



SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

2010-2012

Personnel
November 2009



VCA SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME 2010-2012

1. About this document

This document sets out the key tasks (Annex A) that the Agency will be taking forward to promote equality and diversity through its Single Equality Scheme over the next 3 years. It builds on the progress to promote equality in the areas of disability, gender and race in accordance with legal obligations under the three equality duties. As a reminder:

- **Equality** is about creating a fairer society where everyone can participate and has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. It is supported by legislation designed to address unfair discrimination.
- **Diversity** is about recognising and valuing difference in its broadest sense. It is about creating a culture and practises that recognise, respect, value and harness difference for the benefit of members of the public and our people.

There are strong business reasons for building a diverse workforce. We need to ensure our staff represent our customers and engage with, and value, views from all sections of society. Other benefits of building a diverse workforce include accessing a wider range of resources and skills, improving staff retention and increasing creativity and innovation.

2. Recent developments

The Agency's record on equality and diversity is well documented and reported on annually. A number of recent actions include:

- Diversity and Bullying and Harassment courses held for all new staff, and refresher courses for existing employees;
- 2 ticks accreditation by Job Centre Plus;
- Key staff have received Impact Assessment training;
- Disability survey undertaken and, where appropriate, adjustments carried out;
- Succession Planning/Talent Management meetings held at 6 monthly Board meetings;
- Signed up to a Local Employment Partnership with Job Centre Plus;
- VCA behaviours adopted across the Agency; and,
- Annual monitoring of equality data and publications on Agency website.

3. Moving forward

The overarching principles to deliver our Single Equality Scheme are that:

- We ensure strong and effective governance to embed equality and diversity into our daily business.
- We continue to share best practice, engage effectively with Departmental networks and improve our ability to attract and recruit a diverse workforce which best represents the customers we serve.
- We build on previous work through close monitoring of quantitative and qualitative data and evidence.
- Ultimately, equality and diversity will be influenced by behaviours of all leaders, managers and staff that value "difference". The focus of this Single



Equality Scheme is to strengthen that wider organisational responsibility of all Agency staff to bring about change.

4. Key themes

The Single Equality Scheme focuses on the four key themes outlined in the Civil Service strategy “Promoting Equality and Valuing Diversity”.

The key themes are:

- Strong Leadership – down to first line management level – and clear, transparent accountability for delivering equality and diversity. The focus is on line managers to bring about behaviour change throughout the business.
- Changing behaviour to create an Agency wide inclusive culture, confident in its own equality and diversity. Underpinned by:
- Talent Management systems that enable everyone to realise their potential, and also accelerates the rate at which we bring in and bring on people from different backgrounds. Resulting in:
- A diverse workforce at all levels; measured against our workforce targets to reach over the next few years, for women, for those from minority ethnic backgrounds and disabled people.

The Single Equality Scheme key actions are shown at Annex A.

