

## ACTIVITY REPORT: January – March 2015

### Overview

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During this period we have focused on the development of our next three year strategy and annual work programme, plus completed delivery of our 2014-15 work programme.

We also published new research jointly commissioned with the LSB comparing the consumer experience of online divorce with more traditional services. The research used an innovative methodology which engaged participants at multiple stages of the divorce process. The research found high levels of customer satisfaction with both traditional and online providers and consumers appear to choose the delivery channel that reflects their needs. Online services were mostly used in amicable divorces and consumers using these providers generally reported quicker, cheaper and less stressful experiences than those using face to face providers.

The Panel met twice over the period. In January, the Panel discussed emerging thinking on the next three year strategy and annual work programme, decided to renew its membership of BEUC and discussed papers on the separate business rule and funding research. In February the Panel signed off the strategy and work programme document, discussed a paper on self-regulation and had a discussion with Richard Moriarty.

The Secretariat had two staff changes during this period. Harriet Gamper left us at Easter to join the Office of the Rail Regulator. She will be replaced by Stephanie Chapman, currently a Policy Adviser at the Financial Ombudsman Service. Steve Brooker will take on a new role as Head of Research and Development at the LSB from 1 May; details of his successor will be announced shortly.

### Update on planned projects

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Project	Activity
2020 commission	Completed Q3. Law Society dinner organised Q1 2015-16
Complaints	No activity this quarter
Consumer Impact Report	Completed Q3. 2015 Tracker Survey results received
Consumer vulnerability	Training session on the vulnerability guide and the consumer principles guide delivered to 23 SRA staff
Litigants in person	No activity this quarter
Open data	All regulators have now published data except CILEx Regulation
Self-help tools	Online divorce research published
Unbundling research	Draft report received, publication expected in June

## **Update on unplanned work**

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Consultation responses:

- SRA – Separate business rule; Training for Tomorrow Competence statement
- CLC – Compensation Fund operating framework
- Legal Ombudsman – Draft strategy and budget
- QC Appointments – Eligibility for appointment as QC
- CPS – Speaking to witnesses at court
- CMA – Call for information on online reviews and endorsements

Elisabeth Davies blogged on consumer vulnerability in the context of the courtroom and Michelle Goddard blogged on use of the Defamation Act by law firms as a tactic to silence negative online reviews. This led to an article in the Independent newspaper.

Selected external events/meetings: Chairman, Bar Council; Chairman, BSB; Chairman, CILEx Regulation; Paul Philip, SRA; Ken Young, Legal Ombudsman; Legal Ombudsman strategy event; Patricia Greer plus officials for Ministry of Justice affordability review; Law Society President; Competition and Markets Authority

## **Future activity**

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The main focus will be implementing our next three year strategy and annual work programme.

Reports: Unbundling research by Ipsos MORI; Tracker Survey analysis; Annual Report.

Presentations: OLC's April meeting; Legal Futures Regulation Conference; CILEx Regulation Futures Committee to discuss 2020 report.

Consultation responses: LSB on BSB licensing authority application; LSB in-house lawyers practising rules; BSB cab rank rule

**Steve Brooker**  
**April 2015**