

Law Society response:
**LSB consultation on draft Statement of
Policy to Encourage a diverse legal
profession**

March 2026

Introduction

1. The Law Society is the independent professional body for solicitors in England and Wales. We are run by and for our members. Our role is to be the voice of solicitors, to drive excellence in the profession and to safeguard the rule of law. On behalf of the profession, we influence the legislative and regulatory environment in the public interest. At home we promote the profession, and the vital role legal services play in our economy. Around the world we promote England and Wales as a global legal centre, open new markets for our members and defend human rights. This consultation response is given by the Law Society in the exercise of its representative functions.
2. We welcome the Legal Services Board's (LSB) consultation on the draft Statement of Policy to encourage a diverse legal profession issued under section 49 of the Legal Services Act 2007 and the opportunity to comment on the proposals.
3. We are committed to building a more diverse, open, and inclusive profession. Inequality and bias continue to shape career paths. Women, minority ethnic, LGBTQ+ and disabled solicitors still face barriers to senior roles. Disabled solicitors remain underrepresented. And too often, workplace cultures leave people feeling like they can't bring their best selves to work. It's vital that people from all backgrounds have the opportunity to join the profession and succeed as solicitors. A diverse and inclusive profession is essential to ensuring both public trust and a resilient and impactful sector.
4. We agree with the LSB's view that the current statutory guidance has not driven the consistent or effective progress needed on equality, diversity, inclusion (EDI), and wellbeing across the sector. We support the LSB's ambition to improve diversity, inclusion, fairness and wellbeing across the legal profession and welcome a strengthened, evidence-based regulatory approach that sets clearer expectations and accountability.
5. We have concerns on how these expectations will be implemented by the regulators and how progress will be measured, tracked, and communicated. We are also concerned with any increased regulatory burden on small firms. We offer comments on each of the proposed outcomes below.

Q1a. Do you agree that these proposed outcomes will help to address the barriers to encouraging a diverse legal profession? Are there any further, or alternative, outcomes we should consider?

6. We agree the four proposed outcomes will help address barriers to a diverse and inclusive profession by strengthening the regulatory baseline around data, fair decision-making, accessible pathways, and inclusive professional standards, creating a clearer framework for action.
7. We have suggested areas where the proposed core and enhanced expectations could be clarified or improved, and where additional expectations under the outcomes should be considered. As an enhancement, the LSB should explicitly

reference timeliness and measurable delivery within each outcome to maintain momentum and accountability.

8. Wellbeing, poor workplace practices, and high levels of stress and mental ill-health in the profession are of significant concern to our members. The draft Statement of Policy acknowledges the impact of poor wellbeing and the importance of promoting health and inclusive professional environments by using regulatory levers. We welcome the expansion of the current guidance for legal service regulators, to include wellbeing in this statement of policy, recognising that women, disabled people and other minoritised groups report lower levels of mental health and wellbeing.
9. Although supporting wellbeing and healthy workplaces are referenced in many of the core and enhanced expectations in the draft statement, we recommend including reference to these in the high-level Outcome descriptors as well to emphasise the importance of removing barriers to wellbeing as part of building a diverse and inclusive profession.

Q1b. Do you agree that the proposed outcomes should be pursued by regulators through a set of specific expectations?

10. We agree that the proposed outcomes should be delivered through a set of clear and specific expectations for regulators. Specific expectations are essential to move from broad commitments to accountable delivery. They provide clarity on minimum standards and expectations allowing members of the regulated professions to hold their regulators to account.
11. Regulation should be evidence based and proportional. The decisions of regulators in how they meet the LSB's expectations should be guided by evidence and by the aim of positively enhancing professional practice. This should be done by conducting research and stakeholder engagement, as well as impact assessments for the statement of policy in general but also for any equality, diversity or inclusion impacts that may result from the policy.
12. It is reasonable to the LSB to make suggestions to regulators and to expect those suggestions to be considered. However, the LSB must respect that individual approaches to meeting those expectations may look different to different regulators, as a result of the process of working to implement the statement of policy.
13. With over quarter of solicitors working in-house, the expectations that apply to authorised firms will not apply to all organisations that regulated individuals work in. We encourage the LSB to consider including within the expectations encouragement for regulators to share best practice and collaborate more broadly on equality, diversity, inclusion, and wellbeing for the benefit of all regulated individuals and the legal profession.