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1. Leadership/Accountability					
OBJECTIVE	FUNCTIONS	WHEN	RESPONSIBILITY	ACTIONS	PROGRESS/ REVIEW
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All leaders and line managers to attend diversity workshops with refresher events every 3 years 	TRAINING	Ongoing	Training Manager	Training in place for all staff.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure VCA represented effectively on Diversity Network Group 	WORKING RELATIONSHIP	Quarterly	Head of Central Services	Regular attendance at meetings.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEO to hold standard setting meetings to monitor that all staff are managed appropriately in the Performance Management systems 	PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT	Annually	CEO	Procedure already in place.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Equality Impact Assessments are carried out when developing new processes and that these are captured on the Agency's website 	PROVIDING INFORMATION	2010	Personnel	Further operational areas identified for impact assessments.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VCA Management Board to agree/support the Scheme and make staff aware of the Scheme. 	PROVIDING INFORMATION INTRANET	Annually	Head of Central Services	Personnel to raise with Board and publicise outcome.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on diversity developments in the Agency's Business Plan and report progress in the Annual Report 	PROVIDING INFORMATION	Annually	Head of Central Services	Already in place.	
2. Behaviour and Culture Changes					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to seek staff views (and take effective Follow up actions) through regular surveys using The Cabinet Office questions as a model of Good Practice 	SEEKING FEEDBACK	Annually	Personnel	Undertake annual survey and issue results.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise staff awareness by mainstreaming diversity throughout all aspects of our business, including people management training 	PROVIDING INFORMATION	Ongoing	Personnel HOBs	Personnel to raise the issue on a regular basis at Management Board.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity training delivered to all staff including refresher training every 3 years 	TRAINING	Ongoing	Training Manager	Training section to ensure all staff attend appropriate training.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best Practice advice on Equality Impact Assessments to be communicated to all leaders And Managers 	PROVIDING INFORMATION	Annually	Personnel	Following IA's information issued to relevant Operational Mangers.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor on an annual basis, Agency monitoring Data and staff engagement via staff surveys 	PROVIDING INFORMATION INTRANET	Annually	Head of Central Services	Full involvement on data collection and survey feedback leading to communication of outcomes to all staff.	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review general access and building services to ensure that these meet the needs of our disabled staff and disabled visitors 	HEALTH AND SAFETY	Annually	Facilities Manager	Upgrade of buildings in place.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out Equal Pay audits regularly in accordance with Equal Pay legislation in addition to impact assessing pay awards on an annual basis 	PAY POLICY	(Equal Pay Audit every 3 years)	Personnel	Procedure already in place and discussed annually with TUS representatives.	
3. Talent Management					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor impact of Performance Management and learning and development strategies to ensure proper application of these systems and that they do not cause bias to under represented groups 	PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT	Half Yearly	Personnel/Training Managers	Procedure in Place.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce workforce plan that demonstrates consideration of equality and diversity in the workforce, including labour market assessment and succession planning for all grades 	REWARD POLICY TRAINING TALENT MANAGEMENT	Annually	Head of Central Services	Procedure already in place – discussed annually at Management Board and 6 monthly review of succession Planning arrangements at Agency Management Board.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take forward Skills pledge that 95% of Agency workforce has a level 2 qualification 	TRAINING/ DEVELOPMENT	Ongoing	Training Manager	Good progress made – number of staff upskilling through NVQ qualifications.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff have an Individual Development Plan (regularly reviewed) which captures personal/business needs in line with Professional Skills for Government and cabinet Office frameworks 	TRAINING/ DEVELOPMENT	Annually	Personnel HOBs	Half yearly reminders (minimum) that staff have IDP's. Process being reviewed.	
4. Representation					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building on the receipt of Agency monitoring reports, assess issues identified and take action to address inconsistencies/ gaps 	MONITORING DATA	Annually	Head of Central Services	Report to be discussed at Management Board.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish appropriate targets (against labour market information) by diversity groups. [currently 30% women, 5% ethnic staff and 4% disabled staff] 	MONITORING DATA	Annually	Head of Central Services	Report to be discussed at Management Board.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase (and maintain) declaration rates on diversity monitoring to 100% on ethnicity and disability across DfT 	TERMS AND CONDITIONS	Annually	Personnel	Procedure already in place.	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aim for a 100% target response rate for exit interview questionnaires 	TERMS AND CONDITIONS	Ongoing	Personnel	Procedure in place.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all staff who take part in recruitment have undertaken appropriate training 	RECRUITMENT	Ongoing	Personnel	Refreshers provided by Personnel and guidance updated.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work more closely with Job Centre Plus and others to ensure that we encourage applications from as wide a pool as possible 	RECRUITMENT WORKING RELATIONSHIPS	Ongoing	Personnel	Ongoing dialogue with Job Centre Plus and Regional Organisations.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure external recruitment agencies demonstrate appropriate methods to attract and reach a diverse pool of applicants 	All	Ongoing	Personnel		
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