

ofqual



**Diversity and
Inclusion
Strategy**

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Foreword

We welcome this Diversity and Inclusion Strategy as it articulates how we will work to ensure that we bring to life the commitments we signed up to in our Equality and Diversity Policy. This strategy aligns with our existing Corporate Plan 2019-2022 and will align with our refreshed People Strategy for 2020 to 2022.

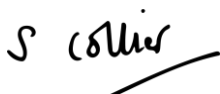
We are fully committed to ensuring we provide an opportunity for all to realise their potential and that we have an organisation that represents the diversity of the qualifications community we regulate and the Midlands community where we are based. By fostering this diversity in Ofqual, we can achieve the ambitious and challenging objectives that we have set for ourselves. We look forward to being a champion for continued investment in our people.

We will focus our effort initially in 2 main areas: creating opportunities to increase our BAME representation at senior levels, and creating a culture where our people feel comfortable in declaring disability so that we can readily provide support.

Our key aim will be to embed diversity related management information into our decision-making, allocate specific investment to support our activities and provide transparent information on an annual basis for the Board to consider.

We will work with our reverse mentors to understand the impact of our actions and seek further ways to deliver improvements in those areas highlighted within this strategy.

Overall, we will strive to become a more inclusive and diverse organisation that delivers on its plans and priorities.



