

**For immediate release, 30 January 2014**

## **PANEL LAUNCHES NEW TOOL TO HELP REGULATORS WORK OUT THE CONSUMER INTEREST**

As part of its efforts to assist approved regulators become more consumer focused, the Legal Services Consumer Panel has developed a simple tool to help them think about the consumer interest when dealing with the issues they face.

The tool is based on seven principles commonly used by consumer organisations, which the Panel has adapted for the legal market. They are a set of reference points or prompts designed to identify issues and ask questions that need to be looked into further. They are best used at an early stage of policy development as a tool to aid thinking and instil a consumer-focused culture within organisations.

The tool was written in collaboration with the Council for Licensed Conveyancers, in order to make sure it is of real practice assistance to regulators. The Legal Services Board has already adopted the principles as part of its internal policy toolkit.

Elisabeth Davies, Chair of the Legal Services Consumer Panel, said:

*“Regulators often tell us about the balancing act they face - promoting and protecting the interests of consumers, whilst improving access to justice and promoting competition. We know it’s not always easy to work out which policies would best serve consumers so we hope the principles will assist with this process. Working with the CLC has enabled us to ground the tool in the everyday realities facing regulators and make sure it is of genuine practical help.”*

Sheila Kumar, Chief Executive of the Council for Licensed Conveyancers, said:

*“Working with the Panel on the development of these principles was very useful and demonstrates the benefits of central leadership on cross-sector initiatives to ensure progress and coherence. We have applied the tool in working through some policy proposals and we think it’s a really useful way of assessing potential outcomes for consumers. We are sure that other regulators are likely to find it similarly useful.”*

**-ends-**

**For more information, contact Steve Brooker, Consumer Panel Manager, on 020 7271 0077.**

### **Notes to editors**

1. 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. We investigate issues that affect consumers and use this information to influence decisions about the regulation of legal services.
2. The seven principles are: access; choice; quality/safety; information; fairness; representation; and redress.
3. The tool can be accessed here:  
<http://www.legalservicesconsumerpanel.org.uk/ourwork/ConsumerEngagement.html>