

14 February 2008

Private and Confidential

Data Sharing Review Secretariat
5.26 Steel House
11 Tothill Street
LONDON
SW1H 9LH

Dear Sirs

The LCS welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Data-sharing Review. We do not have points of detail to make in relation to the use and sharing of personal information since at present the LCS and its main regulator, the Solicitors Regulation Authority, are part of the same legal entity.

We do see the question of the proper use and sharing of information that comes into the public domain, whether personal details are shared or not, as part of a general public policy debate that is taking place at the moment.

The LCS wrote to the Hunt Review of the Financial Ombudsman Service. We made the point that making more information available about complaints about providers of both legal services and financial services could contribute significantly to wider public debate on this topic (this would not, of course, be personal data). Collaborative working amongst people who think that there are regulatory solutions to social problems - regulators, complaint-handlers and others - could lead to desirable changes to the operation of markets, including those in financial and legal services, through tangible changes in policies and programmes.

Of course, in relation to the sharing of personal data amongst government agencies, there is a principle to be explored that transparency may promote efficiency and reduce certain kinds of risk.

The nature of the gateways for personal information that the Office for Legal Complaints (OLC) will have with regulators in the future is a matter for the shadow Board of the OLC, when appointed. I offer our thoughts from the perspective of the LCS as a private sector second-tier complaint-handler at this time in the hope that they will contribute to wider debate.

Yours faithfully

Professor Shamit Saggar
Chairman
Board of the Legal Complaints Service

