this strange new world, from the courts service and the judiciary through to individual legal advisers and free legal advice centres.
- 2.3. The pandemic has made the lives of ordinary citizens more difficult in so many ways, and a latent demand for legal services has built up which requires regulators and providers to be ever more nimble in the year ahead, at a time when financial resources are likely to be very tight.
- 2.4. I am pleased that the Legal Services Board (LSB) is leading the way in encouraging collaboration and

information exchange with all the regulators to meet this unprecedented set of challenges.

- 2.5. Turning back to last year, the Panel has continued to encourage the regulators to adopt a more proactive approach to consumer information. Progress has been mixed. Rules on price transparency have been implemented, but many of the rules are of limited scope, and evidence suggests that even they are not being rigorously followed. A recent survey (by DG Legal) showed that 90% of solicitors firms do not fully comply with these rules.¹
- 2.6. On quality indicators the pace has been even slower: neither the regulators nor the professional bodies have been putting enough energy or resource into the consumer engagement and research that is needed to pin down what “good” looks like for clients or what information they need to establish whether a legal services provider meets this standard, let alone how this information should be collected and disseminated in a way which is clear and comparable. This really matters. Without quality indicators how can consumers make informed choices and secure best value for money in this sector? Price transparency on its own gives no indication of quality and may indeed lead people to make poor choices.
- 2.7. The Legal Choices website contains some useful generic information for

¹ <https://dglegal.co.uk/news/sras-transparency-rules-survey-websites/> (last accessed on 07/07/2020)

consumers and it is improving all the time, but we are disappointed that it is not financially supported by the whole of the legal sector and that it is still not as widely known about as it should be if it is to become a ubiquitous consumer tool.

- 2.8. The Legal Ombudsman plays a vital role in complaints handling and has improved its own transparency, but over the coming year it needs to raise its game in feeding back intelligence gathered from complaints handling in order to raise standards across the sector as a whole.
- 2.9. The focus of this Panel is to make the consumer's voice heard and to make the consumer's voice count. We continue to invest in our annual Tracker Survey which provides a vital source of linear data to regulators, service providers and others. This year we also published our Consumer Impact Report which uses a basket of indicators to assess progress towards the Panel's vision. These reports present a rather familiar picture of progress in some areas and less change in others. One depressingly familiar feature is the unequal (worse) outcomes experienced by BAME users. It is important that frontline regulators and professional organisations address this issue more pro-actively this year, not only by looking at their recruitment policies but also at the way their staff interact with consumers.
- 2.10. We are delighted that the LSB, together with our Panel, have now established a public panel made up of citizens and consumers to help us get a closer and deeper understanding of what consumers need in this market. This should be of real assistance to us in the year ahead, a year when the sector, guided by its regulators, will have to adapt to the COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 world, to the demands (and opportunities) of law tech, and to the calls for a new look at the way the

sector is regulated, prompted by the very thorough review just completed by Professor Mayson.

Sarah Chambers
Chair



3 Equipping consumers with information

What we said we would like to see

- The publication of price and quality information.
- Consumers given better tools to compare providers.
- Consumers finding it easier to understand their rights, protections and routes to redress.

What we did in 2019/20

- 3.1. The Panel has consistently called for improved data provision in the legal sector. As far back as 2012 we started a long and sustained campaign for the most basic of data to be gathered and published. In 2014, this led to change. Approved Regulators agreed to make the most basic of data available; name/s, contact details, size, and the regulated status of individuals and firms.
- 3.2. Today, basic information is now available on most Approved Regulators website or provided to intermediaries on request. In time we hope the consumer facing website 'Legal Choices' will host this information for ease of reference and improved presentation.
- 3.3. In 2016, we started another campaign for price and quality information. We called for regulatory

intervention even before the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) assessed the sector and found it wanting.

