

Meeting: Legal Services Board

Date: 17 October 2023

Item: Paper (23) 54

Title: Annual Conference 2024 Update

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Status: Official/Official sensitive

Introduction: Purpose of the paper/ Issue

1. This paper updates the Board on the Reshaping Legal Services 2024 conference plans. It sets out the proposed theme and content for the event.

Recommendation(s)

2. The Board is invited to **discuss** the developing plans for the annual conference.

Timing

3. The conference is taking place on 7 March 2024.
4. The event will start at 9am with registration and networking. The main programme will then run from 10am to 4pm. Lunch will be provided.
5. Board Members who cannot attend the conference are asked to let us know as soon as possible.

Background

6. The inaugural conference took place on 13 October 2022. The Board debriefed at its October 2022 meeting and evaluated the event at its November 2022 meeting (available on VBR).
7. The programme from October 2022 is available on the Reshaping Legal Services microsite, along with videos and presentations.¹

¹ <https://reshapinglegalservices.org.uk/2022/10/13/reshaping-legal-services-conference-a-diverse-public-deserves-a-strong-ethical-and-diverse-profession-13-october-2022/>

Reshaping Legal Services 2024

8. The overall aim of the conference is to:

- Maintain momentum in the sector-wide mission to deliver the ambitions of the Reshaping Legal Services strategy.
- Demonstrate the LSB's commitment to addressing the challenges set out in the strategy and ensure regulation continues to play its part.
- Launch an LSB project or initiative that demonstrates our progress.
- Promote collaboration and leadership and promote positive examples of good practice to encourage others to play their part in tackling the sector's challenges.

9. The conference is on 7 March 2024 at the King's Fund in London. It's the same venue as last year. It will be a hybrid event, so delegates can also attend online. It is again organised with the Legal Services Consumer Panel (LSCP).

10. So far, 142 delegates have signed up to attend in person and 28 online. We are aiming to attract 250 in-person delegates.

Conference title

11. Last year's conference title was 'A diverse public deserves a strong, ethical and diverse profession', which we spent considerable time deciding on and refining.

12. This year, we propose not having a conference title. Instead, we want to focus on building 'Reshaping Legal Services' as a brand and use the content, topics, and speakers on the programme to encourage attendance and create a 'buzz'. We will ensure consistency across a compelling programme without tying ourselves to an early title.

13. We propose that the key areas to explore through the conference this year include:

- Professional ethics and the rule of law
- Equality, diversity, and inclusion
- Technology and innovation, including artificial intelligence (AI)
- Access to justice

Content proposal

14. The Chair will open the conference with a short speech and wrap up at the end, drawing together the event's main themes.

15. We plan to find an external host for the event to help knit the conference together.
16. Speakers and panellists may be from both inside and outside the legal sector and diverse in terms of their backgrounds, professions, and viewpoints. They should provoke discussion about the challenges and opportunities facing the sector and inspire the audience to take action to reshape legal services to better meet the needs of society.
17. The developing program is attached in Annex A. It is continuing to evolve as we aim to ensure we have a full and compelling agenda, and includes the following elements (final section titles TBC):

Keynote speakers

18. We plan to have two keynote speakers on the programme. We considered whether to invite a government minister to speak at the conference. We concluded that this would be a risk due to the upcoming General Election and the speaker needing to withdraw.

Progress since Reshaping Legal Services 2022

19. We propose to begin the conference with a short video on the activities and outputs that followed the October 2022 conference and the impact so far, followed by a discussion.

NDA – upholding professional standards and ensuring fairness

20. We propose using the event to launch our policy response on non-disclosure agreements, subject to the board's discussion earlier in the meeting.
21. This project arose from discussions during the October 2022 conference, and this follow-up session will be an opportunity to demonstrate how we plan to ensure that regulation addresses the issues raised.

Panel discussion 1: The interface between consumers (or access to justice) and regulation

22. This panel discussion will focus on consumer-focused regulation, including using consumer feedback to design and improve services. This would include insights from various stakeholders and draw on embargoed findings from the upcoming individual legal needs survey. The session will be informed by reflections and insights from the Legal Services Consumer Panel's October 2023 conference.

Panel discussion 2: What will lawyering look like in 2034?

23. This panel discussion will focus on what society and people who need legal services will need and expect from lawyers in the future. We will include a junior lawyer/future leader to share their perspective. The panel discussion would cover access to justice, ethics, and technology and innovation, including AI.

24. This future-looking session is intended to provoke regulators and the sector to think about what we must do to ensure the sector can meet the challenges ahead.

Stakeholder engagement and promotion

25. Following a competitive procurement process, we have appointed Luther Pendragon as our conference delivery partner. They will support our production and promotion of the event and deliver our communications plan.

26. Promotion of the event will increase in October 2023 as we announce speakers and panellists and seek to generate a 'buzz' about the event, including through social media and thought-leadership pieces.

27. The conference hashtag will be #RLS2024.

Bursary scheme

28. We will operate a bursary scheme like last year to widen participation in the event. This will include paying the travel costs for people who would otherwise find it difficult to attend. A basic application process has been devised, and recipients will be asked to contribute to the reshaping legal services microsite. The scheme will launch at the end of October 2023.

Next steps

29. We will keep the Board updated through the CEO report and Board papers.

Risks and mitigations	
Financial:	The Board agreed to the LSB's business plan and budget for 2023/24 following a public consultation, including our plan to hold an annual conference.
Legal:	The LSB will have full legal advisory support while preparing for the conference, including reviewing and/or drafting terms with external contractors and complying with all relevant legal obligations connected to the event (including data protection and health and safety).
Communications and engagement:	Issues are covered in the paper above.
Equality and diversity:	Equality and diversity are central to our planning. We will ensure the event is accessible and offer a bursary to widen participation. EDI will also be a key topic in the programme. We will also ensure speakers and panellists are from diverse backgrounds and that the programme appeals to audiences in England and Wales.
Resource:	Resources have been allocated within the budget for 2023/24.
Environmental:	We will seek ways to minimise the environmental impact of the conference. E.g., no printed program booklets and reusing material from last year, e.g., banner stands.

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (Fol)		
Para ref	Fol exemption and summary	Expires
N/A	None	N/A

Annex A – Developing conference programme

Time	Session
09.00-10.00	Registration and networking
10.00-10.15	Welcome address and opening remarks – Chair of the LSB
10.15-10.30	Keynote speech and Q+A
10.30-11.00	Progress since Reshaping Legal Services 2022
11.00-11.45	NDAs - upholding professional standards and ensuring fairness
11.45-12.15	Break
12.15-13.15	Panel discussion 1: The interface between consumers (or access to justice) and regulation
13.15-14.15	Lunch and networking
14.15-14.30	Keynote speech and Q+A
14.30-15.30	Panel discussion 2: What will lawyering look like in 2034?
15.30-16.00	Closing remarks and wrap-up