

ACTIVITY REPORT: July – September 2016

Overview

During this period the Panel published the findings of its annual Tracker Survey with two briefings focusing on how consumers are experiencing the legal services market. Overall, the findings showed that transparency was needed to improve choice, and to increase the pace of change for consumers. The key findings from the research are:

- Just one in four consumers shopped around for their service
- Reputation and price are the most important choice factors
- Fixed fees are used in almost half of all transactions
- Local firms remain the most used service providers in many areas of law
- Satisfaction remains lower for BME groups than white British
- Trust in lawyers has declined to 42%, previously 47% in 2012

In October 2016, the Panel will publish two more briefings focusing on the disparity in the experiences of Black and Ethnic Minorities, as well as the experiences of Welsh users.

The Panel had one Panel meeting in September. Officials from the Competition and Market Authority attended the meeting to give the panel an overview of its interim assessment of the legal services market and discuss ideas around practical and workable remedies. The Panel also heard from the Head of Partnerships at the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) who discussed the FCA’s recent research and paper on access to financial services. The Panel drew on learnings and targeted solutions from the FCA. Both the Chair and the Chief Executive of the LSB also attended the meeting to discuss their priorities, the CMA’s findings and the LSB’s publication on the legislative framework of the legal services sector.

Update on planned projects

| Project | Activity |
|------------------------|--|
| Tracker Survey | The Panel has drafted and signed off two briefings on the tracker survey to be published in October 2016. The briefings will focus on the experiences of BME groups and Welsh users. |
| Consumer vulnerability | Training was developed and delivered to CILEx Regulation, the LSB and the CLC. |
| Open data | The Panel chair spoke at Westminster Policy Forum in September 2016 about the benefits of Open Data. The Chair also attended the |

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| | CMA's Roundtable event which focused on remedies to the failings uncovered in the legal services market. |
| Consumer Segmentation | The Panel is on schedule to publishing a policy paper (October 2016) highlighting the importance of segmenting consumers for better understanding of their needs, risk identification, and how solutions to access to justice might be targeted more appropriately. |
| Information Remedies | The Panel has been commissioned by the LSB to advice on the effectiveness of information remedies in the legal services sector. |

Update on unplanned work

Consultation responses:

- SRA – Panel response to SRAs consultation on removing barriers to switching regulators.
- CMA – Panel response to CMAs interim report on its legal services market review.
- SRA – Panel's response to the SRAs consultation reviewing the Accounts Rules
- SRA- Panel's response to the SRA's consultation on flexibility and public protection

Selected external events/meetings: Chair Attended an All Party Parliamentary Group on Customer Service. Meeting with Legal Ombudsman to discuss their KPI's. Chair and Panel member attended two Roundtable discussion on the CMA's assessment of the legal services market. Solicitors Regulation Authority event on rethinking regulation; Westminster Legal Policy Forum on the future of legal services regulation.

Future activity

The main focus will be continuing our work programme, publishing the second series of briefings from our 2016 run of the Tracker Survey and working on the Information Remedies Report.

Presentations: The Panel is scheduled to attend and or speak at the following events; Legal Wales Network Conference, Manchester network event hosted by the LSB, LeO and the LSCP, and the National Forum on Litigants in Person.

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

October 2016