

Research and Evaluation Seminars January 2011 – Summary

The LSB undertook a series of seminars, two in London and one in Leicester, to discuss plans to evaluate the success of the LSB according to our proposed evaluation strategy. The objective of these seminars was to aid the development of our research and evaluation plans, considering both the structure of our evaluation and the research base needed to support analysis.

The areas covered in this discussion are according to our regulatory objectives, set out in our Business Plan.

Area		LSB Action
Effective complaints handling	The LSB must be aware that when LeO was introduced complaints-handling had improved, since the Clementi report identified areas for concern.	The LSB will not measure the success of LeO against LCS; we shall measure public confidence and awareness.
Opening up the market	The LSB should not solely focus on the take-up of ABS	The LSB will judge if we have removed unjustified barriers to entering the market; measuring whether individuals are able to enter the market.
Education and Training	Should there be more focus on this in the draft Business Plan and Research Plan?	Throughout the year we may set milestones regarding education and training. The final 2011/12 Business Plan will mention this, but this will receive more focus in the 2012/13 Business Plan. We have commissioned research to make international comparisons of components of legal education.
Consumer knowledge of legal services	There is a gap in research on consumer knowledge of legal services	The LSB, along with the Legal Services Consumer Panel, shall consider how to meet this knowledge gap.
Understanding the consumer experience of will writing – research commissioned	<p>This research may not measure whether the consumer gave the will writer enough information, and whether the will writer probed information.</p> <p>Is the sample size of the will writing research adequate?</p>	<p>The researcher will be collating information on the whole consumer experience including the interaction with the provider. The researcher will also capture whether consumers understood the process.</p> <p>The LSB is looking for patterns using an initial qualitative study. We do not think the study alone will provide robust evidence to</p>

	<p>In the will writing research should the LSB evaluate the quality of the will against its cost?</p> <p>To eradicate potential bias will the research assess the experience of the will writer?</p>	<p>initiate change, but it will provide us with detailed information on experiences, and we may be able to identify areas of concern.</p> <p>This research will assess whether these wills are fit for purpose, according to the panel of experts. This study will not try to evaluate the value for money of the wills produced. We shall investigate consumer experience and can take cost into consideration here.</p> <p>The research will collect data on the experience and expertise of the provider, as much as it can.</p>
Developing a changing workforce for a changing market	Will the LSB investigate equal pay as part of its diversity agenda?	The LSB currently has no plans to measure pay equality as this is captured by the Law Society. But we are interested in views about whether the regulator should have a role in equal pay. We are currently consulting on enforcing firms to supply diversity data.
Benchmarking of supply of legal services	To what extent is the LSB looking at the correlation between new organisations and outcomes?	The LSB wants to segment the supply, e.g. differentiation between high street firms and ABS, so we are able to look for patterns and risks. However, we will not use these findings to target regulatory intervention against individual firms.
Conflicts of interest	Will the LSB investigate this?	The LSB acknowledges the need to investigate conflicts of interest; ABS may cause greater concern.
Conveyancing	Is it a legal services issue or is it really an issue with structure and the nature of land law?	
Referral fees	Do we need to better understand and place this into context of unbundling as competition increases?	
Disciplinary and enforcement	Do we need to identify common themes rather than	

	impost single systems	
Learning from others	Consider identifying and looking at all the areas of law that may be subject to commoditization	
Transparency	Collate more data and make it available to encourage research	The Knowledge Bank will become available to external sources when it is complete. Users will be able to identify current research and gaps.
Consumer ability to learn	Can you teach people to be better consumers of legal services, to shape the market and reward/punish suppliers accordingly?	
Focus	Should all approved regulators and the LSB move communication focus from themselves to the Legal Ombudsman who is point of contact/reference for consumers and not the only place to complain?	
Evaluation	Validity of small number of key performance stats targets	The LSB will need to present data, research and analysis and apply judgement in rich textual manner.