- 3.4. We deem it appropriate to remind readers of the history of slow regulatory intervention where open data is concerned in the sector, because history is repeating itself with regards to the provision of quality information. Approved Regulators have done little to nothing since our report and the CMA's report of 2016².
- 3.5. The Panel has worked hard to direct the discourse, shape the agenda, nudge and push towards change.
- 3.6. In 2016, we called for quality indicators, including the publication of first tier complaints data.
- 3.7. In 2018, we hosted a roundtable event on contextualising complaints data, drawing on the experience of regulators outside of legal services.
- 3.8. In 2019, we published a discussion paper on quality indicators. In this paper, the Panel reiterated the points it has been making for over five years; publishing quality indicators is essential for raising standards and improving consumer choice and voice. Quality indicators play a role in holding providers and regulators accountable. And quality indicators can provide

² LSCP, Opening up data in legal services, LSCP, February 2016

intermediaries with data for mutual benefits.

- 3.9. In 2019 we also hosted a roundtable event with all the Approved Regulators, including regulators outside the sector, the Care Quality Commission and OFGEM. At the roundtable we also heard a presentation from KPMG on the practicalities of developing quality indicators that deliver good consumer outcomes.
- 3.10. We concluded the roundtable with agreement on our main recommendation; for Approved Regulators to collaborate on a piece of work which articulates the generic requirements of a good quality service.
- 3.11. It was also agreed that the LSB, as oversight regulator would convene a meeting with the Approved Regulators to discuss and agree some core categories for quality indicators.
- 3.12. After the roundtable, the Panel developed and submitted a second paper to the LSB.
- 3.13. Our second paper outlined the steps that needed to be taken towards developing a high-level framework for defining quality indicators.
- 3.14. In the paper we described how such a framework could be tested and improved before the quality indicators were finally designed and tested with consumers.
- 3.15. We also broke down the journey regulators must translate into steps and we offered practical support at key stages of the tasks that needed to be undertaken.

Consumer research on quality indicators

- 3.16. To help inform our thinking and knowledge base, we went even further in 2019. In 2019, we commissioned qualitative research on consumers experience and use of quality indicators in the sector. Our consumer research will be published in July 2020.
- 3.17. Our research shows that consumers struggle to find quality indicators before engaging with a provider of legal services.
- 3.18. We also found that consumers attach too much credence to 'professionalism, empathy and accessibility' in lieu of more tangible indicators.
- 3.19. Consumers also make questionable assumptions about longevity in service and assume this is tantamount to quality.
- 3.20. This research, including the papers and events we have held bolsters the call for change.
- 3.21. It is disappointing that the Approved Regulators have not matched the level of investment the Panel has made in exploring this issue. Worse still, there continues to be no leadership and no strategic direction for bringing about change in this area.
- 3.22. Consequently, consumers continue to be hampered in their assessment of quality information, which in turn affects their ability to shop around and hinders competition.
- 3.23. The Panel remains committed to supporting regulators in this area, even if that means calling on the CMA to intervene when they revisit the sector later this year.

Price transparency - unfinished business

3.24. In 2019 we concentrated our efforts on quality indicators, but monitored and gathered intelligence on how price transparency was embedding.

Transparency is not done.

Our 2020 Tracker Survey findings show:

- The percentage of consumers who shop around for legal service as has crept up to 30%, but still 67% of consumers do not shop around.
- Only 6% of consumers find price information on the provider's website.
- 64% of consumers have a conversation with their provider to determine the price.
- 47% of consumers say it was difficult to find information about the cost because "no upfront information on prices were provided."

3.25. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that more needs to be done on price transparency, to ensure that it delivers good outcomes for consumers.

3.26. Also, we recently learnt that Law firm consultancy DG Legal commissioned a survey of 422 websites in May 2020 which showed that around 90% of firms were not complying with the price transparency rules, mainly by either not giving enough information or not making it sufficiently prominent.

3.27. We will continue to encourage Approved Regulators to evaluate how their rules are embedding and where necessary ask them to respond robustly to non-compliance. We will also encourage Approved Regulators to be transparent about their findings.

