

## Resolution

### Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2020

#### INTRODUCTION

Resolution has a growing membership of over 6,500 professionals all working in family justice. The organisation was founded by solicitors in the early 1980s who practiced in what was then known as matrimonial law. Today we are an organisation that reflects modern practice and modern families. Our membership has grown and expanded to include barristers, legal executives, mediators, financial advisers, therapists and counsellors, and others working to support families facing change.

Resolution works to support all our members, and, through them, their clients. As a result, equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) is a thread that must run throughout all our work. In 2018, we established an EDI committee to lead activity in this area to encourage, support and create diversity and inclusivity across Resolution.

One of the first tasks the Committee set itself was to understand the make-up of our membership. With input from a variety of specialists, including academics from the University of Bristol and the University of Westminster, we launched our first comprehensive equality and diversity survey in 2019.

The results of that survey - some of which are highlighted in this paper - have guided the development of our EDI strategy.

We know Resolution is not yet the organisation we want it to be. This is acknowledged by Resolution's Board, staff team and our committees. We are impatient to develop and hone our strategy so that we can move closer to our goal of being a truly inclusive, representative, and wholly welcoming organisation for members and their clients.

The events this year in the USA following the tragic murder of George Floyd in May, and the Black Lives Matter protests in the UK and across the world have brought our work into sharp focus.

#### HOW EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY SUPPORT RESOLUTION'S VISION

Resolution's work is rooted in our vision, mission and [our Code of Practice](#) which all members agree to follow.

Our Vision is to create "*a world where families facing change are supported to achieve constructive outcomes by a community of committed family justice professionals.*" This defines our strategy and shapes our activities.

Achieving greater equality and diversity within the organisation supports our vision, by ensuring our members are equipped to fully support all types of families to achieve constructive outcomes. By ensuring Resolution is a truly diverse and inclusive organisation we will be able to attract and support a wider range of professionals. This will increase the collective influence we have to improve the sector, benefiting everyone who comes into contact with the family justice sector.

## WHY CREATE AN EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY?

We want to truly reflect the diverse professional and wider community in which we work.

If we are to live up to our values, and strive to achieve our vision and mission, it is essential we take action to represent, support and serve all current and future members so they are equipped to support all types of modern families.

There is an established ethical case for creating and implementing an equality and diversity strategy and it is easy to understand that diversity within an organisation creates a diversity of perspectives. Less well-known, but just as important, is that creating an equal, diverse and inclusive organisation also increases creativity and productivity.

By creating and delivering on an EDI strategy we aim to remove barriers for existing and future members. We want to build equality and diversity into all aspects of Resolution work, ensuring we are - and we promote - an increasingly equal, diverse and inclusive membership.

Members across the organisation alongside the staff team will work to deliver the strategy and remove these barriers.

## UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITY ACROSS RESOLUTION

In order to understand the make-up of Resolution's membership the first step the EDI committee took was to collect statistical diversity data. A diversity survey ran between 15th March and 25th June 2019. Resolution had not systematically captured diversity data about the membership before this.

The survey was sent to all members (6,472 at the time) and they provided their information on a voluntary and anonymous basis. By the time the survey closed 3,096 members had completed the survey, representing a 48% response rate.

A report providing a clear and transparent overview of all the data collected and diversity across Resolution has been published to the membership and made publicly available to all. [The report is available on the Resolution website.](#)

The report aims to inform the membership about the diversity monitoring Resolution has undertaken. It will help the National Committee and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee as they develop a diversity strategy, policy and action plan for the organisation. It sets out the evidence base from which a strategy can be developed, and targeted actions can be identified.

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### WHAT WE FOUND OUT

#### Gender

Resolution membership is 27% male and 73% female, survey respondents were 24% male and 75% female. This split reflects anecdotal evidence about the gender make-up of family law but no detailed statistical data exists to corroborate this. The SRA reports that all lawyers in firms they regulate are much more evenly split (52% men and 48% women).

## Disability

Over 7.5% of Resolution members declared a disability when answering the survey. Although the UK workforce includes around 12% disabled workers, SRA statistics indicate that the lawyer population they regulate only includes 3% who declare they have a disability.

## Ethnicity

Although the ethnic background of Resolution's membership broadly reflects the ethnic background of the UK workforce, it does not reflect the population of SRA regulated lawyers. Resolution members are disproportionately white.

## Other areas

When compared to the population of lawyers regulated by the SRA the Resolution membership is older. Of all lawyers regulated by the SRA, 29% are aged between 25 - 34 and just 20% of Resolution members fall into this age category.

Compared with the population of all lawyers regulated by the SRA, those affiliated with the Muslim faith are most underrepresented in the Resolution membership. To a lesser extent so are those who reported they are Hindu, Buddhist and Jewish.

Resolution members are more likely to have been educated in a UK state school than the lawyer and private client lawyer population regulated by the SRA.

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## WHAT WE'RE DOING WITH THE DATA

The report provides us with a snapshot we can use in two ways: as an evidence base; and as a benchmark.

