



EQUALITY & DIVERSITY STRATEGY

An integrated Equality & Diversity Strategy for 2005 to 2008

Revision 1 – this document has been revised, details of the amendments made can be found in the quality and Diversity Annual Report 2006

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APPENDICES

The appendices are significant in length and so are not attached to the main document as a matter of routine. If you require copies of the appendices these can be downloaded from our website or contact the Head of Diversity (diversity@lawscot.org.uk, 0131 226 7411 or text-phone 0131 476 8359).

Appendix 1 Listing and Scoring of all functions, policies and procedures (75 pgs.)

Appendix 2 Prioritising and Departmental action planning (39 pgs.)

This document is NOT intended to be a detailed guide to the relevant legislation or how it may affect individual firms or organisations. This is a fast developing area of law and whilst the contents are believed correct at the date of publication no guarantee is given in respect of accuracy, completeness, or the document being up-to-date. This Strategy is not intended to constitute specific legal advice and The Law Society of Scotland can accept no responsibility for any loss, claim or damage relating to the information provided or how it is interpreted. Independent legal advice should always be sought from a specialist in the field.

THANKS

The Law Society of Scotland would like to thank various organisations, and where appropriate the individuals working there, for their help and support in providing examples of best practice, ideas, inspiration, and sharing their own Race/Diversity/Equality Strategies which have helped in the development of this document, our training, and the guidance we are providing to the profession. In alphabetical order:

ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service)
British Stammering Association (Scotland)
Capability Scotland
Change CRS Recruitment
Changing Faces
Croner – WoltersKluwer UK
Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service
Disability Rights Commission
Equal Opportunities Commission
Law Society of England and Wales
Lothian and Borders Police
NHS Education for Scotland
NHS Health Scotland
NHS Quality Improvement Scotland
Ownership Options Scotland
RNIB
RNID Scotland
Royal Bank of Scotland
Scottish Executive
Scottish Inter Faith Council
Scottish Legal Aid Board
Scottish Parliament Corporate Body
Stonewall
The Mental Health Foundation

The Society believes that organisations sharing information, ideas and experiences in relation to Diversity affords the greatest opportunity for us all to move forward in this important work. We would encourage anyone with questions or feedback about our work to contact the Head of Diversity (diversity@lawscot.org.uk, 0131 226 7411 or text-phone 0131 476 8359).

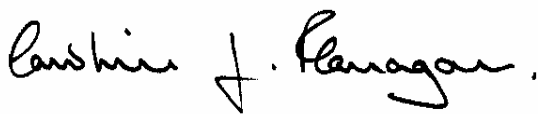
Foreword

The Law Society of Scotland and Diversity

As the professional body for solicitors in Scotland the Society has responsibilities to the profession, to the public as a whole, and as an employer. To provide, and be seen to provide, effective regulation the Society must take account of the Diversity of both profession and public and ensure that our services are 'accessible', 'user friendly' and equitable to all in experience and outcome. Whether it is termed 'good customer care', 'good client care', 'quality management', 'risk management', or 'Equality and Diversity' to carry out our regulatory functions effectively, we have to understand both the groups we regulate, and the public for whom we regulate.

This document is meant to provide a clear picture of the Society and the targets we have set in the field of Equality and Diversity as part of our overall strategy. The Law Society of Scotland views Equality and Diversity as a long-term commitment driven by quantifiable goals as opposed to a single achievable goal, for that reason this work will always be ongoing. Significant targets have been set for the 2005-2008 period and we commit to reporting annually and openly on progress whilst also having built in flexibility to respond to comments and guidance we receive as a result both of publication of the strategy and from the data collection and involvement projects we have planned.

We look forward to the work ahead and to implementing the objectives and challenges we have set for ourselves.



Caroline Flanagan
President



Douglas Mill
Chief Executive

Executive Summary

A flavour of the Society and what we are doing...

As the professional body for solicitors in Scotland the Society has responsibilities to the profession, to the public as a whole, as an employer, as a 'Trade Organisation'¹, and as a 'Qualifications Body'². To represent and protect these truly diverse groups the Society recognises the need to understand, involve, and ensure equal treatment in employment and access to services for all people irrespective of age, sex, gender, race, religion and/or belief, disability, or sexual orientation. This section gives a flavour of our approach and directs the reader to where more detailed information can be found.

Identifying & prioritising relevant functions & policies (section 6.1)

We have involved all directors in scoring every function and policy of the society, prioritising these, and setting action plans tackling issues identified

Assessing & consulting on policies (section 6.2)

The 'scoring' above is a first step, we have established a plan for innovative consultation and involvement projects and will revise action plans on an ongoing basis

Monitoring Policies for adverse impact (section 6.3)

Significant projects are planned to implement better monitoring, including auditing of the make-up of the profession and in relation to training and complaints

Publishing our results (section 6.4)

We have committed to publishing and publicising our progress annually, through our Journal, website, appropriate press releases and other media

Access to information and services (section 6.)

We are currently trying to increase access through, for example, the development of a new accessible website & the introduction of induction loops, text-phones

Human Resources (section 6.5)

We have just been re-accredited with Investors in People status and hope to work towards other recognised standards such as 'Positive About Disabled People'

Awareness Raising and Training (section 6.6)

We have developed a training programme being rolled out to all staff and have received excellent feedback. We are committed to ongoing bespoke training/refreshers

THE SOCIETY AND THE LAW (section 4 & 5)

We have sought to provide basic information on the Society and on the legislation to contextualise the rest of the report

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES (section 7.0)

Having identified areas highly relevant to the duties or significant to mainstreaming Equality & Diversity we have set targets for the 2005-08 period & allocated responsibility

^{1&2} As defined in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Introduction

Equality, Diversity and The Law Society of Scotland

3.1 Definitions of Equal Opportunities, Equality, and Diversity

Equal Opportunities

Equal Opportunities may be the term in this field that most people are familiar with. In business it has historically been summarised as 'treating everyone the same' and concentrated on legal requirements. Organisations tended to take a compliance-driven, reactionary and/or tokenistic approach to the subject meaning the term has often been relegated to little more than a cliché. HR/Personnel were traditionally responsible for Equal Opps. and even where this was done to a high standard there was often a failure to transfer the skills and best practice to other business areas, in particular in relation to service delivery. Whilst there are numerous examples of successful Equal Opportunities Strategies which have delivered real change the Society has not used the term in the remainder of this document because of its mixed connotations.

EQUALITY / EQUALITIES

Equality is about creating a fairer Society where everyone can participate and has the same opportunity to fulfil their potential. Equality is backed by legislation designed to address unfair discrimination based on membership of a particular group. A more detailed list is provided at Section 5.1 but some of the Acts you may be most familiar with are:

Race Relations Act 1976
Sex Discrimination Act 1975
Disability Discrimination Act 1995

- Equality of outcome
- Compliance with Legislation
- 'Owned' by experts
- Risk management (of litigation)

DIVERSITY

Diversity is about recognising that everyone is different in a variety of visible and non-visible ways. It is about creating a culture and practices that recognise, respect and value difference. It is about harnessing this potential to create a productive environment in which the equally diverse needs of the customer/client can be met in a creative environment. It is about generating a workforce who feels valued/respected and has their potential fully utilised in order to meet organisational goals. Diversity is not an 'initiative' or a 'project', it is an ongoing core aim and a core process.

- Recognising Difference
- Linking Diversity to business goals
- Diversity as 'mainstream' vision
- Benefits of Diversity are stressed

3.2 The Separate 'Strands' of the Equalities Legislation

Race	Discrimination is prohibited on the grounds of a person's race, colour, nationality, and their ethnic & national origins in employment and the provision of goods & services
Sex	Discrimination is prohibited on the grounds of a person's sex and marital status in relation to employment and the provision of goods & services; and, in employment/vocational training only, on the grounds of gender reassignment
Disability	'Disability' is defined as a physical/mental impairment with a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out day-to-day activities – covers employment, goods & services and our role as a Qualifications Body & Trade Organisation
Religion & Belief	Discrimination is prohibited on the grounds of religion, religious belief, or similar philosophical belief - relates only to employment and vocational training – some religions may also be covered under Race (those which 'map' to an ethnic group)
Sexual Orientation	Discrimination is prohibited on the basis of a person's sexual orientation (or perception of it/association with someone with a perceived orientation) towards persons of the same sex, persons of the opposite sex, or persons of the same & of the opposite sex
Age	Legislation outlaws age discrimination in employment and vocational training. This covers private and public sectors. It will include every member of the workforce, young and old – age restrictions can, in certain circumstances, amount to sex discrimination

3.3 The 'Strands' working together

Each area has separate legislation and varies slightly in what is covered and how. For example, ethnic minorities are protected from discrimination in relation to access to goods and services but this does not extend (at the date of publication) to those coming from various religious groups, their protection only being in relation to employment and vocational training. An exception to this rule is where a religious group 'maps back' to an ethnic one.

The Society recognises that there are different regimes for the different strands of the Equalities Legislation. The Society staff monitor, aim for and must legally comply with each of the individual statutory arrangements. However, the Society also considers that there is good reason to concentrate on the ‘whole’ of Equality and Diversity, whilst being aware of the ‘strands’. The reasons for this are fourfold:

- A. The need for the different strands to ‘inform’ each other in order to attain the highest standards**
- B. The need to simplify a complex area of law**
- C. The need to learn from analogy**
- D. The fact that whilst legislation creates separate strands this does not mean that people will identify themselves in that way (identity categorisation) nor that their identity is delineated so clearly (multiple-identity)**

It is worth elaborating on each of these points as they emphasise the complexity of this field, the difficulty of tackling issues, and the serious consideration the Society has given to how to present and tackle the equal opportunities and diversity challenge. However, if you are familiar with these concepts you may wish to progress on to Section 3.4.

A. The need for the different strands to ‘inform’ each other in order to attain the highest standards.

As a rule, the Society is committed to trying to achieve the highest standard specified in one strand across all the strands. Hence the approach of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act and the standards introduced by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 being used in relation to all strands. Consequently a truly integrated approach to Equality and Diversity can be taken and mainstreamed in a consistent way across our functions and responsibilities. This proactive approach has already paid dividends; between the Council of the Society voting to formally tackle Equality and Diversity and the action plan being rolled out, the Society was bought under the ‘Specific Requirements’ of The Race Relations (Amendment) Act, a challenge we were better prepared for having already set such an approach as our goal.

B. The need to simplify a complex area of law.

Within any organisation and with any set of rules certain staff must understand all the detail of the legislation to ensure the organisation is complying. However, in 'mainstreaming' Equality and Diversity the Society wanted to ensure that all staff, and in the future the whole profession, understands the core underlying concepts and principles. This necessarily means trying to simplify such a complex field, but should not be seen as indicative of the approach taken at a policy level.

C. The need to learn from analogy.

In raising awareness, promoting understanding, and creating change it is often easier if individuals can try to explore issues around Equality and Diversity in ways that relate to their own experience. For example, in Scotland some people may have had very little exposure to issues faced by some members of ethnic minority groups in employment or accessing services. However, they may have previously had experience of sex discrimination themselves, or through a partner/child, or may be able to relate to race discrimination through experiences of sectarianism. Equally, whilst someone may feel they have no experience of disability, they may understand the difficulty of pushing a pram around a busy city centre, the issues faced by an elderly relative, or an experience of being a young person dressed in a particular style and consequently treated in a particular way in a shop or leisure facility. Of course there are differences, for example, the young person can take off the type of clothing that generates a certain response, the young Asian man cannot change the ethnic origin to which some people may respond. Nevertheless, to focus too strictly on the individual strands of equality can often miss the vital opportunity to generate greater understanding through exploring 'discrimination' in its widest sense, something most people will have experienced at some point in their life knowingly or not.

D. The fact that whilst legislation creates separate strands this does not mean that people will identify themselves (identity categorisation) in that way nor that their identity is delineated so clearly (multiple-identity).

One of the biggest issues around the discrimination legislation is that in order to protect, the legislation must categorise (or discriminate). Whilst most people would state they wish to be treated as an individual, legislation to protect interests necessarily groups people, suggests that there is a commonality (if in nothing else, in

that the whole of that group needs special extra protection), and often ignores the complexity and issues related to other aspects of identity. In implementing legislation within an organisation this raises two issues. Firstly, to talk about and manage equality and diversity one must discuss the groups protected but at the same time recognise that the categories used by the legislation do not necessarily relate to individual experience. For example, one person with relatively serious dyslexia may consider that a 'disability', another may not, the fact that the legislation may cover the circumstances does not necessarily relate to a person feeling that they are a member of that 'group'. Equally, another individual may consider themselves 'disabled' and suffer discrimination on that basis, but be unable to bring themselves under the statutory definition of disability. Research has shown that it is not unusual for siblings to identify differently in defining their ethnic origin. The regulations on sexual orientation suggest a linear model of orientation, with protection being afforded to people who have a orientation towards (or are perceived to have a preference, or associate with someone with a preference) persons of the same sex, persons of the opposite sex, or persons of the same & of the opposite sex. However, a sex-based definition of sexual orientation fails to recognise that very few people within those groups will be attracted to all people within the group and indeed sometimes the attraction to a "type" of person will be more powerful than consideration of their sex. Thus, again, the legislation adopts one particular model of categorisation but this may not equate to individual experience.

