

SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME 2008 – 2011



Respecting Diversity, Valuing Difference

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Foreword

We are delighted to present our Single Equality Scheme 2008-2011 that brings together our work under the various equality areas. It is a robust document which outlines our priorities, successes and the areas we would like to focus on as we move forward in our quest for a stronger, healthy organisation which values the contributions of all employees.

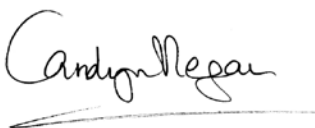
We recognise that for us to deliver change, diversity must have the same priority as other outcomes on which organisation places value, the same amount of leadership attention and the same level of accountability to challenge poor performance.

Our role within the justice system is to ensure that we engage effectively with diverse communities and work in partnership with key stakeholders to promote access to social justice.

In addition, when procuring legal aid services, there is a responsibility upon the Commission to ensure that it is procuring good quality services for all clients. This is important as clients deserve to receive services in which they are confident and which will contribute to their sense of trust in the justice system.

As we continue to operate and deliver services in a multiracial and diverse environment we need to ensure that our processes, procedures and practices promote an environment which values diversity and difference.

A diverse workforce, which reflects the society we all live in will provide us with a better understanding of our clients, more informed decision making processes and will signal a strong message that we are committed to going beyond compliance by taking positive steps to combat inequality and promote equality of opportunity for all.



Carolyn Regan
Chief Executive, Legal Services Commission

I am delighted as the Executive Team Diversity Champion to present the new Legal Services Commission Single Equality Scheme.

The Legal Service Commission is committed to ensuring that we deliver on our equality and diversity agenda through leadership, corporate social responsibility and accountability. These principles underpin all areas of work as we strive to ensure that clients receive access to social justice.

The Scheme recognises our duties under a wide-ranging set of legislation and sets out our commitment to deliver. We understand that in delivering on our duties to tackle discrimination we need to recognise that many of our clients encounter multiple discrimination and factor this into everything that we do.

This has been a challenging year for the Commission, but there have been some successes in the area of equality and diversity. I remain focused on promoting and challenging our performance on an agenda that is becoming increasingly important to our work. To this end, I look forward to your continued involvement and support to ensure that the principles of equality and diversity are translated into visible and positive outcomes for all.



David Godfrey
Executive Team Diversity Champion

August 2008

Section 1

The role of the Legal Services Commission

The Legal Services Commission (LSC) manages the provision of legal aid in England and Wales. We are also responsible for ensuring people receive the information, advice and legal assistance they need to address a wide range of social problems.

We work in partnership with solicitors and not-for-profit organisations to provide information, advice and legal representation to clients. Research has shown that legal aid clients are often vulnerable and socially excluded people who may have a variety of problems such as debt, housing or welfare benefits, or issues relating to crime.

We deliver legal services through two organisations: The Community Legal Service and the Criminal Defence Service.

The Community Legal Service is a network of organisations which funds, provides and promotes civil legal services from general information to advice and representation.

The Criminal Defence Service (CDS) is run by the LSC in partnership with criminal defence lawyers and representatives. The purpose of the CDS is to ensure that people suspected or accused of a crime have access to advice, assistance and representation, as the interests of justice require.

The LSC currently employs approximately 1650 people working in 11 regional offices across England and Wales and a Head Office in London. We also operate four Public Defender Service (PDS) offices, in which we directly employ people to deliver criminal legal aid.

Since the LSC introduced the last Race Equality Scheme, the Disability Equality Scheme and the Gender Equality Schemes, there has been steady progress in key areas.

As we move forward there will be a renewed focus as legislation on Age, Sexual Orientation, Religion and Belief and Human Rights become increasingly important and places a greater duty to promote equality. Therefore, we have developed a Single Equality Scheme to reflect that focus and support the way forward.

Equality and diversity will be integrated into the LSC's strategic priorities and the Scheme sets out how this will be achieved. Our Corporate Plan 2008-2010 sets out our four strategic priorities:

- A transformed organisation that enables the delivery of objectives and excellence in all it does
- Clients have access to quality services that meet their needs
- Providers deliver quality, value for money and client focused services
- An affordable legal aid scheme delivered within resources available and that demonstrates effective financial control

As a procurer of public services we recognise that access to legal aid is fundamental to promoting social justice by ensuring that clients receive the advice and guidance they need to make informed decisions. We know that people can experience harassment, discrimination, unemployment and homelessness and this impacts upon wider society in ways such as crime, poverty and inequality.

As we take the agenda forward we are determined to ensure that clients receive services, which are accessible, relevant and appropriate to their needs.

Through our Single Equality Scheme we aim to take action, which will be equally applicable to all groups, whilst understanding that there are some distinct differences, which reflect the specific experiences of inequality and discrimination of each particular group.

The purpose of our Single Equality Scheme is to:

- Provide all employees of the Legal Services Commission, partner organisations, stakeholders and clients with a clear statement of our key priorities, to promote equality and diversity and eliminate discrimination in service delivery and employment
- Make clear the LSC's commitments in fulfilling its legal obligations to achieve equality of opportunity in the areas of race, gender, disability, sexuality, religion or belief and age
- Draw together the different strands of equality work into one comprehensive scheme
- Enable all departments in the LSC to see how they contribute to our equality objectives
- Ensure that our equality objectives are consistently applied throughout the whole organisation
- Set out equality priorities for the next three years and explain, through our Corporate Equality Action Plan, how we will achieve them
- Monitor and review our performance to ensure we meet the aims of our policies
- Consult service users and employees to ensure our policies are effective and meet their needs

1.1 Our priorities for equality and diversity

We have established four organisational priority areas for equality and diversity. This is to ensure there is a consistent approach to integrating equality and diversity across the business. These are:

- Leadership
- Mainstreaming
- Service Delivery
- Inclusiveness

The priorities enable us to focus our attention on the areas which most impact on our business.

1.2 Our legal responsibilities

Public duties to promote equality

As a public sector organisation we have general duties to promote equal opportunities relating to gender, race and disability. These are sometimes called the public duty to promote equality or public duties. These duties are set out in the:

- Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005 (hereafter DDA 2005);
- Race Relations Act 1976 and Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (RRA 1976; RR(A)A 2000);
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA 1975) amended by the Equality Act 2006;

The core general duty is similar for disability, gender and race:

- Promote equality of opportunity

However, there are important areas where there are different legislative requirements between the general duties which set a higher standard.

- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people under the DDA 2005
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups under the RRA 2000
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life under the DDA 2005
- Take positive steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people under the DDA 2005. This means we have to take steps which go beyond treating disabled people and non-disabled people alike.

We also have specific duties which provide a framework to guide us in meeting our general duties in the most appropriate way. Many of the specific duties are similar for disability, gender and race:

- Produce a scheme that shows how we intend to meet our duties to promote equality under the RRA, DDA and SDA
- Produce an annual plan demonstrating how we intend to fulfil our general and specific duties
- Ensure the scheme includes a statement of our arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of our proposed policies on the promotion of equality
- Gather information in relation to employment and the delivery of our services to monitor for any adverse impact on the promotion of equality
- Put this information to use in particular, in reviewing the effectiveness of the Action Plan and in preparing subsequent equality schemes
- Publish the results of our assessment and consultation annually and review the scheme at least every three years

There are some areas where the different legislation is more specific or sets a higher standard:

- Involve disabled people in the development of the Disability Equality Scheme under the DDA 2005
- Ensure the Disability Equality Scheme includes a statement about the way in which disabled people have been involved in the development of the Scheme
- Under the DDA 2005 to consult stakeholders (in other words employees, service users and others including trade unions) and take account of relevant information in order to determine its gender equality objectives under the SDA 1975, amended by the EA 2006
- Set out our gender equality objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gaps reinforced by the equal pay obligations in the EA 2006
- Ensure public access to information and services which we provide under RRA 2000

- Train our staff in connection with the general and specific duties under the RRA 2000 and specifically to:
 - Monitor by reference to the racial groups they belong, the numbers of staff in post and applicants for employment, training and promotion
 - Monitor the numbers of staff from each racial group who receive training, benefits or suffer detriment as a result of our performance assessment procedures who are the subject of disciplinary procedures, and who leave the employment of the commission and publish annually the results of our employment monitoring set out above.

