 **SLAB/2021/30**

 Agenda Item: **08**

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| **Report to:** | The Board |
| **Meeting Date:** | 10 August 2021 |
| **Report Title** | Business Plan Update – August 2021 |
| **Report Category** | For Discussion |
| **Issue status:** | Business from a project |

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| **Written by:** | Andrew McIntosh – Corporate Support Manager  |
| **Director responsible:** | Anne Dickson |
| **Presented by:** | Andrew McIntosh  |
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| **Delivery of Strategic Objectives** |
| Select the Strategic Objective(s) relevant to the issues  | 1. We deliver a high quality user focussed service2. We embed ways of working across the organisation that enhance the quality, consistency and transparency of our decisions and delivery3. We engage with users and delivery partners across the legal aid and justice system to inform good design of our system and services |

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| **Link to Board or Committee Remit** |
| The Board has reserved authority to approve SLAB’s annual business plan and is responsible for overseeing progress against its delivery. |

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| **Publication of the Paper** |
| We consider this paper is suitable for publication.  |

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| **Executive Summary** |
| This report gives the Board a snapshot of current progress against the 2020-21 Business Plan.Progress against the plan is generally good with no business critical issues currently.Projects delivering strategic objectives 1 and 2 are all on track at this stage. Strategic objective 3 projects are experiencing a range of issues, although we are confident that projects will come back on track in due course. This is perhaps unsurprising as we do not hold all the levers in these areas. The incorporation of the UNCRC project is highlighted as needing the most attention at this point. |

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| **Previous Consideration** |
| **Meeting** | **Detail** |
| March 2021 | The Board were presented with a paper which brought together a report of activity in 2020-21 to take forward the themes of the Corporate Plan together with a draft business plan for 2021-22. The Board noted the report approved the Business Plan for 2021-2022. |

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| **Report** |

**Format of the report**

1. We have made some changes to the format of this report. The cover paper gives a snapshot of each of the business plan projects. It should allow members to assess what projects are on/off track and provides a short summary of the current delivery position, any current issues etc.
2. The term ‘on track’ goes wider than project timescales and refers to general progress and issues – timescales, resources, external factors, risk etc. In other words, the aim is to highlight whether there are issues that Members need to be concerned about. If a project is showing as amber, we are assuring the Board there is a level of confidence that issues will not impact on the overall success of the project over its lifecycle. A red categorisation signifies substantial issues or efforts required to bring the project back on track.
3. Rather than clutter the snapshot with background information about the project, activity to be delivered, timescales etc, this detail that forms the bulk of the business plan itself is included in the appendix should members wish to refer to it.
4. Equalities considerations are a key factor in the delivery of this business plan. We are aiming to more closely align our reporting against our new Equalities Outcomes with our wider corporate reporting. This will involve, for example, moving away from separate published reports on equalities outcomes and instead reporting on progress as part of the Annual Report and Accounts. As the Board is aware, we have also just signed up to an action plan with the Equality and Human Rights Commission (“EHRC”) as part of the Section 23 Agreement. Accountabilities are clearly identified and refreshed Executive Team reporting currently being developed will incorporate oversight of progress.
5. Members can now see in this report which projects are also the delivery mechanism for the [Equality Outcomes Plan 2021-23](https://www.slab.org.uk/app/uploads/2021/03/Equality-Outcomes-Plan-2021-23.pdf) and/or the EHRC action plan, therefore also giving oversight on these key elements. It is worth noting that the projects that are currently off track do not have a direct link to our equalities work.
6. The projects snapshots are presented in respect of the key strategic objective that they deliver against.

