



Report on progress
for year to 31st March 2011
on **Diversity Action Plan 2009 -12**

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Introduction



Introduction

We are committed to using the diversity action plan to improve equality. Following through this Action Plan will help us meet our legal responsibilities as a public sector employer and ensure diversity is fully integrated into our day-to-day business activities. We have gone beyond the essential legal requirements to include all aspects of equality and diversity in the plan.

It is an inclusive plan to improve our services to our customers and staff. It will help us integrate diversity into our workplace, so that everyone understands their responsibilities. Our managers and staff will work together to identify how they can achieve the delivery of the outcomes.

We are making this report available to all our staff and customers through our websites, which have information on accessibility for those who need it.

Action Plans

The Diversity Action Plan 2009 -12 describes how we promote equality and diversity in the DVLA. The DVLA Plan is part of the DfT Single Equality Scheme.

The DVLA Diversity Action Plan is built around the four key themes of the Civil Service Strategy. We have added the fifth theme of Customer Service, to show how we consider diversity in our customer service delivery.

- Leadership and accountability
- Customer service
- Behaviour and culture change
- Talent management
- Representation

This annual report shows what we have done to progress the plan during the year to 31st March 2011. We have updated the original Diversity Action Plan for 2009 -12 on our website to reflect ongoing changes at the DVLA, the Department for Transport and the wider Civil Service. We will continue to update it as changes take place.

Leadership and accountability



Progress continues in line with the restructuring of HR and devolvement of HR functions to managers, as described in the report to 31st March 2010. Next Generation Human Resources (NGHR) has meant further devolvement to managers has now taken place and is continuing. Managers are now aware that their responsibilities include an extended range of HR activities. This has significantly changed the culture at DVLA with the result that managers now take a more positive approach to staff management.

Diversity Week March 2011

This started with International Women's Day (IWD) on 8th March 2011 and ran until 16th March. Activities included:

- the launch of the Chrysalis Women's Group on IWD
- introduction of a race email account to collect any staff race related issues for action
- disability stands on two sites supported by the CEO and Ability Group, providing advice and guidance
- LGBT stands on two sites
- Christian Union stand
- launch of Diversity@DVLA intranet site providing information for all staff, including at remote offices, using specific pages on each of the protected characteristics (PCs), and
- presentation of the annual DVLA Diversity Award this time at the senior manager forum (SMF).

Diversity Champions at DVLA

DVLA's Diversity Champions continued to provide leadership on equality throughout the year. They are senior grades and are able to influence decisions and actions in the Agency. They met quarterly as the Diversity Action Group (DAG), had regular meetings with chairs of staff networks, attended network meetings and other diversity related events, and influenced action on monitoring information. They supported the introduction of an Annual DVLA Diversity Award which this year featured a team and an individual award, due to the high number of nominations received from staff. An acknowledgement letter was sent to all nominees from Chief Executive Simon Tse. The DAG attended diversity conferences and supported the DVLA Diversity week.

Engagement

DVLA's overall engagement index for 2010 is 54%, which is up on 2009's score of 51% by 3%. These results were provided to senior managers who took action to address key issues raised in the feedback.

In March 2011, additional questions on fairness at work were placed in the DVLA People Survey. HR Engagement Team will now work with the Diversity Team and business areas to review the results and take any possible improvements forward.



PDR's

HR Policy Group conducted two Equality Impact Assessments in August 2010, one on overall PDR scores and the other on scores for attendance objectives in COD and CEG. Basically the outcome of the EQIAs was that we agreed to look in more detail at some of the protected characteristics, specifically disability, ethnicity and age. In order to do this work the Equality Working Group was set up comprising of HR and TUS staff. The Group met in January to share the findings of the initial analysis that Group members carried out. There were some positive outcomes, such as scores for ethnic staff in local offices being in line with those of other staff in the same office and in some cases higher. The Group did however note that there was more work that needed to be done, for example speaking with individuals to see if they had been disadvantaged in any way. We also acknowledged that we needed to make a comparison against end of year scores for 2010/11 to identify whether there were any trends developing.

