



**Not to be used before 00:01 hours, 8 April 2013**

## **PANEL PUBLISHES NEW WORK PROGRAMME**

The Legal Services Consumer Panel today publishes its fourth work programme covering the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014.

Highlights of the forthcoming year will include:

- Assessing the regulatory implications of the rise in litigants in person, including services such as 'pay-as-you-go' legal advice
- Completing our review of regulators' financial protection arrangements
- Research with Mencap on the legal needs and experiences of people with learning disabilities
- Research with the LSB on self-help tools such as automated will-writing and tenancy agreement documents
- Holding a joint event with the Law Society on restoring public trust in lawyers

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

*"ABSs have arrived and new online technologies are well and truly taking hold. Less than half of legal services are now being delivered face to face. As the legal sector transforms at great pace, regulators must listen to consumers and respond quickly to the changing landscape."*

*"Technology is changing the law and we must ensure consumers remain protected without regulation getting in the way of innovation. DIY tools such as automated will-writing and tenancy agreement documents offer an affordable option for consumers that they clearly want. But we need to tackle the different risks online markets present – for example, around unclear pricing, manipulation of consumer choice and data protection. Uptake of these products will increase faster if consumers are confident they are safe to use."*

*"But this year we're also not losing sight of the fact that some of the recent legal developments are out of economic necessity. The reality is that more people now have to represent themselves in court or can only afford to pay for a little legal work."*

*“If our Consumer Impact Report casts a spotlight on the reforms, we’ve asked ourselves what our role is in addressing the very problems that we highlight. The answer is by sharing our insight, working in partnership and sharing learning from other sectors. The Panel will continue to hold the regulators to account, but we’ll also be working in close partnership with them this year”.*

**-ends-**

**For more information please contact:**

**Harriet Gamper, Consumer Panel Associate, on 020 7271 0076**

#### **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)