

To:	Legal Services Board	
Date of Meeting:	26 May 2016	Item: Paper (16) 39

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 27 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 2015 and March 2016.
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 2016-17, 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.

19.05.16

Summary of our key activities/impacts in 2015-16

Area	Impact
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. The reports this year focused on how consumer choose and use legal services.
Working in Wales	We reaffirmed our commitment to consumers in Wales with our booster sample in our annual tracker survey, and one of our Panel members participated in a roundtable alongside the Lord Chief Justice discussion the future of legal services delivery, and the challenges facing providers and consumers.
Open data	Our response to the LSB commission on open data has already led to changes in the type and presentation of data from the Solicitors Regulation Authority. We are continuing this work with the regulators and the Legal Ombudsman at a working level.
Unbundled legal services	Our joint research with the LSB has developed the narrative started with the online divorce research, which is that certain legal services will work for some consumers, but not all. This is feeding into future work on segmenting consumers.
Regulatory responses to consumer vulnerability and consumer principles	Two good practice guides have been developed into bespoke training for regulators. Training has been provided to the entire Bar Standards Board, including Board members, and has been requested by CILEx Regulation, Council for Licensed Conveyancers and the Legal Ombudsman.
Priority areas of law	Our response to the second LSB commission on identifying priority areas of law recommended focussing on family, housing, and immigration law. There is also a recommendation for increased partnership working in order to achieve the best outcomes for consumers. The approved regulators have already agreed to look at how Legal Choices could be used to address some of the issues raised in the report.