The categories used in the legislation can, therefore, alienate individuals as well as bring benefit. Indeed, in some quarters medical and legal discourses, so reliant on categorisation, are seen as perpetuating and adding authority to issues around 'labelling' and 'identity'. Discussing the issues together can help prevent this and, so long as an organisation still recognises the different standards and effects of the legislation behind the individual 'strands', generate greater understanding through recognition that issues of identity and response-to-(perceived)identity effect us all on a daily basis.

A second major issue is that people cannot, even under the legislative categories, have single identities. For example, people will have a sex, a sexual orientation, and an ethnic origin – even if they do not particularly subscribe to this view of themselves - and as such have multiple identities. Multiple-identities can combine to create

deeply marginalised groups within Society, for example, people with certain ethnic origins who are also disabled may find it particularly hard to access employment and/or services. Multiple-identities can also lead to one aspect or another being attributed different 'significance' in different areas of a person's life. For example, someone from a traditional Muslim background may feel they are treated differently in the work place because of their religion and/or their ethnic background. However, when this person returns home it may be her gender that becomes an issue, facing discrimination in her local community for being a working-woman rather than staying within the home. This also introduces the concept of **double-discrimination**, this is where people feel 'torn' between two identities – for example, the need to fit in the work-place environment by wearing western business dress and the need to fit in the home environment with traditional dress. This can lead to a person suffering discrimination for the same aspect of their identity but for different reasons and from different sources.

Overemphasising the individual 'strands' can create an artificially compartmentalised approach, the Society believes overarching concepts of identity and discrimination need explored alongside the individual streams.

The remainder of this document does not go into so much detail on the 'sociology' of Equality and Diversity concentrating more on the practical and business implications. However, anyone wishing further information can contact the Head of Diversity (at diversity@lawscot.org.uk, 0131 226 7411 or text-phone 0131 476 8359).

3.4 Statement of Council on Diversity

On Friday 25th June 2004 the Council of The Law Society of Scotland pledged a commitment to Diversity and ratified the following statement:

As the professional body for solicitors in Scotland the Society has responsibilities to the profession, to the public as a whole, and as an employer. To represent and protect these truly diverse groups the Society recognises the need to:

- *Value the contribution from all who make up the population of Scotland*
- *Take strength from the widest experience, knowledge and understanding it can access – both within and outwith our Society membership*
- *Go beyond legal compliance by integrating diversity into all that we do*

And

- *Promote the core values of diversity to the profession as a whole*

The emphasis is on creating a culture of 'Inclusivity' and continuous development, above and beyond the limitations of each 'strand' of Equality – for the reasons explored above. Whilst understanding and continually consulting on issues such as 'Race' and 'Gender' is vital a deliberate decision has been made to stress our responsibilities in a way that made them core to our functioning rather than as a 'Diversity bolt-on'.

The Society recognises the different legal and 'best practice' implications of the various equality strands, and sees legal compliance as a minimum. Additionally it recognises how one strand can inform others and the need for an integrated approach to make maximum progress with maximum efficiency. ***To that end we have applied the principles of the 'Public Sector Duties' (both 'General' and 'Specific' – see Section 5.5) in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 across all the strands and all our functions – creating this single, integrated Equality and Diversity Strategy.*** For example, we will adopt 'Involvement' standard from the disability legislation in relation to race, believing it to be a higher standard than the duty to 'consult'. The decision was also made to include our 'member services' within this work, despite many of the legal responsibilities only covering our 'public functions'.

Subsequent to the Council vote the 'Executive' of the Society placed 'promoting Diversity' as one of seven strategic aims of the organisation from the management perspective.

3.5 Mainstreaming Equality to Promote Diversity

The Society is committed to 'mainstreaming' Equality to promote Diversity and it is noteworthy that the definition approved by Council (see above) places Equality and Diversity at the heart of carrying out its regulatory functions effectively and fairly.

To the Society 'mainstreaming' means ensuring that:

- All staff take a responsibility for Equality and Diversity issues
- All managers know and meet their responsibilities to members of their team
- All managers know and meet their responsibilities in relation to the provision of services
- Council and Committee members are aware of Equality and Diversity and its implications for the decisions they make
- Equality and Diversity are taken into account at the start of every new project
- Equality and Diversity become a standard element of the criteria on which project and personal success are measured within the organisation
- Equality and Diversity is never viewed as just the domain of Human Resources or a Diversity officer

'Mainstreaming' is the only way to ensure that Diversity becomes a part of the way the Society functions rather than an 'initiative' or 'project' which sits alongside. This approach can mean progress is slower; with managers taking time to learn the necessary knowledge and skills and experiment putting them into practice where a dedicated Diversity Officer could perhaps arrive at solutions or provide guidance immediately. Nevertheless, it is the only approach which creates the sustainability and accountability which is essential if Diversity is to be meaningful within an organisation. The Society is firmly committed to this approach.

3.6 Why develop this Strategy?

During 2003/2004 the Society became increasingly aware of the need to focus all of its current activities in relation to Equality and Diversity, and indeed Human Resource issues in general. Responsibilities had previously resided with individual department heads and much good work had been undertaken. However, the decision was made to appoint a Human Resources Manager to lead modernisation work of HR systems and this happened in July 2003. It was further recognised that whilst Diversity was important in relation to employment issues it was equally important in relation to the 'goods and services' provided by the Society and our role as a Trade Organisation and Qualifications Body. To this end a new Deputy Director was appointed with responsibility for Diversity to work closely with the HR manager and ensure that the Society became compliant with the various legislation in this field, and, where possible become a model employer and service provider. It was recognised from this early stage that the two functions would need to work closely together to ensure consistency of process.

A document of this nature was always envisaged both when the Council of the Society approved an initial plan and when the 'Executive' set Diversity as a strategic objective. When the Society was bought under the 'Specific Requirements' of The Race Relations (Amendment) Act it obviously made sense to draft the document where possible in a manner closely related to a standard Race Equality Action Plan to aid ease of comparison. The Strategy also aims to meet the standards required by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, although these were introduced after the strategies implementation cognisance had been taken of the likely format for the duties. However, to ensure that disability is given the appropriate profile and that our work is easily identifiable a separate **Disability Equality Scheme** is available on our website. Both this strategy and that scheme come to an end in 2008, at which point we can again fully harmonise the approach to ensure one consistent, committed and purposeful strategy.

3.7 How did we develop this Strategy?

Prior to the decision by the Council of the Society to commit to the development of an Equality and Diversity Strategy little co-ordinated work had been done in this field. In developing this strategy we therefore followed a programme of work summarised here:

Stocktaking

It was necessary to start with an assessment of areas such as:

- What the statutory requirements were?
- What requirements may be implemented in the near future?
- What guidance was available from the Commissions?
- What was the Society's current position in relation to these?
- What were other analogous organisations doing?
- What key issues could we identify in relation to staffing, resource, and policy?

The key outcomes of this stage of the project were:

- A yearlong action plan covering 'foundation building' activities in particular in relation to training, benchmarking and developing a structure for gaining expert advice
- A commitment to trying to take the highest standards from each of the 'strands' of Equality and apply these across the board, including in relation to age.
- A commitment to the concept of 'mainstreaming'

Foundation Building

The 'stocktaking' phase gave the Society a much better picture of what we needed to aim for, both in terms of the legislation that cover all organisations and the additional Public Sector (or more correctly for the Society, Public Function) Duties.

Training had been identified as a key issue and it was seen as essential that a 'critical mass' of staff be trained to a sufficient level in the principles of Equality and Diversity to be able to contribute to the further development of a strategy and understand implications within all the departments and functions of the Society. Several models (both commercial and other in-house) were examined with the Society eventually developing its own in-house model. This was designed and delivered by staff experienced in the provision of Equality and Diversity training, further details are provided in Section 6.6.

It was also viewed as essential that the Society learn from the best practice of others and so a 'benchmarking' programme was established to work with other organisations and learn about their approaches, experiences, and outcomes.

An 'Advisory Group' was convened, representing a range of perspectives in relation to legal issues and best practice in Equality and Diversity. The group worked to establish its own 'constitution' and has developed a role as 'advice giver', 'trouble shooter', and 'risk spotter'. The Society sought further methods of obtaining expert advice and inspiration through the development of a Personal Development Plan for the project lead and through subscription to services that provide update and advice on implementing legislative requirements.

Finally, based on the work done in the above areas, an 'audit tool' was developed to allow the Society to list functions, policies and procedures and then have these scored by trained staff to identify initial Diversity priorities.

The key outcomes of this stage of the project were:

- Training of a 'critical mass' of staff to take the project forward (*training will continue on an ongoing basis*)
- The convening of an Advisory Group (*will continue, and be expanded, throughout the 2005-8 period*)
- A programme of benchmarking (*will continue throughout the 2005-8 period*)
- The development of an audit strategy

Audit

The Society had no formal list of functions, policies and procedures which covered the full range of our work. It was, therefore, considered necessary to start by having each area develop such a list.

An 'audit tool' (completed example at Section 6.1) was then used by departments to 'score' the likely implications of their functions. This scoring was checked by the project lead to ensure consistency between departments and also in comparison to how other organisations had ranked and prioritised analogous areas within their own Race Equality or Diversity Equality Action Plans. Scoring took into account the number of 'strands' of

Equality relevant, relevant evidence on impact/potential impact, the level of public concern, and relevance to the three core areas of the 'general duty'. Having reviewed the scoring the issues were then ranked and transferred to an Action Planning Template (see below).

Further audit work was also committed to at this stage, such as a research project across the whole profession to create a demographic profile of solicitors in Scotland and to identify Equality issues which may be affecting and/or relevant to them.

The key outcomes of this stage of the project were:

- A highly detailed list of all functions, policies and procedures
- A ranking of these scored across the number of 'strands' of equality it may be relevant to and the seriousness of the possible implications

Action Planning

Having ranked the issues the next stage was to reorder them by their level of significance (denoted by a high score) and identify how these might be tackled (completed example at Section 6.1).

At the moment, and aimed initially at meeting the duties of the Race Relations Amendment Act (see Section 5.5) these issues have been ranked by the staff of the Society. However, in meeting the new requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act the 'Involvement' projects (one of our strategic objectives – Section 7.3) will be used to identify further and/or new issues, re-focus the issues identified, and reprioritise them as appropriate. **Over the three-years it is hoped that the strategy will develop from being management led to being based on evidence (from audit/research projects) and feedback (from involvement).** However, the Society needed to initiate projects in the first instance in order to start working towards these ideals.

A threshold was set for each departmental action plan, issues falling below this threshold would only require to be reviewed on an annual basis and needed no specific action. Issues falling above the threshold would need specific actions set, including the allocation of responsibility, a completion date, and performance indicators which would ensure that the action had been completed. Common themes were identified from

departmental plans and were brought together to create an additional tier of Strategic Diversity Objectives (SDOs) for the three-year period.

The key outcomes of this stage of the project were:

- Departmental objectives set
- Overall Strategic Diversity Objectives established
- Responsibility, timescale, and performance indicators allocated to all objectives

Strategy

The final phase was to work towards the integrated Equality and Diversity strategy that is this document. This involved returning to our statutory requirements and re-examining our position in relation to them. For example, a key issue identified was the need to start 'involvement' projects and allow sufficient flexibility within the strategy to provide for priorities to change as we work more closely with relevant bodies and individuals to examine our services.

The key outcome of this stage of the project was this strategy document

3.8 Monitoring and Review of this Strategy

The Law Society of Scotland views Diversity as an on-going commitment driven by quantifiable goals as opposed to a single achievable goal. That commitment must be held by our Council, our Office Bearers, and our staff and must permeate the workings, processes, policy, and decision making of every layer of the organisation.

