



Home Office

Diversity Strategy 2013-2016

Making the Most of Our Diversity

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Foreword by the Permanent Secretary

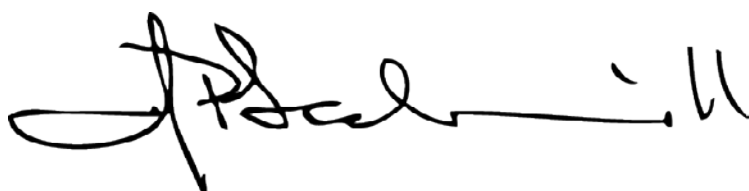
I am delighted to introduce the new Home Office Diversity Strategy. The Home Office is a leading government department with respect to equality, diversity and being an inclusive workplace, and we are recognised as such by Stonewall, Business in the Community and other respected equality campaign organisations.

Since launching our first Diversity Strategy in 2007, the Home Office has become more representative of the communities we serve and we are improving the way we deliver policies which meet the diverse needs of our Ministers and the public. Equality, diversity and inclusion are about valuing our people, wherever they work and whatever they do. Over the coming three years, we need to make the most of our diversity in terms of the way we recruit, develop, retain and progress our people at all levels.

To make the most of our talent, we need staff to achieve their full potential, working effectively with all our partners in delivering a first-rate service for our service users. Enabling staff to make the very best of themselves at work will enhance our policy making and our working environment. We will use our diverse backgrounds to enhance professional knowledge, bring challenge and new perspectives. This will help us build capability and flexibility to deliver as part of a new, reformed civil service.

Organisations that embrace diverse workforces and support life and family responsibilities deliver better results, more motivated staff, increased recognition from service users, greater innovation and internal challenge leading to more justified decisions. This Diversity Strategy is designed to help the Home Office reap these business benefits.

Everyone has a role to play in embedding equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of all we do in protecting the public. Together with the Home Office Executive Management Board, I renew our commitment to keep asking the difficult questions and making sure issues are addressed at a strategic level. However, I expect all line managers and staff to take a hard look at your teams and the work you do in ensuring we are making the most of our diversity - bringing in fresh perspectives and ensuring everyone is treated fairly.



Mark Sedwill
Permanent Secretary



Executive Summary

The work of the Home Office impacts on millions of people in the United Kingdom as well as those coming into the country. Respecting and valuing differences, with a commitment to equal treatment and equal opportunity, will help us serve the public effectively, and deliver policies and outcomes which are fair and transparent.

The Home Office has made significant progress since the launch of our first Diversity Strategy in 2007 and we are proud of what we have achieved since then. Over the last six years, the department has progressively moved to a far stronger position, and now has good capability to tackle inequality and deal with its consequences. There is a clear focus on the actions and improvements required to champion equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), in all we do, whether these concern staff or the wider public. This includes removing barriers to social mobility and recognising people for their efforts, skills and achievements rather than social backgrounds or where they are from.

Our vision is to make the most of our diversity by promoting effective and authentic leadership, seeking behaviour change and securing tangible outcomes. Four strategic aims have been set for the next three years (2013-2016) to help us achieve this:

1. Managers at all levels demonstrate effective leadership and due regard to equality, diversity and inclusion.
2. Potential of under-represented groups developed to create a diverse, representative workforce at all levels
3. An inclusive work environment where staff respect and value each other's diversity
4. Services delivered in a way that promotes equality and respects diversity and inclusion

The public sector is going through a period of unprecedented change. Delivery of this strategy links directly to our plans to deliver the initiatives set out in the Civil Service Reform Plan, the Government's Equality Strategy "Building a Fairer Britain" and our corporate and social responsibility (CSR) through continuous improvement in sustainable procurement.

Introduction

The Home Office is tackling some of the biggest issues that affect the public including policing, immigration, protecting the public from terrorism and taking a lead on reducing domestic violence and hate crime. We do so in challenging economic times where the public sector needs to deliver efficient, effective and modernised public services within the context of unprecedented levels of change and significant financial constraints.

It is therefore, more important than ever, to reinvigorate our commitment to diversity in our policymaking, focus on outcomes and make the most of the talents of all our people to serve the public effectively. The department must ensure it has people with the right knowledge, skills, attitude and behaviours to meet existing and emerging needs, in order to achieve the expectations and priorities for reforming the civil service.

The work of the Home Office has an impact on millions of people in the United Kingdom, and those who come into the country. As a result, the diversity of people we come into contact with, and offer services to, is immense. We therefore need to fully incorporate equality into the way we do business, making every effort to eliminate discrimination, promote equal opportunities and help our staff to be the best they can be. It is essential we create a culture of respect and treat each other, our stakeholders, and the people we come into contact with, fairly and justly.