**Delivery against the Business Plan at end July 2021**

*Strategic Objective 1 - We deliver a high quality user focussed service*

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| **2021-22 Business Plan Workstream** | **Equality Project?** | **On Track** | **Comments** |
| WS1: Develop and implement a new SLAB customer service policy  | Yes | Yes | We have begun the policy development process and will soon begin discussions internally (including with members of the Board with experience in this area if they have capacity). Current thinking is that this policy will set out the high level principles on what customers can expect from us as an organisation, including equality considerations. We are also looking to use it as a vehicle to set out how customers can assist us to provide a high level of customer service and what we expect from our customers concerning their own behaviour. Although the formulation of the overarching policy principle should be fairly straightforward, we do expect this to highlight the need for potential sub-polices or implementation guidance for staff, for example, around how best to deal with customers who present themselves as vulnerable. This will then require further consideration of how this will be resourced. |
| WS2: Review of template letters sent to applicants in civil legal aid | Yes | Yes | Improved and more accessible letters that we send to applicants and any named opponent(s) in a civil legal aid application began a roll out from the end of March. The new letters follow a review aimed at increasing the accessibility of letters to members of the public, including those with a sight disability or whose first language is not English.Among the accessible features used are a larger font size, plain English and improved formatting and layout. They are being rolled out in small batches and this process is due to complete by November 2021. We have issued 36 of the 88 civil system letters. Feedback from staff has been very positive. We haven’t received any external feedback yet. We do not currently send letters to criminal legal aid applicants - we are now considering whether this will be introduced in future. If so, we can apply our learning from the civil templates into that. |
| WS3: Review of complaints policy | Yes | Yes | We have begun the policy development process and will soon begin discussions internally. Scope will consider accessibility of the policy and improvements to data collection particularly around identifying and resolving equalities issues in complaints |
| WS4: Tender for and deliver a new case management system for CLAO, PDSO and SCL  | Yes | Yes | The Board approved the business case for the case management system at the Board meeting at the end of June 2021. The contract has just been signed and we will be having our first round of meetings with the supplier in August. We have already highlighted the range of challenges in implementation across the three services.  |

*Strategic Objective 2 - We embed ways of working across the organisation that enhance the quality, consistency and transparency of our decisions and delivery*

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| **2021-22 Business Plan Workstream** | **Equality Project?** | **On Track** | **Comments** |
| WS6, 7, 8: GALA Workstreams – Accounts, applications and financial eligibility | Yes | Yes | This project is now also an intrinsic part of the EHRC action plan. The hard deadline for delivery against that plan is July 2023. We have a GALA delivery plan, including contingencies, so the Board can take assurance that we are in a good place to meet that deadline. We are some 18 months into the project and have learned a huge amount about the process in that time which is resulting in new reviews of policy becoming smoother in their operation. As well as the valuable support and oversight we are getting from the Legal Assistance Policy Committee (“LAPC”), we are now also beginning to engage with stakeholders at an earlier point in the process. The idea of having a formalised stakeholder panel (something we have discussed with the LAPC) is currently under consideration which will give us another arm to the consultation part of this work.The project is helping us further embed the use of Equality Impact Assessments (“EQIA”) – we are supporting staff to ensure that the EQIA process does not stop with the policy. For example, briefings have been given to assessment officers to enable them to more confidently understand where an equalities issue may be apparent within the assessment of applications and accounts. Equalities issues are also being embedded into the development of training and briefing materials in relation to different sets of Decision Makers Guidance.For a project that is directly changing the way that people work significantly, the positivity of engagement from staff directly involved has been excellent. There are signs that we are maturing in the development and impact assessment of our policies and the project has arguably begun to encourage cracks in traditional departmental silos. |
| WS9: Designing a New Working Environment (DANWE) – covid-19 recovery | Yes | Yes | Our plan is to consult shortly with staff on a 'return to work' policy which will seek views on proposals for returning safely to the office. When we began planning for opening offices again, it was assumed the rates of Covid would be low - that is not currently the case even though the country is currently at Level 0 restrictions. It is therefore expected that the return will take place using a phased approach. Although on track generally, there are still a number of uncertainties to deal with. We await further guidance from the Scottish Government on social distancing and another announcement from the First Minister regarding possible further steps on 9 August on the Covid recovery plan. The return to work policy will also be accompanied by guidance for staff on how the office is likely to operate with social distancing measures in place e.g. use of lifts, moving around the buildings. We have made good progress on other elements of the work with the assessment of health and safety issues and the provision of a range of wellbeing support for staff providing a good grounding. Once we have an agreed plan for a safe return to work we can move on the workstream that will consider our long term approach to home working. |
| WS10: Review of people policies | Yes | No | This project is a significant thread of our action plan with the EHRC which has now been agreed and runs to July 2023. The current priority is developing a tender to secure external consultants to assist us with the development of the policies, some of which may prove complex and have cost implications. Within our internal HR resource we have reviewed our Special Leave Policy and this is now with the Union for comment. We will consult with staff on this as soon as possible.Since the list of policies has been agreed, it has since been highlighted that reviews of a range of reward policies are also important - for example we discussed with the R&A Committee in July our intention to review our pay and grading structures. These are significant reviews in their own right and we will now need to consider how that work fits with this in terms of governance and reporting.The project is now dependent on the securing and management of external consultancy support, both for the policy review and the review of pay and grading. The tender process will commence shortly. As we cannot be confident until that process is complete that resources will be in place to enable delivery within intended timescales, the project is marked as amber for the time being.  |

