



Gender Identity Research & Education Society

Consultation on LSB Draft Business Plan 2017/18.

Response on behalf of GIRES

About the Gender Identity Research & Education Society (GIRES)

GIRES is a registered charity providing support and information to those affected by gender identity conditions, their families, employers and service providers.

Further information can be found on our website www.gires.org.uk

Response

We welcomed the opportunity to contribute to the LSB's workshop on its draft Business Plan, held in London on 6 February.

We are pleased to see references to Equality & Diversity in this Business Plan and to education and training.

We look forward to further engaging with you on your stated business objectives of further promoting equality and diversity, ensuring your decisions take account of all relevant equality and diversity information and ensuring that your own practices and procedures focus on equality and diversity issues.

Our view remains that the priority should be adequate training and other communications strategies to ensure that trans issues, as well as those pertaining to other protected characteristics, are better understood by both regulators and providers of legal services.

Please read this in conjunction with our recent Responses to the "Encouraging a Diverse Profession" Consultation at the end of last year and our recent comments on your proposed Decision Document following that Consultation.

Consultation questions

1. Do you have any comments on our proposed work plan?

There is inevitably some overlap of the roles of regulated legal practitioner as both service provider to consumers and engager of staff.

Trans individuals can of course be consumers and staff, as can vulnerable consumers generally. All those having protected characteristics are covered under the Equality Act.

We are pleased to note at para 33 of your Business Plan that you will seek to sustain your leadership role on Diversity in 2017/18. We valued being able to contribute to your recent LSB Consultation on Diversity and have seen and commented separately on the results. We have suggested that the LSB should do more to ensure that the regulators stimulate positive action regarding diversity and ensure that this impacts on attitudes among those who are regulated.

We welcome the LSB's intention to engage with its stakeholders as it develops the new Strategy but wish that engagement also to include implementation of this latest Business Plan.

Education and training in the fast developing sector of gender identity should be provided to all legal practitioners and support staff covering the wide range of issues affecting trans individuals. Such issues include use of correct names and pronouns, access to toilets, transphobic bullying, storage of confidential information, and the general legal requirements of the Gender Recognition and Equality Acts.

2. Do you have any comments on the research we have proposed?

Research into understanding how vulnerable consumers access legal services seems sensible. We encourage the LSB to include trans people in that research. This could include work on why trans individuals are reluctant to e.g. instruct solicitors as outlined in our Response to your recent Diversity Consultation referred to above.

In any event we would like to propose research into gender identity and the legal profession for the new LSB 2017/18 research project, which would involve engaging with stakeholders such as ourselves. The House of Commons Women & Equalities Committee Report 2016 on Transgender Equality* offers excellent source material.

3. Do you have any comments on the LSB's budget?

We note the planned continued decline in the LSB's expenditure and the intention to finance any pay increases and inflation rises through on-going efficiencies and tough negotiations with suppliers. The risk of inflation may have increased substantially since the Business Plan was drafted. We would like reassurance that the £100,000 allocated to research will be ring-fenced.

[*http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmselect/cmwomeq/390/390.pdf](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmselect/cmwomeq/390/390.pdf)

GIRES
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