

Legal Ombudsman

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Julie Myers
Legal Services Board
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19 February 2015

Dear Julie

LSB STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-18

The OLC welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on your draft Strategic Plan 2015-18 and Business Plan 2015-16.

In broad terms we feel that the overall shape and thrust of the strategy is in the right place and that the objectives as set out are the right areas to focus on.

We strongly endorse the need for the LSB to look at the unregulated as well as the regulated sector so that it can take a fully-informed view of how the system as a whole is operating. This is clearly very important given the dynamic nature of the legal services market and the need to ensure that providers and consumers can operate on a level playing field where the risks are clearly understood. We feel that it is particularly important as part of this to understand what the growth of unregulated service provision means in terms of access to redress and what, in turn, this means for our continuing aspiration for the Legal Ombudsman scheme to be a single point of access for redress across all legal services.

The effective gathering and sharing of knowledge and insight across the legal services sector is critically important especially in relation to new and emerging business models. To this end, we would welcome the LSB taking a more active role in co-ordinating research and intelligence gathering and the Legal Ombudsman would be a very willing partner in this.

The logo for the Legal Ombudsman. The word "LEGAL" is written in a bold, pink, sans-serif font. Above the letters "L", "E", and "A" are decorative, flowing pink lines that resemble a signature or calligraphic flourish. Below "LEGAL", the word "OMBUDSMAN" is written in a black, all-caps, sans-serif font.

We note the work that you will continue to lead on how best to reduce regulatory burdens whilst maintaining consumer protection. Whilst we understand the reason why this work has, until now, been focused on the Regulators we would very much welcome an opportunity to feed into this debate.

Equally, we think that we could add value through being involved in your work on the consumer choice agenda as we feel that it is important for this to include a consideration of how effective complaints handling and access to redress helps to underpin consumer confidence in the sector.

Stakeholder feedback on our own Strategy consultation has underlined the need for us to give further consideration to how we can contribute to the delivery of the wider regulatory objectives that we share with the LSB and others under the Legal Services Act. It would, therefore, probably be helpful to develop our thinking with you (and the Regulators) on this in a collaborative fashion.

I have previously discussed with Sir Michael Pitt the value of us at some point holding a joint strategic workshop. Given that both of our organisations are now in the process of finalising their respective strategies for the coming years now may be a good moment to convene such an event.

Yours sincerely,



Steve Green
Chair
Office of Legal Complaints