



RESHAPING
LEGAL SERVICES

Welcome

6 March 2025

The King's Fund, London W1G 0AN



LEGAL SERVICES
BOARD





Dean Dunham

Conference Host, Solicitor and LBC Radio Presenter



Catherine Brown

Interim Chair, Legal Services Board



Dean Dunham

Conference Host, Solicitor and LBC Radio Presenter



Tania Hardcastle

Conference Online Host and Regulatory Policy Manager,
Legal Services Board



Research digest: regulatory approaches to improving access to justice



Tom Hayhoe

Chair, Legal Services Consumer Panel



Dr Liz Curran

Associate Professor, Nottingham Law School



Nottingham
Law School
Nottingham Trent University

Reshaping Legal Services Conference ***6 March 2025***

Presentation by Dr Liz Curran
Research, Report & Need for Action
‘Regulatory Leadership on Access to Justice’

**Authors: Nottingham Law School, Legal Services Consumer
Panel and Legal Services Board**

Regulatory Leadership on Access to Justice

Overarching question:

“How can regulators be more creative in using their powers, levers and influence to find multiple (and creative) solutions to the problem of unmet legal needs as it relates to access to justice?”

Given that “improving access to justice” is a statutory regulatory objective, our report makes suggestions on how to make access to justice an intentional and clear focus for regulators’ work.

The Research Team: Project Lead Dr Curran, Project Lead (Access to Justice expert), Professor Ching (Legal Education Regulation expert) and Professor Jarman (Legal Regulation expert)



Sustainable Development Goal 16.3

Access to Justice

- A **people centred approach** focuses on addressing people's everyday justice and needs
- Aims to improve the lives of all members of society through access to effective and efficient dispute resolution mechanisms, legal protection of human rights and the ability for all people to live in safety and security
- Starting from an understanding of people's needs, experiences and expectations, a people-centred approach aims to strengthen systems to deliver justice and security services for all

(‘OECD Framework and Good Practice Principles for People-Centred Justice’ (OECD 2021) UNDP, ‘Human Rights: The Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice, and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development Phase IV (2022-2025)’)

Key points - What regulators can do to improve access to justice (emphasising importance of LSB leadership)

To address the access to justice problem we need to:

- Be **bold**
- Be **creative** – facilitate innovation
- Have LSB take a **leadership** and convening role – with a deliberate and intentional focus on access to justice improvement
- Take **action**
- Take **calculated risks** informed by overseas experience (next slide)
- Start **culture change** which takes time, so report has immediate, short, medium and long term aims
- Have an **outcome plan** (or Theory of Change)

Key points - What are regulators in other jurisdictions doing

- A2J is not about legal aid, it is about equality before the law underpinning democracy/rule of law and quality legal service and consumer protection
- Regulators all have a role to play in A2J but not just legal regulators. Consider opportunities in health, insurance, financial, and utility sectors
- ***Move beyond saying 'it's not possible' to what's possible*** e.g. IOLTA, Investment, A2J grants and paramount duties/ expectations of the profession across all statutory objectives rather than reductionist 'best interest of clients'
- Culture shift occurred in Australia since the 1990s, often led by regulators. 10 years ago, FCA thought 'consumer duty' could not happen

Key points - How regulators can help with early advice and support intermediaries

- Research barriers to early advice (e.g. low capability, trust, navigability) and support for trusted intermediaries (Victoria) and paralegals (Saskatchewan)
- Reconsider homogenous approaches to regulation - assuming models are all for profit and commercial reduces scope for A2J agencies
- Explore integrated legal practice such as health justice partnerships to overcome barrier of service users having to go to multiple providers
- Share effective practice - How can professions and regulators help? What is working already? What is replicable?
- Urge Government/Parliament to ensure legislative change in line with the recommendations in the report

To address harm caused by people not having access to justice — *(e.g. poor housing, lack of income, being unsafe, discrimination etc.)* requires:

- a problem-solving and growth mindset;
- a willingness to look at the evidence to inform strategic action, practice and improve development;
- innovation, exploration and creativity; and
- measurement of positive impacts on access to justice of implementation and action, to inform, recalibrate and gauge progress and to inform future steps.

