

Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs Equality Objectives 2012-2016

**Report under the Public Sector Equality Duty
April 2012**

© Crown copyright 2012

You may re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/ or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or e-mail: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This document/publication is also available on our website at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/about/how/diversity/>

Any enquiries regarding this document/publication should be sent to us at:

Inclusion and Engagement Team

Defra
Area 2B
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London
SW1P 3JR

Email: diversity.team@defra.gsi.gov.uk

PB 13749

Contents

Contents	3
Foreword by the Permanent Secretary	4
Departmental Equality Objectives Overview	5
<i>Introduction</i>	5
<i>Our approach</i>	6
People Objectives	6
<i>Monitoring Performance</i>	7
Customer Objectives	7
<i>Engagement and Consultation</i>	8
<i>Accountability</i>	8
Departmental Equality Objectives	9
<i>Table 1: People Objectives 2012 - 2016</i>	9
<i>Table 2: Customer Objectives (Phase One April - September 2012)</i>	16

Foreword by the Permanent Secretary

The new Public Sector Equality Duty gives us a great opportunity to push forward our equality and diversity agenda and redouble our efforts to ensure we are delivering positive outcomes for our customers and making Defra a good place to work for all our staff. Defra, in common with many other Government departments, is facing a significant period of change as we seek to meet the challenges of the Government's reform agenda and embody the ideals of the Big Society. Our Equality Objectives will help us build on our strengths and challenge us to do better and work differently to be the best department we can be and to achieve positive outcomes that make a real difference.



The issues Defra deals with affect people locally, nationally and internationally. We promote efficient business, protect communities from flooding and help rural communities to thrive. Therefore, how we do what we do is important: we need to make sure we can recruit, develop and retain the right people with the skills we need to meet the challenges we face. Our Equality Objectives set us on this path and provide us with the framework under which we can take positive action.

I am committed to making sure that Defra meets its obligations and welcome the opportunity that the legislation has given us to set ambitious long term objectives for our Department. We have a real opportunity to make sure that we use our Equality Objectives to make a real difference for our customers and our staff and I would encourage us all to raise our game in how we work together to achieve our goals.

Bronwyn Hill

Permanent Secretary

April 2012

Departmental Equality Objectives Overview

Introduction

We recognise there is a strong moral and business case for ensuring that our services, our policies and how we support, develop and manage our staff embrace diversity and promote equality of opportunity. It is widely recognised that diversity is good for business: organisations perform better when their board is more diverse; greater diversity brings different perspectives to problems and improved decision making; and our staff perform better when they are able to be themselves in the workplace. Our diversity is our strength, which will help us make Defra a high performing organisation, delivering positive outcomes for our customers and a good place to work for all of our staff. As a public sector organisation there is also a strong legal imperative for building diversity into everything we do.

This paper sets out how we will implement [The Equality Act 2010](#) and meet our legal obligations under the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) and most important how we will integrate action on diversity and equality into how Defra operates and does business. It provides information on our People Objectives and how we will measure and report on our performance, and provides a high level action plan for how we will identify our Customer Objectives.

Under the Public Sector Equality Duty, as a public body the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has a [specific duty](#) to publish one or more equality objectives to help it meet the aims of the general Equality Duty.

The general Equality Duty requires Defra and its Executive Agencies¹ to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination or associative discrimination², harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between people; and
- foster good relations between people who may or may not have the following protected characteristics:
 - age;
 - disability;
 - gender reassignment;
 - pregnancy and maternity;
 - race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality;

¹ NDPBs will be developing separate objectives to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty relevant to their business and are not covered by this document

² Associative discrimination means discrimination of an individual on the grounds of their association with someone displaying a protected characteristic i.e., carers of disabled children/adults (see [Coleman Case](#))

- religion or belief – this includes lack of belief;
- sex (gender);
- sexual orientation; and
- marriage and civil partnership – in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination only.

Equality objectives must be published by 6 April 2012 and subsequently at intervals of no more than four years.

Our approach

The Department's aim is to ensure that equality and diversity objectives are not separate from our business objectives but are aligned to the [Defra Business Plan 2011- 2015](#) where possible. To do this, we need to realise the potential of our people in driving organisational performance and achieving our goals.

Although the legislation states that the objectives can last for up to four years, the Department is committed to reviewing these objectives regularly, monitoring our performance against them and updating them when needed to ensure they are relevant and meet changing business and customer needs.

