

## ACTIVITY REPORT: April – June 2016

### Overview

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During this period the Panel has published its annual report for 2015-16 and begun its work from its 2016-17 work programme.

The Panel received responses from the Legal Ombudsman and the Legal Services Board to its report, *Opening up Data in Legal Services*. This report identified what further information could be published by the frontline regulators to inform consumer decision making when choosing a legal service provider. Both the Legal Ombudsman and the LSB were supportive of the report and its recommendations and have committed to continuing to work on increasing transparency. The Panel has responded to both organisations.

The Panel has also published its second commission, *Identifying Priority Areas of Law*. This report identifies priority areas of law for the LSB to focus its work on meeting unmet demand. The report identified family law, immigration and asylum, and housing law as three areas which featured significant demand for advice and services, which have been affected by policy changes in that area, and which may benefit from regulatory intervention to improve the situation. The recommendations include greater regulatory collaboration and looking at what role the LSB can play to encourage these.

The Panel met twice in this period. In April the Panel met with Jenny Pickrell of the Ministry of Justice, Kathryn Stone of the Legal Ombudsman, and heard from the LSB on their research into prices of legal services. In June the Panel heard from Stephen Mayson about the LSB's work on legislative reform, as well as receiving an update on the LSB's regulatory standards work. The Panel also heard from Jim Diamond, a costs lawyer who has spent many years advocating for increased costs transparency and fixed fees. There was also discussion on consumer segmentation, a core theme in the Panel's work for the year ahead, and a run through of the Panel's upcoming Tracker Survey, set to be published in July 2016.

### Update on planned projects

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Project	Activity
Tracker Survey	The first two of four Tracker Survey briefings are drafted and set to be published in July 2016
Consumer vulnerability	Training is being developed for CILEx Regulation and the LSB as well as CLC

Litigants in person	The Panel is continuing to engage in the debate and feed into relevant ventures but will not be undertaking its own research in this area.
Open data	Panel chair will be speaking at an SRA hosted event in July 2016 about the benefits of open data
Priority Areas of Law	Report published
Consumer segmentation	A Panel approach has been agreed and a position paper will be drafted by September

## Update on unplanned work

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Consultation responses:

- LSB – Panel response to LSB’s consultation on requirements and guidance on first tier complaints for approved regulators
- CLC – Panel response to CLC’s consultation on its professional indemnity insurance code and guidance
- JEB – Panel’s response to the Judicial Executive Board’s consultation on how the courts interact with McKenzie Friends

Selected external events/meetings: Council for Licensed Conveyancers, meeting with executive team to discuss work in the year ahead; Solicitors Regulation Authority for a quarterly catch-up; LexisNexis to present a webinar on McKenzie Friends and litigants in person; Advice Services Alliance to discuss plans for the year ahead; Modern Law Conference to present on ‘power to the people’ – empowering consumers.

## Future activity

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The main focus will be continuing our work programme, publishing the first series of briefings from our 2016 run of the Tracker Survey and drafting further briefings from this data.

Reports: Information remedies.

Presentations: All-Party Parliamentary Group on Customer Service to discuss regulating for excellent service; All-Party Parliamentary Group on Public Legal Education; Solicitors Regulation Authority event on rethinking regulation; Westminster Legal Policy Forum on the future of legal services regulation.

Consultation responses: the Panel will continue to respond to consultation reports that fit its prioritisation criteria and is within scope.

**Stephanie Chapman**  
**July 2016**