

## Consumer understanding and use of Digital Comparison Tools

8 June 2022

### Executive summary

#### Overview

The sample of 1,000 respondents is a good reflection of the population for gender and ethnicity but over-represents those aged 55-plus by 10% at the expense of 18–24-year-olds.

Before making any purchase, around 88% of respondents use review and price comparison websites. Reasons for none use centre around lack of trust and preferring to make their own decisions rather than not knowing about them. Price not being the only consideration is another prevalent reason for not using price comparison sites.

Of those using review and price comparison sites, broadly speaking two-thirds use multiple sites and check how ratings are devised. Just over half are inclined to leave a review.

#### Consumers' decision-making process when searching for legal services

When asked what the first thing respondents did when they realised that they needed legal services, the most prevalent answer actioned by a fifth of respondents was to ask for recommendations from friends and family. In addition, just under a fifth each contacted a firm they had used before or researched online. Looking at these data by type of legal service the respondent was searching for shows differences in the first thing respondents did. The most common first action of those using conveyancing was to contact a firm they had used before. For those needing an employment solicitor their first action was to contact their trade union or professional body. Respondents needing family law services are most likely to initially search online.

Where respondents took multiple actions to search for legal services, while asking friends/family/colleagues holds the single most influence over a respondent's decision across all areas of law, the difference is less clear cut for employment law. Here, asking a professional body or another advice service features highly too. Those looking for conveyancing tend to use a firm they had used before and for family law, looking at the website of a firm that had been recommended features prominently. Consequently, when asked which one source of information they felt they spent the most time interacting with, the areas of law sought makes little difference for the proportions spending time asking friends and family. Those seeking employment law firms spend more time interacting with professional bodies and advice services than respondents seeking family and conveyancing.

#### Whether and how firms are compared

A third of respondents only looked at one legal service provider and these respondents are most likely to contact a firm they had used before – they account for more than three quarters of people contacting a firm they had used before as the first thing they did when they realised they needed legal services.

Respondents seeking support with family law are more likely to look at multiple firms when finding information on a legal services provider.

Just over a quarter of respondents looked at one legal service provider in detail before deciding which firm to instruct. A further quarter looked at two firms with 15% looking at three or more in detail. Respondents finding detailed information on more than one firm were asked why this was and almost half researched multiple firms to understand their offer looking at: costs, level of support, experience, availability to get the best option for their situation. Just under a fifth do so to compare prices. Figures do not vary much by area of law.

Respondents were asked how easy or difficult they found it to find and choose a legal adviser; 12% found it difficult. Looking at these data by area of law shows respondents searching for family law and employment law legal advisers find it more difficult than those looking for conveyancing.

The most common means of contacting a legal adviser is telephone. Interestingly, while there is no difference in the proportions of respondents contacting their legal services adviser by telephone before they instruct them, respondents looking for family lawyers are more likely to visit their solicitors in person than those looking for either employment or conveyancing.

Looking at respondents' considerations when looking to instruct by area of law, price and how quickly work can be completed are important when looking for conveyancing. How much experience the lawyer has is significantly more important for employment and family law than for conveyancing.

#### Use of legal service digital comparison tools

Respondents were asked whether they had ever used an online review website in relation to legal services; 22% had. The nature of the respondents' legal issue has no bearing on their likelihood of using online review sites. More than three quarters found them helpful when looking for legal services.

Respondents who had not used an online review website in relation to legal services were asked why this was. Most comments referred to being happy with who they were using or who had been recommended to them. Just 13% did not use an online review site as they were not aware of them. The most common means of finding these sites was via an internet search. The most common use of online review sites is to support/check other information that respondents had.

Respondents were asked whether they were aware of price comparison websites for legal services; 24% were and 41% of these respondents had ever used one for legal services. The nature of the respondents' legal issue has no bearing on their awareness of legal price comparison sites. These 96 respondents who had used legal price comparison sites were asked how helpful they found them when looking for a legal services provider and 80% found them helpful.