As we are responsible for commissioning the delivery of legal aid services in Wales, our duty to promote equality is also governed by the Welsh Language Act 2003 which also places a public duty to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language for citizens who live in Wales.

In carrying out our statutory duties, we will:

- Ensure that information is accessible for clients in Welsh or community languages upon request
- Make arrangements to support members of the public with communicating in Welsh, if that is the preferred language
- Ensure adequate translation facilities are made available at public meetings held in Wales

Each of our statutory responsibilities and supporting functions is relevant to the general duties of the RRA 2000, DDA 2005 and SDA 1975.

Wider legal responsibilities

As a public authority, an employer and as service provider we must have regard to legal duties not discriminate against our staff and those we serve. The following are key pieces of legislation that provide these duties.

As an employer we must not discriminate on the basis of age, sexual orientation, religion or belief as set out in the following legislation:

- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

As a service provider we must not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, religion or belief when providing our services in accordance with the Equality Act 2006 nor the basis of race, disability and gender in accordance with the RRA, DDA and SDA.

As a public body we have a duty under the Human Rights Act 1998 to protect and promote human rights contained in the European Convention on Human Rights. The Convention rights are relevant to our commitment to promoting equality and diversity, particularly by Article 14 to the Convention providing protection against discrimination in the enjoyment of the Convention rights on the basis of any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.

1.3 The Equality and Human Rights Commission

On the 1st of October 2007, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) replaced the Disability Rights Commission, the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission. The new EHRC has inherited from the former commissions the responsibility for ensuring the statutory duties are met and has responsibility for the other equality areas (age, sexual orientation and religion and belief) as well as human rights.

1.4 Accountability

The Chair and Chief Executive of the Legal Services Commission will approve the final scheme and have the overall responsibility for ensuring it is implemented, monitored and reviewed regularly. Additionally, the Executive Team Diversity Champion

is responsible for monitoring and challenging performance and delivery against the scheme.

Senior Managers, Heads of Department and Heads of Unit are responsible for implementing the actions outlined in the Action Plan. They are also responsible for ensuring public functions, services and policies for their respective business areas are reviewed for their relevance and compliance with the equality duties. The Director of Human Resources is responsible for ensuring that equality, with regards to race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief in employment is implemented.

Section 2

2.1 Reporting progress on our scheme

We will report our progress each year and take steps to ensure that stakeholders, including the Provider Diversity Reference Group can comment on our performance against the scheme. We will do this by reviewing progress against the relevant actions and indicators. A full review of the scheme, detailing progress and identifying key areas for action across the LSC will be undertaken and presented to the Executive Team and the Commission Board for approval and publication on a three yearly basis.

2.2 Who the scheme is for

The Scheme communicates what we are currently doing and planning to do over the next three years to meet our general and specific duties and action our aims to promote equality.

We have consulted widely on our Scheme and we have taken into account feedback from a variety of stakeholders.

The Scheme enables all of our stakeholders, the people we work with, our clients to hold us accountable for the delivery of the activities set out in our action plan.

2.3 Delivering our commitment

We all have a responsibility to promote equality and we know that a good organisation requires a coherent vision, visible commitment and a consistent approach.

Public services have a vital role to play in delivering quality outcomes to diverse communities. Access to social justice is the key premise from which we deliver our work and as a procurer of legal aid services we

do not often directly work with the public. Talking to people who do, through various stakeholder groups such as the PDRG, is invaluable. We need to ensure that we promote equality both within our organisation and through the work of others.

High-level leadership is crucial to promoting good practice. This is demonstrated through explicit objectives for senior leaders to:

- Create a positive culture; set standards, challenge behaviour
- Be a Diversity Champion for their part of the organisation
- Value the diversity of our staff by creating a diversity friendly working environment
- Embed diversity into all functions of their business

Middle managers have explicit objectives to value diversity and promote equality.

Section 3

3.1 Nature of discrimination in employment

Over recent years there has been a considerable amount of discussion concerning how discrimination impacts on community cohesion and integration. The Commission for Racial Equality final report suggests that to achieve an integrated Britain, we need to achieve equality for all sections of society, interaction between all sections of society and participation by all sections of society.

Discrimination affects all sections of society and we are seeing complex pictures of diversity which are a result of globalisation and economic change.

Britain's ethnic minority population is a young one, while 20% of the white British population is under 16, the figure rises to 38% for those of Bangladeshi origin, 35% for those of Pakistani origin, and 50% for those of mixed race population.

The gap between the employment rate of BME communities and that for the white population is worrying. 76% of white people in the working age group have a job; only 60% of working age people from BME communities are in employment. More strikingly, this gap has largely remained unchanged for a generation.

A survey commissioned by the Business Commission on Race Equality in the Workplace to establish why employers have taken little action to promote race equality identified the following responses:

- Race equality is not an issue because they don't have any ethnic minority employees;
- No suitably qualified people from ethnic minorities live in their area, so race equality is purely a supply-side problem;
- Promoting race equality is too expensive and they can't afford the information systems required;
- It is impossible to do ethnic monitoring because ethnic minority staff do not want to answer the question;
- White staff resent measures to tackle inequality;
- Although they back race equality at the top of the company, it is impossible to change the behaviour of middle management;
- They do not want to employ specific BME groups because of a concern that they will require too much time off for religious purposes;
- All they want to do is "hire the best" and in promoting race equality they are being asked to lower standards

Source: *The Business Commission for Racial Equality October 2007*

This research suggests a lack information, stereotyping and perceptions of capability and fit amongst employers. Discrimination within employment, can take place in different ways.

It could be racial prejudice from individual managers. It may include harassment or victimisation, which can drive individuals to leave employment. Or it may be the workplace culture, which on the surface may not appear to be discriminatory at all.

An example of this is word of mouth recruitment from within a professional network. The intention may not be racist, but the effect is discriminatory.

Gender inequality presents another challenge. For women who work full-time earn, on average, 17% less per hour than men working full-time. For women who work part-time, the gap in pay relative to full-time men is a huge 38%. These figures are recent and illustrate the unacceptable income gap that persists between men and women today. Women from certain BME communities face an even bigger income gap – for example, Pakistani women are paid less on average for full-time work than White British women and substantially less than white British men.

Source: *The Gender Agenda*
– *Equal Opportunities Commission July 2007*

Unless this income gap is addressed men and women will not be able to organise family life in a way which meets their needs, older women will continue to be less independent and the economy will suffer the consequences as we become less able to compete in a global environment.

Ageism impacts on all aspects of the employment – recruitment, promotion, training as well as redundancy and retirement selection. This is particularly true in relation to young people as:

- More than one in four (27%) 16-24 year olds think that age has stood in the way of them getting a job (compared to just 15% of 35-44 year olds)
- One in five (19%) 25-34 year olds have seen ageist behaviour in their workplace over the last six months (compared to just 6% of 55-64 year olds)

Source: *The Employers Forum on Age 2007*

There is still a tendency by some employers to advertise for 'young professionals', 'recent graduates' or 'mature candidates' or state that the salary will be dependent upon age and experience. This is clearly not acceptable in today's society.