In the room - Turn to the person next to you (or in front or behind you) and each answer this question:
(Total 2 minutes)

Online – Contribute your answer to this question in the chat channel:

“What more can you do to address access to justice?”

Continue this conversation later in the break.

‘From Little Things Big Things Grow’ (Paul Kelly & The Messengers, 1991)

Contact

- Liz.Curran02@ntu.ac.uk (Project Lead)
- Jane.Jarman@ntu.ac.uk
- Jane.Ching@ntu.ac.uk

Community collaboration to improve access to justice: What can we learn and what's holding others back?



David Abbott

Session Chair and member of the Legal Services Consumer Panel



Laura Pinkney

Head of NLS Legal, Nottingham Law School, Nottingham Trent University



Dan Hopewell

Director of Knowledge and Innovation, Bromley by Bow Health Partnership

Emma Bates

Director on Positive Action on Poverty, Central England Law Centre

Dr Sarah Nason

Senior Lecturer, Bangor University



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Let's take a break

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Keynote address



Lloyd Hatton MP

MP for South Dorset, chair of the APPG on Fair Banking and a member of the Anti-Corruption and Responsible Tax APPG

From 'private and confidential' to public accountability: raising ethical standards in legal services



Dan Neidle

Tax Lawyer, Tax Policy Associates Ltd



Dean Dunham

Conference Host, Solicitor and LBC Radio Presenter

The role of regulation in raising ethical standards



Richard Orpin

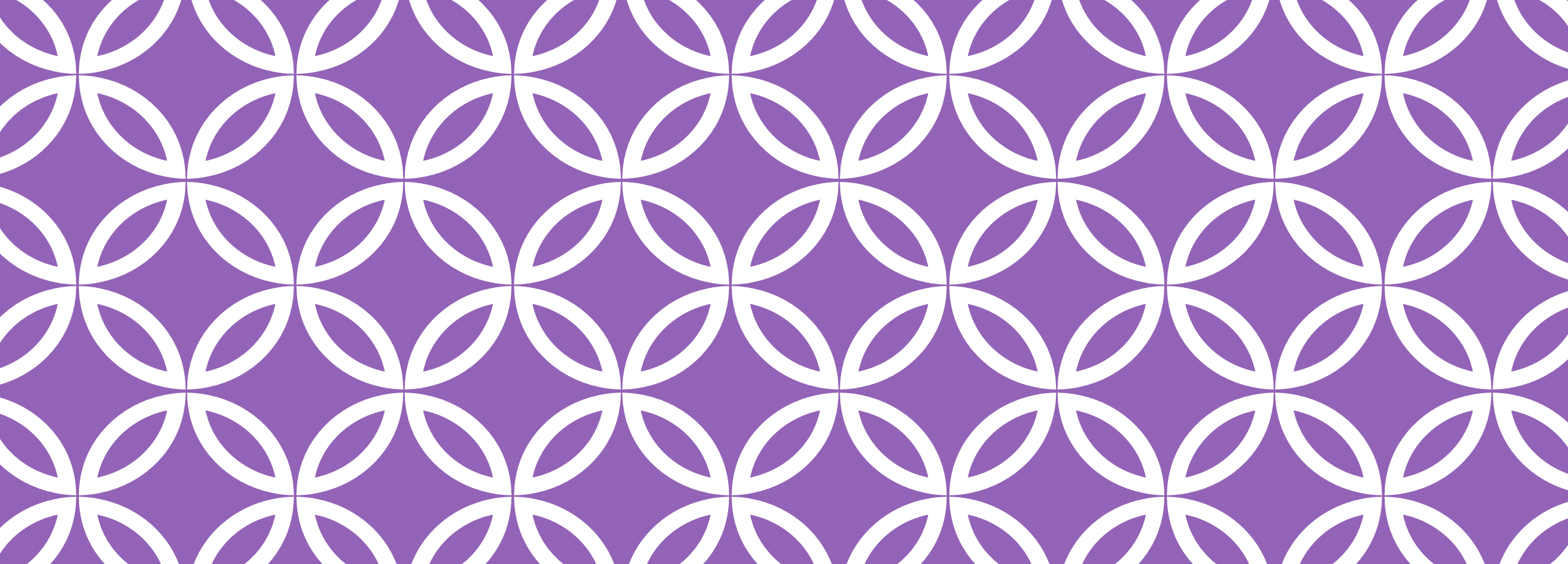
Director - Regulation & Policy, Legal Services Board