As an evidence base the data shows us that the following areas should be considered in more detail (this is not an exhaustive list):

- The age of the Resolution membership and whether steps should be taken to increase the representation of younger members.
- The areas where Resolution could support members with disabilities and improve access to the services we provide.
- The ways Resolution membership, the benefits, services and activities we provide can be made more attractive and inclusive for members from all ethnic backgrounds.
- The steps that can be taken to increase representation from members across all ethnic backgrounds
- How Resolution can support members with caring responsibilities and improve access to the services we provide.

The National Committee and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee have used this evidence to develop a diversity strategy for the organisation.

Once an action plan has been implemented, we will use this data as a benchmark so we can measure the success (or not) of the action we've taken.

## STRATEGIC AIM & OBJECTIVES

Our aim is to create an inclusive, representative and wholly welcoming organisation for all members, potential members and their clients.

Our strategic objectives will drive the activities we undertake to achieve our aim. They are to:

- Embed equality, diversity and inclusion within Resolution
- Reflect the diversity of the sector workforce within our membership
- Support the engagement of all groups across Resolution
- Support and promote EDI within the family justice sector

## EMBED EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION WITHIN RESOLUTION

In order to embed EDI within Resolution, equality, diversity and inclusion must run through everything we do. We must address attitudes and behaviour as well as cultivate a truly inclusive organisational culture. This involves developing data, knowledge, understanding, resources and processes that support members, committees and staff to deliver.

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### ACTIVITIES

#### **a) Develop and promote Resolution EDI strategy and policies**

Our strategy - developed in partnership between members and staff - sets out our ongoing commitment to addressing inequalities and encouraging inclusion across Resolution. The policies and processes that will be created as a result transform the strategy into everyday practice across the organisation.

#### **b) Undertake regular diversity monitoring**

Regular, systematic equality monitoring will build on the data already collected and enable Resolution to review progress and respond to changes by developing further approaches to improving participation and diversity.

#### **c) Address non-physical barriers and attitudes**

We recognise everyone should share the responsibility for achieving equality. Our plans to address attitudes and behaviour include consultation with members, training and events.

#### **d) Continued development and support for the EDI committee and their work**

Resolution's National Committee is ultimately responsible for the delivery of the strategy, but the EDI committee will work with the staff team to implement the strategy and monitor progress.

The committee will continue to identify opportunities to promote EDI within the organisation and any additional ongoing support they need.

## REFLECT THE DIVERSITY OF THE FAMILY JUSTICE SECTOR WITHIN OUR MEMBERSHIP

We aim to diversify membership, specifically focusing on targeting under-represented groups; young professionals, Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) people, members of some religious groups, trans people and people who identify as bisexual.

### ACTIVITIES

#### **a) Promote a more diverse representation of Resolution**

Ensuring the visuals and imagery we use across all platforms represent Resolution's efforts to encourage diversity and inclusivity, and shape perception to ultimately make sure membership is more welcoming to groups who have been traditionally underrepresented.

This, and related activities, will form part of Resolution's ongoing marketing plan which will ensure we support and encourage contributions from people from diverse backgrounds such as speakers and attendees at conferences and other events.

#### **b) Work with YRes to develop a targeted recruitment plan for young family law professionals**

YRes is Resolution's network of family law professionals at the start of their careers. This network can support the development of targeted recruitment materials and events that will highlight the benefits of Resolution membership specifically for young and newly qualified professionals.

#### **c) Develop targeted recruitment activities**

The EDI committee has already identified a number of professional organisations working with, or advocating for, family justice professionals who identify with protected characteristics. By working together, we can cross-promote membership and ultimately develop targeted recruitment materials or activities.

#### **d) Diversify Resolution channels of promotion**

Resolution will explore new channels to promote membership to a wider and more diverse audience.

## SUPPORT THE ENGAGEMENT OF ALL GROUPS ACROSS RESOLUTION

It is vital to support the engagement of all groups across Resolution's structure. There will be a particular focus on women, gay and lesbian members who are already well represented within general membership; and removing barriers to access by providing support and help to disabled members and those with caring responsibilities.

#### **a) Expand monitoring to measure engagement levels and build on good representation**

To build on good levels of representation and ensure diverse voices are involved in decision-making, we will monitor diversity at an active level of the membership. This will show whether women, lesbian and gay member representation specifically translates to committee participation, training

and event attendance. As a result, we will develop activities to build on good practice and remove barriers where they exist.

**b) Develop targeted channels of participation to support diverse voices in Resolution decision making processes**

Where groups are underrepresented, for example, within committees and at events we will develop channels to encourage participation. Activities considered will include training and events addressing issues affecting these members and the development of equality groups as supportive and specific channels of engagement.

**c) Remove barriers to accessing services and participation for disabled members and members with caring responsibilities**

While some consideration has already been given to removing barriers to participation at Resolution events there will be a full review to inform a plan to make the necessary reasonable adjustments and ensure that relevant access information is always shared.