3.28. The Panel will continue to emphasise that price transparency is not complete until it delivers good consumer outcomes.

Over the next year the Panel will:

- Continue to support the Remedies Programme Implementation Group (RPIG) in its drive to ensure the CMA remedies are implemented effectively.
- Collate and submit evidence to the CMA on progress around transparency in the sector.

4 Consumer protection

What we said we would like to see

- Consumers have adequate protections and routes to redress.
- Flexible and innovative service with proportionate consumer protection.
- Enhanced understanding of the different needs and experience of consumers.

What we did in 2019/20

Cross-Sector workshop on complaint handling and ADR

- 4.1. In 2019, the Panel in conjunction with the LSB and the Legal Ombudsman (LeO) hosted a cross-sectoral workshop on complaints handling and ADR.
- 4.2. Our objective was to begin to explore some of the issues and concerns that we have observed and commented on over the years. For example, we are still concerned that the intelligence gathered from complaints handling is not used to raise standards in the sector.
- 4.3. The Panel was also keen to explore the optimal balance (in resourcing) between complaint handling and feedback/communication.
- 4.4. In addition, we sought to explore the difficulties around balancing timeliness with quality, while providing a person-centred service.
- 4.5. The workshop was insightful and left us with much to consider. It certainly challenged some of our own thinking. Some of the standout points we took away were:

- The Ombudsman should help to deliver sectoral improvements without getting directly involved.
- Behaviour insights should be used to understand what motivates businesses and consumers.
- Getting access to 1st tier complaints data is important to understanding systemic issues and identifying risks early.
- There is a continuous need to feedback to the profession in a structured and accessible way.

- 4.6. We fully understand, more than ever that the Legal Ombudsman needs to continue to have this dialogue and proactively lead the discourse in this area. Quite frankly, its effectiveness and survival as a modern and relevant ombudsman depends on it.

Lawtech that delivers good outcomes

- 4.7. The Panel is keen to see lawtech embed in legal services because technological innovations have the potential to lead to new and more responsive legal services, from improved access, positive consumer outcomes and competition, to increased profitability for businesses.
- 4.8. We have been particularly impressed with the LSB's proactiveness in this area.
- 4.9. The LSB has drawn on the happenings and learnings in other sectors and jurisdictions. It has also considered the consumer interest and risks.

- 4.10. The breadth and depth of the body of work done by the LSB leaves one in no doubt that this is an area of priority and value.
- 4.11. There now needs to be a shift in focus from theory to the practicalities of getting legal services regulators to prepare and respond to lawtech.
- 4.12. More than ever, the current Pandemic emphasises the need for regulators to consider what must be in place for lawtech regulation to thrive. This includes incentivising law firms to adopt digital innovations to broaden access to justice and having adequate consumer protection in place.
- 4.13. It is also crucial that regulators and providers are mindful of ensuring that access to digital channels are non-discriminatory, in that consumers who lack IT literacy or digital equipment or indeed those who prefer human contact do not lose out.
- 4.14. Our previous work makes a further point which is even more relevant to the current environment. We must ensure that inequalities and discrimination is not transferred to technology.
- 4.15. We must not transfer human biases to artificial intelligence. Therefore, we will continue to encourage regulators to consider how they can develop regulatory guidance to minimise the risk of biases. This will no doubt involve and include increasing transparency and auditability which would be crucial to trust and confidence in Artificial intelligence.
- 4.16. In 2019/20 we hosted a roundtable event on lawtech. We were successful in getting all the regulators around the table, including academics, leaders from other sectors and funders of lawtech.
- 4.17. At that event many crucial points were noted including:
- the need to start a dialogue with tech businesses and with legal service providers.
 - The importance of building up internal knowledge and understanding of lawtech.
 - The need for data, you cannot have technology without data and regulators need to give more thought to where it lies and how it can be made available to others.
- 4.18. The importance of developing technology strategies was also emphasised. To this end attendees agreed that Approved Regulators should play a more active role by working together, engaging with other sectors and jurisdictions. And crucially, discussing and learning from law tech providers.
- 4.19. Further to the roundtable, our Chair gave a presentation at the regulators CEO's meetings, where the advantages for a common approach to lawtech regulation was made. We were pleased that the CEO's accepted the recommendation. We are yet to be updated on progress towards this common goal.
- 4.20. It remains our strong view that the regulators cannot afford to work in silos in this area and we will continue to press for joined up working.

