

**LEGAL SERVICES BOARD DRAFT EQUALITY SCHEME
CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

A RESPONSE BY THE INSTITUTE OF LEGAL EXECUTIVES (ILEX)

AND ILEX PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS LIMITED (IPS)



<p style="text-align: center;">LEGAL SERVICES BOARD EQUALITY SCHEME CONSULTATION RESPONSE</p>
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The Institute of Legal Executives

The Institute of Legal Executives (ILEX) is the professional and leadership body representing Legal Executive lawyers and has a membership of 22,000 students and practitioners. There are 7,500 Fellows who are regulated by the ILEX regulatory arm, ILEX Professional Standards (IPS).

Alongside Barristers and Solicitors, Legal Executive lawyers are recognised under the Legal Services Act 2007 as qualified lawyers. Recent developments also mean that Legal Executive lawyers are eligible for prescribed judicial appointments, including eligibility as first tier judges of tribunals. Recent changes in legislation also permit Legal Executive lawyers to become partners and to form partnerships with other lawyers.

Fully qualified and experienced Legal Executives lawyers are able to undertake many of the legal activities that solicitors and barristers do, (subject to advocacy rights). For example, they will have their own client base with full conduct and responsibility of cases.

Legal Executive lawyers must adhere to a code of conduct and, like solicitors, are required to undertake and obtain continuing professional development points each year and throughout their careers in order to keep themselves abreast of the latest developments in the law.

ILEX provides policy responses to consultations in order to represent its members and the public interest.

Introduction

1. ILEX welcomes the opportunity to provide a response to the Legal Services Board's (LSB) draft Equality Scheme. It is essential that the LSB values diversity in its service provision, as an employer and in the public interest by:
 - a) treating everyone fairly and with respect
 - b) providing varying solutions for different needs and expectations
 - c) promoting equal opportunities in employment and progression
 - d) challenging prejudice and discrimination

Response to Objectives

ILEX provides responses against several objectives contained within the draft Equality Scheme as detailed below. The bulleted format used in the draft Equality Scheme has been converted to numbering for ease of reference.

2. The LSB as an Employer (6.1) and Objective 1.

We are pleased to see that the LSB has acknowledged its role as an employer and has identified criteria to encourage equality, diversity and inclusiveness.

It is important under Objective 1 to make everyone at the LSB more aware of the LSB's equality and diversity objectives on an ongoing basis, in relation to the LSB Scheme. ILEX would also recommend that the LSB create an additional objective in relation to its role as an Employer, encompassing the criteria listed at 6.1, or introduce additional activities under the existing Objective 1 which relate specifically to the LSB's cultural development. ILEX assumes that the criteria also extend to appointments to the Board.

For example, the ILEX Group Single Equality & Diversity Action Plan and Scheme (attached) contains several Staff related Objectives to include

training, appointment of Staff Diversity Champions, embedding of E&D into Person Specifications and Staff Diversity Questionnaires.

3. Objective 2

For completeness, ILEX recommends that this be extended to include procedures and processes, alongside policies.

4. Objective 3

ILEX has no observations or comments

5. Objective 4

ILEX seeks clarification in relation to Quality Assurance, and how this aligns to the objective of measuring actions and objectives?

6. Objective 5

ILEX is encouraged by this objective, given the accessibility of the ILEX route into the legal profession. With regard to the Education and Training activity, it is important to ensure that within the group of 'educators', further education providers, such as ILEX, are included.

7. Objectives 6 and 7

ILEX welcomes these objectives and raises the following observations: Whilst it is helpful for the LSB to bring together the profession, approved regulators and the providers of legal education, ILEX would also recommend that the LSB maintain an ongoing level of awareness of existing Equality & Diversity Schemes owned by the approved regulators, to ensure that any synergies are identified and opportunities maximised. This could be through the Diversity Forum or an alternative mechanism to be agreed by all stakeholders.

Conclusion

As with all Equality Schemes, the challenge will be implementation, measurement and monitoring. Through ILEX's own experience, it is essential that timescales for delivery of milestones are considered and planned in

advance, to ensure the appropriate resource and/or training is available to those with responsibility for delivering the objectives.