

Janet Edwards
Legal Ombudsman Corporate Services
PO Box 6803
Wolverhampton
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28 February 2013

Dear Ms Edwards

Legal Ombudsman Consultation: Strategy 2013 -2016, Business Plan 2013-14

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your Strategy for 2013-16 and Business Plan for 2013-14.

The Bar Standards Board (BSB) congratulates the Legal Ombudsman on another successful year in which you have been able to keep costs under control and achieve a below estimate budget outturn. We welcome the Legal Ombudsman's commitment to value for money and the apparent good stewardship of the funds provided by the legal profession.

We have no specific comments to make on either the Strategy or the Business Plan and consider both are realistic and achievable particularly given they build on, and do not significantly change, the approach set out in the previous strategy and plan for 2012-15 and 2012-13.

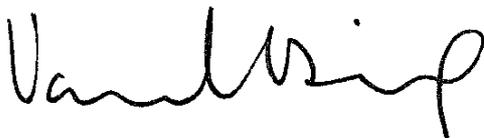
The BSB agrees with the general approach of continuing to consolidate and improve on the core statutory work of the Legal Ombudsman by focussing on efficiency through continuous improvement in all areas of your operation. We consider the range of KPIs that are increasingly becoming embedded in the Legal Ombudsman's work provide a sound basis for monitoring performance and your approach is one that the BSB will continue to watch, and where appropriate, learn from.

We also welcome the decision to separate, on a functional basis, current business from the work arising from the extension of your jurisdiction to claims management companies. There is clearly a need to ensure that this expansion is not inappropriately subsidised by the approved regulators. We trust a similar approach will be taken if your modelling indicates the jurisdiction should be further expanded to include a voluntary scheme.

We welcome your recognition of the importance of signposting complaints information to clients and understand that there has been some discussion about whether the Ombudsman's office should have a more visible role in providing information to clients of legal services providers on how to complain. We would support such an approach.

As the BSB moves towards a more risk and evidenced approach to the regulation of barristers, we are keen to build our information sharing arrangements with the Ombudsman and would welcome an early opportunity to discuss how this should be progressed. I have asked the relevant department to contact your offices in that regard.

Yours sincerely



Dr Vanessa Davies
Director, Bar Standards Board