



The Law Society

Activity Report for the three months
ending 31 July 2024

Introduction and the Law Society Corporate Plan

In September 2022, the Law Society's Council approved a three-year corporate plan to run from 1 November 2022 to 31 October 2025. A business plan for the year to 30 October 2024 was later approved by Council in October 2023. Both plans are built around four key strategic objectives, and this activity report is organised around those same four strategic objectives.

Progress is reported for the period of three months ending 31 July 2024 ("Q3").

Objective One: We will promote the value of the profession and provide a compelling member offer



Under this objective we focus on development of member resources, international opportunities for members, key segments and communities within our membership, liaison with local law societies, access to content and frontline member services.

Development of member resources

Q3 saw us launch resources to support our members to stay up to date with best practice, save time and money, and ultimately give the best possible legal advice. This included:

- case studies for solicitors and firms on the consequences of not preventing economic crime through deliberate, reckless, improper, dishonest and/or negligent behaviour
- guidance for private family practitioners on attendance at mediation information assessment meetings following changes to the Family Procedure Rules
- insight into the sustainability of civil legal aid and how the legal aid means test can be improved as living costs rise
- guidance for employers on the recommended minimum salary for trainee solicitors and Solicitors Qualifying Exam candidates
- a tool to help members understand current and emerging money laundering risks and threats

International opportunities for members

Our members will now find it easier to practise in Japan as the Japanese Ministry of Justice has agreed to streamline their registration and renewal processes following Law Society representation. We will continue working with the Japanese Federation of Bar Associations on their own processes to widen the benefits to our members further.

The new UK government has confirmed that it will resume free trade negotiations with India, the Gulf Cooperation Council, South Korea, Switzerland, Turkey and Israel. That

means that attempts by the previous government to negotiate FTAs with the USA, Canada and Mexico have been shelved. The new government will confirm in Q4 what its ambitions are in relation to trade dialogues with other jurisdictions, which can also be useful tools for us to raise and address market access issues for our members.

Key segments and our communities

In Q3 we held four topical section webinars (professional development) and one networking reception as part of London International Disputes Week, which collectively attracted close to 1000 members. We also held a section online roundtable with 100 members of the risk and compliance section and leadership and management section on effective preparation for an SRA audit.

During Q3 we also launched Member Talks, a new video series of bite-sized online content for leadership and management, private client and dispute resolution section members. These feature short talks on practical topics such as 'Litigator's survival guide: best tips from judges in conducting litigation', a series examining the legal issues of elderly and vulnerable clients in a private client context, and short lectures on the use of AI in the legal profession as well as the Financial Benchmarking Survey (for medium-sized law firms). We also launched new episodes of our complimentary online management series for smaller firms, on ethics and on change management.

We held four regional trips for our President and senior stakeholders to meet with members and aspiring solicitors, including in Newcastle, Leeds, Plymouth, Exeter, Truro, Leicester, Bournemouth and Southampton. The visits featured a range of 20 or more activities, including many talks, networking sessions and topical discussions with a diverse range of members and aspiring solicitors. These were organised with the support of our committee and Council Members, local junior groups, universities and local law societies.

During the quarter we also held our private client conference and competition law conference, as well as co-organised the Legal Geek conference for smaller firms. We hosted an in-house counsel forum at the Law Society Hall which featured panel talks, break-out discussions and networking. The forum involved close to 90 in-house counsel from a range of specialisms and career stages in the development of our new corporate strategy, as well as to update them on the development of the ethics framework for in-house counsel, seek their insight and discuss emerging lessons from the Post Office Inquiry.

Liaison with local law societies

In May we hosted close to 100 representatives from local law societies across England and Wales for a hybrid Townhall discussion which covered a diverse range of topics, including our policy and public affairs achievements, AI work and bicentennial planning. Most of the audience chose to attend online; with a core group of approximately 20 local law societies' representatives who attended in-person and enjoyed a tour of the Royal Courts of Justice and networking lunch as well as drinks after the event. The attendees also took part in a discussion to provide helpful insight to the development of our next corporate strategy, 2025 to 2028, and participated in two fireside chats with the Attorney General as well as with the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, respectively.

In Q3 we also held three topical online forums with representatives of local law societies, on the SRA consumer protection review, on influencing activities with parliamentary liaison officers, and to brief on the TA6 form and SGM, respectively. In addition, we launched the quarterly edition (Q3) of the Local Law Societies e-bulletin and continued to take part in meetings of local law societies' committees to provide updates and gather information.

Access to content

Q3 saw the continued growth in the number of members that accessed our content through our email newsletters and social media channels.

