

Complaints transparency

Research with users of legal services
Summary of findings

March 2022



Bringing the voices of communities into the heart of organisations



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1. Executive summary

1.1 Introduction

Community Research recruited a cross section of 41 users of legal services to take part in an online research platform and asked them to complete a series of tasks and questions relating to the process of making a complaint and the transparency of complaints information on legal service providers' websites.

1.2 Key findings

The research indicates that, whilst there are some positive examples, not all complaints information on legal services providers' websites is as transparent as it could be:

- Research participants often opted to look for links to complaints information within the main body of the home page or within a 'Contact us' tab, in the first instance, with little success.
- A number of legal service providers make an assumption that consumers will 'read the small print' contained within the footer of a web page, when, in reality, research participants demonstrated that consumers will have different levels of familiarity with corporate websites; if information is in the footer it will not always be found. Furthermore, some participants will consider it purposely 'hidden' and reflective of an organisational culture that is not open to learning from complaints.
- In some instances, visibility of complaints information was further obscured by the fact that participants were not always looking for a complaints process but rather a means of making a complaint (contact details of a legal services provider). This will likely have implications for the channel consumers choose to use to make their complaint and their awareness of the time it may take to receive a response, for example, several participants indicated they may use the chat function.
- In short, there was a general call from participants for complaints information to be more prominent on legal service providers' websites. This would allow information to be easily found and communicate an organisational culture that is open to receiving complaints.

Once found, the complaints information is generally understood by participants. The vast majority of those who took part in the research recognised (often even before finding complaint information on providers' websites) that they had to raise a complaint with the legal service provider before they could escalate it further. Those participants who visited the Legal Ombudsman's website, in the first instance, also found information about the correct process for making a complaint. However, there were concerns that making a complaint to a provider could jeopardise an ongoing legal case and did not necessarily reflect the power imbalance between consumer and legal service provider. Furthermore, participants believed that this route may not be appropriate in all circumstances and put forward instances where they thought it may



be better not to follow the process, for example, in cases involving negligence, fraud, a breakdown of communication and/or trust between consumer and provider. As a result, it appears that understanding the process does not necessarily mean that it will always be followed, indicating that there is a role for the Legal Ombudsman in offering support and reassurance for those wishing to make a complaint.

Furthermore, recent research for the Legal Services Board¹ confirms that consumers are inherently vulnerable when they approach a legal services provider, both due to their situation and because the law and legal system are hard to understand and navigate for a layperson. These situational vulnerabilities may be further exacerbated if consumers are in the position of needing to make a complaint and, therefore, having a transparent, easy to understand complaints process is vital.

2. Introduction

2.1 Background

In December 2018, new Transparency Rules were introduced by the Approved Regulators in legal services, with an aim of ensuring that easy-to-understand information on legal services providers was more readily available to consumers. This included a specific rule on the publication of complaints information on websites.

While it was expected that these new rules would result in a reduced volume of premature complaints to the Legal Ombudsman, this has not been the case and premature complaint volumes to the Legal Ombudsman have remained consistent, accounting for approximately a third of the complaints received.

An initial review of the websites of the 20 firms receiving the highest volume of premature complaints was undertaken by the Legal Ombudsman internally to locate complaints pages / information on each of the firms' websites, with an aim of understanding how this information was being presented and how easy it was to access. This work found an inconsistent approach to how complaints information is being presented, with few firms providing links to complaints information directly from their home pages. While this was a small sample, it did suggest that the effectiveness of the transparency rules could be impeded by inconsistencies in how firms chose to publish their complaints information on their websites. The internal research concluded by recommending that the application of this transparency rule, and its effectiveness in informing consumers about the complaints process, should be explored in more detail through independent research.

This report outlines findings based on that subsequent independent research and focusses solely on the transparency of complaints information published on legal

¹ <https://legalservicesboard.org.uk/news/lsb-research-highlights-the-need-for-the-legal-sector-to-provide-better-support-to-vulnerable-consumers>



service providers' websites. Whilst other formats of complaints information may be available to consumers, they were not within the scope of this research.

2.2 Methodology

Community Research recruited a cross section of users of legal services ²(within the past 5 years) into an online research platform (Recollective) and asked them to complete a series of tasks and questions.

The core task was to conduct an online search for information about making a complaint, starting from one of two points:

- The legal services provider's website
*"Now we would like you to imagine that you were not happy with the legal services you received from the company that you named or selected in the previous task, and you wished to make a complaint. **Please go to their website and find out about the process for making a complaint.**"*
- A search engine
*"Now we would now like you to imagine that you were not happy with the legal services you received from the company that you named or selected in the previous task, and you wished to make a complaint. **Please go to your own preferred search engine (Google, Bing, Duck Duck Go etc.) and take us through the steps you would go through to make that complaint.**"*

Across the sample, just over half were asked to go direct to the website of a legal service provider and others were asked to start their complaint from a search engine. These different starting points provided an opportunity to understand if participants would ever look for information on the relevant legal service provider's website, if not specifically directed to. Furthermore, the approach provided some insight into whether participants using alternative websites would be successfully directed to the correct process for making a complaint.

