Minutes – Legal Services Consumer Panel meeting

Date: 21 October 2026

Time: 13:00 – 17:00

Venue: hybrid meeting (in person and online)

Present:

Tom Hayhoe	Chair
Adhir Ramdarshan	Member
Dan Newman	Member
Mike Mack	Member
Sabrina Basran	Member
Richard Spencer	Member
Lola Bello	Head, Consumer Panel
Heidi Evelyn	Consumer Panel Manager
Caroline Clayton	Consumer Panel Associate
Robert Morrison	LSB, Interim Head, Policy & Delivery
Huma Munshi-Burch	LSB, Regulatory Policy Manager
Mia David-Biles	LSB, Regulatory Policy Manager
Samuel Omolade	LSB, Head of Strategy and Research
Richard Orpin	LSB, Chief Executive Officer
Tania Hardcastle	LSB, Regulatory Policy Manager

Item 1 – Welcome and Apologies

1. The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed those present and online.

2. Apologies received from Ayub Khan and Elizabeth Coll.

Item 2 – Declaration of Interests

3. None

Item 3 – Minutes of last meeting

4. The Chair presented the minutes from the 8 July 2026 meeting which had been agreed via electronic correspondence.

Item 4 - Matters arising

5. All matters arising were acknowledged.

Item 5 – Chair's report and members' updates

6. The Chair thanked Panel members for their contributions and representation at recent external engagements. The Chair noted his introduction with the Chair of the Scottish Legal Services Consumer Panel.

Item 6 – Project updates and consultation responses

7. The Consumer Panel Manager provided updates on ongoing projects.

8. A Panel member raised the recent Nuffield Foundation report on consolidating the legal system. It was agreed amongst Panel that it would be of interest to invite the authors to a future meeting, with the prospect of a Panel member writing a blog on the topic following this.

Action: The secretariat to approach the Nuffield Foundation to attend a future Panel meeting.

Item 7 – Frontline Updates

9. Panel members raised the ongoing concerns around legal aid. This includes large firms announcing withdrawal from legal aid and immigration which is going to leave large legal aid advice deserts. Another Panel member noted similar trends in mediation. Panel discussed the opportunity to draw attention to this at the next LSCP Access to Justice workshop.

10. The issues facing small businesses and accessing legal advice and support, particularly in rural areas was also raised.

Item 8 – LSB Consumers and AI Research

11. The Chair welcomed Huma Munshi-Burch (Regulatory Policy Manager), Samuel Omolade (Head of Strategy and Research), and Robert Morrison (Interim Head of Policy & Delivery) from the LSB to discuss their Consumers and AI research. Huma provided an overview of the research, which was published earlier this summer, and the LSB's proposed next steps.

12. A Panel member asked whether the LSB had considered mandatory standards for the use of AI, rather than the voluntary standards proposed. Members noted that mandatory standards could help establish minimum protections for consumers and differentiate providers in the market. LSB colleagues explained that there were legal constraints on making standards mandatory particularly in relation to providers in the unregulated sector under the Legal Services Act.

13. Panel members discussed how the proposed standards would address gaps in existing regulation. Although regulated firms may be held accountable under their existing regulatory obligations if something goes wrong, there is no common AI-specific standard across regulators. This leaves uncertainty about expectations on matters such as transparency about AI use and obtaining consumer consent. A Panel member also highlighted the growing number of regulated firms developing AI tools in-house and questioned what specific standards should apply to those tools beyond general regulatory principles.

14. The Chair commented that, if consumer protection was the starting point, voluntary standards would not be the first natural choice. If limitations in the current legal framework prevent the LSB from pursuing mandatory standards, these need to be clearly explained. The LSB should also explain how voluntary standards would provide

effective consumer protection and where gaps would remain. The Chair encouraged the LSB to use the research to identify this limitation and articulate them more widely. The LSB noted that voluntary standards is one option they are considering, alongside other policy proposals.

15. On implementation, Panel members noted that any work to develop a voluntary register should draw on lessons from the Regulatory Information Service.

16. A Panel member also asked how the LSB intended to take forward its work on the accuracy of AI outputs. Huma explained that the LSB was considering using its convening powers to bring together stakeholders, including innovators, government, and regulators, to examine these collectively, alongside other related issues such as consent and privacy. The Head of Consumer Panel highlighted the importance of including consumer groups in those discussions. The LSB was in agreement on this.

17. The LSB is considering how to track consumer use of AI tools for legal advice (and had reached out to LSCP on this) as well as how to evidence any consumer harms arising from this. The LSCP encouraged the LSB to continue to make the case with the MoJ to protect consumers from any harms arising from AI use.

Item 9 – LSB Strategy

18. The Chair welcomed Samuel Omolade (Head of Strategy and Research) and Tania Hardcastle (Regulatory Policy Manager) from the LSB. Samuel and Tania presented a draft outline of the LSB's 2027-2030 Strategy. The Panel provided feedback and were invited by the LSB to provide further comment as the Strategy develops and goes to consultation.

Item 10 – LSCP Compensation Fund Research

19. The Head of the Consumer Panel discussed the upcoming publication of the LSCP's Compensation Fund research, including the plans for communication and dissemination.

Item 11 – Engagement with LSB CEO

20. Richard Orpin (CEO, LSB) provided an update to Panel members on the Regulatory Information Service, the LSB's 2027/30 Strategy and the LSB's enforcement action against the SRA.

Item 12 – Topics for Newsletter/Blog

21. A blog following a presentation from the Nuffield Foundation to Panel, a further blog on the Regulatory Information Service, and a blog following the LSB's consultation on the 27/30 strategy.

Item 13 – Draft agenda for next meeting

22. Several agenda items and guest speakers noted for the 2nd December Panel meeting, including the Ministry of Justice, the Legal Ombudsman, to be approached by the secretariat.

Item 14 – Any other business

23. N/A