

LSB 2025/26 draft business plan

Consultation event

15 January 2025



LEGAL SERVICES
BOARD

As part of the 2025/26 business plan consultation, we hosted an online event to discuss our proposed projects, activities and budget. The following is a thematic summary of the conversation.

The draft business plan and consultation document are [available on our website here](#). The consultation closes at 5pm on 3 February 2025.

Access to justice

We were asked what we mean by “third sector work on alternative funding models” in relation to our access to justice policy project. Separately, we were asked whether our work in this area should continue to focus on the role of regulation in facilitating access to justice.

We noted that organisations in the not-for-profit sector are exploring the feasibility of innovative funding models for access to justice, in collaboration with a wide group of stakeholders. We will seek to provide our support, including any research and evidence we can contribute to that discussion.

We also noted some forthcoming research from the Legal Services Consumer Panel and Nottingham Trent University, which examines the role of regulation in improving access to justice. We will carefully consider the report’s findings as we take forward work in this area. We are aware that regulation is not the primary solution to access to justice, though we believe it has a role to play.

Disciplinary and enforcement

We were asked whether, as part of our attention to regulators’ disciplinary and enforcement processes, we would consider how they conduct investigations.

We confirmed that our work here is designed to ensure regulators’ approaches to disciplinary and enforcement build public confidence and uphold standards, and that this included how they conduct investigations.

Consumer protection and empowerment

We were asked about the scope of our consumer protection work, how it differs from consumer empowerment and whether it would look at failures to deliver consumer protections rather than just action that could be taken in future.

We noted that the consumer protection work is at an early stage and our priorities at this stage are to build a comprehensive understanding of the risks of harm to consumers from recent market developments and to explore the balance between encouraging a thriving market and consumer protection.

Consumer empowerment – a separate workstream – will be considered as part of the Regulatory Performance Assessment (RPA). The RPA will outline the progress that regulators are making against [our expectations for consumer empowerment](#).

Measuring success

We were asked about the KPIs and metrics we use to measure the success of our business plan.

As part of our approach to policy making, we seek to establish metrics to allow us to monitor and evaluate our impact, while our [annual reports](#) provide high-level overviews of the progress we've made.

Research and horizon-scanning

We were asked about the timeframe for an updated State of Legal Services report – noting that the report has proven valuable previously in providing intelligence and data for the sector. Likewise, we were asked the next report – and our approach to research more broadly – would draw on work being done by other organisations.

We confirmed that planning work for the next State of Legal Services report has begun, and we anticipate engaging externally later in the year. We also confirmed that we endorse a collaborative approach to research and intelligence-gathering, including our new horizon-scanning function. We offered the example of our Technology and Innovation Forum as an effort to share insight and best practice across the sector and, at the same time, to avoid duplication of research.

We were asked whether any of our research projects might explore why relatively few consumers use comparison sites to inform their decisions about legal services providers.

We agreed this was an important topic and noted that the Legal Services Consumer Panel had undertaken research into this issue. We noted that this is an issue that frontline regulators may also wish to explore further.

Budget

Our proposed increase in budget was noted, alongside the reasons for the increase. We were asked whether organisations under investigation should in future bear the associated costs.

We explained that we do not currently have a “polluter pays” approach but have not ruled it out for the future.

We were asked whether the one-off, exceptional costs in the budget would be removed from future budgets.

We confirmed that one-off costs, such as some of our required office move costs, would not be included as baseline costs in future. On our legal costs, we noted that our Board wanted to ensure that we had some contingency budget. We explained that we

want to be upfront about potential costs but would not spend this contingency if it was not required, in which case it would be returned to the sector via a levy rebate.

We were also asked how the budget for the Legal Services Consumer Panel is decided.

We explained that the Legal Services Consumer Panel feed into the LSB budgeting process and that the LSCP have requested the required headcount and research budgets for 2025/26 to be able to achieve their objectives for next year.