

<b>Meeting</b>	OLC Board Meeting	<b>Agenda Item Paper No.</b>	8 128.4A
<b>Date of meeting</b>	20 July 2023	<b>Time required</b>	15 Minutes
<b>Title</b>	EDI Strategy		
<b>Sponsor</b>	Paul McFadden		
<b>Status</b>	<b>OFFICIAL</b>		
<b>Executive summary</b>			
<p>This executive summary provides an update on the progress made in refining and developing the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) strategy for LeO. The aim of the EDI strategy is to promote staff engagement and inclusion, and to contribute to promoting accessibility and access to justice for our customers. This update outlines the background, considerations, risks, dependencies, and mitigations associated with the strategy. The EDI team is confident in delivering the 1-year plan and successfully achieving the aims of the 3-year strategy.</p> <p>Background and Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EDI manager has been focusing on reviewing and refining the existing EDI strategy to create a credible 3-year strategy and a 1-year action plan.</li> <li>• A consultative approach has been adopted to engage key stakeholders. The input and feedback from various stakeholders, including the Chief Ombudsman, Head of People Strategy and Services, Head of Operations, EDI Steering Group, and corporate/Ops colleagues, have been instrumental in shaping the strategy.</li> <li>• We have ensured that the strategy aligns with the business plan, strategic objectives, Equality Priority Objectives (EPOs), HR People Strategy, legislative requirements, and EDI best practices.</li> <li>• The previous strategy was primarily internally focused, whereas there is a clearer set of external activities detailed in the updated strategy aims.</li> </ul> <p>Risks and Dependencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risks and dependencies associated with the plan have been identified, including the availability of HR resources, recent resignations from the IT development team, allocation of Project Management Office (PMO) resources, and the temporary nature of the EDI team's positions.</li> </ul> <p>Mitigations and Controls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EDI team has taken a proactive and solution-focused approach to mitigate the identified risks.</li> <li>• A staggered multi-year approach has been adopted to work towards achieving the strategy's aims.</li> <li>• Project management best practices have been employed, including the use of a detailed project Gantt chart to timeline all activities.</li> <li>• Contingencies have been incorporated into the timelines of each activity to account for unforeseen issues or workload conflicts among colleagues involved.</li> </ul>			
<b>Recommendation / action required</b>			
The Board are asked to <b>comment</b> on the EDI strategy.			

<b>EDI implications</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<p>This 3-year EDI strategy is a key part of LeO's work to ensure we are compliant with relevant EDI legislation and best practice. It is also key in terms of supporting our people and our customers, having impacts on candidate attraction, staff engagement, staff retention, and customer accessibility and satisfaction.</p>	
<b>Freedom of Information Act 2000 (Fol)</b>	
<b>Paragraph reference</b>	<b>Fol exemption and summary</b>
N/A	N/A

# EDI strategy update

## Background and considerations

- 1.1 The aims of the EDI strategy are to support the broader LeO aims of engagement and inclusion of staff, and accessibility and access to justice for customers. It is ambitious and stretching, but also realistic in terms of what we have set out to deliver with the resources available.
- 1.2 The EDI manager has been in post since mid-March and a key initial objective was to review and refine the existing EDI strategy to come up with a credible 3-year strategy and 1-year action plan that can be delivered (the 3-year strategy aims are detailed in the appendix).
- 1.3 A consultative approach has been employed to engage with key stakeholders to understand their needs and priorities and considerations to completing this activity were as follows.
  - Aligns to our business plan and strategic objectives.
  - Aligns to our Equality Priority Objectives (EPOs).
  - Aligns to our HR People Strategy.
  - Addresses legislative gaps / EDI best practice gaps.
  - Established network priorities (through engagement with Network chairs).
  - Discussions with Chief Ombudsman.
  - Discussions with Head of People Strategy and Services / Head of Operations.
  - Feedback from our Exec.
  - Feedback from our EDI Steering Group (includes our EDI Board Sponsor, Network chairs, Ops reps, corporate reps).
  - Feedback from corporate colleagues (via engagement sessions).

## 2. Risks and dependencies

- 2.1 In the creation of the plan, risks and dependencies have been identified for each activity. The key ones being:
  - 2.1.1 Availability of HR resource required to contribute to/advise on activities.
  - 2.1.2 Some recent resignations from the IT development team (links to the BI report building and CRM improvement activities in the plan).
  - 2.1.3 Allocation of PMO resources to support with the management of some of the activities on the plan.
  - 2.1.4 The EDI team are both in temporary positions which is a risk to the delivery of this strategy. Delivery of the plan requires resource from the EDI manager and EDI Specialist to lead and complete these activities.