Sally Collier

Chief Regulator



Sean Pearce

Chief Operating Officer



Christine Ryan

Board Equality & Diversity Champion

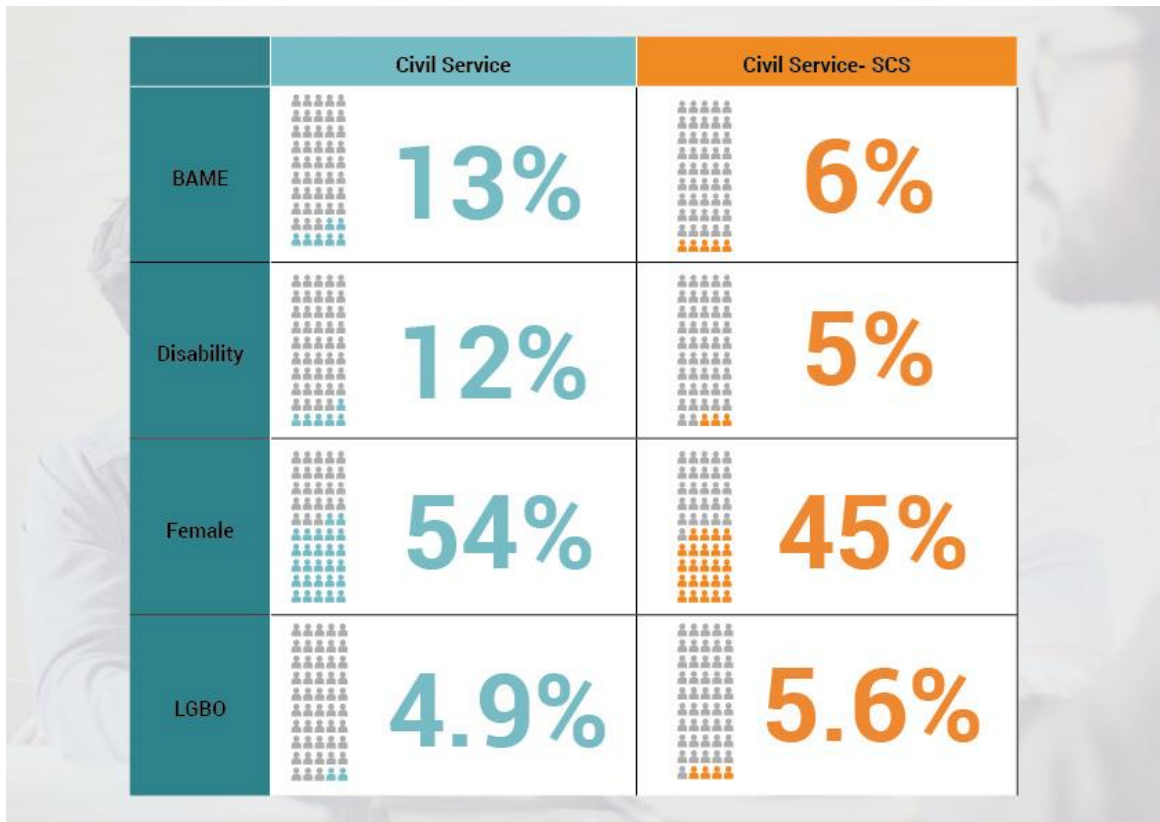
1 Overview

Ofqual supports the Civil Service Workforce Plan 2016-2020, which sets out a challenging ambition for the Civil Service to become the most inclusive employer in the UK by 2020. The Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Strategy has 2 key priorities:

1. Continue to increase the representation of currently under-represented groups at all levels across the Civil Service.
2. Focus on inclusion to build our culture and reputation as a place that attracts, develops, retains and fully engages all the diverse talent across our organisation.

Set out below in Figure 1 is Civil Service diversity data.

Figure 1: UK Civil Service diversity data



Please note: this graphic shows Civil Service data. The Civil Service uses the LGBO descriptor (lesbian, gay, bisexual, other). In Ofqual we use LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) in our data, and this appears later in the report. SCS = Senior Civil Servants

This Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (D&I Strategy) considers how we operate and connects to the [Ofqual People Strategy](#) which is itself linked to our [Corporate Plan](#).

The D&I Strategy sets out where we start from in terms of our workforce and our current legal duties. The D&I Strategy articulates our strategic intention, vision and commitment, which aligns with the Diversity and Equalities Policy, and sets out the governance arrangements to support the delivery of the Strategy.

The Ofqual Diversity and Equalities Policy sets out our purpose and how we will implement the D&I Strategy to guarantee that we not only comply with our legislative requirements but also actively promote best practice to ensure our people are dealt with fairly and equitably in all respects.

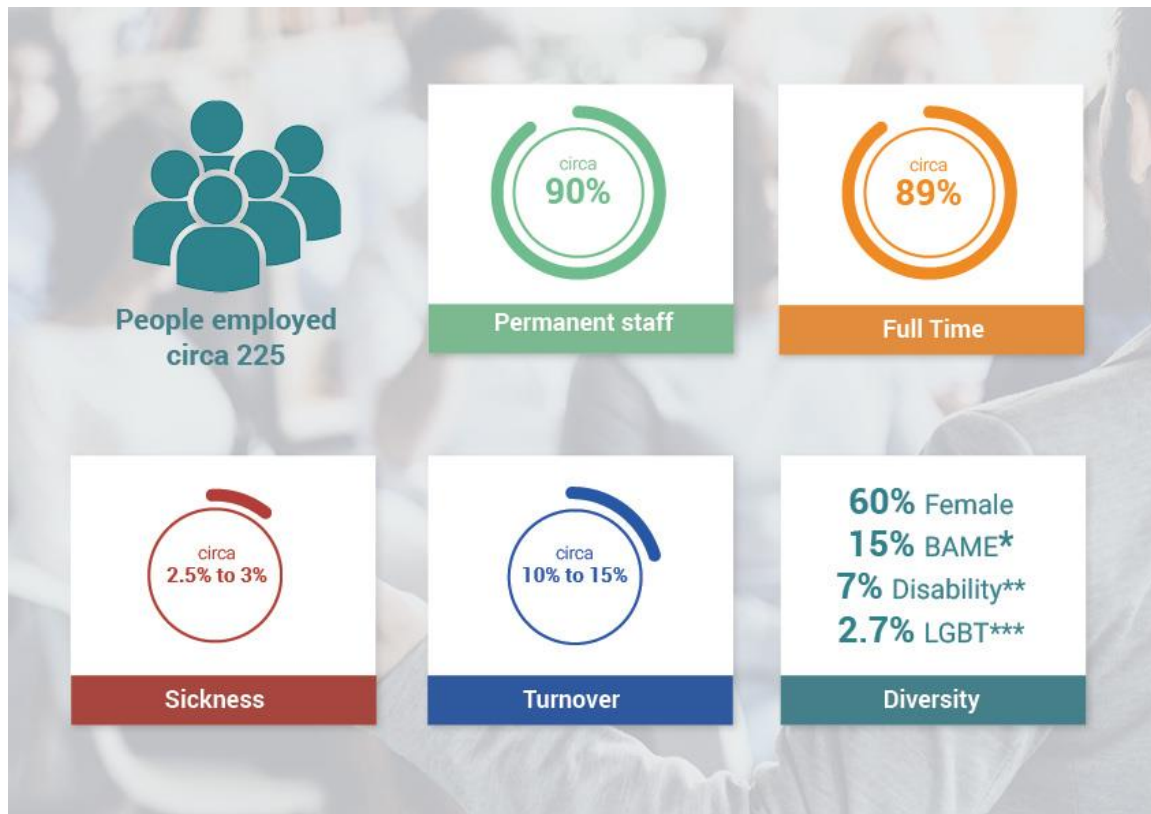
A key part of assuring the delivery of our D&I Strategy is through our Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Working Group. The Working Group will oversee and report on progress being made on the practical steps we will take to demonstrate improvement across the protected characteristics.

