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Press release

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Endorsement for the Office for Legal Complaints

Elizabeth France CBE has been re-appointed as Chair of the Office for Legal Complaints (OLC). It will be her second period of office after successfully establishing the Legal Ombudsman exactly one year ago.

Elizabeth France says: "I am delighted to have been given the opportunity to continue to lead the development of the Legal Ombudsman. It's an endorsement of all the hard work that's been put in making sure consumers have a real voice when it comes to grievances they may have with the legal profession. I am also looking forward to continuing to work with the profession as we all learn to navigate the new legal landscape of bundled and online services."

The OLC has six members in total and first met officially in July 2009. It is charged with overseeing the running of the Legal Ombudsman by the Legal Services Act 2007. In its first full year of operation some 75,000 people contacted the Legal Ombudsman with complaints about legal professionals. The new system of redress operates within a budget of £19.9m which is significantly cheaper than the regime it replaced (costing some £32.5m).

Speaking on her re-appointment Justice Minister, Jonathan Djangoly said: "Liz France has been a real driving force behind making the Legal Ombudsman a great success. I am delighted she has accepted to serve a further period of office. I'd like to wish her further success in her important role ensuring consumers can access an independent Ombudsman."

Elizabeth France's re-appointment will run from 1 November 2011 to 31 March 2014.

David Edmonds, Chair of the Legal Services Board added "Consumers and lawyers alike need an independent, impartial, fair and fast service to resolve complaints. The Legal Ombudsman is working hard to deliver that service and has made great progress in its first year. It gives me


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great pleasure to mark the service's first anniversary by warmly welcoming Elizabeth's re-appointment."

For further details please contact Alison Robinson on 0121 245 3070 or 07741 035 967.

Notes for editors

The Legal Service Board (LSB) successfully recommended to government that Liz France's appointment should be extended.

As well as being Chair of the Office for Legal Complaints, Elizabeth France is: Chair of the UK Public Affairs Council; a Member of the British Transport Police Authority; Vice President of Aberystwyth University and a member of the General Assembly of Manchester University.

Until 1 July 2009 Elizabeth was Chief Ombudsman and Chief Executive of the Ombudsman Service Ltd., which provided the Telecommunications Ombudsman Service (Otelo), the Energy Ombudsman Service and the Surveyors Ombudsman Service. She was a Non Executive Director of the Serious Organised Crime Agency from 2005-2010.

Elizabeth began her career in the Home Office, resigning to become the Data Protection Registrar in September 1994 and becoming Information Commissioner in January 2001.

Elizabeth has been awarded honorary doctorates by the Universities of De Montfort, Loughborough and Bradford and is a Fellow of Aberystwyth University. In June 2002 she was awarded a CBE, for services to data protection.