Poor regulatory framework and consumer protection

- 4.21. The Panel has been vocal for several years about the deficiencies of the regulatory framework. This year we engaged with Professor Stephen Mayson's review on the Independent Review of Legal Services Regulation. So far, we have had the opportunity to share our views with him at two Panel meetings and attended all his public

events, as well as responded to his interim report.

- 4.22. Our position remains the same. The regulatory framework is not fit for purpose and we broadly agree with his proposals.
- 4.23. In our response to his interim report we took some clear lines. We agreed that professional tittle should no longer be the only route to personal authorisation, even for high risk activities.
- 4.24. We strongly agreed that the current regulatory framework is overly complicated. And this exacerbates information asymmetry and contributes to higher cost for services, because it is ultimately consumers who pay for regulation.
- 4.25. The Panel is in full support of a single regulator. And we strongly believe that all providers of legal services should be within scope of regulation, but to varying degrees.
- 4.26. The Panel will continue to make the case for change because deficiencies in the framework itself contributes to gaps in consumer protection. There are gaps around which services are covered, right through to who can claim redress when things go wrong.

Market Flexibility and Consumer Protection

- 4.27. The Panel continues to challenge regulators to minimise consumer confusion and to refrain from lowering consumer protection without justification or any corresponding benefits. This is exacerbated by what we often consider to be inadequate impact assessments, and little or no consumer research to support proposals. We have raised these points in numerous responses to consultation documents and we will continue to do so.

- 4.28. In 2019, we responded to a number of consultation documents reiterating the points noted above, from the Solicitors Regulation Authority's (SRA) reduction in consumer protection for those who use the newly titled 'freelance solicitors' to the inadequacies we highlighted in the proposals for regulating advocacy standards.
- 4.29. We will continue to employ the LSB to demand the requisite evidence when considering whether rule changes should be approved.

Consumer Impact Report

- 4.30. This year the Panel published its Consumer Impact report. The Consumer Impact Report uses a basket of indicators approach to assess the direction of travel towards the Panel's vision.
- 4.31. The findings in this edition was mixed. There has clearly been some progress even if not as advanced as we would like. Consumers now shop around more than they did four years ago for example.
- 4.32. However, although shopping around has moved from 22 per cent in 2012 to 30 percent in 2020, we know that there are pockets of the sector where shopping around is much lower, for example in probate and personal injury claims where shopping around stands at 16%
- 4.33. We also found improvement in the transparency of Approved Regulators governance arrangements.
- 4.34. In general, we remain disappointed with the amount of consumer research that informs policy decision making in the sector. The Panel must be clear, policy making without consumer research is likely to result in poor outcomes for consumers.
- 4.35. Moreover, regulatory strategies and risk registers are likely to have unacceptable gaps when they are

not informed by the consumer experience.

- 4.36. We understand that some regulators consider engagement with consumer representatives to be sufficient in their drive for reforms or seismic policy changes. We accept that engagement with consumer groups may be sufficient in some cases. However, there are times where regulators must commit to consumer research.
- 4.37. We no longer consider it acceptable for smaller regulators to say that they do not have the resources to commit to consumer research. This is tantamount to saying they do not have the competence to do their job. The smaller regulators must find creative ways to meet their obligations. For example, through partnerships with other regulators.
- 4.38. We are pleased that the LSB and the Panel has recently established a public panel made up of citizens and consumers. This is a resource we hope the smaller regulators will feel empowered to draw on.