2 Our workforce

Ofqual is based in the West Midlands, within an Education Hub that includes the Department for Education, the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, the Education and Skills Funding Agency and the Teaching Regulation Agency.

Our most valuable resource is our people. It is important that we invest in our talent and ensure that everyone has an equal and fair opportunity to flourish and contribute to our success.

Figure 2: Ofqual Workforce - October 2019



*13% blank or prefer not to say **47% blank or prefer not to say *** 46.7% blank or prefer not to say

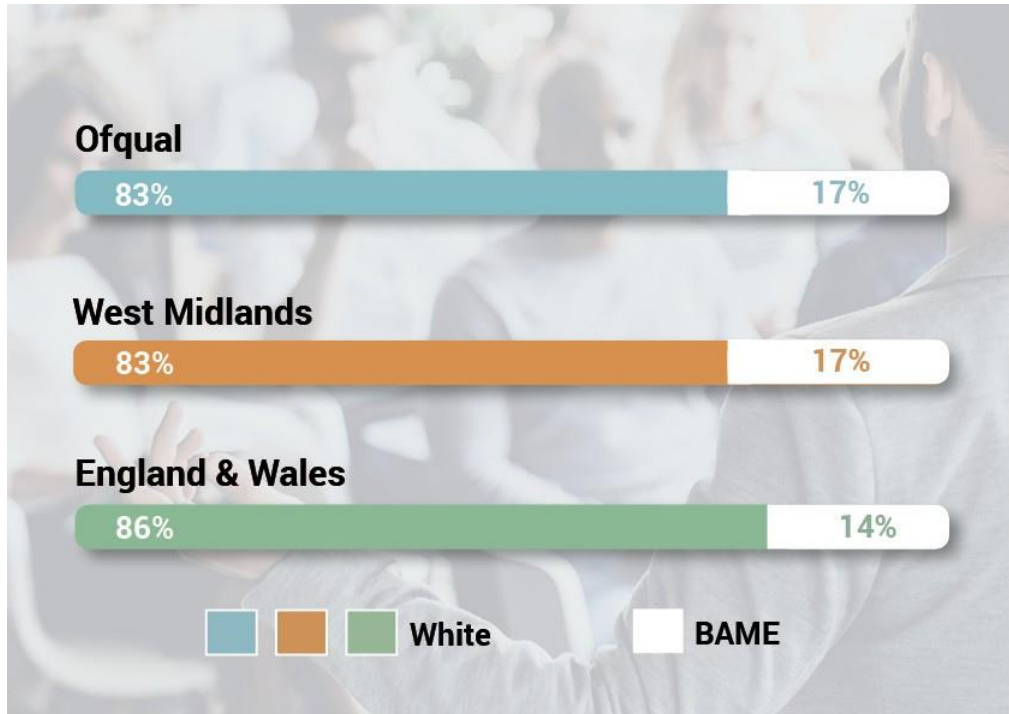
Our analysis is set in the context of around 18% of working age adults in the UK identifying as disabled¹ and 2% of the UK population identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual.²