People Objectives³

Our job is an important one, and to be effective we must recognise the increasing diversity and different needs of our customers. We need to make sure we can recruit and retain the right people with the skills we need, build the capability of our people to meet the challenges we face, develop, bring on and retain our most talented people, and lead, engage and inspire our people to enable high performance.

Our People Objectives focus on how we will manage our staff, what we will do to achieve our aspirations and how we will measure our progress. Our objectives are based around the four pillars of our People Strategy and mirror the commitments in the Civil Service Diversity Strategy:

- **Capacity:** we will demonstrate clear leadership with senior commitment and accountability for mainstreaming diversity and equality into every aspect of our business;
- **Culture:** we will act with dignity, show respect for others and develop a workplace that is inclusive and confident, free from bullying, harassment and discrimination, where our staff are passionate about our goals, engaged and able to fully contribute;
- **Commitment:** we will make Defra a good place to work that attracts, develops and retains the most talented people from the widest range of backgrounds; and
- **Capability:** we will ensure our people have the skills and tools they need to make Defra a high performing organisation that understands and responds to the needs of our customers.

³ See Table 1 for detail

Monitoring Performance

We will continue to work with our colleagues across the Defra Network to identify and agree base-line data and aspirational targets aligned to the People Strategy and Business Plan, which we will report on through the Department's business performance processes. The core-Department, however, is currently part way through a restructuring exercise which will be completed in September 2012. For this reason, we aim to set meaningful targets by which to measure ourselves once the restructuring is complete. In the meantime, between April and September 2012, we will seek to improve:

- our understanding of our workforce profile;
- our management information; and
- our understanding of the impact of restructuring on our staff profile.

This will enable us to set targets based on robust and reliable base-line data. Our aim will be to publish refreshed People Objectives in September 2012.

These exercises will provide us with the robust and reliable base-line data we will need in order to fully understand what our next steps should be. We will aim to publish our refreshed People Objectives in September 2012.

Customer Objectives⁴

Our policies and how our delivery partners implement them, affect the lives of our customers, be they individuals (citizens of, or visitors to the UK), businesses, other public sector bodies or NGOs. Therefore, it is important we ensure we are delivering the best possible service and outcomes for the widest range of our customers. To do this, our Customer Objectives must support the key priorities in our Business Plan, which focuses on Defra as an economic department working in partnership with businesses, local communities and civil society. The Department will be refreshing its Business Plan in line with Ministerial priorities, and when published, will consider how the Equality Duty can be delivered through each of its key business areas/priorities. We expect the refreshed Business Plan to be available later in 2012.

Given the above, it is highly likely that any equality objectives identified now will need to be reviewed in line with the refreshed Business Plan. However, we do recognise there are some activities that we can and should be doing now that will help us to identify what our equality objectives will be before we publish our refreshed Business Plan. For this reason, we are adopting a phased approach to identifying our Customer Objectives. This document, therefore, sets out the steps we will take first to help us to identify our Customer Objectives. The second phase of our work, which will be published later in 2012, will be to identify the activities we need to do to address any significant issues that are identified in the first phase of our work. Approaching our Customer Objectives in this way will ensure we are working on the areas that will have the greatest impact on our customers, whilst ensuring alignment with Business Plan.

⁴ See Table 2 for detail

We also recognise that our delivery partners have their own business and customer needs to meet which we need to reflect in our high level Customer Objectives, so we have been working closely with our Executive Agency and NDPB⁵ colleagues over the past year to develop this high-level plan. We will continue to engage with them as we develop our specific actions based on the outcomes of our research.

Engagement and Consultation

We recognise the need to involve customers and staff in diversity issues and to consult them about our proposals for implementing the equality legislation. Prior to the publication of these equality objectives, we have sought feedback from the following groups:

- staff from business and corporate functions across the Defra Network and NDPBs;
- staff networks, representing minority groups in our workforce;
- the Defra Diversity Scrutiny and Advisory Group;
- key external diversity partners (Opportunity Now, Race for Opportunity, Employers Forum on Disability, Employers for Carers, Stonewall);
- other government departments;
- Departmental Trade Unions;
- Agency Chief Executives; and
- our Permanent Secretary and Directors General.

It is important to note these objectives do not capture the full range of work that is carried out by Defra and our delivery partners, but focuses on the key areas where we believe we can (or will) have the greatest positive impact on our staff and customers.

Accountability

Ensuring we achieve our People and Customer Objectives is the responsibility of everyone at Defra, but particularly falls to our business leaders and Senior Civil Servants. The Permanent Secretary, as Defra's Diversity Champion, is accountable to the Head of the Civil Service for our performance.

