

## Response from Minster Law Solicitors

- 1) Is the proposal to switch the focus of the guidance to outcomes beneficial to encouraging the diversity of the profession?

Yes. Different areas of the legal sector may need to have slightly different approaches to Diversity. Outcomes based guidance is less prescriptive and allows regulators and legal entities to meet the requirements in different ways.

- 2) Will the proposed guidance allow regulators the opportunity to develop their own approaches to addressing diversity issues in the legal services profession?

Yes, outcomes based guidance gives regulators some flexibility in respect of how they encourage legal services providers to address diversity issues.

- 3) To what extent are regulators already demonstrating achievement of the outcomes? If they are not, why do you think is this?

As a legal services provider, we continue to develop our approach to diversity and our regulator, the SRA provides clear guidance on the obligations that must be met within their Code of Conduct. Therefore, to a certain extent, the outcomes are being achieved. It is unclear though exactly how legal services providers are monitored to meet these obligations.

- 4) How can the LSB ensure that the data the regulators collect continues to be comparable?

By ensuring that there are still key measurable indicators within the data collection such as – size of organisation

- 5) Given the LSB's proposal to assess regulator performance in this area, what would be the most effective way to carry this out? How long should we allow regulators to implement changes before any potential future performance assessment?

Perhaps by making a sample check on regulators to ensure that alongside any data collation this is discussed with legal service providers as part of any regular reviews.

- 6) Will the proposed guidance:

- a. deliver better services for consumers?

Diversity doesn't just affect employees, but consumers as well, such as those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, or those with vulnerabilities. If the guidance becomes outcomes focused, then theoretically this should be more effective. If it is more effective and there is more focus on diversity, then this should lead to better services for consumers.

- b. support innovation in legal services?

Evidence suggests that diversity within the workforce can provide businesses with a greater competitive advantage as it can lead to an increase in productivity through increased creativity. There may even be positive reputational affects. This would support legal services in developing innovative practises.

- c. allow regulators to encourage business-led diversity initiatives?

Yes – as the initiatives could be developed off the back of data collected

- d. encourage a more diverse profession?

It would allow businesses to reflect on their practises and implement any changes from this which may lead to a more diverse workforce.