



Corporate Strategy

2022–2025



The Law
Society

Foreword

The Law Society was founded in 1825 to be the independent professional body for solicitors in England and Wales. Our objectives are to promote the value of the profession, protect the justice system and support our members with a compelling offer.

During this nearly 200-year history we have been run by and for our members. With the passage of time the needs of our members have become increasingly more complex and diverse. The total number of solicitors is now over 200,000, with women accounting for 53% of practising certificate holders. Our corporate strategy for the next three years focuses on delivering our objectives for an increasingly diverse membership base in a challenging and uncertain future.

Our last five-year strategy focused heavily on transforming the Law Society by investing in new digital platforms and capabilities to improve the member experience. We also modernised 113 Chancery Lane and created a clearer operating model to focus the Law Society on the needs of members and on its public interest responsibilities.

The last five years has seen us weather the challenges of a major fire at our headquarters and the unprecedented global pandemic, which impacted our organisation, our members and society as a whole. In 2021, we supported our members by cutting our proportion of the Practising Certificate fee by 10% after many years of flat fees.

Given that the future may involve yet further change and volatility, we need to embed managing uncertainty into our plans. The pandemic, the Ukrainian crisis, and inflation will all cast long shadows across the coming years and affect all parts of the operating environment for our members, their clients, the government, regulators, and the Law Society itself.

Our new three-year corporate strategy (2022-2025) presented here is ambitious and member-focused. It is a strategy to grow service and value for our members funded by increased commercial income, as well as a rise in the Practising Certificate fee. Our focus needs to be on increasing member awareness and engagement with the Law Society. We recognise that our diverse membership requires different types of support to enhance their sense of belonging to the Law Society. Alongside this, we must continue to be an active champion for the justice system and the rule of law. Our public interest responsibility lies at the heart of our role as a professional body and is one of the ways we contribute to a sense of pride in the profession. This three-year strategy aims to meet all of these challenges and to ensure we are a truly modern professional body as we reach our 200th year in 2025.



Lubna Shuja, President



Ian Jeffery, CEO

Who we are

Our vision is to promote, protect and support solicitors, the rule of law and justice in England and Wales.

...members
contribute £60bn
to the UK economy

For nearly 200 years we have championed solicitors working in the public interest and their role in protecting rights and promoting justice. We have just over 200,000 members across England and Wales, who contribute £60bn to the UK economy. We are proud of our dynamic and diverse profession and its unrivalled expertise.

We promote the values expected of a world-class profession based on clarity, trust, respect, and excellence.

Our members are at the heart of all we do. We provide them with a powerful collective voice.

And we continue our work in the public interest, just as we have for nearly 200 years, in protecting the justice system and making sure it is accessible and applies to us all equally.

Background

Our last five-year strategy focused heavily on transforming the Law Society, given the many areas of improvement required across the organisation.

We invested in improved member services through digital platforms. We have modernised our home in 113 Chancery Lane and created a clearer operating model to focus the Law Society on the members' needs and on its public interest responsibilities.

No organisation can claim its change process is over and the Law Society is no different. However, whilst the next three years will be a much less intensive period of technology transformation, we do need to continue the process of change in how we prioritise our work and how we organise ourselves to ensure we are agile and able to respond to member need and policy developments.

The Law Society navigated a complex transformation programme whilst also managing to weather the challenges of the pandemic which impacted every part of our organisation and our membership. We supported our members by cutting our proportion of the PC fee by 10% following many years of reducing costs to members. Our new plan is a step change as it sees us growing our income once more, both through an increase via the PC fee and through higher commercial income.

This growth in income will underpin an ambitious three-year strategy that puts members and the justice system at the heart of our work. The three-year strategy takes us to our 200th anniversary in 2025, which is a significant milestone for the Law Society and an opportunity to celebrate the difference our justice system and our profession has made to society.



The three-year strategy takes us to our 200th anniversary in 2025

What have we learned from the past five years?

The past five years has impacted every part of the organisation and what we have learned informs our approach to delivery in this strategy.

Our ability to introduce new digital platforms has matured over the past three years and we will continue to embed an agile approach to our project teams. We responded quickly to support members during the initial shock of the pandemic and lockdown and will continue to responsively convene the right members to inform the support and guidance we provide on emerging issues. Just like every other organisation, we have adapted to remote and hybrid operations and will integrate this into our future approach for both staff and member engagement.

We have pursued a strategy over the past five years to keep the PC flat or reduce it and have driven down the cost base of the organisation but this is not a sustainable approach for the future. We are ambitious to deliver more for our members and must recognise that ambition requires resource to succeed.