We will develop an EDI checklist that will incorporate considerations for events across all the equality strands that will benefit members with caring responsibilities.

## SUPPORT AND PROMOTE EDI IN THE FAMILY JUSTICE SECTOR

Resolution recognises that what happens within its membership can be a reflection of what's happening in the sector our members represent. A commitment to support work addressing inequalities and increasing diversity across family justice will improve working conditions for Resolution members and be reflected in the diversity within Resolution membership.

**a) Support sector wide EDI initiatives, or commission research investigating inequalities within family law**

We aim to support research that will raise awareness of EDI issues. We will support industry wide action to address inequalities and promote diversity. Investigating diversity in family justice at a senior level is already an area of interest.

**b) Review student recruitment**

Resolution has already started a project focussed on the benefits we provide to students and student recruitment which will support young and new professionals entering the sector. By improving the service we provide to students and by recruiting a wider pool of students, we will better understand student members and the concerns students and new practitioners have.

**c) Educate employers in the sector on the benefits of EDI for their business and provide advice on how to improve equality and diversity**

We will promote EDI to employers within the sector and provide resources to support action. This will include highlighting the growing evidence to support a business case for diversity as a way to further engage employers, developing guidance and training.

## KEY ACTIVITIES AND PRIORITIES

Over the next 18 months we will put into place the building blocks needed to achieve our aim. We have identified priority activities to undertake to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion is developed, implemented and promoted within our membership and - ultimately - more widely within the sector.

By December 2021 we will have completed the following:

Strategic Objective	Focus	Actions	When
<b>Embed equality and diversity across Resolution</b>	Develop and promote EDI strategy and policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish EDI strategy</li> <li>• Consult with committees, wider membership and staff team</li> <li>• Publish an EDI policy</li> <li>• Promote strategy and policy to the membership</li> </ul>	October 2020
	Address non-physical barriers and attitudes within Resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organise equality training for committee Chairs and staff members</li> <li>• Speak to all Resolution central committees about EDI</li> <li>• Develop EDI guidance for the wider membership</li> <li>• Develop support resources to deliver on EDI for committees</li> </ul>	March 2021
	Regular diversity monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedule a biennial diversity survey for the membership</li> <li>• Review equality monitoring practice across Resolution and identify areas where relevant and important data can be collected and reported on</li> </ul>	October 2021
<b>Reflect the diversity of the sector workforce within our membership</b>	Proactively promote a more diverse representation of Resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capture and promote more diverse images of Resolution membership</li> <li>• Engage more diverse speakers across Resolution events</li> <li>• Deliver content covering equality and diversity to support member understanding and delivery and to support members affected by inequality</li> </ul>	June 2021

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with affinity groups in the sector to explore partnership working</li> <li>• Develop targeted recruitment materials for underrepresented groups</li> </ul>	
<b>Support the engagement of all groups across Resolution</b>	Remove barriers to accessing services and participation with a particular focus on members with disabilities and those with caring responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an EDI checklist for all Resolution events</li> <li>• Complete a full review of barriers to access at Resolution's Office and implement all adjustments</li> <li>• Improve and update access information for Resolution hosted events on our website</li> <li>• Review training and learning programme to ensure a flexible approach to delivery</li> </ul>	March 2021
<b>Support and promote EDI within the family justice sector</b>	Review student recruitment into family law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement student recruitment and retention campaign</li> <li>• Survey student member needs and concerns</li> </ul>	December 2020
	Educate employers in the sector on the benefits of EDI for their firms and advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop resources to support employers in family law to understand the benefits of equality and diversity and how to deliver an inclusive culture within their workplaces</li> </ul>	December 2021

## MEASURING SUCCESS

We aim to create an inclusive, representative and wholly welcoming organisation for all members, potential members and their clients. Our strategy and objectives have been created so we can work towards achieving that aim.

In order to measure our progress towards achieving our aim and objectives we will measure:

- Diversity across the membership
- Diversity across engaged members, e.g. on committees and at events
- Attitudes towards, and perception of, the diversity of the Resolution membership

Each area of work will have focussed measures of success attached to them but, overall, the three points above will remain central. Improvements (or not) to those numbers will demonstrate whether we have started to achieve our aim (or not).

## LONG TERM ACTIVITIES

Our aim, objectives and activities will be reviewed each year so we can respond to the progress we've made.

## CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

Recent events in America and across the world bring sharply into focus the context and increased urgency for this work within our organisation. There is no doubt among Resolution's key decision-makers that the essential activity to create an inclusive, representative and wholly welcoming organisation for all is of vital importance, and has been for some time.

The activity and aims outlined in this strategy will move us closer to achieving our vision. Some activities will be easier than others. Some goals will be achieved quicker than others. There will undoubtedly be challenges along the way but we are committed to rising to these.

Resolution's National and Executive Committee unanimously support this strategy. Together with our committee chairs and staff team taking it forward, the organisation will have a renewed focus, energy and shared commitment to improving the experience of all our members, reflecting the importance of this strategy in helping us realise our Vision, Mission and Values.