

# Together we can make government work better

Creating a Diverse Cabinet Office: A Policy Framework



The Cabinet Office performs a unique coordination and strategic role across government and has an important role in creating a fairer and more equal Britain. Its key purpose is to 'make government work better'.

The new Cabinet Office People Strategy highlights our need for the strength of diversity if we are to achieve our goals – the right people with the right attitudes, backed up by the right systems and the right culture. We do not yet benefit fully from that strength.

We want to become a more inclusive Department where talents can flourish. *Creating a Diverse Cabinet Office*, combined with the Cabinet Office values and behaviours, sets out the policy framework to make sure that we do. It underpins and complements the People Strategy; it captures our policy on diversity, affirms our commitment to it and provides a framework for delivering diversity in the Cabinet Office.



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# Shaping our **FUTURE**





'Making government work better' means constantly seeking out and bringing together a wide range of talents, skills, backgrounds and experiences. We are here to serve the whole British population. We cannot do that well unless our workforce properly represents the communities we serve. When we talk about diversity, we mean making sure that we respect, value and harness differences so that everyone can make a full contribution.

Diversity makes sense, both for our customers and for us. Our vision is of a Department that is more effective in making government work better because it actively promotes equality and sees diversity as an opportunity, not a problem; has an open culture and behaves inclusively; and unlocks

the energy and potential of every member of staff.

There are benefits for everyone. All staff have an assurance of fair treatment without discrimination – and in turn we expect them to treat colleagues and customers from all backgrounds with respect and sensitivity. Managers will benefit from the creativity unleashed by increased diversity within their teams and will be expected to develop all individuals to achieve their full potential. The Cabinet Office as a whole will gain greater trust and credibility by being more representative of the people we serve.

Diversity is not an 'add on'. It is an integral part of how we all behave. Celebrate diversity, and together we can make government work better.

**Cabinet Office Board and Executive Management Group**



### Case study: 1

A deputy director in the Cabinet Secretariat works from home one day a week, using a work computer and a broadband connection. This flexibility is great for him because it allows him to share some of the childcare responsibilities with his wife who also works, for example by taking and collecting his children from school/nursery.



# Achieving our AIMS

***Creating a Diverse Cabinet Office sets out a clear policy framework to make us representative of the population we serve.***

It offers:

- for the individual – a demonstration of the Cabinet Office’s commitment to fair treatment for all;
- for managers – a framework and action plan to help them manage their staff and get the most out of each individual; and
- for the Cabinet Office – the opportunity to be an organisation of choice, where people of all backgrounds want to work.

We recognise that, although it is important to take account of demographics as one of the many indicators of increased diversity in the organisation, the most important change is cultural.

## Why this is important

There are four reasons for taking diversity seriously:

## Case study: 2

Stuart Moore joined the Corporate Diversity Strategy Team in 2005. Stuart has a speech impairment, so had always experienced a lack of self-confidence in the workplace, especially in meetings and when giving presentations. To develop his confidence and his knowledge of equality law and administration, Stuart went on a mini-secondment to the Office for Administrative Affairs in Stockholm. During his visit he met with people from various equality organisations and the Swedish Parliament (Riksdag); gave an interview to an equality magazine; and gave a presentation to a large audience on equality in the UK. Stuart found this a great learning opportunity and has used this experience in his leadership of the Cabinet Office Disability Network (DisCO).



## The MORAL case

The Cabinet Office is morally committed to providing a lead in moving towards a fairer society that gives everyone equal opportunities and an equal chance to live free from discrimination and prejudice.

We believe that by actively valuing diversity we will contribute to creating a more just and equitable society.

**We need to do as we say.**

## The SOCIAL case

The Cabinet Office recognises that it is vital for us to reflect and respond to the fact that people's expectations and social circumstances continue to change.

