

Ms Bridget West
Delivery Unit
Government Equalities Office
3rd Floor Fry
2 Marsham Street
London
SW10 4DF

The Cube
199 Wharfside Street
Birmingham B1 1RN

DX: 720293 BIRMINGHAM 47
UK 0870 606 2555
Int + 44 (0)121 329 6800
F + 44 (0)121 616 1999
www.sra.org.uk

12 April 2013

Dear Ms West

I am writing with reference to your letter dated 19 March which you sent to Mr Des Hudson, CEO of the Law Society requesting feedback on the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Mr Hudson has passed your letter to the Solicitors Regulation Authority. The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) is a public authority for the purposes of the [Equality Act 2010](#) and is bound by the public sector equality duty which came into effect on 5 April 2011.

The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) is the independent regulatory body of the Law Society in England and Wales, regulating solicitors and solicitor practises.

The equality duty requires the SRA, in the exercise of its public functions, to have due regard to the need to

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

As a public authority, the SRA also has a legal duty to work in a way that complies with human rights and we monitor this through our equality and human rights impact assessment programme, supported by human rights training.

The public sector equality duties have been a key driver for the development of our [Equality Framework](#) which sets out how we aim to meet the duty. Our Equality Framework and its supporting documents set out our strategic approach to equality and diversity at the SRA, explaining how we are complying with our equality and human rights duties and identifying the key equality issues for us as an employer and in relation to our regulatory functions and services.

As a public sector organisation regulating a diverse profession which serves a diverse consumer base, it is important that we deliver our obligations fairly and in a

non-discriminatory manner. We need to have the confidence of the public and the profession we regulate and being proactive in promoting equality and diversity is key to our success. The public sector duties have provided us with a useful framework for developing our equality approach internally and externally.

We have used the Equality Impact Assessment Process as a risk management tool to assess impact of our policies at the earliest stage, engage more proactively with our stakeholders and improved transparency in our decision making.

The public sector duties have given is the underpinning framework for implementing mandatory training on equality and diversity for our managers and staff and in ensuring that all of the business are considering equality as part of their work and ensuring they are fair and proportionate in their decision making.

We have integrated equality considerations into our procurement process and have put in place guidance for staff to ensure they take into consideration equality and diversity when procuring services and in the engagement of consultants

We do not consider the Equality Act or the Public Sector Equality Duty as 'red tape' and as an organisation we have seen the public sector duty as providing a focus for most of our work which is about being and being seen as an organisation that is fair, proportionate and once which proactively addresses issues of equality and diversity.

The public sector duty provides a good steer and we have used the guidance to focus on achieving the right outcomes and promoting equality for all groups, giving particular attention to those covered by the Equality Act.

As an outcomes focussed regulator, we have used the duty as a useful guide and a key driver in helping us develop our equality approach and articulate the case for equality and diversity. We have focussed on outcomes and thus do not see the duty as being bureaucratic. As a regulator our aim is to be and be seen as an organisation that is delivering its responsibilities fairly and proportionately.

Please find attached some of the policies, examples of EIA's and our procurement guide.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to respond to your review. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need any more information .

Yours sincerely



Mehrunnisa Lalani
Director of Inclusion