

Our Profession Our Future

A Guide to Taking Action

Diversity, equity and inclusion is a shared responsibility across the legal profession. Organisations and individuals will be at different stages of their journey, and there is no single approach that will work for everyone.



This guide sets out examples of actions organisations may wish to consider as they strengthen participation, belonging, leadership and momentum within their own context, and aligned to the **Our Profession, Our Future: Diversity Equity and Inclusion Strategy**.

Use this guide to:

- reflect on current practices
- identify opportunities for improvement
- consider future priorities
- contribute to a profession-wide movement
- engage with available Law Society support.

Participation

Why it matters

Participation is about ensuring people from all backgrounds can see a place for themselves within the legal profession and access the support, opportunities and pathways needed to enter, progress and succeed throughout their careers.

1. Getting started

Organisations can:

- Promote career development conversations with employees.
- Encourage participation in mentoring, networking and professional development opportunities.
- Support early-career lawyers to understand progression opportunities.
- Increase awareness of the different pathways and career opportunities available across the profession.

What this looks like in practice

"We're helping our people understand their options and feel supported in navigating their careers."

2. Building momentum

Organisations can:

- Review career development and progression practices.
- Strengthen support during key career transition points.
- Implement mentoring, sponsorship or development initiatives.
- Engage with underrepresented groups and/or employees to understand barriers to progression.
- Create greater visibility of career pathways and opportunities within their organisation.

What this looks like in practice

"We're actively removing barriers and creating opportunities for people to progress and thrive."

3. Leading the way

Organisations can:

- Share career stories and role models from within their organisation.
- Support outreach activities with schools, universities and future talent.
- Contribute examples of effective practice to support profession-wide learning.
- Partner with professional associations and community groups.
- Actively support future leaders through mentoring, sponsorship and advocacy.
- Contribute to the development of future talent through outreach, mentoring or work experience opportunities.

What this looks like in practice

"We're contributing to the future of the profession and helping others learn from our experience."

New Zealand Law Society support available

Over the life of the strategy, the Law Society will continue to develop and provide:

- Career pathways resources and guidance.
- Development resources for different career stages.
- Mentoring opportunities.
- Networking opportunities.
- Career stories and role model profiles.
- Research and insights into progression barriers.
- Resources developed in partnership with diverse communities and professional associations.

Belonging

Why it matters

Belonging is about creating workplaces where people feel safe, respected, valued and able to contribute fully. Inclusive workplace cultures can support wellbeing, engagement, retention and long-term career success across the profession.

1. Getting started

Organisations can:

- Review workplace policies and practices through an inclusion lens.
- Encourage participation in inclusion learning and development opportunities.
- Create safe opportunities for employees to share feedback and experiences.
- Consider the accessibility of workplaces, resources and events.
- Explore opportunities for employee-led support networks, communities or informal connections.

What this looks like in practice

"We're building awareness, listening to our people and creating an environment where everyone feels welcome and supported."

2. Building momentum

Organisations can:

- Review recruitment, onboarding and progression practices.
- Strengthen manager capability to support inclusive and psychologically safe workplaces.
- Introduce workplace initiatives that support wellbeing, inclusion and belonging.
- Encourage participation in employee-led activities, networks or support groups.
- Use employee feedback to identify opportunities for improvement.
- Improve accessibility of workplace practices, communications and events.
- Consider flexible approaches that

support different working styles and life stages.

What this looks like in practice

"We're actively strengthening our workplace culture and creating an environment where people can thrive."

3. Leading the way

Organisations can:

- Regularly review workplace culture and inclusion outcomes.
- Share examples with NZLS of successful initiatives and lessons learned.
- Champion inclusive workplace practices within their organisations and across the profession.
- Support continuous learning and capability development.
- Create environments where diverse perspectives are welcomed and valued.
- Contribute examples of good practice to support profession-wide improvement.

What this looks like in practice

"We're creating an inclusive workplace culture and helping others learn from our experience."

New Zealand Law Society support available

Over the life of the strategy, the Law Society will continue to develop and provide:

- Practical guidance and resources to support inclusive workplaces.
- Learning and development opportunities, including webinars and CPD.
- Thought leadership, case studies and examples of effective practice.
- Accessibility guidance and resources.
- Research and insights to support evidence-based action.

