

# **SRA Annual diversity report 2014**

## **Section 1: Foreword**

We are pleased to introduce our very first annual Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) workforce diversity report, covering data for 2014. At the SRA we are committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion. We also want to be an employer of choice in the legal workforce.

We know that sharing diverse perspectives and ideas result in a flexible, creative and innovative workforce. Diversity is about respecting and valuing difference and is vital to the success of our organisation. Research has shown that when managed well, diversity contributes to better performance. We are committed to fulfilling our requirements under the statutory public equalities duties and aim to be a fair and proportionate employer.

As a regulator we have a challenging role; we set the standards for solicitors and our aim is to serve the public interest and protect consumers of legal services. We want to make sure that our approach to regulation is open, fair and transparent and that diversity becomes part of what we do, part of 'business as usual'. For example, the actions in our equality, diversity and inclusion action plan take into consideration the needs of the public, the regulated profession and our staff. It is important that in making regulatory decisions we can draw on diverse views and perspectives which help us to understand better the public we protect and the firms we regulate.

In this report we summarise the progress we have made and provide information about our achievements and developments in the past year. To that end, in late 2014, we launched a leadership initiative that identifies inclusive work practices. We also launched a programme of internal staff events and began looking at the possibility of forming staff networks. We are really pleased to say this work is going well and continues to expand beyond our early expectations.

In 2014, a new monitoring system was put in place to improve the quality of the diversity data we hold. This provided a greater level of understanding and detail in identifying under representation by protected characteristic on gender, age, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

The response rate from staff against each of these protected characteristics has been high and we will continue to encourage staff to complete and update their personal diversity data.

## **Section 2: Overview**

Our [equality, diversity and inclusion strategy](https://upgrade.sra.org.uk/sra/equality-diversity/strategy/edi-strategy/).

[\[https://upgrade.sra.org.uk/sra/equality-diversity/strategy/edi-strategy/\]](https://upgrade.sra.org.uk/sra/equality-diversity/strategy/edi-strategy/) outlines our core priorities for the next three years. Of our three objectives, the first relates to our people and workforce; "develop a more diverse workforce and promote an inclusive culture, equality of opportunity for all staff and the behaviours and capabilities required to regulate proportionately, fairly and free from bias". Sitting under this objective are our actions on board and governance, staff engagement and training and benchmarking and monitoring.

The further two objectives focus on our role as a regulator. They are to 'ensure that the way we operate, our rules and the decisions we make are proportionate, fair and free from bias and help firms and individuals understand and comply with our requirements' and 'work with those we regulate to support them in achieving a more diverse and inclusive profession'.

Our work is overseen by a board, consisting of 15 members, 7 solicitors and 8 lay people (one of whom chairs the board). Of the 15 board members, 9 are male and 6 are female; 13 are white, two are black and minority ethnic (BAME).

Our board is helped in its work by committees. We run five committees, including an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee. 40 per cent of our board is female and for board and committees this percentage increases to 50 per cent.

In 2014, we employed 585 people, 355 women and 235 men. We continually work towards building and retaining a diverse workforce and to develop all of our people to their full potential.

Our Board is 40 per cent female Our board and committees are 50 per cent female.

## **Senior Management Team**

Our senior management team comprise six people; five men and one woman. We have a leadership team which support key projects and processes across the SRA.

## **Section 3: Protected characteristics**

We publish and share information on our workforce according to:

- age
- gender
- ethnicity
- disability
- religion or belief



- pregnancy and maternity
- sexual orientation

Our grading structure is organised in the following way:

- **A-D**: non management roles,
- **E-I**: specialist and management roles; and
- **J-L**: head of business units and directors. Included in the J-L roles are leadership and senior management roles.

We will use this structure throughout this report to illustrate the diversity across the organisation across all pay grades.

## Age

### Figure 1: grade breakdown by age

Figure 1 illustrates the age distribution across all pay grades.

- 35 - 44 year olds are represented across all pay grades, 33 per cent of 35-44 year olds are found in grades E-I.
- 23 per cent of staff are in the 45 - 54 age bracket. Just over half of this percentage, 55 per cent, are found in the J-L grades.
- 5 per cent of 16 - 24 year olds are employed at the SRA and represent 20 per cent of the workforce in grades A-D.
- Half, 50 per cent of all promotions were achieved by staff aged 25-34.

