

Diversity & Inclusion

A review of the Irwin Mitchell vision for building an inclusive and supportive organisation

Irwin Mitchell is proud to be different.

We celebrate the diversity of our people, our clients and the communities in which we operate.

The issue of diversity is a key element of our wider social responsibility (SR) agenda, and as a firm we have already begun our diversity journey. This is an area that is increasingly being given prominence by the Law Society, government, external stakeholders and major corporate clients.

Clearly our diversity awareness on this issue has a direct business impact through our reputational position in the legal services community and in relation to our major clients, who have clear commitments in this area.

This brochure will chart the progress of our diversity work to date and outline our strategic aims over the coming year.

“Diversity is a key leadership issue for the firm. Visible and committed leadership, together with tangible actions and sustained momentum will be the essence in delivering our vision for the firm...”

Mike Napier, Senior Partner

“Over the past year you will have seen regular headlines in the Lawyer and other publications highlighting what major law firms are doing on diversity issues. Why are law firms investing so much in this area and promoting their successes? Because they appreciate, as we do, that a strong commitment to diversity is good for their people, good for their business and good for doing business with other like minded organisations. As if these benefits were not enough, it is absolutely right for a modern business to commit to this agenda.”
Stuart Henderson, Regional Managing Partner, Birmingham



Review of 2007: Start of a Journey

In May 2007 the diversity agenda was launched. Our initial goal was to build a baseline of commitment and understanding around diversity within the firm.

Below is our assessment of the progress that was made against that agenda:

- The firm's overall diversity policy was agreed and circulated to all our people with appropriate communications.
- Externally facilitated diversity awareness training was delivered for all Partners, Associate Directors and Associates. Feedback indicates that it was well received, creating an increased awareness of this topic.
- Stage 2 training is now being delivered to all supervisory levels of the firm through the Passport to Leadership programme. This training is aimed at providing practical management skills within the arena of diversity.
- There will be a diversity module included within the Development Academy for the 2008 cohort. Some practice areas have already introduced diversity training for their lawyers.
- IM.com and intranet content - we have published our policy statement and indicated links to other websites relating to the topic on the intranet.
- We have identified key organisations such as Opportunity Now (gender), Race for Opportunity and Black Solicitors Network (race), Stonewall (sexual orientation), Go Able (disability) and Age Concern (age). We are now putting in place a programme of communication which will allow us to establish relationships with these organisations and join as committed corporate members where appropriate. We have recently developed a relationship (alongside many other major law firms) with 'Equality Britain'.
- Our programme of internal communications was aimed at engaging our people on this agenda. We delivered IM News articles on different aspects of faith. However, we recognise that there is much more to do in this area and a programme of communications for 2008 is currently being finalised. We have a calendar of diversity related events for 2008 which we will consider from the perspective of internal and possible external communications.
- Establishing a 'Diversity check' in relation to policy definition within the firm is in place through the activities of the HR team in association with the Policy Review Group.
- Diversity statistics gathering and publishing – we made progress updating the information we hold in relation to the demographic profile of our workforce which will enable the firm to record and potentially publish diversity statistics. Additionally, we participated in the 'Black Solicitors Network' survey for 2007 where we were ranked 19th out of the top100 law firms.

"The Board's reflective assessment of 2007 when we met in January was that we made a decent start in this area but we have a great deal more to do in leading and demonstrating our commitment to diversity and inclusivity both internally and in our business communities."

Howard Culley, Managing Partner



Overall Strategy Direction – 2008 – A Year of Building Foundations

Over the next year we aim to complete delivery of the strategic objectives for 2007 and then move to embed diversity and inclusion deeper into the firm’s agenda through:

Report to the Partnership

This formal brochure will become an annual review of our successes, misses and the agenda for the following year.

Broader Coalition of Leadership

Responsibility for diversity rests with Stuart Henderson (Board Member for PI) on behalf of the Partnership with all other members of the Diversity Working Group being from within the HR & Training and Business Development and Communication teams. Going forward, we have broadened the involvement and leadership within the Partnership to include in the Diversity Board:

Alison Eddy from PI in London
Jane Wright from PI in Leeds
Gary Walters from ILR in Sheffield

Diversity Charter

We will seek to define a core set of ‘promises’ to staff that will represent deeply held and protected values in this area. These will be communicated as key principles that the firm and its leadership embody. The Charter will be a formal document that will be physically signed by the firm’s Senior Partner, Managing Partners and Practice Area Heads. Copies of the charter will then be displayed within the reception and within the boardrooms of each of our offices.