Q1c. Do you agree that the proposed structure of core and enhanced expectations under the general outcomes offers an effective way to set a clear minimum standard for all regulators, while also encouraging regulators to consider additional steps, where appropriate?

14. We agree that the core/enhanced structure strikes the right balance given that each regulator operates in a different regulatory context.
15. We would welcome greater clarity on how the LSB will assess and monitor regulators' compliance with this statement of policy, including how engagement with the core and enhanced expectations will be evaluated. Clearer information on how compliance will be measured, tracked and communicated to the regulated communities is needed for transparency and to ensure confidence in this new strengthened regulatory approach.

Outcome 1: Strategic evidence-based and collaborative action

Q2a. Do you agree with the proposed Outcome 1?

16. We support Outcome 1 and agree that regulators must take a strategic, evidence-based and outcomes focused approach underpinned by high-quality data, active engagement and collaboration.

Q2b. Do you agree that the proposed expectations will help regulators to pursue Outcome 1? Are there any further expectations beyond those we have included that would support regulators to pursue this outcome?

We agree that the proposed expectations will help regulators pursue Outcome 1.

Diversity data collection and publishing

17. We welcome the focus on collecting and publishing high-quality diversity data to build a clear and thorough understanding of the diversity profile of the regulated community and where greater diversity needs to be encouraged. This level of transparency is essential for understanding sector-wide patterns, supporting shared learning and building trust.
18. While the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) publishes diversity data on solicitors working in private practice collected biannually, the current low response rates to individual diversity data collection mean the full profile of the profession – including solicitors working in-house, who make up 28% of the solicitor profession – remains poorly understood. For example, in 2024, 32% of practicing certificate holders did not share data about their ethnicity leading to an increasingly unreliable dataset. The individual diversity data may also capture data from individuals in small and medium firms who are reluctant to share this information with their firm as part of the SRA firm diversity data exercise.
19. We welcome recent efforts by the SRA to collect diversity data of those taking SQE exams and entering the profession however there are significant gaps to fill. We encourage the SRA to improve individual level data collection to provide the

comprehensive picture needed for informed regulatory action, particularly to provide a clear diversity profile of all regulated individuals, not just those working in authorised firms.

20. We support the use of qualitative and lived experience insights alongside quantitative data. This should include involving those with relevant lived experience and expertise in the development of new or revisions to regulatory activity, as well as representative bodies. This includes any significant changes to diversity monitoring questions and developing clear guidance to support confident responses.

Strategic action planning

21. We strongly support the requirement for regulators to publish a time-bound measurable strategy action plan with clear evaluation methods, marking a necessary shift from broad commitments toward accountable delivery.
22. We remain concerned that the SRA has not yet published its action plan on addressing overrepresentation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic solicitors in SRA enforcement processes following publication of the [research](#) in October 2024, and that its [action plan](#) on differential outcomes by ethnicity lacks timelines and clear measures of success. We recommend the LSB explicitly require timely publication of all action plans with clear milestones to maintain momentum and accountability, and ensure regulators' plans in response to the policy statement are evidence based, that progress is monitored, and interventions are thoroughly evaluated.
23. We also encourage a cross-sector approach to intelligence gathering and specifically research, working with the Law Society and the SRA to identify EDI topics where further insight is needed.

Q2c. Are there any enhanced expectations that would be better placed under core expectations under Outcome 1? Are there any core expectations that would be better placed under enhanced expectations under Outcome 1?