We know that:

- the participation of women in the labour market has increased significantly over the last 25 years and continues to rise;
- work/life balance is becoming more important to both men and women;
- employers are increasingly aware that they have to be flexible about childcare and other caring responsibilities outside work if they are to attract and retain good quality and experienced staff – and that caring responsibilities are not a gender issue;
- health improves when people feel valued;
- at least 12% of the UK population are disabled;
- people are living and working longer: by 2010, 40% of the population will be 45 or over and only 17% will be between 16 and 24 years old; and
- with increasing globalisation and population movements around the world, there is an ever more diverse mix of ethnicities and cultures in the UK.

**We need to meet these challenges and maximise the opportunities they bring.**

## The BUSINESS case

Diversity can help us to make government work better in two ways; firstly by increasing our efficiency and effectiveness through the greater creativity of a diverse workforce where everyone's potential is fully realised. Research shows that valuing and supporting the diversity of people's backgrounds and lifestyles is a key factor in maximising the workforce's contribution to improving organisational performance. And the best performing organisations, both in the public and private sector, are also the ones that invest most in promoting diversity. This is not about favours and special interests – everyone is part of one group or another. Nor is it only about narrowly defined 'diversity' groups: we need the right mix of front-line delivery, policy development and corporate services skills and experience in our workforce. **Most importantly, we need to attract and retain the best talent from the widest sources.**

Secondly, we know that there is a positive relationship between workforce representation, knowledge of our customer population and, ultimately, service delivery. We also know that the different experiences that come from a diverse workforce can provide insights into the service delivery needs of different, sometimes hard to reach, groups. So diversity matters to all of us if we are to engage our customers, develop evidence-based policies that take their different needs into account and deliver high-quality services to everyone who needs them in an increasingly personalised way.

The Cabinet Office's mission is to make government work better; and we have an important role in creating a fairer and more equal Britain. We will succeed only if we value our staff, invest in their development and manage more inclusively, giving a lead to other government departments as we do so.

## The LEGAL case

There is an extensive legal framework, both national and European, underpinning diversity and equality objectives. These cover sex, race, disability, equal pay, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion and belief, and age.

**We need to comply with legal obligations.**

## Representation

Deep and sustained culture change is vital, but representation of different groups is also an important visible signal of change. We believe we cannot fully realise the benefits of diversity until we have a truly representative workforce. We are already representative of the economically active population in terms of gender and ethnicity. But we know that representation of black and minority ethnic staff and women starts to decline at B2 level and above.

	Target for April 2008	Position at September 2007 <sup>1</sup>
Women at Band A	50%	41.9%
Women in the SCS	40%	38.6%
Women in SCS 2 and above	35%	30.3%
Black and minority ethnic staff at Band A <sup>2</sup>	8%	5.9%
Black and minority ethnic staff in the SCS	6%	5.3%
Disabled staff at Band A	5%	4.1%
Disabled staff in the SCS	5%	5.3%

1 Source: Cabinet Office human resources directorate, August 2007.

2 Figures for black and minority ethnic and disabled staff expressed as a proportion of known population.

Our analysis tells us that unless we take immediate action we are unlikely to meet our targets for women at Band A and in the Senior

Civil Service (SCS). While we have met or are close to our targets for black and minority ethnic and disabled staff, we need to ensure that we maintain and sustain our progress in these areas. Our analysis tells us that the barriers and issues for different groups vary, and our action will be tailored to address these.

Naturally, it is important to look below SCS and Band A level, even if that is where our current diversity targets are focused. In particular, we need to ensure that we remain representative in terms of gender and ethnicity; improve representation of disabled staff at all levels; and encourage and support talented staff in groups that are under-represented at Band A and above to progress up through the Department.

Beyond April 2008, we will:

- continue to work towards any diversity targets we have not achieved;
- work towards a longer-term aim to become representative of the population we serve; and
- consider whether we need to introduce targets for other groups on the basis of evidence that they are under-represented at particular levels.

### Case study: 3

'By starting early, I am able to compress my working hours and spend one afternoon a week at home looking after my three-year-old twin daughters. This assists greatly with childcare arrangements, especially as my wife has recently returned to full-time working.'

*Alistair Clyde, Intelligence and Security Secretariat (ISS)*

'This benefits the team too. Alistair's early arrival extends the time my team is available to deal with crises – particularly valuable on a day like today when there were indications overnight that Pakistan might declare a state of emergency and we needed to check our sources.'

