

Law for Life

My response concentrates on these priorities as part of the Consumer Feedback element, as I think that taking account of these would be helpful in addressing the CMA aim of measures to improve engagement with customer reviews.

It is also important to recognise that the potential client does not know what they do not know.

Possible questions for quality indicators [to be used as consumer feedback] might be:

- Were you given a full explanation of the issue and the various options for resolving it?
- Were you provided with explanatory materials to study at your leisure or signposted to useful resources to help you understand it better?
- Were you told about how much work you might have to put in to enable your issue to be taken forward and the fact that some of this might be time consuming and have to be undertaken within deadlines?
- Were you told about the possible future decisions you might have to make and when?
- Were you supported in understanding the implications of those decisions, so that you felt that you were making a fully informed decision?
- Did you receive information about the potential cost of your issue and how it would be paid for in language that you understood?
- In particular, was “hourly billing” explained to you, and the most efficient and cost-effective way of interacting with your legal advisor?
- In particular, was a CFA explained to you and what it would and would not cover?
- Were you told how often you would receive updates on your issue, even when there was nothing to report, including reasons for there being nothing to report?
- Did you receive these regular updates?

It could be argued that many of these issues are covered in quality indicators such as timeliness, communication and customer service which are referred to on websites such as Legal Choices and the professional and regulators’ websites – so these are also important to consumers. My suggestion is that these elements should become more than important issues, they should become explicit indicators of quality.

Looking at different solicitors’ websites I am struck by how a number will have good information on one or two of these issues, but rather fewer have good information on all of them.