 **SLAB/2021/43**

 Agenda Item: **08**

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| **Report to:** | The Board |
| **Meeting Date:** | 6 December 2021 |
| **Report Title** | Business Plan Update – December 2021 |
| **Report Category** | For Discussion |
| **Issue status:** | Business from a project |

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| **Written by:** | Andrew McIntosh – Corporate Support Manager  |
| **Director responsible:** | Graeme Hill |
| **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 2021-22 Business Plan.Although there has been an increase in the numbers of projects showing as amber since we last reported, the vast majority of projects are still generally on track. Our ability to resource development and improvement work in tandem with our operational duties (which must be a priority) remains a considerable challenge and is the key risk to projects not delivering outputs or outcomes as opposed to simply being delayed. The impact of this is perhaps easier to manage within the projects with longer timescales such as GALA. |

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| **Previous Consideration** |
| **Meeting** | **Detail** |
| March 2021 | The Board was 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. |
| August 2021 | The Board was presented with a snapshot of current progress against the plan Progress against the plan was generally good with no business critical issues at that time.The improved format of the report was noted and welcomed by the Board. |

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| **Report** |

**Format of the report**

1. This report gives a snapshot of each of the business plan projects. It allows 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. If a project is showing as amber, we are assuring the Board that there is a level of confidence that issues will not impact on the overall success of the project over its lifecycle. A relatively minor delay in overall timescales will mean the project can still be assessed as on track if there is no risk to the delivery of outputs or outcomes. A red categorisation signifies substantial issues or efforts required to bring the project back on track.
3. Equalities considerations are a key factor in the delivery of this business plan. We are now more closely aligning our reporting against our new Equalities Outcomes with our wider corporate reporting. Members can 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 action plan we have agreed with the Equality and Human Rights Commission, therefore also giving oversight on these key elements.
4. The project snapshots are presented in respect of the key strategic objective that they deliver against.

**Delivery against the Business Plan at end November 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 now have now developed what we consider the policy should look like. The policy will be more akin to a customer services charter. This 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. It will be underpinned by a small number of customer service performance indicators.We will begin consulting with managers before Christmas on the proposed principals and performance indicators. We will also consider how best to engage with external stakeholders in the new year. Although we are confident that a policy will be in place by April, there is likely to be more work required on potential sub-policies or implementation guidance for staff, for example, around how best to deal with customers who present themselves as vulnerable.  |
| WS2: Review of template letters sent to applicants in civil legal aid | Yes | Yes | We have continued with the roll out of improved and more accessible letters that we send to applicants and any named opponent(s) in a civil legal aid application. 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. We have now issued 62 of the 88 civil system letters. The remainder require system development time as they are brand new and require to be set up from scratch. This is planned for the next system deployment in January 2022.Feedback from staff continues to be positive. We hope to receive feedback from end users once the templates are more established. 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 | The focus of this project is to equality impact assess the policy and to improve the recording of complaints relating to equality issues. We have completed the EQIA and this is now ready for Chief Executive approval and then publication – it did not highlight any key concerns around equalities that need addressed.The system that we use to record complaints is easily adaptable and we will add specific data fields on equalities that staff can complete when recording complaints. We are also drafting guidance for staff on how to recognise an equalities complaint and we will consult staff on this in the new year. |
| WS4: Tender for and deliver a new case management system for CLAO, PDSO and SCL  | Yes | Yes | We continue to work well and have regular catch up meetings with the supplier. We continue to work through the set-up of the system and additional training is scheduled for key staff in all services to be able to take more responsibility in the set-up and maintenance of the system. The supplier has concentrated on the development of the work flows we have passed to them and these are being released to test after a demonstration to the team. We are considering the best way to migrate data from existing systems and what data should be included in the migration. Technical discussions are taking place and the integration with Office 365 and single sign on are progressing.We remain confident that a new system will be in place for April 2021. However, the main challenge that remains is with regard to the pros and cons of building in fee tables to the system.  |

*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 | Elements of this project are 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. As advised previously we are making positive progress generally in what is a very detailed and cross cutting project. What we learned so far is resulting in new reviews of policy becoming smoother in its operation. Since we last reported we have made significant progress in what are arguably the most complex range of decisions we take - accounts (and the assessment of the taxation standard) and means assessment. The Legal Assistance Policy Committee have provided much valued oversight and input into these work streams. We launched a detailed public consultation on our assessment of accounts at the end of September and this closes in mid-December (following an extension to the timetable to following a request from the Law Society). Policy statements are expected to be developed by February next year. We will also be launching a consultation on our assessment of financial eligibility in the next couple of weeks. Although good progress is being made overall, resourcing in operational areas is proving challenging, particularly around the ability to deliver work on policy development and decision makers’ guidance in tandem. Day to day operational performance on applicants and accounts and dealing with challenges as they arise, such as COP26, also have to take priority for operational staff. This can result in timescales shifting within workstreams. This project will run until late 2023. |
| WS9: Designing a New Working Environment (DANWE) – covid-19 recovery | Yes | Yes | We consulted with staff on our return to work policy which sets out the approach to office use in line with the different range of SG Covid protection levels. This policy is now live. SG guidance remains unchanged and is to work from home wherever possible. Numbers of SG staff back in the office are very low.From 15 November, staff were permitted to work in the office if there was a case to be made for improvements to productivity. This phase also allows teams to return for collaborative working. Guidance for staff on the different phases of return and how to work within the current office environment is available. This includes guidelines for team collaboration when meeting participants are both office and home based – known as hybrid meetings.Take up of office working has been very low so far with less than 20 people in the office at any one time.We have published a questionnaire for those that have used the offices so that we can use their experiences as we are now developing our longer term approach to office working. |
| WS10: Review of people policies | Yes | Yes | This project is a significant thread of our action plan with the EHRC which has now been agreed and runs to July 2023. The work is aimed at ensuring that our full suite of people policies are compliant with employment law and promote SLAB as an employer of choice.Since we last reported we have successfully tendered for an external consultant and this was awarded to Morton Fraser. The inception meeting has taken place with them and work is underway. Regular review meetings will take place with the first happening in mid-December.This is a challenging piece of work with some 27 policy reviews plus EQIAs to be developed by 31 March. Therefore it remains as amber. |