Given the scale of change over the past five years, it is also clear that we need to be confident that our governance processes and controls are robust and, importantly, well-understood by all parts of the organisation. The Law Society staff and elected and appointed members will succeed through alignment to a single plan that focuses on delivery for members in an ever-changing operating environment.

Finally, the Law Society has an incredibly powerful voice when it is mobilised and focuses on the biggest issues that members care most about. We have the ability to shape and influence our environment but this takes discipline and a commitment to prioritisation.

Context

Politically and economically the next few years may be as uncertain and unpredictable as the past five years. We need to embed managing uncertainty into our plans.

The pandemic and the Ukrainian crisis will cast long shadows across the coming years and clearly impact all parts of the operating environment for our members, their clients, the government, regulators and the Law Society.

An assessment of the operating environment tells us that our focus needs to be on increasing member awareness and engagement with the Law Society, and that our service offer needs to be stronger, particularly given new challenges around rises in the cost of living and the impact on mental health and wellbeing.

We also recognise that member segments require different types of support to enhance their sense of belonging to the Law Society.

41%

...said they would like to improve their mental health, wellbeing and resilience

The current size and shape of the profession

During the last decade there have been notable changes in the make-up of the profession. As of July 2021:

- Women with practising certificates outnumbered men by **8,802** and accounted for **53%** of PC holders.
- Black Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups make up **14.2%** of all PC holders.
- The proportion of solicitors working in-house continues to rise and is now **25%**, but this is likely an underestimate where some PC holders recorded as not attached to an organisation are working in-house.
- **21%** of PC holders are under 35. The mean age of women is 42 and for men it is 47.
- There were **9,113** Private Practice firms in England and Wales. **46%** of firms are sole ownership but account for only **7%** of PC holders. In comparison, only **4%** of firms have 11 or more partners and these account for **56%** of PC holders.

We will continue to monitor the make-up of the profession on an annual basis so that it closely informs development of our priorities and member offer. Key to improving the member experience (awareness, engagement, sense of belonging and satisfaction) is being able to clearly define, articulate and communicate to each member segment the role of the Law Society in supporting and delivering value to our members, from a solicitor's first interaction with the Law Society, continuing throughout their career.

The operating environment

ECONOMY

The wider outlook for the UK economy remains very challenging and uncertain given the changing relationship with the EU and other trading partners, as well as the impact of the conflict in Ukraine. The annual inflation rate in the UK increased to 10.1 percent in July of 2022 – the highest rate for 40 years and the midterm outlook means that the prices of fuel, energy and food will continue to put pressure on firms and households.

A challenging and uncertain economy affects our members and their clients, and we aim to meet ever-changing needs through a robust corporate strategy that includes an ability to be agile and responsive.

POLITICAL

Our political environment remains highly unpredictable and alongside the economic circumstances outlined above, the Law Society faces challenges on several fronts in the pursuit of its public interest role and influencing work.

For any government, responding to the cost-of-living crisis and the fiscal deficit means that public finances face significant pressure. Adequate funding for the justice system is essential but will remain at risk in the coming years with a direct impact on our members and their clients.

At the same time, the profession has faced political and media attacks on the rule of law and for carrying out their professional duties. This is a deeply worrying development but also has a wider international impact. The UK is seen as a stable jurisdiction which underpins our attraction to global business and we must strongly defend this position.

Promoting access to justice and defending the rule of law will be a key part of what the Law Society stands for over the next three years. These are core values underlying both our justice system and our economic transactions. We will continue to campaign and lobby on these high priority areas for the profession, alongside creating new thinking about a justice system fit for the 21st century.

TECHNOLOGY

The Law Society published its “Future Worlds 2050” report in June 2021. This research captured the views of a range of experts and used other data sources to present predictions about future employment trends. The disruptive scenario estimates that in the next 10 years, due to the adoption of new technology employment in the UK, the legal services sector could be 10% lower than it would otherwise have been.

In the nearer term solicitors and other lawyers face many change questions associated with the use and adoption of technology. The type and scale of decisions for members to take will vary depending on area of practice and client types. We believe that innovation in services and service delivery will become an increasingly important differentiating factor. For that reason it is more important than ever for legal professionals to have access to information about potential future developments, so they are able to anticipate changes in client needs and the effects technology may have on how they, their clients and regulators operate.

ENVIRONMENT

Climate change stands to have far-reaching negative effects on the health of our planet including depletion of food and water sources, destruction of existing zones in low-lying coastal areas and devastation of biodiversity. The repercussions from climate change may also have a profound impact on the human ability to subsist in the worst affected zones, impacting human rights and access to justice.

Driven by that and supporting the wider policy and scientific responses, a key business and professional trend is the growing importance of ESG/CSR (Environmental, Social and Governance/Corporate Social Responsibility) and the regulatory landscape around it.