Leadership

Why it matters

Leadership plays a critical role in shaping workplace culture, influencing decision-making and creating opportunities for people to succeed. Meaningful and sustainable progress depends on visible leadership commitment, accountability and a willingness to champion change.

1. Getting started

Organisations can:

- Consider how diversity, equity and inclusion aligns with organisational values and priorities.
- Begin conversations about the role leaders play in creating inclusive workplaces.
- Identify opportunities to

demonstrate visible commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.

- Encourage leaders to engage with available research, guidance and learning opportunities.
- Reflect on how leaders currently create opportunities for diverse voices and perspectives to be heard.

What this looks like in practice

"We're building awareness among leaders and developing a shared understanding of why diversity, equity and inclusion matters."

2. Building momentum

Organisations can:

- Review recruitment, onboarding and progression practices.
- Strengthen manager capability to support inclusive and psychologically safe workplaces.
- Introduce workplace initiatives that support wellbeing, inclusion and belonging.

- Encourage participation in employee-led activities, networks or support groups.
- Use employee feedback to identify opportunities for improvement.
- Improve accessibility of workplace practices, communications and events.
- Consider flexible approaches that

support different working styles and life stages.

What this looks like in practice

"We're actively strengthening our workplace culture and creating an environment where people can thrive."

3. Leading the way

Organisations can:

- Champion diversity, equity and inclusion within their organisation and across the profession.
- Share successful initiatives, challenges and learnings with NZLS.
- Support emerging leaders through mentoring, sponsorship and advocacy.

- Contribute examples of good practice to support profession-wide improvement.
- Participate in collective efforts to strengthen diversity, equity and inclusion outcomes across the legal profession.
- Act as visible role models for inclusive leadership.

What this looks like in practice

"We're leading by example, sharing what works and supporting progress across the profession."

New Zealand Law Society support available

Over the life of the strategy, the Law Society will continue to develop and provide:

- The Diversity Charter.

- Leadership networks and peer-learning opportunities.
- Thought leadership, research and best practice resources.

- Leadership profiling, case studies and examples of effective practice.
- Profession-wide insights and reporting to support informed decision-making.

Momentum

Why it matters

Momentum is about understanding where progress is being made, where challenges remain, and how evidence can be used to support positive change across the profession. By improving visibility of experiences, outcomes and trends, the profession will be better equipped to identify priorities, share learnings, make informed decisions over time and create systemic change.

1. Getting started

Organisations can:

- Develop an understanding of the diversity, equity and inclusion data already available within their organisation.
- Participate in Law Society surveys, research and engagement opportunities.

- Consider what information may help better understand the experiences of employees.
- Reflect on how diversity, equity and inclusion information is currently used to inform decision-making.
- Encourage open conversations about the value of data and evidence in supporting positive change.

What this looks like in practice

"We're building a better understanding of where we are today and identifying opportunities to improve."

2. Building momentum

Organisations can:

- Begin collecting and reviewing relevant workforce information where appropriate.
- Use employee feedback and workplace insights to inform decision-making.
- Establish processes to track

progress against organisational priorities.

- Use data and evidence to identify areas for improvement and measure change over time.
- Participate in profession-wide reporting, research and benchmarking opportunities.

What this looks like in practice

"We're using evidence and insights to inform action and understand whether our efforts are making a difference."

3. Leading the way

Organisations can:

- Regularly review and assess progress over time.
- Share insights, challenges and examples of effective practice with the profession.

- Use evidence to inform strategic decision-making and future priorities.
- Contribute to profession-wide understanding through participation in research, surveys and reporting.
- Champion transparency and continuous improvement.

What this looks like in practice

"We're using evidence to drive improvement and contributing to a stronger understanding of progress across the profession."

New Zealand Law Society support available

Over the life of the strategy, the Law Society will continue to develop and provide:

- Data collection guidance and resources.
- Profession-wide surveys.
- Annual reporting on trends and progress.
- Examples of effective practice and lessons learned.

Every organisation has a role to play in creating a profession where people can participate, grow and succeed at every stage.

Whether you are just getting started or already leading the way, progress is strengthened through collective action, shared learning and ongoing commitment.