As well as recording their thoughts as they searched for complaints information; following the exercise, participants were asked a series of follow up questions. These covered how they felt about the information they had found, what they had understood from it and what their next steps would likely be, if they wanted to proceed with a complaint. Of course, what research participants believe and say they might do cannot be taken as equating directly to what users of legal services would do in real life and research cannot ever perfectly replicate the real-world situation. In particular, it is important to be mindful of the fact that we cannot know what other sources of complaints information would be available to users of legal services in a real-world

² These participants were recruited from the Legal Services Board Consumer Panel



situation nor can research replicate the heightened emotions involved with making a real complaint.

2.3 Sample

The table below provides a breakdown of the 41 participants involved in the research by key variables. The sample design was, in part, informed by the Legal Services Consumer Panel tracking data (carried out by YouGov):

Variable	41 Participants
Experience of legal services in last five years	
Yes	ALL
Gender	
Male	22
Female	19
Age group	
18 to 34	9
35 to 54	22
55+	10
Region	
North of England	9
Midlands	11
South of England	15
Wales	6
Vulnerability measures	
English is not first language	2
Has a disability or long-term condition (day to day activities limited a little or a lot because of a health problem or disability)	9
Social grade	
ABC1	30
C2DE	11
Ethnic background	
Minority ethnic background	7

Notes on reading the report

This is a qualitative research study. This kind of research cannot be – and does not seek to be – representative of the wider population. It is not intended to be statistically reliable nor does it draw conclusions about the extent to which something is true for the wider population.



Throughout the report, quotes have been included to illustrate particular viewpoints. It is important to remember that the views expressed may not always represent the views of all those who participated.

3. Experience of legal service providers

Summary: Participants had experience of a range of legal services. Several believed they had cause for complaint but expressed concerns about pursuing this. We hypothesise that the process of making a complaint could potentially exacerbate situational vulnerabilities (arising from the need to use legal services) – making transparency of the complaints process vital.

Participants involved in the research had used legal services for a variety of reasons, including:

- Conveyancing
- Employment issues
- Will writing
- Power of attorney
- Probate
- Divorce
- Tenancy issues
- Personal injury
- Immigration status

For the most part, participants were happy with the legal services they had received. However, several believed that they had had reason to complain about the services received, but explained that they did not have the emotional energy to pursue a complaint and/or felt that the risk of making a complaint was too great. All of these participants came from a high socio-economic background and might not be typically classed as vulnerable; however, previous research conducted on behalf of the Legal Services Board³ confirms that people are inherently vulnerable when they approach a legal professional, both due to their situation and because the law and legal system are hard to understand and navigate for a layperson.

I am currently using a legal service to evict a tenant from my rented property....I think that they have not been particularly pro-active in engaging with the tenant to reach a solution....The problem is that the matter is ongoing and I am already

³ <https://legalservicesboard.org.uk/news/lbsb-research-highlights-the-need-for-the-legal-sector-to-provide-better-support-to-vulnerable-consumers>



financially invested in completing the work. If I complain now I am concerned that they will not deliver the service in full. (Male, ABC1, South East)

It was thoroughly unsatisfactory from start to end, at a super-stressful time. I was so relieved the whole process was over, and it had caused so much damage, with having a direct-access barrister who had zero interest in doing what he promised, I simply didn't have the emotional energy. I chalked it up to experience. (Female, ABC1, North West)

4. Exploring different starting points

Summary: When simply tasked with 'making a complaint' not all participants looked for a complaints policy. This has implications for the transparency of complaints information - how to make it visible to those not actively looking for it.

As part of the research, participants were asked to imagine that they wished to make a complaint about the legal services provider they had used most recently or, alternatively, to select a legal services provider from a predetermined list of 20 providers obtained from the Legal Ombudsman. Participants were then asked either to:

- Go to the website of the legal service provider and find out about the process for making a complaint OR;
- Go to their preferred search engine and talk through the steps they would go through to make that complaint.

Many of the participants, who started at a search engine, went on immediately to 'google' the name of the legal services provider and navigate their way to the provider's website to look for information. Others selected to undertake a wider 'google' search to find complaints information, search terms included:

- How to make a complaint about a legal service provider.
- How to make a complaint about a solicitor.
- How to make a complaint about [name of specific provider].

There were several examples of participants going to the Legal Ombudsman website from their search results. In part, the decision to conduct a broader 'google' search and the search terms used could have been driven by task instructions; however, it is also feasibly an indication that some users of legal services may not immediately think to resolve their complaint directly with the legal services provider, in the first instance.

Furthermore, even when participants went straight to the website of the legal services provider, not all were looking for a written complaints policy, some were simply looking for a means of making a complaint and appeared content with finding contact information for a provider (including the chat function).



