

## Shifting mindsets in diversity

We supported partners in the London, Brussels and Antwerp offices to begin acknowledging the legal, business, moral drivers for Diversity.

### Objectives

Allen & Overy approached Steps with an interesting proposition. 'Law firms are finding it challenging to truly engage their staff and fee earners with the subject of diversity, so how can we use a Steps approach to make training valuable and relevant for our staff?'

### Approach

At Steps we conducted research within the firm and then used what we found to create realistic scenarios that were challenging, meaningful and relevant to the organisation and the wider legal profession. These portrayed partners and employees in a range of settings including internal and client meetings, feedback and appraisal sessions - everyday situations that can present diversity challenges. Each scenario presented a credible situation and characters whose behaviour and attitudes stimulate debate and challenge assumptions. Highlighting the subtleties and the 'grey areas' of diversity, the sessions used humour to engage the delegates and encourage an open and honest dialogue.

*"High impact is created because the dramatic scenarios are so realistic," said Jane Masey, HR Policy & Diversity Manager at Allen & Overy, "The session gave partners an opportunity to discuss diversity away from the workplace. They found it a highly valuable experience and a very effective way of addressing the issue."*

### Outcomes

Having worked with Steps on a successful training programme for key teams in their London offices, Allen & Overy commissioned Steps to run a further session for 35 partners in its Brussels and Antwerp offices.

There was a real shift in mindset as people began to acknowledge the business and moral case for Diversity, as well as the legal case.

*"An understanding of diversity is essential to the culture of any firm and it's a requirement that our clients increasingly expect of us," said Jane Masey, "Sometimes inappropriate behaviour can be exhibited unconsciously, particularly if people are under pressure. We wanted to highlight the impact that unconscious behaviour can have on others. We chose a Steps approach as we wanted to make the greatest impact in the shortest space of time."*