## Gender

The SRA gender split is  
61% female  
39% male

The gender split at the SRA is 61 per cent female and 39 per cent male.

### Figure 2: grade breakdown by gender

- The proportion of male and female at grade J-L is relatively equal with 52 per cent female and 48 per cent male.
- More females, 68 per cent are represented in grades A-D than males.

### Figure 3: recruitment by gender (external applicants)

In 2014, we received 1253 applications for jobs at the SRA. 544 were submitted by men and 666 by women.

- More males than females applied for J-L roles.
- On average females have a higher success rate in securing employment at the SRA. The average benchmark success rate from application to employment for all external applicants is 7.9 per cent. The success rate from application to employment is 9.3 per cent for women and 6.3 per cent for men.
- 60 per cent of females who applied for a promotion received one.

## Ethnicity

- 75 per cent White / White British 19 per cent BAME
- 6% not specified
- We have 14 per cent of Asian or Asian British staff employed in J-L roles. Asian or Asian British is the largest ethnic minority group employed by the SRA and this percentage has increased by 7 per cent since 2009.

### Figure 4: grade breakdown by ethnicity

- The percentage of Asian or Asian British staff in E-I roles is 16 per cent.
- The percentage of Asian or Asian British staff in J-L roles is 14 per cent and although we do not have any Black or Black British staff employed at this level, we can see that the total number of staff from this ethnic group is very small.

### Figure 5: external recruitment by ethnicity

39%  
of BAME applicants applied for jobs at the SRA

31%  
of BAME applicants were successful

- 39 per cent of BAME applicants applied for jobs at the SRA and 31 per cent of BAME applicants were successful. The majority of applicants were for A - D roles. 18 per cent of applications were for J-L roles although in this instance they were not successful in securing a role in 2014.

## Internal recruitment

## Figure 6: internal recruitment by ethnicity

- We did not receive any applications from BAME staff for J-L roles.
- 30 per cent of BAME staff applied for A-D roles and 10 per cent were successful. 25 per cent of BAME staff applied for E-I roles and 11 per cent were successful.
- Because of the small number of 'Chinese or other staff' employed at the SRA, we did not receive any applications for internal roles from this group of people.
- 13 per cent of BAME staff were promoted in 2014 and 85 per cent of White staff were promoted.

## Disability

5%  
of staff declared a  
**disability**

- 5 per cent of staff declared a disability. We are really pleased to see such a high percentage of staff letting us know they have a disability. As such we provide a range of reasonable adjustments and hope staff feel confident they can get in touch with us at any point to request support or a reasonable adjustment.
- The health and well being of our staff is very important to us. We provide information and guidance on reasonable adjustments, flexible working, health and well being and stress awareness. We also provide an employee assistance programme which includes expert counsellors on a range of issues, including on stress, bullying and harassment.
- 5 individuals notified us of a disability and began their employment with the SRA in 2014 and 3 disabled staff left in the same period.
- Although we did not receive any applications from disabled staff for J-L roles, we received 5 per cent of applications across grades A-D and E-I and 4 per cent were successful in obtaining an internal role.
- 3 disabled members of staff received a promotion.

## Religion and belief

*Figure 7: religion and belief*

- We have a range of religion or faith groups represented at the SRA.
- The majority of staff identify as Christian and of no religion.

- There were more Christians, Muslims and Sikhs beginning their employment at the SRA, than leaving the organisation. There were no staff leaving the organisation who identified as Hindu in 2014.

## **Sexual orientation**

*Figure 9: Sexual orientation*

- 3 per cent of staff identify as same sex and same sex and opposite sex. We had 15 per cent of staff who chose not to specify their sexual orientation.
- 6 per cent of external applicants and 5 per cent of internal applicants did not specify their sexual orientation.

## **Gender Reassignment**

We collected data on gender reassignment for the first time in 2014 although we are unable to report on data due to the low numbers of staff in this category.

## **Next steps**

We know there is still work that remains to be done and we are doing more to take full advantage of the opportunity that diverse teams represent, in particular through our talent pipelines; attracting, developing, mentoring and sponsoring at all levels of the organisation. We have set up a number of staff networks and will report on the progress of these in our 2015 report.