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/family-resources-survey-financial-year-201718>

² <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualidentityuk/2017>

The following chart is a comparison of our workforce to the West Midlands average and national average for ethnicity taken from the 2011 census.

Figure 3: Ethnicity compared to West Midlands and national averages



*Excludes the 13% of Ofqual employees who have not declared their ethnicity or opted to prefer not to say.

3 Our strategic intention

Ofqual’s Corporate Plan and our People Strategy set out how our expert teams will work together to ensure the public can have confidence in the qualifications system. The D&I Strategy commits Ofqual to ensuring that all employees have the opportunities and support needed to develop and excel in their roles. To deliver it we need to attract, recruit and retain the best and most diverse range of people we can, as reflected in the following aims of our People Strategy:

- to build a collaborative, innovative, healthy and safe working environment with a culture that promotes equality and diversity
- to recruit the best people by attracting talented and capable people from all walks of life

This D&I Strategy is supported by a work plan that will be used by the executive team to drive and monitor delivery at an operational level. The D&I Working Group will review and evaluate the success of the action plan each quarter.

We are committed to working inclusively to ensure that all employees feel supported and barriers to effective working are identified and addressed. We are committed to utilising smarter and flexible working. We will provide workplace support and consider how reasonable adjustments can be made to reduce any disadvantage and promote accessibility.

4 Meeting our legal duty

In line with the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 Ofqual has to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out our activities. The characteristics that are protected in relation to the public sector equality duty are:

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

Ofqual complies with this legislation by demonstrating 'due regard' to the three aims of the general duty of the Equality Act 2010 which are:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation;
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and people who do not share them; and
3. Foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and people who do not share them.

We commit to:

- report on this duty and review our objectives, in line with the 3 aims above, (as outlined in Section 5) to the Board on an annual basis, in our annual Equalities report
- promote equality in recruiting, employing and promoting members of staff
- promote equality when we procure goods and services

We have already achieved a significant amount in this area and a full summary of our achievements to date are set out in Appendix A.

5 Our vision and commitment

Our vision, commitment and objectives have been developed by the D&I Working Group and supported by our Senior Management Group (SMG) to establish what good looks like in the context of being a truly diverse and inclusive organisation.

Vision

'To build a collaborative culture that promotes diversity and inclusion and seeks to attract and retain a diverse range of people from all walks of life'.

Commitment

We are committed to creating and maintaining an inclusive working environment that provides equality of opportunity for all whilst recognising and valuing our individual differences. We will achieve this by:

- promoting respect and encouraging good relations within and between all our people
- aiming to meet the needs of all our people, where appropriate while promoting shared values
- taking into account and valuing individual and group differences and implementing policies that recognise different needs
- not tolerating discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation of employees, or third parties who undertake work on Ofqual's behalf, taking practical steps to address inequality and discrimination
- developing confidence within the workforce to challenge inappropriate behaviours
- continuing to strive towards a culture that is diverse and inclusive and that recognises the benefits and opportunities of having a diverse community of staff
- ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion are priorities across all parts of the organisation, including at senior level

Objectives

Our objectives have been developed by the D&I Working Group and agreed by our SMG. They have been grouped into 3 areas: **inclusion, representation and monitoring**, to embed, deliver, review and assess our commitment to diversity and inclusion. Further details to support these overarching objectives are set out below.