The most common reasons given by respondents for not using price comparison websites when they were last looking to instruct a legal service provider is that they were using a firm already known to them and that elements other than price are deemed more important by the respondent. The most common use of price comparison websites for legal services is to support/check other information.

Around a third of people would use either a review or price comparison site, if recommended by a regulator and just under half maybe would.

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## **Introduction**

### **Background**

In 2016 the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) recommended in the final report of its Legal Services Market Study that legal regulators take action to improve the comparable information available to legal service consumers. This included mandating providers of legal services to provide information on their prices and services, and about redress and regulatory protections.

The CMA did not mandate specific requirements for quality indicators in 2016; instead it concluded that it would observe how the legal services market and the market for comparison websites evolved. In September 2020 the CMA launched a progress review with a key focus on the quality indicators available to consumers in the legal services market. In response to this, the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) started to devise a pilot scheme to test the use of and learn more about quality indicators.

In December 2020, the CMA published the final report of its progress review. It recommended "that regulators take action to improve the provision of information on quality of legal services providers to consumers." It identified two sets of actions:

In December 2020, the CMA published the final report of its progress review. It recommended 'that regulators take action to improve the provision of information on quality of legal services providers to consumers.' It identified two sets of actions:

1. 'Identify, design and implement effective quality indicators. Regulators should design and implement a programme of consumer research and testing to identify, design and implement effective quality indicators. This should include considering which quality indicators are appropriate for each area of legal services, and what quality information could be standardised to enable consumers to assess and compare providers.'
2. 'Measures to improve engagement with customer reviews. Regulators should conduct further work to determine appropriate mechanisms to improve engagement with customer reviews.'

The SRA launched a quality indicators pilot in February 2021 which is being delivered in partnership with other legal regulators. The pilot focuses on trialling new approaches to help improve comparable information about the quality of law firms and their services and to make that information accessible for the public when they need to choose a legal services provider. To support this work, addressing the CMA's recommendation to develop a programme of consumer research and testing, this report shows the findings of our first consumer research piece to study the path an individual takes from the point they decide they need a legal service.

### **Purpose of the research**

This research seeks to capture a consumers' decision-making process when looking for legal services, whether and how different firms are compared and how digital comparison tools (DCTs) can support this process. The primary aim of this research is to understand how we can best encourage consumers to use quality indicators when looking to procure legal services; in particular, using Digital Comparison Tools (DCTs). We consider DCTs to be an important part of the solution as they have the resources and expertise to present information to consumers in the most useful and accessible way, and at speed. However, current awareness and use of DCTs in the legal services market is low. This research aims to understand the role DCTs play in a consumers decision making process when commissioning legal services and how we can further encourage their use.

### **Approach**

The SRA designed a questionnaire for on-line completion and commissioned YouGov to host it, inviting their panel members in England and Wales to take part. The sample was to include 1,000 respondents who had



used conveyancing, employment or family law services in the past two years.

The questionnaire captured views on respondent's typical use and reasons for non-use, of review and price comparison websites. Then, thinking about the legal service they had used, respondents were asked about how they selected their solicitor, how they engaged with them, the sources of help and information they used and how many firms they compared. Respondents were asked about their awareness and use of on-line review and price comparison websites for legal services and their likelihood of leaving reviews.

## Findings

### Sample

One thousand respondents took part in the survey. Comparing the sample with the latest population statistics for England and Wales shows the gender and ethnicity of the panel are a good reflection of the population. While all age groups are represented, the sample over-represents those aged 55 and over (48% vs 39%) and under-represents 18-24-year-olds (1% vs 11%).

Respondents had to have used a solicitor for conveyancing, employment or family law within the last two years. Where respondents had used multiple legal services, routing within the questionnaire selected which legal service to focus on based on when and which legal services had been used. The routing prioritised employment and family law over conveyancing as otherwise respondents' experiences with conveyancing might dominate the findings. Sections of the questionnaire ask respondents about their specific legal issue, where this occurs, the sample is made up of views on the following:

- Conveyancing (53%)
- Employment law (28%)
- Family law (19%).