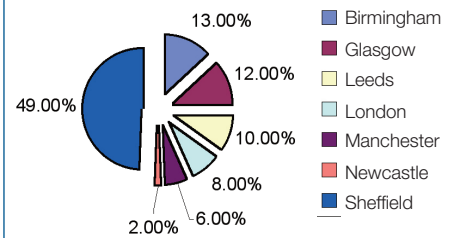
Communications

Building on 2007, we will revamp and re-energise our intent that all internal communications media (particularly IM News) will have regular features reflecting the diversity of our organisation.

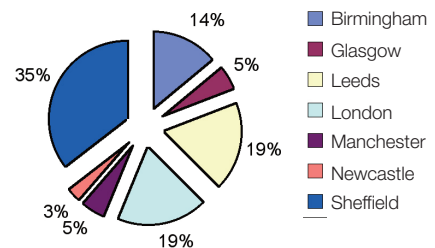
We intend to also develop a ‘vox pop’ video which will be designed to be an uplifting reflection of the diversity of Irwin Mitchell – its locations, work types, people, clients etc. under the heading and messaging that ‘Irwin Mitchell is proud to be different’. This video can be used at Practice Area away days, full or half year AGM and also as part of the induction of all new entrants to the firm. The video will ground what we believe and ‘stand for’ in this area. It will not be about minority interest groups and stereotypical diversity issues, it will be a celebration of our firm and the people who are a part of it.

We will also be developing a sophisticated diversity section on IM.com and sensitively looking for opportunities for positive media coverage on diversity issues.

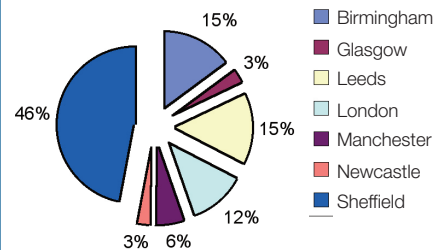
Staff Split across Irwin Mitchell offices



Partners Split across Irwin Mitchell offices



Associates Split across Irwin Mitchell offices



Internal listening groups

We will be launching the opportunity for staff members to join together in establishing a series of voluntary 'listening groups' in relation to sexual orientation, gender, age, ethnicity, disability and faith. These groups will be voluntary and will meet to discuss 'what its like to be... in Irwin Mitchell'. These groups will help us to shape the action required to ensure we are providing an inclusive and supportive working environment. These groups will also work alongside the external organisations that we choose to partner with.

Each listening group will meet no more than twice a year and will be sponsored and facilitated by a senior member of the Partnership as outlined below:

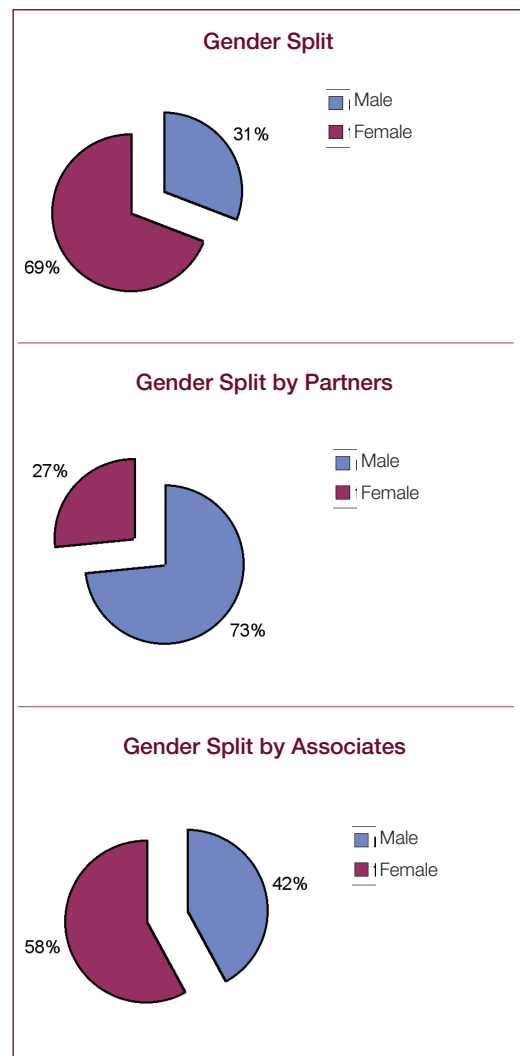
Listening Group	Facilitator
Age	Gary Walters
Gender	Alison Eddy
Disability	Niall Baker
Race	Craig Marshall
Sexual orientation	Jane Wright