The address is at the top of the page, the number and email address. Obviously, you can send your complaint and you can speak directly to someone if you really want to. (Male, C2DE, North West)

I want to make a complaint that the service is not OK with me, so I go to 'Contact us' button and register my complaint [via contact us form]. (Male, ABC1, London)

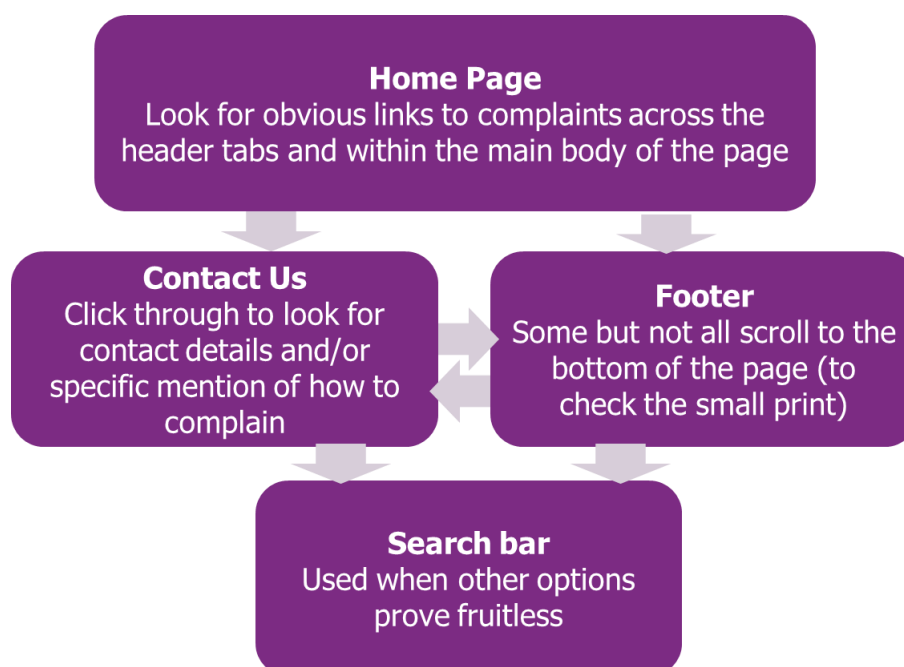
5. Navigating the providers' websites

Summary: Participants used a number of common routes when looking for the complaints process on providers' websites. When information was not available via any of these routes it was judged to be particularly difficult to find. In one or two cases participants gave up or got led astray.

5.1 Common approach

Participants who focussed on finding a complaints policy often shared a broadly common approach to searching out the information across the different providers' websites. See Figure 2.

Figure 2: A common approach to searing for complaints information



Exploring the home page

Most participants began their search for the complaints process by browsing the home page of the legal services provider for an obvious link to a complaints policy.



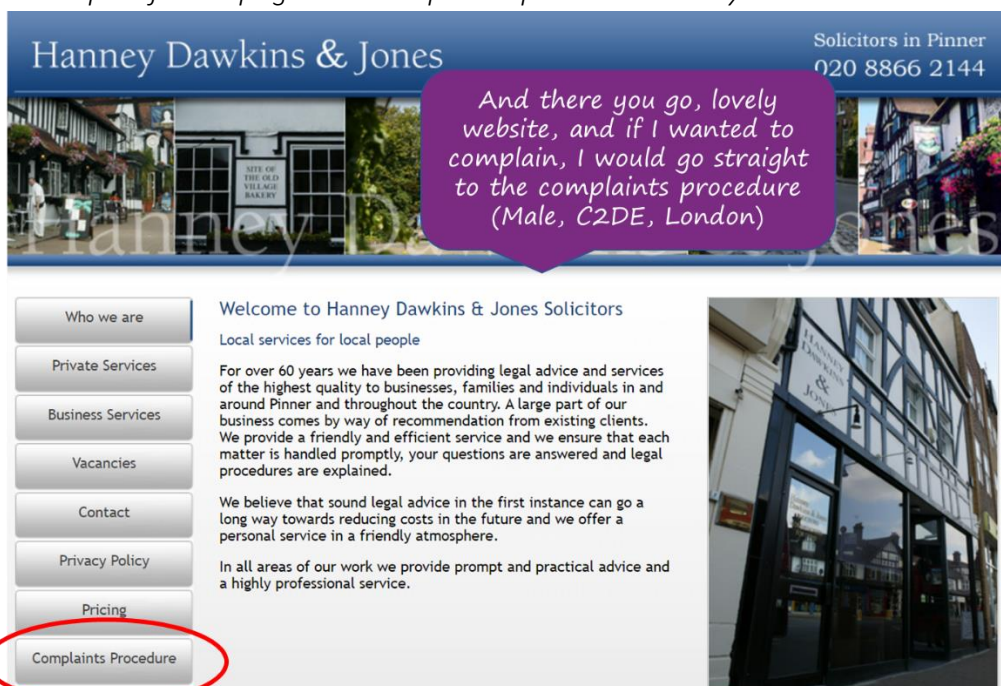
- However, only one of the websites viewed had the complaints policy clearly listed within a tab on the home page (see Figure 3).
- For most participants, a brief look at the home page revealed very little.