### General use of review and price comparison websites

Around 88% of respondents use review and price comparison websites and they were asked to indicate, from a selection of services, which ones they used them for. The proportion of respondents using each type of site is shown in the table below. Broadly speaking, respondents use review websites to support product and trade purchases and price comparison sites are more commonly used for utility and financial services.

Service	Review (n=885)	Price comparison (n=870)
<b>Electronics/technology</b>	75%	47%
<b>Restaurants/bars</b>	66%	8%
<b>Health/medical</b>	33%	11%
<b>Trade services (plumber/gardener/electrician)</b>	69%	20%
<b>Financial services</b>	44%	55%
<b>Utility services (gas/electric/broadband/'phone)</b>	47%	79%
<b>None of the above</b>	4%	6%

Seventy-one per cent (n=1,000) think it's important (very important/important) that review or price comparison websites are accredited by the appropriate industry regulated body. Fifteen per cent have never considered this and 5% think it's unimportant (unimportant/very unimportant)

### Review websites

Respondents (n= 1,000) were asked about their use of review websites generally before making a purchase:

- 11% do not use review websites
- 25% always use review websites
- 63% sometimes use them.

In an open-comments box, respondents were asked to explain why they do not use review websites; some respondents made multiple points in their responses hence the number of comments is greater than the number of respondents (n=125). Just 9% of respondents not using review websites do not know about them. The remainder choose not to use them due to lack of trust, not liking them or preferring other methods of research.

Almost a quarter of comments (24%) referred to a lack of trust in review websites with respondents thinking companies pay people to leave reviews and that many reviews are planted. Fourteen per cent stated that they can make their own decisions with a further 14% preferring to research in other ways such as via friends and family. Eight per cent use reviews on the website they are purchasing from and 6% do not like them.

Of those using review websites, just over two-thirds of respondents use multiple sites (n=885):

- 31% use just one site
- 46% use two
- 23% use three or more review sites.

Around a third (32%, n=885) never check how review websites generate their star ratings/rankings, 48% sometimes check and 20% always do.

Seventeen per cent (n=1,000) never write online reviews about their experiences of a product or service. Eleven per cent often write reviews, 44% sometimes do and 29% do so rarely.

### Price comparison websites

For general use of price comparison sites the figures are (n= 1,000):

- 13% do not use price comparison websites
- 22% always use price comparison sites
- 65% sometimes do.

Just 12% of respondents not using price comparison sites do not know about them. The remainder chose not to use them as price is not their only consideration, lack of trust, and not offering a true final price and preferring to make their own decisions.

Nineteen per cent of comments citing reasons for non-use of price comparison sites (N=139) referred to price not being the only consideration and a further 17% stated they can make their own decisions. Fourteen per cent cited that they do not trust them, and a further 7% do not think the prices shown reflect the final cost so do not provide consistent comparisons. Two people said that not all companies are represented. A small number of respondents also mentioned their dislike of having to give out a lot of information (3) and that once firms have this information, they bombard respondents with unwanted sales contacts (4). Nine per cent of respondents stated it's too much bother and they do not have time.

Of those using price comparison sites (n=870) two-thirds use multiple sites:

- 33% use one site
- 44% use two
- 23% use three or more.

### Consumers' decision-making process when looking for legal services

Respondents were asked to explain, in an open-ended question, what was the first thing they did when they realised they needed a legal service provider. Three clear actions stand out. The single most prevalent answer, accounting for 20% of comments (n=996) was to ask for recommendations from friends and family. Seventeen per cent of respondents contacted a firm they had used before and a further 17% researched online. Of those researching online, 15% did not name specific sites but sites mentioned by 2% of respondents included the Law Society, SRA, Trustpilot, unnamed price comparison/review and Government websites.

Nine per cent of respondents checked solicitors in their local area and 7% contacted their trade union or professional body. A further 7% of respondents stated they instructed a solicitor but did not indicate how they selected the solicitor and 4% contacted the solicitor their Estate Agent had recommended. Three per cent of respondents mentioned finances saying they obtained quotes, looked up prices and arranged finance. Two per cent sought advice from their local law centre or organisations such as Which?, Citizens Advice and Shelter. One per cent cited emotions such as crying, cursing or panic.

