

To:	Legal Services Board	
Date of Meeting:	27 May 2015	Item: Paper (15) 29

Title:	Consumer Panel Annual Report	
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Status:	Official	

Summary:
The Consumer Panel's Annual Report is attached at Annex A . The Board is asked to receive and comment on the report.

Risks and mitigations	
Financial:	N/A
FoIA:	Annex A: S22. To be published unchanged shortly after meeting
Legal:	N/A
Reputational:	The Annual Report is the Panel's key accountability tool and allows stakeholders to assess its achievements, impact and value for money.
Resource:	N/A

Consultation	Yes	No	Who / why?
Board Members:		✓	
Consumer Panel:	✓		The Annual Report was agreed by the Consumer Panel following its meeting on 29 April.
Others:	None		

Recommendation(s):
The Board is invited to: a) discuss the Annual Report

LEGAL SERVICES BOARD

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Consumer Panel Annual Report

Recommendation

1. The Board is invited to:
 - a) discuss the Annual Report

Annual Report

2. The Panel's terms of reference include a commitment to producing an Annual Report. The attached document reports on the Panel's work between April 2014 and March 2015.
3. The Annual Report is an important document as it gives the Legal Services Board and our stakeholders, including legal services consumers, a record of our activities during the previous twelve months and allows them to hold us to account for this work. It is also a key means for us to demonstrate our impact and value for money.
4. In order to reinforce the Panel's outcomes, the report reflects the five high level themes in the Panel's flagship publication, the Consumer Impact Report. This is the same format that was used last year. It consists of:
 - A one page overview of the Panel
 - A foreword by the Panel Chair, drawing out key areas where our work has had a particularly important impact
 - The five key themes which the Panel uses in the Consumer Impact Report to measure the direction of change in the legal services market: responsive services, high quality advice, diversity, complaints, and consumers at the heart of regulation
 - Each theme sets out brief findings from recent research (including the Panel's tracker survey), followed by the action the Panel has taken, and our impact in this area
 - Our priorities for 2015-16, referring to our Work Programme, which we publish separately
 - Transparency – financial information, attendance record and activity summary
 - Annexes – a comprehensive list of our activities: reports, research, consultation responses, speeches and presentations, events hosted by the Panel, news releases, membership of ongoing committees and working groups, and stakeholder meetings.
5. The main impacts are listed below for ease of reference.

Next steps

6. The Consumer Panel plans to publish the Annual Report shortly after the meeting.

12.05.15

Summary of our key activities/impacts in 2014-15

Area	Impact
2020 Report	Publication of our major report on legal services in 2020 and how regulators should prepare for the future. It has been influential not just in shaping the LSB's new strategy but also the emerging priorities of the frontline regulators. This looks set to continue into 2015 as colleagues who are new to their roles define new strategies for their future.
Consumer Impact Report	The third edition of our Consumer Impact Report, the only report which measures the legal services reforms from the consumer perspective, has continued its assessment of the legal services reforms from a consumer perspective.
Tracker survey	Five years of the Tracker Survey has created a rich dataset which is freely available to all who want to use it, and continues its assessment of the legal services reforms from a uniquely consumer perspective.
Working in Wales	We reaffirmed our commitment to consumers in Wales with our booster sample in our annual tracker survey and our Chair's speech at this year's Legal Wales Conference.
Open data	Our work on open data this year has resulted in action – all the regulators except one are now publishing a basic dataset in a reusable format, a vital step forward in supporting better consumer choice. CILEx Regulation have set out a plan to have their data live by July 2015.
McKenzie Friends	Our report on fee-charging McKenzie Friends has shaped the debate on this emerging market. Since then, a new trade body has been set up to raise standards, we have presented the overall findings to the Justice Select Committee, and the judiciary set up a working group to examine the issues we raised further.
Online delivery research	Our pioneering research on online divorce tools provided fresh insight on the digital delivery of legal services and the use of online self-help tools. The findings will help the Panel define a consumer agenda and inform the debate on the benefits and risks of technology in legal services.
Regulatory responses to consumer vulnerability and consumer principles	Two good practice guides – on the consumer principles and recognising and responding to consumer vulnerability – are shaping day-to-day regulatory practice. We have provided

training around both, and the vulnerability guide has been used by the Bar Standards Board and the Solicitors Regulation Authority.