

HMRC Equality Schemes
Annual Progress Reports
April 2011

Background

The new Public Sector Equality Duty which came into force on 5 April 2011 replaced the three previous equality duties for race, disability and gender, bringing them together into a single duty, and extending to cover: age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment. It requires public bodies (in the course of developing policies and delivering services) to have **due regard** to the need to:

- **eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- **advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- **foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

This general Equality Duty will be supported by specific duties which are due to come into force in September 2011.

The progress reports below are the final reports on HMRC's Equality Schemes for disability, gender and race. They summarise the progress made against the objectives of their respective Schemes, covering the last 12 month reporting period for each Scheme. All three Equality Schemes had a three year lifespan but each one covered a different period due to varying start dates; for that reason, the 12 month reporting period for each of the progress reports differs.

A final progress report for each of HMRC's Equality Schemes can be found at the links below:

- [Disability Equality Scheme 2009 to 2012 - annual progress report \(December 2009 to November 2010\) \(PDF 187K\)](#)
- [Gender Equality Scheme 2010 to 2013 - annual progress report \(May 2010 to April 2011\) \(PDF 124K\)](#)
- [Race Equality Scheme 2008 to 2011 - annual progress report \(April 2010 to March 2011\) \(PDF 124K\)](#)

In the interim period, in the absence of the specific duties, HMRC remains fully compliant with the general Equality Duty and is firmly committed to ensuring that our policies and processes continue to be fair and inclusive for both our employees and customers. As the Equality Schemes' progress reports (and their accompanying action plans) indicate, there has been and continues to be a great deal of positive activity across HMRC dedicated to the diversity agenda on disability, gender and race. In addition, although not reflected in the final progress reports above, HMRC has shown a strong commitment to ensuring that equality and inclusion across **all** the protected characteristics are promoted.

In preparation for the new Public Sector Equality Duty, we have been reviewing the achievements of our Equality Schemes and considering which activities HMRC should take forward when setting equality objectives. We recognise the shift in approach expected under the Equality Duty, which requires us to be more transparent and accountable for delivery on equality and the need to focus on performance, not process.

We are working hard to make sure that we are able to meet the specific requirements of the Equality Duty by improving the quality of our diversity data so that we have a firm basis of evidence on which to inform us in identifying HMRC's key diversity objectives. On the customer side for example, we have been engaging over the last six months with customer groups for disability, gender and race, to identify the barriers which customers in these groups may experience in accessing our services and to establish where we can make the most difference in promoting equality.

Both as an employer and as a service provider, the objectives which we take forward will be those which are most relevant to HMRC in ensuring equal treatment and equality of opportunity for all; we will publish these objectives no later than 6 April 2012.

Contacting HMRC

Alternative format requests

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Alternative format requests for large print, Braille or audio cassette versions should be sent to: HMRC, Visually Impaired Media Unit, 2nd Floor, Victoria Street, Shipley, West Yorkshire, BD98 8AA. Tel: 01274 539646.

Questions

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