Improving inclusion

- to focus on inclusion to build our culture and reputation as a place that attracts, develops, retains and fully engages diverse talent
- to raise awareness of the need to be inclusive and promoting inclusive leadership
- to create an environment where we have effective and skilled leaders taking individual responsibility to help deliver and drive our ambition in relation to diversity and inclusion
- to ensure that diversity and inclusion is woven through all of our management and leadership programmes, enabling everyone to engage with the diversity and inclusion agenda to allow us to make real progress

Improving representation

- to explore ways we can increase representation of under-represented groups across all grades in Ofqual, and support recruitment practices to help ensure our local community can access opportunities here
- we will prioritise objectives for diversity strands where there is notable under-representation, such as BAME at senior levels, and disability across all grade profiles, while remaining committed to tackling under-representation across all other areas such as age, gender, identity and expression, faith and belief and socio-economic background
- a person's identity consists of multiple characteristics. We will therefore develop an approach to understand this and tackle any representation issues

Improving monitoring

- we will develop our monitoring to specifically meet our needs and be capable of being benchmarked against overall Civil Service data. This will ensure that we can demonstrate our support of the Civil Service aspiration to become the UK's most inclusive employer
- we will make sure the progress we make that can be evidenced matches the scale, ambition and pace of the change required across the Civil Service
- we will seek to improve the completion and transparency of diversity data and use it to inform strategy, focusing across all areas of the employment lifecycle (for example recruitment, promotions, appraisal outcomes, gender pay gap)

Key measures of success are articulated in our work plan and include satisfaction and wellbeing of staff, increased reporting of personal characteristics by staff and evidence of increased diversity where groups are under-represented. The D&I Working Group will undertake regular reviews of both qualitative and quantitative data relating to equality and diversity in Ofqual, including the results from the People Survey.

6 Governance

Diversity and inclusion is the responsibility of every employee across the organisation. The Board's responsibility is to agree the D&I Strategy for Ofqual and monitor its overall impact and delivery. Our Senior Executive accountability sits with our Chief Regulator, supported by our Chief Operating Officer, who will have responsibility for delivery on a day to day basis.

The Chief Regulator is supported by the SMG, which is responsible for creating an environment that ensures we embed and implement the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. The SMG will consider and monitor progress on all aspects surrounding the D&I Strategy and Policy on a quarterly basis, with an annual review at the end of 2020 and every year thereafter. This work will be informed by feedback from the D&I Working Group.

The Ofqual Board will be provided with an annual report via our Board Equality & Diversity Champion, who will assess, monitor and report back to the Board on the delivery and effectiveness of the D&I Strategy.

The diagram below sets out how we propose to assure the governance and delivery of this strategy.

Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Governance Framework



The Diversity and Inclusion Working Group

Our D&I Working Group was established with members from across the business in 2018 and is chaired by a Director. The Terms of Reference for the Working Group have been agreed by the SMG and are set out in Appendix B.

The Working Group meets quarterly to review current equality priorities and objectives as well as looking nationally across the Civil Service to ensure it is well sighted on, and responding to, any emerging and evolving issues. It will provide a summary of its work to SMG and will formally review progress against the work plan quarterly, as set out in Section 7. The Board Equality & Diversity Champion will be invited to attend as part of their governance responsibilities and report back to the Board on the delivery and effectiveness of the D&I Strategy. An update on progress will also be shared quarterly with the Board Finance and HR Sub- Committee.

The D&I Working Group will discuss the diversity and inclusion agenda and ways of promoting it within Ofqual and monitor progress.

7 Taking practical steps: our work plan

Our Equalities and Diversity Policy was last updated in 2016 and it will be refreshed in 2020. As set out in Section 1, this Strategy establishes how we intend to deliver the commitments set out in the Equalities and Diversity Policy in the period 2020–22 so that it is aligned with both our Corporate Plan and our People Strategy. It will provide the main tool for the Board to support and challenge our performance through to 2022.

This D&I Strategy is supported by a detailed work plan that is aligned to our commitment on how we will deliver against our 3 main diversity and inclusion objectives as set out in Section 5. A high level summary is provided below of this work plan which includes key measures of success.

