

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Commitment to action from comparison websites
shows power of consumer and regulator
collaboration**

The Legal Services Consumer Panel has worked with the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) and the Council for Licensed Conveyancers (CLC) to review the standards for comparison websites it first published in February 2012.

A new voluntary 'sign-up' section has also been established for comparison websites wishing to commit to achieving these standards where these websites can self-certify that they adhere to them.

Commenting on the announcement, **Chris Kenny, LSB Chief Executive** said:

"I am delighted to welcome publication of the standards for comparison websites and the fact that so many providers are prepared to sign up to them. The cooperation between the Consumer Panel, SRA and CLC in refining these good practice standards is a powerful model for the future.

The standards agreed to represent a welcome step forward for the consumer and will help to deliver better outcomes as consumers can begin to place more reliance on legal comparison websites, which in turn will help to drive more competition and innovation in legal services."

ENDS

Notes for editors:

1. The [standards](#) describe how those websites providing comparison services for legal consumers can achieve good practice. They include standards relating to website accessibility, the accuracy of information provided, and how far websites should aspire to go in enabling people to make good choices about their lawyers.
2. The Legal Services Consumer Panel lists comparison websites that have agreed to follow the good practices set down through the comparison website standards. You can view the list, as well as find more information about comparison websites, [here](#).
3. The Legal Services Consumer Panel's February 2012 report and mystery shopping exercise on 16 legal comparison websites can be viewed [here](#). The quality of consumer experiences was found to vary across the marketplace and a low take-up of comparison websites by consumers across England and Wales was identified. Just 1% of people who had used legal services in the preceding 2 years said they had used a comparison site as part of that process. Just 22% of consumers shop around and of these only 57% find it easy to compare providers.
4. The findings were used to develop 20 draft standards setting down how legal comparison websites could aim to deliver their services in ways that create maximum value for consumers.
5. The Legal Services Act ("The Act") created the Legal Services Board as a new regulator with responsibility for overseeing the regulation of legal services in England and Wales. The new regulatory regime became active on 1 January 2010.
6. The LSB oversees eight approved regulators, which in turn regulate individual lawyers. The approved regulators, designated under Part 1 of Schedule 4 of the 2007 Act, are the Law Society, the Bar Council, the Master of the Faculties, the Institute of Legal Executives, the Council for Licensed Conveyancers, the Chartered Institute of Patent Attorneys, the Institute of Trade Mark Attorneys and the Association of Costs Lawyers.
7. In addition, the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland and the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants are listed as approved regulators in relation only to reserved probate activities.
8. 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. It investigates issues that affect consumers and uses this information to influence decisions about the regulation of legal services.
9. The [Solicitors Regulation Authority](#) is the independent regulatory body of the Law Society of England and Wales. It regulates in the public interest, and oversees more than 110,000 individuals and 11,000 organisations providing legal services.
10. The [Council of Licensed Conveyancers](#) is the regulatory body for licensed conveyancers working across England and Wales. It regulates in the public interest, and oversees over 1,000 lawyers and law firms that provide legal services.
11. Details of the Consumer Panel's work plan for 2013/14 can be found [here](#).
12. Details of the SRA's work plan for 2013/15 can be found [here](#).
13. Details of the Consumer Panel's work plan for 2009/14 can be found [here](#).