

## Minutes

### Legal Services Consumer Panel Meeting

**Date:** 8 February 2012

**Time:** 13:00 – 17:00hrs

**Venue:** Victoria House, Southampton Row, London WC1B 4AD

#### Present:

Elisabeth Davies	Chair
Jeff Bell	Member
Graham Corbett	Member
Emma Harrison	Member
Neil Wightman	Member
Karin Woodley	Member
Steve Brooker	Consumer Panel Manager
Alanna Linn	Consumer Panel Associate
Julie Myers	Legal Services Board
Ramandeep Bhatti	Legal Services Board
Holly Perry	Legal Services Board (Items 1-7)

#### Item 1 – Welcome and apologies

1. The Chair welcomed the Legal Services Consumer Panel ('the Panel') and Holly Perry. The Chair noted apologies from Paul Munden.

#### Item 2 – Declarations of interests

2. Emma Harrison noted that Irwin Mitchell had approached Action on Hearing Loss about working jointly on a project. If it goes ahead, Emma indicated that she would not be involved.

#### Item 3 – Minutes of the 14 December 2011 meeting

3. The Chair presented the Draft Minutes for the 14 December 2011 meeting.

**The Panel approved the Minutes of 14 December 2011 subject to a minor factual amendment.**

#### **Item 4 – Matters Arising from the Minutes**

4. Item 9 - The Chair advised that the LSB would issue a discussion paper for consultation before the end of March on approaches to quality assurance. The Panel Associate noted she had attended a workshop hosted by the LSB on the Panel's Voluntary Quality Schemes report on the morning of 8 February, which was attended by the scheme operators and regulators.
5. Item 11 – The Comparison Websites report was published on 7 February 2012.

**The Panel noted the matters arising.**

#### **Item 5 – Chair's report**

6. The Panel agreed the tracker log was a useful addition to the Chair's report and should be included in subsequent meetings packs.
7. The Chair provided the Panel with an update from the Triennial Review Workshop, which took place on 1 February. The Chair noted she would be meeting Abigail Plenty from the Ministry of Justice on 1 March and would feedback her comments on the Workshop.

**The Panel noted the Chair's report.**

#### **Item 6 – Members update**

8. Emma Harrison noted she was interviewed by Vanilla Research as part of a LSB study into the information needs of consumers. She also noted, along with the Chair and Panel Manager, she had attended a meeting with the Chief Executive of the Solicitors Regulation Authority, Antony Townsend.
9. Jeff Bell noted he submitted a response to the Legal Ombudsman Stakeholder Advisory Panel on the organisation's Business Plan consultation and would be meeting with Legal Ombudsman staff on 14 March.
10. Neil Wightman advised that researchers from the Legal Education and Training Review had sought comments on a client questionnaire, and the Panel Associate would be providing feedback.
11. Karin Woodley advised that on 9 March she would be meeting the SRA at their offices in Leamington Spa, along with the Panel Manager and Graham Corbett.
12. Graham Corbett noted he had a meeting with Fraser Whitehead from Russell Jones and Walker (RJW) and discussed the work of the Panel. Graham also had a meeting with Margaret Doyle from the Office for Legal Complaints to take forward their earlier discussions on fair complaint outcomes.

**The Panel noted the members' update.**

### **Item 7 – Shaping our work programme for 2012-13**

13. The Chair invited Panel members to discuss the approach to the 2012-13 work programme.
14. Overall, Panel members agreed with the proposed narrative subject to a couple of amendments.
15. With respect to consumer vulnerability, the Panel suggested consideration should be given to undertaking a needs assessment approach.
16. The Panel discussed potential leads for anticipated LSB advice requests and supported a proposal to meet with relevant LSB colleagues during set-up.

**The Panel agreed the proposed narrative for the work programme and noted that they would consider a full draft at an extra meeting on 27 February.**

### **Item 8 – Deaf Consumers Project**

17. Emma Harrison presented the draft research report by the Deaf Studies Trust and welcomed feedback from the Panel.
18. The Panel noted the draft report and agreed it was an interesting piece of research. The Panel discussed the key findings and suggested a number of points which could be raised in the joint foreword of the report.
19. The Panel noted the proposed outputs and suggested some additional follow-up work, including a potential article in a trade journal.

**The Panel noted the draft report and endorsed the proposed outputs.**

### **Item 9 – Response to call for evidence of will-writing, probate and estate administration services**

20. Jeff Bell presented the draft response to the call for evidence and invited Panel members to give their feedback.
21. The Panel supported the draft submission, noting it made clear arguments and recommendations. The Panel Manager advised the response would be submitted to the LSB next week.

**The Panel approved the draft response.**

### **Item 10 – Consultation responses**

22. The Consumer Panel Associate presented a paper on recent and upcoming consultation responses.

**The Panel:**

- **noted a draft response to the Bar Standards Board’s Public Access Rules consultation would be circulated electronically;**

- **agreed the proposed response to the SRA's consultation on regulating international practice;**
- **noted the submission made to the Legal Ombudsman's Strategy (2012-15) and Business Plan (2012-13) consultation; and**
- **noted the submission made to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills: EU proposals on Alternative Dispute Resolution.**

**Item 11 – Draft agenda for next meeting: 9 May**

23. The Consumer Panel Associate presented the proposed agenda for the 9 May meeting.

**The Panel agreed the proposed agenda.**

**Item 12 – AOB**

24. The Panel Chair noted that the Consumer Panel Associate was returning to Australia at the end of February and this was her last meeting. Each of the members in turn thanked Alanna for her major contribution to the Panel over the last two and a half years and wished her well for the future.