This Diversity Strategy together with the Home Office Capability Plan, form a common approach across headquarters and delivery agencies to address the skills, knowledge and behaviours required of all civil servants, whether they are members of teams, leaders or professional experts. We will ensure we make the most of our diversity through this integrated approach. It also supports other strategic departmental drivers such as the Civil Service Reform Plan, Investors in People, Civil Service Capability Plan and the Home Office People and Wellbeing Strategy.

We are proud of what we have achieved since the first Home Office Diversity Strategy was launched in 2007. Over the last six years, the department has progressively moved to a far stronger position, with good capability for delivering diversity with a clear focus on the action and improvement required to achieve key outcomes. Highlights of the progress made and a summary of external diversity benchmarks and awards are published in annual Diversity Strategy progress reports.

The Business Case for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Making the most of our diversity is clearly the right thing to do. Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is about valuing our people, at all levels, wherever they work and whatever they do. We understand that diversity is about the numbers of different groups represented in our workforce, while inclusion is about making those numbers count in delivering Home Office objectives.

Having a diverse workforce which reflects society is not an end in itself. Organisations that embrace diverse workforces deliver better results. Business benefits of EDI include improved employee engagement, motivation and increased recognition from service users, making us more capable to respond to our diverse customers. A diverse workforce with clear collective goals is generally associated with innovation, comprehensive and better-framed strategies, and decisions that are more robust resulting from increased challenge and different perspectives.

This is also about capability and the ability to recruit from the widest talent pool. Particularly in times of restructuring, redeployment and redundancy, we need the people with the right skills and learning opportunities in place to develop them. We need a talent management approach that enables all our staff to work at the very top of their abilities. We will ensure that EDI is embedded into our departmental Capability Plan to enable talented staff to access the most appropriate development and talent programmes, from the lowest to the highest levels of our organisation. We also want to retain our talented people from all backgrounds and ages and where it makes business sense, encourage flexible working to support them with their life and family responsibilities.

Our Vision, Aims and Outcomes

Our Vision

“Making The Most of Our Diversity”

We want to be an organisation where people “get the message” that diversity and inclusion are an essential and embedded part of our business strategy

Achieving this sort of organisation is no simple task. We want to continuously improve and increase the pace of progress. Hence, this Strategy is focused on concerted action in supporting effective and authentic leadership, behaviour change and tangible outcomes.

Our Aims

Our four strategic aims for the next three years are:

- 1) Managers at all levels demonstrate effective leadership and due regard* to equality, diversity and inclusion
- 2) Potential of under-represented groups developed to create a diverse, representative workforce at all levels
- 3) An inclusive working environment where staff respect and value each other’s diversity
- 4) Services delivered in a way that promotes equality and respects diversity and inclusion

Ensuring compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is a common thread throughout these aims. Effective Home Office implementation of statutory obligations on equality and diversity will be embedded in all of the aims and monitored on a quarterly basis.

What is due regard?

Under the general equality duty (as set out in the Equality Act 2010), public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. The protected grounds covered by the equality duty are: age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. The equality duty also covers marriage and civil partnership, but only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The law requires that this duty to have due regard be demonstrated in decision making processes. Assessing the potential impact on equality of proposed changes to policies, procedures and practices is one of the key ways in which public authorities can demonstrate that they have had due regard to the aims of the equality duty.

Our Outcomes

To achieve our vision of the Home Office as an inclusive organisation, we need to deliver tangible beneficial outcomes against our strategic aims.

AIM 1 - Managers at all levels demonstrate effective leadership and due regard to equality, diversity and inclusion

Our outcome

Leaders at every level demonstrate active, authentic and visible leadership, driving every aspect of EDI within day-to-day business across the organisation. Clear and transparent accountability, demonstrating that the potential impact of their business decisions, actions, policies/procedures on EDI have been assessed, understood and show 'due regard'.

Our leaders will

- Demonstrate active, visible leadership down to first line management with clear, transparent accountability for delivering equality, diversity and inclusion
- Take personal responsibility for embedding equality, diversity and inclusion into their business plans focusing on outcomes
- Ensure that all staff demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty by showing due regard
- Enhance and develop staff capability on equality, diversity and inclusion across the business. Work on unconscious bias roll out and embed it in all key people decision-making processes
- Have open and constructive dialogue with staff networks
- Use management information (including the Employee Monitoring Report and people survey results) to drive changes and deliver outcomes that demonstrates commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion
- Champion diversity and protected characteristics and take personal responsibility for driving the equality agenda forward

AIM 2 - Potential of under-represented groups developed to create a diverse, representative workforce at all levels

Our outcomes

A diverse, representative workforce at all levels including top management

The Home Office attracts and develops people from the widest social backgrounds fully realising the benefits of a diverse workforce