24. We agree that horizon scanning, enhanced evaluation practices and co-design with regulated communities are appropriate considerations.
25. We would welcome greater clarity on the level of expectation the LSB will place on regulators regarding the enhanced expectations, including those we would expect the SRA to meet. Further clarity is also needed on how the LSB will assess, monitor and communicate regulators' compliance with these enhanced expectations.

Outcome 2: Fair regulatory approaches and decision-making

Q3a. Do you agree with the proposed Outcome 2?

26. We agree that fair, proportionate, transparent and evidence based regulatory processes are fundamental to supporting a diverse and inclusive profession. We welcome the framing of all proposed expectations under this outcome as *core*.

Q3b. Do you agree that the proposed expectations will help regulators to pursue Outcome 2? Are there any further expectations beyond those we have included that would support regulators to pursue this outcome?

27. We agree that the proposed expectations will help regulators pursue Outcome 2.

Equality impact

28. We support the expectation that regulators identify and address any impacts on protected characteristics as well as socio-economic background that arise from any new or updated regulatory policies or actions. We recommend that under Outcome 2, 31. I the expectation that regulators must 'take steps to effectively identify and address any impacts on protected and other relevant diversity characteristics (including socio-economic background)' is extended to include considering and addressing any impacts on wellbeing.

29. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) note that 'case law has established that considering equality must be at the centre of policy formulation and should start early in the policy cycle'. We therefore recommend including within 31. I an expectation that equality impacts are considered from the outset of regulatory policy development.

Disciplinary and enforcement processes

30. We welcome the strengthened expectations for fairness in disciplinary processes, including:

- appropriate training to minimise bias
- data collection and analysis across all stages
- identification of causes of unfair or inconsistent outcomes

31. Of particular importance is the core expectation that regulators publish clear and measurable remedial plans where disproportionate impacts are identified. We reiterate that we are awaiting the SRA's action plan addressing overrepresentation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic solicitors in SRA enforcement processes, and a SMART action plan with evaluation measures to address differential outcomes in professional assessments (the SQE) by ethnicity. We recommend adding a reference to timeliness in 31 III.C to ensure momentum. We also suggest adding an expectation that progress on remedial plans should be published.

Wellbeing

32. We support the emphasis on the wellbeing of all parties involved in enforcement processes – including both complainants and respondents. These processes can be highly stressful, and regulators' responsibilities in this area should be explicit. This is an area of significant concern to our members, and we welcome further discussions on this topic and particularly how the SRA's disciplinary, investigation and enforcement processes can better support wellbeing for all involved.

33. What remains less clear is how the SRA's revised approach to fitness to practice cases is working in practice. For example, have the changes made in 2023 led to improvements in how the SRA handles health issues? We would encourage the SRA to provide information or updates about how the new system is working.

Q3c. Are there any enhanced expectations we could set for regulators to pursue Outcome 2?

34. We welcome the LSB's invitation to propose enhanced expectations.
35. We recommend adding an enhanced expectation for regulators to consider introducing independent observer or stakeholder panels (including representatives from minoritised backgrounds and those with lived experience) to review systemic issues and advise on continuous improvement.
36. A further suggestion is an enhanced expectation for independent fairness audits of enforcement outcomes at defined intervals.

Outcome 3: Accessible, flexible and inclusive pathways into and through the profession

Q4a. Do you agree with the proposed Outcome 3?

37. We strongly support Outcome 3, particularly in light of the significant challenges facing candidates for the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE) – including cost, transparency, and variable support for under-represented groups. However, it is worth noting that, in the case of the SQE, the SRA should already be meeting these expectations, given the original case set out in its rule change application. The issue is not the design of the scheme in most aspects, but the lack of follow through on actually meeting these expectations.
38. If the LSB wishes to formalise in this statement what is already supposed to be happening, we strongly support this, but with the understanding that more must be done to ensure that regulators do not continue to over promise and under deliver. There should be clear objectives and timelines, with action taken to ensure regulators remain on track to deliver for the benefit of those seeking to enter the legal professions as well as the knock-on benefits for consumers of legal services.