Equally, although most organisations have a policy for addressing bullying and harassment Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual (LGB) employees still encounter discrimination. Some of the most common barriers include:

'It'll ruin my career:' despite changes in the law, many LGB staff perceive that being out at work will have a negative impact on their career development. They are therefore unlikely to risk outing themselves by reporting anti-gay bullying and harassment.

'It's just part of our workplace culture'; If homophobic banter and jokes are the norm at work and are never challenged, LGB staff are unlikely to feel confident that a complaint about anti-gay bullying and harassment will be taken seriously or dealt with effectively.

'I don't want to come out to my manager'; an LGB employee who has been targeted because of their sexual orientation may be reluctant to inform

their manager or human resources (HR) if they do not have faith in the organisation's confidentiality mechanisms and are concerned about labelling or further victimisation.

Source: *Stonewall – Preventing Bullying and Harassment of Gay Employees*

Workplace diversity should also take into account the religion and belief considerations of employees. Organisations should consider whether their policies, rules or procedures indirectly discriminate on the grounds of religion or belief and what reasonable changes should be made.

Points to consider:

- Times within work schedules for religious observance
- Special dietary requirements, for example kosher, halal and vegetarian food
- Avoid ice breakers and training activities that use language or physical contact that might be inappropriate for some beliefs
- Avoid exercises which require the exchange of personal information
- Related social activities do not exclude people by choice of venue
- Avoid significant religious festivals such as Ramadan

Source: *ACAS Religion and Belief in the Workplace*

Legislation protecting the rights of disabled people seeks to create a society where all disabled people can participate as equal citizens. Disability equality has a major impact on the lives of many:

- Because one in five people of working age has a disability or long-term health condition – you probably already employ someone in this category and they may be among your best job applicants.
- Because the UK has an ageing population and so more and more of us will be living and working with a disability or health condition.
- Because discrimination against disabled people is not just unlawful, it's also unfair and huge waste of human potential.

Recent research has shown that many people with a disability or long-term health condition who have rights under the DDA, do not tend to use the term 'disabled' to describe themselves. Therefore relying on the definition within the Act encourages an inquisitorial approach that focuses very much on the individual as a 'problem' rather than looking at what can be done to enable the person to enter or remain in employment.

By adopting a best approach to mainstreaming disability equality, which focuses on pro-active measures and valuing the individual an organisation will be better able to respond to needs appropriately and with respect.

Source: *Disability in Employment- DRC 2006*

There is a sound business case for eliminating discrimination from the workplace. Staff who are subjected to discrimination, harassment or victimisation may:

- By unhappy, less productive and de-motivated
- Resign
- Make a complaint to an Employment Tribunal

This can have a detrimental impact on the organisation in terms of:

- Damage to reputation both as a business and an employer
- Cost of staff leaving and consequent recruitment and training
- Cost of compensation if they take a claim to an Employment Tribunal – there is no upper limit to the amount of compensation an organisation may be ordered to pay.

As illustrated through the above examples, discrimination is bad for business and bad for society. It is in the interests of employers to ensure that it is eliminated from workplace and that we create an environment where people feel supported and respected for who they are regardless of background, age, disability, race, whether they are men, women, their sexuality, religion or belief.

The LSC is committed to eradicating discrimination.

3.2 Delivering services to diverse communities

In its 2004 Equality and Human Rights White Paper, the Government expressed its view that fairness for all is the basis for a healthy democracy, for economic prosperity and for the effective delivery of public services and that equality and human rights therefore matter to all of us, not just those who experience discrimination and employment.

With the increased emphasis on addressing diversity within service delivery, it has become more important for organisations to gain a better understanding of the needs of the wider society. With globalisation and increased migration the matter of diversity and the impact on services has never received such high attention.

Source: *Fairness for All – Government White Paper on the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights 2004*

The LSC has been working closely with the Provider Diversity Reference Group (PDRG) to gain a better understanding of the needs of diverse clients. The PDRG has been instrumental in influencing policy and practice within the LSC and in raising awareness of the diversity challenges in relation to their work. We have recently worked with that group to develop research into the experience of clients within the Criminal Justice System and their choice of lawyer.

Developing services which meet the needs of diverse clients requires public sector organisations to be much more pro-active in identifying ways to:

- Understand the diverse make-up and differing needs of the entire client base, through data gathering and stakeholder consultations
- Provide a clear vision and drive for mainstreaming diversity by setting targets that clearly underpin the service delivery needs of a diverse client base, and by empowering all staff to take initiatives to move towards these targets
- Integrate diversity into all aspects of the business, including the organisational structure, workforce representation and resource allocation

- Evaluate progress continuously through a number of methods, including public consultations where lessons are fed back into the design and delivery of public services
- Share lessons and experiences within and across organisations, to gain a better understanding of tools and processes that already exist and work well, and to avoid mistakes that others have already learnt from.
- Use human rights as a force for unity and source of shared values: 'what unites us' rather than 'what divides us'
- Use human rights to empower people and encourage greater participation

The Legal Services Commission is well placed to play a key role to play in promoting human rights. We promote human rights through our public information about the Human Rights Act, access to justice and legal aid for human rights actions.

Source: *Delivering Public Services to a Diverse Society* – National Audit Office 2004

Source: *Human Rights Visions of Equality Conference June 2007 - Bringing Rights to Life*

3.3 Bringing human rights to the fore

In the UK equality and human rights have developed along different legislative paths. The Equality and Human Rights Commission brings them together for the first time in the UK (outside Northern Ireland). As well as overseeing public authorities' compliance with the public duties to promote race, disability and gender equality, the EHRC has responsibility for promoting an understanding of the importance of human rights, encouraging good practice in relation to human rights, including promoting compliance with the duty under the Human Rights Act 1998 to take positive steps to protect and promote human rights.

A debate has begun about what challenges exist and what steps can be taken to encourage the use of human rights alongside the equality and diversity agenda.

Key challenges and recommendations:

- Promote awareness of human rights law beyond the legal profession
- Use of words like dignity, fairness and respect to communicate that human rights belong to everyone

Section 4

4.1 Our progress so far

Since the publication of the last scheme we have made good progress in three main areas:

- Strengthening our arrangements for governance and scrutiny
- Improving our approach as an employer
- Taking better steps to reflect equality and diversity in our work with external organisations

We have strengthened our arrangements for delivering on our equality and diversity programme. We have:

- Put in place a clear governance structure for all equality and diversity work through the creation of a Diversity Strategy Board
- Appointed an Executive Team Diversity Champion to provide drive, oversight and scrutiny of our performance
- Increased the capacity of the corporate equality and diversity team
- Commissioned an independent review of our equality and diversity performance
- Developed our approach to managing equality impact assessment (EIAs), using the knowledge of groups such as the Provider Diversity Reference Group
- Identified leaders who can act as champions to promote equality and diversity in their respective business areas
- Improved the way we gather and use information, particularly in relation to employment data
- Promoted the use of staff networks to address issues of well-being and equality
- Raised the importance of equality and diversity through focus group discussions, team meetings, management meetings and events
- We have reviewed all our HR policies to ensure they meet our general duties. This includes developing a new policy to promote Respect at Work.

As an employer we have improved our approach to equality and diversity. We are a 'two tier' disability symbol user and committed to good practice in the employment of disabled people.

This means we have signed up to the five commitments on recruiting, retaining and developing disabled people, improving disability awareness among key employees and reviewing and reporting on our performance annually. We interview anybody with a disability who applies and meets the minimum conditions for the job.

