



Legal Ombudsman
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28 February 2011

Legal Ombudsman equality and human rights

This response represents the views of ILEX Professional Standards (IPS), the regulatory body for Legal Executives. Legal Executives are members of the Institute of Legal Executives (ILEX). ILEX is the professional body representing 22,000 qualified and trainee Legal Executives and is an Approved Regulator under the Legal Services Act 2007 (LSA 07).

IPS does not propose to respond in detail to all of the questions posed. Comments on the proposals in the consultation have been presented below where IPS is able to offer a view.

IPS agrees with LeO's draft policy statement and overall approach to equality and human rights. It shows LeO's commitment to valuing diversity and promoting equality throughout its organisation. IPS also agrees with LeO's aim to build human rights into every section of its equality priorities and objectives as LeO will be handling complaints with human rights implications.

The consultation clearly outlines what LeO is trying to achieve. LeO has identified equality groups and a number of disadvantaged groups which fall outside those equality groups. LeO aims to address the needs of the identified groups by taking concerted action to ensure equal access to its services for its diverse customers and fair employment for its staff and potential employees.

The priorities and objectives outlined in the consultation will enable LeO to address the needs of the identified groups. LeO will monitor the impact of its policies and functions and will collect data on employment and on service delivery. It is important that regular review and analysis of the data is carried out. Monitoring needs to be continual to enable LeO to be alert to new issues that may arise. Continual monitoring will also enable LeO to be responsive to equality groups. Furthermore, IPS welcomes the publication of results from impact assessments conducted by LeO. A summary of findings alongside details of the results of the impact assessment would be helpful.

The consultation also highlights that LeO intends that its workforce is broadly reflective of the demographics of the West Midlands, where it is based. LeO is an organisation that will come into contact with people nationwide. It is also important that its workforce is reflective of the consumers it serves. LeO will monitor its employment practices in order to identify the possibility of adverse impact. LeO may want to consider continually reviewing the training of individuals who sit on recruitment and selection panels. It is those people who directly influence how diverse LeO's workforce is. They should be trained on fair recruitment and selection processes and the selection processes themselves should use fair and objective criteria. Reviewing both the selection processes and the training of selection committees will enable LeO to address any barriers that equality groups face to employment with LeO.

IPS would be willing to be contacted after the consultation is complete to discuss our response.

IPS 28/02/11