Looking at these data by type of legal service used shows differences in the first thing respondents did. The most common first action of those using conveyancing was to contact a firm they had used before (26% n=526) followed by asking friends and family for recommendations (21%) and researching online (14%). Eight per cent contacted the firm their Estate Agent recommended.

The most common first action for respondents needing an employment solicitor was to contact their trade union or professional body (23% n=280) followed by asking friends and family for recommendations (18%) and researching online (18%). Just 5% of respondents needing employment legal services contacted a firm they had used before.

Respondents needing family law services are most likely to initially search online (24% n=190), 18% asked friends and family for recommendations and 15% checked for solicitors in their local area. Ten per cent contacted a firm they had used before.

All respondents were then asked to select from a list which actions they undertook when finding a legal service provider. The responses, overall and by area of law, are shown in Figure 1 reflecting the findings to the open-ended question.

### Actions taken to find a legal service provider (%)

	Overall (n=1980)	Conveyancing (n=985)	Employment (n=594)	Family (n=401)
<b>Friends/family recommendations</b>	37	18	17	19
<b>Social work/prof body/Estate Agent</b>	12	5	10	3

<b>Citizen's Advice</b>	9	1	9	6
<b>Website of recommended firm</b>	24	12	10	14
<b>Firm used before for this service</b>	25	17	7	8
<b>Firm used before for different service</b>	19	11	7	8
<b>General internet search</b>	31	15	15	17
<b>Look at online review websites</b>	17	9	7	9
<b>Looked at price comparison sites</b>	8	5	4	4
<b>Press/magazine advertisements</b>	3	1	3	1
<b>Industry website</b>	10	2	7	7
<b>Other</b>	8	4	5	2

'Other' responses included being obliged to use a solicitor by their mortgage/insurance provider or their Trade Union, social media and developer/employer recommendations.

Where respondents used multiple actions to select their legal services, they were asked to place them in the order in which they used them. Figure 2 combines these data with responses from those taking one action and shows that recommendations from friends and family is the most common first course of action respondents take when searching for legal service providers.

### Order of actions taken to find a legal service

Source of help used	Order of actions taken to find a legal service										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
<b>Friends/family recommendations</b>	239	64	34	13	4	1	1				
<b>Social work/prof body/Estate Agent</b>	53	14	4	4	2	2					
<b>Citizen's Advice</b>	45	19	11	5	3		1				
<b>Website of recommended firm</b>	61	87	46	28	7	2	1	2	1		
<b>Firm used before for this service</b>	159	52	16	7	2	1			1	1	
<b>Firm used before for different service</b>	98	39	36	1	2	4	1				1
<b>General internet search</b>	149	85	39	19	6	3					
<b>Look at online review websites</b>	28	63	41	16	16	1					
<b>Looked at price comparison sites</b>	19	30	14	9	4	4	2				
<b>Press/magazine advertisements</b>	8	7	11	3		1	1	1		1	
<b>Industry website</b>	22	28	22	8	6	3	3	1			

Respondents selecting multiple actions (n=488) were then asked which one source of help they used had the most influence over their decision to choose a firm:

- 27% said asking friends/family/colleagues
- 14% said contacting a firm they had used before for this service
- 11% said it was looking online at the website
- 11% said it was looking online to find suitable firms
- 10% said it was looking at online review websites to find suitable firms
- 5% said using an industry website such as the Law Society
- 4% used price comparison sites to find suitable firms.

While each online related action accounts for no more than 11%, when they are added together (looking online at a website, looking online to find suitable firms, industry websites, review and price comparison websites) making use of online information accounts for 41% of responses.

Looking at these data by area of law, shows that while asking friends/family/colleagues holds the single most influence over a respondent's decision across all areas of law, the difference is less clear cut for employment law. Of the 137 respondents seeking an employment lawyer, 26 (19%) state that family has the most influence over their choice of firm. However, 12% asked a professional body and 9% used Citizen's Advice or another advice service suggesting more than a fifth (21%) of respondents are most influenced by these support services when searching for employment lawyers.

