

BAR
STANDARDS
BOARD

REGULATING BARRISTERS

Lisa Peplow
Legal Ombudsman
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22 February 2011

Dear Ms Peplow

Legal Ombudsman Consultation: Draft Business Plan 2011-12

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your Business Plan and I apologise for the slight delay in sending the Bar Standards Board's response.

The BSB commends the Legal Ombudsman (LeO) on a Plan which concentrates on consolidation of the new service and creating improvements following the successful commencement last year. The BSB considers the Plan is realistic and achievable. Our only comments are as follows:

The BSB finds it surprising that there is only passing comment in the "Strategy" and "Plan" to developing and improving the LeO's "conduct" referral mechanisms given that this is a fundamental, albeit relatively small, part of the LeO's role. The terms of the Legal Services Act ("the Act"), the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and the supporting Operational Protocols provide for the LeO to be the "single portal" for "consumer" complaints including the initial submission of any concerns by clients about issues of "conduct". As the BSB is completely reliant on the LeO to identify issues of conduct arising from "consumer/client" complaints, it is crucial for the performance of the BSB's regulatory functions that the LeO operates effective identification and referral mechanisms. The BSB therefore considers the Plan should incorporate specific "deliverables" in this area.

Yours sincerely



Baroness Ruth Deech
Chair, Bar Standards Board