

Meeting: Legal Services Board

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Title: Reshaping Legal Services Conference 2022 evaluation

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Introduction

This paper updates the Board on the evaluation of our inaugural annual conference, including lessons learned and recommendations for next year.

Recommendation(s)

1. The Board is invited to:
 - **Note** the findings of the evaluation of our inaugural annual conference
 - **Note** the actions arising from the conference
 - **Note** the proposed week for next year's conference: w/c 9 October 2023

Background

2. The Reshaping Legal Services conference was the first event of its size and scale delivered jointly by the Legal Services Board and the Legal Services Consumer panel. The aims of the conference were to bring together representatives from across the profession to:
 - maintain momentum in the sector-wide mission to deliver the ambitions set out in the Reshaping Legal Services strategy
 - promote collaboration and leadership and positive examples of good practice to encourage others to play their part in tackling the sector's challenges.
3. The conference programme focused on key themes of the strategy: diversity and inclusion, professional ethics and public trust. The programme involved 22 speakers and comprised keynote speeches, presentations and panel discussions.

4. This paper sets out our evaluation of the conference, including a summary of attendee feedback. Lessons learned sessions have been held with the Board and executive colleagues, with the outputs recorded to inform and improve next year's delivery.

Attendance and delegate management

5. 242 people attended the conference. Total in-person attendance stood at 167, including 110 delegates, 22 speakers and 35 LSB Board members, colleagues and other external support. This exceeds the target of 100 external attendees.
6. 132 unique viewers watched online, with an average view time of 3 hours and 24 minutes.
7. We attracted a wide range of attendees in person and online, including regulators (legal and non-legal), legal services providers, representative bodies, EDI groups, the UK and Welsh Government, the judiciary, legal education and training providers and students. The conference was the first time many attendees had had contact with the LSB.
8. Although we had some regional and Welsh representation in person, most attendees were London-based. Regional and Welsh representation was higher online, where we also had delegates watching from six overseas jurisdictions.
9. With the event being equally as popular online as in person and bearing in mind accessibility benefits, we will maintain the hybrid approach for 2023. Now that we are confident with hybrid delivery, we will also give thought to how we can increase engagement with our online audience (for example, through online polling).
10. The in-person drop-off rate was only 19%. For free events, this is often much higher, up to around 40%. We will continue to communicate with delegates from the point of registration through to the day of the event, sharing key information about the speakers and themes, with a view to maintaining the low drop-off rate.
11. For those who did not attend, we have published a recording of each session alongside the speeches, presentations and videos. We have let attendees know they are available to share with colleagues, students and wider networks, and have promoted them more widely on social media. We will also highlight them in our next e-newsletter.
12. Other operational lessons learned in relation to delegate management include the need to:
 - a) capture all delegate information at the point of registration, including dietary and access requirements. We should also be asking where they heard about the event so that we can monitor and evaluate our marketing channels.
 - b) make use of a ticket management system (e.g. Eventbrite) to reduce the amount of time spent on administration and to improve the delegate experience.

Format

13. Our key reflections on the format of the event were that:

- a) The breakfast roundtable was a useful opportunity to for Board members and others to get together with our speakers to discuss the conference themes, key issues facing the sector and priorities for the coming year. In light of the good attendance and insightful discussion, we will look to repeat this next year.
- b) The professional conference facilitator did not knit the day together in the way we had hoped. We will review our options for next year's event and consider whether a conference facilitator could play a more prominent role throughout the day, such as chairing panels.
- c) The combination of keynote speeches, presentations, short videos and panel discussions worked well to keep people engaged throughout the day. Providing more opportunity for discussion will be a focus for next year, to allow more time for attendees to share their insights, ideas and learning. This point is also reflected in the delegate feedback.
- d) The exhibition tables did not work well in the space available. We will factor this into our venue scoping exercise for next year's event.

Attendee feedback

14. We received 58 responses to our feedback survey. The 24% response rate is above the industry standard for a conference, which is around 10%. Key findings include:

- Overall, respondents rated the conference 8/10
- The conference programme scored 8/10
- Those attending in-person rated the venue 9/10
- In relation to how likely they would be to attend again next year, the average score was 9/10.

Programme

15. Overall, respondents fed back positively on the conference programme, with reference to the topical nature of the themes as well as the quality and diversity of speakers:

- "I thought it was an excellent, thought-provoking programme."
- "The calibre of the speakers was excellent and some quite different voices in the mix, which was just great."
- "An excellent conference, which was really looking at the pressing issues in the legal profession. Well done."

16. Constructive comments, which we will bear in mind for next year, included:

- a) Tighter time-keeping and allowing more time for discussion, perhaps by having fewer longer sessions, reducing the amount of time spent on speeches and presentations or by adding breakout sessions to the agenda to provide an opportunity for a more detailed discussion on specific topics
- b) Focusing more on possible solutions to challenges and sharing best practice
- c) Providing more opportunities for delegates to hear from the LSB, as well as the frontline regulators.

17. Some respondents also suggested themes for next year's conference, ranging from unmet legal need and the role of technology in improving access to justice, to developing this year's themes around professional ethics and diversity and inclusion.

Venue

18. Delegates fed back positively on the venue, noting the accessible facilities, location, catering and friendly staff.

19. Constructive comments related to the lack of natural light in the main theatre and the need for seating at lunchtime. We will include the Kings Fund in our options for 2023, in addition to looking at venues that could provide a solution to these issues and allow us to grow the event.

Social media

20. Social media played a key role in helping to promote the event and increasing our engagement with new audiences before and after the event.