Improving inclusion

We will achieve this by:

- launching our D&I Strategy internally and publishing externally
- further developing a collaborative, innovative, healthy and safe working environment with a culture that promotes equality and diversity
- ensuring diversity and inclusion is considered formally in all SMG and Board reports
- all members of the SMG and the Leadership Team having a diversity and inclusion personal objective
- regularly reporting of our progress to the SMG and annually to the Ofqual Board
- where appropriate, ensuring our recruitment and selection process incorporates an employee engagement exercise for Senior Civil Service (SCS) appointments made up of a diverse Ofqual panel
- seeking expert external assessment and validation of our performance on diversity and inclusion during 2020 in the following areas:
 - Disability Confident Levels 2 and 3 (Employer and Leader)
 - Thrive at Work recognition - Bronze
- continuing to increase awareness of our approach to diversity and inclusion by publicising a calendar of events and delivering awareness sessions
- ensuring that our diversity and inclusion approach is incorporated into all our talent acquisition and development, promoting relevant training, including the new manager/leadership training as with induction and unconscious bias
- promoting the existing networks across Civil Service, strengthening local diversity and inclusion links with other public and private sector bodies

Improving representation

We will achieve this by:

- recruiting the best people by attracting talented and capable people from all walks of life, whilst still retaining and promoting staff within Ofqual
- better understanding our impact on social mobility through our attraction, recruitment and retention efforts when advertising our vacant roles to ensure that we reach all communities
- establishing partnerships to seek ways we could increase staff representation from wider socio-economic backgrounds (for example outreach programmes and apprenticeships)
- delivering recruitment training for all staff involved in recruiting new team members, which will be continuously refreshed against feedback and its impact measured via our diversity statistical data

- ensuring our culture and processes are inclusive and supportive of a range of backgrounds when it comes to promotion and other opportunities, including through mentoring and myth-busting

Our current data demonstrates that we are under-represented in relation to BAME in senior leadership roles and disability across all grades.

In relation to BAME we will engage with and publicise Civil Service wide programmes to colleagues to support career progression. We will strengthen the BAME talent pipelines at all levels, particularly at SCS levels, through positive actions, talent programme and targeted support for high performing BAME staff. Specifically we will:

- ensure our recruitment campaigns reach under-represented groups for all grades
- strengthen recruitment and selection processes, for example, by introducing the expectation, where possible, that panels are diverse at all grades; and introducing a range of selection and interview options
- Create work shadowing opportunities to enable exposure and input into SMG meetings and Board meetings

In relation to disability we will work towards strengthening the talent pipeline of people with disabilities at all levels, seeking to increase representation at all grades and improving our understanding of the importance of mental health and wellbeing. We will look to create role models who will champion and value difference, demonstrate inclusive leadership and the ability to build inclusive teams. We will commit to ensuring all employees feel supported and that barriers to effective working are identified and addressed through appropriate workplace adjustments.

Specific actions that we will take are:

- increasing the representation and engagement of people with disabilities and creating an environment where staff feel comfortable disclosing their disability, using focus groups and communications campaigns
- maintaining our pool of Mental Health First Aiders across the organisation and providing access to training to assist managers in their capability to address colleague mental health and wellbeing issues, in order to make necessary adjustments
- ensuring that staff with disabilities and their line managers are aware of the process for accessing workplace adjustments, that the adjustments are of good quality, and that they are implemented within agreed timeframes
- encouraging our Leadership Team to join existing support groups and share best practice, working with the wider Civil Service to increase representation

Improving monitoring

We will ensure all of our efforts are specific and relevant to our context whilst being consistent with our overarching Civil Service aspiration to become the UK's most inclusive employer. We will make sure our progress matches the scale, ambition and pace of the change required across the Civil Service. We will develop

our management information at Executive and Board level to ensure we can judge whether we have achieved our objectives to increase representation and inclusion, as set out in the previous 2 sections, across all areas of the employment lifecycle (for example recruitment, promotions, appraisal outcomes, gender pay gap) by 2023.