As a professional body it is important for us to be a source of information and support, helping all members from the sole practitioner to our largest firms meet their professional responsibilities in relation to climate change and achieve the goals set by them over and above those responsibilities.



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Our Strategic Objectives 2022-2025

To make the most powerful impact with our resources, we will focus on the priorities that matter most to our members as they address their professional and business challenges.

To maintain that focus and alignment with our members' priorities we have set four strategic objectives for the period 2022-2025. These objectives are to:

- Promote the value of the profession and provide a compelling member offer.
- Protect the justice system and make sure it applies to everyone equally.

- Maximise our potential by growing our commercial reach, by being efficient and sustainable.
- Be an employer of choice for people who want to make a difference.

In delivering these objectives we will use research, insight, and data to inform all our services, activities, and digital offerings. Where evidence is not available or clear, we will look to work with members and other partners to fill those gaps.

We will also break down barriers to make the Law Society more diverse and inclusive. Both through our people, making sure that we are responding to staff needs in a way that is relevant and meaningful to them and their circumstances, and by advocating for greater equality, diversity, and inclusion across the legal profession.

We will build our achievements over three years. Our four objectives will remain the same over that period, but we will develop more detailed plans on how we will deliver them during each year, as we work to increase capacity and capability, making sure we operate as a learning organisation and one that builds on its successes from year to year.



1

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

We know our members care deeply about their profession and as a professional body we have a unique role and responsibility in promoting the difference they make. Our profession is a critical contributor to every local community and economy across England and Wales. It is a British success story, a net exporter and the source of high quality and productive jobs. The profession offers a wide range of career options and its work upholds fundamental values of justice and fairness. Our strategic communications and engagement need to better reflect this complexity and the value the profession brings.

Alongside promotion of the value of the profession, we will also continue to build on the work of the past few years in refining our member offer. We worked with our members to define our value proposition and our aim is to ensure we offer value to all members whatever their career stage, specialism or place of work. The digital transformation of Law Society Learning and the creation of MyLS are just two examples of new platforms that can deliver

a more personalised and relevant experience which should ensure our members can more easily access the support and content they most value. Our value proposition guides the delivery of our services as it reflects the broad range of needs we must meet.

To deliver on this objective:

- We will engage and be influential with a much broader range of stakeholders and in different forums than before. This includes working with members at a local level to promote the profession across our cities and communities across England and Wales and promoting the profession as a key part of the UK services sector, with the City and in trade and economic policy.
- We will deliver targeted and relevant resources, such as our new Diversity & Inclusion Framework, that support key member segments including junior lawyers, in-house members, sole practitioners, freelancers and those leading our largest firms.

- We will finalise the transformation of our member services, ensuring that the experience of engaging with the Law Society is consistent and supports our members to get the most value from their engagement and membership.
- We will explore new forms of membership, recognising the importance of aspiring solicitors as the future of the profession.

We will track members' awareness of and engagement with the different elements of the value proposition. We will measure members' sense of belonging to the Law Society and their trust in our work and as a professional body. We will also track our success in communicating the value and impact of the profession

At the end of the three-year strategy we will have more engaged members who are aware of and value our offer and have a strong sense of belonging to the Law Society. Members will increasingly view the Law Society's member offer as a key support for the fulfilment of their professional goals and the provision of high-quality legal services.



2

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

We are a leading voice on legal policy issues, and we have the ambition to be more influential with a wider range of stakeholders. Not only is justice and the rule of law a basic underpinning of our own democracy, but it is also at the heart of the UK's international reputation and reach and therefore of huge value economically and strategically.

Our influencing, policy and campaigning work covers many areas of law and a large proportion of our resources is focused on responding to policy and regulatory developments. However, across the three years of this plan we will take a more proactive approach to some of the biggest challenges the profession and the justice system face.

We believe we are the only organisation with the reach and resources to act as a catalyst for change in public attitudes towards the justice system. Our profession understands the system and the importance of it and their expertise is at the heart of our evidence-based approach to influencing policy and regulation.

To deliver on this objective:

- We will launch a long-term programme to 'reframe' how we speak about the rule of law so that people better understand, and value, its fundamental contribution to our society.
- We will launch a campaign to create a vision for a 21st century justice system. The justice system has been under pressure for years, through funding cuts and policy decisions and this work aims to generate new policy thinking including the role of technology in driving change.
- We will engage our members and wider stakeholders in a major programme on professional ethics. We recognise the importance of exploring how professional ethics operate in a modern context where public attitudes are not static.
- We will continue the Law Society's strategic interventions in the courts to represent the profession in promoting access to justice, upholding the rule of law and acting where important legal principles are at stake.

