

Sent by email only to consultations@legalombudsman.org.uk



14 February 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

Consultation: The Legal Ombudsman's Corporate Strategy for 2020-23.

The Legal Services Consumer Panel (the Panel) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Office of Legal Complaints (OLC) Strategy for the Legal Ombudsman (LeO). The Panel is broadly supportive of the plans outlined in the document.

Reflection on questions

Have we considered all of the external developments that may affect our operations over the lifetime of this strategy? If not, what else should we take account of?

Yes, the Panel believes that all the pertinent external developments likely to have an impact on legal services have been considered. We appreciate that it is not possible to predict every foreseeable external development. However, we concur that what is noted is the most relevant at this point in time.

Have we identified the correct strategic areas to focus on in the next three years? If not, what should we be addressing?

The Panel agrees with the strategic areas LeO has decided to focus on. We are particularly pleased to see transparency feature strongly as a standalone objective. We welcome a focus on the development of services that will ensure that LeO meets the evolving needs of the sector. We also agree that this work should focus on using LeO's intelligence gathering ability to raise standards in the sector.

In addition to the areas described in the consultation document, we would like to see a clear focus on improving complainants experience through a robust feedback gathering process.

Are there any objectives that should take priority amongst these?

The Panel welcomes the three streamlined objectives outlined in the document. This offers improved clarity of purpose and gives LeO enough time, and hopefully resources, to focus its attention accordingly. It may be that LeO chooses to rotate what it prioritises over the three years, but the Panel does not believe that any one objective should take overall priority over the others.

Will our proposed actions for the next 12 months help us to achieve the strategic objectives we have set for 2020-23?

LeO's proposed actions for the next 12 months are likely to help it achieve its strategic objectives. However, clearer plans around the specificities of projects, including timescales, would give the Panel a clearer idea of how the short-term goals complement the longer-term objectives. We accept that further details may be planned for a subsequent work-programme or business plan. We therefore look forward to future engagement in this area.

Do you agree with our plans for an increased budget in order to bring about the proposed improvements in customer journey and in learning and feedback to the sector?

The Panel acknowledges that the improvements set out by LeO are necessary for it to function as an effective and efficient organisation. Therefore, provided LeO have done all it can to improve efficiency in its day to day tasks, some extra investment may be needed to support its future ambitions.

I hope you find these comments helpful. Please contact Lola Bello, Consumer Panel Manager, with any enquiries.

Yours sincerely,



Sarah Chambers

Chair

Legal Services Consumer Panel