I can't see anything on the front page that tells me. It is all about everything that they do right from Wills, Family, Employment law. Nothing on the front of the page [about complaints]. (Male, C2DE, Wales)

I'm just going to have a quick read and scroll down. See if it has anything on the first page that tells you about how to complain about their services. (Female, ABC1, East Anglia)

First of all, I'm looking at their home page. It's got a list across the top of all the different services they offer. But nothing I can see that says what to do in the event you wish to make a complaint, so I shall have a look down. I would have thought something like that would have been near the top somewhere. (Male, C2DE, East Anglia)

Figure 3: Example of homepage with complaints procedure clearly visible



After having had little success in locating the complaints information within the main body of the home page, participants generally went on to either scroll down to the bottom of the page or proceeded to click on 'Contact us' to seek out further information. In some instances, participants tried both routes.



Scrolling to the footer

Some participants appeared familiar with the type of information generally contained within the footer of a company website and scrolled to the footer within several seconds of landing on the home page.

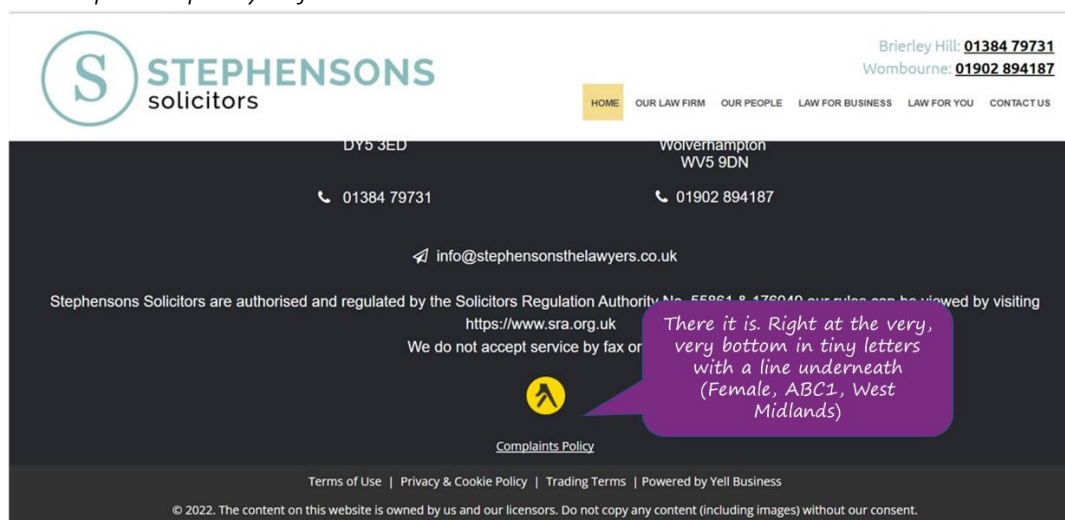
OK, so I'm going to have a look on the website for the complaint section, normally this is tucked away somewhere, so I will scroll down and, yeah, there's a link at the bottom. (Male, ABC1, North East)

However, the type of information contained within a web page footer was by no means familiar to all participants and some only arrived at the information in the footer having meticulously studied other options on the home page. Others never found it. Even when a link to a complaints policy was found, several went on to describe it as 'hidden' or 'buried'.

I wouldn't scroll all the way down, but very helpfully they have complaints procedure right at the bottom here. (Female, ABC1, North West)

I didn't find it until I looked at the last place left that I did not search, which was right at the footer of the homepage. (Male, ABC1, East Anglia)

Figure 4: Complaints policy in footer



Clicking on Contact us

'Contact us' was another obvious port of call for many participants; both those actively looking for a complaints process and those simply seeking a means of making a complaint. However, no participant appeared to find complaints information within 'Contact us'.