Q4b. Do you agree that the proposed expectations will help regulators to pursue Outcome 3? Are there any further expectations beyond those we have included that would support regulators to pursue this outcome?

Qualification and training pathways

39. We agree with the core expectations regarding training routes to qualification, standards monitoring, and clear information on costs and outcomes.
40. The LSB should also consider the importance of inclusive training environments. The SRA does not regulate, accredit or endorse training providers or organisations that offer SQE education and training courses as it did previously with the LPC and training contract providers, or as some other regulators do for their training routes. As a result of the chosen model of the SQE, the SRA does not provide any quality assurance or oversight of education or training providers. We still expect the SRA

to ensure that qualifying routes support equality of access and professional standards, but the LSB will need to work with the SRA to address any gaps in information due to this arrangement for education and training.

41. We welcome the core expectation that regulators publish data so that candidates can make informed choices about their training, qualification, and assessment options. This is essential given persistent gaps and lack of visibility around quality, cost and outcomes – issues exacerbated under the SQE model. We strongly advise that this core expectation also includes the expectation to publish outcomes for qualifying courses and examinations, see our response to Q4c below. This is essential for the SQE, where the SRA maintains that SQE preparation courses are not ‘required’ for the SQE assessments, but it is not possible to tell whether this is accurate without the data, linking prior education to pass rates, referenced above.
42. We encourage the LSB to take a more robust approach to ensuring regulators deliver the commitments made in rule-change applications. Such follow-up is essential in monitoring, measuring, and dealing with the consequences of these changes to regulation and must be conducted transparently.
43. The SRA’s continued delays in publishing data showing the results for those following different routes of SQE qualification, citing difficulties in collection four years into the SQE, are increasingly unconvincing. The SRA’s own recent report¹ shows that confidence levels for the SQE are middling, or low. Whilst it is true that routes have initially widened and new providers have entered the market, without any evidence-base to support choice, candidates will come to equate cost with quality and move to the ‘big name’ brands in the market, as was the case with the previous Legal Practice Course (LPC). This data is essential for student choice. The LSB’s most recent ‘expectation’ was that data would be published in autumn of 2025 and yet we still await data in the format promised.
44. In addition, given ongoing differential outcomes by ethnicity in SQE assessments, there is a clear need for a published, SMART, action plan with measurable milestones and evaluation to address this. The SRA has not produced this, and the LSB has not intervened, despite longstanding awareness of the issue.

Support for disabled candidates and solicitors

45. Robust support for disabled candidates including provision of reasonable adjustments is essential to ensuring pathways into the profession are inclusive. This aligns with one of the key areas of focus in our EDI strategy for the solicitors’ profession, and our evidence base concerning barriers faced by disabled solicitors.
46. The representation of disabled solicitors is not currently in line with the general working population. 2% of solicitors have shared with the SRA that they are disabled (6% in private practice, SRA firm diversity data 2023) compared to 23% of working-age adults (UK Government statistics for 2022/3). Our research shows that disability figures are often underreported due to fear of stigma and discrimination.

¹ <https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/sqe-phase-three-evaluation/>

47. Through our research (*Legally Disabled?*) and development of our EDI strategy members told us that many organisations struggle to provide adequate reasonable adjustments and there is a lack of support for disabled solicitors. There are persistent structural and cultural barriers faced by disabled students and disabled solicitors to join, remain and progress in the profession.

Q4c. Are there any enhanced expectations that would be better placed under core expectations under Outcome 3? Are there any core expectations that would be better placed under enhanced expectations under Outcome 3?

