

# MINUTE SLCC Consumer Panel



**THURSDAY 19<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2015**  
**Venue: The Stamp Office, 10 – 14 Waterloo Place, Edinburgh, EH1 3EG**

**Present:** Lauren Wood [Chair], Citizens Advice Scotland  
Shaben Begum, Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance  
Carol Brennan, Queen Margaret University Consumer Insight Centre  
Sheila Scobie, Competition & Markets Authority

████████████████████, Head of Oversight, SLCC

**In Attendance:** Matthew Vickers, CEO, SLCC  
████████████████████, Legal Services Consumer Panel (England & Wales)

**Apologies:** Lynn Welsh, Equality & Human Rights Commission

## 1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed all present to the inaugural meeting of the Panel. In particular, she welcomed ██████████, the Manager of the Legal Services Consumer Panel in England & Wales.

## 2. Apologies

Apologies were noted from Lynn Welsh of the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

It was also noted that the nominated representative from Which? had now left that organisation. It was not clear whether Which? intended to provide an alternative representative and it was agreed that this would be investigated.

## 3. Declarations of interest

No notes of interest or conflict were declared.

After discussion it was agreed that, in terms of good governance, it would be best practice to create and publish a register of members' interests which would include the publication of the names of the Panel members. It was also agreed that a register of gifts and hospitality should be created and published.

Members discussed the potential that, being named, they might be individually approached in relation to SLCC rather than Consumer Panel related matters. It was agreed that a dedicated Inbox would be created to forward such enquiries on, and that a form of wording would be formulated by the Head of Oversight (HoO) for members to use in such situations.

## 4. Overview of the SLCC

The HoO provided members with a short presentation highlighting the work and role of the SLCC and, in particular, focussing on recent operational improvements and planned oversight initiatives.

## **5. Consumer Panel, England & Wales**

The Manager of the Consumer Panel for England and Wales delivered a presentation on the work of that panel. Attention was drawn, in particular, to some recent reports. It was agreed that links to relevant reports would be circulated along with the Minute.

The Panel noted that the scope and remit (and budget) of its southern equivalent was far wider than that of the SLCC Consumer Panel. However, it was agreed that there were advantages in operating within the smaller Scottish landscape, and it was suggested that it was easier to identify gaps and, through existing links to other bodies, flag those where relevant.

It was also agreed that, where appropriate, consideration should be given to joint initiatives and research projects. It was agreed that a further joint meeting be held towards the end of November/ early December to discuss possible joint working once the Panel had considered its own priorities for the future.

## **6. Discussion topics (agenda items 6-10)**

The Panel noted a number of proposed topics included on the agenda for future discussion. In particular:

- Consumer awareness of the SLCC
- Legal consumer survey
- Service standards in the legal profession

The HoO and CEO gave a brief introduction to the thinking behind the inclusion of these suggestions and it was agreed that members would consider these with the aim of a fuller discussion at the next meeting.

It was also agreed that it would be helpful for members to be aware of the SLCC's proposed Operational Plan for 2015/16 and the HoO undertook to circulate a link to that.

## **7. Panel membership**

Further to the previous discussion in relation to 2 (above), members discussed whether the membership of the group should be extended to include any other organisations or whether it was preferable to invite other relevant bodies to attend as and when particular topics arose for discussion. Suggestions for other members included Young Scot; Age Concern; Victim Support; and Trading Standards Scotland.

On balance, the group favoured the latter approach, taking the view that most of the organisations currently represented had the advantage of wider scope.

It was agreed that this subject would be further considered at the following meeting and, in the meantime, the HoO would circulate the results of some analysis which had been undertaken into the demographics of SLCC complainers to better inform the debate.

## **8. Frequency of meetings and date of next meeting**

It was noted from the Terms of Reference (ToR) that the Panel was expected to meet at least twice a year. There was unanimous agreement that, at this initial stage, it was important for momentum that the group met more frequently. It was agreed that a date for the next meeting should be set towards the end of April (provisionally April 30<sup>th</sup>).

## **9. AOB**

There being no further business, the Chair thanked all for their attendance.