



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

**MOD Strategic Equality Objectives
2012-16**

Ministry of Defence
Corporate Equality Team

Context – Legal Requirements

The Equality Act 2010 (EA10) streamlined and strengthened existing equality legislation in a number of ways and extended legal protection to additional groups with 'protected characteristics'. The protected characteristics under the Act are:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex; and
- sexual orientation.

The General Duty

Section 149 of the EA10 imposes a 'General Duty' on all public bodies covered by the Act to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between those who share protected characteristics and those who do not; and
- foster good relations between those who share protected characteristics and those who do not.

The three arms of the General Duty imposed on public bodies are collectively referred to as the 'duty to promote equality'. The MOD is a public body within the meaning of the Act and therefore has a duty to promote equality across all groups with protected characteristics.

The Specific Duties

The EA10 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 requires all public bodies to:

- Prepare and publish one or more objectives within the timescales required by the Specific Duties and subsequently at intervals of not greater than four years beginning with the date of the last publication. The objectives must be specific and measurable.
- Publish information to demonstrate its compliance with the General Duty within the timescales required and at intervals of not greater than one year beginning with the date of the last publication. The information must be published in such a manner that it is accessible to the public.

We have published accessible information on our services and workforce to demonstrate our compliance with the General Duty across all our functions. This information, which relates to all our equality and diversity policies and practices, can be found at:

<http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/WhatWeDo/Personnel/EqualityAndDiversity/>

Ministry of Defence Approach

Diversity Vision

Our Vision is a workforce, uniformed and civilian, that: is drawn from the breadth of society we defend; gains strength from that society's range of knowledge, experience and talent; and welcomes, respects and values the unique contribution of every individual.

Diversity Mission

Diversity is core business for the Ministry of Defence in order to encourage people throughout society to join us, remain with us, make their distinctive contributions and achieve their full potential. Also operating in multinational environments, our success will be improved by being able to understand and respond to different types of situations and people. We will be inclusive and not tolerate discrimination, harassment, bullying or abuse. We will ensure each individual is treated fairly, with dignity and respect and that the diversity of our workforce increases operational effectiveness.

Equality Objectives

The Ministry of Defence has adopted a unified philosophy towards equality and diversity issues at the strategic level. This is reflected through our Unified Diversity Strategy which ensures the development of equality and diversity action plans which are relevant to, and reflective of, the respective requirements of the Armed Forces and the MOD Civil Service. These action plans support the equality objectives which, in turn, reflect the breadth of our work and align with our business priorities in respect of both the exercise of our public functions and our workforce.

In setting these objectives, we have considered what we have learned from the equality information we hold and we have built on previous work, which included our Single Equality Schemes. These objectives reflect the areas on which we consider we should be giving greatest attention and should not be taken to suggest that they reflect the entirety of our equality and diversity activity.

To understand better the needs of our personnel and how to support them so that they can give of their best, we will continue to identify whether there are barriers in our policies, practices or processes that disadvantage or discriminate against them. This will form part of our work to deliver on the objectives.

We will report annually on progress as part of the publication of equality information on our external website. Although, the objectives relate to the period 2012-2016, it is envisaged that we will also update and review them where necessary.

Equality Objectives

Objective 1 – *To continue to embed equality and diversity as an integral part of Departmental business*

We will know we have succeeded when:

- The impact on all our people is taken into account across our business and reflected in change programme/business decisions as a matter of routine.
- Equality and diversity is an integral part of all command, leadership, management and other relevant training.

Objective 2 – *To reduce the incidence of bullying and harassment, on the basis of protected characteristics, in the Armed Forces and the MOD Civil Service*

We will know we have succeeded when:

- We can demonstrate a reduction in the incidence of bullying and harassment on the basis of protected characteristics, and use evidence from anonymous surveys to show that the reduction is not attributable (in whole or in part) to a general lack of confidence of other factors on the part of complainants and/or witnesses.
- Equality and diversity is an integral part of all command, leadership, management and other relevant training.

Objective 3 – *To improve the process for handling complaints relating to equality and diversity issues submitted by Armed Forces personnel and by MOD Civil Servants*

We will know we have succeeded when:

- Anonymous survey results show increasing levels of satisfaction with the way complaints are handled.
- The Service Complaints Commissioner's annual report acknowledges sustainable improvements in the handling of complaints.
- Lessons learned from handling complaints are shown to be affecting positively the manner in which the system is operating.

Objective 4 – *To better understand the experience of female, ethnic minority and disabled personnel in the MOD Civil Service and work to improve retention by ensuring that due regard is paid to the lived experience of these groups*

We will know we have succeeded when:

- Our overall representation targets (including for the Senior Civil Service) are achieved or exceeded, with sustainable upward trends for each of the

groups mentioned above and we see strong talent pipelines in the feeder grade populations.

- Reliable/independent and anonymous data is collected on a consistent basis and, on the basis on this data, we have visibility of the disability status and ethnic minority background of at least 90% of our civilian staff.
- We continue to develop and build upon a previously strong record in diversity benchmarking exercises.

Objective 5 – *To better understand the factors affecting representation of women, of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) personnel, and of people from UK ethnic minority communities in the Armed Forces, and to work to improve their representation to a level consistent with that in the wider population*

We will know we have succeeded when:

- There is evidence of steady, sustainable increases in the proportion of women, LGB personnel and of people from UK ethnic minority communities in the Armed Forces with the effect that the level of representation is proportionally more consistent with that in the general population.
- Anonymous surveys show a steady, sustainable increase in levels of satisfaction amongst women, LGB personnel and people from UK ethnic minority communities across Service life, supporting improved recruitment and retention.

Objective 6 – *To improve support to those in the MOD Civil Service with disabilities*

We will know we have succeeded when:

- We can demonstrate that staff consistently receive an equivalent entitlement to DWP's 'Access to Work' Scheme as their private sector counterparts.
- We can demonstrate that the waiting times for the provision of reasonable adjustments are reduced and reflect Departmental policy.
- We ensure that line managers of staff with disabilities have access to consistent advice and expertise.

Objective 7 – *To improve our understanding of the needs of our Armed Forces personnel who have a faith, and to work to improve the support we provide to them*

We will know we have succeeded when:

- Declaration data shows a steady, sustainable increase in the number of persons declaring their religious and personal belief thereby demonstrating increased confidence that their personal belief will be respected and tolerated.