Our fortnightly newsletter, *Professional Update*, goes to 180,000 solicitors and saw our highest average open rate and click rate to date during this period. In addition, content published on our corporate LinkedIn account was seen a record 3.8 million times.

The creation of content, based on data analysis and best practice techniques, is driving this continued growth. We published new profiles of our members involved in a diverse range of activities such as the Diversity Access Scheme and personal injury law, together with content focused on regulation, wellbeing in the profession and resources to support solicitor's everyday work.

The events team ran 19 events with around 4,800 registered attendees. The largest event was on AML with nearly 800 registrations.

Admission ceremonies

Q3 saw eight ceremonies including a ceremony in Cardiff, Wales and the first ceremony to be publicised as 'family friendly' to encourage members to celebrate their achievements with younger family members in particular. New items were added to the merchandise offer and these continue to attract strong interest.

Diversity & Inclusion

We appointed Purpose Union, a social justice and EDI consultancy, to help develop our next member-facing EDI strategy. They held focus groups and interviews in June and undertook a literature review to inform the development of strategy.

We published guidance in May to support organisations to improve disability inclusion through digital accessibility.

We marked Mental Health Awareness Week in May and Pride month in June by sharing member profiles, articles, guidance and resources. Our Disabled Solicitors Network took part in London Legal Walk in June.

We celebrated and marked 20 years of our Diversity Access Scheme (DAS) by bringing together around 100 DAS alumni, current awardees, sponsors, work experience hosts and supporters for an event in Chancery Lane. We also shared profiles of DAS alumni. Interviews for the next round of DAS awardees also took place in July

We brought together signatories of our Women in law pledge for a roundtable in July to discuss the benefits of and barriers to flexible working along with practical tips to support flexible working in all its forms.

Objective Two: We will protect the justice system and make sure it applies to everyone equally



Under this objective we focus on building public understanding of the rule of law and the justice system, having a positive influence on developments in legislation, practice, and justice policy, representing members in key policy areas, promoting our home jurisdiction as well as supporting colleagues at risk around the world.

Influence on developments in legislation

A general election was called on 22 May 2024 and held on 4 July 2024, so the focus of much of our activity in this quarter has been on analysing each political parties manifestos, building new and strengthening existing relationships with key political stakeholders, and assessing and analysing the results.

We published our own recommendations for the next government, which received positive coverage, and produced a campaign guide for members to ensure they were equipped to engage their local candidates on justice issues. Following the results of the election, we have begun to engage with the new government and the significant number of new MPs elected.

Influence on Justice Policy

On 1st May we launched the Interim Report in our 21st Century Justice project. This report proposed a number of practical and cost effective ideas for enhancing access to justice, and outlined five continuing workstreams.

In May we published a report from Frontier Economics analysing the economic viability of civil legal aid practice. This showed that most housing and private family legal aid work generates significant losses.

In July, we published a new report from Professor Donald Hirsch, highlighting the harsh impact on people in poverty of the previous Government's failure to implement promised reforms to the legal aid means test.

Influence on regulation

We have continued to oppose the proposals for the SRA to regulated CILEX members, including submitting a response to the SRA's consultation on unauthorised CILEX members. Following the SRA Board's decision to accept the redelegation of regulation, CILEX has applied to the Privy Council (PC) for necessary changes to its charter and bylaws. We have engaged with the PC with a view to opposing the proposed changes.

We submitted our response to the SRA's Consumer Protection Review. We raised concerns that the SRA's review appeared rushed and published before the findings of the independent review into the SRA's actions in the lead-up to the collapse of Axiom Ince / SSB Group. We argued that client accounts were a fundamental tool for the efficient and effective delivery of many types of legal services. We also argued that the Compensation Fund remained a key client protection and made several suggestions to tighten up the SRA's operational procedures, such as monitoring and supervision of firms, which could lead to enhanced consumer protection.

Building public understanding

Public testing of messaging and communications frames to as part of the Reframing Justice programmes is underway, yielding indicative findings. We held a workshop in May with over 20 organisations in the wider justice and legal fields to develop the frames that went into fieldwork testing. Final findings will be ready end of October.

Supporting colleagues at risk around the world

In June, we took part in an international [fact-finding mission to the Philippines](#). The mission documented human rights violations against lawyers in the country. Linked to this activity, on 14 June, we also co-organised an event in Manila, for International Fair Trial Day, raising awareness of fair trial violations in the Philippines.