For respondents seeking conveyancing (n=244), asking friends and family had the most influence over their decision (30%) and 20% asked a firm they had used before. For Family law, friends and family is the main influence (29%) followed by looking at the website of a firm that had been recommended (15%).

The influence review and price comparison sites have on a respondent's decision to choose a firm are below. A higher proportion of respondents are influenced by review websites than price comparison sites, these differences being significant (at 95% confidence interval) both for conveyancing and family law, ie we can be 95% confident that difference is real.

Which one of these sources of help you used had the most influence over your decision to choose a firm?	I looked at online review websites to find suitable firms		I looked at online price comparison sites to find suitable firms	
	#	%	#	%
<b>Conveyancing (n=224)</b>	28	12	13	5
<b>Employment law (n=137)</b>	10	7	7	5
<b>Family law (n=107)</b>	10	9	1	1
<b>Total (n=488)</b>	48	10	21	4

When respondents who had used multiple sources of information were asked which one source of information did they feel they spent the most time interacting with:

- 21% spent most time looking online to find suitable firms
- 19% cited they spent most time speaking to friends/family/colleagues
- 11% said looking online at the website of the firm that had been recommended to me
- 11% said looking at review websites to find suitable firms.

Looking at the sources of information respondents spent most time interacting with, shows the areas of law sought makes little difference for the proportions spending time asking friends and family – employment is 18%, conveyancing and family are each 20%. Those seeking employment law firms spend more time interacting with professional bodies and advice services than respondents seeking family and conveyancing (22% for employment, 12% for family and 2% conveyancing).

### **Whether and how firms are compared**

Respondents were asked how many firms they looked at any information about before instructing their most recent legal service provider. A third (n=1,000) stated they looked at one. Looking at respondents who only looked at any information about one firm before instructing a solicitor, they are most likely to contact a firm they had used before – they account for 77% of people contacting a firm they had used before as the first thing they did when they realised they needed legal services.

- 33% looked at one
- 18% looked at any information on two firms
- 21% looked at three
- 8% looked at four
- 6% looked at between 5 and 10
- 1% looked at any information on more than ten firms
- 13% cannot remember.

Looking at this by area of law shows that 37% of respondents, both for employment law and conveyancing, only found any information out about one firm. This is likely to be that those using conveyancing are more likely to know who they want to use and those needing employment law might have been given a recommendation for a specific firm. Respondents seeking support with family law are more likely to look at multiple firms when finding information on a legal services provider; 18% only look at one firm.

Twenty-eight per cent of respondents did not look at any detailed information on their legal service provider before instructing them and 5% cannot recall. As expected, when looking at a respondents first actions when they realised they needed legal services, and comparing it with how many firms they obtained detailed information about, respondents not searching for any detailed information are most likely to contact a firm they had used before.

Twenty-seven per cent of respondents looked at one legal service provider in detail before deciding which firm to instruct. 26% looked at two firms in detail, 10% looked at three and 5% looked at four or more in detail. Respondents finding detailed information on more than one firm were asked why this was (n=350):

- 47% researched multiple firms to understand their offer/costs/level of support/experience/availability/to get best option for their situation
- 17% did so to compare prices
- 9% stated they looked at more than one firm to make a comparison/benchmark
- 7% needed as much information as possible
- 7% had received different recommendations
- 3% said they were advised to compare multiple firms it being good practice.

Figures do not vary much by area of law.

Respondents were asked how easy or difficult they found it to find and choose a legal adviser. Seventy per cent of respondents reported it was easy (33% very easy/37% easy) with a further 16% finding it neither easy nor difficult. Nine per cent found it fairly difficult and 3% found it very difficult.

Looking at these data by area of law shows respondents searching for family law and employment law legal advisers find it more difficult than those looking for conveyancing (23% fairly/very difficult family and 14% employment). These differences are significant at the 95% confidence interval.

