

Better information

Tony Stafford – Policy Manager

Overview of this session

- Why it is important for information about lawyers and their services to be transparent and accessible
- What's been happening in the legal services sector, and what's happening next
- Take-away points and practical steps for solicitors, their colleagues, and their businesses

Information transparency: a mandate for change



‘Legal services market study’
(December 2016)



“The development of information remedies in
legal services”
(March 2017)

How have we been responding?



Rules requiring clearer information on price, service and credentials

Clearer and accessible information on protections, and regulated status



Launching the Solicitors Register

An improved data sharing service for third parties



Development and relaunch of the 'Legal Choices' website

Reviewing progress: our evaluation



- 77% find online information useful in helping them find and choose legal service providers
- 68% of consumers and 56% of SMEs looked at prices on firm websites
- Just 10% who reviewed prices thought instructing a solicitor was unaffordable

Called for further action by the regulators to:



- Build on the reforms
- Address lack of information on quality

The quality indicators pilot

- Increasing the availability of quality indicators to consumers, focusing on conveyancing and employment
- Launched February 2021 – first phase looking at use of online customer reviews
- Collaboration and partnership working with other organisations:



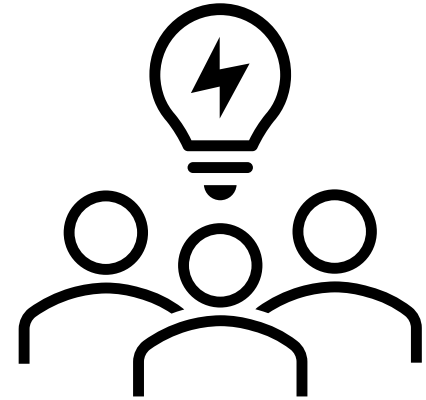
Participants

Working with comparison websites and review websites



Participants

And more than 70 law firms,
tripling new approaches and
carrying out actions



Supporting law firms to engage with online reviews



- New guidance for firms on engaging with online reviews
- Webinars to discuss the opportunities and address concerns
- Dialogue with firms about their experience of online client feedback

Supporting law firms to engage with online reviews

‘In short they’re good for business. We know that more people get in touch with us these days after they’ve read our reviews, from all around the country actually.’ (high street law firm in north-east England)

Supporting law firms to engage with online reviews

‘Our fee-earners and their teams are just over the moon when a 5 star review comes through. They really bring out the human side of our firm and they’re the proof of a job well done.’ (regional law firm in south Wales)

Supporting law firms to engage with online reviews

‘We’re just people at the end of the day and if we make mistakes we hold our hands up and try to fix things as best we can. To me, a disappointing review is in many ways just as valuable as a positive one.’ (small law firm in south east England)

Progress by digital comparison tools



25% increase in law firms engaging in Q1 2021



350% increase in law firms subscribing, and a 180% increase in law firms accessing free-to-use services by end of Q2 2021

Phase 2 - objective data

Now exploring the value of published data as a quality indicator, including:

- Land Registry data
- Employment dispute outcomes
- Legal Ombudsman data



CMA's other key 2020 recommendations

- Ensure compliance with our transparency rules
- Drive clearer, more comparable and prominent information on providers' websites
- Help consumers engage with information
- Ongoing research on what works best for consumers

Takeaway points

- Look at online reviews about your firm
- Consider what information about the quality of your services you could publish
- Let us know your thoughts – email us at qualityindicators@sra.org.uk
- Register to take part in our webinar – www.sra.org.uk/events

Your questions

