

# LSB 2024/25 draft business plan

## Consultation event

### 17 January 2024



As part of the 2024/25 business plan consultation, we hosted an online discussion event to talk through the key project areas and workstreams for the LSB over the next year. This was an opportunity for attendees to raise questions and feedback on the proposed plan.

The [draft business plan](#) and [consultation document](#) are available on our website, and the consultation closes on 12 February 2024.

The following is a note of the key questions and concerns raised. For further information, please contact us on [events@legalservicesboard.org.uk](mailto:events@legalservicesboard.org.uk)

#### Professional ethics and the rule of law

We were asked what the LSB was doing to address professional ethical issues, particularly by those working as in-house lawyers, that some felt were not being directly addressed by the frontline regulators. These concerns were also underpinned by the recent wide-spread media attention on the Post Office scandal, and the renewed focus on the role of in-house lawyers. Some attendees called on the LSB to be more rigorous in holding regulators to account for poor behaviour of legal professionals or do more to identify areas of concern. It was noted that the UK rates low in the Rule of Law international index, which is an ongoing cause for concern for the reputation of legal services.

- The LSB stated that we have a rigorous regulatory performance assessment process, and that we're investing in this further in the coming year. In respect of professional ethics, the LSB is exploring the extent to which regulators' existing rules and codes of conduct are capable of addressing professional ethical misconduct and are considering whether further regulatory intervention may be necessary to better incentivise and support legal professionals to identify, navigate and respond to professional ethical issues.

#### Access to justice

There was a sentiment from several attendees that more action is needed to directly tackle the challenges identified in the [Reshaping Legal Services](#) strategy, in particular, increasing access to justice. These points also acknowledged that change will be best facilitated through collaboration across the sector and regulators.

- The LSB stated that we believe everything we do should be framed through an access to justice lens, so the principles of our workstreams are in line with increasing access to justice for the public.
- We were asked to look at the role that fixed costs has had on access to justice in the civil litigation process, as many litigants are left without any of the allocated costs after legal fees. We said we would refer this to MoJ.

## Research programme

It was noted that the LSB should engage with all existing research reports in the sector before commissioning additional reports that cover the same ground – both for fiscal reasons and to limit the requests on a small pool of people who are often interviewed (for example, EDI research on senior members of the Bar).

There were some questions raised around the dedicated research budget, and our in-house capacity.

- The LSB engage external research companies due to the size and capacity of our inhouse research team (2 staff), and research is often initiated with a literature review of existing and available research.
- Our research planning and budgeting includes a major survey each year (2023/24 is the Individual Legal Needs Survey, upcoming in 2024/25 is the price and quality transparency research.) These large-scale surveys represent the single largest research project spend of the allocated research budget.

## Enforcement and disciplinary review

We were questioned on the evidence we have showing that the current enforcement and disciplinary toolkit available to regulators isn't sufficient or fit for purpose ahead of our plans to initiate a review in this area.

- Our annual regulatory performance reports have raised concerns of inconsistencies in the application of enforcement processes across the regulators. We also want to ensure that regulators have sufficient tools to deter and address serious and wilful misconduct. Views from the regulators on the adequacy of their toolkits differ, so the planned review is designed to consider any changes which would be taken forward as a recommendation under s69 of the Legal Services Act. We published an update on the review in August, available [here](#).

## Other points raised:

- The LSB issue a detailed breakdown of its operating costs in Note 2 of the LSB Annual Report and Accounts (ARA) – [2022/23 accounts available here](#). The next set of accounts will be published after the end of the financial year.
- The final budget will be updated to reflect any changes in forecasting and inflation which have taken place since the provisional budget was prepared in November 2023.
- Timeline for delivering the Single digital register, led by Legal Choices (expected in 2024)
- It was noted that there isn't sufficient reference to the Legal Services Consumer Panel (LSCP) expenditure in the LSB business plan. The LSCP operational costs and activities are not listed in the LSB business plan – these are published by the [LSCP separately](#).

- We were asked how feedback has shaped previous consultations, and highlighted examples from previous plans where we've demonstrated re-prioritisation in response to feedback.
- We regularly update the quarterly business plan milestone document on the website, for absolute transparency on progress with our workstreams.