

Workforce progress report 2016

November 2017

Foreword

Welcome to our third annual diversity report on our workforce, covering the period 1 January to 31 December 2016.

We are an organisation where diversity is valued, and we are committed to working in an inclusive way, harnessing the contribution every member of the organisation makes towards our success. Similarly, we aim to treat those we regulate fairly and to encourage a strong and diverse profession where all have an opportunity to succeed.

A diverse organisation is an effective organisation. We know that diversity matters to each of us as individuals and as a society, but it is also important to us at work. We have incorporated this ethos into our work through our values, which include being Inclusive and Fair. We have a clear commitment to Equality, Diversity and inclusion (EDI) in all we do.

We have made significant progress against our EDI Strategy 2014-17. This report talks about how we met the actions set against our workforce EDI objectives, in addition to outlining the key achievements against our programme of work.

This report also helps to inform a wide range of readers about the EDI work that is underway to support our staff.

We have held various staff events over the past year on diversity, and this has supported us in embedding our staff networks across the organisation. Our staff survey has also provided us with some real insight into the way staff feel about working here, and we will continue to monitor and act on what we hear.

We recognise that having a diverse workforce that feels recognised and valued for its difference will contribute to better performance and the overall success of our work. But it is also right for us all, creating a positive culture that is a pleasure to work in. I am pleased to be part of an organisation that takes its commitment to diversity to heart.

Paul Philip

Chief Executive

Overview



We must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duties set out at section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. We are required to have due regard for the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people of different groups or “protected characteristics”.
- Foster good relations between people from different groups.

Having “due regard” means we need to consider equality and diversity issues when making decisions about equality and diversity policies, priorities and services.

The “protected characteristics” referred to in section 149 indicates the groups of people who are specifically offered protection by the Act. Protected characteristics are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful. We do not tolerate discrimination in any form and will continue to work to make sure that any practices or behaviours that could be deemed to be in any way discriminatory are eradicated.

In this report, we will share information on our workforce covering the following protected characteristics:

- age
- gender
- ethnicity
- disability
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation.

Our internal grading structure is organised in the following way:

- A-D: non-management roles
- E-I: specialist and management roles
- J-L: head of business units and directors. Leadership and senior management roles are included at this level.

The report has been structured in to two parts:

- Part 1 – What we have achieved against our workforce equality objective.
- Part 2 – Workforce profile.

What we have achieved

Progress on our Equality Objectives:

We agreed our Equality Objectives in January 2014 and completed a number of notable achievements in support of the workforce objective

over the past three years.

Workforce Equality Objective:

Develop a more diverse workforce and promote an inclusive culture, equality of opportunity for all staff and the behaviours and capabilities required to regulate proportionately, fairly and free from bias.

To support this objective and to develop the programme of work, a short staff survey was conducted in early 2016 and carried out during 2016. Based on the results of the survey, we have since been busy building on and embedding an inclusive culture through driving our internal programme of work linked to the objectives in our strategy. Our progress against the EDI strategy is reported to our senior management team and People Strategy Committee on a bi-monthly basis, and we publish annual updates on our website.

We have five networks, listed below, that were set up in 2015. Our aim in 2016 was to further enhance our activities to move the networks forward.

Internal networks established by staff:

- LGBT+ (Nexus)
- Women
- Christian
- Disability (Accessibility)
- BAME.

Over the past year, a number of internal staff events have been run as part of the programme of work, which has been supported by the staff networks. The networks have helped promote an inclusive and fair culture that is being continually developed. Through the programme of work for 2016, we have achieved and embedded the initiatives below.

Inclusive Leadership

In March 2016, a number of workshops were ran on inclusive leadership and subsequently a series of workshops with all staff on inclusive working. We partnered with ENEI (Equality Network for Equality and Inclusion) to develop and deliver the programme, which was aimed at shifting the focus from looking only at diversity to the broader inclusion agenda and the behaviours that drive an inclusive environment, including unconscious bias.

Launching Transgender Policy

A new Transgender Policy was developed by engaging with staff networks, forums and external experts. The policy was launched and



went live in October 2016. In addition, we had an external speaker to provide a workshop on transgender and how we can be more inclusive in the work place.