We have:

- Carried out an accessibility review of all the buildings we own or rent
- Commissioned an independent assessment of our Community Legal Advice Website with the Shaw Trust
- Ensured that materials provided by Community Legal Service are tested and written in Plain English
- Trained the majority of our staff on the implications of the DDA 2005 and the RRA 2000 to help them understand and better reflect the issues in their day-to-day work
- Provided a confidential helpline for employees to report incidences of bullying, harassment and discrimination. This is managed by In-Touch
- Promoted a confidential free telephone service which allows access to free advice on a range of personal or work related matters
- Introduced on-line equality and diversity training course which has to be completed by all employees within 3 months of joining the organisation
- We have developed a system for ensuring reasonable adjustments are made for all new and existing employees. This involves liaising with disabled people, their line manager and HR business managers to identify the adjustments needed.

We have reviewed our terms and conditions to:

- Enhance maternity pay for women to 39 weeks which has been increased to full pay for the first 26 weeks
- Introduce adoption leave of 52 weeks for all employees with 26 weeks service
- Introduce paternity pay and partner leave
- Extend our flexible working policy to include provisions for part/time, term time, and flexible start and finish times
- Introduce term-time working
- In our work with external organisations we have:
- Made the promotion of equal pay opportunities and elimination of discrimination and harassment explicit in our procurement framework
- Tested our website for disability accessibility with the Shaw Trust and RNIB
- Monitors the delivery of the Action Plans, challenging and supporting progress across the business
- Reviews the evidence gathering throughout the year to inform the annual review of the scheme
- Provides technical guidance and advice to commission staff
- Services and supports the Provider Diversity Reference Group
- Works with external stakeholders to ensure opportunities for involvement in the Commission's work

4.2 Leading our equality and diversity work

Our equality and diversity programme is led by the Chief Executive, Commissioner for Equalities and the Executive Team Diversity Champion. The Diversity Strategy Board (DSB) meets bi-monthly and is responsible for overseeing progress towards achieving the outcomes set out in the scheme. The DSB is supported by the equality and diversity team, led by the Head of Equality and Diversity, based in the Policy and Planning Department. This team has a strategic remit and co-ordinates and supports the delivery of the Equality and Diversity Scheme.

That Equalities Commissioner chairs the Provider Diversity Reference Group which continues to give us an important perspective on the work we do, especially our reform programme.

The equality and diversity team:

4.3 Involving people in the development of our scheme

We have involved people throughout the development of our scheme in a number of ways. The views and experiences of our employees, along with those who receive public services, have been an essential factor in establishing the right priorities for our equality action plan.

Actively involving people in identifying the barriers they face in working here or in using public services is vital to the effectiveness of the equality and diversity scheme.

We consulted on this scheme between 4 April and 16 May 2008. We asked the public services we work with, our national external stakeholders and all our staff for their views on our proposed actions. The views expressed have helped us to revise our plans and be more precise about what we are trying to achieve and how.

Section 5

5.1 How we involve specific groups of stakeholders

We have developed our approach for involving disabled people in the development of our scheme. As a result of various discussions on how we can work with disabled people to inform policymaking we are exploring ways to better involve disabled people in the policy making process.

The LSC recognises that by working in isolation, it will not be able to deliver services that meet the diverse needs of clients. Therefore it works closely with the Provider Diversity Reference Group, organisations and community groups so that we have a better understanding of the local, cultural and social issues which impact on the clients who use our services.

5.2 Promoting equality and diversity in service delivery

The LSCs approach to equality and diversity recognises that not everyone has fair access to public services and as a result, this may affect their quality of life. We recognise that people can experience discrimination, harassment and other barriers to participation as a result of different aspects of their identity.

Within the public sector, we have an unusual position in that we do not always work directly with the public, so we need to make sure that we promote equality within our organisation and through the work of others. Central to this is having good and timely information about our performance which is critical to understanding and rooting out inequality.

We are committed to involving the public in our work so that we can reflect the experiences of people who use public services. This has meant that we have to establish a variety of ways to involve the public so

that we strengthen our capacity to reflect the views of diverse communities.

The delivery and improvement of our services requires an ongoing understanding and consideration of internal and external client groups to ensure high standards in service delivery and the promotion of equality within all business areas.

Similarly, we expect our providers to take equality into account in the services they provide to clients and that they monitor their services in accordance with public sector equality duties. In doing so, they must ensure their analysis uses qualitative and quantitative data to monitor the needs of different groups. Our guidance must therefore ensure the monitoring of the take up services from diverse communities.

Our aim is to create a working environment where diversity is recognised, valued and celebrated. We are operating in an increasingly diverse society and recognise that services must be relevant, responsive and sensitive to changing needs and circumstances.

5.3 Equality Impact Assessments and the policy making process

Our Equality Impact Assessment is a system which considers all our current and proposed activities and policies to ensure that they do not unlawfully discriminate against disabled people, black and minority ethnic people, men, women, transgender people and people of different ages, religion or belief, or sexuality. It also identifies where our policies and activities can be more effective in promoting equality of opportunity and positive attitudes to and good relations between different groups and is underpinned by the consultation and involvement of external stakeholders.

The results of our EIAs mean that we can make informed adjustments to our policies and activities to ensure we are promoting equality of opportunity and positive attitudes to and good relations between different groups.

Our existing policy review schedule (in Appendix One) lists our main activities. We are revising this to ensure that all of our main activities are reprioritised and assessed over the next three years and to ensure that we meet all of our equality duties. We will involve people from the different equalities groups.

Our criteria for prioritisation will include those activities which most affect our employees, stakeholders or clients. We will take into account the seriousness and extent of potential discrimination, harassment, inequality or opportunity to promote equality and not just focus on the numbers of people potentially affected.

5.4 Action planning for change

The key areas we are focussing our activities on over the next three years are those which have been articulated through:

- The results of our Staff Survey
- The results of our external performance audit
- Feedback received from consultations with internal and external stakeholders on the Scheme

Over the next three years we aim to ensure that we make significant improvement in our understanding, methodology and approach to delivering equality and diversity outcomes. We recognise that leadership is key to ensuring that vision becomes a reality. To this end, we are committed to achieving the following outcomes:

a) Employment and service delivery

- A workforce that is knowledgeable about diversity so that individuals are able to promote equality of

opportunity and eliminate discrimination in the course of their work

- An environment where discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or religion and belief is dealt with appropriately
- Facilities for quiet reflection and prayer
- An improved understanding of our workforce profile through better reporting of the diversity of our employees
- Removal of any unfair differences in pay
- Effective and diverse engagement in the development of our scheme
- A more robust equality impact assessment framework
- Improved monitoring of our performance against diversity indicators and standards
- All the buildings we own or rent comply with DDA regulations
- Make reasonable adjustments for our disabled employees including the provision of information, ICT, software and other facilities to enable disabled employees to carry out their roles effectively

b) Providing information

- An improved approach to how we monitor translation services and a better monitoring of the take-up of translation services
- All events we hold are fully accessible to all equalities groups and are held at venues which are fully accessible to disabled people
- A consistent approach to making all our printed and electronic materials fully accessible

Section 6

In order to take forward our commitment to deliver on the Scheme we have identified a number of priorities which are outlined in more detail within the plan.

