



The Society of Licensed Conveyancers

The Society of Licensed Conveyancers response to the LEO Transparency and Reporting Impact Discussion paper

Q1. Would adding extra filtering options for our decision data help consumers to make informed decisions when selecting a service provider? Are there other filters we do not currently offer that we should consider including?

A: We do not believe that offering extra filtering options would enable consumers to make informed decisions. The wording for these filters would invariably include legal wording which consumers would not be familiar with.

Q2. Would sending annual reviews to service providers (without publishing the information) be helpful in raising standards? If so, what should the selection criteria/methodology be?

A: We believe this would be helpful in raising standards. It is all too often easy to miss trends or not acknowledge that a person within a firm has a fundamental issue that needs to be addressed when working on the front line as well.

The criteria should include, summary of complaint, was the complaints handling reasonable, was the initial offer reasonable (if appropriate), how many cases attracted the case fee and how many was the fee waived. The cases should be all matters referred to the Ombudsman scheme.

Q3. Would edited annual review letters be useful to consumers? Are there any risks we should take account of when considering this proposal?

A. We do not feel that this would be helpful as these are likely to include legal jargon that clients are not familiar with and could confuse the client.

Q4. How might publishing full decisions help consumers to assess quality of service?

A. We do not feel that this does help consumers assess quality of service. There is much better left to independent review platforms where a wider snapshot of the firm's service can be assessed.

Review Platforms are able to give ratings of firms based on their review replies and a quick scan of the newest reviews is able to inform a consumer if the current service level being provided by the firm is also shown in the form of current reviews.

Q5. In what ways could publishing full decisions have benefits for firms and the wider sector?

A. We do not feel that publishing full decisions would have benefits for the firms and wider sector.

Q6. What reasons should we consider for not publishing full decisions? Please provide evidence with your answer.

- A. As stated in your discussion paper, any referral to LEO is seen as detrimental to the firm even when there is a finding in favour of the firm. Clients regularly refer to LEO in their complaints in the hope that the mere mention of this will ensure they receive compensation.

As detailed in the answer to Q4 there are better ways of assessing quality.

Q7a. Would it be useful and appropriate to be able to provide contextual information alongside our decision data? Do you foresee any potential difficulties with this, other than those already identified?

- A. IF decision data were to be published then contextual information is a must. In conveyancing this could be published in line with the Land Registry data that is freely available, if firms are worried that number of instructions or financial information is sensitive.

Q7b. (if you are responding from a regulatory body) What are some of the barriers preventing sharing of contextual data, or lessons we can learn from other sectors? Are there ways of overcoming these?

- a. N/A

Q8. Does publishing a greater range of data provide consumers with better information on which to make decisions about choosing a provider?

- a. We do not agree that this is beneficial, one of the benefits of the current system is that firms are able to stand their ground if they feel they have dealt with the complaint fairly and offered fair compensation (if appropriate). If informal decisions were also published then an unintended consequence could be that firms decide that they settle at all costs in order to ensure that no matters are referred to you.

The Society of Licensed Conveyancers and its members has lost trust and confidence in LeO to be impartial in its handling of complaints nor do they find LeO to be cost-effective when you add the £400 case fee and protracted time it takes to resolve the complaint. A typical

complaint here a £300 compensation is agreed informally effectively costs the law firm around £1000 after the case fee and time taken is added.

Q9. Would it be useful for LeO to publish a greater range of data for other reasons?

A. We do not see any reasons that would be useful.

Q10. Would allocation of resource to changing the Legal Services Act 2007 be appropriate? Who would it be most appropriate for us to work with on this project?

A. We do not feel that the Legal Services Act 2007 requires changing.

Q11. Would you support greater investment of budget and resources into improving our data collection and analysis for the purpose of transparency?

A. We would not support this. We feel that a better use of resources would be to invest in streamlining the process and engagement with stakeholders and working with them to drive up standards and complaints handling.