



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LSB sets the complaint handling agenda

The Legal Services Board (LSB) is reminding all regulators of their important role in making sure lawyers deal properly with complaints – and stressing the need for both regulators and lawyers to learn from what they reveal.

This follows an interim review of regulators' arrangements for overseeing lawyers' complaints resolution procedures.

The reminder follows closely on the heels of the Legal Services Consumer Panel second annual 'health check' of legal services reforms issued earlier this week in which particular focus is given to *quick, fair and cost-effective complaints-handling*.

In letters sent to all regulators, the LSB makes clear that improving the complaints experience for consumers remains a serious priority of the LSB.

They are the latest step in an improvement process which originally started with the Legal Services Act and which has been followed by a number of initiatives including LSB commissioned YouGov research which demonstrated that consumers were not universally well treated by providers through the complaints process.

In addition to interim conclusions they outline next steps which the individual regulators should consider taking to meet the complaints handling objectives.

Chris Kenny, Chief Executive of the Legal Services Board said:

“Ensuring that consumers are able to complain about the services that they receive and that the complaints are handled appropriately is fundamental to ensuring that the legal services regulatory system is achieving its purpose.”

Although much progress has been made, most regulators still have more to do in understanding the volume and nature of complaints, focussing on consumer experience of the process and, most importantly, using information about the effectiveness of complaints handling as part of their wider monitoring, supervision and enforcement activities.

In writing to the regulators we are both reaffirming our determination to ensure that progress on this issue stays at the front of all of our agendas and we are reiterating that the consumer needs continued assurance that complaints will be dealt with in an appropriate and satisfactory manner.”

For further information, please contact our Communications Manager [Vincent McGovern](#) or by calling 020 7271 0068.

Notes for editors:

1. The individual letters sent to the approved regulators and to the Legal Ombudsman are:
 - [Bar Standards Board](#)
 - [Council for Licensed Conveyancers](#)
 - [Costs Lawyers Standards Board](#)
 - [Intellectual Property Regulation Board](#)
 - [ILEX Professional Standards Board](#)
 - [Master of the Faculties](#)
 - [Solicitors Regulation Authority](#)
 - [Legal Ombudsman](#)
2. The Legal Services Consumer Panel ‘consumer health check’ report can be found [here](#).
3. The Legal Services Board commissioned YouGov research can be found [here](#).
4. The Legal Services Act (“The Act”) created the Legal Services Board as a new regulator with responsibility for overseeing the regulation of legal services in England and Wales. The new regulatory regime became active on 1 January 2010.
5. The LSB oversees eight Approved Regulators, which in turn regulate individual lawyers. The Approved Regulators, designated under Part 1 of Schedule 4 of the 2007 Act, are the Law Society, the Bar Council, the Master of the Faculties, the Institute of Legal Executives, the Council for Licensed Conveyancers, the Chartered Institute of Patent Attorneys, the Institute of Trade Mark Attorneys and the Association of Costs Lawyers.
6. In addition, the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland and the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants are listed as Approved Regulators in relation only to reserved probate activities.
7. The legal profession currently consists of some 15,000 barristers, 119,000 solicitors and 12,000 individuals operating in other aspects of the legal profession such as conveyancing. The sector was valued at £24.74 billion per annum (total turnover) in 2009.