6.1 Priorities

Priorities	Why a Priority
<p>1 Management Information systems require some improvement to ensure diversity data can be collected and analysed in a more meaningful way</p>	<p>Monitoring of diversity data is critical to ensuring that we have a clear picture on the issues which are impacting on our business. Currently, BME and disabled employees are underrepresented at senior levels within the organisation</p> <p>In addition, we do not have a clear picture regarding the diversity profile or needs of our clients</p>
<p>2 Equality Action Planning and Reporting historically been quite patchy and in some areas there has been very little monitoring of progress in relation to the Scheme.</p>	<p>Although there is an improvement in recording progress, there is clearly still an enormous amount of work to be done to improve in this area. We are currently reviewing our approach to performance reporting and will be introducing new methods to monitor evidence and outcomes against the Scheme</p>
<p>3 Develop the capacity of our employees so that they are able to deliver on the action plan</p>	<p>Although we have a well developed programme of equality and diversity training, staff still lack confidence in integrating it into their everyday work</p>
<p>4 Influence our contractors to meet the duties to promote equality</p>	<p>We have a public duty to promote equality and we have to make more use of our procurement powers to ensure that our providers and other contractors understand and fulfil their duties to promote equality</p>
<p>5 Communicate and report progress more consistency</p>	<p>Feedback has suggested that we could take more steps to publicise the work we are doing in equality and diversity</p>
<p>6 Improve our approach as an employer of choice</p>	<p>There is a higher concentration of women and BME employees in administrative posts, where they are lower paid</p>
<p>7 Manage the performance of our work in equality and diversity</p>	<p>Continue to review and implement performance measures to promote a step change in this area</p>

6.2 Action Plan

Key to general duties

1. Promote equality of opportunity (DDA 2005, RRAA 2000, EA 2006, Welsh Language Act 2003)
2. Eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination (DDA 2005, RRAA 2000, EA 2006, Welsh Language Act 2003)
3. Promote good relations between persons of different racial groups and positive attitudes towards disabled people (DDA 2005, RRAA 2000, Welsh Language Act 2003)
4. Encourage participation by disabled people in public life (DDA 2005)
5. Take positive steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people. This means that we have to take steps which go beyond treating disabled people and non-disabled people alike (DDA 2005)
6. Promote equality of opportunity in Employment (Age) Regulations 2006
7. Promote equality of opportunity in Employment (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
8. Promote equality of opportunity in Employment (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
9. Protect and promote human rights Human Rights Act 1998

1. Leadership

Promote an environment where equality and diversity is driven from top and integrated into the strategic business agenda of the organisation

Duty	Equality group	Activities	Who is responsible	By when	Outcomes
All	All	1. Executive Team Diversity Champion to drive forward equality and diversity change at Executive Team Level	David Godfrey, Executive Diversity Champion	Ongoing Review success annually	Clear vision for equality and diversity which is communicated and driven from the top Equality and diversity is part of the strategic business agenda of the Commission.
All	All	2. Ensure equality and diversity performance is a standing item on the board room agenda	David Godfrey, Executive Diversity Champion	Ongoing	Leadership is given to raise the profile and understanding of equality and diversity issues Identify and address strategic concerns in a timely and effective manner
All	All	3. Diversity Strategy Board to oversee the implementation of the Equality Schemes	Diversity Strategy Board	Ongoing Review success annually	Takes collective ownership and responsibility for monitoring and reporting progress Drives change Ensures compliance with legislation and ensures the Commission is at the leading edge of diversity strategy
All	All	4. All senior leaders adhere to core standards and behaviours to promote equality and diversity by: Valuing the diversity of their staff Becoming a diversity champion for their departments	Executive Team Directors Heads of Service/ Unit	Immediately	Promote a culture of diversity leadership Embed diversity into business practice
All	All	5. Review all activities relevant to diversity	Head of Direct Services	Sept 2008	Secure commitment to take the agenda forward All team members understand how diversity impacts on their work

2. Mainstreaming

Ensuring equality and diversity is integral to all our strategies, policies and plans and translated into targets; ensuring our behaviours match our vision

Duty	Equality group	Activities	Who is responsible	By when	Outcomes
Equality Impact Assessments					
1, 2, 3, 4, & 5	Race Disability Gender	6. Deliver Refresher Briefings to update staff on the new Code	Impact Assessment Co-ordinator	July 2008 April 2009 April 2010 April 2011	Improved compliance with equality duties
1, 2, 3, 4, & 5	Race Disability Gender	7. Deliver new training on equality impact assessments to key LSC employees.	Impact Assessment Co-ordinator Equality and Diversity Team	July 2008 September 2009 September 2010 September 2011	Improved staff knowledge and confidence in carrying out equality impact assessments Identify and address potential areas of inequality
9	Human rights	8. Incorporate human rights in equality impact assessments: revise guidance and training	Equality and Diversity Team	2011	Promote human rights
1, 2, 3, 4, & 5, 7 & 8	Race Disability Gender Sexual orientation Religion and belief	9. Carry out equality impact assessments in line with the development of our policies, procedures and practices.	Equalities Performance Adviser (Employment) Equality and Diversity Manager	by June 2009	Equality impact assessments are mainstreamed into the business planning process Existing policies, practices and procedures to be equality impact assessed

Monitoring

All	All	10. Ensure the Change Programme Board and Sub groups explicitly integrate equality considerations into their work to include: Advocates Quality Experts Best Value Tendering Crime Reform Civil Reform Delivery Transformation Transfer of Grant People Strategy Management Information Provider Readiness	Heads of Service	Equality and Diversity to be part of all appropriate work programmes Regular reports to Diversity Strategy Board on progress as from Sept 2008	To mainstream equality into all business operations To minimise risk of potential discriminatory impact on diverse groups. Equality issues are identified and addressed in an appropriate and timely manner.
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Duty	Equality group	Activities	Who is responsible	By when	Outcomes
1, 2, 3, 4	Race Gender Disability	11. Monitor application of equal opportunities policy and include in HR monitoring data	HR Consultant	September 2008 Report annually	Policies are consistently applied across the organisation
1, 2, 3, 4	Race Gender Disability	12. Monitor level of grievances raised by staff and include in HR monitoring data	HR Consultant	September 2008 Report annually	Establish whether there are areas of disproportionality and take appropriate action
1, 2, 3, 4	Race Gender Disability	13. Monitor reasons for staff leaving the Commission by equality group and include in HR monitoring data	HR Consultant	September 2008 Report annually	Establish whether there are areas of disproportionality and take appropriate action
1, 2, 3, 4	Race Gender Disability	14. Monitor redundancies in line with change programme and include in HR monitoring data	HR Consultant	September 2008 Report annually	Establish whether there are areas of disproportionality and take appropriate action
1, 2, 3, 4	Race Gender Disability	15. Monitor return to work by equality groups and include in HR monitoring data	HR Consultant	February 2009 Report annually	Application of policies in line with representation of minority groups in the workforce
1, 2, 3, & 5	Race Disability Gender	16. Providers of goods and legal services to comply with contractual provisions to provide equal opportunity monitoring information	Head of Facilities Management Equality and Diversity Team Corporate Legal Team	August 2008	Improved management information about clients Improved understanding amongst providers of our duties to promote equality
All	All	17. Ensure SMS system is able to capture and monitor diversity data that meets business needs	Head of ISD Management Information Team Equality and Diversity Manager	Ongoing Review annually from October 2008	IT systems are able to record and monitor diversity data in a consistent way To enable interpretation and analysis of trends
6, 7, 8	Age Sexual Orientation Religion or Belief	18. Where appropriate, monitor clients of LSC Direct Services and Customer Services by age, sexual orientation and religion or belief to gain an improved understanding of client diversity needs	Head of Direct Services Head of Customer Services Equalities Performance Advisor (Service Delivery)	August 2008	Identification of issues and trends To take appropriate action to address the diversity needs of clients
All	All	19. Review outcome of client monitoring and feedback strategy	Head of Direct Services	September 2008 Half- yearly reports	Identify needs and take appropriate action to improve services to meet diverse needs

