

2016

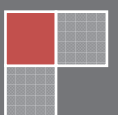
Equality & Diversity Induction Pack for Legal Services

A useful tool for introduction to Equality and Diversity

The legal profession serves a diverse society. It provides access to justice for all sections of the community and employs staff from many different backgrounds.

This pack has been developed as a practical toolkit to help all staff working in legal settings to meet their statutory and professional obligations and follow the Law Society's twin-track approach to equality and diversity: that of tackling inequalities and valuing diversity.

It includes all the new Equality Act information you need to implement the Act effectively in your organisation



Contents

About this resource	4
Rationale	4
How to use this pack	5
What do we mean by equality and diversity?	6
Equality	6
Diversity	6
Areas of equality protected by law	7
Additional protection afforded by the Solicitors' Code of Conduct	8
Major legislation	9
Why is equality and diversity important?	10
The Solicitors Regulation Authority Code of Conduct	10
How it affects you	10
How it affects the organisation and its clients	11
Your employer's responsibilities	12
Responsibilities towards employees	12
Making a complaint	12
Your responsibilities	13
General responsibilities	13
Additional responsibilities	14
What gets in the way of treating people fairly?	17
Barriers to equality	17
Breaking down the barriers	21
Challenging unacceptable behaviour	22
Practical steps and strategies	23

How to encourage respect for diversity	25
Practical tips	25
Developing cultural and social awareness	26
Differences in dress	26
Differences in diet	27
Differences in body language	28
Differences in religious observance	29
Acceptable language	29
Building rapport	30
Inclusive language	30
Plain language drivers	31
Using plain language	32
Plain speaking	33
Practical tips for promoting equality	35
... in relation to gender and transgender	35
... in relation to race or culture	35
... in relation to religion or belief	36
... in relation to sexual orientation	36
... in relation to age	36
... in relation to disability	37
How diverse is your community?	39
Finding out about your community	39

Activities

Equality Act debate	41
Equality Act debate answers	45
The consequences of not embracing equality and diversity	47
Are they protected?	48
Does the law protect them?	51
Are they protected? /Does the law protect them? Answers	53
Case study: sexual orientation	54
Case study: religion or belief	55
Case study: age	56
Case study: race	57
Case study: gender	58
Case study: disability	59
Case study: gender reassignment	60
Case studies discussion points	61
Changing your own behaviour	63
What can you do to encourage respect for diversity?	64
What would you do?	66
Using the right language	70
Is this an acceptable term?	71
Using the right language/Is this an acceptable term? Answers	73
Understanding and respecting cultural differences	74
Cross examination in court	74
Migrant Workers: fact or fiction?	76
Migrant Workers: fact or fiction? Answers	76
Create your own quiz	79
Local equality and diversity quiz template	80

About this resource

Rationale

The legal profession serves a diverse society. It provides access to justice for all sections of the community and employs staff from many different backgrounds.

The Law Society values and respects this diversity. It wishes to go beyond recognising and complying with its statutory obligations under the anti-discrimination legislation. As stated in its Equality and Diversity Policy and Strategy:

“More importantly, as a body representing and regulating a profession, which supports individuals in asserting their legal rights and accessing justice, we want to go beyond compliance and be at the forefront of embracing equality and diversity. We want to promote best practice in the profession and encourage the profession to be sensitive to the specific needs of the different communities to which it provides legal services. We want to promote the profession as one whose members are required to treat each other, clients and others in a fair, equal and non-discriminatory manner.”

Rule 6 of the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) Code of Conduct goes beyond the scope of anti-discrimination legislation in a number of key areas and applies to all professional dealings.

This pack has been developed as a practical toolkit to help all staff working in legal settings to meet their statutory and professional obligations and follow the Law Society’s twin-track approach to equality and diversity: that of tackling inequalities and valuing diversity.

For more information about equality and diversity and the legal profession:

- The Law Society website provides information on a range of equality and diversity issues such as its Diversity Access Scheme (widening access to the profession), best practice guidance, research and special interest groups **www.lawsociety.org.uk**
- The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) website provides information and guidance about Rule 6 of the Solicitors’ Code of Conduct and how it affects professional practice. **www.sra.org.uk**

How to use this pack

This resource provides an induction and refresher package for staff working in a range of capacities in legal services environments in the private or public sector, or for voluntary and community sector organisations. It can be used to form the basis either of formal induction training or guided self study for new and existing staff, including temporary staff, volunteers and people on work placement. In addition, it can be used flexibly to support delivery of equality and diversity sessions for those working directly with clients, volunteers or staff.

It aims to:

- remove any mystery and misconceptions and clearly explain the concepts of equality and diversity
- suggest simple strategies for supporting equality and diversity in everyday situations that staff at all levels can put into practice straight away
- offer practical advice on dealing with challenging situations in an effective way
- demonstrate how embracing equality and diversity creates a better working environment for everyone
- improve understanding and social awareness of why people behave differently and thus reduce the incidence of unwitting and unintentional discriminatory behaviour in the workplace
- reflect the reality of multiple discrimination, since everyone is affected by each of the equality strands that are protected by legislation, and areas not protected by law

The following graphics help to guide the user around the resource.



Signposts users to relevant activities



Information on solicitor/staff roles and responsibilities



Information or activity exploring legislation



Practical tips and advice

The resource includes a range of examples, advice, practical tips and activities to help embed the learning in an interesting way. Some activities are differentiated to allow different levels of difficulty – the signposting graphic indicates where this occurs. It draws on people’s own experiences and highlights the application and relevance of equality and diversity in a range of job roles, including those of solicitors, interns, partners and administrators.