48. In the case of the expectations set out under Outcome 3, it would seem obvious, as indicated by the evidence of the SRA's conduct on the SQE so far, that the enhanced expectation to 'Where appropriate, publishing outcomes for qualifying courses and examinations, disaggregated by relevant diversity characteristics', should be a core expectation. Robust, provider level data is foundational, and key to supporting informed student choice and social mobility. It is also essential to contextualising SQE results and determining whether the SRA's position on the non-necessity of SQE preparation courses is correct. Provision of this data should not be optional, so we would also propose that the wording reflect this, rather than "where appropriate". It is not good enough to design schemes with good intentions alone, there must be follow up, evaluation and data to hold regulators to account and to provide an evidence-base for change if indicated.
49. Whilst it is appropriate that the other enhanced expectations should remain in that category, we would strongly support the LSB's encouragement to regulators and firms that this data be provided. In particular, as noted above, the SRA has stepped away from any regulatory oversight of education and training programmes, which includes qualifying work experience (QWE) providers. Some encouragement and clear information for firms on fostering diversity and inclusion would be useful in addressing this gap.

Q4d. Are there any additional expectations, either core or enhanced, we should set under Outcome 3 to reduce barriers faced by authorised persons when moving between and/or re-entering the professions (e.g., following a prolonged absence from practice for health, caring or other reasons)?

50. We strongly encourage the strengthening of Outcome 3 with a core expectation added to support fair, inclusive re-entry into the profession without creating unnecessary burdens:
- to ensure that return-to-practice pathways are clear and accessible, and encourage diversity within, the profession, whilst maintaining appropriate professional standards. This must include clear guidance, refresher training options, and proportionate re-entry requirements.
51. In addition, we suggest adding an enhanced expectation for regulators to encourage and support authorised firms, in collaboration with minoritised groups and representative bodies, to support fair, inclusive re-entry. This could include

providing guidance or examples of best practice on some or all of the following areas:

- Structured support for carers and those with health conditions, including flexible assessment routes, enhanced reasonable adjustments and tailored return to practice plans (bespoke to the person, practice area and experience level).
- Flexible working options during re-entry to enable reintegration into professional practice and allow individuals to manage their career and personal circumstances.
- Flexible career pathways to support people to choose the pathway that is right for them and to ensure talent is retained.
- Fair allocation of work and equitable access to developmental opportunities in line with their career aspirations, including training, supervision and stretch opportunities to support long term career progression.
- Proportionate billable and/or performance practices, possibly on a phased return basis to ease people back into the workplace and recognise that blanket targets may indirectly disadvantage certain groups.
- An enhanced expectation on regulators to gather and analyse data on progression and retention of returners, issue evidence-based guidance and support the sector to address systemic barriers.

52. It is crucial that any additional expectations should encourage regulators and authorised firms to consider how they support returners while avoiding strict or overly prescriptive requirements that might unintentionally create new barriers or issues.

Outcome 4: Professional conduct and competence

Q5a. Do you agree with the proposed Outcome 4?

53. We support the intention that regulators ensure professional standards and workplace cultures that promote fairness, inclusion and respect.

Q5b. Do you agree that the proposed expectations will help regulators to pursue Outcome 4? Are there any further expectations beyond those we have included that would support regulators to pursue this outcome?

Conduct expectations

54. We support the requirement for clear conduct standards prohibiting bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination.

55. We also support the expectation for regulators to produce practical guidance and competence frameworks to support authorised and regulated persons and their managers to meet their duties. Within this should be requirements for regulators to have enhanced competence expectations for managers to build healthy, inclusive workplaces. We would note that the SRA Code of conduct already includes an enhanced expectation for managers to challenge behaviour that does not meet the standard.