I would scroll down and see if there is the option here to contact them because usually I find on websites that if there's a contact us button, usually complaints might come under there. (Female, ABC1, East Anglia)



So, to Contact us again, I'd expect a bit more of a bespoke information. Again, it's asking for a full-priced fixed quote....., nothing specific to saying that, they'd be the opportunity to make a complaint here. (Male, ABC1, North East)

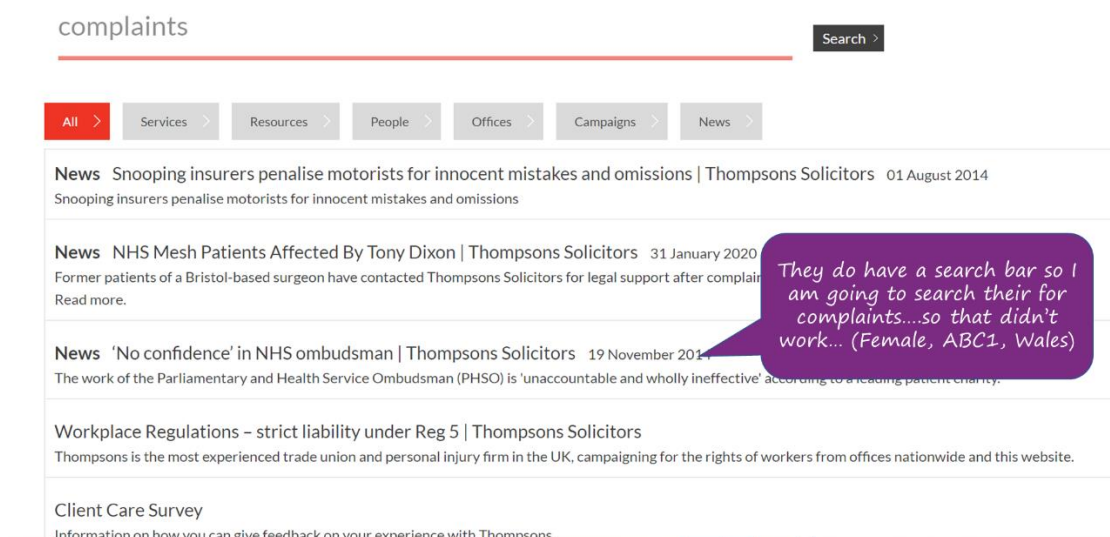
Using the search function

Having tried several routes, some participants resorted to typing in 'complaints' to the website's search function.

So given that there are no links to making a complaint... I'm going to do a search for complaint. Aha, so on the search results, the first thing that's come up is their complaints procedure. (Female, ABC1, Yorkshire)

Okay so it's not in an obvious place, I did have to type at the top in the search 'complaints' to find out where the complaints procedure is and had I not done that I would have had to contact somebody through requesting a call back function that comes up. (Female, ABC1, London)

Figure 5. Failed search



5.2 Failed attempts

With the above routes exhausted finding the complaints policy often became a case of trial and error and multiple dead ends. One participant gave up trying and one participant resorted on clicking on a link that took them to the Solicitors Regulation Authority's website.

I was unable to find any information about making a complaint, which I perceive to be most unfriendly and certainly not welcoming. In conclusion it did not feel like the service provider would be open to receiving a complaint. (Female, ABC1, Wales)



6. Review of the complaints process

Summary: Regardless of whether participants accessed information about the complaints process through the website of a legal service provider or through information provided on the Legal Ombudsman website (via a 'google' search), the result was an almost universal understanding that a complaint has to be raised with the legal services provider in the first instance. However, a number of participants also believed that this route may not be appropriate in all circumstances.

6.1 Overall thoughts on the complaints processes found on legal service providers' websites

Most participants were happy with the complaints process if and when they found it. They generally believed that, although somewhat formal in tone, the information was easy to understand. Furthermore, even the existence of a written process helped reassure them that the provider was open to receiving complaints.

It's very clear and in layman terms. It isn't too wordy. It covers the key points of what to expect i.e. how the complaint will be handled, time frames for response, and the process for it not satisfied with outcome. It also gives assurance about customer satisfaction being a priority. (Female, ABC1, Yorkshire)

Seemed pretty straight forward. Gives you details of what they need and the timescale for replying. (Female, C2DE, Wales)

I think it's incredibly clear and transparent, and explained very well. (Female, ABC1, North West)

That said, the following points were mentioned by some:

- Lengthy timescales, particularly for those who might need immediate redress. Several participants called for a more immediate acknowledgement of the complaint (before the 3 days set out in some policies) and others highlighted that 21 days was a long time to wait to receive a written response to the complaint. There were several calls for updates within this period.

A lot of people get very frustrated when things move slowly when there are no issues. I think contacting them frequently and to be in email or phone contact on a regular basis makes you feel reassured everything is being done. (Female, C2DE, South East)

- Providing a contact name/job role to address the complaint to offer reassurance that the complaint was being handled by someone sufficiently senior and/or independent to the source of the complaint.



I think it is helpful to have a different individual within the company to deal with the complaint. i.e., the client doesn't have to raise the issue with the person they are complaining about. (Female, ABC1, North West)

- One or two suggested that an online complaint form that asked for information could potentially make the process easier, rather than consumers having to write or email in their complaint:
 - To ensure that consumers provided all the necessary information.
 - They also wanted to be able to have access to a copy of this form once submitted.

6.2 Understanding of first step in the process

The vast majority of participants (39/41) understood that they were required to make their complaint to the legal services provider in the first instance. This understanding was reinforced by the complaints processes they found on providers' websites and, in several cases, information on the Legal Ombudsman's website.