In order to embed diversity throughout our business, we need to improve and strengthen our diversity leadership and accountability. To do this, we will embed equalities considerations within our People Strategy and Business Plan, integrating progress reporting with our corporate performance reporting processes and as part of our annual workforce monitoring activities.

⁵ Our working group includes representatives from the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency, the Rural Payments Agency, the Veterinary Medicines Directorate, the Food and Environment Research Agency, the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science Agency, the Environment Agency and Natural England

Departmental Equality Objectives

Table 1: People Objectives 2012 - 2016

Vision: *Harnessing the richness of our diversity to make Defra a high performing organisation that delivers positive outcomes for our customers and is a good place to work for all of our staff*

	Strategic Objective	Action/Resources necessary to achieve success	Success Criteria
Capacity	We will demonstrate clear leadership with senior commitment and accountability for mainstreaming diversity and equality into every aspect of our business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify leaders as role models for others and encourage and support them to play an active part in encouraging others • Encourage and support senior leaders to actively champion diversity and equality • Embed diversity into leadership and management behaviours through effective performance management • Equip and support our Diversity Champions to actively champion diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved leadership and management scores as measured through the annual Civil Service People Survey • Improved satisfaction of BME and disabled staff with line management as measured through the annual Civil Service People Survey • Senior leaders actively champion diversity through sponsorship of staff diversity networks, participate in cross-

	Strategic Objective	Action/Resources necessary to achieve success	Success Criteria
		<p>throughout our business and across Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the capability of our leaders and managers to develop and harness the richness of diverse teams to enable Defra to deliver against its objectives. 	<p>Government diversity networks and events, and are confident talking about diversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality considerations are embedded within our business planning and reporting cycle • Due regard to equalities is embedded within the policy cycle/project and programme management processes and demonstrates a positive impact on policy development and outcomes
Culture	We will act with dignity, show respect for others and develop a workplace that is inclusive and confident, free from bullying, harassment and discrimination, where staff are passionate about our goals, engaged and able to fully contribute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a zero tolerance statement to bullying and harassment, setting clear expectations of how we will behave towards one another, towards our customers and how we expect our customers to behave towards us • Take focused action to identify and reduce harassment, bullying and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of zero tolerance signed and championed by Permanent Secretary • Improved engagement scores for staff who have declared a disabilities measured through the annual Civil Service People Survey • Improved Behaviour and Culture Index scores as

	Strategic Objective	Action/Resources necessary to achieve success	Success Criteria
		<p>discrimination (including associative discrimination)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the position of disabled staff by understanding and removing the barriers to their achievement • Use diversity data to understand any potential differences in the performance of BME, disabled, older, and LGB&T staff under our new performance management processes • Use data from a range of sources e.g., staff survey, grievances, to understand the levels of reported bullying and harassment • Take targeted action to address reported bullying and harassment • Encourage and recognise corporate behaviours that develop an inclusive culture • Raise the awareness of 	<p>measured through the annual Civil Service People Survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will have an understanding of the levels of reported bullying and harassment across the Department and local managers have plans to address the issues. • Staff will understand what is expected of them and be confident that reporting bullying and harassment will result in action being taken (when necessary) • Reduction in levels of reported bullying and harassment • Disabled staff are consistently satisfied with the reasonable adjustments process • We will understand any underlying reasons if BME, disabled and older staff appear fair less favourably

	Strategic Objective	Action/Resources necessary to achieve success	Success Criteria
		diversity by developing a communications plan to celebrate key equality and culture events e.g. LGBT History Month, Black History Month etc	<p>in performance management as was the case in previous system and take action to address any issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Diversity award to be incorporated into the Annual Awards programme • Staff demonstrating a commitment to diversity to be recognised through a Diversity Recognition Programme • Diversity is openly discussed throughout our internal communications e.g. the intranet, staff magazines, and staff feel confident to participate in discussions
Commitment	We will make Defra a good place to work that attracts, develops and retains the most talented people from the widest range of backgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve our knowledge and understanding of our workforce profile • Ensure equalities considerations are embedded at all levels of the core-Defra 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will be confident that our data are robust and provides a consistent understanding of our workforce profile • Data are collected on a