Over the next year the Panel will:

- Highlight the findings of our Consumer Impact Report and use it as the basis of our evidence to the CMA.

The Consumer Impact Report 2020

Recommendations:

Transparency of information

1. Regulators should work towards identifying a set of agreed quality indicators in the legal services sector to help consumers make informed decisions when choosing a provider.
2. Regulators should monitor and evaluate the success of the transparency rules recently introduced.
3. The LSB should focus its attention, through its performance standards work, on transparency in enforcement actions and decisions.
4. Regulators should publish all enforcement data at the end of an investigation that leads to a sanction.

Information remedies

5. Regulators should address the disparity in how BAME groups experience the legal services market.
6. Regulators should monitor the implementation of the action plans on addressing the needs of vulnerable consumers and evaluate their impact and seek to improve them where necessary.

Consumer protection

7. The SRA and the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal (SDT) should work together and ensure they use similar measures to calculate the time between the decision to refer a matter from the SRA to the SDT.
8. The SRA's fining powers for non-Alternative Business Structures firms, and for individuals working outside of ABSs are inadequate for effective deterrence. The LSB should support the SRA more vocally on the need for change.

Consumer research

9. Regulators should undertake more consumer research to inform policy development and implementation.

5 Stakeholder Engagement

- 5.1. The Panel meets with key stakeholders regularly (often at CEO/Chair level) to discuss regulatory issues and share our concerns. This is a significant aspect of our ongoing work. And these meetings extend beyond legal services regulators to representative bodies of the professions, government departments and other consumer groups.
- 5.2. It is also important to emphasise that a significant aspect of our stakeholder engagement and influencing work takes place at our Panel meetings. In 2019/20 we welcomed to our meetings senior stakeholder representatives from the BSB, SRA, LSB and LeO and importantly stakeholders outside the sector too e.g. where we sought to understand, influence and input into a range of policy proposals or ideas.
- 5.3. We have engaged several times with NESTA and the SRA, as part of the Legal Access Challenge that aimed at increasing the availability of tech-based solutions to support consumers accessing justice.
- 5.4. The Panel has also met with Professor Stephen Mayson from the Faculty of Laws, University College London, to discuss his Independent Review of Legal Services Regulation.
- 5.5. Finally, the Panel has worked on delivering its work programme while responding and engaging with the LSB on its own programme of work. We typically do this by engaging with the LSB at a working level, during early stages of policy developments, right through to having board to board meetings.

6 Transparency

Committed to transparency

- 6.1. The Panel is committed to transparency. Below we list details of our expenditure and outputs for the past year.

Expenditure

- 6.2. The Consumer Panel is supported by a small policy secretariat and is funded by the LSB as part of its annual levy on the approved regulators. Our budgeted costs for the year ending 31 March 2020 was £240,066 (see below Table 1 overleaf for a breakdown).
- 6.3. Details of members' expenses are available on the Panel's website [here](#).

Attendance

- 6.4. The Consumer Panel held six formal meetings this year. The attendance of each Panel Member is outlined based on the number they were eligible to attend:

Sarah Chambers - 6/6

Adam Cooper 5/6

Owen Derbyshire – 5/6

Liz Owen - 4/6

Paul Crook – 3/3

Marlene Winfield OBE - 5/6

Mark McLaren - 4/6

Dr Michelle Goddard - 5/6

David Abbot – 6/6

Activities and outputs

- 6.5. A list of the Panel's activities can be found at the back of this document. This can be summarised as follows:
- Policy and research reports - 9
 - Consultation responses – 17
 - Speeches and presentations – 9
 - Ongoing committees and working groups – 5
 - Events hosted by the Panel – 3
 - News releases – 3
 - Blog posts – 3
 - Stakeholders meetings – 66

Table 1 – Breakdown of Panel expenditure in 2019/20

Category	2018/19	2019/20
Panel Fees and Secretariat	181,949	191,810
Research	33,654	43,607
Travel	1,888	1,658
Training	0	0
Subscriptions/office costs	12	2,819
Catering/room hire	75	172
Total	217,578	240,066