Duty	Equality group	Activities	Who is responsible	By when	Outcomes
All	All	20. Review and revise equality opportunities information gathered from clients	Management Information team	August 2008 Half- yearly reports	Gain a better understanding of the diversity needs of clients in order to inform the delivery of services
1, 2, 3, & 5	Race Disability Gender	21. Produce a Report on Provider Diversity	Legal Services Research Centre	Annually	Information enables us to identify how the change programme is impacting on the provider base
1, 2, 3, 4 & 5	Race Disability Gender	22. Monitor diversity of counsel from whom LSC procure advice and representation for services direct to the LSC	Corporate Legal Team	Establish process from September 2008 Ongoing	To promote diversity within our arrangements for representation and advice
1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8	All	23. Measure employees' perception of equality and diversity through our annual Staff Survey and respond to feedback in both local and national action plans, as appropriate.	Human Resources	Annually	Staff report improvements in fairness and employee engagement Perceptions of bullying, harassment and discrimination are progressively eliminated
1, 2, 3, 4 & 5	Disability	24. Monitor outcome of individual risk assessment of all employees who have stated they have a disability	Human Resource Managers	November 2008 Yearly report on the actions taken to promote equality	Improvements in feedback from staff with a disability. Disabled staff report that they feel their needs are addressed in a sensitive and respectful way
1 & 2	Gender	25. Follow up on findings of last annual pay review	Director of Human Resources	October 2008	Action taken demonstrates that areas of inequalities have been addressed
1, 2, 3, 4	Gender Race Disability	26. Conduct an annual equal pay review and produce an action plan to address any disproportionality	Director of Human Resources	December 2008 December 2009 December 2010 December 2011	There are no areas of unequal pay by gender, disability or race

Duty	Equality group	Activities	Who is responsible	By when	Outcomes
Employee Engagement					
All	All	27. Carry out a Feasibility Study to explore whether there is a need for Staff Networks on disability, age, race, gender, sexual orientation and religion to address wider diversity concerns which affect employees	Equalities Performance Advisor (Employment)	June 2009	Recommendations on need for staff networks Improved understanding of the diversity needs of our employees Promote the wellbeing of our employees
1, 2, 3 & 5	Race Disability	28. Consider a Career Development Programme to support BME and disabled employees applying for internal posts in areas where they are underrepresented	Equalities Performance Advisor (Employment)	September 2009	To promote a representative workforce. To eliminate disadvantage and discrimination. To raise the confidence of BME and disabled staff in applying for employment opportunities
Training					
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9	Race Disability Gender Sexual Orientation Age Religion Human Rights	29. Produce a generic training plan identifying target groups to be trained: including line managers; contracting staff; relationship managers; policy staff; independent reviewers, adjudicators and clerks; customer service; telephone operators; frontline staff; Commissioners and senior management (ii) topics relating to job roles	Equalities Performance Advisor (Employment) Equality and Diversity Manager	July 2009	Training needs identified and courses planned
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9	Race Disability Gender Sexual Orientation Age Religion Human Rights	30. Deliver training on equality and diversity in accordance with training plan	Equalities Performance Advisor (Employment) Equality and Diversity Manager	From November 2008 in accordance with training plan	Increased awareness and understanding of equality and diversity by all staff
1, 2, 3 & 5	All	31. Deliver Equality and Diversity training for new Peer Reviewers	Peer Review Operations Team	Ongoing	Peer Reviewers understand and apply the LSCs duty to promote equality

Duty	Equality group	Activities	Who is responsible	By when	Outcomes
Promoting an Accessible Environment					
1, 2, 3, 4 & 5	Disability	32. Ensure that buildings within LSC control are accessible for disabled users and processes are in place to review periodically Report on accessibility of new buildings in line with Property Strategy	Head of Procurement and Estates	August 2008 Review annually June 2009 June 2010 June 2011	LSC buildings are accessible for staff and visitors and comply with the Disability Discrimination Act

Procurement

All	All	33. Review procurement process and guidelines for external suppliers. Implement changes	Head of Procurement and Estates Equalities Performance Advisor (Service Delivery)	August 2008	Our Procurement Policy encourages our partners or contractors to employ best practice in the area of equalities To eliminate discriminatory practices within our arrangements with Suppliers of goods or services
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3. Service delivery

Ensuring that the services we deliver meet the needs of the multiracial and diverse communities we serve

Duty	Equality group	Activities	Who is responsible	By when	Outcomes
Service Development					
1, 2, 3 & 5	Disability	34. Review analysis by the Shaw Trust of Community Legal Advice Website	Head of Public Information and E-Service	August 2008 Final review	To promote accessibility for disabled people
1, 2, 3 5 & 6	Disability Race Gender	35. Review findings from Community Legal Advice Services User Group	Senior Project Manager Direct Services	August 2008	Clients are able to inform and shape the delivery of services to ensure It meets their needs
4, 5	Disability	36. Ensure equality impact assessment is carried out on the National Telephone Service	Senior Project Manager Direct Services	Review annually May 2009 May 2010 May 2011	To promote accessibility for disabled people
4, 5	Disability	37. Evaluate email advice pilot for users with a hearing impairment	Senior Project Manager Direct Services	August 2008	To ensure services meet accessibility requirements

Duty	Equality group	Activities	Who is responsible	By when	Outcomes
4, 5	Disability	38. Explore provision of advice via web for BSL users Ensure an Equality Impact Assessment is carried out	Senior Project Manager Direct Services	August 2008	To ensure services meet accessibility requirements
4, 5	Disability	39. All new leaflets to adopt new accessibility standards	Head of Public Information and E-Service	August 2008	Improved access to information by disabled people
4, 5	Disability	40. Produce BSL version of high volume leaflets	Head of Public Information and E- Service	September 2008	Profoundly deaf people are able to access LSC information and services
1, 2 & 3	Race	41. Review language translation of existing leaflets	Head of Public Information and E- Service	August 2008	Improved access to information in community languages
1, 2, 3, 5	Race Disability	42. Give consideration to feedback from Website visitors, particularly those with visual impairments who experience problems with the website and within the constraints available try to resolve them	Head of ISD	Ongoing	The LSC Website is universally accessible and usable, including by people with visual impairments, motor impairments, Dyslexia
3, 6, 7, 8	Race Disability Age Sexual Orientation Religion or Belief	43. Review whether targeted marketing of services is required to reach greater diversity of clients	Head of Direct Services	May 2009 May 2010 May 2011	Ensure all clients are aware and can access services in a way which meets their needs

Duty	Equality group	Activities	Who is responsible	By when	Outcomes
4, 5	Disability	<p>44. Ensure all LSC organised meetings held internally or externally are in accessible venues and reasonable adjustments are made to allow full involvement.</p> <p>Review accessible room hire standards and raise employee awareness.</p> <p>A record of advice on requests for special assistance will be maintained and regularly reviewed to identify best practice.</p>	<p>Regional Directors</p> <p>Heads of Services</p> <p>Equality and Diversity Manager</p> <p>Equality and Diversity Manager</p>	<p>May 2009</p> <p>July 2009</p> <p>July 2009</p>	LSC meetings are accessible for people with a range of disabilities
4, 5	Disability	<p>45. Produce an Accessibility Statement to signpost individuals to various information</p> <p>Review the content of our websites</p>	<p>Web and Publications Manager</p> <p>Head of Direct Services</p>	<p>July 2008</p> <p>July 2009</p> <p>July 2010</p> <p>July 2011</p>	Disabled people are able to access information in a way which is appropriate to them
4, 5	Disability	<p>46. Ensure all written communications meet DDA standards for accessibility</p>	<p>Communications Manager</p> <p>Regional Directors</p> <p>Consultation Co-ordinator</p> <p>Head of Direct Services</p>	November 2008	Information is provided in a way which is accessible to disabled people
All	All	<p>47. Review Consultation process to promote diverse engagement and participation from clients</p>	<p>Consultation Co-ordinator</p> <p>Communications Manager</p> <p>Civil and Crime Policy Teams</p>	<p>September 2008</p> <p>September 2009</p> <p>September 2010</p> <p>September 2011</p>	To ensure that clients are able to fully engage in the consultation process
All	All	<p>48. Review Equal Opportunities Monitoring feedback forms to ensure that the outcomes and barriers experienced by people are captured and acted upon.</p>	PDS Team	<p>March 2009</p> <p>March 2010</p> <p>March 2011</p>	<p>Clients needs are identified and addressed in an appropriate way</p> <p>To promote equality of opportunity</p>