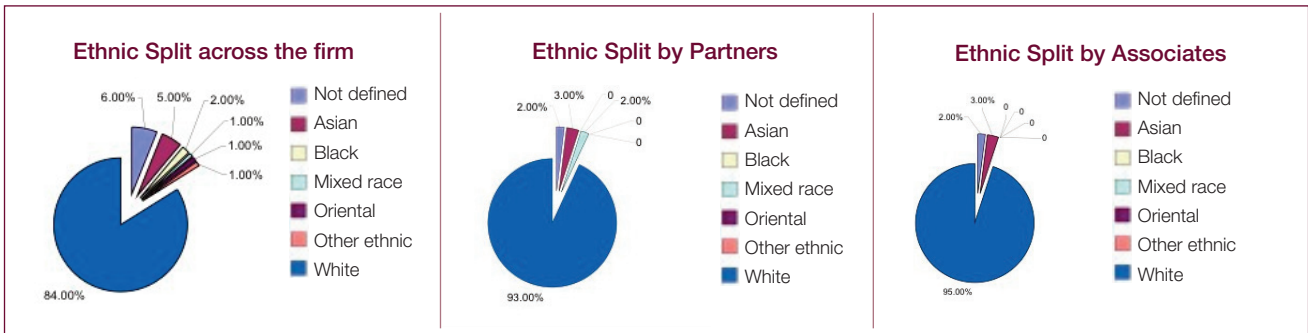
Leadership Development & Training

From July 2008 diversity will become a core part of the induction programme. This will be structured as a one hour sesion on what our stance and beliefs are, based on the 'Irwin Mitchell is proud to be different' messaging. When completed the 'vox pop' video will form a core part of this.

HR Statistical analyses

We have sought to gather increased data regarding the diversity of employee base as part of the 'data cleanse' activity for the implementation of the new HR system. Outlined below are some initial diversity statistical analyses which will be built upon throughout 2008 and 2009.





And so the journey continues...

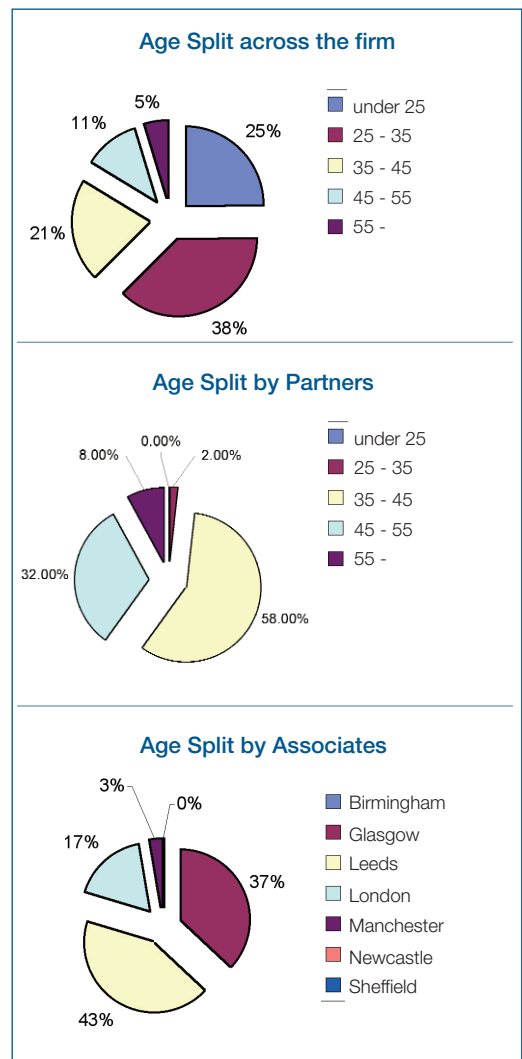
Having reviewed the achievements that have been made over the last 12 months, it is clear that solid foundations have now been laid and we are looking forward to building on this over the coming year.

As a firm, we remain thoroughly committed to creating an inclusive and supportive organisation in which our people can flourish and from which our clients can prosper.

A strong commitment to diversity is absolutely vital to ensure the continuing success of our business regardless of the prevailing economic conditions. It is a 'must have' for any modern business. Irwin Mitchell will maintain its commitment to the diversity agenda and other social responsibility issues as part of the continued investment in the long term future of the firm.

"We are a people business, it's easy to say but it's true. We need the highest calibre people from all backgrounds and sectors of the community and the right environment for them to contribute their best to deliver sustained growth for the future."

Andy Chalmers, HR Director



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