## 3. Mitigations and controls

- 3.1 To mitigate risks the EDI team have adopted a pro-active and solution focused approach to completing the activities detailed in the strategy. Where resource cannot be initially obtained from the Data/PMO teams, the EDI team have created data tools themselves as a starting point before we can move these reporting tools in our PowerBI format.
- 3.2 Other strategies employed include a staggered multi-year approach of working towards the achievement of the aim (for example ensuring LeO progresses from Disability Confident Level 1 in year 1 of the plan, to achieving Disability Confident Level 3 by the end of the 3-year plan).

- 3.3 To manage the multiple concurrent activities on the plan, we have adopted some project management best practice methodologies such as using a detailed project Gantt chart to timeline all the activities. This is updated weekly by the EDI team and managed by the EDI manager. This allows oversight to be provided to stakeholders and for the progress of all the activities to be closely controlled and reported on.
- 3.4 To provide further assurance as to the achievability of the plan, contingencies have been added to the timelines for each activity to allow for any unforeseen issues or workload conflicts relating to colleagues required to be involved in the activity.
- 3.5 In summary, the EDI team are confident that the 1-year plan will be delivered in its entirety and the 3-year plan will also be delivered successfully.

## 4. Example of some of the activities on the 1-year action plan

### 4.1 Data activities

- 4.1.1 We have pro-actively utilised data extracted from our HR Ciphre system to build an EDI workforce dashboard tool in Excel. This enables us to view the LeO workforce in terms of the protected characteristics where staff have declared it or indicated that they did not want to provide the information.
- 4.1.2 We have pro-actively utilised data extracted from our CRM system to build a customer EDI dashboard tool in Excel. This enables us to view LeO customers in terms of the protected characteristics.

### 4.2 Enhancing our policies

- 4.2.1 We are creating a new reasonable adjustments policy for LeO staff. We are working with the Business Disability Forum who are advising us on best practice in this area, and we are reviewing existing policies from SRA and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to inform the design of the policy.
- 4.2.2 We have been collaborating with HR to complete an inclusive language review of HR policies. This is aimed at ensuring our policies are gender neutral and promote inclusivity.

### 4.3 Promoting engagement, Equality, Inclusion & Wellbeing

- 4.3.1 We have launched our traditional mentoring pilot and we have 9 mentees being mentored by Board members and Exec colleagues. That pilot is due to end at the end of October. We also plan to launch a reverse mentoring pilot in November.
- 4.3.2 In September/October we will be leading on some activities to raise awareness of menopause in the workplace. 68% of LeO's workforce are female, and of that 68%, 29% are within the menopause range. We are procuring some training for managers. All staff will complete some self-directed learning. Finally, we will deliver a 'Ask me anything' session with a panel from our Women's network on the topic.

# Appendix

## 5.0 EDI Strategy 3-year plan

### Representative EPO workforce aims

Activities in this EPO over the next three years are to:
Build robust workforce EDI data to enable us to assess representation at all levels.
Use this insight to target and implement initiatives aimed at increasing representation and access to opportunity.
Have systems in place to track EDI data for all of LeO's recruitment and development opportunities.
Achieve compliance with the Race at Work Charter.
Achieve compliance with the Race Equality Code.
Develop and deliver our first ethnicity pay gap report (building on our annual gender pay gap reporting).
Ensure external presentation of LeO represents diversity.
Ensure our suppliers and partners align to LeO's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

### Inclusive place to work EPO aims

Activities in this EPO over the next three years are to:
Ensure our policies are developed to fulfil our legal obligations and taking on board EDI industry best practice.
Ensure our recruitment processes and workplaces are accessible and inclusive (through the achievement of Disability Confident Level 2 and Level 3 accreditations).
Develop and implement initiatives to support access to opportunity (e.g., traditional mentoring, reverse mentoring programmes).
Develop and implement initiatives to support staff development and progression (e.g., leadership development programme, aspiring leaders programme).
Complete annual EDI analysis of reward and recognition data.
Complete annual social mobility reporting of LeO's management.
Support and develop our staff networks to promote EDI activities and an inclusive culture at LeO.
Enhance our annual programmes of EDI awareness activities with includes learning opportunities for LeO staff.
Support managers to increase their knowledge of disability (utilising resources such as our membership of the Business disability forum and via Civil service-learning resources).

### Customer service and accessibility EPO aims

Activities in this EPO over the next three years are to:
Build a customer EDI dataset that will enable us to understand our diversity customer profile and how our service impacts on them (customers with RAs, impacts of scheme rule changes, outcomes, service complaints).
Identify organisations that support vulnerable customers and customer consumer panels. Pro-actively develop links with them to promote our services and take insights from their work that can support LeO's work.
Engage with other Ombudsmen organisations and Regulators to seek out best practice and use that to improve our service.
Provide annual accessibility training for all staff to enhance their knowledge to support their customers.
Contribute to the external engagement work of LeO by providing EDI insights data that can be shared with the profession aimed at reducing complaints, supporting customers with protected characteristics, and improving the quality of complaint resolution.