HR has received data which will be taken as a final report and used to compare against last year's EQIA data. HR should then be able to bring the Equality Working Group together in July to do some final analysis which will include identifying managers and staff that HR will want to speak to and gain more information from.

The Equality Working Group is something that we have said we want to continue with year on year and use it to review PDR data on an ongoing basis.

Equality impact assessing - EQIA

We reviewed the EQIA process and issued new templates and guidance on the Intranet. The new Diversity@DVLA Intranet site gives staff better access to completed EQIA's. The mandatory equality training explains the public sector duties and EQIA process to all staff, so they become more aware of the need to complete EQIA's.

A new EQIA training programme was developed and put on the SAP portal. We publicised this through Workforce Development's Target newsletter and on the Intranet.

The Diversity Champions encouraged leaders in the business to consider EQIA's when they developed new functions or reviewed existing ones. We talked to business leaders to ensure the revised EQIA information and templates is accessible, usable and legal.

The EQIA process is integrated into our HR policy making, as each policy must be subject to an EQIA and provide a link to it. We encourage other areas of the business to consider diversity when they make impact assessments. Other policies and functions have been subject to EQIA, such as the call-centre attendance policy and office closures.



EQIA's made during the reporting period include:

- office refurbishments in the network
- IT processes and change
- an office closure, and
- new or revised HR policies.

An example of changes made is: improvement in accessibility features on a specific computer process DXX Change.

There were fewer EQIA's made in this reporting period than in previous years. We need to improve this. In the revised Diversity Action Plan we describe how we can increase the quantity and improve the quality of EQIA's. This includes; talking to staff, using Diversity Champions effectively and redesigning the information and templates.



Customers



We improved customer service by increasing the speed we respond and consult. Our aim is to improve compliance with driver and vehicle licensing and ensure our services are as accessible as possible. Our Customer Care policy shows we are serious about our responsibility to our customers and it provides information for staff and customers.

Currently the only transaction that can be completed at a "Post Office photo booth" which incorporates a photo is the "ten year renewal" transaction. The new functionality became available to the general public in April 2010. It will be rolled out to 750 Post offices by October 2011. The content of the "ten year renewal" reminder was adjusted to direct customers to their nearest Post Office booth very much in the same way our V11 works. Current volumes suggest that 27.5% of customers are using the Post Channel (approx 55,000 per month.) OS&DD are currently working on the Agency's future channel strategy which when completed and agreed may result in further transactions being dealt with using the booths.



Currently, the over 70 driving licence renewal application has two available channels, the paper and online channels with approx 17% using the online facility. Again there is ongoing work being progressed by OS&DD that could suggest these customers may prefer a Post Office channel using the Post office booths to renew their licence whilst having a new photo. Future channel strategy may confirm this but is not yet agreed. There is a further probability that more customer views will be taken into consideration as we progress using the Agency Improvement Measurement & Analysis (AIMA) team.



Customer Service Excellence – CSE Standards

The Agency retained this accreditation in November 2010 with an improved performance. The assessment measures the service we provide and the culture, professionalism and attitude of staff. The CSE assessor was very satisfied with the work the Agency is doing to improve access issues to our offices. The standard acts as a driver for customer-focused change and helps us manage and improve access to services, information and DVLA offices for all customers.

- This is the second year of the rolling programme review and has seen DVLA achieve its best result yet. We achieved thirteen compliance plus elements and reduced the partial compliances to just two, from five last year.
- The assessor stated that in discussions with other organisations, he quotes DVLA as an example of a 'leading edge' organisation, in terms of putting the customer at the heart of our business. He also said:

"2009-2010 has been a challenging year for DVLA. The economic downturn has continued to affect service development with funding uncertainties, a recruitment freeze and a ban on marketing.