*Strategic Objective 3 - We engage with users and delivery partners across the legal aid and justice system to inform good design of our system and services*

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| **2021-22 Business Plan Workstream** | **Equality Project?** | **On Track** | **Comments** |
| WS11: Strategic Development – gathering and use of applicant equality data | Yes | Yes | This work is dependent on the implementation of the applicant module within the new applicant IS system. Activity is planned to start later in 2021. |
| WS12: Grant funding policy development | No | No | The original plan was to submit advice to SG in the last quarter of 2021 for a new programme to commence mid 2022-23. Recent calls on SG and our resource, particularly around the Resilience Fund has meant that we have been unable to engage with them on this, or start our own policy development process. An internal project board is to be established with a focus on option development and appraisal for future grant funding commissioning priorities. We may be able to develop plans to support a fresh approach mid 2022-23, but changes in personnel may have an impact on that timeline. Separately a meeting has been arranged with SG officials immediately before the grant funding project board (for existing projects some of whom are on one-year grants) to focus on their plans given the end date for Justice funded projects. |
| WS13: Surveys and feedback work with solicitors and clients | No | Yes | This core work programme is well established and developing well. The criminal applicant survey (which has included some questions suggested in discussion with LSS and Scottish Solicitors Bar Association) and PDSO surveys are due to go out for tender shortly. The staff survey is out for commission and tenders should be received by the end of July. The CLAO client and contact survey and the civil applicants’ survey are in the early stages of development. |
| WS14: Incorporation of UNCRC | No | No | We are urgently considering the impact on SLAB as a public body and the legal aid framework. The Scottish Government has shortened the original timescale for implementation to six months following the passing of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2021. This is October 2021. There are also issues for the Scottish Government to consider around the compatibility of legal aid policy and the UNCRC, of most significance being the way in which financial eligibility in children's legal aid cases is assessed.Likely impacts for us are the consideration of how child friendly our own policies and procedures are. It will also involve carrying out a new Children's Impact Assessment on relevant future policy changes.  |
| WS15: Develop a workforce plan | No | No | Our original plan was to develop this in the early part of the plan. We were asked by the R&A Committee to give an update on this work at their meeting last month. As we remain unclear as to the direction of SG legal aid policy and the likely future of the organisation (expand, contract, evolve, no change), we have found it difficult to make significant progress with this work. We have however identified the potential components for a strategy (e.g. recruitment, redeployment, retraining, voluntary redundancy) and started consideration of how we can build in flexibility to our structures to best ensure we are able to respond quickly when SG’s intended direction for the organisation becomes clear. The lack of conclusion to this work brings with it a challenge with the External Auditor as compiling a plan was an action following last year's audit. It was agreed at the R&A Committee that a paper would be presented to the next Audit Committee in September setting out what the current position and to clarify what our existing vacancy management strategy is. This could then be used to give assurance to the External Auditor that we are managing the workforce appropriately in the interim. |