This document represents true collaboration between all the staff of the Society who have been involved in brainstorming functions, 'scoring' them for possible impact, our Equality and Diversity training, and reviewing drafts of the document. We want to build on this approach and ensure that all the Society staff have a role in monitoring and reviewing this strategy, identifying targets met and changes required as they progress with their allocated projects. We will report annually on progress and have a major review in October 2008. All staff will receive copies of this strategy, and will be fully involved in reviewing and revising it in the future. We shall also send copies to our

partners and contacts as well as making it available on our website (<http://www.lawscot.org.uk>)

All enquiries should be directed to the Head of Diversity (diversity@lawscot.org.uk, 0131 226 7411 or text-phone 0131 476 8359)

The Head of Diversity, alongside the Chief Executive, will ensure that Department Heads are meeting their targets in relation to Diversity and will report periodically on progress of the departmental plans to the Heads of Department Meeting, The President's Committee, and to Council. The Chief Executive, aided by the Head of Diversity, will take overall responsibility for the delivery of the Strategic Equality and Diversity Objectives and will actively monitor progress, encourage achievement, and support implementation throughout each year. The internal appraisal process will also be used to monitor progress with the strategy linked to performance management.

However, a variety of factors may involve changes to the Strategy as our work develops. These include:

- **Changes in the functions or services provided by the Society** (*for example, a decision to no longer provide a certain service*)
- **Changes in the delivery of functions or services** (*for example, if a function was outsourced the issues may change from ensuring compliance around Equality and Diversity ourselves to issues around tendering, the company's systems for ensuring compliance, monitoring of that company's systems, etc.*)
- **Feedback from Involvement Projects** (*for example, an involvement group may suggest a different prioritising of functions within a department which will inform the way we progress*)
- **Feedback from Data Collection** (*for example, data collected on advice provided by the Society to solicitors might show that significantly fewer lawyers from ethnic minorities contacted the advice line, even after adjusting for the number in the profession, this might need to be explored further and other projects adjusted*).
- **External Factors** (*for example, when Council originally approved a set of work in relation to Diversity it was not known that the Race Relations (Amendment)*

Act would be extended to cover the Society's public functions. This meant a slight reprioritisation from tackling sex discrimination issues first - to build understanding of the nature of discrimination and because of the numbers of individuals involved, before moving on to other strands - to tackling race in the first year in order to comply with the requirements of the Act.

If priorities are changed for these, or any other, reasons then the Society will document this as part of its annual reporting and provide an explanation as to the decisions taken.

The Organisation

An outline of the structure and role of The Law Society of Scotland

4.1 Overview

The Law Society of Scotland is the regulatory and membership body for Scottish solicitors. It was established by the Legal Aid & Solicitors (Scotland) Act in 1949. The main aims of the Society are set out in the Solicitors (Scotland) Act 1980. In essence, the Society promotes the interests of the Solicitors' profession in Scotland and the interests of the public in relation to the profession.

All practising solicitors in Scotland must be members of the Society and must hold a current Practising Certificate. These are issued annually by the Society and the charge made for the certificate provides the majority of the Society's income. The organisation is not funded by the government nor associated with the civil service or other executive agencies. Nevertheless, many of our functions are regulatory and are deemed 'public functions', therefore a high standard of fairness and equity is expected by public and government of which a commitment to Equality and Diversity is part.

4.2 The Council and Committees

A Council of 53 members governs the Society. Of this number, constituents elect 44 based on the geographic spread of sheriffdoms in Scotland, and 9 are co-opted from industry, commerce, local government and private practice. The Council meets every month to discuss current legal issues, policy, and to oversee the decisions of the Committees of the Society.

The Council also elects a President and Vice President for the Society who serve a year's term of office. The Vice President chairs the 'President's Committee', the main executive committee of the organisation. This is comprised of the President, the Vice

President, the past President, the Chief Executive, the Chief Accountant, the Auditor, and an elected member of Council.

The Council delegates some of its responsibilities to its committees and other directly to the Executive. Some of these Committees have a formal regulatory function while others monitor and develop services across a wide range of areas. Schemes of Delegation define which areas can be dealt with by the Executive Staff of the organisation, by committee, or by the recommendation of a committee to Council.

Key Committees within the Society are:

Regulatory Committees	Non-Regulatory Committees
Admissions Committee	Access to Justice Committee
Audit Committee	Civil Procedure Committee
Client Care Committee	Constitution Committee
Client Relations Committees A to M	Conveyancing Committee
Competence Committee	Criminal Law Committee
Conveyancing & Executry Practitioners Com.	Diversity Advisory Group
Guarantee Fund Committee	Education and Training Committee
Insolvency Solicitors Adjudication Committee	In-House Lawyers Group
Insurance Committee	Insolvency Solicitors Committee
Investor Protection Committee	Law Reform Committee
Practising Certificate Committee	<i>Employment Law Committee*</i>
Professional Conduct Committee	<i>Mental Health & Disability Committee*</i>
Professional Practice Committee	Legal Aid Solicitors Committee
Quality Assurance Committee	President's Committee
Rights of Audience Committee	Remuneration Committee

** The Law Reform Committee has numerous sub-committees focussing on specific areas of law, only two are included here because of their relevance to the strategy*

Full details of Council and Committee membership are available on request. Please contact us for more details (lawscot@lawscot.org.uk or 0131 226 7411).

4.3 The Executive

In addition to the Council, the Society has a permanent staff of around 130, responsible for the administration and day-to-day running of the organisation. Headed by the Chief Executive, the staff look after all the various Committees and progress the various areas of interest to the profession such as law reform, practice development and Education and Training. The Society's Brussels office monitors European law and the Society lobbies in Edinburgh, Westminster and Brussels for law reforms to improve Scottish law.

The Executive is divided into eleven core operational areas that also represent our major functions. These are (in alphabetical order):

1. Administration

Providing reception services, records management, post office and printing services, catering, and support to the In-House Lawyers Group

2. Client Relations Office

Dealing with complaints from the public, and other sources, in relation to solicitors and the provision of a help-line service in relation to complaints

3. Education and Training

Responsible for the accreditation of providers of pre-qualification legal education, monitoring the traineeship, careers advice and admissions to the profession

4. Finance and the Guarantee Fund

General finance office, covering management of accounting and budgetary process, salaries, petty cash, and internal audit. Administration of the Guarantee Fund (which covers the financial losses of clients as a consequence of dishonesty on the part of a solicitor in the conduct of their practice); inspections of the accounts of solicitors; and interventions in practices where required.

5. Human Resources

Provision of all internal Human Resources functions.

6. Information Technology (IT)

Provision of internal IT support in relation to general software, the Regulatory Management System, websites, e-mail, and intranet.

7. Law Reform

Providing commentary and analysis on various proposals for law reform from around the UK and other European institutions and aiming to improve the law in the Scottish legal system for the benefit of the public and the profession through promoting for change and responding to consultations.

8. Professional Practice

Support and guidance for the profession in relation to the Practice Rules set by the Council of the Society

9. Registrar

Responsible for dealing with issues in relation to practising certificates (required by all solicitors in Scotland), professional indemnity insurance arrangements for solicitors in private practice, and for various regulatory functions in relation to investment business.

10. Media Relations

Central contact point for media requiring comment from the Society or the profession on legal issues, provision of internal media training and briefings, proactive provision of press-releases and articles.

11. UPDATE

Provides post-qualification training and education events for solicitors on a commercial basis

The Society also provides additional services for the public, for example, we produce a wide range of easy-to-understand leaflets giving information on a broad range of legal topics. These can be obtained from the Society (in electronic or paper format), from solicitors' office and from general public outlets.

4.4 The Strategic aims of the organisation

The Executive Staff of the Law Society of Scotland developed a strategy for the organisation which was approved by Council. The current organisational objectives can be summarised as:

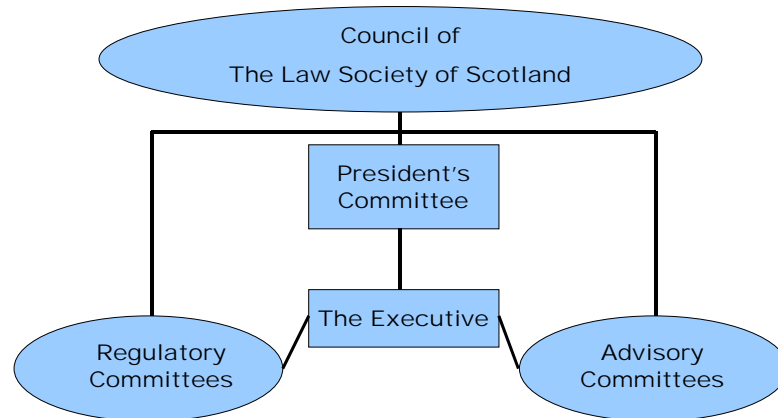
1. Ensure effective regulation of the profession and the continuous improvement of the complaints handling processes.
2. Identify and participate in all reviews concerning the provision of Scottish legal services.
3. Deliver the new regulatory management system.
4. Enhance the provision of information and the provision of legal services to the public.
5. Promote awareness of relevant diversity issues.
6. Establish a culture of continuous improvement in the Society, for example through Key Performance Indicators.
7. Implement, monitor and review a risk management system for the Society.

If the goal of 'mainstreaming' is to be achieved then it is essential that there is an overt link between Equality and Diversity and the strategic plan of the organisation. This link must be bi-directional; Equality and Diversity must be taken account of in moves to achieve each of the organisation's overall strategic objectives; and key issues identified through Equality and Diversity must feed into the organisation's overall plan and influence the direction and content of it where necessary.

At the moment this link is achieved by having Diversity as one of the key organisational objectives, bringing the whole of this strategy into the organisational plan. Furthermore, in Section 7 where the individual Strategic Equality and Diversity Objectives are identified reference is made to their link back to other of the overarching objectives as stated above.

4.5 Summary

The interrelationship of various committees and panels within the Society can be complex. So too can the division of responsibility between, for example, the Executive and the Council of the Society. However, broadly speaking the structure of the Law Society of Scotland can be summarised as:



Equality, Diversity and the Law

Legislation and regulation in relation to the Diversity

5.1 Legislation

The Law Society of Scotland recognises its legal responsibilities under the following legislation, as subsequently amended:

- **Equal Pay Act 1970**
- **Sex Discrimination Act 1975**, as amended (SDA), in particular by the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999 and the Sex Discrimination (Indirect Discrimination and Burden of Proof) Regulations 2001, The Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005
- **Race Relations Act 1976**, as amended (RRA), in particular by The Race Regulations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Race Relations Act 1976 (Statutory Duties) (Scotland) Order 2002 (as amended) and The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2003, The Race Relations Act 1976 (Statutory Duties) (Scotland) Order 2005
- **Disability Discrimination Act 1995**, as amended (DDA), in particular by the Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Amendment) Regulations 2003 and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- **Employment Rights Act 1996**
- **Protection from Harassment Act 1997**
- **The Human Rights Act 1998**
- **Employment Act 2002**
- **Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003**
- **Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003**
- **Disability Discrimination Act 2005**
- **Equality Act 2006**
- **Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006**

5.2 Codes of Practice

In addition to the legislation there are various Codes of Practice issued including:

- The Commission for Racial Equality code of practice on racial equality in employment (2006) [available at <http://www.cre.gov.uk>]
- The Equal Opportunities Commission code of practice on sex discrimination; equal opportunities policies, procedures and practices in employment (2002) [available at <http://www.eoc-law.org.uk>]
- The Equal Opportunities Commission code of practice on Equal Pay (2003) [available at <http://www.eoc-law.org.uk>]
- The Equal Opportunities Commission DRAFT code of practice on the Gender Equality Duty (2006) [available at <http://www.eoc.org.uk/Default.aspx?page=18302>]
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 codes of practice in relation to employment (2004) [available at <http://www.drc-gb.org>]
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 codes of practice in relation to rights of access to facilities, services and premises (2002) [available at <http://www.drc-gb.org>]
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 codes of practice in relation to trade organisations and qualifications bodies (2004) [available at <http://www.drc-gb.org>]
- The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 codes of practice in relation to the Disability Equality Duty (2006) [available at <http://www.drc-gb.org>]
- The European Community code of practice on the protection of the dignity of men and women at work [available at http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social]

The legislation, and where appropriate the related Statutory Codes, affect our role as:

- Employer
- Service Provider to the Public
- Service Provider to the Profession
- As a Trade (membership) Organisation
- As a Qualifications Body
- As a 'Public Authority' in respect of our 'public functions'

5.3 What Protection is offered?

Again, it must be emphasised that each regime has its own specific requirements and rules. However, there are four areas in which protection is generally offered:

1. Direct Discrimination

This is where a person is treated less favourably than another in a similar situation on a protected ground (as listed at Section 3.2).

2. Indirect Discrimination

This is where a rule or practice is applied across the board, but it operates to particularly disadvantage a protected group when compared to others outside the group, unless the rule is needed to achieve a legitimate aim, and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary.