The legal services provider lets you know how long to expect a resolution from them, which I think is a good thing to include on their website. They also mention the Legal Ombudsman guidelines, giving the impression they are likely to deal with the complaint correctly. Because of this, I would make the complaint to them directly, as I feel trust that they will deal with it best. (Male, ABC1, East Anglia)

The site made it clear that you could not complain about a legal services provider through a third party until you had made a complaint through the provider themselves first. This made the process feel longer and more complicated but at least I knew that this was the order I needed to go in, thanks to the clear flow chart that was provided. (Male, ABC1, South West)

Many participants also explained that it was also the more natural route:

- The legal service provider is the cause of the complaint and therefore it was deemed common courtesy to give them an opportunity to address the complaint first.
- Also, some thought it was potentially more straightforward to approach the provider than an external organisation.

This is because I would like to give the legal firm the opportunity to resolve the complaint internally first, before I escalate my concerns further. (Female, ABC1, London)

I think that I should give them a chance to fix the problem and explain their actions. There may be a reason or an oversight that can be sorted out without having to resort to external sources. If I then had to take it further, I would have



the proof that I have tried to sort it out with the service provider. (Male, C2DE, London)

I would always try and resolve my complaint with the service provider and would only look elsewhere if I felt like I was not listened to. (Female, ABC1, North West)

Although the majority of participants understood the process for making a complaint and recognised that the complaint had to be raised with the legal services provider in the first instance, there were concerns raised in relation to this:

- The potential for a complaint to jeopardise an ongoing legal case.

So, what I am find confusing here, is that even though the law firm has its own process, if you have been assigned a lawyer from that firm.... or if you are complaining to the law firm, the lawyer will know that you are the one making the complaint, and if the person is still handling the case, you don't want it to ruin the case. (Female, ABC1, London)

- The power imbalance between the consumer and the legal service provider.

If a solicitor has been, say, aggressive and rude, I can see why people would not want to complain directly to them first. Plus, there is the element of feeling at a disadvantage with a solicitor, legally. If they say black is white, would you believe them simply because of their legal background? (Female, ABC1, West Midlands)

Suggesting that the Legal Ombudsman has a role to play in both signposting and supporting users of legal services, wishing to make a complaint, to follow the correct process.

6.3 Exceptions to the rule

There were also instances where participants believed that consumers may have good cause not to follow the stipulated process:

- If the complaint about the provider was associated with grave misconduct/negligence/fraud.
- If communication and/or trust between the consumer and the legal service provider had completely broken down.

Yes, if it was a whistleblowing type of situation or grave misconduct then I would be more inclined to use an independent body. (Female, ABC1, North West)

If it was something minor I would endeavour to solve it with the service provider but if, for example, I needed to complain about something more serious such as negligence I would take it to a higher authority. (Male, C2DE, Wales)

If my complaint was in regards to the service provider working outside of the law or some major breach then I would likely go direct to an external organisation. Such a breach would knock my confidence in the integrity of the



provider and I would not have faith in them addressing the complaint satisfactorily. (Female, ABC1, Yorkshire)

If it was a fundamental breakdown in communication then I believe that an external party may be the only way to bring the two parties together. (Male, C2DE, London)

7. Recommendations from participants

Finally, participants put forward suggestions for what more they thought could be done to ensure that consumers who have a complaint about a legal service provider try to resolve it through the legal service provider itself, in the first instance:

Legal service providers to display a more obvious link to the complaints process on their website.

Even those who had found the complaints process relatively easily felt that having it in a more prominent position on the website would help indicate to consumers that the provider had a culture that was open to receiving complaints. In some cases, they felt that this could counteract the negative emotions associated with the provider (stemming from the original complaint).

Legal service providers should make it easier for clients to find out how to make a complaint. Putting the complaints procedure right at the footer on the bottom of a long page is not good enough. Hiding it away on a website which would take a client 30 minutes to find, gives the impression they would not like a complaint to come through, and having this impression given to clients before they've even made the complaint, would frustrate them more. (Male, ABC1, East Anglia)

Make a section on the website titled complaints so that it is clear for any prospective customers to then access. It was only through trying different menus that I was able to find the information. (Male, ABC1, North East)

Maybe they could put the complaints procedure at the top of the page instead of the bottom. (Male, C2DE, North West)

The website that I chose to look at did not seem to have any information on their home page relating to raising a complaint with them *before* going to the regulators. Again, this could be clearly stated on the homepage, in a prominent position near to the top of the homepage. Also appended to this information could be the name of person who deals with complaints withing the organisation. (Male, C2DE, East Anglia)

Legal service providers should continue to make it clear to consumers, at key stages of the relationship, that there is a formal complaints process in place, should they need one.



There was a sense that legal service providers could not simply rely on their website to communicate a complaints process.