*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 split into two tranches – (i) the development of the applicant module in the Legal Aid Online system and (ii) engagement with the profession on the importance of data collection with accompanying guidance for applicants and solicitors.The applicant module itself has been developed and will be tested in December prior to deployment in January. The development of new screens for the profession will begin shortly, with user engagement and testing from January in advance of a May 2022 deployment. We are likely to be able to begin engaging with the Law Society before Christmas, with more detailed work to follow as we near implementation. In terms of the customer angle, we will be amending a range of documentation such as leaflets and the equality card that solicitors take their clients through when they meet. We will consult with the Law Society on this shortly. As solicitors play a key role in gathering equalities data from applicants, our main aim currently is to devise clear messaging to encourage this happen. This will involve setting our clearly the reasons why this data is required and the potential benefits that solicitors could see to their business and clients through improvement to service delivery. To support this we have now finalised a policy statement and associated EQIA.  |
| WS12: Grant funding policy development | No | No | The original plan was to submit advice to SG in the final quarter of 2021 for a new programme to commence mid 2022-23. Recent calls on SG resources, particularly around the Resilience Fund and COP26 has meant that we have been unable to progress this. We should be able to provide a more up to date position on this work at the meeting as there is a rescheduled project board with the Scottish Government on 1 December. It is now a significant challenge to be able to develop plans for a new programme with the original timescales.  |
| WS13: Surveys and feedback work with solicitors and clients | No | Yes | This core work programme is well established and generally on track.Fieldwork for the criminal applicant survey (which has included some questions suggested in discussion with LSS and Scottish Solicitors Bar Association) and PDSO surveys are now complete. Fieldwork for CLAO contact survey has begun and the fieldwork for the civil applicants’ survey will begin in January.The staff survey has concluded and results are now being analysed. Early indications are that there are notable improvements from the last survey. |
| WS14: Incorporation of UNCRC | No | No | This has been impacted significantly by political issues. The Supreme Court has recently ruled that certain parts of the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill fall outwith the competence of the Scottish Parliament. Ministers announced in October that the Bill will not become law in the form which the Parliament agreed, but that they remained committed to the incorporation of the UNCRC to the maximum extent possible as soon as practicable. Whilst the judgement means that the Bill cannot receive Royal Assent in its current form, the majority of work in relation to implementation of the UNCRC is continuing.We have been contacted separately by the team in SG dealing with implementation. Guidance that has been made available includes an introduction to children’s rights e-learning tool, guidance on delivering the new children’s rights and wellbeing impact assessments (CRWIA) and enabling participation of children and young people in decision-making.SG has said that it will publish detailed implementation guidance. We do not have a date for this or the enactment of the legislation.We will now be considering how child friendly our own operational policies and procedures are. We are also assessing what is involved in the new children’s rights impact assessments and the likely resource implications for their completion. |
| WS15: Develop a workforce plan | No | Yes | The Board, Audit Committee and R&A Committee are aware of the challenges that we have faced in developing a workforce plan in the absence of a clear direction on legal aid reforms.We do not want to delay this any further. Colin Lancaster and Graeme Hill have now met with staff to bring a fresh impetus to this work. Members may remember that our response to the legal aid review consultation set out five possible models, with the range and complexity of reforms increasing from model one through to model five. We have decided to begin developing the plan for a workface plan based on the middle model i.e. one that sees a continuation of our judicare functions alongside at least some movement towards a wider role in relation to the design, development and implementation of other models of delivery to meet a range of needs. This will enable us to develop a plan that incorporates the range of tools we will need to build our capabilities as an organisation and support a transition towards a new mission, even if how and to what extent we will need to deploy those tools and the precise future shape and functions of the organisation will not become clear until we know the details of the model Ministers decide to pursue in legislation. We aim to discuss the key features of this model at the strategy day with the Board early in 2022 with a worked up paper for discussion with the Board thereafter.The HR policy review will complement this work. |

**Risks and Resourcing**

1. We currently have resources in place to enable the delivery of most aspects of the plan. However, we continue to face significant issues, particularly in the operational areas around operational work being necessarily prioritised over development work. We also hope to be clearer soon on our role in the development of the legal aid bill. In addition, the ongoing dialogue between SG and the legal profession on the sustainability of criminal legal aid means that our senior and development resource is likely to be called upon in the coming months.
2. We will be discussing risk with the Audit committee on 6 December. There is the obvious risk around the Director vacancies we currently have as these positions are key to the delivery of strategic and high profile work. This is being managed as a priority with the help of a recruitment consultant and we hope to have posts advertised shortly.

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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
 |
| **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.
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| **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
 |
| **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 |