3. Victimisation

This is where an individual who has sought to enforce their rights, or helped another to do so, and as a result, is treated less favourably than others who have not complained.

4. Harassment

This where an individual is subjected to unwanted conduct on a protected ground which has the purpose or effect of violating his or her dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or offensive environment

Two further important areas to consider relating to disability are:

5. Disability related discrimination

Employment

This is where a person is treated less favourably for a reason relating to their disability. This is different from direct discrimination in that the reason for the treatment relates to the disability, but is not the disability itself (which would be direct discrimination).

Goods and Services

Treating someone less favourably for a reason relating to their disability by:

- refusing to provide a service
- providing a lower standard of service
- providing a service on worse terms
- victimisation of people who complain

6. Duty to make reasonable adjustments

Employment

This is where a practice, procedure or policy or a physical feature places a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared to a non-disabled person, the employer must adjust them where reasonable to do so.

Goods and Services

A failure to comply with the duty to take make reasonable adjustments:

- changing practices, policies and procedures
- providing auxiliary aids or services
- overcoming a physical feature by:
 - removing the feature
 - altering it
 - providing a reasonable means of avoiding it
 - providing the service by a reasonable alternative method

Unless this can be justified on certain limited grounds such as:

- health and safety.
- the disabled person cannot enter agreement or give consent.
- the different treatment is necessary to provide the service to the public.
- any increased charge reflects increased cost, beyond the requirement to take “reasonable steps” to meet duties.
- an adjustment is “not reasonable in all the circumstances”.
- a service provider is not required to “fundamentally alter the nature of the service in question or the nature of the trade, profession or business”.
- the adjustment will cost more than the prescribed limit (*none set at the moment*).

It should also be noted that these areas should be seen as providing protection over a period from before, during, and after direct involvement. For example; ‘employment’ covers a period from pre-employment (protecting those making applications, affecting advertising of posts, and so on) to post-employment (in relation to references etc.); likewise a Trade Organisation has responsibilities prior to membership (accessible applications process, not discriminating on the basis of sex or race), during membership (opportunities for training, election to offices), and after membership (in not discriminating when confirming past membership, or in recovering training costs). **Furthermore, Solicitors should take**

particular note that much of this legislation covers partners, self-employed, and contract workers as well as full and part-time staff of a partnership or company.

There are certain limited exceptions to the protections offered by the legislation but specific advice should always be sought before relying on one of these.

Finally, it should again be noted that the aim here is to simplify a complex body of law into an understandable format and simple principles - NOT to provide definitive legal guidance.

5.4 The Society's Codes of Conduct

It is not only external regulation that is relevant in defining the framework within which this strategy sits. Since June 2002 Scottish Solicitors have had an obligation in respect of Equality and Diversity under The *Codes of Conduct* of The Law Society of Scotland, Rule 11:

11. Discrimination – NOW AMENDED

Solicitors must not discriminate on grounds of race, sex, sexual orientation, religion or disability in their professional dealings with clients, employees or other lawyers.

Legislation already provides that it is unlawful to discriminate against individuals either directly or indirectly in respect of their race, sex or marital status. However, solicitors should be prepared to observe not only the letter but also the spirit of the anti-discrimination legislation in dealings with clients, employees and others. In particular, solicitors should ensure that within their own firms, there is no discrimination in employment policy and that opportunities for promotion and advancement are open on an equal basis to all employees. In addition, solicitors should give active consideration to opportunities for the disabled.

It had been noted for some time that this definition was no longer ideal, in particular ages such as the terminology (for example, it is not appropriate to say 'the disabled'). This took some time to amend as it required a formal vote of the Council of the Society to endorse any new wording used. However, in August 2006, after consultation, the Council formally endorsed a new rule (overleaf):

11. Discrimination – NEW VERSION

Solicitors must not discriminate on the grounds of race, sex (including on the grounds of marriage), disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion and belief, or age (including perceived orientation, religion and belief, and/or age) in their professional dealings with clients, employees or other lawyers.

Legislation already provides that it is unlawful to discriminate against individuals either directly or indirectly in respect of the above grounds, it also protects individuals against harassment, or from victimisation if they raise or support a complaint in relation to issues affecting one of these 'protected groups'.

However, solicitors should be prepared to observe not only the letter but also the spirit of the anti-discrimination legislation in all their dealings with clients, employees and others. In particular, solicitors should ensure that within their own firms or where they supervise solicitors working within a company or organisation:

There is no unlawful discrimination in employment including in recruitment, training, employment terms, promotion, advancement and termination of employment;

That those who may carry out work on their behalf do not discriminate unlawfully;

That they, and those they supervise, have appropriate awareness and understanding of the issues surrounding equal opportunities, unlawful discrimination, equality and diversity;

That there is no unlawful discrimination in the provision of legal services, and that those to whom legal services are provided can access them in a manner most appropriate to their needs.

5.5 Public Sector Duties (Race) - The Responsibilities of the Society

One of the primary drivers of this strategy is the need to comply with the RRAA. The aim of these duties is to make race equality an essential part of the way public authorities and those carrying out public functions (such as regulation) work, by putting it at the centre of policy-making, service delivery, and employment practice.

The General Duty

Under the general duty, authorities must have 'due regard to the need to':

- Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
- Promote equal opportunities; and
- Promote good relations between people from different racial groups

The Specific Duties

This general duty is supported by a series of Specific Duties. These are not ends in themselves but provide the steps, methods or arrangements organisations should follow to help them meet the General Duty. Key areas are:

- The preparation and publication of a race equality scheme
- Assessing which functions are relevant to the duty
- Setting out arrangements for assessing and consulting on impact
- Monitoring of policies for adverse impact
- Publishing the results of assessments, consultations and monitoring
- Ensuring access to information and services
- Training staff on issues relevant to the duty

The Society currently employs fewer than 150 staff and is not, therefore, subject to the 'Employment' section of the RRAA. However, it is recognised that these are still standards of best practice that we should be working towards.

In order to meet the commitment of the Society and our Council to an integrated **Equality and Diversity Strategy** it was decided we would attempt to apply the principles of the RRAA 2000 to all the 'strands' or Diversity whilst at the same time recognising that the legislation meant that compliance in terms of race would, where necessary, need to be given priority.

The Society's interpretation of these has now been amended and supplement by the **Disability Equality Duty**, please refer to this to document to find additional information on the approach we will be applying in the future to all strands of equality.

5.6 What is our Equality & Diversity Strategy?

A Race Equality Scheme is effectively a strategy, and a timetabled and realistic action plan. It should summarise an organisation's approach to race equality, link these to its strategic aims and identify how each of the Specific Duties (listed above) will be met. Developing a Race Equality Scheme is mandatory for bodies covered by the 'Specific Duties'.

In the future, if the Society is to maintain an integrated approach to Equality and Diversity, this structure will need to change as the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the new public sector duty in relation to gender come into force. The Society is pleased at the development in Scotland of a joint statement on meeting the duties planned by the Disability Rights Commission, the Equal Opportunities Commission, and the Commission for Racial Equality. The launch of this (on the 8th November 2005) unfortunately comes slightly too late for those organisations, including the Society, due to publish their schemes by November 2005. However, once the text of the joint statement is available, it is planned that it will then supplement Section 5.5 as a statement of what we aim to achieve. The Society will ensure that as these strands are implemented the integrated strategy will clearly 'map' the various responsibilities against the work of the Society.

The **Equality and Diversity Strategy** is designed to ensure:

- Equality and Diversity considerations are taken into account in all decision making
- That we do not discriminate as an employer, service provider, Trade Organisation, Qualifications Body, or in our exercising of public functions.
- That our organisation has an understanding of the issues in relation to Diversity, including, but not limited to:
 - Prejudice, discrimination, and the exercise of power
 - Equality, equity, and fairness
 - Direct and Indirect Discrimination, Victimisation, Harassment, and 'reasonable adjustment'
 - Institutional Discrimination
 - Positive action
 - Historical power imbalance
 - Cultural competence in relation to the issues affecting people belonging to one of more of the diversity 'strands'
- That we promote 'best practice' in relation to Diversity to the profession, our partners, and our stakeholders

Our Responsibilities

How the Society is aiming to meet the Specific Duties

6.1 Identifying and prioritising relevant functions and policies


In this *Diversity Strategy* we set out all of our functions, policies and procedures, and indicate how relevant we view them in relation to the strands of diversity and the General Duty to promote race equality. The functions and policies are reported in considerable detail in Appendix 1 and 2. It was felt that only by such detailed analysis would we be able to identify where possible Equality and Diversity implications might arise.

'Functions' is used to mean our duties and powers – for example, Accreditation of the providers of Legal Education. It covers internal and external functions, including those related to the public and to the profession.


'Policies and procedures' means the full range of formal and informal decisions and processes the Society makes and uses in carrying out its functions, and all the ways in which we utilise our powers – or decide not to. We have taken notice of the fact that any assessment of a policy must include an examination of long-standing 'custom and practice' and management decisions, as well as any formal written policy.

'Relevant' means 'having implications for' (or affecting) the general duty. A function or a policy will be relevant if it has, or could have, implications of any kind for promoting equality in terms of race and the other Equality and Diversity strands.

Below is an example from the Education and Training Department of the Stage 1 Scoring (for full-size format complete table see Appendix 1) with an explanation as to why those scores were attributed:

Law Society of Scotland – Race Equality Assessment												
Equality Scoring – Worked Example – Education and Training										2005-2008		
Function or Policy	Is there evidence or reason to believe that some groups could be differently affected? Score: No 0 Not known 0.5 Yes 1						What is the significance of the evidence (or reason to believe)? Score: Very Low 0 Low 1 Medium 2 High 3	Is there public concern about potential discriminatory practices? Score: None 0 A little 1 Some 2 Substantial 3	Which aspects does it relate to? a. Eliminating discrimination b. Promoting equality of opportunity c. Promoting good relations Score: 1 point per heading (a-c)	Total points for each function (?/15)	Comments High/Low/impact High/medium/Low urgency Short/medium/Long timescale Work planned/in progress/completed Links to other areas of work Comments which qualify score Next Steps	Evidence Sheet (A-Z)
	Gender/Marital Status	Disability	Race	Religion and Belief	Sexual Orientation	Age						
Standard Setting – accreditation	1	1	1	1	0	1	2	2	3	12		
<p>Points were scored for each of the Equality Strands except Sexual Orientation. It was felt that policies on assessment, attendance requirements, etc. could have a differential effect on a variety of groups, but although it was possible to see how someone of a particular sexual orientation could suffer discrimination on a particular accredited course it could not be seen how this would be affected by Society Standards imposed. We also felt there were missed opportunities, for example, in terms of not making disabled access a prerequisite for accreditation. We thought there was some evidence to suggest this (general education literature, how the Society works in England and Wales, etc.). We thought that access to the profession was an issue of public concern and commented on fairly regularly in the media. We felt there was the possibility of 'eliminating discrimination' (for example, only accrediting providers with appropriate accessibility arrangements), 'promoting equal opportunities' (to the providers, for example, by promoting the featuring of equality and diversity across the curriculum) and 'promoting good relations' (for example, making Diversity part of the curriculum).</p>												

All the functions and policies of the department were scored in a similar way, and then ranked in order by score. This scoring was checked to ensure consistency between departments and also in comparison to how other organisations had ranked and prioritised analogous areas within their own Race Equality or Diversity Equality Action Plans. Having reviewed the scoring the issues were then ranked and, those above the threshold of significance, were transferred to an Action Planning Template (see below). The same example from Stage 1 is used below to illustrate this next step (for full-size format complete table see Appendix 2).

Law Society of Scotland – Equality and Diversity Action Plan											
Action Planning – Worked Example – Education and Training										2005-2008	
Standard Setting (Accreditation)	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment Methods Course Content Access Issues Need to assess providers on Equal Opps Criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised accreditation guidelines to include specific reference to these issues Consult on phrasing of new standards Check examples from other accreditation schemes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish new accreditation standard Monitor through submission of annual reports from accredited providers Action taken for non-compliance 	NS	12.05	NS	06.08	E&T Com.	Annual	

It should be noted that the scoring and ranking exercise was seen as far more important in stimulating active discussion about our functions and policies than as a mathematical exercise. Whilst we hope the scoring is 'accurate' it is the new understanding of our processes, and their possible implications, which is the outcome and not whether a particular functions is a '12.5' rather than a '13'.

Again, as acknowledged in Section 3.7, this process is a first step and allowed the Society to develop this initial Strategy. In order to meet the requirements of the upcoming public sector duties in relation to disability and gender these lists of functions, for example, will be need to be used in the planned 'Involvement' projects to examine how the prioritisation tallies with the perception of service users and we may need to adjust our priorities accordingly.