**Very easy easy neither Fairly difficult Very difficult Don't know**



<b>Conveyancing (n=528)</b>	40.5	37.1	13.8	5.5	1.7	1.3
<b>Employment (n=282)</b>	29.1	36.2	19.9	10.6	3.2	1.1
<b>Family (n=190)</b>	19.5	40	16.3	15.8	7.4	1.1

Respondents were asked whether they contacted their legal services provider before they instructed them and if so, how they made contact. The most common means of contacting a legal adviser is telephone, with 59% of respondents making contact this way. This is followed by email (42%), visiting in person (17%) and via their website/app (15%). Just four per cent of respondents did not contact their legal services provider before instructing them and for a further 2% (reported under 'other') stated enquires were made on behalf of the respondent. The remaining 'other' means of contact include messaged on a forum and through an employee collective.

### Method of contacting legal advisor before instructing them (% n =1,000)

Method of contacting legal advisor before instructing them	%
Phone	59
Email	42
Visited in person	17
Website/app	15
Didn't contact	4
Text	3
Post	3
Other	3
Don't know	1

Interestingly, looking at these data by area of law shows that while there is no difference in the proportions of respondents contacting their legal services adviser by telephone before they instruct them, respondents looking for family lawyers are more likely to visit their solicitors in person (30%) than those looking for either employment (16%) or conveyancing (12%). This difference is significant at the 95% confidence interval and is in preference to email.

When all respondents were asked which elements from a list they found out before making their decision to instruct (n=1,000), price was asked about by the largest proportion (45%). This was followed by the lawyer's experience (37%), how quickly the work can be completed (27%), what previous customers thought of the firm (25%) and the lawyer's success with similar work (21%).

### Which of the following do you ask about before instructing? (n=1,000)

	%
<b>Price</b>	44.8
<b>Lawyers experience</b>	36.8
<b>Lawyers success similar work</b>	21.1
<b>Quickly completed</b>	27.2
<b>Firm accreditations</b>	16
<b>Previous customer views</b>	24.7
<b>Something else</b>	5.8
<b>Don't know</b>	1.3
<b>N/A already knew firm</b>	6.3

'Something else' includes the respondent's personal impression of the lawyer, the location of the firm, whether they could do various things in-house and whether they undertake pro bono/legal aid work.

### Which of the following do you find out before instruction by area of law

	price	lawyers experience	lawyers success similar work	quickly completed	firm accreditations	previous customer views	something else	don't know	n/a already knew firm
<b>Conveyancing (n=528)</b>	51	28	18	33	14	27	6	0.9	23
<b>Employment (n=282)</b>	31	45	23	23	14	19	7	2	16
<b>Family (n=190)</b>	48	51	27	18	25	26	5	1	13

Looking at respondents' considerations when looking to instruct by area of law shows price and how quickly work can be completed are important when looking for conveyancing. The lawyer's experience is significantly

more important (95% confidence interval) for employment and family law than for conveyancing, and previous success in family law is significantly more important than a lawyer's success in conveyancing.

### Legal service DCTs

#### **Online legal review sites**

Respondents were asked whether they had ever used an online review website in relation to legal services; 22% had (n=1,000). The nature of the respondents' legal issue has no bearing on their likelihood of using online review sites. These 219 respondents were asked how helpful they found online review websites when looking for legal services. More than three quarters (77%) found them helpful (60% helpful, 17% very helpful), 17% stated 'neither', 5% unhelpful (3% unhelpful, 2% very unhelpful) and 1% did not know.

Respondents who had not used an online review website in relation to legal services were asked why this was. Comments were made by 678 respondents, the majority of which referred to being happy with who they were using or who had been recommended to them. The most prevalent comment in this vein (26%) was that they were happy with the services of a firm they had used previously. A further 12% said they were happy with the recommendation they had received and another 12% said their agent/trade union/relative or mortgage provider chose their provider. Six per cent did not feel it was necessary to use an online review website as they were happy/confident with their choice of legal services provider.

Eighty-five respondents (13%) did not use an online review site as they were not aware of them and a further 6% did not trust them – not believing they are genuine, fair or independent. A further 28 people (4%) said they prefer personal recommendations, 4% prefer to talk to their supplier directly and 3% did not use them as they claimed not to have information about local firms.