This will include a focus on:

- improving Board and Executive level management information and using it to inform strategy and focus across all areas of employment
- promoting good practice and reducing instances of our staff not recording diversity data so that we have a more complete set of management information with regard to protected characteristics
- reviewing the Civil Service's work on socio-economic background and ensure Ofqual is monitoring in line with their requirements
- continuing to monitor and report on the gender pay gap
- developing reporting on our ethnicity pay gap once adopted by the Civil Service
- embedding diversity and inclusion principles by completing proportionate Equality Impact Assessments where required for all our internal policies
- exploring ways we can capture and improve our methods of understanding inclusion by measuring socio-economic background through the Civil Service Survey
- striving to improve our Civil Service People Survey results in the Inclusion and Fair Treatment section by understanding the underlying reasons for the scores and addressing them
- establishing and building on partnerships with leaders across the public sector that are known to actively embed diversity in their organisations in order to benchmark our performance

8 Procurement

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) sets out anti-discrimination law and the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). We are mindful that compliance with the PSED should help to ensure that the procurement of goods and services are fit for purpose, thus ensuring that they meet the needs of their users.

Ofqual is funded by public money and, while our non-pay budget is small, our processes to procure goods and services are subject to the EU Treaty principles of:

- non-discrimination
- free movement of goods
- freedom to provide services
- freedom of establishment

Ofqual is also committed to contributing to the government's target of 33% of procurement spending to reach Small to Medium Enterprises (SME). We will embed our expectations in our ways of working and we will strive to meet these principles and objectives by reviewing our contracts on a case-by-case basis, building in provisions which include:

- making it easier for suppliers to deal with Ofqual by aligning procurement processes and documents with best practice and guidance provided by the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS) and the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) to ensure consistency
- undertaking structured supplier engagement throughout the procurement and contract management process
- defining and communicating our requirements in a clear and transparent way that is consistent with the D&I Strategy
- breaking our requirements down into lots (where possible) to enable SMEs to tender for our requirements
- embedding a culture of working with and developing relationships with our suppliers
- where we are procuring through centralized or collaborative framework contracts continue to discuss with those organisations how diversity and inclusion can be included in their procurements

As part of our procurement processes we will use the CCS standard selection questionnaire which enables us (on discretionary grounds) to exclude Tenderers if, within the last 3 years, they have had a complaint upheld following an investigation by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, or its predecessors (or a comparable body in any jurisdiction other than the UK), on grounds of alleged unlawful discrimination. This safeguards us from entering into contracts with Suppliers that have engaged or allegedly engaged in unlawful discrimination.

Appendix A

Overview of Ofqual achievement and impact in 2018/19.

Inclusion

- we have introduced a Dignity at Work Policy and Charter and held workshops for all employees so that members of staff understand how Ofqual values their contributions and that they have the knowledge and mechanisms to raise concerns
- we have increased our staff engagement scores by 2 percentage points to 69% particularly in relation to being a great place to work within the Civil Service People Survey (and to 70% in 2019)
- we have established the D&I Working Group to provide improved focus, representation and challenge. This has raised awareness and provided insight ahead of the development of this strategy
- we have raised awareness and greater understanding internally of being mindful of protected characteristics by linking our people to internal and external events and initiatives
- we have published internal articles and blogs on specific diversity topics for example Ramadan, mental illness, autism, Carers' Week providing a platform for people to raise awareness of issues that important to them
- we have introduced a diversity web page produced to increase visibility and provide a dedicated area to publicise information and support. This has included training opportunities in areas such as wellbeing and mental health to support colleagues' confidence to discuss issues and raise concerns
- we have introduced an annual calendar of activities to provide a greater understanding of the Civil Service strategy in relation to certain disabilities
- we have held internal talks and sessions on the Civil Service D&I Strategy, blindness, autism and reverse mentoring
- we have enhanced our induction process to include specific learning tools in relation to unconscious bias so colleagues are more aware of their unconscious bias and are able to reduce the impact of it in their everyday interaction and activities
- we have appointed and trained 8 employees as Mental Health First Aiders, who are able to signpost appropriate internal support to staff
- we have reviewed our whistleblowing policy and updated it in line with Sue Owen's 'Review of Tackling Bullying, Harassment and Misconduct in the Civil Service' (2018) report. We have also introduced a new external independent whistleblowing help-line (Protect) to encourage colleagues to raise any concerns they have not been able to resolve internally
- we have introduced a new Employee Benefits programme – with an emphasis on health and wellbeing to raise the profile of how staff can access health and fitness opportunities
- our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) support has enabled individuals to return to work from sick leave more positively and collaboratively