Our departmental priorities

- Monitor representation benchmarks for all grades in relation to protected characteristics and ensure that representation levels are on a positive trend to meet departmental indicators
- Mandate unconscious bias training for staff with interviewing and recruitment responsibilities
- Reduce adverse impact and ensure due regard in recruitment and selection processes
- Improve access to opportunities for promotion for talented staff from the widest social backgrounds - identifying staff with high potential for top management, as set out in the Home Office Capability Plan
- Provide staff at all levels, where they have the potential and if appropriate, access to development programmes to improve the diversity of our talent pipeline

AIM 3 – An inclusive working environment where staff respect and value each other’s diversity

Our outcomes

An inclusive culture that attracts, supports and develops people from diverse backgrounds and where the benefits of an engaged workforce are fully realised

Improving levels of engagement for all staff - actively tackling bullying, harassment and discrimination, and treating people with dignity and respect

Our departmental priorities

- Reduce year on year the gap between levels of employee engagement of the majority and minority groups in the people survey results
- Reduce year on year, the proportion of staff who feel they have been bullied, harassed or discriminated to bring down people survey figures to below the civil service average
- Use employee engagement data to identify and take steps to address employee capability gaps in delivering equality and diversity and inclusive services in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010
- Ensure all business areas are appropriately meeting legal requirements to support staff with disabilities who require reasonable adjustments

AIM 4 - Services delivered in a way that promotes equality and respects diversity and inclusion

Our outcomes

Our procurement and commercial activities directly or indirectly deliver social value by embedding equality, diversity and inclusion considerations in all of our activities

A diverse workforce equipped with the appropriate skills and knowledge to deliver professional and high quality goods and services to our stakeholders, and to the diverse range of people and communities we come into contact with

Our departmental priorities

- Business and operational areas to conduct appropriate measurement and evaluation of customer (internal and external) satisfaction levels and to act on these findings to improve service delivery to our diverse range of customers
- Equality Objectives to be progressed, including reviews with key internal and external stakeholders (where appropriate)
- To demonstrate due regard in the development or amendment of policies, Bills, and practices relating to external customer matters
- By 2016, all of our top suppliers by spend to be part of the CSR requirement, and be actively participating in the self assessment questionnaire called Corporate Assessment of Environmental, Social and Economic Responsibility (CAESER) and providing returns, specifically around diversity and inclusion
- To engage regularly with EHRC (Equality & Human Rights Commission) through departmental links

Governance

The department's Diversity Strategy is owned by the Executive Management Board (EMB) with the Diversity Strategy Programme Board (DSPB) sub-committee, acting as the governance body for EDI.

The role of the DSPB is to monitor progress against the Diversity Strategy and show leadership in embedding EDI. DSPB will continue to meet on a quarterly basis.

Diversity assessments are overseen by the DSPB and used as part of the regular performance assessment of business areas. The DSPB examine the progress made by business areas, with peer review providing an opportunity for challenge and to showcase good practice. All business areas will continue to undergo a quarterly diversity assessment across a range of EDI indicators, ensuring all managers, including those at Board level, are accountable.

Diversity Champions, both general and those covering specific protected characteristics have been identified at EMB level and throughout the business areas to drive further progress.

A monthly Senior Talent Board (made up of EMB members) regularly considers senior civil service diversity within the department with respect to talent management and succession planning, including specific themes such as gender, black and minority ethnic recruitment and overall representation.

Staff Support Networks

The department recognises the immense value that staff support networks can bring to improving our workplace and also, importantly, our public policy.

The networks provide direct support in the form of advice and training to their members. They provide insights into and perspectives about the diversity of our people, and run conferences and seminars to keep staff better informed about being responsive to differing needs. They have been instrumental as internal resources in increasing our understanding of how to better engage our stakeholders and the communities and individuals we come into contact with. It is vital to have internal critical friends to keep us focussed on creating an inclusive and engaged department. This role is increasingly important in an environment of reducing public expenditure.

The department recognises and supports the following formal staff support networks

- THE NETWORK - for black and minority ethnic staff
- Home Office Disability Support (HODS)
- Spectrum – for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans staff
- a:gender – the Home Office supports the cross-government network for transgender, transsexual and intersex staff
- Home Office Women (HOW)

There are also a number of faith-based informal networks recognised by the department providing invaluable insights into religion and belief, and these include Home Office Christians (HOC), Home Office Islamic Network (HOIN), the Hindu Connection and the Home Office Sikh Association (HOSA).

The Group Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI) team provides the networks with the support to operate effectively. They have also produced guidance on how to establish a voluntary staff network. This information is available on the Home Office intranet alongside other diversity guidance and information.