The Society was pleased to find that this process could also feed into other initiatives within the organisation and saw the positive benefits of engaging with the process. The list will be reviewed annually, to meet the requirements in relation to the upcoming public duties in relation to disability and gender, feeding into a major review every three years.

- Appendix 1 identifies all functions and policies
- Appendix 2 prioritises these, consequently identifying which are most relevant

Strategic Equality and Diversity Objectives (see Section 7) relevant to this requirement include 3, 4, and 5.

6.2 Assessing and consulting on (proposed) policies

The first aspect of this duty relates to assessment. In voting through an initial Diversity plan The Law Society of Scotland recognised the need to carry out a complete audit of its functions and score these for possible impact across the range of Diversity strands (Section 6.1).

All new policies and procedures proposed to/by Heads of Department meetings, President's Committee, Society Committees, or Council will have been impact assessed using an enhanced template and carry appropriate recommendations.

In the future this will involve:

- Setting clear policy aims and objectives
- Collecting initial data on possible impact on Equality and Diversity
- Using this data to score the likely impact of the policy in relation to a differential effect on any particular group

Where that scoring indicates it is necessary:

- Consider alterations to the policy which could negate this effect whilst still delivering the aims of the policy
- Where appropriate, consult with and involve interested organisations, user groups, staff, members of the public, etc.
- Take account of assessment and involvement before making recommendations or decisions
- Monitor and review the policy as it is implemented to assess for unforeseen impact
- Publish the results of assessment, involvement and monitoring

In all cases:

- Reviewing in the course of every three-year cycle, as a minimum, all policies, procedures and data collected to ensure continuing compliance
- Always being willing to consider guidance and feedback in relation to policies and procedures and be willing to review, appropriate to the feedback received, their status on an ongoing basis

The second aspect of this duty relates to Consultation. In anticipation of the implementation of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 the Society is committed to finding new and innovative ways not just to **consult** but also actually **involve** people from a variety of groups, backgrounds and experiences. We see true **involvement** as a higher and more appropriate standard than simple consultation. Recent initiatives include policy developments having been placed on our website for public consultation, lay representation on committees, working with service user groups, etc. A key part of our work in the coming years is to develop further methods and a more integrated strategy for consulting on a range of issues that affect the public and the profession.

The Society recognises that some of the leading work in this field has been carried out within healthcare and would see relevant standards and guidance in this field being provided by the following documents:

Involving People In The NHS - Building Strong Foundations

The Scottish Executive

Involving People In The NHS - Building Strong Foundations: Opening Up

The Scottish Executive

User And Public Involvement In Health Services: A Literature Review

Dr Julie Ridley And Lyn Jones, Partners In Change
SHS Trust

Assessment of Innovative Approaches To Testing Community Opinion

Andra Laird, Jo Fawcett, Fiona Rait and Sharon Reid
George Street Research Ltd

DRC Guidance

This will become available shortly on the DRC website – <http://www.drc-gb.org>

In our involvement projects we commit to the following five principles:

Proportionate	- to the nature of the issue(s) involved
Transparent	- aims, objectives, possible outcomes, and the (possible) results of involvement are all clear and publicised
Appropriate	- to the aims and objectives of the involvement
Inclusive	- ensuring a range of groups are involved and that deliberate effort is made to involve hard-to-reach groups
Accessible	- in the way those involved are 'recruited', in method, and in implementation

Finally, in order to meet the general duty we will review and revise proposed policies, if assessment and consultation shows adverse impact on some groups.

Strategic Equality and Diversity Objectives (see Section 7) relevant to this requirement include 3, 4, and 5.

6.3 Monitoring Policies for adverse impact

In the past the Society has formally collected little outcome-based data in relation to any of its functions and across any elements (such as outcomes, satisfaction, groups affected, etc.). It is recognised by the Society that this is a necessary part of effective

management as well as effective Equality and Diversity and there is a commitment to work towards monitoring various aspects including:

- The make-up of the profession, across all Equality strands
- The experiences of the profession, in relation to areas such as recruitment, promotion, access to development and experiences of discrimination
- Access to education in relation particularly to the professional stages, the Diploma in Legal Practice and the Traineeship, and working with our colleagues in the universities in relation to the earlier stage of the LL.B. in Scots Law
- Record keeping, by equality 'strand' (see Section 3.2), in relation to those accessing the key services of the Society
- Projects to monitor 'satisfaction' in relation to key services of the Society
- Budget profiling
- Continually examining and assessing evidence generated and published by other organisations to consider how this may have a bearing on our functions (literature review)
- Networking with representatives of academia, policy, commerce, public sector, user groups, etc. to ensure that information is shared and best-practice identified
- Commissioning independent research, where appropriate

This monitoring will cover race and religion (using the codings from the Scottish Census, to allow comparison with normative figures in Scotland), sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability (further disaggregating this into indicative groupings used by the Disability Rights Commission). Without such data there is no way to reliably identify whether, where and in what form discrimination may be taking place. Data collection will also be designed to identify possible improvements and amendments to existing policies and procedures that may be seen as being of benefit in tackling any issues of discrimination.

So little information is currently available that as these systems are established the first set of data will only produce a benchmark from which development can be measured and identify any key discrepancies. It is not until the second or third cycle of data collection that trends will start to be reliably identified.

Data will then be used to help in the review of policies and procedures and ensure that they are fit for purpose for the public and the profession in Scotland who may wish or need to access the services of the Society, regardless of personal characteristics.

Strategic Equality and Diversity Objectives (see Section 7) relevant to this requirement include 3, 4, and 5.

6.4 Publishing our results

The Society commits to publishing its **Diversity Strategy** and annual updates, with a major review taking place in October 2008. This will include information on our functions and policies, their relevance to Diversity, and our progress in meeting the objectives set in this document. The strategy will be published on our website and in a variety of formats which will be available on request.

A summary will be presented in our annual report with information on how to gain copies of the full report, and press releases will be passed to various media to promote the availability of the plan.

Various relevant organisations working in associated fields will be identified, contacted and encouraged to provide any feedback they feel is appropriate.

Information on various projects (including data collection and specific initiatives) will also be fed back as appropriate through the Society's Journal (available to the public free of charge online), through press-releases, through the website, and other means as is appropriate.

MAIN FORMS OF REPORTING:

<i>Our website</i>	http://www.lawscot.org.uk
<i>The Journal</i>	http://www.journalonline.co.uk
<i>Press releases (as appropriate)</i>	available on our website
<i>Annual Report on Diversity</i>	available on our website

Strategic Equality and Diversity Objectives (see Section 7) relevant to this requirement include 2, 4, 8 and 9.

6.5 Access to information and services

The Society provides services to the public, profession and, on occasion, to other organisations such as Universities and Schools. In many areas the Society is the only provider of the service in question, for example in accrediting universities to provide an Exempting LL.B. degree in Scots Law or in administering complaints from the public against the profession. In this latter instance the requirement to use this service is often also linked to a stressful episode in a person's life (for example, where they feel they have been let down by their solicitor). The Society must be able to provide fair and equitable access to services and information if it is to be an effective regulator in addition to the requirements of the various legislation.

The Society has committed to providing flexible access to information through a variety of mediums:

- Phone enquiries and our helpline
- Fax
- Text phone/Minicom enquiries
- Information and promotional events
- Press releases to a variety of print and other media
- Our website – <http://www.lawscot.org.uk>
- The website of 'The Journal', the official magazine of the Society – <http://www.journalonline.co.uk>
- Information leaflets and packs – including a variety of formats
- Training DVDs including subtitles, text of audio tracks, etc.

The Society is establishing a monitoring system for requests for information including what is requested and in what format. By understanding our service users we will aim to ensure that materials are relevant and up-to-date and that the most requested formats are always immediately available, be that in relation to language, large print, on-line, an audio format, or any other appropriate means.

During various Involvement exercises planned it may also become apparent that there is a need to specifically target some groups with general, or some specific, information to raise their awareness of particular services or of the Society in general.

Strategic Equality and Diversity Objectives (see Section 7) relevant to this requirement include 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 9.

6.6 Human Resources

The Society is proud of its 'Investors in People' status and the fact that it was first achieved before the Society had any HR staff/presence, through a collaboration of individual line managers. Building on this longstanding commitment to good staff-management practice, and mainstreaming the responsibility for that, the Society was recently reaccredited and is now looking for further external quality marks to inspire and guide its developments. It is planned that we shortly start working towards the 'Positive About Disabled People' standard.

The Society has an Employee Relations Group that considers and informs all new HR policy. Guidance is also sought from the Diversity Advisory Group where further information is required on Equality and Diversity related matters.

Despite being under the 150 employee threshold (contained in the RRAA2000) which necessitates it the Society is committed to the standard applied to larger organisations and intends, over the coming three-year period, to work towards implementing these requirements across all the strands of Diversity, including monitoring:

- Staff in post
- Applications for employment, training and promotion
- Staff receiving training
- Staff involved in disciplinary and grievance procedures
- Staff leaving the organisation

A biennial staff survey is also planned which should not only give us a better profile of the staff who make up our organisation but will also help identify the issues they feel may face them at work, both positive and negative.

Finally the HR department is planning to launch a new policy and associated training in relation to recruitment and selection. Whilst the current system meets the demands of 'Investors in People' benchmarking against other organisations has identified strengths which can be built on further.

Various policies and procedures cover the work of the HR department, these are all available to staff through IT services, the staff handbook, and in paper copy on request.

These policies are regularly reviewed in light on new developments, guidance received from our update and legal services and on the basis of examples of good practice. The Employee Relations Group was involved in the development of all policies and procedures. The Society is aiming to develop working arrangements which will aid in promoting 'work-life balance' and suit a range of individuals, of particular note are the development of flexible working and flexitime arrangements; we hope to continue this work in the future. Policies and procedures are available in the following areas:

- Absence
- Appraisal
- Bullying & Harassment
- Care Leave – Dependents
- Child Care Vouchers
- Disciplinary Procedure For Employees
- E-mail and Internet use
- Equal Opportunities
- Flexible Working
- Flexitime
- Grievance
- Maternity Leave
- Adoption Leave
- Parental Leave
- Paternity Leave
- Recruitment & Induction
- Training

Copies of any of these are available on request. Please contact the Head of Diversity (diversity@lawscot.org.uk, 0131 226 7411 or text-phone 0131 476 8359).

Strategic Equality and Diversity Objectives (see Section 7) relevant to this requirement include 1, 5, 7, and 8.

6.7 Awareness Raising and Training

The Law Society of Scotland see ongoing training as underpinning all the work planned in relation to Equality and Diversity. It was recognised that every member of staff had to have an awareness of what Equality and Diversity are, our legal commitments, the positive benefits, and what is planned. It was further understood that without every member of staff aware of these issues there would always be the potential that good policies and procedures may not be translated into high quality and Equality and Diversity aware provision of services.

The Society assessed various commercially available courses and worked with several other organisations (for example, NHS Education for Scotland, The Crown Office and

Procurators Fiscal Service, The Scottish Parliament, and Lothian and Borders Police) to examine their in-house programmes. In the end it was decided that a start should be made with a one-day course to be delivered to all staff. The course was interactive and participatory and had proved hugely popular. Feedback from the courses so far has been highly positive (for example, 56.60% rated the overall course as 'excellent', 41.51% as 'good'). One of the most popular elements was the use of the Janet Elliott Blue Eyes/Brown Eyes videos – which challenges perceptions of prejudice, discrimination, and our own personal accountability.

Further training is scheduled to tackle specific issues and remits within the Society. A needs analysis is planned to identify those with roles where further development is needed and to identify what types of training might be most suitable. There is a commitment to provision for new members of staff and to refresher training, the latter of which was frequently requested on the feedback forms from the initial programme, showing a real commitment among all staff, not just management, to ensuring understanding of these issues.

A separate half-day training programme for Council and Committee members has been developed taking into account the pre-existing knowledge members have of Equalities Legislation. Again, feedback from the courses so far has been highly positive (for example, 62.5% rated the overall course as 'excellent', 25% as 'good').

An impact assessment exercise is planned for approximately 6 months after the provision of these two courses (Staff and Council/Committee) to assess longer-term changes in attitude, knowledge retained and further more specific training needs.