7 Consumer Panel's activities

Policy and consumer research reports

19 March 2020	The Consumer Impact Report 2020
23 December 2019	A discussion paper on quality indicators in legal services
2 December 2019	Infographic on the Panel's LawTech discussion paper
30 July 2019	Tracker Survey 2019 – Infographic on how consumers are choosing legal services
30 July 2019	Tracker Survey 2019 – Infographic on how consumers are using legal services
30 July 2019	Tracker Survey 2019: How consumers are using legal services
30 July 2019	Tracker Survey 2019: How consumers are choosing legal services
30 July 2019	Tracker Survey 2019 – data tables for recent users
22 May 2019	Lawtech and consumers discussion paper

Consultation responses

29 March 2020	CLSB – Consultation on CLSB’s Practising Rules
14 February 2020	LSB – Consultation on the Legal Services Board’s draft Business Plan for 2020/21
14 February 2020	LeO – Consultation on the Legal Ombudsman’s Corporate Strategy for 2020-23
4 February 2020	CLSB – Consultation on the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for Cost Lawyers
31 January 2020	SRA- Consultation on the SRA’s Corporate Strategy 2020–23
31 January 2020	LeO -The Legal Ombudsman’s Transparency Discussion Paper
10 January 2020	SDT – Consultation on amendments to the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal’s policy on the provision of documents to non-parties
20 December 2019	IRLSR – Independent Review of Legal Services Regulation; Findings, Propositions and Consultation.
13 November 2019	CLSB – Consultation on Disciplinary Rules and Procedures
13 November 2019	SRA – Consultation on assuring advocacy standards
9 October 2019	IPREG – Consultation on rule changes to run-off cover
9 October 2019	IPREG – Consultation on removing restrictions on providing pro bono advice

21 June 2019	CLC – Consultation response on Accounting Rules
3 June 2019	SDT – Consultation response to rule change application to LSB
11 April 2019	CILEx Regulation – Consultation on the proposed changes to CILEx Regulation’s education standards
11 April 2019	LSB – Letter on the SRA’s rule change application about PII and Compensation Fund
11 April 2019	LSB – Letter on the SRA’s rule change application about whistleblowers

Speeches and presentations by the Chair, Panel Members, and Secretariat

9 January 2020	LSB – Stakeholder event on ongoing competence
18 October 2019	LSCP – Quality indicators roundtable
2 December 2019	WLPF - The future of legal technology - smart contracts, increasing investment and realising the potential of AI'
23 October 2019	LSB – Roundtable on legal education/law tech and emotional competence
8 October 2019	London Law Expo 2019 – Panel discussion
4 July 2019	SRA – SRA Innovate event
12 June 2019	WLPF – Seminar on Diversity
12 June 2019	LSCP, LSB, LEO – Cross-sector workshop on complaints handling and ADR
5 June 2019	SRA – SRA Innovate event

Ongoing committees and working groups

Consumer Panel Chairs regular meetings
Legal Services Board Research Strategy Group
Legal Regulators Research Forum ³
Regulators' Forum ⁴
Remedies Programme Implementation Group

Events hosted by the Panel

18 October 2019	Quality indicators roundtable
9 July 2019	Lawtech roundtable
12 June 2019	Cross-sector workshop on complaints handling and ADR

News releases

19 March 2020	The Panel calls for urgent work to build quality indicator framework for legal services
27 January 2020	Efforts need to focus on building legal confidence and capability
30 July 2019	The legal services market is failing to support consumer engagement and low income consumers accessing justice

³ A forum for all the legal regulators to meet and discuss the research each organisation is undertaking. It is focused solely on research.

⁴ A forum for discussion of common issues between regulators, LSCP, and LeO. This meeting is broader than research.