Ensuring that each client is told by the legal provider from consultation onwards about the information to do with complaints so they have the details should they need to use it. (Female, ABC1, London)

I think by outlining the complaints option on any agreement or paperwork also sets out to the client that should the service fail, this is something that can logged directly with the company to then resolve. (Male, ABC1, North East)

I imagine by putting a note on the final bill. Something along the lines of 'If you are not satisfied with any aspect of the work carried out, please contact Ms/Mr XXX who will be happy to discuss the matter'. (Female, ABC1, West Midlands)

Legal service providers to have a named contact for dealing with complaints, wherever possible.

Participants believed that the provision of a named contact within the complaints policy might help ensure that complaints were made to providers in the first instance.

- Consumers would immediately be able to recognise if their complaint was being dealt with by an independent party within the firm.
- Consumers would feel more in control of the process as they had a point of contact and a clear route to follow up on their complaint, if they felt the need to.

Legal Ombudsman to have their role/process clearly stated on their website

Finally, several participants visited the Legal Ombudsman website during the course of the research and one or two completed the Complaint Checker. They believed that there was scope for the Ombudsman to further highlight:

- That they should not be contacted in the first instance.
- That they are not a quicker route to resolution.

I think that the Ombudsman should always set out its position as a much longer drawn-out solution. Most people want a quicker solution so highlighting this point might be helpful. Also, some advice on who best to engage with before approaching the Ombudsman might be helpful and guidance on being factual and not emotional in the approach with the provider. (Male, ABC1, South East)

Well, the first thing I would do is have that fact in big bold letter on the home page of your website. I have just gone on it and it was not on the home page and it was not until I clicked on the 'Find out how to complain' that I found that info in the introduction. (Male, C2DE, South East)

It should state clearly on the Ombudsman's website that you must go to the provider first as some people might feel they will get further taking it straight to



the Ombudsman which isn't necessarily the most productive way to go about it.
(Female, ABC1, North East)



8. Appendix – online activity content





LeO Complaints Transparency

Research with users of legal services

February 2022

We will conduct an **online forum with 40 participants** (recruited from the LSB Panel). The discussions will be 'live' for approximately 1 week and participants will be asked to log on several times during this time and respond to specific tasks.

How it works

- Invitations to take part will be sent to a number of participants who have been profiled for the LSB Panel (who we already hold a certain amount of information for and know whether or not they have used legal services in the past 5 years).
- From those who register an interest in taking part, we will select 40 who reflect our proposed sample specification.
- The selected participants will then join our Recollective platform. They will be able to login and choose their own username, allowing them to be completely anonymous to any clients who are observing, although we (at Community Research) will know their identities.
- The software allows us to 'tag' each individual participant so that we can identify their characteristics/recruitment criteria. We will be able to analyse our findings according to these criteria.
- The tasks can be set up so that the participant needs to answer for themselves first without seeing other participants' responses – but once they have responded, they are then able to see and comment on what others have written. **However, the screen recordings will not be shared with other participants.**
- LeO will be invited to observe the process.
- Any screen recordings/data can be downloaded from the site as soon as the tasks are complete.

We have drafted some tasks/questions below and suggested the order in which questions could be asked.

Objectives of the research.

To test whether or not 40 consumers can find information about how to complain about a legal services firm, from two different starting points:

- 20 starting at the legal services firms' website.
- 20 starting at a Search engine home page.

