



## Consumer Panel Briefing – Work programme 2014-15

### Strategic objectives

The work programme is based on our three strategic objectives:

- Equality of access – by ensuring that all consumers, especially those in a position of vulnerability, have access to affordable and high quality advice
- Unleashing greater consumer power – by giving people the information and tools to drive greater competition
- Enhancing the safety net – through improving quality assurance, better financial protection and redress and consumer-focused regulators

This coming year we are emphasising our strategic theme of equality of access, in particular the challenge of balancing access to justice and enhancing consumer protection.

### Main activities

Ten highlights in our work programme for 2014-15

- Publishing the third edition of our flagship Consumer Impact Report and continuing our annual Tracker Survey to monitor the consumer experience
- Identifying the strategic risks likely to face consumers in 2020
- Pursuing the recommendations in our report on fee-charging McKenzie Friends
- Commissioning research on unbundled legal services, in partnership with the LSB
- Producing a simple and practical guide for approved regulators to help them take account of consumer vulnerability
- Publishing innovative research commissioned with the LSB on online self-help tools
- Ensuring we reach a successful resolution on opening up the professional registers and unlocking data on the performance of lawyers to inform consumer choice
- Making real progress on third party complaints to the Legal Ombudsman
- Commissioning research on consumer expectations of getting redress, in partnership with the Legal Ombudsman
- Rolling out training on the consumer principles for approved regulators

## Our approach

The Panel will continue to evolve its working style as the Legal Services Act reforms move into a different phase. This year we will not start any major new initiatives, but instead take a 'less is more' approach and follow through in full on existing projects. Following the model of our consumer principles tool, we will support the approved regulators by developing practical resources designed to help them become more consumer-focused organisations.

The membership of the Panel is also changing. The terms of our remaining four founding members expired in March 2014 and they have been succeeded by four new faces: Cathy Gallagher, Dr Michelle Goddard, Dr Philip Marsden and Marlene Winfield OBE.

## Legal Services Board commission

From time to time, the Legal Services Board commissions advice from the Panel. This year the LSB wants our help to inform the development of its 2015-18 strategy, as follows:

*“What developments in the period to 2020 are most likely to have an impact on the consumers of legal services and what should guide how the LSB and approved regulators respond to them?”*

This will be a collaborative venture between the LSB and the Panel.

## For more information:

[Work programme 2014-15, April 2014](#)

## About the Legal Services Consumer Panel

The Legal Services Consumer Panel is a central feature of a regulatory framework in England and Wales which is designed to transform the legal services market around the needs of its users. Created by the Legal Services Act 2007 we are an independent arm of the Legal Services Board. As a permanent, discrete champion for consumers we have an essential responsibility to ensure that regulators are able to consider and act on the user perspective.

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