We submitted a joint report and made a statement on Turkey to the UN Committee against Torture (CAT). With funding secured from the University of Bristol's Human Rights Implementation Centre a Turkish lawyer joined our delegation at the CAT session, which enhanced our advocacy and helped with capacity building.

Strategic litigation

Earlier this year, the Society successfully brought Judicial Review proceedings against the then Lord Chancellor for failing to comply with Lord Bellamy's recommendations in the Criminal Legal Aid Independent Review (CLAIR). However, the general election resulted in a change of government and the appointment of a new Lord Chancellor in July 2024. The Society has sought to liaise with the new Lord Chancellor to ensure that she complies with the Court order. The Society continues to consider the legal options available should it be necessary to compel the Lord Chancellor to comply with the court order.

Objective Three: We will maximise our potential by growing our commercial reach, by being efficient and sustainable



Under this objective we focus on creating greater value in various product and service offerings, making better use of our heritage property, driving digital transformation projects and raising member engagement through improvements in governance processes.

Creating greater value in various product and service offerings

Law Society Learning released thirty-one new member courses and content items, including on leadership and workplace culture to align with SRA guidance, principles of legal professional privilege, economic crime and corporate transparency, AML, and financial orders in family law cases. The Society's learning offerings were featured at London's Legal Geek conference in June and we co-hosted an event with the City of London Law Society's Training Committee on AI and legal education practice.

We extended our partnerships with Gallaghers and D2 Legal Technology, bringing cybersecurity advice and offers, plus legal change consulting services respectively to our Members. The Society also renewed five successful existing partnerships in the quarter.

Driving digital transformation projects

Following on from the soft launch of our continuous professional development (CPD) diary, full launch to the profession took place in May. The CPD diary allows members to capture all their training in one place including external courses not hosted by the Law Society. Uptake of the diary functionality has been good with very positive feedback received from users.

We have also delivered value to members by launching a new app for expenses, Certify, which enables our board, council and committee members to submit their expenses on the go using their mobiles. Through the app they can track the submission, providing greater transparency for members around claims status and speedier payment of the expense.

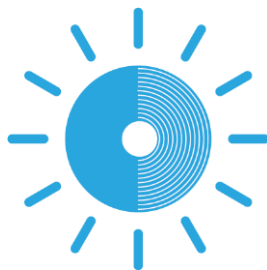
Our small change process has enhanced the user journeys for events and accreditations, reducing the number of refunds by simplifying the user journey for members and improving identification processes for accreditations applicants.

Legal Services

The legal team has assisted with drafting and negotiating various agreements for the procurement of services in order to support the Society's internal functions and to assist the international team.

Legal support has also been provided to facilitate the Society entering into a number of partnership agreements and other commercial arrangements.

Objective Four: We will be an employer of choice for people who want to make a difference



Under this objective we focus on becoming more strategic in our approach to human resources and organisational development, continuing our work to embed equality, diversity, and inclusion practices across the organisation, whilst ensuring our governance processes are efficient and continuously improving.

Our approach to human resources and organisational development

We completed our Leading with Impact Leadership Development programme, which will support career development, future proof leadership capability and inform succession planning. This included leaders at all levels across the organisation.

We completed our annual Investors in People (IIP) survey with a 74% response rate and forty people attending six focus groups. The feedback demonstrates that we are making strong progress, with particularly positive results in relation to having clear objectives, understanding how the work contributes to the organisation success, more collaboration, and feelings that our values are part of how we work, and people are trusted to make decisions. These are areas that we have been focusing on, which demonstrates we continue to develop and evolve our culture. Our next full accreditation of IIP will be undertaken next summer.

Embedding Equality Diversity and Inclusion

We have been awarded Disability Confident Leader (Level 3) after being independently audited by Business Disability Forum. This is the highest level an organisation can be awarded and reflects the steps we have taken to address disability inclusion, particularly our work regarding reasonable adjustments and accessibility. We are using the feedback to take further steps to improve disability inclusion.

We have secured a supplier and undertaken preparation to launch our first organisational wide EDI survey, which will help inform our EDI goals and action plan.

We have created a new process and toolkit for Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process. This is currently being reviewed by an external EIA specialist and we will be consulting with internal stakeholders on this new process, before piloting.

We successfully delivered our third year of the internship programme as part of the 10,000 Black Interns programme. Eleven interns participated across ten teams, for up to two months.

The learnings and recommendations from the reverse mentoring pilot were published and shared with the wider organisation in a comprehensive review and dedicated intranet page.

In conclusion

We hope that you will have found this report useful and look forward to reporting next at the end of the three months to 31 October 2024.