**Risks and Resourcing**

1. We currently have resources in place to enable the delivery of most aspects of the plan, although there is always the risk that resource will be diverted by other things. Certain developments in the external environment remain uncertain. In particular we are currently discussing with the Sponsor Team our role in the development of proposals for a legal aid bill. In addition, the publication of the payment panel’s report (including next steps) and SG’s ongoing dialogue with the legal profession on fee reform mean that our resource is likely to be called upon in the coming months.
2. Noted in the table above are a few resource contingencies, including successful tender exercises for HR support for the policy review and pay and grading review. We also need to ensure that we have a structure in place and resourced for delivery of the changes needed for UNCRC compliance. We are currently giving this urgent consideration.
3. We have also recently discussed with the R&A committee plans for the recruitment of a new Director of Strategic Development following the current Director’s retirement at the end of September. This is a key role in the delivery of much of the business plan and a successful recruitment and interim management of relevant business plan work are therefore a priority.

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|  | **Governance Links**  |
| 1 | Finance and ResourcesNothing additional to note.  |
| 2 | Risk Each project on the business plan considers risk to delivery of the project. Risks will be escalated as appropriate and significant risks flagged to the Board or relevant Committee. |
| 3 | Legal and ComplianceIt is a condition of our Framework Agreement with the Scottish Government that we publish our business plan. We will report to SG on progress through our corporate governance monitoring meetings. |
| 4 | PerformanceThe plan identifies some measures which will be reflected in reports to the Board and in the Annual Report. |
| 5 | Equalities ImpactEach project on the business plan will consider equalities impacts as appropriate and this has oversight by the Director of Strategic Development and the Chief Executive. The Business plan includes projects, aspects of which deliver our Equalities Outcomes and the EHRC action plan.  |
| 6 | Privacy Impact and Data ProtectionN/A |
| 7 | Communications and EngagementProgress against the plan is published via Board papers, dependent on sensitivity. Projects will consider engagement with stakeholders as appropriate.  |

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| **Conclusion and next steps** |
| The Board is asked to consider the paper and comment on any issues.  |

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| **Appendices/Further Reading** |
| **Appendix 1** – Details of business plan projects |

## SLAB/2021/30 Appendix 1

## Strategic Objective 1: We deliver a high quality, user focussed service

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| **Workstream 1: Development and Implementation of a Corporate Customer Service Policy** |
| **Drivers**  | * Civil Finance teams in their interactions with applicants/ members of the public
* Mental Health Check survey and feedback from employees.
* Feedback from equality organisations during our external engagement process
* Internal research conducted during 2017-2020 outcomes cycle and finding that we tend to respond to communication support needs on an ad hoc basis
 |
| **Who will benefit?** | * All external customers
 |
| **Activity** | * Develop a corporate customer service policy based on research and current good practice
* Identify additional guidance and supporting policies that are required to ensure the policy can be effectively implemented.
* Publish the policy including in suitable formats including BSL video with audio and subtitles, and easy read format.
 |
| **Measures** | * Involvement of stakeholders in the development of the policy
* Monitoring of complaints
* Baselines from surveys of staff and applicants established 2021
 |
| **Owner** | Director of Strategic Development |
| **Duration** | * Implementation by April 2022
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| **Workstream 2: Review of template letters** |
| **Drivers** | * Feedback from Civil Applicant survey 2016 that letters were too technical
* Several sources of evidence we reviewed cited accessible communication as important.
* SLAB commissioned research on our draft letters during 2017-2020 outcomes cycle that has informed the development of this work to date.
 |
| **Who will benefit?** | * People involved in the legal aid process
 |
| **Activity** | * Ongoing testing and launch of civil legal aid letters in stages
* Staff briefing sessions to coincide with staged launch
* Plan the review and launch letters across other aid types
 |
| **Measures** | * Ad hoc feedback via operational teams from people who receive the letters
* solicitor survey feedback
 |
| **Owner** | Director of Operations |
| **Duration** | * Civil Legal Aid letters will continue launch during 2021-22
* Review and launch of letters for other legal aid types expected in 2022-23 subject to planning process.
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| **Workstream 3: Improved complaints recording and reporting and use of complaints, including equality related complaints**  |
| **Drivers** | * Our own experience of the limitations of the current way that we log complaints
* Recognition that this is a valuable source of evidence that we can better use in equality impact assessments.
 |
| **Who will benefit?** | * External customers including Legal Aid Applicants, Solicitors and members of the public
 |
| **Activity** | * Review logging of complaints to improve identification of equality related complaints
* Develop and review internal guidance and procedures to support the updated SPSO model complaints procedure and changes to logging process.
* Determine routine reporting
 |
| **Measures** | * Evidenced use of data in relevant equality impact assessments
* Reporting in place and evidenced
 |
| **Owner** | Director of Strategic Development |
| **Duration** | * By December 2021
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| **Workstream 4 : Implementation of a new case management system for PDSO, CLAO and SCL services and development of key management metrics. This project is a precursor to full scale business plan review and will inform future design of services** |
| **Drivers** | * Our own experience of the limitations of current data in understanding the experiences of our customers throughout the legal aid process. This includes the amount and quality of data collected across relevant protected characteristics, how the data can be reported on and our communication about how we use the data.
* Case management limitations on efficiency and risk management of legal work
 |
| **Who will benefit?** | * Clients and contacts of our PDSO, CLAO and SCL services
* Staff in direct services
 |
| **Activity** | * Complete tender process for a new case management system
* Implement policies for data capture and reporting
* Direct services to develop relevant local procedures and guidance on collecting relevant data
* Set up management reports and key indicators
* Use data to inform business planning reviews
 |
| **Measures** | * Evidenced use of data in relevant equality impact assessments and service design
* Reporting in place and evidenced
* Improved % disclosure of relevant equality data
 |
| **Owner** | * Director of Strategic Development
* Director of PDSO
* Head of Service CLAO
* Manager of the Solicitor Contact Line
 |
| **Duration** | * By April 2022 (Year one)
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| **Workstream 5: Applicants System Upgrade: IT Development to develop applicant module in SLAB case management systems.** **This work is a precursor to implementation of improved gathering and use of applicant data and to support the implementation of the customer communication support needs policy** |
| **Drivers** | * Our own experience of the limitations of current data in understanding the experiences of our customers throughout the legal aid process. This includes the amount and quality of data collected across relevant protected characteristics, how the data can be reported on, and our communication about how we use the data.