*Richard Tilbrook, ISS, Alistair's line manager*



## Our priorities

We therefore need to prioritise key areas for action. Our five strategic priorities for the year are:

- improving accountability for diversity outcomes;
- changing behaviours right across the Department, fostering more visible leadership and more inclusive managers who understand the benefits of diversity, and developing a culture of greater openness on sensitive diversity issues;
- creating a more diverse workforce, particularly by encouraging recruitment and promotion on merit of individuals from under-represented

groups and by extending flexible working opportunities to all;

- embedding equality and diversity in all human resources (HR) policies and processes such as recruitment, induction and performance management. This will include proactive talent management and a wide range of appealing learning and development options; and
- delivering clear and consistent messages on diversity by managers at all levels.

Specific steps that will help us meet these challenges are set out in *Creating a Diverse Cabinet Office: An Action Plan*, which is published in parallel with this document.

### Case study: 4

'My mum is going into hospital next week – I was able to get a work laptop, and get trained in time, and will be working from my parents' house in Essex two days a week for the next three weeks. This means that I can be at home to help while she recovers, which is obviously good for me and my mum, but I am still able to do my work – which is obviously good for the Cabinet Office as I can provide cover while some colleagues are on leave.'

*Anisha Punchihewa, Economic and Domestic Affairs Secretariat*



# How we will CHANGE

**If we are serious about creating a truly diverse Cabinet Office, everyone has a role to play. But we also need top-level accountability.**

Alexis Cleveland is our departmental Diversity Champion and has a leading interest in disability issues, which includes supporting our network for disabled staff. We have additional senior diversity champions with a special interest in particular groups and the relevant staff networks: Sarah Cox for women; Howell James for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender staff; Roger Marsh for black and ethnic minority staff; and Paul Britton for carers.

And the five strategic priorities all have a corporate owner: Alexis Cleveland for accountability; Sarah Cox for behavioural and cultural

change; Helen Dudley for a diverse workforce and embedding equality and diversity in HR processes; and, when appointed, our new Director of Communications for communications.

As members of the Cabinet Office, we accept that we are responsible for:

- setting a good example by our own behaviour and encouraging a healthy balance between work and home life;
- challenging harmful or discriminating behaviours;
- understanding and working with the different approaches people may take;
- treating colleagues with respect and expecting to be treated with respect;
- valuing people for the contribution they make, not their grade, and drawing on their range of experiences and perspectives;
- setting ourselves meaningful and measurable diversity objectives that form part of our overall performance assessment; and
- fulfilling the duties placed on us by the legislation.

## Case study: 5

‘Some months ago when I was doing project work for HR, I was asked if I could arrange for a few members of HR staff to attend a seminar on Islam and its dress code. The question of the ‘veil’ and the ‘hijab’ was very much in the news then and I felt it was time to dispel some myths. After some research, I arranged a presentation on Islam and its dress code, which was really well received. This led me to think that awareness is needed for other faiths as well and I’ve arranged presentations on Islam, Sikhism and Baha’ism – all running to capacity audiences. I feel this programme of multi-faith awareness is helping the Department achieve a truly inclusive culture.’

*Mohinder Alg, Social Exclusion Task Force*

In addition, line managers will be responsible for:

- making sure that people know what standards of behaviour are expected of them;
- encouraging a healthy balance between work and home life;
- promoting an environment free from unfair discrimination, bullying and harassment;
- creating a working environment that encourages everyone to contribute and participate; and
- investing in people, supporting their development and encouraging them to achieve their potential.

In addition, heads of management units will be responsible for:

- integrating the diversity policy framework into their unit plans;
- working within their senior management team to ensure that the diversity framework is delivered across their unit;
- reporting annually to the Diversity Champion on the progress achieved within their unit; and
- leading by example.

The HR Diversity Manager will be responsible for:

- ensuring that HR policies are in line with our diversity objectives;
- monitoring the recruitment and progression of under-represented staff; and
- supporting the Diversity Champion, senior champions, network convenors and the corporate owners of the five strategic priorities in achieving their objectives.

