

News from the Board

Reflect, develop and progress your firm - race equality, what now?

30 July 2020

SRA Board Chair Anna Bradley chaired the first of three virtual events we are holding against the backdrop of the wider Black Lives Matter movement. The event, a panel discussion, was held to discuss and explore race equality in the legal profession.

Anna was joined by Paulette Mastin, Chair of the Black Solicitors Network, Sam Smethers, CEO of the Fawcett society and John Oladeji, Co-founder of Black men in law.

The discussion was wide-ranging with agreement that the Black Lives Matter movement has accelerated the need to take positive steps and to make change happen. The panel discussed the issues around people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds both entering and staying within the profession, but also, and importantly, progressing within in it.

Paulette talked about the positive things that some law firms are doing, and she highlighted the power of reliable diversity data to help us all to understand the issues and monitor progress. Sam shared her views on the importance of White allies and the power and influence that those in senior roles have to drive and support change. And John brought insight to the discussion from his own experience, speaking about the obstacles and difficulties that junior lawyers often face making their way in the profession. Like Paulette, he spoke of some of the actions that firms can put in place to make a real difference.

There was agreement that there is much more to do to encourage and develop Black, Asian and minority ethnic talent in the profession, and that part of that has to be open discussion about diversity and an active approach to being anti-racist.

You can watch the broadcast below.