

Legal Services Board Consultation on a Draft Statement of Policy – Anonymous response 1

Insight Summary: Individual Respondent (Legal Services Provider)

Overview

This response was broadly supportive of the proposed policy framework, but its most valuable contribution lies in a number of practical suggestions for regulators and the wider legal sector on how diversity, equity and inclusion (EDI) work could be strengthened in practice. The respondent consistently emphasised accountability, transparency, continuous improvement, stakeholder engagement and support for individuals facing barriers to participation and progression.

Key Learning Themes for Regulators and the Sector

1. Move Beyond Data Collection Towards Accountability

A recurring theme was that gathering diversity data alone is insufficient. Regulators should focus on using data to measure progress, identify barriers and demonstrate impact.

Potential learning

- Publish diversity and pay gap data where appropriate.
- Measure and publicly evaluate progress against EDI objectives.
- Introduce stronger accountability mechanisms for governing bodies.
- Consider periodic external reviews or independent scrutiny of EDI strategies and outcomes.

Why this matters

The respondent suggests that transparency and evaluation are essential to maintaining confidence that diversity initiatives are delivering meaningful change rather than becoming compliance exercises.

2. Embed the Voice of Underrepresented Groups

The respondent repeatedly highlighted the importance of involving those affected by barriers when designing regulatory interventions.

Potential learning

- Undertake regular engagement with underrepresented communities.
- Co-design initiatives with affected groups.
- Use feedback mechanisms throughout policy development and implementation.
- Create opportunities for continuous dialogue rather than one-off consultation exercises.

Why this matters

There is a clear view that regulators will be better able to identify emerging barriers and develop effective interventions when they work directly with those experiencing disadvantage.

3. Strengthen Independent Review and Challenge

One of the more developed suggestions concerned the use of external challenge mechanisms.

Potential learning

- Independently audit equality impact assessments.
- Conduct periodic reviews of disciplinary and enforcement processes.
- Benchmark fairness across regulatory activities.
- Share lessons learned through anonymised case studies.

Why this matters

Independent assessment can provide assurance that processes remain fair and that unintended disparities are identified and addressed.

4. Recognise Intersectionality and Multiple Disadvantages

The respondent encouraged a more explicit focus on intersectionality throughout regulatory approaches.

Potential learning

- Analyse outcomes across multiple protected characteristics where possible.
- Consider how overlapping characteristics may compound disadvantage.
- Assess impacts on groups facing multiple barriers simultaneously.

Why this matters

The response suggests that single-characteristic approaches may fail to capture the full reality of experiences within the legal profession.

5. Improve Understanding of Neurodiversity

The most personal and distinctive contribution concerned neurodiversity and non-disclosure.

Potential learning

- Recognise that some individuals may not disclose neurodivergent conditions due to stigma.
- Avoid over-reliance on voluntary disclosure data when assessing workplace inclusion.
- Promote psychologically safe environments for disclosure.
- Improve organisational understanding of neurodiversity through training and awareness initiatives.
- Provide anonymous methods for seeking support and sharing experiences.

Why this matters

The respondent highlighted the risk that significant groups may remain invisible within data collection exercises if disclosure is not perceived as safe or worthwhile.

6. Focus on Practical Access and Progression Barriers

The response places considerable emphasis on improving accessibility throughout legal careers.

Potential learning

- Collect and publish information that enables informed decisions about qualification routes.
- Gather better evidence on training and educational backgrounds.
- Conduct regular research into candidate experiences.
- Expand outreach activities aimed at underrepresented groups.
- Share examples of inclusive recruitment and training practices.

Why this matters

The respondent views transparency and evidence gathering as key tools for identifying where barriers remain within entry and progression pathways.

7. Provide Better Support for Career Mobility and Returners

A notable contribution was the focus on those re-entering practice or moving between professional roles.

Potential learning

- Develop clear guidance for returners.
- Encourage flexible re-entry arrangements.
- Promote refresher training and tailored CPD.
- Consider mentoring and wellbeing support for returning professionals.
- Monitor barriers and outcomes for career transitions and re-entry.

Why this matters

The respondent suggests these groups may face avoidable obstacles that limit retention of talent within the profession.

8. Promote Healthy and Inclusive Workplace Cultures

The respondent identified workplace culture as a critical enabler of diversity and inclusion.

Potential learning

- Use regular staff feedback mechanisms to assess culture.
- Encourage anonymous reporting channels.
- Share examples of effective inclusion practices across the sector.
- Support managers and leaders in developing inclusive leadership skills.

Why this matters

Creating inclusive cultures was viewed as essential to retaining diverse talent and ensuring that regulatory objectives translate into day-to-day experiences.

Supporting Smaller Regulators

The respondent acknowledged that implementation capacity may vary across the regulatory landscape.

Potential learning

The LSB and larger regulators could support consistency through:

- Practical implementation guidance.
- Standardised templates and tools.
- Shared data collection frameworks.
- Communities of practice and workshops.
- Access to advice and support for smaller regulators.
- Dissemination of good practice examples.

Why this matters

The response highlights the risk that resource constraints could affect implementation unless sector-wide support mechanisms are available.

Strategic Reflections for the Sector

The response points towards a model of EDI regulation that is:

- Evidence-led rather than purely compliance-driven.
- Transparent and accountable.
- Informed by lived experience.
- Sensitive to intersectional disadvantage.
- Supportive of career mobility and retention.
- Focused on workplace culture as well as regulatory processes.
- Accompanied by practical support for implementation.

Taken together, these themes suggest a desire for regulators to act not only as standard setters, but as facilitators of continuous improvement, learning and collaboration across the legal sector.