



## ACTIVITY REPORT: September – December 2017

### Overview

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The Panel's latest annual Tracker Survey results show high levels of satisfaction amongst users of legal services. 83% are satisfied with the outcome of their legal matter and 80% of consumers are satisfied with the service they purchased. Trust in lawyers has also increased marginally.

But there is little movement towards greater consumer choice as set out in the recent Competition and Markets Authority's (CMA) report on the sector. People using legal services still rely too heavily on reputation to decide on their provider (75%). A key hindrance appears to be the lack of pertinent information to help consumers make informed decisions. The research found that only 2% of consumers use comparison websites. A small number of consumers shop around (27%) and only 6% of consumers find pricing information on providers' websites. It is also concerning to note that the use of fixed fees has declined amongst solicitors and barristers.

The Panel will therefore focus a substantial part of its business planning year (October till March) on engaging robustly with the approved regulators various action plans and consultation documents to address the market deficiencies highlighted above.

### Update on planned projects

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Project	Activity
Tracker Survey	The Panel has now published two briefing reports on how consumers are experiencing the legal services market. Two more reports are scheduled to be published by the end of October.
Consumer Segmentation	Following the publication of the consumer segmentation report, the Panel will host a Roundtable event to engage front line regulators on the need to segment consumers for better regulation. The event is scheduled for the 15 <sup>th</sup> of November.

### Update on unplanned work

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#### Consultation responses:

- BSB – The Panel responded to BSB's consultation on changing the standard of proof used in professional misconduct proceedings for barristers.
- SRA – The Panel responded to the SRA's consultation on the Solicitors Qualifying Examination regulations.

- BSB – The Panel responded to the BSB’s consultation on new declaration rules for barristers.
- LSB - The Panel responded to the LSB’s consultation on its revised Regulatory Performance Assessment.
- SRA – The Panel responded to the SRA’s consultation on its Corporate Strategy (2017-2020).
- BSB – The Panel responded to the BSB’s consultation on simplifying the Public and Licensed Access Rules.

#### **Selected external events/meetings:**

- The Panel met with the CLC to discuss the CLC’s Action Plan for the CMA’s remedies.
- The Panel gave a presentation at the OLC’s Board meeting.
- The Panel met with the MoJ to discuss the implication for the legal services market to leave the European Union.
- The Panel met with the interim LSB Chair and the new Chair of the OLC.
- The Panel attended a House of Lords session on EU exit and consumers.
- The Panel attended a Law Society event to judge the Annual Excellence Awards.
- The Panel attended the LSB’s Board Strategy meeting.
- The Panel met with the Chief Legal Ombudsman.

#### **Future activity**

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The Panel’s existing strategy comes to an end at the end of March 2018. Planning for its 2018-21 strategy will be prioritised over the next few months.

#### **Future Presentations**

- The Panel is scheduled to attend Cilex Regulation’s Board discussion on 12 October.
- The Panel is scheduled to meet the CEO of the Bar Council on 16 October.
- The Panel is scheduled to host a meeting with the chairs of the Consumer Panels on 16 October.
- The Panel is scheduled to attend a House of Lords session on EU exit and consumers on 16 October.
- The Panel is scheduled to attend the Regulatory Forum on 19 October.
- The Panel is scheduled to give a presentation on Solicitors Qualifying Examination at the SRA on 3 November.
- The Panel is scheduled to hold an event on Consumer Segmentation on 15 November.
- The Panel is scheduled to hold a consumer event on 23 November.
- The Panel is scheduled to co-host/participate in a regional event on 23 November in Bristol.
- The Panel is scheduled to give a presentation at the Westminster Legal Policy Forum on 29 November.
- The Panel is scheduled to attend a LawWorks event on 5 December.

**Consultation responses: the Panel will continue to respond to consultation reports that fit its prioritisation criteria and is within scope.**

#### **October 2017**