56. We agree with the objective of maintaining high standards in the profession, which is key to upholding the rule of law, delivering access to justice, and upholding the reputation of the profession, all of which are key regulatory objectives. In our view a good system of ongoing competence should give assurance to the regulators, the profession and the public that standards are being maintained, whilst avoiding unnecessary costs and burdens. Any approach to adding additional requirement to the current system should be based on evidence and risk.
57. In our response to the LSB's draft policy statement on ongoing competence, we expressed our support for several mandatory training areas that all professionals should be required to maintain their knowledge and skills in. This included professional ethics and equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). We would reiterate our support for these measures, in line with the expectations set out under Outcome 4.
58. We have also previously stated our support for mandatory training in management skills for those who have management responsibilities. It is clear from the consultation paper that there could be enormous benefits as a result of this, particularly around inclusive practices and support for health and wellbeing, leading to a more supportive and inclusive working environment. This would be a key factor in addressing and improving workplace culture.
59. It is important to note that mandatory areas are not the same as mandatory training. Regulators should set necessary requirements for ongoing competence through their individual schemes and ensure these are completed, but practitioners should be able to determine which training, within that area, best suits their learning needs, the stage of their career and what other training they have undertaken.
60. Any ongoing competence requirements deemed important enough to be made mandatory should first be grounded in pre-qualification education and training and should be assessed as part of a professional's entry to their chosen profession. This should be done in such a way as to make clear what must be learnt and understood by the individual seeking to enter the profession and assessed in a way that gives confidence to the profession and the public that the required standards are being met as a prerequisite for entry to the profession.

Expectations for authorised firms

61. Outcome 4, 34. VII, sets a core expectation for regulators to require authorised firms to understand and address diversity gaps and wellbeing and inclusion challenges, take remedial action, and to report data and plans to the regulator on request. While we are supportive, in principle, of the SRA working with firms to support them to understand and address diversity gaps and wellbeing and inclusion challenges, the reporting element needs to be proportionate.
62. Solicitors from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds are overrepresented in one partner and small firms. The SRA's research into overrepresentation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic solicitors in their enforcement processes found that 'working in a one partner or small firm, and the overrepresentation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic solicitors in such firms, is the key organisational factor

relevant when considering the overrepresentation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic solicitors in reports received by the SRA' highlighting that Black, Asian and minority ethnic solicitors are disproportionately exposed to the range of challenges and 'strains' that solicitors working in smaller firms might experience.

63. We would be concerned if all authorised firms are required to report to the SRA on their EDI policies and would seek a proportionate approach that does not overburden small firms and have an adverse impact on Black, Asian and minority ethnic solicitors. A phased approach or size-specific requirements could be considered.
64. We recommend that 'on request' is clarified to ensure that regulators consider regulatory and equality, diversity, and inclusion impacts when considering how to meet this core expectation.
65. Outcome 4, 34. VIII, sets a core expectation for regulators to encourage and support authorised firms to design, publish and communicate, implement and monitor formal workplace policies that effectively advance equality and encourage diversity in the workforce. Again, a proportionate approach that considers the impact on small firms and the different contexts in which authorised firms operate in is important.
66. We expect the SRA to provide clear guidance and frameworks to support authorised firms to meet any new regulatory requirements and recommend that further detail on what regulators are expected to do to meet these core expectations is provided.

Q5c. Are there any enhanced expectations that would be better placed under core expectations under Outcome 4? Are there any core expectations that would be better placed under enhanced expectations under Outcome 4?

67. We support the enhanced expectations addressing leadership diversity and evidence-informed firm-level strategies. We support them remaining as enhanced expectations given our concerns, previously outlined, around proportionality and potential impacts on small firms if these were made core expectations and any additional reporting requirements were subsequently placed on authorised firms by the SRA.
68. The Law Society is focused on strengthening diversity in senior leadership as part of our three-year EDI strategy for the solicitors' profession and we encourage the SRA to collaborate on the development of guidance and frameworks around inclusive leadership.

Implementation and impact

Q6a. Do you agree our proposed timelines for implementation are achievable?

Q6b. Are there any reasons why a regulator would not be able to meet these milestones? Please explain your answer.

Q6c. Do you have views on whether and how the LSB could take additional steps to support compliance with the proposed statement of policy (e.g., through either formal or informal outputs, such as guidance and/or other relevant resources)?