Agenda

TASK 1	<p>General introduction</p> <p>Introduce research and Community Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thank you for signing up to take part in this online community to help us understand how people may go about making a complaint about a legal service provider (most likely solicitors, barristers, legal executives, and licensed conveyancers). We are interested in your honest feedback and there are no right or wrong answers. This is not a test of any kind.• Before starting the forum, we need to check you're happy to take part. We want to draw your attention to the following points:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please check that you are happy that the selected username, gives you the level on anonymity that you are happy with. You can change your username by clicking on Account Settings in the top right-hand corner of the Recollective webpage.• Anonymous quotes taken from your feedback may be used in our report to the consumer body who has commissioned this work. Your name will not be linked to this report and there will not be any follow up in relation to the things you have said. We will provide you with the name of the organisation who has commissioned this research at the end of the project as naming them now may influence how you answer the questions.• The main aim of this piece of research it to understand more about how you might use the internet/websites to look up how to make a complaint. One of the tasks will ask you to record your computer screen and use audio to talk us through your website browsing. We will compile a short film of these clips to share with our client to help them understand any issues relating to how easy or difficult it is to find information on the internet. The videos are for our client's internal use only.• For further details about how we keep your personal data secure and your rights you can go to: www.communityresearch.co.uk/privacy-policy
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To complete the recoding task, you will need to use the desktop version of Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, or Microsoft Edge. Please be careful to close down any open tabs that may identify you before starting recording. This task cannot be completed on a mobile phone or tablet. • If you are unsure that you have the right technology and wish to check that this will work for you, please complete the following check below. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please tick here to indicate that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I consent and am happy to take part • I don't consent and am not happy to take part <p>Now, please tell us something about yourself and the legal services you have used in the past 5 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do you live and, if you work, what do you do? (Please do not share your name or any information that might identify you to others in this forum) • What did you use legal services for (no need to go into a lot of detail)? • Were you happy with the legal services you received? If not, why not? • If not happy, did you consider making a complaint? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did you not pursue it?
TASK 2A	<p>Online search – legal services website</p> <p>Before we start, please write in the website address of the legal services company you used most recently:_____</p> <p>If, for any reason, they do not have a website, please choose one from the list below (the list will be presented in randomized order, so will not look the same to each participant)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of 20 websites to be provided (randomised order) <p><i>"Imagine that you were not happy with the legal services you received from the company that you named or selected above, and you wished to make a complaint. Please go to their website and find out about the process for making a complaint."</i></p> <p>We are interested in how easy or difficult it is to find the information you would need to make this <i>imaginary</i> complaint. We would like you to navigate/click through the selected website and 'think aloud' as you look for the information you need. As you record your computer screen please think aloud/talk us through:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is it you are looking for? • Is everything where you would expect it to be? • Anything that is difficult to find? • Anything that you find surprising? • Anything that you find confusing? • Etc <p>Before you start, please check:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have no other windows open, to ensure your privacy. • Remember you need to use a desktop version of GoogleChrome / Mozilla Firefox / Microsoft Edge (v80+). <p>Please click on the record screen button to start recording your screen.</p> <p>When give the option please choose to share your entire screen</p> <p>In order to ensure that your voice is recorded please tick the 'share audio' box in the left hand corner</p> <p>Once you have found or not found what you are looking for please click the 'stop recording your screen' at the bottom of your screen</p>
TASK 3A	<p>Follow up questions about complaints information on a company website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you for sharing your experiences so far. • Overall, what do you think about the information provided in the complaints information found on the website? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anything that made it particularly difficult to find? • Anything that made the information difficult to understand? • Anything that you would like to see taken out or added in? • How do you feel about tone of the information you found? E.g. Friendly, unfriendly, intimidating, welcoming, encouraging etc. • Are you feel confident that you know the best way of making a complaint now? • Do you have any advice about how the company could make their complaints policy more accessible/easier to find and/or understand?
TASK 2B	<p>Online search – starting from search engine</p> <p>Before we start, please write in the name of the legal services company you used most recently _____</p>

	<p>Or, if you can't remember, select one of the companies from the list below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of 20 websites to be provided <p><i>"Imagine that you were not happy with the legal services you received from the company that you named or selected above, and you wished to make a complaint. Please go to your own preferred search engine (Google, Bing, Duck Duck Go etc) and take us through the steps you would go through to make that complaint."</i></p> <p>We are interested in how easy or difficult it is to find the information you would need to make this <i>imaginary</i> complaint. We would like you to navigate/click though to find the information you need. As you look for the information, please think aloud/ talk us through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is it you are looking for? How do you know/decide where to start looking? How easy or difficult is it to find what you are looking for? Anything that you find surprising or confusing? What is your conclusion from the search i.e. What have you decided is the best way to make the complaint? <p>Before you start, please check:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You have no other windows open, to ensure your privacy. You are using a desktop version of Google Chrome / Mozilla Firefox / Microsoft Edge (v80+). <p>Please click on the record screen button to start recording your screen.</p> <p>When give the option please choose to share your entire screen</p> <p>In order to ensure that your voice is recorded please tick the 'share audio' box in the left hand corner</p> <p>Once you have found or not found what you are looking for please click the 'stop recording your screen' at the bottom of your screen</p>
TASK 3B	<p>Follow up questions about complaints information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thank you for sharing your experiences so far. Overall, how easy or difficult was it to find information you were looking for? Anything that made the information particularly easy/difficult to find?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any websites/organisations that seemed particularly helpful? What was it that you liked about them? • Any websites/organisations that seemed particularly unhelpful? Why was this? • How confident do you feel about how to make a complaint about a legal services company (if you really did wish to make a complaint)?
TASK 4	<p>Summing up thoughts on making a complaint</p> <p>Now thinking about making a complaint in real life, what do you think you would do as a first step? Remember this is not a test!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a complaint with the legal services company itself OR • Look for another way of making the complaint/go to another organisation • Why have you selected that option? • Do you think it would depend on the nature of the complaint? Why? • Do you think your answer has changed as a result of this research task? Why? <p>Explain: In most cases, you must first raise the complaint with the person/organisation who provided you with the legal service before you can seek help from any other organisation. By looking at the complaints it receives, our client, the Legal Ombudsman has noticed that this does not always happen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What more could be done to ensure that clients who have a complaint about a legal service try to resolve it through the legal services company, in the first instance?
TASK 5	<p>Thank you</p> <p>Evaluation and incentive payments</p>