When respondents who had ever used an online review website (n=218) were asked whether they had used one the most recent time they instructed a legal service provider, 63% had. Although having used an online review website in relation to legal services at some point, 68 respondents did not use one when choosing their latest legal service. Reasons for this reflect the reasons cited for overall non-use – happy with previous service/recommendation.

The 137 respondents who used an online review website the last time they instructed a legal services provider were asked how they found out about it. The most common means of finding these sites was via an internet search.

#### **How did you find out about legal review sites? (n=137, multiple response)**

<b>I stumbled across it</b>	20%
<b>Friend/family recommend</b>	19%
<b>Professional recommend</b>	22%
<b>Saw advertisement</b>	12%
<b>Used other review sites</b>	25%
<b>Used legal reviews before</b>	13%
<b>internet search</b>	2%
<b>other</b>	2%
<b>don't know</b>	1%

Among respondents who used an online review site when searching for their latest legal services provider (n=137), a third of these respondents used online review websites as the first thing they did in their search. However, the largest proportion of respondents (45%) used online review websites to support existing information they had found about a firm and 20% used review sites while looking for information. The most common use of online review sites is to support/check other information respondents had as 60% (n=137) of respondents stated they used them for this purpose. Thirty-seven per cent used them as their main source of information.

#### **Legal price comparison sites**

Respondents were asked whether they were aware of price comparison websites for legal services; 24% were (n=1,000). The nature of the respondents' legal issue has no bearing on their awareness of legal price comparison sites. The 235 respondents that were aware of legal price comparison sites were asked whether they had ever used one for legal services; 41% had. These 96 respondents were asked how helpful they found the price comparison site when looking for a legal services provider and 80% found them helpful (25% very helpful, 55% helpful). Just four respondents (4%) found them to be unhelpful.

Of the 96 respondents that had ever used price comparison sites to find legal services, 70 (73%) used them to find their latest legal service.

The most common reason given by respondents for not using price comparison websites when they were last looking to instruct a legal service provider is that they were using a firm already known to them (31 people, 23% said this). The next most popular reason given for not using price comparison sites when looking for legal services is that elements other than price are deemed more important by the respondent – 19 people, 14% of



comments cited service/trust/experience/quality of representation/availability are more important than price. Ten per cent of respondents trusted the recommendation they had been given by someone else (Estate Agent/trade union) and six people stated that online rates tend to be the minimum ones and that there are often further hidden costs.

Among the 70 respondents using price comparison sites for legal services, 25 found them as they are using them for other services, 22 were recommended to use them by a professional and 19 people's friends/family recommended them. Twenty people stumbled across them and 13 had used them before. Of these, 70 people (30%) said using a price comparison site was the first thing they did when searching for legal services, 46% used them once they had found out about a firm and 19% used them while looking for information. The most common use of price comparison websites for legal services is to support/check other information (57%) with 25 people (36%) using them as their main source of information.

## Reviews and accreditations

Respondents were asked whether they would use an online review or price comparison website if it were recommended by a legal services regulator. These data are shown in the table below (n=1,000) and indicate that around a third of people would use either a review or price comparison site, if recommended by a regulator, and just under half maybe would. Just over 10% would not use them in this instance.

If recommended by a legal services regulator would this encourage you to use them	Review website		Price comparison	
	#	%	#	%
<b>Yes</b>	370	37	322	32
<b>Maybe</b>	443	44	456	47
<b>No</b>	112	11	134	13
<b>Don't know</b>	75	8	88	9

Respondents were asked whether they would leave a review on a review website about legal services:

- 24% would do so of their own accord
- 21% would if the firm asked them to
- 5% would if the review website asked them to
- 31% maybe would
- 17% would not
- 2% do not know

## Read the reports

- [Findings - Attitudes to comparison websites for legal services \[https://update.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/law-firm-access-panel/\]](https://update.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/law-firm-access-panel/)
- [Publication - Law firms' views of customer review sites \[https://update.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/law-firm-access-panel/\]](https://update.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/law-firm-access-panel/)