A New Ethical Framework for In-House Solicitors



Dr Jim Baxter

IDEA Centre Professional Ethics Consultancy Team
Leader, University of Leeds



AN ETHICAL PRACTICE FRAMEWORK FOR IN-HOUSE SOLICITORS

Jim Baxter
LSB conference 6.3.25

WHO AM I?

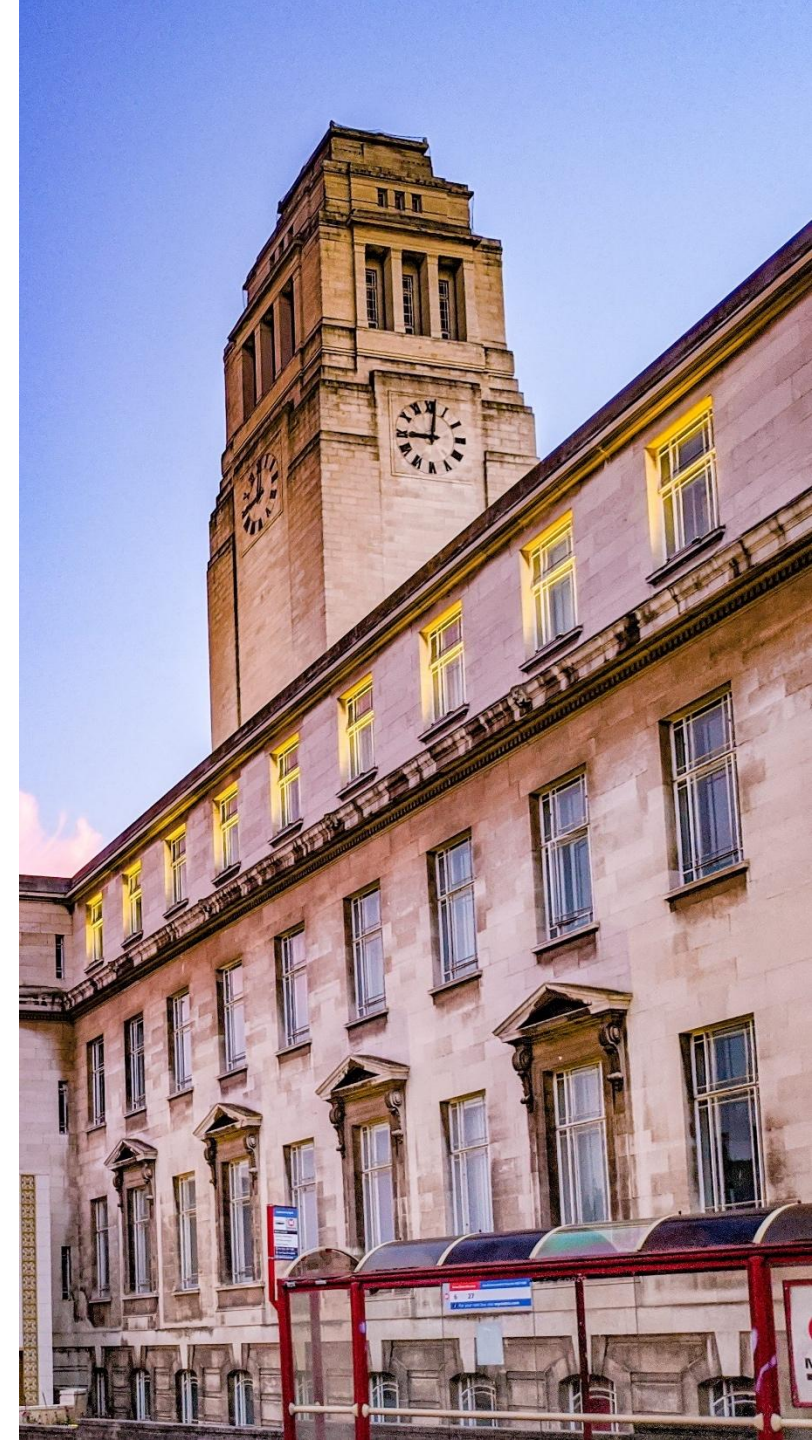
Dr Jim Baxter

Professional Ethics Consultant

IDEA, The Ethics Centre

University of Leeds

Commissioned by the Law Society to produce an Ethical Practice Framework for In-House Solicitors



WHY IN-HOUSE SOLICITORS?