69. The proposed timelines for implementation look broadly sensible; however, further detail on how the LSB intends to track and monitor progress and hold regulators to account following the first year of implementation is needed beyond the proposal to use the LSB's Regulatory Performance Assessment process. This will support greater transparency around compliance.
70. We expect the SRA to publish SMART action plans, ensuring resourcing is aligned, clear milestones are set and communicated, and progress is reported with governance-level accountability.
71. As a general principle, we would continue to strongly encourage the SRA to prioritise its focus on core activities, regarding the regulatory objectives, and only undertake additional workstreams based on evidence of regulatory need, or specific gaps in responding to consumer needs. This will ensure the SRA has the capacity to focus on implementing this Statement of Policy by the expected timelines, to regain public confidence and the trust of the profession it regulates.
72. Helpful steps to support compliance would include annual progress reports by the LSB identifying good practice and areas for improvement, more detailed guidance for regulators on how to implement the statement of policy, and periodic cross-sector learning events to spot opportunities for collaboration and reduce duplication.

Q7a. Have you identified any equality impacts (both positive and negative), we haven't considered which, in your view, may arise from our proposed statement of policy?

73. Positive impacts include increased transparency, accountability, and consistency across regulators, which can reduce systemic barriers. Potential negative impacts include increased regulatory burden – particularly for small firms which will disproportionately impact Black, Asian and minority ethnic solicitors – if additional reporting requirements are introduced by regulators for authorised firms are not proportionate.

Q7b. Do you have any evidence relating to the potential impact of our proposals on specific groups with certain protected characteristics, and any associated mitigating measures that you think we should consider? Q7c. Are there any other wider equality issues or impacts that we should take into account and/or any further interventions we should take to address these in our proposed statement of policy?

- 74. We would expect to see the LSB and those it regulates continue to consider EDI and wellbeing impacts across all areas of its work and address any adverse impacts that are identified.
- 75. We advise that the LSB is inclusive of socio-economic barriers and caring responsibilities, and wellbeing alongside protected characteristics when considering impacts of this Statement of Policy. Interventions could include scholarship/fee reduction transparency, flexible training/assessment options, and returner support.

Q8. Do you have any comments on the potential impact of the draft statement of policy, including the likely costs and anticipated benefits?

- 76. The benefits include a strengthened regulatory framework with greater transparency and accountability on the steps regulators are taking to improve diversity, inclusion, fairness and wellbeing across the legal profession.
- 77. As outlined above, we have raised concerns about the increased burden on small firms and the subsequent disproportionate impact on Black, Asian and minority ethnic solicitors if additional reporting requirements on authorised firms are introduced by the regulators covered by this Statement of Policy.
- 78. We have also raised a concern that for the SRA to meet the core and enhanced expectations under this Statement of Policy it will need to allocate and align resources and capacity. We strongly encourage the SRA to focusing on its core regulatory functions and only undertake additional workstreams based on evidence of regulatory need or consumer interest to meet the expectations.

Q9a. Do you have any comments on how the LSB, either independently and/or in partnership, might develop further measures alongside the proposals set out in the consultation to encourage a diverse profession?

Q9b. Do you have any views on whether the LSB could take additional steps alongside setting expectations for regulators in the draft statement of policy to encourage a diverse profession? If yes, please share your reflections on the most appropriate and potentially effective routes the LSB could take to achieve this.

- 79. We have outlined above where the LSB can develop further expectations within the proposal and additional steps to consider.

Q9c. Do you have any further comments on our proposals that you would like to share

80. We welcome the replacement of the existing statutory guidance with a strengthened, evidence-based regulatory approach. The draft Statement of Policy provides clarity, raises ambition, and sets the foundation for consistent, effective action on diversity across the legal sector. We look forward to ongoing engagement and stand ready to contribute further evidence and insights.
81. We have highlighted areas where we particularly welcome the LSB's direction, as well as areas where further clarity or strengthening would be beneficial. We look forward to continued engagement as this policy is refined and implemented and would be pleased to contribute additional evidence or insights from our members as needed.