

## ACTIVITY REPORT: January – March 2016

### Overview

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During this period the Panel has finalised the delivery of our 2015-16 work programme and set out the Panel's priorities for 2016 -17.

The Panel published its response to the first of two Legal Services Board commissions, *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. The findings, which use case studies from other sectors where transparency has already been achieved, concludes with various recommendations to the approved regulators and to the LSB. In response to the report, the SRA has already committed to publishing a basic regulatory data set on its website, and is considering further options for publishing data.

The Panel has also made progress on its second commission, which seeks to identify priority areas of law for the LSB to focus its work on meeting unmet demand. We have completed a call for evidence and met with key stakeholders, and now that the desk research is completed the report will be submitted to the LSB in April 2016. The report identifies three areas of law which feature 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.

In February the Panel met with the Competition and Markets Authority at its Panel meeting to discuss the ongoing market study of legal services. The Panel shared its experiences and knowledge on key areas such as will writing and McKenzie Friends, and also discussed the broader frustrations with the market and the difficulties facing consumers when choosing and using a legal service.

The Panel has agreed to provide training on its consumer principles and vulnerability guides to CILEx Regulation, the Legal Ombudsman, the LSB and the Council for Licensed Conveyancers in 2016-17, and is pleased to see the influence previous training has had on the BSB's risk outlook for the year ahead.

### Update on planned projects

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Project	Activity
Tracker Survey	2016 Tracker Survey data received and briefings being drafted
Consumer vulnerability	Training is being developed for CILEx Regulation
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	Report published on 16 February

**Update on unplanned work**

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Consultation responses:

- LeO – Panel response to LeO’s consultation on its draft budget and KPIs
- SRA – Panel response to the SRA’s proposals to revise qualification routes for solicitors

Selected external events/meetings: Legal Ombudsman, meeting with Kathryn Stone as new Chief Ombudsman; CILEx Regulation for an introduction to its new Chair; Law Society for a quarterly catch-up; LSB and Stephen Mayson to discuss legislative reform; Civil Justice Council workshop on developing fixed recoverable costs; Law Society to discuss the future of regulation.

**Future activity**

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The main focus will be embarking on the second year of our three year strategy, starting with the 2016 run of the Tracker Survey.

Reports: Information remedies.

Presentations: Professional Paralegal inaugural conference, Lexis Nexis webinar on litigants in person and McKenzie Friends, Annual Modern Law Conference.

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

**Stephanie Chapman**

**January 2016**