Customer insight continues to drive organisational change. Significant progress has been made in channel shift with more transactions available online. LEAN processing and customer journey mapping have been used to rationalise and streamline transactions with improvements being made in all main areas of work.

This year we maintained our accreditation to the standard and increased our number of 'compliance pluses'. 'Compliance plus' means areas where exceptional service was delivered.



Customer Complaints

Ongoing work has improved customer access to our complaints procedure. New guidance for dealing with customer complaints was provided to staff, resulting in a faster response. The guidance encourages the use of a simpler, clearer and more personal response in plain English. This makes the correspondence easier to access and understand for everyone and is especially useful for those customers with any reading difficulties. The Customer Service Standards assessor identified that we make good use of complaints to identify problems experienced by users. Comments and complaints can be made online through a secure link from: [direct.gov](https://www.direct.gov). On this site problems can be fully dealt with and solved in a reasonable time.

Physical Accessibility for customers

Estates Management Group carried out regular site audits throughout the year. The audits included elements of the Customer Service Excellence Award evaluation process. The accessibility and signage elements contributed significantly to renewal of the award this year.

Customer feedback

Following customer feedback, the Agency's Code of Practice for dealing with Customer Complaints (DOM 3251), was updated. It now reflects the Equality Act 2010, that replaced the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. It provides for reasonable adjustments to be made to help customer with difficulties reading or writing.

Information was included on the Customer Service Guide and 'What to do if things go wrong' (INS101) leaflet. These tell customers that they could contact the Agency using their usual method of communication, for example, face-to-face, phone, fax, textphone, email, CD or letter.

Information on how to deal with customers who wish to complain by phone has been updated on the CEG Intranet as a reference to staff. This information is refreshed from time to time so that customer service standards for customers with disabilities are sustained.

CEGs Customer Relations Team (CRT) were runners up in DVLA's Diversity Awards for the above, as this work has improved processes for disabled customers and has helped reduce customer complaints.

Initiatives in COD included:

- the introduction of wider accuracy checking to improve processes and accuracy of customer records, and
- proactive identification of customer record inaccuracies and action to amend.

Behaviour and culture change



We have;

- encouraged employee engagement
- built a culture taking full account of diversity
- shown we value the contribution of all our staff
- understood and respected personal commitments and supported staff well-being
- encouraged participation and learning, and
- ensured equality across the organisation is integral to the way we do business. Very good progress was made in this area and some specific examples are included to demonstrate this success.

Staff Engagement Survey 2010

Each directorate continues to work on action plans to address areas identified in previous and current People Surveys, as in need of improvement. Included in these are diversity-related issues.

For example, CEG include feedback obtained from People Surveys in their Contact Centre Forward Plan. Currently, CEG are reviewing the team meeting process to improve communication to part-time staff, and reviewing shift patterns and leave allocation to improve the way leave is allocated to all staff.

Engagement Champions from each directorate take forward issues relating to their area. All diversity related issues identified will be highlighted to the Staff and Customer Diversity Team

Health and Well-being initiative

We have a strategy for improving Health, Well-being and Attendance. Activities in this area have resulted in reducing sick absence and promoting a healthier lifestyle and a culture of wellness.

Statistics show a continued reduction in sickness absence to an average of 7.1 days per person during 2010/11. The Agency continues to support staff wellbeing through various initiatives (Employee Assistance Programme; Well-point Health Screening facility; calendar of health promotions led by OH and so on), as well as providing information on the Agency's intranet and arranging an annual corporate challenge to support lifestyle improvement.

Activities include:

- ongoing support for staff and managers from OH and EAR
- promoted lifestyle changes by bringing in health care organisations and circulating information through well-being champions
- British Heart Foundation offered staff an opportunity to have a health check and provided advice for improvements needed
- agency challenge Dig for victory which promoted healthy eating and exercise
- helped staff and managers improve pregnancy related sick absence procedures



Supporting staff

We continued to offer specific support for staff in relation to; disability, caring responsibilities, age, gender, race or nationality, sexual orientation, religion and belief, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity and gender identity and reassignment.