The SCS Diversity Team will be responsible for:

- continuous development of the policy framework and action plan and reviewing progress every six months;

## Case study: 6

Katherine Fisher and Justine Csaky job share in the communications team here at the Cabinet Office – working three days a week each and therefore overlapping on one day. This allows them to fulfil caring responsibilities they have, and the overlapping day means that they can keep up to date with what each other is doing and provide a seamless service to those they work with and for. They have also set up a part-time and job-sharers' network across government, for people in the Government Communication Network. One of their aspirations is for people to be able to find job-share partners.

- providing a challenge function within their groups and to the Executive Management Board;
- acting as individual diversity champions within their groups, sourcing and sharing best practice; and
- advising the Board and Executive Management Group on whether we need further specific targets for other under-represented groups.

The senior champions will be responsible for:

- working closely with their networks to help them decide and achieve their objectives;
- championing the issues of their networks at Board discussions and with senior colleagues; and
- reporting twice yearly to the Board through the Diversity Champion.

The departmental Diversity Champion will be responsible for:

- overall performance against targets;
- providing leadership in the implementation and achievement of this policy framework and the action plan within the Cabinet Office; and
- reporting twice yearly to the Board on progress.



# Measures of SUCCESS



We will monitor our progress using the following measures over the course of the next 12 months:

- responses to the questions relating to diversity in the Pulse Survey;
- random sampling of performance agreements and performance reports to check that all staff have meaningful diversity objectives that are assessed effectively;
- feedback from exit interviews;
- performance against our current targets based on analysis of recruitment and promotion data;
- responses in the People Survey;
- effective embedding of equality and diversity in HR policies and processes, such as recruitment, induction, performance management and learning and development; and
- improved data quality and coverage, aiming for 90% known ethnicity, disability status, sexual orientation and religion or belief.

But, in the longer term, we will know we are really making a difference on diversity when:

- diversity objectives are built into 100% of our business planning processes and regularly evaluated as a central part of departmental performance;
- HR policies are universally applied without discrimination;
- other government departments and our partners outside the Civil Service acknowledge that a core element of our effectiveness is our inclusive approach to all our work;
- staff volunteer as corporate owners of priority areas of action on diversity as a core part of their job descriptions, and feel they are rewarded for good diversity practice;
- the People Survey shows that Cabinet Office staff feel that the vision set out in this document accurately describes the organisation they work in;
- the percentage of female, ethnic/religious minority, disabled and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender staff in the Cabinet Office reflects the percentage of these groups in the population we serve at all levels and we have exceeded the Civil Service Public Service Agreement workforce targets for the SCS; and
- we receive external accreditation for excellence in diversity, for example by reaching the top 10 in Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index (a national benchmarking exercise to showcase Britain's top employers for gay people; the Cabinet Office was ranked 72 in the 2007 list), and achieving recognition in Race for Opportunity and Opportunity Now awards, and in the Employer's Forum on Disability benchmarking.

## Case study: 7

In March 2007, the Cabinet Office Black and Asian Network (COBAN) organised a 'Diversity of India' event. The team in charge of planning and delivering the event was drawn from a cross-section of units, with backgrounds from different regions of India and a common passion for raising awareness of their heritage. The allocation of roles and responsibilities meant that team members could improve or develop specific skills not normally used or demonstrated in their day job. The event consisted of colourful displays on interesting and relevant topics about India, Indian dancing, food from different states, and high-profile guest speakers – including Baroness Prashar, Kamallesh Sharma (the Indian High Commissioner) and Pat McFadden (then Minister for the Cabinet Office). All those who attended felt that they had learnt something about India, and the event was short listed for the Cabinet Office diversity award.

Human Resources Directorate  
Cabinet Office  
22 Whitehall  
London SW1A 2WH

Telephone: 020 7276 6207  
Fax: 020 7276 6271

E-mail: [savio.patricio@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:savio.patricio@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk)  
Web address: [www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk)

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