Refresh of Dignity at Work policy

The Dignity at Work policy and our Diversity and Inclusion policies were refreshed through engagement on the changes with staff networks and staff forums.

Faith events

Several Faith events also took place throughout the year and were well received by staff:

April	May	June	July	October and November	December
Vaisakhi	Passover	Ramadan	Eid	Diwali	Christmas

Equality and Diversity Events and key themes

We also held a number of equality and diversity events, such as:

- LGBT History Month
- Pride
- International Women's Day
- Mindfulness and stress management
- Mental Health Awareness, aimed at raising staff awareness and building an understanding of key themes. We created a new site for staff on our intranet to make mental health information more accessible, such as research, articles, blogs, recommended books, etc. External speakers were sourced for each quarter and the use of TV screens, weekly communications and team briefs were used.
- In November 2016, the SRA became member of the Business Disability Forum.

The Strength Deployment Inventory (SDI)

SDI is a self assessment tool that helps people understand what motivates them and what's important to them when relating to others. Over 90% of staff have experienced the first session and reported that they found the sessions beneficial, particularly for team building. We have introduced this as part of our EDI plan to improve individual and team working relationships for all our managers and staff through:

- improved self-awareness
- better appreciation of difference
- greater ability to understand and communicate with others



- stronger working relationships.

Equality Data Collection and Analysis

In November 2016, we asked staff to complete an exercise to update their personal data (including religion, disability, sexual orientation and ethnic origin). This was previously done in October 2014. This data gave us an up to date picture of our staff demographic and helped us to check that we are being fair and that people from all backgrounds were being represented, supported and included. It also helped us understand the impact of policies, target any unrepresented groups and support workplace needs. We expect the firms we regulate to collect, report and publish equality and diversity data and we also need to make sure that we do this to the same standard.

Corporate values

Our values are displayed in our offices and we have quarterly and annual Values Awards, where staff are recognised for demonstrating the values through their work. Staff performance is evaluated against objectives, behaviours and, implicitly, our values:

- Independent
- Professional
- Fair
- Progressive
- Inclusive

Our values and behavioural competencies form a key part of our induction training, and we make these behaviours clear as part of our recruitment process.

The Staff Values Group, Local Employee Forum and Business Champions all contribute through open discussion with leadership on inclusion matters.

Our Writing the SRA Way programme of work has supported our drive for openness by incorporating the Fair and Inclusive values in our use of language, and forms part of the induction process.

Staff Engagement Survey

We continue to run full staff engagement surveys and mini Pulse surveys, sharing the results and working on action plans. The results of the last survey were released in November 2016. There have been a number of areas of improvement since our last full survey in 2015, including staff involvement in change, understanding vision for the future, recommending the organisation as a good place to work, to name but a few.

For the bullying and discrimination questions in the 2016 pulse survey, the percentage of people feeling they have experienced discrimination is very slightly down on 2015 main survey. Both the discrimination and bullying results are below the average for other UK organisations (meaning we have fewer people who feel they have experienced discrimination or bullying than the average), but this is still an important area for us to continue to focus on.

Promoting EDI at Induction and Training

Initial induction is supported by a full range of staff engagement activities, including members of the different networks facilitating information sessions during a two-day organisational induction. We also ask new staff to complete Diversity and Inclusion e-learning, which includes modules on Working with Respect and Managing with Respect to set the standards of behaviour we expect. Staff EDI e-learning completion rate as at the end of 2016 was 94 % and is an area that will continue to focus on during 2017.

We have also made progress with key directorates to address training for staff, to manage vulnerable and challenging stakeholders.

Stonewall Equality Workplace Index (WEI)

We completed our first Stonewall application in September 2016. In January 2017, it was announced that we had achieved a Stonewall Workplace Equality Index of 241. This is a good achievement in a national benchmarking index which operates across private, public and third sector organisations.

Staff networks

The staff networks operate across the organisation by providing a safe, inclusive and diverse working environment that encourages respect and dignity for all. They also provide opportunities to support projects, review policies, provide social interaction, peer support and personal and career development. They all support the promotion of our EDI agenda.