The Society is also currently exploring innovative ways to integrate Equality and Diversity '**learning**' rather than **training**. This is based on two principles; firstly, that training is only one way to promote learning and, as with any approach, has strengths and weaknesses; secondly, that 'mainstreaming' Equality and Diversity means that learning must not only take place within a 'classroom' environment or along a set educational approach (slides, discussion groups, etc.). Consequently, alongside the core programmes developed voluntary events (planned with organisations with expertise in the field) might run of the following nature:

- The appropriate marking (for example, with food typical of a feast day) of significant events in religious calendars. Staff would be invited to also collect a fact-sheet on that religion and festival
- A 'challenge' to learn some basic sign language, with prizes for those who can remember a certain number of key signs at the end of a set period
- Multiple choice Equality and Diversity quizzes, again with prizes
- Voluntary visits (for example a local mosque) or talks (for example, from a disabled person on their experiences of accessing the Society's services).

TRAINING :

- Basic awareness raising for all staff (whole day)
- Basic awareness raising for all council, and committee chairs (half day)
- Ongoing induction awareness raising session for all staff (whole day)
- Needs analysis with staff as to what further training may be required
- Further targeted training based on the outcomes of the needs analysis
- Refresher training for all towards the end of the three-year period

Strategic Equality and Diversity Objectives (see Section 7) relevant to this requirement include 2, 4, and 8.

Strategic Equality & Diversity Objectives

Key organisational objectives for the 2005-2008

7.1 Introduction to the Strategic Equality & Diversity Objectives

Starting on the page overleaf are the Strategic Equality and Diversity Objectives of the organisation.

The Strategic Equality and Diversity Objectives are based on:

- issues identified through the scoring of functions and policies as **highly relevant to the 'general duties'** in relation to Race and the other strands of Diversity
- issues requiring to be addressed in order that the organisation **fulfils our 'specific responsibilities'**
- issues which, whilst lower scoring, were **occurring in several departments.**
- issues which were identified by the Diversity Lead as **important and requiring action** – for example, Accreditation (6) may seem more focussed than some of the other objectives, but without addressing access to routes to qualification the Society will never be able to influence to composition of the profession. That means all the other departments good work in Equalities and Diversity could still end up regulating an unrepresentative group.

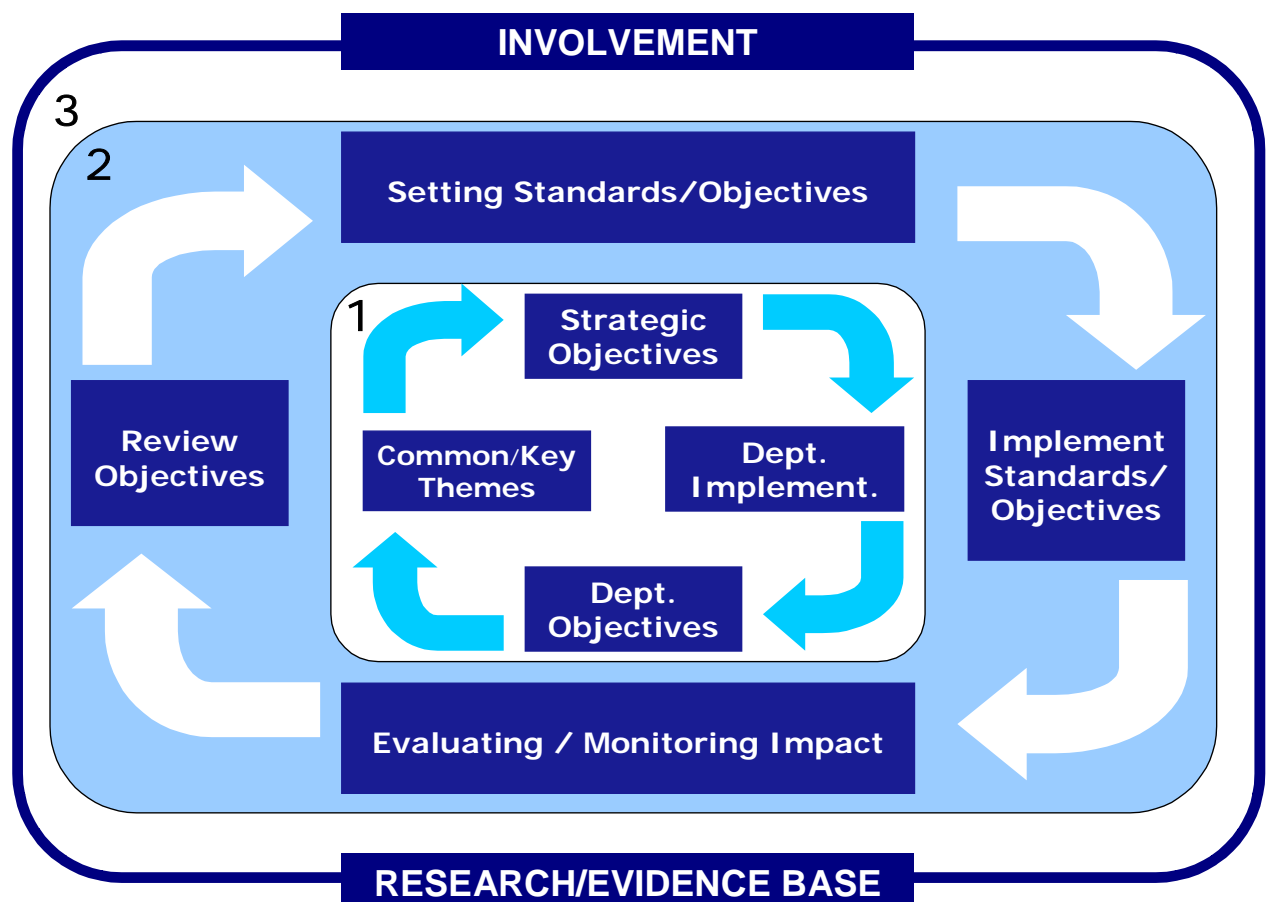
Each Strategic Equality and Diversity Objectives is defined and then Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are set which will allow the organisation to assess whether or not the Strategic Equality and Diversity Objectives have been met. Responsibility and deadlines are identified alongside each KPI. The Chief Executive, aided by the Head of Diversity, will take overall responsibility for the delivery of the objectives and will actively monitor progress, encourage achievement, and support implementation throughout each year. All targets will be reported on annually.

At the bottom of each box there is a note of the Overarching Organisational Objectives (as noted in Section 5.4) to which these Diversity targets are related. Delivery of the Strategic Equality and Diversity Objectives will be vital in the organisation meeting its Overarching Objectives and is indicative of the approach of mainstreaming Diversity.

7.2 Equality & Diversity Objectives in context

The diagram below indicates the concept behind the objectives and displays three interdependent cycles of activity that must be ongoing in development and support of the objectives:

- Cycle 1** Starting at the bottom of the inner cycle (1) departments undertook 'scoring' and 'action planning' (as described in Sections 3 & 6) and started the process of setting departmental objectives. Moving clockwise, common themes were identified and supplemented by key issues arising out of other work. Organisational objectives were then set, which will feed back into the departments as they implement the overall plan. Annual review at departmental level will re-start the cycle.
- Cycle 2** Setting Standards and Objectives is meaningless unless done within the context of audit and evaluation. The middle cycle (2) therefore summarises how objectives will be set (top, moving clockwise), implemented, monitored and evaluated, reviewed, and then either amended/increased or new objectives set.
- Cycle 3** Setting Objectives and measuring their impact is meaningless if the wrong objectives are set. Consequently, the final cycle (3) encompasses both others and involves ensuring the appropriateness of objectives and instigating new objectives based on Involvement projects and research.



7.3 Foundation building and beyond

As you read the objectives we have set a valid question for you to raise would be:

“Why do your objectives not concentrate more on outcomes in relation to people? If you believe in Equality and Diversity why do so many concentrate on systems and processes rather than clearly stating you intend to increase the number of disabled people attending courses you run, or the number of women on sitting on committees, or the ethnic diversity of your staff?”

The answer is that the Society is at an early stage in its evolution in the field of Equality and Diversity. Whilst the public sector has been tackling many of these issues for a number of years the Society was, for example, only bought under the Specific Duties of the Race Relations Act in December 2004 and only required to publish a scheme by November 2005.

The Society had always taken these issues seriously (for example, we achieved ‘Investors in People’, have sponsored research in the field, and include Equal Opportunities in our Professional Codes of Conduct), however, there was neither a co-ordinated approach nor the legal requirements many organisations were under.

We could easily set objectives like the ones above, but it would actually be disingenuous. Without base-line data we could never really say whether we had managed to increase numbers, keep them static, or if they had actually reduced.

Thus this first strategy concentrates on building a mainstreamed culture of Diversity using the evidence base from various fields, including the Commissions, which indicate that high quality training, ‘involvement’, recruitment policies, impact assessment, and monitoring should lead to change – the reason these are the factors increasingly included in legislation. As we see the results of measurement, gain the feedback from involvement projects, and identify issues through impact assessment we will set new targets more in the nature of those above. We simply can’t do that until we start to identify what the issues are and speak to people about how they may best be addressed; indeed acting on preconceptions about what issues there may be, stereotypical notions

of requirements, and without understanding and involvement from the effected groups goes against the principles of Equality and Diversity that we are attempting to apply.

We believe that the building of these coherent and evidence-based foundations will actually lead to better decisions, faster progress, and a more fundamental change of culture than a sudden rush to set targets without understanding what we are doing.

To the people who ask something similar to the very valid question above, we would explain this and also ask them to come back and look at our annual reports on progress. What we want you to see is that as these objectives start to deliver results our next sets of outcomes will develop from being management led to being based on evidence (from audit/research projects) and feedback (from Involvement).

7.4 Summary of the Equality & Diversity Objectives

- The key areas tackled by the Strategic Diversity Objectives are:**
- 1. Recruitment and Appointment**
 - 2. Guidance for The Profession**
 - 3. Impact Assessment**
 - 4. Involvement**
 - 5. Measurement and Monitoring**
 - 6. Accreditation – LL.B., Diploma & PCC**
 - 7. Procurement and Partnership**
 - 8. Diversity Awareness Raising and Training**
 - 9. Accessible Information & Events**
 - 10. Departmental Action Plans**

Key to progress reporting

C	Completed in full
W1	Work underway, due to be complete on schedule
W2	Work underway, likely that timescale will need extended
D	Delayed (please provide reason)

NOTE: *The Society wanted this document to be an evolving statement of our work, progress and intent. It is updated annually (including using the codes above to note progress on our key objectives). Details of all amendments made each year are noted in our Equality and Diversity Annual Report*

Of course, what matters most is how these might apply to you as a member of the public or a member of the profession. We have therefore provided some examples (Section 7.4) of how you might become involved with the Society and how our objectives might improve that experience. The Departmental Actions Plans (Appendix 2) should also provide you with further information if you are interested in a particular area of work.

Please note, dates are expressed as ‘Q’ and then either 1,2, 3 or 4. These relate to ‘quarters’ of the year. For example, ‘Q1 2006’ means we hope to achieve this in or by the January-March period of 2006.