Duty	Equality group	Activities	Who is responsible	By when	Outcomes
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	All	49. Review feedback forms to ensure clients needs are taken into account and acted upon	Customer Service	August 2008 June 2009 June 2010 June 2011	To inform and improve services to diverse clients
1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Race Gender Disability	50. Enhance the role of Client Champions to include diversity	Customer Service Equality and Diversity Team	September 2008	To promote an improved understanding of the diversity needs of our clients To promote and share good practice
All	All	51. Develop a User Participation Forum	Service Delivery Support	April 2009 Subject to approval of Public and User Engagement Strategy	Develop clear performance measures and standards that reflects clients needs
1,2, 3, 7	Race Religion or Belief	52. Carry out a Needs Analysis of Language Line	Service Delivery Support	August 2008	To establish whether there is a need for such a service within the LSC
1, 2, 3, 7	Race Religion or Belief	53. Promote Cultural Awareness Toolkit to staff	Service Delivery Support Equalities Performance Advisor Service Delivery	September 2008	Greater awareness of diversity and how it impacts on clients Improved service to clients
1, 2, 3	Race Disability	54. Ensure Provider Readiness Toolkit and associated materials promote equality with SMEs	Transition Manager	Ongoing Review progress by August 2008	SME businesses are able to compete in the new market environment
All	All	55. Explore the development of capacity building schemes in areas of inequality	Equality and Diversity Team	Ongoing	To promote awareness and access to legal aid services
All	All	56. Produce an Impact Report to celebrate good practice in Equality and Diversity	Equality and Diversity Team	June 2010	To raise awareness of our achievements in equality and diversity

4. Inclusiveness

Developing a broad and inclusive focus across all equality and diversity issues

Duty	Equality group	Activities	Who is responsible	By when	Outcomes
All	All	57. Co-ordinate Aspire Programme with Schools and Universities to promote community engagement and participation amongst young people	Equality and Diversity Team	Programme planned for November 2008	Motivate and raise aspirations of young people to consider a legal career To promote volunteering, civic engagement and enhance community relations
1, 2	Race Gender	58. Consider the use of a Positive Action Programme to address underrepresented areas e.g. BME and disabled staff	Equalities Performance Advisor (Employment)	February 2009	Ensure employees have an opportunity to realise their potential within the organisation To eliminate disadvantage
1, 2, 3, 4	Race Gender Disability	59. Work with legal profession to promote diversity of legal professionals Explore partnership projects to address wider diversity concerns	QED Training Grants Co-ordinator Equality and Diversity Team	Ongoing Review August 2008	To promote succession planning and the next generation of legal professionals
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	All	60. Establish a Client Reference Group to support delivery and challenge our performance against the Equality Scheme	Equality and Diversity Team	Options paper September 2008 Implement	To ensure the views of clients inform and shape the direction of the Scheme To provide critical challenge of our performance
1, 2, 3, 4	Race Gender Disability	61. Research diverse needs of clients who access Criminal Defence Services	Criminal Defence Service Legal Services Research Centre	Started November 2007	Gain a better understanding of the barriers experienced by clients Take steps to ensure services are developed to meet their needs
All	All	62. Promote the Commission as an employer to the multi-racial and diverse communities that we serve	Directors Heads of Service Project Managers Programme Managers	Ongoing	Our work demonstrates we are committed to working in partnership to deliver good equality outcomes for diverse communities

Duty	Equality group	Activities	Who is responsible	By when	Outcomes
All	All	63. Develop a CSR pilot project to explore the wider social diversity needs of clients i.e. Domestic Abuse	Head of Whole Systems Head of Experts Equality and Diversity Performance Advisor (Service Delivery)	March 2009	To understand the impact of legal aid services on clients and the wider social context
All	All	64. Launch topical debates on equality and diversity issues inviting cross-section of stakeholders and LSC staff	Head of Equality and Diversity	April 2009	To improve LSC staff knowledge and understanding of topical issues and foster relationships with stakeholders

Appendix 1

List of Functions and Policies

The LSC's functions are wide-ranging and are prescribed by legislation (the Legal Aid Act 1988 and the Access to Justice Act 1999). We are currently engaged in a programme to transform how legal aid services are delivered and also transform the LSC as an organisation. Information about the Transforming Legal Aid and Transforming Ourselves Programme can be found on our website at <http://www.legalservices.gov.uk/aboutus.asp>. Below is a list of strategic areas of work and how we rank their importance in relation to our equality and diversity priorities and legal responsibilities (see section 1.1).

In doing so we have considered the relevance of the function or policy to:

- improving access to legal advice or services for ethnic minority communities, the disabled or people from other diverse backgrounds
- evidence or awareness of public concern about the importance to promoting equality
- work carried out to date in assessing and managing the impact on promoting equality

	Lead Directorate	Importance to:		
		Race	Disability	Gender
Civil Change Programme	Policy	Medium	Medium	Low
Crime Change Programme	Policy	Medium	Medium	Low
People Strategy	Organisational Transformation	Medium	Medium	Medium
Delivery Transformation	Organisational Transformation	Medium	Medium	Low

Appendix 2

Who we consulted to prepare this Scheme

The LSC conducted a six-week public consultation between 4 April and 16 May 2008.

We invited the organisations listed below to submit responses to our consultation.

Advice Services Alliance
 Association of Muslim Lawyers
 Audit Commission
 Bar Standards Board
 Black Solicitors Network
 Business Link
 Citizens Advice Bureau
 Crown Prosecution Service
 Employers Forum on Age
 Employers Forum on Disability
 Equality and Human Rights Commission
 Focus Consultancy
 Group for Solicitors with a Disability
 Interfaith Network
 Lesbian and Gay Lawyers Association
 Society for Visually Impaired Lawyers
 Society of Asian Lawyers
 Solicitors Regulation Authority
 Stonewall
 The Bar Council
 The Law Society
 Young Solicitors Group
 Home office
 London Development Agency
 Ministry of Justice
 Transport for London

Below is a summary of responses to the consultation together with the LSC's responses.

Q1 How easy did you find our Equality Scheme to understand?

Option	Results
Very Easy	7%
Fairly Easy	43%
Neither Easy Nor Difficult	36%
Difficult	14%
Very Difficult	0%

LSC response

We have tried to make the document easier to read using Plain English and have re-designed the document with a view to making it easier to understand and improving accessibility.

Q2 a) In our scheme we explain the LSC's role and vision for the future. Based upon this, do you think the objectives we have identified are the right ones?

Option	Results
Yes	79%
No	21%

Q2 b) What do you think are the top three priority areas we should focus on?

You said	LSC response
<p>In general, you were supportive of the priorities. You agreed that the following were particularly important: improved management information; influencing contractors and improving our approach as an employer of choice. In addition, you highlighted the importance of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting the needs of diverse clients and • LSC staff having the necessary skills to implement the Scheme, including carrying out impact assessments • Sexual orientation equality • Gender equality • Equal pay • Involving Trade Unions 	<p>We are taking steps to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that improving services for minority clients is a corporate priority • train staff on equality impact assessments • make explicit reference to specific equality strands where they are most relevant in our work; the work on staff networks will be an opportunity to explore specific issues • review equal pay at the LSC • involve LSC Trade Unions: the GMB and FDA representatives are full members of our Diversity Strategy Board; we will look to best practice from them and when implementing the Scheme

Q2 c) Are there any areas you think we should prioritise, but which we have not mentioned in the Equality Scheme?

