



# Equality Outcomes Plan 2023-26: Final Progress Update

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# Context for our equality outcomes


As a public body, we are legally required under the Equality Act (2010) to consider equality in our day-to-day business. We need to demonstrate that we pay due regard to the three aims of the public sector equality duty (PSED):


1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.


Every three years, we publish a set of equality outcomes to help us fulfil our duties. These outcomes are developed based on evidence, including literature review, consultation with internal and external stakeholders, and our leadership team.

This report provides a final progress report for our [equality outcomes](#), developed and published in 2023:

**1 Create the conditions to narrow the gender, disability and ethnicity pay gaps.** 

**2 Gather and use equality data to inform our policies and improve our services.** 

**3 Gather and use equality data to advise Ministers as part of our advice on legal aid reform, and work to monitor availability and accessibility of legal services.** 

**4 Make key information about our work and legal aid accessible to those who need our help.** 

To achieve these outcomes, we developed a plan with 10 workstreams, each with an identified owner and a timeline.

This report summarises the work we have accomplished in the final year of the Equality Outcomes Plan.

## Equality outcomes progress

### Equality Outcome 1: Create the conditions to narrow the gender, disability and ethnicity pay gap

Relevant to the protected characteristics of: Sex, Disability, Race.

Equality Duty Deliverables:

- Advance equality of opportunity
- Eliminate discrimination.

#### Workstream 1: Pay and grading Review – Complete

**Objective:** Deliver a comprehensive pay and grading review, ensuring a fair, equitable, and robust system for assessing roles of equal value, applied consistently across the organisation and subject to ongoing review and improvement.

**What we achieved:**

- ✓ Successfully completed and implemented a full review of SLAB's pay and grading structure.
- ✓ Ensured a fairer and more consistent approach for roles of equal value.
- ✓ Improved cohesion and transparency across grades.
- ✓ Established a sustainable framework to support the reduction of gender, disability, and ethnicity pay gaps.

#### Workstream 2: Development of a workforce planning framework – In progress

**Objective:** Develop a framework to ensure we have the right capacity and skills to meet organisational needs.

**What we achieved:**

- ✓ A corporate workforce planning approach has been developed, informed by long-term financial planning, digital strategy, and legal aid reform context.
- ✓ Workforce planning principles and scenarios were reviewed by the Executive Team and agreed by Board Members.

**Next steps:**

- Roll out the methodology to develop team-level workforce plans aligned with corporate priorities.

### Equality Outcome 2: Gather and use equality data to inform our policies and improve our services

Relevant to all protected characteristics.

Equality Duty Deliverables:

- Advance equality of opportunity
- Eliminate discrimination.

### Workstream 3: Gathering and use of applicant data – In progress

**Objective:** Gathering, supporting and promoting equalities data analysis.

#### What we achieved:

Since the start of the 2023–26 plan, disclosure rates have improved, enabling more robust GALA EqIA work and a stronger foundation for external engagement with solicitors, as outlined in the narrative.

- ✔ Completed an investigation into disability-related costs and translation needs; no adverse impacts identified.
- ✔ Identified equality patterns in grants through the Guidance on the Administration of Legal Aid (GALA) programme.
- ✔ Agreed standard statistical tests to support future equality impact assessments (EqIAs).
- ✔ Progressed a major data linkage project with the Analysis & Management Information (AMI) team to improve the completeness of applicant data, including establishing the project framework; approval from the Census Oversight Committee is pending.

#### Next steps:

- Continue development of linked datasets and integrate enhanced data into equality analysis.

### Workstream 4: Gathering and use of client equality data for Client Legal Services – In Progress

**Objective:** Review equality disclosure rates and use equality data in EqIAs and service design.

#### What we achieved:

- ✔ Produced and shared quarterly equality reports with the CLS Leadership Team.
- ✔ Identified low equality disclosure levels, particularly ethnicity, national identity, and disability.
- ✔ Developed a solicitor engagement plan and issued a survey to understand disclosure barriers.
- ✔ Supported CLS to integrate equality evidence into their delivery model review and completed EqIAs.