Ongoing support includes:

- agreeing change of hours to help staff manage caring responsibilities or special leave if needed
- a wide range of flexible working patterns
- risk assessments for pregnant staff
- desk station assessments
- making reasonable adjustments for individuals
- providing rehabilitation support leave for staff
- new guidance on needs relating to religion or culture.
- providing a new diversity site with information on all the protected characteristics
- providing guidance on how to manage the effects of domestic violence
- reviewing and improving the accessibility of all equality and diversity policies
- entrance adjusted to allow easier access for disabled member of staff.

Anti Bullying and harassment

The Harassment Contact Officers (HCO's) provided staff with advice and guidance on 23 cases of bullying and harassment reported. The HCO list was reviewed and updated for the Diversity Week 2010. New posters and information leaflets were made available to staff. Statistics on recorded cases continue to be reported up to the Executive Board. Two bullying and harassment related questions were included in the March 2011 survey. This followed the results of the October 2010 Civil Service survey, which reported 10% of staff indicated that they had personally experienced bullying and harassment at work,

Race

As part of the Diversity Campaign in March 2011, the Race Champion commissioned a dedicated email post box and publicised it using the intranet. This provided all staff with the opportunity to identify any race related issues.

Black History month 2010 was promoted by an information sharing item on iPoint.



Staff networking groups

LGBT networking group

The chair and vice chair continue to attend monthly meetings with the LGBT Champion. Meetings with the organisers of Swansea Pride, Stonewall Cymru, Gay Police Association, the Civil Service Rainbow Alliance and Lambda also took place. In addition, the LGBT Group submitted an application to join the LGB Excellence Centre which offers free advice, guidance and legal services and other services to LGBT communities. LGBT staff networking group participated in the DVLA Diversity Open Week providing information for staff which resulted in an increase in membership.

Articles to improve the understanding of sexual orientation issues were published in Licence the staff-magazine.

The Group has secured a budget for the next financial year enabling officers and members the opportunity to attend meetings to support and promote the network.

The chair/vice chair worked with the Staff & Customer Diversity Team providing information on sexual orientation for the development of diversity workbooks for all staff.

Disability networking group

The Ability group held three well-attended meetings in the year to give staff information and the opportunity to raise issues with managers. Membership increased to around 200 during this reporting period. They invited a range of organisations to provide information to staff at their meetings. They have begun a series of visits to local offices to promote the group's activities and the support they provide.

Network staff were involved in Disability History Month in December 2010. There was a quiz (written by HR) and information published in order to enhance their understanding of issues.





Chrysalis networking group

The women's networking group, Chrysalis, was launched on 8 March 2011 to coincide with International Women's Day. The group was brought together to encourage a culture of leadership, support, and communication amongst the women of DVLA. Membership currently stands at 31 for this reporting period. The group's objective is to enable the women at DVLA to succeed in and enjoy their working lives and influence policy that affects women. Their theme for this year is Women at DVLA Legacy and Leadership. They have representation at two levels - the Working Group, being the eyes and ears, which sit in the business and provide a steer on the direction of group, and the Steering Group, who implement and maintain the Chrysalis Action Plan and report directly to the Gender Champion. Chrysalis has planned events for their 2011 programme.

Male Gender Group

We are keen that all groups are represented and have looked at the feasibility of setting up a male group. This is unusual as research on the internet has shown that there are few exclusive male groups meeting on a regular basis.

As an initial step we conducted an iPoint survey which asked the question "as a man would you actively participate in a men's group?" The results showed that out of 437 responses 34% said they would be interested. This was followed up by discussions with male colleagues who showed an interest in gender issues at the Chrysalis launch and with personal contacts and referrals from interested individuals.

As a result of this an initial meeting was held to determine whether there was sufficient interest and ideas to take the group forward. Work is ongoing on this.





Religion and belief

We developed guidance for staff and managers on religion and culture issues related to workplace issues, such as taking leave and dress. We publish a religion and culture calendar annually.

