

Response to SLCC consultation on its Regulatory Statement

Do you agree that our Regulatory Statement adequately reflects the regulatory objectives, our approach and responsibilities?

Agree

Do you have any comments on our understanding of the regulatory objectives and how they apply to our work?

We welcome this statement as a helpful response to the changed landscape and objectives of the regulatory system following the passing of the Regulation of Legal Services (Scotland) Act 2025. The statement helpfully sets out how the SLCC understands its role and its place within that system, and how it will use its powers to benefit consumers, in line with the regulatory objectives set out in the Act.

Understanding and protecting the interests of consumers is a central function of any regulatory system and this is highlighted in the regulatory objectives. Under the new remit given to the Consumer Panel by the provisions of the 2025 Act, we have a key role to play in sharing insight and holding the regulatory system to account for its work in this area. We therefore welcome the statement's support for the Panel in discharging those responsibilities. The commitment to meeting the statutory requirements placed on the SLCC by the Consumer Duty is also a key part of this approach.

We welcome the focus throughout the statement on clarity. Legal services are by their nature often complex and technical. The regulatory and complaints landscape is also confusing and difficult for a consumer to understand. We are disappointed that the Act did not go further in decluttering the landscape and that the changes made may actually make it more complex.

A system which is difficult to understand, lacking in transparency or challenging to navigate can cause confusion, suspicion, and disengagement. In terms of access to justice, this is of significant concern given the importance of public confidence in legal services and their regulation.

The SLCC must play its part, along with others, in ensuring that consumers are clear about their rights and the support available to then to exercise those rights, including when things go wrong.

Research by Consumer Scotland¹ shows that less than half consumers are confident about how to make a complaint. This situation is unlikely to be improved by the changes in the Act. It's therefore vital that the SLCC steps up its work to make consumers aware of the service it provides, to provide a service accessible to all, and to drive confidence in the complaints process by listening to consumer feedback.

Access to justice and to therefore to legal services is a key concern for consumers so we welcome the SLCC considering its role in helping to improve access to justice. This includes balancing the risks and opportunities of innovation and looking at provision across the whole legal services market. When considering the need to support innovations which may improve consumer access to justice, the SLCC should also be mindful of the need to identify and mitigate the risks of harm to consumers.

The consumer principles also highlight the need for services to be good quality and to provide quality outcomes for consumers. However, over a third of adults in Scotland have low levels of legal confidence, meaning they are not confident they can achieve good outcomes across a range of common legal scenarios, and almost a quarter perceive the justice system in Scotland as being not very accessible².

This means the SLCC's work to resolve complaints about poor quality services, and to help improve the quality of services, is crucial. We support the commitment to ensure the Panel can bring consumer insight to inform definitions of quality.

Do you have any comments on our approach?

We particularly welcome the SLCC's commitment to empowering consumers through information and support and to a continued focus on preventing consumer harm wherever possible.

Is there any other evidence or information we should be taking into account in this statement?

We note the SLCC's plans for this statement to remain live and open for discussion. It should be informed by any available research and insight into consumer needs and expectations in Scotland, and best practice from other sectors and jurisdictions. The Consumer Panel is currently developing its plans to better understand and share the existing evidence and to bring further consumer insight. We look forward to sharing

¹ [Using legal services in Scotland \(HTML\) | Consumer Scotland](#)

² [Using legal services in Scotland \(HTML\) | Consumer Scotland](#)

that with the SLCC and to it informing the ongoing development of the SLCC's approach.

Do you have any other comments to make?

No

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Chair

SLCC Consumer Panel

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<https://www.scottishlegalcomplaints.org.uk/about-us/consumer-panel/>