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| **Who will benefit?** | * Legal Aid Applicants
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| **Activity** | * Legal Aid online user experience captured
* IS development of a standard applicant module for each aid type
* Reordering of equalities monitoring data in LAOL
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| **Measures** | Outputs – new applicant module |
| **Owner** | Director of Corporate Services and Accounts (IS development) |
| **Duration** | Development of applicant module including monitoring questions is due to be complete by Spring 2022 |

## Strategic Objective 2: We embed ways of working across the organisation that enhance the quality, consistency and transparency of our decisions and delivery

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| **Workstream 6: GALA Project: Review of Taxation Standards and Accounts Assessment**  |
| **Drivers** | * Legal Aid Review tells us there is a desire for change
* Significant gaps in guidance for solicitors on accounts assessment
* Alignment to our corporate values by improving accountability and increasing transparency
* Evidence and experience of employees in our Accounts Teams
 |
| **Who will benefit?** | * Legal Aid applicants and Solicitors
 |
| **Activity** | * Review policy and develop decision makers guidance and solicitor guidance for the taxation standard
* Consultation where necessary
* Set out policy, decision makers guidance and solicitor guidance for all areas of accounts assessment
* Equality impact assessment for accounts policies carried out
 |
| **Measures** | * To be determined by the equality impact assessment
* Increase in Accounts satisfaction measures in solicitor micro-surveys.
 |
| **Owner** | Director of Operations and Director of Corporate Services and Accounts |
| **Duration** | Review and development of policy statements for all areas of accounts assessment will be complete by December 2021.Implementation staggered into next business planning period.  |

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| **Workstream 7: GALA Project: Applications General stream**  |
| **Drivers** | * Legal Aid Review tells us there is a desire for codified guidance
* Alignment to our corporate values by improving accountability and increasing transparency
 |
| **Who will benefit?** | * Legal Aid applicants and Solicitors
 |
| **Activity** | * Review policy and develop decision makers guidance and solicitor guidance Consultation where necessary
* Set out policy, decision makers guidance and solicitor guidance
* Equality impact assessment for applications policies carried out
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| **Measures** | * To be decided by the equality impact assessment
 |
| **Owner** | Director of Operations |
| **Duration** | 2022-23 |