DVLA's active Christian Union (CU) meets twice each week, and while the aim of the CU is wholly Christian they welcomed people from all faiths - including no faith - to attend their meetings. Our CU participated in the Diversity Open Week by providing information on a stand.

IT Accessibility

DVLA Systems Development continue to assess how easy it is to understand and use the Internet and Intranet information, ensuring DVLA meet the requirements of the COI's "Delivering inclusive websites". Our aim is to conform to the W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines v2.0. The DVLA corporate site is currently at WCAG v2.0 Double-A standard. The site provides information and online services available 24 hours and a BrowseAloud facility.

A high level plan is being produced to identify, categorise and assess every DVLA website/transaction to assure all systems conform to the W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

Gender equality and equal pay review

Following the 2010/2011 Pay Award, an Equality Working Group has been formed between HR and the TUS. This group looks at the equality and PDR distribution data.

Staff Surveys

In addition to the participation of DVLA staff in the Civil Service Staff survey, we also collect information in other ways. It has used a staff Engagement Survey in 2010 to check and identify actions to improve staff engagement. Feedback is given to managers on their individual scores so they can identify what actions to take.

Specific initiatives in COD

- Monthly managers meetings tell staff about forthcoming events on Diversity, Ability Group, Health and Wellbeing or iPoint information.
- Managers had training and have support from the Attendance Management team to help them manage a diverse range of conditions, reasonable adjustments, and care issues and so on.
- COD management team actively support the Ability Chair by providing facility time of two days per week for Ability Group topics.
- Wide range of working patterns available to support parents, carers and work-life balance.
- Focus Groups with staff to improve communications with management.

Talent Management



DVLA continues to progress its existing talent initiatives for Executive Officers and Graduate Trainees. It has, since the last Diversity Action Plan launched an additional programme for Administrative Assistants (AA) -Administrative Officers (AO) and equivalent grades.

The AA-AO programme attracted some 100 applicants who were then subject of a paper sift for progression to the next stage. This was an assessment exercise which consisted of an interview and presentation. Eleven people were successful and form the talent group. The group has now commenced their ILM qualification and have completed two modules to date.

The Executive Officer talent group, of 6 individuals, has now completed their first year of study and obtained their initial management award, which will now be built on to achieve an ILM management qualification. In addition, they have completed a corporate project which will assist the business in embedding its work on improving staff engagement, through exploring themes from our staff survey.

Staff in COD were supported through the Talent programme and COD provided opportunities for specialist staff to enhance skills through training.

Diversity Training

A workbook has been designed to provide a learning opportunity to those staff that for operational reasons were unable to attend the classroom based sessions on Diversity. It can also be used as a refresher product for those who attended the original programme and as a learning resource for any new staff to the Agency. Managers can request access to the resource for them to use.

Staff development

A graduate scheme was launched in 2009 to develop the skills of graduate's already in post and to help them learn more about the business. This group are reaching the end of their 2 year programme and have achieved their ILM qualification. They are in the process of transitioning into permanent posts within the Agency.



Representation

Recruitment

All recruitment for DVLA is now dealt with by the DfT resourcing group. Little recruitment has taken place in the reporting period due to the recruitment freeze. Most posts are offered on a part-time or full-time basis, except where this is not operationally possible due to shift-working or other business needs. The way we advertise posts and select staff has been 'equality proofed'. Recruitment and selection monitoring data is analysed by equality groupings.

All posts are advertised through the Intranet or Internet, as appropriate. We make reasonable adjustments for candidates who make us aware of a disability. The DVLA retains the two ticks symbol and offers the GIS (Guaranteed Interview Scheme).

Staff monitoring

DVLA continues to collect staff employment data which is provided to IHAC (the DfT's In House Analytical Consultancy for Human Resources) for analysis. The report to 31st March 2010 can be found on the DVLA external website and the staff Intranet. The report for year ending March 2011 will be posted on the intranet around September.

