



Scottish  
Legal  
Aid  
Board

# Digital Strategy

**2026-29**

# SLAB Digital Strategy 2026-29

This strategy sets out a clear path to stabilise our technology estate, reduce organisational risk, and prepare SLAB for the demands of the coming decade.

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

## Strategic context

SLAB is at an important stage in its delivery of legal aid reform. The organisation has a clear mandate to provide modern, reliable and secure digital services that support solicitors, applicants and staff, while enabling the policy and service changes expected over the coming years.

The digital foundations underpinning these services now reflect a set of legacy challenges that limit our ability to respond as effectively and efficiently as we would wish. Core systems were implemented to meet earlier organisational needs and have served SLAB well over time. However, they are increasingly difficult to adapt to new service demands, evolving user expectations and contemporary technology standards.

The Digital Services team continues to deliver day-to-day services and support reform activity with professionalism and commitment. This strategy recognises the breadth of demand in our portfolio of concurrent work and takes us to a resilient, more agile and sustainable delivery model that will better equip/allow us to address the demands of the future.

Addressing these challenges through a clearer strategic direction, targeted investment and a phased roadmap for change will allow SLAB to:

- strengthen cyber resilience by simplifying the technology estate
- improve the reliability and resilience of its digital services
- enable faster and more consistent delivery of legal aid reform
- strengthen data quality, insight and reporting
- provide a better experience for users and staff
- ensure that future change is sustainable, affordable and aligned to organisational priorities.

# Digital Objectives

## 1. Building a modern, stable foundation

We will create a secure, resilient and reliable technology foundation that supports the delivery of high-quality legal aid services. Modern, supportable technology is critical to reducing risk, improving reliability and enabling us to respond effectively to changing needs. By strengthening our core systems and practices, we will provide a stable platform for ongoing improvement and reform.

To achieve this, we will

- transition to modern, supportable platforms
- put in place consistent approaches to system updates, maintenance and monitoring
- strengthen cyber security protections and our ability to respond quickly and effectively to incidents.

This will provide a safe, stable and future-ready foundation, enabling better services for our users and supporting SLAB's Corporate Plan.

## 2. Moving towards a single, coherent platform

SLAB currently delivers core services through three separate platforms. While each platform was introduced for sound reasons at the time, their divergence now creates inefficiency, complexity and reduced agility. Managing multiple bespoke systems increases dependency on a small number of specialist roles and heightens the risk of inconsistencies.

We have set a clear direction to progress towards a single, sustainable platform for SLAB's core services. This consolidation will simplify support, reduce duplication, streamline development, and provide a more consistent experience for solicitors and applicants. It will also reduce reliance on scarce specialist contractors by moving away from niche, legacy technologies. This will also strengthen cyber resilience.

## 3. Strengthening governance and delivery discipline

To meet the pace and complexity of reform, SLAB must operate with greater predictability, transparency and discipline in digital delivery. While strong practice exists in places, the current project landscape is highly variable, and many initiatives begin without sufficient scope definition, ownership or discovery.

We will introduce a strengthened governance model, which will include:

- a single, organisation wide, prioritised programme
- standardised scoping, documentation and decision-making
- clear accountability for outcomes and benefits.

This will allow SLAB to focus resources on the most important work, protect capacity for critical reforms, and provide clearer assurance to the Board on progress and risk.

#### 4. Investing in people and skills

Technology alone will not deliver transformation – our people will. The Digital Services team brings deep organisational knowledge and commitment, but its structure reflects the need to maintain legacy systems rather than deliver a modern digital estate. We will:

- reshape the team around recognised digital professions
- recruit targeted specialist roles
- invest in continuous learning, particularly on modern technology stacks like AI and career development
- use external suppliers selectively to accelerate change and reduce risk.

This balanced approach will provide the resilience required to deliver both stabilisation and long term transformation.

#### 5. Delivering modern, user centred services

Enhance the services relied upon by solicitors, applicants and SLAB staff. A user centred approach is fundamental to building trust and meeting the expectations of a modern public service. As we modernise our platforms, we must redesign around the needs of the people who use them. A consolidated platform, improved data, and modern design practices will enable us to:

- streamline the full solicitor journey from application through payment
- improve reliability and responsiveness
- improve accessibility and inclusion
- reduce administrative burden for staff and external users
- support external users of the service by getting them to the right information, first time.

#### 6. Strengthening data capability

We cannot effectively support reform or provide meaningful insight without stronger data foundations. Currently, data is dispersed across legacy systems, with inconsistent structures and limited governance. We will establish:

- improved data quality and reporting
- stronger controls for managing sensitive justice data
- a modern platform capable of supporting automation and the responsible use of AI.

These improvements will allow SLAB to make more informed decisions and better support policy development.

# Phased roadmap for sustainable change

## Phase 1 – Stabilise (0–12 months)

- Reduce immediate risks
- Strengthen governance
- Build core capacity.

## Phase 2 – Simplify (12–24 months)

- Progress platform consolidation
- Strengthen data and architectural foundations.

## Phase 3 – Optimise (24–36 months)

- Deliver improved user-facing services and automation opportunities
- Deliver a modern, mature digital operating model.



## Success indicators

We will know the Digital Strategy is succeeding when digital services enable reform rather than constrain it.

Success will be evidenced by:

- systems that are more flexible and reliable enabling smoother and faster change
- faster delivery of reform with fewer workarounds
- improved experience for users and staff
- clearer alignment between digital investment and organisational priorities
- greater readiness for future change



**Progress will be tracked through reform delivery outcomes, service performance, and user and staff feedback.**

**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	Building a modern, stable foundation	Moving towards a single, coherent platform	Strengthening governance and delivery discipline	Investing in people and skills	Delivering modern, user-centre services	Strengthening data capability
<b>Service</b> 	Customer Experience	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
	Data Utilisation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Automation & Simplification	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>People</b> 	Capability, Leadership & Resilience			✓	✓		
	Engagement, Wellbeing & Reward			✓	✓		
	Adaptability, Workforce Planning, & Service Redesign				✓		✓
<b>The Future</b> 	Change for the Better		✓	✓		✓	
	Influencing Change			✓		✓	
	Legal Aid Reform				✓	✓	