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| **Workstream 8 : Guidance on Administration of Legal Aid (GALA) Project: Review of financial assessment**  |
| **Drivers** | * Legal Aid Review tells us there is a desire for change
* Significant gaps in guidance for solicitors and applicants
* Alignment to our corporate values by improving accountability and increasing transparency
* Evidence and experience of employees in our Civil Means Teams and CLAO
 |
| **Who will benefit?** | * Legal Aid applicants and Solicitors
 |
| **Activity** | SLAB operates the means assessment tests across each scheme under five different schedules* The Legal Aid (Scotland) Act 1986
* Advice and Assistance (Scotland) Regulations 1996
* Civil Legal Aid (Scotland) Regulations 2002
* Children’s Legal Aid (Scotland) Regulations 2013
* Criminal legal Aid (Scotland) Regulations 1996

The statutory framework varies in the degree to which means assessment is specified across the different schemes. Advice and Assistance, civil and children’s regulations set certain rules governing the calculations of disposable income and capital, while criminal does not. The rules differ between the schemes however and for civil and children’s, while set rules exist, wide discretion is also contained within the statute and regulations. This discretion means that a personalised assessment of each applicant is undertaken for the legal aid schemes, using information provided by the applicant and, as a consequence, limited by what information is provided as evidence. Options for reviewing the use and application of SLAB discretion will be developed in consultation with owners of alternative means of assessing income and groups representing users.  |
| **Measures** | Two key outputs: Development of new policy guidance for application of discretions Development of advice to Government for matters covered by statutory regulations, if required. |
| **Owner** | Director of Strategic Development  |
| **Duration** | Final quarter 2021-22 |

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| **Workstream 9: Designing a New Working Environment (DANWE) – covid-19 recovery** |
| **Drivers** |  SLAB (including PDSO, SCL and CLAO) have moved almost entirely to a working from home basis, subject to exceptions for some essential tasks. As the situation evolves, SLAB needs to plan and prepare for:* a limited return to offices and
* continued working from home for a significant number, and probable majority of staff in the medium term
* A phased return to office based work in accordance with public health guidance and good design of services balanced with employee preferences.

Specific attention is required to support staff wellbeing during this time and in the management of the return to office based operations.  |
| **Who will benefit** | * Employees
 |
| **Activity** | Several strands of work are already in place in response to the global pandemic and to enable a safe continuation of homeworking and return to ‘normal’.Work stream 1 - Thistle House, PDSO and CLAO office availability Work stream 2 - Staff Wellbeing Work stream 3 - Health and Safety. Thistle House, PDSO and CLAO office requirements, and Tenants of Thistle House Work stream 4 - External work protocols Work stream 5 - Long term Homeworking Work stream 6 - SLAB Policies Work Stream 7 - Equipment and Furniture  |
| **Measures** | * Improvement in staff survey indicator related to an inclusive workplace
* Maintenance or improvement of wellbeing indicators in staff survey
* Ongoing pulse surveys with equality groups captured to allow analysis
* Take up of health and wellbeing initiatives and impact of these for individuals
* Absence data
* Efficient space utilisation and configuration
 |
| **Owner** | Director of Corporate Services and Accounts |
| **Duration** | 2021-22 |

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| **Workstream 10: People policy review to deliver People Strategy Objectives**  |
| **Drivers** | We require a fundamental review of key people policies to drive the key themes from the People Strategy will guide our decision making as we seek to* Attract the right calibre of people to help us fulfil our purpose and deliver our strategic objectives
* Develop people with the right mix of hard and soft skills to meet the current and future opportunities and challenges facing SLAB
* Retain people to ensure continuity of service and the sharing of knowledge and expertise
* Reward people fairly through a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic benefits
* Empower our people to bring out the best in themselves and the best in SLAB.
 |
| **Who will benefit?** | Employees and SLAB  |
| **Activity** | Policy review, development and consultation on refreshed policies. The first tranche of policies for review 2020-22 are: * Special leave policy
* Flexible working
* Absence
* Parental leave
* Recruitment
* Dignity at work
 |
| **Measures** | Measures will be identified as part of policy development and equalities impacts assessment to include staff survey results, absence data, recruitment data.  |
| **Owner** | Director of Corporate Services and Accounts |
| **Duration** | 2022-23 |