#### Next steps:

- Continue strengthening equality data in 2025–26 and explore additional engagement options.

### Workstream 5: Gathering and use of staff equality data – In Progress

**Objective:** Improve equality data across the employee lifecycle.

#### What we achieved:

- ✔ Developed the recruitment portal to enhance collection of staff equality data, including improved interview scheduling and manager access.

#### Next steps:

- Further development will continue into the next cycle.
- Integrate data into HR metrics and EqIAs.

## **Workstream 6: Structured plan to identify improvements in coverage of equality information available to SLAB – Completed**

**Objective:** Identify priority gaps and develop a structured approach to equality research.

### **What we achieved:**

- ✓ Reviewed research gaps and priority groups requiring improved evidence.
- ✓ Identified aims and objectives for new equality research.
- ✓ Agreed recommendations for SLAB's next research programme.

### **Next steps:**

- Develop research proposals that include equalities considerations which are focused on specific legal aid policy areas, which is where most gaps lie.

## **Equality Outcome 3: Gather and use equality data to advise Ministers as part of our advice on legal aid reform, and work to monitor availability and accessibility of legal services**

Relevant to all protected characteristics.

Equality Duty Deliverables:

- Advance equality of opportunity
- Eliminate discrimination.

## **Workstream 7: Advice to Ministers on legal aid reform or improvement includes relevant equalities assessment as appropriate – In Progress**

**Objective:** Embed equality considerations in Scottish Government reform advice.

### **What we achieved:**

- ✓ Completed EqIAs on children's legal aid reform and criminal reform and submitted these to Scottish Government alongside our advice.
- ✓ Clarified why fee reforms are less susceptible to EqIA than other judicare policy advice.
- ✓ Submitted advice on costs incurred in the legal aid system due to a protected characteristic.

### **Next steps:**

- Continue supporting Scottish Government by providing equality analysis and information as required.

## **Workstream 8: Undertake analysis to better understand the availability and accessibility of legally aided services for equality groups – In Progress**

**Objective:** Better understand whether equality groups have differing access to legally aided services.

### **What we achieved:**

- ✔ Drafted the third analytical report, including a detailed review of criminal summary legal aid and protected characteristic patterns in grant rates and processing times.

**Objective:** Analysing trends in supply of legally aided services by relevant protected characteristics. AMI testing new software modelling public transport travel times to assess geography-related access barriers.

**Next steps:**

- Finalise and publish the analytical report in the next cycle.
- Further develop tools for ongoing accessibility monitoring.

## **Equality Outcome 4: Make key information about our work and legal aid accessible to those who need our help**

Relevant to the protected characteristics of: Age, Disability.

Equality Duty Deliverables:

- Advance equality of opportunity
- Eliminate discrimination

## **Workstream 9: Engage external stakeholders to review and develop information materials – Completed**

**Objective:** Improve accessibility of legal aid information.

**What we achieved:**

- ✔ Worked directly with organisations supporting children, BSL users and people with cognitive impairments.
- ✔ Redesigned key public materials based on stakeholder feedback.
- ✔ Final versions shared with stakeholder groups and published on our website: [BSL videos on legal aid](#).

**Next steps:**

- Continue to promote these more accessible resources internally and externally.

## **Workstream 10: Review of Principal Sums and Collection Letters – Completed**

**Objective:** Improve accessibility of correspondence.

**What we achieved:**

- ✔ Principal Sums letters fully reviewed and approved.
- ✔ Collections letters are nearly complete, with 10 templates undergoing final review.

## **Conclusion**

During this equality outcomes cycle, SLAB has strengthened how equality considerations are embedded across our work, including pay and grading, data collection and analysis, advice on legal aid reform, and the accessibility of information and services. Several actions have now been

completed and embedded into business-as-usual processes, while others will continue into the next cycle to ensure ongoing monitoring and improvement. This work provides a strong foundation for meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty going forward.

### **More information**

If you would like any additional information about our progress, please contact the Equalities team at [equalities@slab.org.uk](mailto:equalities@slab.org.uk).

We have published our new equality outcomes for 2026-29, which are available on our website: [Equalities and diversity](#).