Blog posts

31 March 2020	A Digital Swansong Marlene Winfield
26 March 2020	Law in the time of Corona Sarah Chambers
23 December 2019	A Christmas Carol for Legal Service Users (with apologies to Mr Dickens) Sarah Chambers

The list of the stakeholders the Panel has met throughout the year

The Panel also hosted a roundtable on contextualising complaints data where all the Frontline and Approved Regulators attended, including key organisation representatives.

Bar Standards Board
Bar Council
Chartered Institute of Legal Executives
CILEx Regulation
Council for Licensed Conveyancers
Competition and Markets Authority
Consumer Panel Chairs Group
Chartered Institute of Trademark Attorneys
Chartered Institute of Patent Attorneys
Citizens Advice

Fintech Circle
The Intellectual Property Regulation Board
The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales
Law Society
Legal Utopia
Legal Ombudsman/Office for Legal Complaints
Legal Services Board
Legal Choices Steering Group
Master of Faculties
Ministry of Justice
Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner
Ombudsman Association
UKRN
University College London
Professional Paralegal Register

Research Strategy Forum
Remedies Programme Implementation Group (CMA Report)
Solicitors Regulation Authority
State of Victoria Consumer Commission
Which?

8 Terms of reference

Purpose

- 1 The Legal Services Consumer Panel ('the Panel') is established by the Legal Services Act 2007. The Panel contributes towards the achievement of the regulatory objectives by representing the interests of consumers of legal services. The Panel acts independently of the Legal Services Board ('the LSB') and the Office for Legal Complaints ('the OLC').
- 2 The Panel is deliberately comprised of members who are able to provide evidence of the experience of the wide range of consumers of legal services. The Panel will prioritise its work around those consumers who it considers are less able to give voice to their own interests. The Panel will have particular regard to the interests of consumers who may be in a position of vulnerability when using legal services.
- 3 The principal focus of the Panel will be on activities falling within the jurisdiction of the LSB and the OLC. However, the Panel will also have a remit on legal services matters that do not fall within the remit of the LSB or the OLC.
- 4 The Panel has an advisory role and does not have decision-making responsibilities. The key activities of the Panel are (in no order of importance):
 - (a) To help the LSB and the OLC to understand fully, and take account of the interests of consumers in its policy development and decisions;

(b) To respond to relevant consultations as appropriate;

(c) To carry out research, as agreed with the LSB, and gather other intelligence and evidence to understand the consumer experience of the legal services market;

(d) To provide the LSB and the OLC with feedback from a consumer perspective on the effectiveness of its policies and practices;

(e) To help the approved regulators develop their own approach to consumer engagement to inform their work;

(f) To speak out publicly on behalf of consumers as appropriate in order to positively influence outcomes for consumers of legal services; and

(g) To maintain an overview of developments in the legal services market, and related developments affecting consumers in other markets, in order to best deliver the other activities listed above.

Procedure

- 5 Panel members are appointed by the LSB, with the approval of the Lord Chancellor, in accordance with Nolan principles, to represent the interests of consumers.
- 6 The Panel shall determine its ways of working, and may appoint sub-committees and make other arrangements for regulating its procedure. Sub-committees may include persons drawn from outside of the Panel, but all sub-committees shall include at least one member of the Panel.

- 7 The Panel and the LSB shall agree an annual programme of work for the Panel. The Panel may carry out such additional work, as agreed with the LSB, in response to developments in the legal services market.
- 8 The Panel shall ordinarily publish its representations, advice and research. However, it may choose not to publish its representations, advice and research if it considers that to do so would be likely to impact adversely on the interests of consumers.
- 9 The Panel shall publish the agenda and minutes of its meetings.
- 10 The Panel shall publish an Annual Report on its work.
- 11 The Panel and LSB shall review the Panel's terms of reference annually.

Legal Services Consumer Panel | 3rd floor, The Rookery, 2 Dyott Street, London, WC1A 1DE |

0207 271 0076 | www.legalservicesconsumerpanel.org.uk |

Twitter @LegalservicesCP

LinkedIn www.linkedin.com/company/lscp