

EMBARGOED UNTIL 00:01 11 NOVEMBER 2009:

NEW VOICE TO REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF CONSUMERS IN THE LEGAL SERVICES MARKET

LSB ANNOUNCES MEMBERS OF INDEPENDENT CONSUMER PANEL

Marking a major step forward in ensuring that the voices of all consumers are heard at the heart of the legal services market, the Legal Services Board (LSB) is today announcing the eight members of its new Consumer Panel.

The Panel, chaired by Dr Dianne Hayter, will operate independently of the LSB and will represent the interests of both individual and business consumers in the LSB's work to oversee the regulation of lawyers in England and Wales.

The formation of the Consumer Panel marks the latest strand of the LSB's work to develop a sharper focus on consumers' interests across the legal services sector and enhance access to justice. Other elements of this work include overseeing the independence of lawyers' regulation and stimulating new ways of delivering legal services.

The establishment of the Panel is a statutory requirement of the Legal Services Act 2007. Members of the Panel were appointed by the Legal Services Board with the approval of the Lord Chancellor. The Panel's inaugural Chair, Dr Dianne Hayter, was announced in July 2009 and is the former Vice-Chair of the Financial Services Consumer Panel.

The Panel will examine issues of importance to legal services consumers and will advise the LSB in its work overseeing the frontline regulators including the Bar Standards Board and the Solicitors Regulation Authority. The Panel has powers to publish its advice. Should the LSB fail to agree with such advice, it will be required to publish a written statement of its reasons.

Chairman of the Legal Services Board David Edmonds said:

The launch of the Legal Services Consumer Panel is a landmark in the reform of legal services regulation in England and Wales. The members of the Panel launched today bring with them a broad range of backgrounds and commitment to championing the interests of all in society. We look forward to working with them in our continuing work to put consumers at the heart of legal services.

Chair of the Legal Services Consumer Panel Dr Dianne Hayter said:

For the regulation of lawyers to meet the needs of clients, the consumer interest must be heard at the heart of the oversight regulator: the LSB. This is the role the Consumer Panel will play, assessing proposals from the standpoint of users of legal services and influencing the Board accordingly. Just as lawyers have a legitimate interest in good and effective regulation, so also do clients – but without a Panel, they have no formal or organised way of their voices being heard.

For more information or interview requests please contact Craig Jones, Media and Public Affairs Manager at the LSB on craig.jones@legalservicesboard.org.uk or by calling 020 7271 0068 / 07956 226562

Notes for editors:

1. The Legal Services Act 2007 ('the Act') provides for the creation of the Legal Services Board as the oversight regulator for legal services in England and Wales.
2. The LSB oversees eight "approved regulators", which in turn regulate individual lawyers and organisations. The eight 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 Agents, the Institute of Trade Mark Attorneys and the Association of Law Costs Draftsmen.
3. Clauses 8-11 of the Act provide for the creation of the Legal Services Consumer Panel.
4. Dr Dianne Hayter was announced as Chair of the Consumer Panel in July 2009.
5. Eight members of the Consumer Panel have been announced today. Short biographies of the Chair and Members are below:

Dianne Hayter (Chair)

Dianne is Chair of the Property Standards Board, and Chair of the Actuarial Stakeholder Group of the Financial Reporting Council. She is also a member of the Board for Actuarial Standards, the Insolvency Practices Council, and the Determinations Panel of the Pensions Regulator. She was previously Chair of the Consumer Panel of the Bar Standards Board, Vice Chair of the Financial Services Consumer Panel, and on the National Consumer Council.

Prior to that she was the Chief Executive of a number of organisations, including Alcohol Concern, the European Parliamentary Labour Party and the Pelican Cancer Centre, as well as Director of Corporate Affairs at the Wellcome Trust. She served for a year as Chair of the Labour Party's National Executive Committee, is a trustee of a number of charities and was a JP for over a decade.

Location: London

Jeff Bell

Jeff is a Trading Standards Consultant based in Stockton-on-Tees. Formerly, he was Chief Trading Standards Officer at Redcar and Cleveland Unitary Council, and worked as a Trading Standards Officer at local authorities in Cleveland, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear, and Durham. He was also Chair of the North East Trading Standards Association and a Member of the North East Electricity Consumers' Committee.

Location: Stockton-on-Tees

Carol Brady

Carol is Director for Service Improvement at the Local Better Regulation Office, and is a Fellow of the Trading Standards Institute. Formerly, she was National Operations Manager for Consumer Direct and was a Trading Standards Manager in local authorities in Kent, Northamptonshire and Solihull.

Location: Derbyshire

Graham Corbett

Graham is Senior National Officer at the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS), and a Member of the Employment Tribunal Panel. Formerly, he was Deputy Head of Legal Services at the PCS and a civil servant at the Department of Environment and Transport. He previously chaired the Departmental Trade Union Side for negotiations and was a senior lay representative at the Civil and Public Services Association.

Location: West Yorkshire

Elisabeth Davies

Elisabeth is Head of Public Engagement at Voluntary Services Overseas. She is also a Trustee of the Immigration Advisory Services, the Chair of Wandsworth Citizens Advice Bureaux, and was previously Deputy Chair of Wandsworth Primary Care Trust. Her career includes a series of senior roles in the health arena at the National Patient Safety Agency, the UK Breast Cancer Coalition, the Patients Association and the World Cancer Research Fund. She was also previously Director of Policy at the Refugee Council.

Location: London

Emma Harrison

Emma is Director of External Affairs at the Royal National Institute for the Deaf. She brings experience of working in the consumer movement as former Principal Public Affairs Officer at Which? and Campaign Manager at Consumers International. She was also previously a Research Manager and Political Advisor at the European Parliament.

Location: London

Paul Munden

Paul is an experienced general counsel and chartered director. Over the last ten years he has held a number of senior board posts at the Business Link operation in London. He is an accredited tutor with the Institute of Directors leading a number of their board development courses designed to provide an in-depth view of the key duties, roles and legal responsibilities of directors and corporate governance. He has also served as non executive chairman of a Bafta award winning educational software house and a founder non executive director of Customer First UK, which is responsible for the national Customer First quality accreditation framework. He is currently on the board of NHS Mid Essex and the National Youth Music Theatre.

Location: Essex

Neil Wightman

Neil is Deputy Head of Housing Needs at the London Borough of Camden and is Joint Chair of the Association of Housing Advice Services. He was a member of the Beacon Advisory Panel between 2003 and 2009 and a Trustee Director of Kilburn Youth Service for 10 years. He has worked in local government for 20 years and before that worked as an advice worker at Sheffield and Clapham Citizens Advice Bureaux.

Location: London

Karin Woodley

Karin now works as a freelance consultant having ended her role as Chief Executive of the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust in June. Formerly, she was Director of the Tabernacle Trust; Deputy Director of the Arkwright Arts Trust; Partner, Keya Associates; and Chief Executive of Minorities Arts Advisory Service. She was also previously Chair of Kensington and Chelsea Metropolitan Police Independent Advisory Group on Race, and Adviser to the Scotland Yard Gold Task Group for the Notting Hill Carnival Policing Strategy.

Location: London