



THE COUNCIL OF THE INNS OF COURT

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Mr David Edmonds
Chair, Legal Services Board
Victoria House
Southampton Row
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4 March 2009

Dear Mr Edmonds,

Draft Legal Services Board Business Plan 2009/10

You will remember, I hope, that we met for lunch at Lincoln's Inn a while ago.

I am writing now about the draft Legal Services Board Business Plan 2009/10. Members of the Council have read the plan with interest but, given that we are not an approved regulator, we are not going to submit comments on it. However, at our last meeting, we approved an action plan identifying work that COIC and the Inns might undertake to coordinate with and support the LSB work programme. I enclose a copy.

I want to take this opportunity to re-emphasise COIC's determination to support the Legal Services Board. You will recall that, when we met, we offered to host a future Board meeting which could be combined with a familiarisation session. If you think it would be of assistance, we would also be happy to arrange for your Board members and staff to attend one of the Inns' education events. I have today written to Elizabeth France to offer similar assistance to her and the members of the OLC.

*Yours sincerely,
Anet Suat*

Lady Justice Smith
President

Draft Legal Services Board Business Plan 2009/10
Draft Action Plan

1. The Legal Services Board (LSB) issued its draft Business Plan for 2009/10 on 29 January. The Business Plan is issued for consultation, with comments to be received by 13 March 2009. The final version of the Plan will be published in April.
2. At the top of the LSB's Business Plan, it is made clear that to deliver on its key policy priorities the Board will be drawing on the best available evidence from the Legal Services sector in the UK and abroad, as well as regulators/policy makers from other sectors. Much emphasis is placed on working in a collaborative manner with a range of partners. The stated vision is to *"reform and modernise the legal services market place in the interests of consumers, enhancing quality, ensuring value for money and improving access to justice across England and Wales"*.
3. In the first year of operation, the LSB intends giving particular priority to regulatory independence, alternative business structures, providing effective redress and working up a model of regulatory excellence in legal services.
4. The 2009/10 deliverables set out in each area of the LSB's work programme (pages 11 to 25) do not raise any issues of immediate impact on the Inns/COIC. However, there are 4 areas of the Board's work programme against which there is work which COIC which COIC might initiate.

Regulatory Excellence: *Section 5D, pages 20 and 21.*

Suggested Action: Development of an MOU/Service Level Agreement between COIC and the BSB to formalise the relationship on the disciplinary side. This will include laying down clear lines of accountability and setting standards against which the BSB will monitor the effectiveness of COIC's work in this area.

Suggested Action: Development of further MOUs between the BSB and COIC/the Inns in respect of education (covering such matters as Qualifying Sessions provision, delegation of Pupil Supervisor approval and training and delegations to the Advocacy Training Council etc). This will include putting in place agreements about standards and quality assurance.

Independent Regulation: *Section 5E, pages 22 and 23.*

Suggested Action: Development of an MOU/Service Level Agreement on discipline (see above).

Suggested Action Amend COIC's Constitution to recognise the BSB's membership of COIC, thus underlining the independence of the regulatory side from the regulator and COIC's recognition of this.

Promoting Diversity in the Legal Profession: *Section 5F, pages 22 and 23.*

Suggested Action The Inns will be keen to highlight the work that they undertake to ensure accessibility and promote diversity. It is suggested that a paper should be prepared for the July 2009 COIC meeting reporting on the Inns' initiatives in this area and updating COIC on progress as regards those recommendations in the 2007 Final Report of the Entry to the Bar Working Party (the Neuberger Report) which fall to the Inns for implementation.

Suggested Action In respect of pre- and post-qualification education and training arrangements, the Inns should be encouraged to develop training outcomes/threshold competencies for the training they provide. In addition, the Advocacy Training Council should be encouraged to push forward with

existing initiatives to define/develop (1) training outcomes for each stage of advocacy training and (2) teacher training standards.

Research/public legal education strategies: *Section 5G, pages 24 and 25.*
Suggested Action Given the Inns' importance as providers of high quality education and training, over the coming year COIC/the Inns will wish to monitor and contribute to the mapping work that the Board will undertake in this area.

RO'D
12/02/09