21. There were 902 LinkedIn engagements in the four weeks leading up to the conference and two weeks afterwards. A 554% increase compared to the same six-week period last year. This led to 14.1k impressions, a 406% increase from last year, and 717 views of our page, a 260% increase from the year before.

22. We live-tweeted during the conference, with 28 tweets sent during the event, sharing insights and content. These generated 540 engagements or interactions and 10,600 impressions (an increase of 2,807% compared to the same day the previous year). Sentiment on Twitter about the event was overwhelmingly positive, with people sharing ideas, and reflecting how much they valued the discussions and appreciated the networking opportunity.

23. 57 tweets were sent by delegates during the conference, with 250 interactions. 24 people shared reflections on LinkedIn following the conference covering how inspired they were, what they took away from the conference, and how much they valued the event. These received 523 interactions.

24. The videos of the Chair looking forward to the event and then thanking people for attending have received around 800 views.

25. In terms of lessons learned, next year, we will promote the conference hashtag more prominently on event collateral such as the slides, programme, and digital screens.

Media coverage

26. The conference generated 23 pieces of media coverage. The sentiment about the LSB and the conference was positive.
27. They focused overwhelmingly on professional ethics and the speech made by the Master of the Rolls.

Actions arising from the conference

28. In our feedback survey, 90% of respondents said they had heard something on the day that had influenced or may influence them to do something differently to improve diversity and inclusion, public trust or professional ethics. Examples included:

- a) making the pupillage application process more accessible
- b) outreach activity with state schools
- c) taking on apprentices
- d) more internal training on ethics
- e) being more aware of and challenging microaggressions.

29. Many more thoughts and ideas about promoting a more diverse and inclusive legal sector and turning our conversation into action were shared on the day. We captured these and shared them with attendees in a follow-up email.

30. These outputs link directly to our objective to promote positive examples of good practice to encourage others to play their part in tackling the sector's challenges. They will therefore be essential ambitions for each annual conference going forward.

31. We have also reflected on the actions we will take as a result of the discussions at the conference. These are focused on the areas where regulation can have the greatest impact. Examples of actions we have taken or will take include:

- a) Reflecting the examples of effective EDI interventions in our revised performance framework
- b) Holding a series of thematic roundtables on EDI to follow up on the themes coming out of the conference as well as our counter-inclusive practices research, for example, progression, retention and both BAME and disability inclusion
- c) Convening an external reference group and associated roundtables to help shape and inform our work on ethics and the rule of law

- d) Working with Welsh Government to meet a roundtable for legal services regulators in Wales
 - e) Increasing our engagement activity in Wales, including a Board reception in the Senedd and a Board meeting and other activities outside of Cardiff.
32. We will also be giving further thought to our role in relation to other key policy areas, such as the misuse of non-disclosure agreements, encouraging the adoption of recruitment practices that support a diverse profession, apprenticeships and the role of professional ethics in legal education and training.
33. We have also identified opportunities to develop and maintain relationships with attendees and speakers, with a view to engaging or collaborating with these stakeholders in our upcoming work around EDI, ethics and the rule of law and curating the strategy. These stakeholders include third-sector organisations, members of the judiciary, the legal education and training sector as well as legal services providers.

Legal Services Consumer Panel reflections

34. The Panel would like to continue its involvement in the conference and sees it as an opportunity to raise the profile of both the Panel's and the LSB's work. It notes that it is important to involve stakeholders in thinking about big ideas facing the sector, especially as legal services regulation continues to evolve to serve the consumer.
35. The Panel felt that the opportunity for dialogue was the key added value of the conference, which means that Q&A time, breakout sessions and networking should be prioritised. Bringing in non-traditional voices served as an effective way to open up current thinking on specific regulatory matters. The Panel hopes to see more of this in the future.

Resources

36. The budget for the conference was £51k, made up of £36k directly given to the conference and £15k of contingency budget. The actual costs were £59k.
37. Given it was the inaugural conference, there was a degree of uncertainty around the costs involved at the budgeting and forecasting stage. The main reason for overspending was the sheer demand for in-person places, which exceeded the number of places we had budgeted for. SLT took the decision to extend the conference's places to meet this demand to ensure the success of the conference.
38. The conference did see some good examples of achieving value for money by leveraging our existing relationship to help promote the event, as well as to secure speakers and presentations. For example, our research supplier, Solutions Research, prepared and delivered their presentation on counter-inclusive practices for no additional cost. It should also be noted that some of the

event collateral that was paid for out of this year's budget will have a lifespan of several years.

39. Planning for the annual conference started in October 2021. Our resource recording shows that we underestimated the time we needed to dedicate to planning in the final weeks and months. However, we had contingency plans and effective risk management in place. Planning will be more effective next year, since it won't be the first time we deliver a conference of this scale.

Next steps

40. We will provide an update to Board in January 2023, including a proposal for next year's conference. In the meantime, we will be carrying out preliminary work, such as developing a project plan and scoping venues, with a view to securing a booking for the week commencing 9 October 2023.

41. 33 people have so far registered their interest in attending next year's conference. We will aim to attract over 150 in-person delegates.

Risks and mitigations	
Financial:	Finance and resource issues are covered above
Legal:	The legal team provided necessary support to the conference team and plan enhanced involvement in preparation for next year to assist in mitigating any risks well ahead of time
Communications and engagement:	Communications and engagement issues are addressed above
Equality and diversity:	EDI issues are addressed above
Resource:	Finance and resource issues are covered above

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (Fol)		
Para ref	Fol exemption and summary	Expires
n/a	n/a	n/a