

## **SENTENCING ADVISORY PANEL**

### **DIVERSITY**

#### **STATEMENT OF INTENTION**

1. The Sentencing Advisory Panel has established a diversity sub-group to ensure that it complies with its obligations under the various strands of equality legislation. The first full meeting of the sub-group took place on 24 July 2007.
2. Sub-group members and the secretariat staff who support them will receive adequate training to enable them to meet the Panel's statutory obligations. The sub-group will ensure that the full Panel membership is fully aware of the requirements that need to be met.
3. When a consultation paper is being drafted, and prior to general consultation on draft guidelines, the sub-group will consult stakeholders to identify any factors relevant to sentencing that might result in outcomes that impact unfairly on grounds of race, disability, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or age.
4. The sub-group has compiled a list of stakeholders most likely to be able to identify areas of concern; this may be augmented depending on the particular topic under consideration.
5. Stakeholders will be contacted by email in the first instance; meetings may be arranged by the secretariat where issues of particular importance or complexity are identified; these meetings will take place prior to general consultation.

6. Any areas of concern will be investigated by the sub-group and discussed with the wider Panel membership; relevant questions will be asked in the published consultation paper.

7. The possible implications for the Panel's provisional proposals of any diversity issues raised will be considered by the sub-group and will be put forward for discussion by the full Panel before the consultation paper is finalised for publication.

8. Where particular diversity issues are not raised prior to consultation, the consultation paper will include a generic question inviting respondents to identify any equality concerns.

9. The implications of all diversity issues identified will be considered by the full Panel alongside the generality of responses.

10. Before the end of 2008, the diversity sub-group will review the list of organisations invited to comment on recent consultation papers with a view to contacting those who have responded less frequently. Where these are groups likely to be able to contribute in relation to diversity issues, it may be possible to identify ways in which the Panel can assist such organisations to respond more often. If necessary, alternative or additional consultees will be identified.