



LSCC Advisory Board and Legal Services Consumer Board

Minutes

21 September 2006

Attendees

Zahida Manzoor (The Commissioner – Chair)

Stephen Boys Smith (Member)

Colin Brown (Member)

Rob Chester (Member)

Louise Hanson (Member)

Malcolm Hurlston (Member)

George Seligman (Member)

Professor Avrom Sherr (Member)

Steven Silver (Member)

Michael Wilson (Member)

Les Courtneil (OLSCC)

Lorraine Jackson (OLSCC)

Bronwyn Baker (OLSCC)

Anita Holmes (OLSCC)

Janice Revill (OLSCC – Secretariat)

From 11:00 – 12:00:

Bridget Prentice MP – Under Secretary of State for Department for Constitutional Affairs

Jane Frost – Chair, DCA Consumer Advisory Panel

James Sandbach – Member, DCA Consumer Advisory Panel

Apologies

Countess of Eglinton and Winton (Member)

Professor Dame Hazel Genn (Member)

David Harker OBE (Member)

1. Welcome and Introductions

1.1 The Commissioner welcomed members to the joint meeting of the LSCC Advisory Board and Legal Services Consumer Board.

1.2 Each Board member gave a brief introduction and details of their experience.

2. Update on the work of the OLSCC

2.1 Board members were given a brief update on the work of the OLSCC.

2.2 In July, the Law Society submitted a revised complaint handling plan for 2006/07, which the Commissioner declared adequate.

- 2.3 The Commissioner also decided that the Law Society had failed to act in accordance with its 2005/06 complaints handling plan. However, after considering various factors, decided not to levy a penalty.
- 2.4 The Commissioner thanked Board members for their support in reaching these decisions.
- 2.5 OLSCC presented initial findings from the Annual Case File Audit of the Law Society, which was conducted during the summer. The intention of the Audit was to determine the extent of improvements to performance and to inform future target setting of the Law Society. The Audit Report is due to be published at the end of October.

3. Legal Services Reforms

- 3.1 The Commissioner updated the Board members on the progress of the legal reforms. A Joint Committee had been established to scrutinize the Draft Legal Services Reforms Bill and the Commissioner had provided both written and oral evidence to the Committee. The Committee had published a report of its findings at the end of July.
- 3.2 The Government had announced that their preferred location for the Office of Legal Services would be the West Midlands. Board members expressed concern that consumers may see this as rebranding of the Law Society.

4. Discussion with the Minister

- 4.1 The Commissioner welcomed the Minister, Bridget Prentice MP, to the meeting along with Jane Frost and James Sandbach who represent the DCA Consumer Advisory Panel.
- 4.2 The Minister gave an overview of the work of the DCA Consumer Advisory Panel and the Commissioner offered the support of LSCC Consumer Board.
- 4.3 Board members discussed the progress of the legal reforms with the Minister and raised issues which they felt may impact on the success of the reforms implementation. The Government is due to respond to the Joint Committees Report on 25 September.

5. Approach to setting the Law Society's targets for 2007/08

- 5.1 OLSCC provided Board members with a paper and verbal update on the approach to setting the Law Society's targets for 2007/08.
- 5.2 The targets are due to be shared with Board members in October.

6. Consumer Strategy

- 6.1 OLSCC updated the Board Members on the production of the Consumer Strategy and shared design ideas. The Strategy is due to be signed off by Board

members in February 2007. The Commissioner thanked Board members for their assistance in the production of the Strategy.

7. Closure

- 7.1 The next meeting is due to be held on **8 February** in Leeds. This will be a joint meeting of the Advisory and Consumer Board.
- 7.2 The Commissioner thanked Board members for their attendance and valuable input to the discussions.