

The Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal (SDT) Response to the LSB's Consultation on policy statement on 'Encouraging a diverse legal profession'

Question	SDT Response
Q1a. Do you agree that these proposed outcomes will help to address the barriers to encouraging a diverse legal profession?	Yes. The proposed outcomes represent a positive step. Clear outcomes are necessary to drive progress. Ongoing evaluation is recommended to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness.
Q1b. Do you agree that the proposed outcomes should be pursued by regulators through a set of specific expectations?	Yes. Regulators should pursue outcomes through specific expectations, but these must be realistic, achievable, and supported by stakeholders. Cultural 'buy-in' is essential; incentives alone are insufficient.
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?	Yes, generally. The core/enhanced structure provides clear minimum standards while allowing flexibility. This aligns with the need for engagement and coherent implementation noted in Q1b.
Q2. Do you agree that the proposed expectations under Outcome 1 will help regulators to pursue effective strategic, evidence-based and collaborative action?	Yes. The expectations will assist regulators, but responsibility should also lie with stakeholders (firms, professional bodies, education providers). Persistent barriers remain, so collaboration beyond regulation is essential.
Q3. Do you agree that the proposed expectations under Outcome 2 will help regulators pursue fair regulatory approaches and decision-making?	Yes. They are likely to assist regulators, but effectiveness depends on implementation, ongoing evaluation, transparency, and engagement with those being regulated to prevent inadvertent disadvantage.
Q4. Do you agree that the proposed expectations under Outcome 3 will help regulators support fair, flexible, and accessible pathways into, within, and back into the professions?	Yes. Accessible and flexible pathways are essential for inclusion, representation, and cohesion across the profession. Without them, areas of the profession risk fragmentation and remoteness.
Q5a. Do you agree with the proposed Outcome 4?	Yes. Promoting professional conduct and competence that supports diversity is a key part of an inclusive profession.
Q5b. Do you agree that the proposed expectations will help regulators to pursue Outcome 4?	Yes. The expectations are appropriate. Success depends on embedding principles at

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all levels and fostering active engagement, not just regulatory compliance. Q5c. Are there any enhanced expectations that would be better placed under the core expectation and under Outcome 4?	No adjustments suggested. Real impact relies on education, engagement, and cultural adoption. Expectations act as a “touch paper” for wider cultural change.
Q6a. Do you agree our proposed timelines for implementation are achievable?	Yes. The timelines appear reasonable and proportionate.
Q6b. Are there any reasons why a regulator would not be able to meet these milestones?	No specific barriers identified; expectations and timelines seem realistic.
Q6c. Do you have views on whether and how the LSB could take additional steps to support compliance?	No further steps suggested; LSB’s approach appears sufficient.
Q7a. Have you identified any equality impacts (both positive and negative) we haven’t considered?	We broadly agree with identified impacts: better data, monitoring, and assessment should improve fairness and reduce barriers. Administrative burden is acknowledged but proportionate.
Q7b. Do you have any evidence relating to the potential impact on specific groups with certain protected characteristics?	Assessment is reasonable. Acknowledges sensitive data handling, variability in readiness across the profession, and potential enhancement of regulatory legitimacy.
Q7c. Are there any other wider equality issues or impacts we should take into account?	Cultural embedding may take time, especially in firms and chambers. Smaller firms may face challenges with reporting. Opportunities include innovation, collaboration, and increased public confidence.
Q8. Do you have any comments on the potential impact of the draft statement of policy, including the likely costs and anticipated benefits?	Costs likely proportionate to objectives. Benefits include cultural change, reduced barriers, greater representation, and a more unified profession. Success depends on active engagement by regulated entities.
Q9. Do you have any further comments on our proposals that you would like to share?	No additional comments. The policy is a constructive step towards a diverse, inclusive, and representative profession.