

London Region sets out collective commitment to EDI



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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is something that has become “popular” over the last few years but as a committee we were keen to find out what more we could be doing. We had noticed at our events that despite having probably the most diverse potential membership, this was not reflected by attendance. This concerned us and we decided we wanted to make a change. Richard Shaw, the Chair of the London Regional Committee, invited Remyhs Baker from the Resolution EDI committee to speak to our committee about EDI towards the end of last year.

Remyhs kindly shared her knowledge with us and her ideas. As a committee we decided that we needed an EDI champion and at every meeting we needed EDI on our agenda to ensure that it became a monthly discussion. I volunteered for the role and when the discussion of our annual summer conference and party came up, I thought this was a perfect opportunity for us to celebrate diversity and we agreed on the theme of “Valuing Diversity”, alongside the launching of an action plan in support of our commitment to EDI.

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The Action Plan

I worked hard with my subcommittee, Natalie Friday and VyVy Lewis, the EDI committee and the Operations Director of Resolution, Alison Bradley, to put together an action plan.

The action plan is a declaration of our commitment to eliminate discrimination and encourage and value diversity across the Resolution London Region membership in support of the Resolution EDI policy, which can be found on the Resolution website.

Here is our action plan:

EDI action plan – The London Region Resolution will support EDI by committing to:

- Educate members on equality, diversity and inclusion to develop awareness, understanding and best practice by holding training events for the region to assist both our colleagues and our clients.
- Invite a diverse range of speakers to all our events.
- Ensure our events are considerate to barriers that may be caused due to the time of day or date of the event and the food and/or drink that is offered.
- In the event of witnessed discrimination, actively speak up and not be passively observant.

We did not want this to be just words and so we also considered how we would implement the commitments and how we would measure success. We therefore have committed to having an EDI representative on the committee and a sub-committee of at least two other members who will meet regularly and ensure that EDI is a recurring agenda item at every main committee meeting to ensure that London Region continues to focus on EDI issues every month alongside the other work we are doing.

In order to hold ourselves accountable we have committed to at least annually sending out a questionnaire to our membership to seek feedback on the work undertaken by London Region from an EDI perspective, to welcome ideas and generate new EDI initiatives which are important to our members. ➤

The launch

Our summer seminar and party was held on 8 June and, as noted, the theme was “Valuing Diversity”. Richard opened the meeting with a formal welcome and an introduction to the topic, following which we had the pleasure of Yanoulla Kakoulli, co-Chair of the EDI committee, talk to us about diversity and Resolution’s EDI policy. She spoke to us about what EDI was and reminded us that equality is giving equal opportunities to a group of people and protecting them from discrimination; diversity is about respecting, recognising and valuing what makes them unique; and inclusion is creating an environment where everyone feels welcome and valued, allowing everyone to contribute and have a voice. You could see from the audience that everyone in that room agreed.

I then had the pleasure of introducing our action plan and made a pledge to our membership that this was a commitment and not just a tick-box exercise. This was very well received and I could see plenty of heads nodding and big smiles, which made me feel very proud.

“You could feel the warmth in the room and the discussions I had with those who attended – the speakers and colleagues – really were incredible.”

The launch was followed by Stephanie Coker, who spoke to us about the impact of invisible disabilities on financial orders, which really gave us all food for thought. We then welcomed Anna Remington and Rob George, who shared with us some real practical advice on how we as legal professionals can work better with autistic clients in family law cases. Simply asking clients what they need at the outset of a case seems so obvious, but speaking to attendees following the seminar it appeared to be very rarely done.

Matthew Brunsdon-Tully shared with us his own experiences of ADHD and asked whether ADHD as a family lawyer was a superpower or a superpain. Spoiler: he concluded it was a superpower! He gave us insight into the superpower of having diversity in teams, and how it actually brought a variety of insights and skills which provided a better experience for clients.

We had a short coffee break and then had the honour of Sarah Edwards joining us straight from the High Court to share her expertise of personal injury claims in financial remedy cases. The grand finale was an incredible panel of esteemed family lawyers: Nicholas Allen KC, Jennifer Lee, Sapna Shah, Oluwapelumi Adeola, Nasstassia Hylton and Joe Rainer exploring maintenance through an EDI lens. This was a fine example of how a diverse panel can bring a different perspective to a single topic. Not only was the

discussion insightful, it was also extremely entertaining. We were very grateful that Remhys was able to chair this for us, as it was her thought-provoking discussion that started our committee on this journey. She of course did an excellent job.

Following a closing speech of appreciation by Richard, we led everyone into the sunshine at Collingham Gardens for drinks and canapes.

I cannot put into words how proud I felt to be a part of this wonderful event. You could feel the warmth in the room and the discussions I had with those who attended – the speakers and colleagues – really were incredible. I have never been to a Resolution event where I have seen such a diverse panel of speakers, such topics discussed or such a diverse audience.

The feedback has been incredible and the standout comment for me on the day was that someone said to me that it felt like Resolution had had an awakening! Wow. That’s a big statement and an amazing one to be acknowledged.

Diversity needs to be celebrated and we certainly did that!

What’s next?

We are not stopping now, we have made a commitment and we will honour it.

At both the summer conference and via email following the event we sent out our first questionnaire. The subcommittee are in the process of reviewing the feedback and at our next meeting we will feed back with action points.

We are in the process of arranging EDI training for the region and details of this will be circulated shortly.

What can you do?

If you are in the London Region please ensure you send us feedback, whether this be by way of questionnaire, orally or via an email. We are always happy to hear from you.

If you are in another region/part of a committee, have you considered putting your own action plan together or asking for your committee to do so?

We really do hope this will encourage other regions to follow suit to make a real difference to the whole Resolution Membership.

Together we are stronger and with commitment to change, we can make a difference!

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The summer seminar was held on 8 June at Collingham Gardens on the Coram Campus (next to the Foundling Museum)

Matthew Brunsdon-Tully examined whether ADHD could be a superpower. Anna Remington and Rob George also shared their research into working with autistic clients in family law cases



**RESOLUTION
IN PICTURES**
London Region's
EDI event

Stephanie Coker spoke about the impact of invisible disabilities on financial orders



Pictured left to right: Sapna Shah, Nicholas Allen KC, Jennifer Lee, Oluwapelumi Adeola, Nasstassia Hylton and Joe Rainer

“Equality is giving equal opportunities to a group of people and protecting them from discrimination; diversity is about respecting, recognising and valuing what makes them unique.”

Richard Shaw, the Chair of the London Regional Committee, opened and closed the event



Sarah Edwards shared her knowledge of PI claims in financial remedy cases