During 2017, cross network meetings will also be embedded to create a forum for sharing best practice and ideas. Participation by staff in the networks to date has been positive and they each have developed some terms of reference, which will provide focus and foundation to the activities already undertaken and scheduled for 2017.

Over the past year many of our staff have volunteered by supporting both faith and network events, which has in turn developed their EDI knowledge and skills.

Workforce profile



Our staff

Our work is overseen by a Board, consisting of 15 members: seven solicitors and eight lay people. Of the 15 Board members in 2016, nine were male and six were female; 13 were white and two were black and minority ethnic (BAME).

At the end of 2016, we had 605 members of staff, 375 women (62%) and 230 (38%) men. Our Senior Management Team (SMT) comprises of seven people: five men and two women.

Age

We employ people across all age groups.

- The largest proportion of our workforce (64%) falls within the 25–34 and 35–44 age brackets.
- Nearly a quarter of our workforce is aged 45–54, of which 39% are found in Head of Business Unit or Director roles.
- Although only 4% of our workforce falls within the 16–24 age bracket, 23% of new starters in 2016 were aged 16–24, which was slightly lower than 2015. Our data indicates that we are still positively attracting and appointing candidates in this age group. However, we will be looking at ways to increase this figure in 2017.
- All age groups, except for over 65s, were represented for internal promotions and flexible working applications. There has been no change since our last report in 2015.

Gender

The gender split at the SRA is:

- The ratio of female to male members of staff at grades A–D and E–I is approximately 2:1.
- The ratio reduces at grade J–L, with 52% female and 48% male. This has edged closer to a more equal split since 2015.
- In line with our gender split, 60% of new starters in 2016 were female, which was slightly lower than the previous year.
- 40% of applicants (internal and external) were male and 59% were female (one % preferred not to state).
- For grade J–L, external applicants were more likely to be male (52% male to 44% female (4% preferred not to state)). Internal applicants were also more likely to be male (59% male to 41% female). This has dramatically shown a reversal in trend from 2015 where internal applicants were more likely to be female, at a rate of 73%.
- 56% of all promotions were secured by women, showing no change from 2015.
- 84% of all flexible working applications were submitted by females, with an increase of 4% on last year.



Women's Network

The Women's Network was established to create a forum in which women across the organisation could come together on a regular basis.

The network aims to:

- create networking opportunities
- encourage confidence building and skills development
- arrange for guest speakers to raise awareness of a range of topics.

Ethnicity

- Within the BAME group, Asian/Asian British is the largest ethnic minority group, making up 16% of the SRA workforce.
- The percentage of Asian/Asian British staff in grade A-D is 22%, E-I is 15 % and J-L is 4%.
- As reported in previous years, there are no Black/Black British staff employed within grade J-L. The total number of staff in this ethnic group across remains small at 3%.
- 43% of external applicants who applied for a role with us were BAME. Some 39% of successful external candidates were BAME.
- Most external BAME applications (66%) were for a grade E-I role. This has shown that most external BAME applications are now aiming for specialist/management roles, which has shifted from non-management roles, as per 2015 statistics.
- Asian/Asian British staff made up 26% of internal applications. Some 17% of successful internal applicants were Asian/Asian British. This has increased by 7% from 2015.

BAME Network

An internal network for black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) provides networking opportunities and support to any employee who does not class themselves to be of white/white British ethnicity.

The network is building relationships with other external networks to share best practice and enhance support available to its members.

Disability

Again, during 2016, 5% of the SRA workforce declared a disability. We are pleased that staff have shared this information with us.

- 4% of staff declined to state whether or not they had a disability. We are pleased that this has decreased by 10% from 2015. We would still like to see this percentage reduce, with everyone feeling able to share this information with us.



- Staff who have declared a disability are fairly evenly spread across each of the pay grades.
- 4% of applicants, both internally and externally, had a disability. Some 3% of internal applicants with a disability were successful, compared with 4% of external applicants.
- We continue to work with staff who have a disability to provide information and guidance on reasonable adjustments and flexible working. We have a range of supportive tools to assist all staff, including:
 - an employee assistance programme
 - occupational health support
 - counselling
 - stress management training
 - private healthcare
 - access to gym membership
 - health screenings.

