



Scottish
Legal
Aid
Board

People Strategy

2026-29

SLAB People Strategy 2026-29

Our people strategy is designed to build a future-ready workforce with the skills, mindset, and support needed to thrive in a continually evolving environment. The strategy proactively incorporates the principles of the **Employment Rights Bill 2026**, embedding fairness, transparency, flexibility, and employee voice throughout the entire employee journey – from attraction to exit

It supports the Corporate Plan's themes of **Service**, **People** and **The Future**, and will focus on **three areas of delivery**, with progress tracked through annual action plans.

1. Capability, Leadership and Resilience

We will ensure our employees are skilled, supported, and equipped to meet both current and future business needs, enabling the successful delivery of the corporate plan. This will be achieved by strengthening workforce capability, leadership, and resilience, while embedding clear career pathways, continuous learning, a high-performance culture, and inclusive development opportunities.

2. Engagement, Wellbeing and Reward

We will enhance engagement and wellbeing by creating fair, inclusive, and supportive employee experiences. This will be underpinned by effective policies, accessible and flexible benefits, and a strong employee voice.

3. Adaptability, Workforce Planning and Service Redesign

We will build an adaptable, future-ready organisation through strategic workforce planning, the ethical use of technology, and innovative service redesign. This will enable us to anticipate change, respond to evolving legislation, and deploy skills where and when they add the greatest value.

The Employee Lifecycle



Recruitment



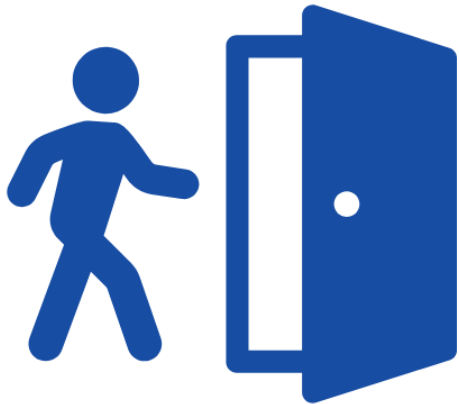
Onboarding



Development



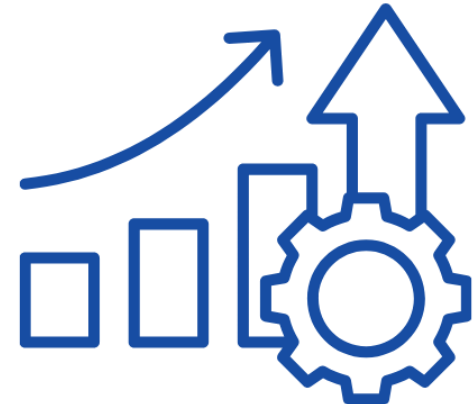
Engagement



Offboarding



Retention



**Performance
management**

<p>Recruitment</p> <p>Key focus areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive hiring – proactively widening pipelines to improve workforce representation • Technology-enabled recruitment – Using AI-enabled sourcing and assessments to create an equitable, candidate friendly experience, with strong governance and bias monitoring. 	<p>Onboarding</p> <p>Key focus areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immersive onboarding – blending digital tools with personal experience to support cultural integration • Learning from day one – opening career pathways, broadening our use of traineeships and modern apprenticeships, and providing wellbeing resources • Belonging – building early connections through buddying systems, inclusion and storytelling. 	<p>Development</p> <p>Key focus areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career pathways – clear routes for progression and mobility • Continuous learning – personalised, future-focused development • Leadership Development – building tomorrow’s leaders today.
<p>Engagement</p> <p>Key focus areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance evolution – moving from annual reviews to continuous feedback and support • Employee voice – creating forums, surveys and committees that enable genuine input • Recognition culture – celebrating achievements big and small, aligned to values and behaviours. 	<p>Performance management</p> <p>Key focus areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair pay – transparent structures that build trust • Flexible benefits – personalisation for health, financial wellness and work-life balance • Wellbeing strategy – treat wellbeing as a core business priority, not a perk, embedding mental, financial, and social support into everyday work • Trauma-informed practice – embedding health and care interventions across our policies, procedures and training. 	<p>Retention</p> <p>Key focus areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal mobility – reskilling and redeploying talent to unlock opportunity • Employee experience – utilising hybrid models, strong managers, and cultural reinforcements • Data Insight – using analytics to predict and prevent high attrition.

Offboarding

Key focus areas

- Positive offboarding – structured exits that inform cultural improvements
- Alumni networks – keeping connections alive for advocacy and future opportunities
- Knowledge retention – preserving expertise for the next generation.

Strategic context

Reform to legislation

A political cross-party consensus has emerged in recent months that reform of the legal aid system is both necessary and pressing. Scottish Parliament's Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee recommended that primary legislation should be a top priority for the next administration. Scottish Government's 2025 Legal Aid Reform Discussion Paper set out plans to simplify the current system, undertake a structured review of legal aid fees, and design a future system built around user needs and robust evidence. **We will play a crucial role in this.**

Finances

The 2026-27 Scottish budget sought to provide stability for the wider justice system and delivers 3% increase in the legal aid allocation. However, our administration budget is under significant pressure, so improving efficiency and delivering cost-effective services is a key part of this plan. Whilst some stakeholders have expressed concern that current legal aid funding does not fully reflect system pressures, the fund remains uncapped: if rising demand or cost increases lead to rising expenditure, this will be met by Scottish Government. External factors may therefore continue to place significant pressure on public finances.

Public service reform

The scale of the fiscal sustainability challenge over the next decade requires strategic change across public services – to reduce demand, manage costs, and improve outcomes. Legal aid reform sits firmly within this wider agenda of system transformation. Scottish Government has been clear that reform will be central to delivering a modern, person-centred, rights-based justice system, aligned with the Vision for Justice. A more strategic statutory framework will better enable the legal aid system to support the kind of whole-system, preventative approach encapsulated in the public service reform agenda.

SLAB will continue to play a key role in building a sustainable legal aid system that safeguards access to justice for the people of Scotland – supporting the next administration to deliver a justice system that is more inclusive, effective, and future-ready.

Staff survey results

The staff survey results were positive overall; however, they did provide three areas of insight:

1. Pay and benefits showed a significant improvement, **increasing by 21 percentage points**
2. Learning and development **declined by seven percentage points**, highlighting an important area for renewed focus
3. Inclusion and fair treatment **decreased slightly by three percentage points**, emphasising where further attention is needed.

Success indicators

We will know we are on track when:

- our career pathways are visible and clearly defined
- we are better equipped and capable of managing organisational changes
- we have improved our resilience and leadership capacity
- our people have participated in and influenced our ongoing policies and supporting guidance
- our staff benefit from the implementation of a wellbeing strategy
- we have redesigned services to better align with customers' needs, implement changes flowing from regulations or deliver against ministerial priorities
- we are using workforce planning tools and techniques to:
 - anticipate skills, capacity and capability needs
 - inform budget, resourcing and development decisions.



OUR PURPOSE: To fund, provide, and advise on services that secure access to justice.

OUR VISION: Our work transforms lives through modern, responsive, and accessible legal aid services.

Theme	Strategic Objective	Recruitment	On boarding	Development & growth	Engagement	Performance management	Retention	Off boarding
Service 	Customer Experience			✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Data Utilisation							
	Automation & Simplification			✓	✓			
People 	Capability, Leadership & Resilience	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
	Engagement, Wellbeing & Reward	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Adaptability, Workforce Planning, & Service Redesign			✓	✓		✓	
The Future 	Change for the Better		✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Influencing Change			✓	✓	✓		
	Legal Aid Reform			✓	✓	✓		