## Strategic Objective 3: We engage with users and delivery partners across the legal aid and justice system to inform good design of our system and services

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| **Workstream 11: Strategic Development – gathering and use of applicant equality data** Full implementation dependent on applicant module This data would be used at a high level to understand trends at a strategic level and to inform strategic policy development, for example as part of the equality impact assessment process.  |
| Drivers | * EHRC Guidance – Evidence and the Public Sector Equality Duty
 |
| Who will benefit? | * People who go through the legal aid process
 |
| Activity | * Engagement with the Law Society of Scotland and the profession on their role in gathering this data from clients
* Development and publication of guidance for customers on the equality data we gather and how we use it.
 |
| Measures | * Improved % disclosure across the relevant protected characteristics
* Ad hoc feedback from solicitors
 |
| Owner | * Director of Strategic Development
 |
| Duration | * Engagement with the Law Society of Scotland to begin late 2021
* Development of guidance for customers will take place during year one
* Publication of guidance for customers will coincide with roll out of the applicant module which is planned for Spring 2022 (year two).
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| **Workstream 12: Grant Funding Policy development**  |
| Drivers | The Legal Aid Review identified an objective of including user input into the design of services. Most services paid for through the Legal Aid Fund are judicare, case by services, and there are few opportunities to engage users in the design of services. It is an agreed objective with Scottish Government to test user design in a new grant funding programme for 2022-23. It is also an agreed objective to consider civil justice priorities as they relate to wider Scottish Government policies on social justice and tackling inequalities in the design of services.  |
| Who will benefit? | Users of advice and legal services in a grant funded programme |
| Activity | Policy development including: * Data analysis
* Stakeholder consultation
* User consultation
* Development of advice
* Submission of advice to Scottish Government
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| Measures | Output driven  |
| Owner | Director of Strategic Development  |
| Duration | Advice submitted last quarter 2021 |

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| **Workstream 13: Surveys of applicants and clients**  |
| Drivers | We carry out cyclical surveys of all our main client and applicant groups- across the PDSO, CLAO, criminal applicants and civil applicants. This will provide a useful baseline for this planning period and insight into user experience to underpin activity SO 1.  |
| Who will benefit? | Legal Aid Applicants and direct services of clients  |
| Activity | Survey of criminal applicants Survey of PDSO clients Survey of civil applicantsSurvey of CLAO clients  |
| Measures | Outputs Provides baseline for user experience  |
| Owner | Director of Strategic Development  |
| Duration | Quarters 1 &2, 2021-22 |

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| **Workstream 14:**  **Incorporation of UNCRC**  |
| Drivers  | The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill is currently at Stage 3, with implementation expected to be required within 6 months of Royal Assent  |
| Who will benefit? | Child applicants and those acting on behalf of children; clients in Direct Services  |
| Activity | The Bill is concerned with embedding the UNCRC rights into public services. As a public body we will need to consider changes to our impact assessment processes. Legal aid is currently available to allow children to enforce their rights, at present there is no indication that Scottish Government intend to change any of the tests in such cases.  |
| Measures | Refreshed impact assessmentsAdvice to SG on impact on existing legislation  |
| Owner | TBA:  |
| Duration | The Bill is expected to receive Royal Assent this parliament thereafter there is currently a six month period for implementation of the impact assessment duty.  |

Cross cutting Project

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| **Workstream 15**  **Workforce Planning** |
| Drivers  | Financial Sustainability: there is a risk that reliance on vacancy management may have an adverse impact on staff capacity and the quality of services. |
| Who will benefit? | Employees, customers and Board |
| Activity | Development of a workforce plan to support the delivery of the Corporate plan. |
| Measures | Outputs |
| Owner | Director of Corporate Services  |
| Duration | 1st Quarter 2021-22 |