7.5 The Strategic Diversity and Equality Objectives

OBJECTIVE 1	RECRUITMENT AND APPOINTMENT	
<p>A. To improve the criteria, selection methods and appointments process in relation to the committees, panels, and working parties, and non-solicitor representation of the Society with particular consideration of the overall representativeness of the Council and committee structure.</p> <p>B. To increase lay representation within the Society and specifically encourage a cross section of applicants</p> <p>C. To improve the criteria, selection methods and appointments process in relation to Society staff</p>		
KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBILITY
A & C – Recruitment Policy		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development of an overarching policy on criteria, selection and appointment 	Q1/2 2006 C - Complete	KC (Staff) & DC (Council/Com)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development of standard templates for 'Job Descriptions' and 'Person Specifications' for staff 	Q4 2005/ Q1 2006 C - Complete	KC (Staff) & DC (Council/Com)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development of standard 'Job Descriptions' and 'Person Specifications' for Council and Committee 	Q3/4 2006 W1	KC (Staff) & DC (Council/Com)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tailoring of the above items to the needs of each individual committee 	Q1/2 2007 W1	KC (Staff) & DC (Council/Com)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development of standard application forms for Council/committee and for staff 	Q3/4 2006 C - Complete	KC (Staff) & DC (Council/Com)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training of staff in relation to the setting criteria, selection process, shortlisting and interviews 	Q1/2 2007 C - Complete	KC (Staff) & DC (Council/Com)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Equal Opportunities monitoring of applications and appointments established for Council/committee and staff 	Q3/4 2006 W1	KC (Staff) & DC (Council/Com)
B – Lay Representation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conveners of all committees to be asked to formally report on the appropriateness of lay involvement on their committees 	Q2/3 2006 W2¹	DC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Diversity lead to compare results to analogous organisations and consult with Advisory Group. 	Q3/4 2006 W2²	DC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recommendations to be developed as to the future of lay representation 	Q4 2006/ Q1 2007 - W1³	DC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ President's Committee to further consider the issues and agree way forward 	Q2/3 2007 W1	DC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implementation of recommendations 	Q1/2 2008 - W1	DC
Linked to Overarching Organisation Objectives Nos.		1, 5, 6

OBJECTIVE 2**GUIDANCE FOR THE PROFESSION**

To provide basic guidance on Diversity, in partnership with a variety of organisations and representative groups, to all members of the profession.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify organisations and groups willing to help provide general advice to the profession on specific strands of Diversity 	Q1 2006 W1	NS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with organisations to draft guidance notes on employment and service provision – including legal context, case studies, ‘top tips’ and sources of further information. 	Q2/3 2006 W2 ⁴	NS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce draft guidance and supply to all organisations and to Diversity Advisory Group for comment 	Q3/4 2006 W2	NS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design small project to monitor reaction of the profession and gain feedback on the guidance 	Q1 2007 W2	NS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish final guidance and distribute to profession 	Q2 2007 W2	NS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement project to monitor reaction of the profession and gain feedback on the guidance 	Q1 2008 W1	NS
Linked to Overarching Organisation Objectives Nos.		1, 5

OBJECTIVE 3**IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

To ensure all new policies and procedures proposed to/by Heads of Department meetings, President’s Committee, Society Committees, or Council have been impact assessed using an impact assessment template and carry appropriate recommendations.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an impact assessment template and guidance including a graded approach which builds in appropriate consultation & involvement to the level of impact the project is likely to have 	Q1 2006 W2 ⁵	NS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek approval of the Advisory Group 	Q2/3 2006 - W2	NS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch formal policy requiring impact assessment for all projects 	Q3/4 2006 W2	NS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Run a briefing event for all senior staff 	Q1 2007 - W2	NS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Random samples on a quarterly basis to ensure impact assessment and recommendations accompany all proposals – report on quality and consistency of these samples 	quarterly to end 2008 W1	NS
Linked to Overarching Organisation Objectives Nos.		6, 7

OBJECTIVE 4**INVOLVEMENT**

Develop innovative methods of consultation and involvement to ensure that we appropriately represent the groups to which we have statutory obligations and do so in a way that is fair to all.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBILITY
The Profession		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a Diversity Network of registered Solicitors who are willing to commit to involvement in relation to particular Diversity Strands 	Q4 2006 C - Complete	BR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoint two further representatives of the profession to the Advisory Group 	Q3 2006 W1⁶	BR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formally recognise the Advisory Group as a convened committee of the Law Society of Scotland and appoint a Council member as Convener 	Q4 2007 W1⁷	BR
The Public		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construct and maintain a list of other related agencies currently working on diversity involvement projects, the type of work they are undertaking and comments on the results they feel they are achieving. 	Q2/3 2006 W1	NS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To carry out a minimum of two significant projects per annum to increase our understanding of the issues members of the public face in relation to our activities and involve them in the setting of policy 	2 in 2006 C⁸ 2 in 2007 - W1 2 in 2008 - W1	NS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase lay involvement in policy and functions as per Objective 1 	<i>as detailed above - W1</i>	NS
Stakeholders		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construct and maintain a list of stakeholders relevant across one or more set of functions of the Society. 	Q4 2006 W2⁹	MC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform a formal stakeholder analysis 	Q1/2 2007 - W2	MC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an integrated communications and liaison strategy on a Society and departmental level in relation to key stakeholders 	Q4 2007 W1¹⁰	MC / GM
Linked to Overarching Organisation Objectives Nos.		1, 2, 3, 4, 5

OBJECTIVE 5
MEASUREMENT AND MONITORING

To improve measurement of outcomes across all the functions of the Society and monitor these in relation to Diversity

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBILITY
Audit of the Profession		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop a questionnaire capable of delivering a demographic profile of the profession (covering all Diversity strands) and identifying key Diversity issues from the perspective of the profession. 	Q1 2006 C - Complete	DM & NS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To distribute the questionnaire to all members of the profession with appropriate marketing and communication to ensure a high response rate 	Q2/3 2006 C - Complete	DM & NS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To report publicly on the outcomes of the profiling along with actions deemed necessary 	Q4 2006 / Q1 2007 W1¹¹	DM & NS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To re-inform and re-direct this policy, if necessary, in light of the data collected 	Q2/3 2007 W1	DM & NS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To re-audit every two years and report on trends 	Next due – Q4 2009 - W1	DM & NS
Staff Monitoring		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To establish monitoring of employees as per Race Relations Amendment Act standard for employers of 150 staff or more 	Q1/2 2006 C - Complete	KC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To carry out a staff attitude and issues questionnaire, including specific questions on Diversity, every two years 	Q4 2006 W2¹²	KC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To add Diversity related criteria to appraisal and performance management systems and require managers to formally report on the Diversity part of their remit 	Q4 2006 W2¹³	KC
Processes and Functions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Departments to identify a minimum of one significant measurement/monitoring project, or establishment of new measurement system, every two years. 	Q4 2006 + Q4 2008 W2¹⁴	LHC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Departments to build appropriate measurement and monitoring into new policies and procedures 	Q1 2006 W1	LHC
Linked to Overarching Organisation Objectives Nos.		6, 7

OBJECTIVE 6**ACCREDITATION - LL.B., DIPLOMA & PCC**

To include Diversity in the accreditation standards for the providers of the LL.B. degree in Scots Law, the Diploma in Legal Practice, and the Professional Competence Course both in relation to access to those courses and in how these issues are taught pervasively throughout the curriculum.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Include Diversity criteria in the new accreditation schemes 	Q4 2005 C - Complete	LC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approval of schemes by Council and the JSC 	Q4 2005 C - Complete	LC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitoring of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equal Opportunities statement of the provider - Details of schemes and arrangements for promoting access - Details of arrangements, accessibility and support services for people with a range of disabilities - A statement on work undertaken to ensure that assessment methodologies and teaching methods do not discriminate on Diversity related criteria. - Information on how issues of discrimination, diversity, good relations and cultural understanding are taught pervasively through the curriculum. - Demographic statistics in relation to those studying 	Q2/3 of 2006 and annually in Q2/3 until 2008 C - Complete	LC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Report annually on these issues 	As above	LC
Linked to Overarching Organisation Objectives Nos.		1, 5

OBJECTIVE 7**PROCUREMENT AND PARTNERSHIP**

Promoting equality in procurement and partnerships

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formally include diversity issues in policies and templates relating to procurement and partnership working agreements 	Q3 2006 W2¹⁵	DC & GAB
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure issues identified in impact assessments are carried through into any related procurement process 	Starting Q4 2006 W1	DC & GAB
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitor responses in relation to Diversity received from those submitting tenders 	Starting Q4 2006 W1	DC & GAB
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revise approach accordingly 	Review Q4 07	DC & GAB
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Report annually on issues arising from new procurement and partnership policy 	Annual	DC & GAB
Linked to Overarching Organisation Objectives Nos.		5, 6, 7,

OBJECTIVE 8
DIVERSITY AWARENESS RAISING AND TRAINING

- A. To raise and maintain the profile of Diversity throughout the profession and with our partner and stakeholder organisations. To take all possible opportunities to increase understanding about the importance of Diversity issues.
- B. To train all staff and our Council in Diversity, to provide bespoke training for those with particularly high impact responsibilities, and maintain a high profile for Diversity throughout the organisation

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBILITY
A. Profession and Stakeholders		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To use The Journal to promote understanding of Diversity and the work of the Society in this field 	Ongoing – review annually what has been achieved and formally report on it W1	GM/MC/IR/BR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To discuss Diversity at meetings, events, and in media coverage where appropriate to the highlight the core theme of Diversity’s link to effective regulation 		GM/MC/IR/BR
B. Staff and Council/Committee		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To provide a basic half-day module on Diversity awareness to ALL members of Council and Committee Chairs 	Q3 2006 W2 ¹⁶	KC & NS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To provide a basic one-day course to ALL members of staff 	Q4 2005 C - Complete + programme for new starts	KC & NS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To evaluate training and report on outcomes 	Q2 2006 C - Complete	KC & NS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To carry out a impact assessment of training approximately six months after completion of the training provision 	Q2 2006 C - Complete	KC & NS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To perform a needs analysis to identify further training needs for specific groups/posts etc. 	Q3/4 2006 C - Complete	KC & NS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To commission and provide appropriate further or bespoke training on order to meet the needs identified in the training needs analysis 	Q1 2007 – plan in place - training over year period W1 ¹⁷	KC & NS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To identify innovative ways to raise and maintain the profile of Diversity with Staff and Council members 	Q3 2006 W1	KC & NS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To report annually on training and development issues 	Annually C - Complete	KC & NS
Linked to Overarching Organisation Objectives Nos.		1, 5

OBJECTIVE 9
ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION & EVENTS

- A. Monitoring system for requests for materials in other formats noting what is requested and in what format, allowing the Society to better plan services in the future.
- B. To redesign the website to the AA standard of accessibility and accessible design of a new Regulatory Management System, to ensure that it is a useful portal to information for all who may be using it, and to ensure all content is appropriate
- C. To ensure that Society events promote themselves as inclusive and take account of a range of contributing factors (accessibility, catering, time, date, venue) which may affect the ability of individuals to attend

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBILITY
A. Requests for Information & Materials		
▪ Development of a standard materials request monitoring form	Q3 2006 – W2 ¹⁸	GM
▪ Approval by Advisory Group	Q4 2006 - W2	GM
▪ All staff requested to note format of materials requested	Q4 2006 - W2	GM
▪ Report on findings at end of year one and make recommendations about future formats for information and materials	Q4 2007 W1	GM
▪ Implement recommendations	Q1/2 2008 W1	GM
B. Website and Regulatory Management System		
▪ Budget Secured	Q4 2005 - C	GAB
▪ Timetable in place	Q4 2005 - C	GAB
▪ Staff to draft content on basis of accessibility and readability guidelines	Q4 2005 - C	GAB
▪ External assessment of compliance with AA WAI Standard	Q1 2006 – W2 ¹⁹	GAB
▪ Review of content from accessibility perspective	Q2\3 2006 W1	GAB
▪ New Roll Management System on-line allowing preferences to be set relating to how correspondence is sent out	Q2 2006 – W1 ²⁰	GAB\JH
C. Events		
▪ Accessibility checklist developed and available for use	Q2 2006 C - Complete	IR
▪ Use LS Multi Media room where possible	Ongoing	IR
▪ Accessibility/catering questions on standard enrolment and evaluation forms	Q2 2006 C - Complete	IR
▪ Monitor and report on any complaints in relation to accessibility and action required to prevent future complaints.	Ongoing W1 ²¹	IR
▪ Signed off checklist available for every event and maintained on file.	Random checks Q4 06, 07, 08 W1	IR
Linked to Overarching Organisation Objectives Nos.		1, 3, 4,

OBJECTIVE 10	DEPARTMENTAL ACTION PLANS
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Ensuring the departmental action plans are implemented and progress reported on

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ That targets set in the departmental action plans are met on time 	W1	LHC / DM
Linked to Overarching Organisation Objectives Nos.		1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

A senior member of staff is allocated with responsibility for each of these areas, the initials used above correspond to the following people (in alphabetical order):

Responsibility		
Gordon Brewster	- Director – Information Technology	- GAB
Liz Campbell	- Director – Education & Training (E&T)	- LC
Michael Clancy	- Director – Law Reform	- MC
David Cullen	- Registrar	- DC
Leslie Cumming	- Deputy Chief Executive	- LHC
<i>Leslie has recently retired from the organisation, and at the time of writing we are currently awaiting a new appointment – these responsibilities will be reallocated to the new post-holder</i>		
Ken Cunningham	- Human Resources Manager	- KC
Gillian Meighan	- Head of Media Relations	- GM
Douglas Mill	- Chief Executive	- DM
Bruce Ritchie	- Director- Professional Practice	- BR
Iona Ritchie	- Head of Update	- IR
<i>Iona has recently moved on from the organisation, and at the time of writing we are currently awaiting a new appointment – these responsibilities will be reallocated to the new post-holder</i>		
George Samson	- Director – Administration	- GS
Neil Stevenson	- Head of Diversity (& Deputy Director E&T)	- NS
Philip Yelland	- Director – Client Relations Office	- PY

7.6 How might the Strategic Equality & Diversity Objectives (SEDO) apply to you?

The Society and the various departments have already started implementing the changes required to deliver on our objectives. The examples on the following two pages indicate how the implementation of the SEDOs should improve the stages you might commonly go through if involved in one of the example processes. Not every step or combination of stages is discussed, the idea being to provide an illustration rather than a detailed process description.

