



**Not to be used before 00:01 hours, 16 April 2012**

## **PANEL PUBLISHES THIRD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Legal Services Consumer Panel today publishes its third work programme covering the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013.

Highlights of the forthcoming year will include:

- Assessing whether financial protection arrangements are working well;
- Widening access to redress and commissioning new research with the Legal Ombudsman on the consumer complaint experience;
- Focused studies on vulnerable consumer groups;
- Examining how far the regulatory system does currently, and should, help consumers to choose and use legal services; and
- Setting out our expectations for the education and training review.

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

*“New ABS entrants, funding reforms, pressure on third sector advice delivery and major regulatory changes make this a tumultuous time for legal services – it’s more important than ever for us to help ensure that consumers are getting access to high quality and affordable legal services that meet their needs.*”

*“We want to put consumers in the driving seat when they use legal services, but regulators also need to safeguard standards and provide protection when things go wrong. A key aim for the year is to enhance the safety net by widening access to redress and ensuring that financial protection arrangements are working well.*”

*“It’s vital that someone’s ability to access legal services is not disadvantaged due to their personal circumstances, but our recent research with deaf people has shown that sadly this is often not the case for consumers in vulnerable positions. We’re keen to explore the experiences of other groups of consumers who may face barriers to accessing legal advice. As with last year’s programme, we plan to work with the sector to overcome these barriers, helping the approved regulators to engage effectively with the public.”*

**-ends-**

**For more information please contact:**

**Steve Brooker, Legal Services 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 work programme document can be found on our website:  
[http://www.legalservicesconsumerpanel.org.uk/publications/corporate\\_documents/index.html](http://www.legalservicesconsumerpanel.org.uk/publications/corporate_documents/index.html)