

Draft Minutes

Consumer Panel Meeting

Tuesday 10 March 2020

Present: Miriam Simpson (MS), Competition & Markets Authority (Acting Chair)
Jane Williams (JW), Queen Margaret University
Gillian Fyfe (GF), Citizens Advice Scotland

Vicky Crichton (VC): Director of Public Policy, SLCC
Susan Williams (SW), Best Practice Advisor, SLCC

1. Acting Chair

Miriam Simpson agreed to chair the meeting, in the absence of Shaben Begum.

2. Apologies:

Apologies were noted from Louise Macdonald (Young Scot), Louise Johnson (Scottish Women's Aid), and Shaben Begum (Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance)

3. Declaration of interests:

None declared.

4. Minutes:

Regarding item 5, GF enquired about previous direct engagement with practitioners and consumers. VC responded that this had happened during workshops, and was included in the draft SLCC strategy.

The Consumer Panel minutes of 9 December 2019 were approved, without changes.

5. SLCC 2020-24 Strategy and 2020-21 Operating Plan and Budget:

VC had circulated the draft that was currently open for comment until 19 March 2020. The SLCC has a statutory obligation to consult and the Consumer Panel (the Panel) has a right to make representations. By end March 2020 the SLCC would publish the responses and consider how to act.

The Panel discussed the draft response, and agreed amendments. A final draft will be circulated to members for further comments and agreement prior to submission.

In answer to questions VC explained the process followed to encourage responses to the consultation, including on the Panel's strategy. One comment had been received so far on the Panel's role, which members discussed briefly. The SLCC will publish all responses.

It was agreed:

- a) That SLCC would circulate a final draft of the Panel's response for final comments and agreement.
- b) SLCC will circulate for discussion all comments received on the Panel's workplan.
- c) Any further discussion could take place at the June meeting, before the final Plan was published. Panel members would then consider whether to make any specific response, having seen any other comments.

SLCC

6. SLCC customer feedback

VC tabled the Q1 customer feedback statistics which had recently been considered by the Board. Panel members discussed the way the statistics are broken down and asked whether additional analysis might be possible. Panel members also discussed the response rate and numbers per quarter, and the impact that might have on isolating particular themes. They asked that the next quarter's findings also be presented with a comparison to past quarters/ year to date.

They also noted that customer satisfaction feedback is routinely collected by other ombuds, and methodologies could be considered for comparison or learning.

It was agreed that the statistics for the next quarter would be presented both individually and in conjunction with previous quarters.

SLCC

7. Consumer Scotland Bill

VC gave an update, noting that the views of the Panel on the definition of "vulnerable" had been referenced a few times in the Stage 1 debate, and the Panel's definition of "vulnerable" was included in amendments framed at Stage 2. Panel members agreed that the Panel should continue to influence the Bill and the new organisation, and agreed the following actions:

- to brief MSPs again at Stage 3 and reiterate the importance of a consumer involvement on the organisation's Board and in its workplan
- to include, in the Panel's work plan, engagement with the new Chair, once appointed, perhaps including an invitation to a future Panel meeting.

SLCC

8. Regulatory Reform

VC gave a short update on the latest meetings of the Scottish Government Working Group, indicating that the current intention was that consultation should take place prior to the summer recess. She noted that SB sat on the Reform Group as a representative of the Panel, although she had been unable to attend the last few meetings. Panel members agreed that although there was not a formal mechanism for delegation, it was important to have another Panel member to deputise in SB's absence, and to emphasise the need for proper engagement with consumers and consumer groups.

Panel members discussed the need for consultation with consumers and consumer groups. They thought it should be stressed that elsewhere in government, sound consultation processes had been followed that could be replicated for this process to engage with consumers.

The Panel agreed to write to Scottish Government to ask for further information on plans for consultation, and that if helpful, Scottish Government representatives could be invited to the Panel's June meeting to discuss this further.

VC updated the group on the work to identify changes that could be made to the 2007 Act through subordinate legislation, noting that the Panel had previously supported this work. VC outlined the targeted consultation that would take place on these changes. It was agreed that VC would advise Scottish Government of the Panel's continued support for this work in general, and ask that the Panel be added to the list of bodies to be consulted on the specific changes proposed.

SLCC

9. Proposals for updated Terms of Reference

VC noted that some tweaks had been made, related to references to SLCC staff designations that no longer existed. She had circulated the document with tracked changes. Panel members agreed the proposed changes. The Panel also discussed the use of substitutes when members are unable to attend meetings, and the implications of this for the Panel's confidentiality agreements. A final version of the updated ToR will be shared with members for approval, along with further details on confidentiality arrangements.

SLCC

10. The following items were noted:

- The SLCC response to the CMA's Annual Plan had been submitted, which MS commented upon as helpful.
- Date of next meeting: Tuesday 9 June 2020, 14:30.