Access Ability Network

The network seeks to:

- Support in the promotion of equal opportunities in terms of policies, procedures, practices, recruitment and career development for SRA staff to ensure disabled staff are treated equally.
- Work towards ensuring a safe and inclusive working environment, to enable disabled staff to feel more comfortable in the workplace.
- Offer support to all disabled staff or those affected by disability issues in a professional and confidential manner.
- Promote the SRA as a disability friendly organisation, both as a regulator and an employer by supporting with implementation of the ED&I strategy and action plan.
- Raise awareness of disability issues in and around the local area.

Religion and beliefs

The religious demographic here is more diverse than for the general population in the West Midlands.

- A significant majority, 41%, of our workforce is Christian.
- Each religious group is represented, with the largest groups after Christian being Sikh (6%), Muslim (5%) and Hindu (2%).
- In 2016, 10% of new starters were Muslim.
- Grade E-I attracted the largest proportion of applications (internal and external) by candidates from religious groups other than Christian.



- During this reporting period, we had no successful candidates from any of the main religious groups other than Christian for grade J-L. Some 40% of successful applicants at this level were Christian and 50% stated no religion, with the balance sitting in the “other” category.
- We have continued to organise numerous faith events during 2016 to raise the profile of significant religious occasions in the calendar, which were well attended.

Christian Network

The network aims to:

- Provide an opportunity for colleagues to learn about the Christian faith.

Provide support and encouragement to all staff, not just Christians.

Provide specific support and encouragement to Christians for them to be themselves at work and share their faith with their colleagues.

Inform and influence policy and other company decisions to be understanding of Christian needs.

Sexual orientation

- 3% of staff have disclosed to us that they are gay or bisexual.
- 16% of staff chose not to specify their sexual orientation, and this figure remains the same as 2015. We will continue to work to promote our inclusive culture to encourage more staff to feel comfortable to state their sexual orientation in future data collection exercises.
- During 2016, 5% of new starters were gay or bisexual, which is a higher proportion than the current workforce.
- At present, there is a representation of the LGBT population across all grade brackets. Previously, J-L was the only grade bracket that was not represented by the LGBT population.
- For the last three years, we have collected data on transgender staff. We are unable to report on this data due to the low numbers of staff within this category.

SRA Nexus - Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Network

The aims of the network are to:

- Support the promotion of equal opportunities in terms of policies, procedures, practices, recruitment and career development for staff,



- to make sure LGBT staff are treated equally.
- Work towards ensuring a safe and inclusive working environment to enable LGBT staff to feel more comfortable in the workplace.
- Offer support to all LGBT staff or those affected by LGBT issues in a professional and confidential manner.
- Promote the SRA as an LGBT friendly organisation both as a regulator and an employer by supporting with implementation of the EDI strategy & action plan.
- Raise awareness of LGBT issues in and around the local area.

The network has played an active role in promoting internal events during the year and had a strong presence representing the SRA at Pride as well as providing input towards our annual Stonewall application.

Next steps

2016 has seen some positive progress against our EDI agenda, which put us in a strong position to embed and develop our work further during 2016.

Some of the activities that we are planning include:

- Continue to endorse and promote our staff networks further, to embed and strengthen their position within the organisation.
- Monitor and review our progress against our 2016 interim staff survey and action plans, including those areas that address issues arising in relation to EDI.
- Undertake promotional work internally to support a future diversity data collection exercise to maximise response rates, thereby improving the accuracy of our diversity data.
- Promote EDI at all levels, with unconscious bias training for all staff.
- Work closely with Stonewall on developing our application for the top 100 organisations in the annual Stonewall Workplace Equality Index.
- Explore how we could potentially link the EDI work that we are doing to our corporate social responsibility (CSR) plan. This currently focuses on our social, economic and environmental impact.
- Continue to deliver internal events on key topics relating to EDI and to mark national and international initiatives throughout the year, to raise staff awareness of the initiatives and their understanding of them.
- Monitor and review our policies and practices to make sure that they are not discriminatory and are in line with best EDI practice.
- Regular analysis of our diversity profile to identify areas of concern or positive changes within the staff demographic.
- Continue to review our attraction strategies to attract a diverse pool of applicants, to make sure that each protected characteristic is appropriately represented across all grades.