

Group Finance Directorate

**Government Banking Service
Equality Impact Assessment**

Equality impact assessment for Government Banking Service

Purpose and aim(s) of the Government Banking Service

Introduction

The Department for Work and Pensions has carried out an equality impact assessment on the Government Banking Service to meet the requirements of the:

- Race Equality Duty;
- Disability Equality Duty;
- Gender Duty.

This is to ensure that:

- The Department does not directly or indirectly discriminate against people carrying out its functions, policies or services.
- Our strategies, policies and services are free from discrimination.
- Due regard is given to equality (specifically disability, gender and race) in decision making and subsequent processes.
- Opportunities for promoting equality are identified.

Purpose and aims of the service

The Bank of England made a strategic decision to withdraw from the provision of retail banking and clearing services to Government (and other corporate) customers by 2009, in order to concentrate on its core responsibilities. It will continue to hold the Government's high level accounts. The Retail Banking Services it currently provides via Xafinity Paymaster (the service integrator) are:

- Holding DWP high level Ledger Accounts
- Issuing DWP electronic payments
- Transferring money between Government Departments
- Providing a Payable Order Issue and reconciliation service.

The retail banking services the Government Banking Service will directly provide will be by the Royal Bank of Scotland and Citibank, without Xafinity Paymaster.

In October 2008, the Government Banking Service, incorporating the Office of HM Paymaster General, announced its intention to adopt a new operating model, which will:

- Provide a 'direct-to-bank' service for all customers
- Replace existing ledger accounts with commercial bank accounts with Royal Bank of Scotland and Citibank
- Provide 1100 Government Banking Service customers (of which the Department of Work and Pensions is one) with direct access to commercial banks.

In addition, staff will have to reconcile payable order expenditure in-house.

Consultation and involvement

The Department has a number of Staff Network Groups which meet regularly to examine diversity issues within the Department.

We consulted with these staff network groups to establish whether they thought that the Government Banking Service would have an adverse effect on people from the different diversity groups. None of them identified any adverse effect on people from the different diversity groups.

Impact of the Government Banking Service

Customer impact

The GBS changes will have very little change for customers. The only difference will be that payable orders issued to customers will be printed with a slightly different background image.

Staff impact

The GBS changes will have some impact on the systems staff use in Shared Services and in some parts of Pensions, Disability and Carers' Service. Where stand alone computers are currently used as a means of downloading or viewing bank statements and transmitting payments, these will be replaced by two systems – CitiDirect for Citibank and Bankline for RBS.

Both of these systems are currently used within the Department as part of existing banking arrangements and have been for a number of years without producing any diversity and equality issues. A full training schedule has been devised for all affected staff(commencing March 2010), during which any potential issues arising from the implementation of these systems can be

raised and remedied well in advance of July (when the systems will come into operation). This would be covered below under assessing the equality impact.

Disability equality impact

The new system used by staff will be compatible with all the assistive technology solutions that are in use within the Department. These will be fully tested before go-live.

Gender equality impact

No equality issues relating to gender have been identified. No equality issues relating to transgender issues have been identified.

Race equality impact

No equality issues relating to race have been identified.

Age equality impact

No equality issues relating to age have been identified.

Religion or belief equality impact

No equality issues relating to religion or belief have been identified.

Sexual orientation equality

No equality issues relating to sexual orientation have been identified.

Monitoring and evaluation

Annual reviews are conducted on the contractual arrangements with banks and building societies to satisfy HM Treasury requirements to ensure that they meet the statutory requirements for diversity and equality. They allow our customers and organisations that represent groups of customers to present their views on service performance. These reviews are also used as a tool to improve the performance of our suppliers for example if a supplier fails to meet the diversity and equality requirement, we will work with them to ensure that the service meets an acceptable standard although none of the customer surveys highlighted any diversity issues.

After the Government Banking Service is introduced within the Department the team that is introducing it will become a service management team. They will continue to monitor any problems encountered with external software being used. The team will have an ongoing relationship with the Government Banking Service, through which it can raise and resolve any problems with the systems from a diversity perspective provided to the banks.

Within three months of the introduction of the Government Banking Service, an end of project review will be held, at which any initial concerns with the software being used within the department can be raised and addressed especially from a diversity point of view. Beyond that, the team will be a single point of contact for users who wish to raise concerns with the suppliers.

Any issues arising will be escalated immediately to Government Banking Service via the relationship manager dedicated to the Department. The Government Banking Service is obliged to help resolve problems as part of the Memorandum of Understanding held with the Department. The Department maintain a log of outstanding issues with the Government Banking Service and the Department has a direct escalation route it can follow should these issues not be resolved satisfactorily.

Next steps

As none of the staff network groups have identified any issues about the impact of this product on any of the diversity groups we conclude that the product will meet the needs of all our staff once it has been tested and proved compatible with all the accessible solutions that are used by disabled staff to ensure they can use all the Departmental computer systems. The team will work with their colleagues after the introduction of the Government Banking Service to ensure that any diversity issues are dealt with swiftly through its ongoing relationship with the IT suppliers and the Government Banking Service (who own the contract with the banks).

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