	Strategic Objective	Action/Resources necessary to achieve success	Success Criteria
		<p>reshaping exercise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When we know the equalities impacts of the core-Defra restructure we will develop action plans to address the key priority areas for the Department • Identify, develop and nurture diverse talent at all levels • Make the best use of opportunities across Defra and the Executive Agencies to share and develop talent • Ensure we make the best use of cross-government talent development and positive action learning programmes to develop diverse talent • Support the cross-Government internships and apprenticeships programme to identify and attract talent from diverse backgrounds • Continue to work with key external suppliers/diversity organisations to raise the profile of Defra as an 	<p>consistent basis and we are confident that we know the disability, ethnicity and sexual orientation of our staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are confident that staff from minority groups (women, disabled, BME and LGB&T) are able to access the Civil Service Learning positive action talent programmes • Evaluation of Civil Service Learning data shows that our minority staff are benefiting from participation in positive action talent programmes • We will be able to attract new staff from a wide range of minority groups (BME, disabled, LGB&T) who view Defra as an Employer of Choice

	Strategic Objective	Action/Resources necessary to achieve success	Success Criteria
		Employer of Choice	
Capability	We will ensure our people have the skills and tools they need to make Defra a high performing organisation that understands and responds to the needs of our customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the awareness and understanding of all staff to better manage and respect diversity by ensuring access to diversity learning, guidance and support • Ensure all new staff receive diversity training • Improve the capability of our managers to develop and enable disabled staff to reach their full potential • Improve the capability of our managers to better manage and respect diversity and have a better understanding of their legal obligations (disabled staff and staff on maternity leave) • Ensure all staff and managers have access to Unconscious Bias training to better understand the impacts of bias on their decision making • Ensure Defra has plans in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will be confident that our staff have access to the diversity training most relevant to their role / business • Improved Fairness and Inclusion scores as measured through the annual Civil Service People Survey • Publication of an action plan to identify customer delivery objectives by April 2012 • Equalities objectives will be embedded within our Business Plan with progress reported through corporate performance reporting procedures

	Strategic Objective	Action/Resources necessary to achieve success	Success Criteria
		place to enable staff to deliver services to customers in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010	

Table 2: Customer Objectives (Phase One April - September 2012)

Aim: The outcomes of the activities set out below will enable us to identify our specific Customer Objectives, based on engagement and consultation with our stakeholders and delivery partners, for agreement and sign-off by the Permanent Secretary, Directors General and Agency Chief Executives in September 2012

Objective	Action/Resources necessary to achieve success	Outcome/What we will deliver
We will improve our knowledge and understanding of our customers and stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work collaboratively with colleagues across the Defra Network to collate and analyse customer data to better understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Who they are e.g. demographics, locations etc ○ How we engage with them e.g. consultation exercises, website, customer insight data etc ○ How well we work with them e.g. customer satisfaction surveys, complaints etc • Review outcomes to identify significant issues or areas where our policies/work can have the biggest impact on our customers 	Agree and develop an action plan to address the significant issues / areas where equalities considerations can have the biggest positive impact on our customers
We will improve our understanding of the impact of our policies and delivery activities on our customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work collaboratively with colleagues across the Defra Network to collate and analyse customer data to better understand the impact of our policies/activities on our customers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review all published Equality Impact Assessments 	Agree and develop an action plan to address the significant issues / areas where equalities considerations can have the biggest positive impact on our customers

Objective	Action/Resources necessary to achieve success	Outcome/What we will deliver
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review and share good practice in promoting equality in policy development ○ Review and share good practice in promoting equality in front-line service delivery ● Review outcomes to identify significant issues or areas where our policies/work can have the biggest impact on our customers 	
<p>We will engage with colleagues to improve our leadership and accountability for embedding activities to meet our Public Sector Equality Duty as part of our Business Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work collaboratively with colleagues across the Defra Network to ensure equalities is embedded in everything that we do: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work with colleagues to ensure greater understanding of equalities in policy development and front-line service delivery ○ Work with colleagues to influence the development of the Business Plan to ensure equalities considerations are embedded ○ Work with colleagues to better understand the make-up of our public boards to ensure they are representative of the communities they serve ○ Work with colleagues to understand our current processes for ensuring 	<p>Agree and develop an action plan to address the significant issues / areas where equalities considerations can have the biggest positive impact on our customers</p> <p>A senior leader has accountability for ensuring equalities considerations are embedded within business and policy decision making</p>

Objective	Action/Resources necessary to achieve success	Outcome/What we will deliver
	<p>equalities are considered in policy making and front-line service delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review outcomes to identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Significant issues or areas where our policies/work can have the biggest impact on our customers ○ New ways of working to ensure equalities considerations are embedded within policy making and front-line service delivery • As part of the core-Defra restructure, we will identify a senior role within the Strategy, Evidence and Customers business area responsible for embedding equality considerations across our business 	