

News release

Firms invited to join customer review pilot

21 June 2021

Law firms have been invited to join a pilot exercise that is helping develop meaningful quality indicators which can help potential clients choose their legal service provider.

The exercise - a joint project we are running with the Council for Licensed Conveyancers (CLC), CILEx Regulation and the Bar Standards Board (BSB) - has brought together website providers and firms to encourage clients to post reviews about the services they received. More than 70 law firms have already signed up to engage with a number of providers to look at how reviews could add value to other comparison data, such as price.

Because there have already been so many encouraging signs of progress in the three months the pilot has been running, it will probably be extended, giving more firms the chance to sign up.

Tracy Vegro, SRA Executive Director, Strategy and Innovation, said: 'We were obviously confident of seeing the project produce meaningful results that would help develop meaningful quality indicators, but we did not expect to see such a strong level of engagement initially, and to see other, far-reaching effects emerging too. We originally said the pilot would run for six months, but we want to expand it to make sure we capture all the great work that firms are doing.'

'So there is still time for more firms to get involved and become part of the momentum the pilot is creating. Stimulating the market so it is motivated to act allows for greater innovation in the long run when compared to moving straight to increased regulation, and the sector is clearly reaping the benefits of this already. We would encourage any other firm to join the project.'

As well as the marketing boost the pilot has given to law firms, many have also seen other benefits or view it as a catalyst for change. For example, some are reporting that they are incorporating customer feedback into individual staff performance reviews, adding them to the agenda at senior management meetings and using them as part of their rewards programmes. Positive feedback has also helped to boost staff morale.

Many firms now routinely monitor for reviews submitted on different platforms and say that online reviews represent a core element of their approach to managing client feedback, both good and bad. Firms are

accessing a mix of subscription packages and free-to-use tools during their engagement with review websites.

Comparison websites have also seen increased activity, Trustpilot have reported a 25% increase in firms claiming their profile on the platform, while Review Solicitors have reported a 350% increase in firms using its paid for services (adjusted to allow for the pandemic) and a 180% increase in firms signing up for their free services since the pilot began. Three more providers have signed up to the pilot since it started.

We will be carrying out research to find the best way to raise awareness amongst consumers of the benefits of shopping around for legal services. Legal services tend to be one-off or infrequent purchases, so the 'triggers' used in sectors such as energy and insurance are not as evident. The research will therefore explore options relevant to the legal services market.

We are also beginning to explore objective data available to help consumers compare quality and will be liaising with comparison website providers and firms involved in the pilot.

Further information on comparison websites is available on [our Transparency Rules pages \[https://rules.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources-archived/transparency/customer-reviews/\]](https://rules.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources-archived/transparency/customer-reviews/), along with guidance on the rules themselves, the clickable logo and dealing with complaints.