You said	LSC response
<p>Most of you thought that we have included everything that we should have. You asked that we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emphasise that involving disabled people is not the same as consultation; • take account of the need for work life balance and note commitments outside of work can be a barrier to career progression 	<p>We agree that it is important to acknowledge the difference between involving disabled people and consultation and will make a point of ensuring that we meet our specific involvement duty under the Disability Discrimination Act.</p> <p>We agree that it is important to protect work life balance and will take steps to ensure that when considering the impact of policies and practices relating to career progression, we do not preclude people because they have commitments outside work.</p>

Q3 a) Our scheme details how we have and will continue to involve stakeholders in developing, progressing and reviewing our scheme and action plan.

Do you think these steps go far enough to involve stakeholders in our work?

Option	Results
Yes	43%
No	57%

Q3 b) If not, please could you suggest better ways that we could involve stakeholders?

You said	LSC response
<p>You felt strongly that we need to do much more active engagement and demonstrate what we are doing with more concrete examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • run focus groups • create opportunities for positive input rather than reactive consultation • survey users of legal aid services • advertise opportunities to be involved more widely 	<p>We agree that we are not doing enough to involve stakeholders and plan to do more. When we report on actions under the Scheme we will provide examples. The LSC's research centre carries out the English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey. We propose to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hold more one-to-one meetings with representative groups and foster new relationships • work more directly with clients, including through a dedicated client group • seek new and innovative ways to engage with stakeholders and bring them together with LSC staff on equality and diversity issues: eg we are inviting external speakers to Lunch Box talks with LSC staff

Q4 a) Our action plan sets out the steps we will take to promote equality of opportunity.

Do you think that any actions should be deleted, amended or added?

Option	Results
Yes	54%
No	46%

Q4 b) If yes, which ones?

You said	LSC response
<p>You made number of suggestions for re-wording actions, which we have incorporated where we can.</p> <p>In addition, you suggested that we add an action to take account of a person's disability to be taken into account when considering the merits test for granting public funding.</p> <p>Review accessibility of the legal services which you contract and develop a program for bringing accessibility of all suppliers up to at least a minimum acceptable level.</p>	<p>When someone applies for legal aid the fact that he or she has a disability will be taken into account, under the Funding Code, as it is relevant to the merits of the case. We do not think that it is necessary or appropriate to have an additional action under the Scheme.</p> <p>We are working on doing this through the means available to us, using procurement tools and awareness raising.</p>

Q5 Do you have any additional comments that are not covered in the questions asked in the consultation? If so, please enter provide below or continue on an attached separate sheet if necessary.

You said	LSC response
<p>You made a number of additional constructive comments and requests, including being supportive of the aims of the Scheme.</p> <p>Some of you felt that the Scheme doesn't adequately address the impact of changes to legal aid, eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The constraints being placed on legal aid ... make it more difficult for members of the public to have access to the Scheme and minority groups who number amongst them the most vulnerable in society will suffer disproportionately. Reducing access in this way is itself discriminatory ... an increase in the delivery of public funding must, in my view, be at the heart of any equality and diversity scheme. <p>LSC staff also complained about a lack of feedback about the diversity forms that staff are asked to complete.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not within the scope of the Scheme to increase public funding for legal aid. The Scheme sets out what we will do to ensure that we have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality. • It would not be appropriate to include detail about changes to legal aid funding in the Scheme. We do this in detail whenever we carry out an equality impact assessment of a particular policy proposal under consultation. Legal aid funding is highly relevant to the strategy and a number of actions set out in the Scheme. • We publish an annual statistical analysis of workplace diversity on our website. • From September 2008 we will start carrying out quarterly monitoring reports, the results of which will be published annual workplace reports.

Appendix 3

Glossary of Terms

Asian

People who self-define as being Asian, East African Asian, British Asian or originate from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal or China

Bisexual

A man or woman who is emotionally, physically and/or sexually attracted to both men and women

Black

An inclusive term that refers to all ethnic groups who have a common experience of discrimination on the basis of their skin colour. It also includes those who self-define as black. For some statistical data collection purposes, such as the National Census and in monitoring, black has been used as a more narrowly defined term to refer to people who self-define as any of the black or black British categories which are African, Caribbean or Black other

Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act defines disability as a "physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities". However, campaigners for disability rights adopt a more social approach that defines disability as "the loss or limitation of opportunities that prevent people who have impairments from taking part in the life of the community on an equal level with others due to physical and social barriers."

Discrimination

Discrimination happens when a person is treated less favourably because of differences from the majority. These differences include but are not limited to gender, race, disability, religion, sexual orientation and age

Diversity

The difference in the values, attitudes, cultural perspectives, beliefs, ethnic backgrounds, sexuality, skills, knowledge and life experiences of each individual in any group of people. This term refers to differences among people and is used to highlight need

Duty

A mandatory and legal obligation to do something.

Equal Opportunities

The development of practices that promote the possibility of fair and equal chances for all to develop their full potential in all aspects of life and the removal of barriers of discrimination and oppression experienced by certain groups

Equalities

Used as short-hand term to refer to all work addressing issues of discrimination and disadvantage, particularly as it relates to race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief and age

Equality

The vision or aim of creating a society where power and quality of life is shared equally and both individuals and groups are able to live their lives free from discrimination and oppression

Ethnicity

An individual's identification with a group sharing any or all of the following: lifestyles, religion, customs and language

Feminine

Assigned physical and behavioural characteristics attributed to the female sex

Gender

A concept that refers to the social differences between women and men that have been learnt are changeable over time and have wide variations both within and between cultures. The term is also used to differentiate from 'sex', which refers to biological differences

Impact Assessment

Assessment of policies of how they impact on each racial group, disabled people and different genders

Positive Action

Covers a wide range of measures taken to compensate for present and past disadvantages which exist and/or existed because of discrimination. The proviso for such measures is that their *raison d'être* must be to achieve "full equality in practice". Positive action is not affirmative action but reasonable accommodation, and is (1) adequate, (2) proportionate AND (3) limited in time

Procurement

Process by which the Commission enters into a contract with an external supplier for the latter to carry out works or provide goods or services

Sex

A strictly biological reference to the differences between male and female which include: chromosomes, genitalia, reproductive organs, hormonal states and secondary sex characteristics

Sexuality

A person's emotional, physical and/or sexual attraction and the expression of that attraction

Stakeholders

All those individuals or organisations who have an interest in, or could be affected by, a policy

Transgender

People are those who identify their gender to be different from the physical sex at birth. A transgenderist, sometimes known as gender dysphoria, can also be a person who, like a transsexual, goes through transition, sometimes with the help of hormone therapy and/or cosmetic surgery, to live in the gender role of choice but has not undergone and generally does not intend to undergo surgery

Contact us

We continue to welcome comments from the LSC staff, providers of legal services and the public on our scheme.

Copies of this Scheme are available on the LSC's website <http://www.legalservices.gov.uk>

If you require a copy in a alternatives formats will be considered on request from:

Equality and Diversity Team
Legal Services Commission
4 Abbey Orchard Street
London
SW1P 2BS
Telephone switchboard: 020 7783 7000

Complaints about the scheme

Any individual who has a complaint regarding a failure to comply with the scheme should do so to the LSC Equality and Diversity Team. If disability assistance is required, this will be provided.

Complaints will be handled in the following ways. Staff employed by the LSC should submit complaints through the normal internal grievance procedure. Members of the public, individuals and other organisations or bodies from whom the LSC buys goods and services should refer to the complaints section on the LSC website.