Representation

- we have introduced a reverse mentoring scheme to improve representation and encourage inclusion. In its first stage we have sought to increase the understanding of senior leaders within Ofqual of how diversity and inclusion feels across the workforce and the challenges that our members of staff face
- we have achieved Disability Confident accreditation at level 1 (Committed) which demonstrates our commitment and ensures that we draw upon the widest possible pool of talent internally and externally
- we have created a link to a specialist diversity jobsite to improve our ability to attract candidates from BAME backgrounds, in particular, so that we can access the best talent that is currently under-represented in Ofqual
- we have anonymised all recruitment applications for vacancies below our Grade 6 level to move towards removing any unconscious bias from our shortlisting process and interview panels to help improve the diversity of our workforce

Monitoring

- we have started to improve declaration rates from our members of staff. We now have a clearer baseline position on the diversity (declared) of our workforce which has enabled us to be more specific in our diversity strategy
- we have observed an improvement in our Gender Pay Gap from 2018 to 2019 and our gender pay gap is lower the national average.

Appendix B

Diversity and Inclusion Working Group

Terms of Reference

Introduction

The Diversity and Inclusion Working Group is committed to supporting Ofqual to meet its strategic aims and will be guided and informed by Ofqual's People Strategy. The priorities of the Group are annexed to this Terms of Reference.

Purpose

The Group will meet to discuss the diversity and inclusion agenda and ways of promoting it within Ofqual and will advise on diversity and inclusion issues in relation to staff. The Group will:

- contribute to an organisational culture that is respectful and inclusive
- monitor, evaluate and make recommendations for the effective development and implementation of Ofqual's equality, diversity and inclusion policies as required by legislation and good practice
- raise awareness of diversity and inclusion through a planned programme of staff engagement and communication
- support and advise on implementation of the equality aspects of the People Strategy and to further develop this area
- monitor equality data from Human Resources

Membership

Membership is open to staff from any area of Ofqual and should reflect a broad cross-section of experience, knowledge and interests, preferably drawn from all Directorates. PCS Trade Union and the Employee Forum may also nominate a member. The Group will be chaired by a member of Ofqual's Senior Leadership Team and will be attended by HR representatives. The Board Equality & Diversity Champion will also be invited to attend as part of their governance responsibilities.

Meeting Framework

The Diversity and Inclusion Working Group will meet on a quarterly basis. HR will arrange meetings and distribute an agenda and minutes to all attendees in advance of each meeting.

The Chairperson will usually be a member of Ofqual's Senior Leadership Team but may be changed from time to time.

Measures of Success

Key measures of success are the satisfaction and wellbeing of staff, increased reporting of personal characteristics by staff and evidence for increased diversity where groups are under-represented. The Group should undertake regular reviews of both qualitative and quantitative data relating to equality and diversity in Ofqual, including the Ofqual People Survey which will be reviewed annually.

Confidentiality

In order to build and maintain trust and understanding, Ofqual is committed to as much openness as possible. However, there may be instances when the Diversity and Inclusion Working Group shall be obliged to treat information confidentially that has been expressly provided to them in confidence.

This obligation shall remain, if the information concerned is not in the public domain.



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