We will track the difference we make on specific justice and regulatory policy issues, the influence we have with policymakers and our members' awareness of our work. We will also track the way public narratives develop over time although shifting public perceptions of justice and the rule of law is a longer-term goal that extends beyond this three-year strategy.

At the end of the three-year strategy, we will be recognised by decision-makers as the most influential organisation on justice issues that affect our members. Our expertise will have positively influenced legal policy and regulatory issues in the public interest and members will positively support our campaigns and influencing work.

3

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

Like every organisation, we face increased costs and business and economic uncertainty, however we have learned a lot over the past two years operating under the shadow of the pandemic. We have developed our commercial capabilities and changed how we deliver many of our commercial products to take advantage of the efficiencies and improvements that digital delivery brings.

We have successfully secured support for an increase in our share of the Practising Certificate Fee for 2022/23. This strengthens our financial position and allows us to maintain our reserves and to build them in subsequent years. Whilst we rely on the Practising Certificate Fee for the bulk of our funding, around 30% is generated through commercial activities. Some of our current portfolio of products are more sensitive to economic conditions than others however with careful management, our aim is to grow our commercial income over the coming three years.

Our new approach to delivery has driven greater member engagement resulting in more members using our services, greater geographical reach and improved income on key product lines. Our commercial foundations are stronger today than they have been in some years and working as one team with our volunteer members, we are confident of building on this to ensure we grow our income base.

To deliver on this objective:

- We will grow our commercial income through the launch of new products and services meeting key member needs. This includes ambitious plans to grow our accreditations portfolio and Law Society Learning products.
- We will secure more commercial partnerships with relevant organisations that provide value to our members with high quality content and offers.

- We will continuously assess our existing portfolio of services and how we deliver them to drive greater efficiencies from the digital capabilities and platforms we have invested in over the past five years.

We will track our commercial income over the three years of the strategy alongside an assessment of the profitability of our commercial products and services. We will track the commercial success of new products and services and our use of digital platforms to improve the member experience and deliver greater efficiencies.

At the end of the three-year strategy we will be a more successful and sustainable commercial business that is agile, adaptable, and delivering a highly valued suite of commercial products and services.





4

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

As we move towards our 200th anniversary, we want to celebrate our heritage but also look forward to being an organisation that attracts and retains diverse and talented people. Our members uphold the rule of law and our justice system, both key principles underpinning the values of our society. We know our team already feels passionately that this work makes a difference and are proud of their role and the part they play. This is a sound platform to build on and will enable us to enhance member value through organisational efficiencies, growth and developing our people.

The last two years have seen huge shifts in the way employers and their staff work. We do not believe there will be a return to the work patterns of the past, and so we have a shared challenge, with our team, of ensuring we create the right employee offer and work environment to set us apart from the competition.

Working alongside our staff is a dedicated community of members who provide the expertise that underpins our member offer and

our work to protect justice and the rule of law. This is a specialist capability that means we are in touch with the changing needs and perspectives of our diverse membership. Ensuring our staff and our member volunteers work together to a single plan will provide an even stronger platform for success. This united approach should create a thriving, dynamic and forward-thinking organisation where staff, Council and members work together to deliver our vision and purpose.

To deliver on this objective:

- We will embed a fully inclusive culture, ensuring our diversity and inclusion action plan enhances our business decisions and that our staff and members engaged in shaping the work of the Law Society represent the diversity of the profession and wider society.
- We will ensure our ways of working respond and reflect new and changed expectations around the workplace. This means clarity around hybrid and flexible work and a clear resourcing approach to attract the talent we need.
- We will deliver new approaches to future proof the organisation, including talent management, a new employee value proposition and employer brand and a refreshed reward and recognition framework.
- We will continue to develop the ways in which we engage members in the work of the Law Society encouraging them to continue sharing their time and expertise for the benefit of the profession and wider society.
- We will track key engagement measures across the three-year strategy alongside our gender and ethnicity pay gaps. We will continue to track diversity data and our record on recruitment and retention.
- At the end of the three-year strategy we will have a high performing, engaged and diverse workforce and volunteer member community.



Next steps

There is much to be done over the coming three years and working closely with our members and wider stakeholders will be essential to successful delivery.

As a member there are many ways to get involved. You can share views on Law Society Connect or get involved in our governance through standing for election to one of our committees or Council or be part of our member insight panel. Find out more at www.lawsociety.org.uk/membership/

For our stakeholders, we are keen to hear about where you think we can work better together to ensure we do as much as we can to meet our vision to promote, protect and support solicitors, the rule of law and justice in England and Wales.