In all cases the idea is that improvements delivered through the SEDOs will relate to many or all of the equality 'strands' and terms such as 'accessible' will mean for everyone (be that eliminating barriers for those with caring responsibilities, a disability, or a different first language) and not just in the technical sense in relation to disability. For example:

- Clear and straightforward language may help those with a learning disability and someone for whom English is not a first language.
- Understanding that delegates on a course or visitors to a building may require use of a private area can benefit those who may wish to make prayers during the day, those who may wish to breastfeed, or those who need to take certain types of medication.
- Improvements to our recruitment methods should benefit individuals across all the strands, and wider social factors outwith the traditional equalities framework.
- Including greater emphasis on Equality and Diversity in curriculumns and accreditation schemes in relation to the routes to qualification should not only ensure that those entering the profession are better prepared in those fields but also encourage those from currently underrepresented (in the profession) groups to view the profession as one committed to Equality and Diversity and where there are opportunities for them as an individual.

This section examines how the implementation of the Strategic Equality and Diversity Objectives might affect you in your dealings with the Society as:

A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC:

Job applicant - applying for a full-time post within the Law Society of Scotland

Member of the public - making a formal complaint against a Scottish solicitor

A MEMBER OF THE PROFESSION

Solicitor - completing their CPD requirements and attending a course

Trainee - administration of their traineeship by the Law Society of Scotland

JOB APPLICANT

- applying for a full-time post within the Law Society of Scotland

Possible Stages	SEDOs
<p>Advertising The Society will establish a policy on advertising ensuring that we are reaching as many potential applicants as possible irrespective of background</p> <p>We'll be monitoring applications to ensure we are improving the diversity of applicants</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1, 5</p>
<p>Application Pack The Society will be developing a new application pack. This will minimise the amount of information those short-listing for interview see in relation to background. It will also ensure a clear job description and person specification is provided to every applicant and used in the remainder of the process.</p> <p>The pack will be developed after a full impact assessment and with the involvement of people from a range of backgrounds to ensure we get advice on all the possible issues that might arise</p> <p>The pack will be available in, and application accepted in, a variety of different formats</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1, 3, 4</p> <p>1, 9</p>
<p>Short-listing (for interview) All staff involved in the recruitment process will have received training to ensure they are fully aware of relevant Equality legislation and an HR officer will be involved</p> <p>The Society will also be monitoring those selected at this stage against the data on applicants – allowing us to ascertain if problems are occurring at this stage in the process</p>	<p>1, 8</p> <p>1, 5</p>
<p>Interview We'll ensure that the interview venue is accessible and that any reasonable adjustments are made for any applicant (for example, format of materials, date, time, etc.)</p> <p>Again, we'll relate data on the background of successful applicants to those interviewed and those applying to identify any issues arising</p>	<p>1,9</p> <p>1,5</p>
<p>Follow-up The Society will ensure that staff are available to discuss unsuccessful applications and explain, in relation to the job description and person specification, decisions made</p>	<p>1</p>

MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC

- making a formal complaint against a Scottish solicitor

Possible Stages	SEDOs
<p>Finding out how to complain</p> <p>Currently the Client Relations Office information pack is available in hard copy from the Society, the Citizens Advice Bureau and also online. The introduction of the 'double A' compliant website should improve access for a range of people, whilst working with the Citizens Advice Bureaus helps access groups who may otherwise be hard-to-reach.</p> <p>Non-solicitors were involved in the development of the new pack to ensure clear, accessible language and layout.</p>	<p>9</p> <p>4, 9</p>
<p>Making the complaint</p> <p>A complaint may be made in writing (including letter and e-mail), or by telephone (including text phone). It can be made in any language or, if more appropriate, it can be made by an authorised representative of the service user.</p> <p>Law Society staff will assist anyone with special needs; this includes paying home visits to those who may require it or assisting with translation services (remembering this might include 'foreign' language translation or, for example, British Sign Language translation).</p> <p>The Client Relations Office will keep demographic information on complaints made which in the future will help assess the use and accessibility of services.</p>	<p>9</p> <p>9</p> <p>3, 9</p>
<p>Choice of 'Case Manager' and 'Reporter'</p> <p>All Case Managers (who manage the complaints process and a cases presentation to a complaints committee) and Reporters (who assist in analysing cases) will receive intensive training in all aspects of diversity and its importance in helping people as individuals who may have different needs and expectations.</p> <p>The necessary skills in dealing with often sensitive and emotionally charged circumstances, and the particular difficulties in accessing or using services often faced by people from a range of different backgrounds, will be part of the job evaluation and recruitment process.</p> <p>In allocating Case Managers and Reporters attention will be paid to areas of experience and expertise in handling particular types of complaint and assisting service users with particular issues or concerns.</p>	<p>2, 8</p> <p>1</p> <p>5, 8</p>
<p>Being kept informed</p> <p>Case Managers increasingly act and react according to the service user's circumstances; for example, we will discuss how the service users wishes to be kept informed and will arrange translations of letters and documents, or take notice of requests in relation to when calls are made (be this not during a child's afternoon nap time, or not during a day of religious significance) and how frequent contact should be.</p> <p>In gaining feedback from service users from a variety of backgrounds processes can be refined in the future.</p>	<p>4, 9</p> <p>4, 5</p>
<p>The Committee Decision</p> <p>The decision-making committees are formed of equal numbers of solicitor and non-solicitor members. They will be appointed on the basis of clear criteria and will be subject to a transparent recruitment process.</p> <p>The Convenor will have received specific training in Diversity and its implications for the work of the committee, and members will have received Diversity briefings.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>8</p>

SOLICITOR

- completing their CPD requirements and attending a course

Possible Stages	SEDOS
<p>Attending a CPD Course</p> <p>All course delegates will be asked at registration if anything can be done to ensure they get the most out of an event. Common themes will be identified and used for future planning.</p> <p>A checklist will be developed (using Involvement) to ensure only accessible venues are used. This will cover a range of issues from access for those with mobility and hearing impairments through to suitable catering provision for those with special dietary requirements</p> <p>Consideration will be given to the dates, times, duration and breaks – with these being set to ensure that account is taken of factors such as religious or childcare requirements.</p> <p>Course materials will be available in a range of formats and in advance of the courses if requested.</p> <p>Lessons learnt from the annual report on Equality and Diversity from the providers of the Diploma in Legal Practice will be used to inform the Society’s policy and practice in relation to training provisions</p> <p>Guidance issued to the profession will include advice in relation to organising CPD events to ensure that the good practice developed by the Society is shared with those who may, for example, be organising local provision through their bar association.</p> <p>The course evaluations will ask specific questions about Diversity issues, and monitored to ensure any issue identified are addressed.</p>	<p>5, 8, 9, 10</p> <p>3, 4, 7, 9, 10</p> <p>3, 8, 9</p> <p>9</p> <p>6, 9</p> <p>2</p> <p>5, 9</p>
<p>CPD Requirements</p> <p>CPD requirements will take account of factors such as maternity, paternity, or adoption leave.</p> <p>The CPD card will be available in a variety of formats, including a downloadable electronic version.</p> <p>The committee dealing with CPD issues will have been appointed in line with best practice on recruitment and will have had training on Equality and Diversity issues in relation to CPD</p> <p>The development of distance-learning packages will aid those who have difficulty, for whatever reasons, attending CPD events.</p> <p>By building in requirements for accessibility into procurement of distance learning, such as DVD based programmes, it means that from the start the projects will include, for example, subtitles to spoken language and audio description of visual elements.</p>	<p>3, 4, 8</p> <p>9</p> <p>1, 8</p> <p>7, 9</p> <p>7, 9</p>

TRAINEE

- administration of their traineeship by the Law Society of Scotland

Possible Stages	SEDOS
<p>Applying for an Entrance Certificate We will make sure that the application form is available in alternative formats and that we do not insist on a signature</p> <p>We will ensure the Admissions Regulations do not just specify UK qualifications but judge on 'equivalence'</p> <p>We will change the way in which we ask for references to focus on asking specific factual questions rather than asking for general impressions</p> <p>We will collect data on those applying for entrance certificates and relate this to demographic information we will collect from the LL.B. providers, and Diploma providers – this will allow us to assess if equality issues arises at particular stages of the route to qualification and help us set more specific objectives to tackle issues identified in the future</p>	<p>8</p> <p>3, 10</p> <p>1, 10</p> <p>5, 6</p>
<p>Quarterly Reviews and Logbooks We will need to ensure these, and relevant guidance notes, can be supplied and completed in a variety of formats.</p> <p>We will need to ensure that the criteria do not discriminate (for example, that people understand 'communication skills' need to take into account different cultural norms and issues which may arise from certain disabilities') and that the profession is educated on Equality and Diversity issues that could arise. We will need to ensure there are monitoring projects which exam differentials in scoring between various groups and that if these are identified specific objectives are put in place to address them</p>	<p>9</p> <p>2, 3, 5, 8, 9</p>
<p>Applying for Admission (traditionally half-way through a traineeship) Under the legislation applicants need to prove to the Society that they are 'fit and proper', the Society will undertake a project both to provide clear and transparent criteria on 'fit and proper' and to investigate fair methods of assessment. This will also involve ensuring the profession understand Equality and Diversity issues and are aware of the Society's policy. As a potential barrier to entry this process has serious consequences, a full impact assessment will be carried out prior to implementation along with 'involvement' projects in the design stages.</p> <p>Applicants for admission will be asked to provide equality monitoring data, and this will be examined to assess if there is any differential treatment/patterns in relation to those who currently 'fail' the 'fit and proper' test.</p>	<p>2, 4, 8, 10</p> <p>5</p>

7.7 Supplementary Feedback on Strategic Objectives (SEDOs)

This section provides further information on progress towards the SEDOs it should be read in conjunction with the latest annual report (currently the 2006 report)

¹ This process is ongoing, and should soon come back on track

² As above at 1

³ This is marked as W1, despite the two previous objectives being slightly off target we should manage to make time up and deliver this element on time

⁴ This is behind schedule, but additional funding was allocated for the coming financial year to ensure we get back on track – this should be delivered within the life-cycle of this strategy

⁵ This is behind schedule, but additional funding was allocated for the coming financial year to ensure we get back on track – this should be complete by the next annual report

⁶ This was purposefully delayed, to allow the appointments to coincide with the adoption of this group as a formal committee in our Council. This has already received the assent of Council and will take place in May 2007

⁷ This is ahead of schedule, and should be complete by May 2007

⁸ Currently we are working on a consultation on the route to qualifying as a solicitor and ran a major Disability Accessibility Review Workshop looking at issues facing people accessing high street legal practice

⁹ This project is now underway and a protocol being developed, by the next annual report these target should have been achieved

¹⁰ The 'Media Relations' have now had their role developed into 'Corporate Communications' and a major development of our communication work is planned and budgeted for in the coming year

¹¹ Publication is planned for February 2007, the full report will be available through our website

¹² This is planned for 2007, and we should be on target by the 2007 annual report

¹³ The performance management system has been delayed due to operational issues around the possible changes happening to the organisation as a result of the Legal Profession and Legal Aid (Scotland) Bill. This objective should be complete within the strategy lifecycle

¹⁴ This objective has been delayed due to operational issues around the possible changes happening to the organisation as a result of the Legal Profession and Legal Aid (Scotland) Bill. This objective should be complete within the strategy lifecycle

¹⁵ Final completion of the policy in this area is slightly behind schedule, but each individual significant procurement project has had the involvement of the Head of Diversity to ensure that appropriate measures are taken, this objective is on track overall

¹⁶ We have currently providing briefing papers on key topics to ALL Council and Committee Chairs, but actual training has only been rolled out for 50% of members, we will continue to work on this through 2007, and provide a note on progress in our next annual report

¹⁷ After the impact assessment a training map has been developed, the first requirement being mandatory age discrimination training for all staff

¹⁸ Many of the publicly available information services (dial-a-law and guidance leaflets) have been discontinued for reasons outwith the equality remit – and so some areas here are now less relevant. A new more accessible complaints pack has been launched and piloted for feedback with a range of individuals with special access needs. We'll monitor the requirement for this objective over the course of the next year and feedback in the 2007 annual report. The Corporate Communication team have taken over the issue of creating standard templates for all our materials – which will take into account issues of accessibility.

¹⁹ The website was reviewed by participants in our Disability Accessibility Review Website, by we wished to undertake more formal testing and plan to do so in 2007

²⁰ Stage 1 of this project (Client Relations Office) is now complete; Stage 2 of this project (Client Relations Office – second phase) is underway and on track; Stage 3 onwards, are underway and likely to be completed during the course of 2007

²¹ No complaints currently reported