



1 March 2007

Shoosmiths leads the way with equality accreditation

In the week when the Chair of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights, Trevor Phillips, has published his Equalities Review, Shoosmiths has announced that it is the first UK legal practice to gain the Committed2Equality accreditation.

The accreditation has been given to the firm's Birmingham office and will be extended to its other six offices in the next few months. The award endorses the national firm's commitment to equal opportunities and positions the firm as a preferred employer and supplier.

The firm was awarded a Gold standard in the c2e assessment for its achievements in terms of commitment, training, monitoring, knowledge, recruitment and HR processes.

Shoosmiths is already recognised as a firm which values diversity after out-performing its rivals in 2006 by topping the Diversity League Table launched by the Law Society in conjunction with the Black Solicitors Network (BSN) and the Council for Racial Equality.

The Committed2Equality (c2e) accreditation has already been widely adopted by local government and is already being used by members of the Recruitment & Employment Federation. It is a non-profit making body, established in 2004, which aids, confirms and recognises commitment to equality and diversity by providing advisers to work with an organisation to adopt an appropriate good practice change model for diversity.

Shoosmiths' accreditation was managed by its Professional Recruitment Manager, Rita Tappia. She says: "Inclusivity is integral to the firm's strategy for success and is referred to and put into practice at every opportunity. We embrace the skills of all of our employees and this accreditation reflects and supports this culture and enables us to widen our talent pool.

“It is particularly appropriate that we have gained this award first in Birmingham, which will become the UK’s first ethnic minority majority city by 2010. It is critical for law firms to acknowledge the demographics of the communities in which they operate to secure the future health of the business. The Law Society takes diversity very seriously, as identified in Rule 6, and whether you look at it from the perspective of being a supplier of legal services or an employer, having this accreditation makes us a firm of choice for anyone who is concerned about equality and diversity.”

David Williams, head of the c2e operations, said: “Shoosmiths is the first UK law firm that we have worked with and it has enabled us to refine a best practice model which works in the legal services sector. I was extremely impressed with the way the firm stepped up to reach the required standard – and was pleasantly surprised by the forward-thinking individuals I encountered in the firm. I had been warned that law firms were traditionally slow to embrace change but am delighted to be proved wrong by Shoosmiths.

“The programme takes about 6 weeks to complete and involves following a step-by-step programme devised by c2e. On completion, a firm will have acquired local advisors who are on hand throughout and make on-site visits to any participating company in the final stages.

“Once awarded with its unique c2e number, the participating organisation will be re-assessed every year to ensure it is maintaining good equality practice. I hope many other law firms will celebrate 2007 as the European Year of Equal Opportunities by achieving their c2e mark.”

Shoosmiths Birmingham office, headed up by Joel Kordan, has just celebrated its 4th year and its 100th employee and is earmarked for further growth in 2007.

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Notes to Editors:

Shoosmiths is one of the fastest growing national law firms in the UK with 97 partners and offices in Basingstoke, Birmingham, Milton Keynes, Northampton, Nottingham, Reading and Solent. Increasingly seen as a "Firm to Watch"* in the legal services market, Shoosmiths has delivered consistently impressive financial results and continues to attract work from high profile clients including leading FTSE companies as well as financial institutions, private and public sector organisations and foreign-owned corporates in the UK. Shoosmiths is a member of the World Services Group and is accredited with ISO9001 and Investors in People. www.shoosmiths.co.uk

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