A growing (26% of solicitors in England and Wales) and relatively under-examined segment of the profession.

Potentially exposed, vulnerable.

In-house ethics is complex (and interesting!).

Part of the Law Society's professional ethics programme:
Changing Ethical Landscapes.



WHAT DID WE DO?

Three rounds of research:

- Survey
- Expert interviews
- Further interviews and focus groups

Scoping and development phases.



WHAT IS THE ETHICAL PRACTICE FRAMEWORK?

Not regulation. Complementary to the SRA's guidance for in-house solicitors.

Supporting in-house solicitors in meeting their ethical challenges.

Helping them balance **influence** and **independence**.

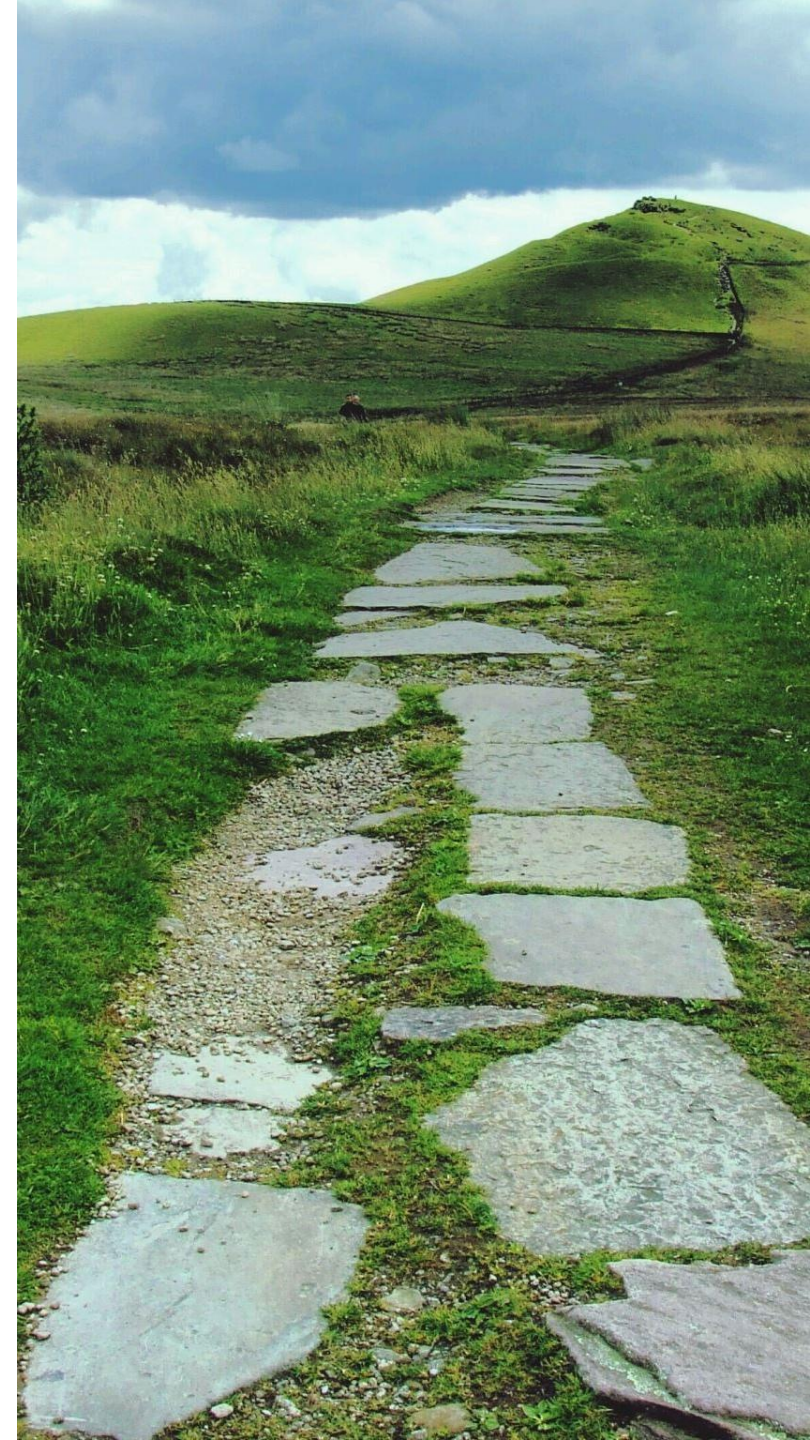
Three levels of support:

- Individual understanding and skills.
- Strengthening the position of in-house solicitors in organisations.
- Professional support and solidarity.

WHAT NEXT?

Launching soon in beta/consultation phase (date tbc).

Feedback from Law Society members to be reflected in final version.





Use the QR code to register to be kept informed:

<https://act.lawsociety.org.uk/page/158053/subscribe/1>

And/or get in touch at j.d.baxter@leeds.ac.uk



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Let's get some lunch

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Beyond policy and theory: how can regulators and leaders keep ethics at the heart of legal practice?



Professor Stephen Mayson

Session Chair and Strategist, independent legal thought leader and advocate for social and organisational fairness



Thorrun Govind

Solicitor, Brabners, Pharmacist, Former Chair, Royal Pharmaceutical Society, and Committee Member, The Law Society



Sophie Wales

Director of Regulatory Policy, Institute of Chartered Accountants



Dr Roger Barker

Director of Policy and Corporate Governance, Institute of Directors



The role of regulation in encouraging a fair, healthy, diverse and inclusive legal profession



Craig Westwood

Chief Executive, Legal Services Board

Legally Disabled? Five years on



Professor Debbie Foster

Professor of Employment Relations
and Diversity, Cardiff Business School



Lizzie Hardy

Associate, Eversheds Sutherland, and Committee
Member, The Disabled Solicitors Network

Chronology of the Legally Disabled? Project

- 2017** Research began on **'Legally Disabled? The Career Experiences of Disabled People Working in the Legal Profession'**. Led by Prof. Debbie Foster, with Dr Natasha Hirst, of Cardiff Business School. Funded by **'Disability Research for Independent Living and Learning (DRILL)'**, from a **National Lottery grant**. Co-produced with the **Law Society's Disabled Solicitors Network (DSN)**.
- Jan 2020** Legally Disabled? research **findings and recommendations** launched
- 2020-21** On-line **roundtables** co-hosted by researchers, the DSN and Law Society
- Nov 2020** Second report: **The Impact of Covid-19 on the employment & training of disabled lawyers in England and Wales: Opportunities for job redesign and best practice'**
- Dec 2020** **'Easy wins and Action Points for Disability Inclusion'** guidance
- Sep 2021** **'Reasonable Adjustments in Organisations – best practice for disability inclusion'** guidance
- Nov 2021** First two firms sign-up to Law Society's **'Project Rise'** initiative
- Nov 2023** **'Becoming a solicitor as a disabled student'** from the Law Society
- May 2024** **'Beginning your organisation's digital accessibility journey'** guidance
- Nov 2024** **'A guide to disability terminology and language'**



Leading effective action, impact and accountability to advance equality and diversity in the legal profession



Patrick McCann

Session Chair, Chair, City of London Law Society Training Committee and Co-CEO of City Century



Elizabeth Rimmer

Chief Executive, LawCare



Dr Natasha Shotunde

Barrister, Garden Court Chambers, and Chair, Black Barristers Network



Sarah Harriott

Senior Lawyer, West Northamptonshire Council, and Director, Lawyers in Local Government



Reena Parmar

Counsel, Freshfields, and Chair, Law Society's Disabled Solicitors Network committee



Olive Craig

Senior Legal Officer, Rights of Women



Catherine Brown

Interim Chair, Legal Services Board