

Annual Equality Monitoring Report 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019



Contents

Chief Executive Summary	3
Section 1	
The Forestry Commission family	4
Section 1.1	
Our values	5
Section 2	
Our approach to Diversity and Inclusion	6
Section 3	
Case Studies	7 – 15
3.1	8
Jack Drum and Hamsterley Forest partner to engage young carers	
3.2	9
Wendover Woods engage local community to install new Changing Places facility	
3.3	10
Wild Women Days	
3.4	11
Westonbirt Arboretum engages over 7,000 participants from harder to reach audiences	
3.5	14
Wellbeing at work and how we are breaking the stigma around mental health	
Section 4	
Our Diversity and Inclusion Objectives for 2019-2020	16 – 17
Section 5	
Our employees	18
Section 6	
Conclusion	19
Appendix	20 – 23





Chief Executive Summary

At the Forestry Commission, we know that we are stronger as a business when our workforce is diverse and inclusive.

Everyone who works for our organisation is unique. We want to ensure that every single member of staff feels truly valued and included so that they feel able to share their diverse and unique perspectives and reach their full potential. This is why we place great emphasis on listening to our staff. This report highlights how we have run diverse focus groups and set up employee networks to help us understand what more we can do to increase the diversity of our workforce and build on our inclusive culture. These networks are all championed by Executive and senior leaders across the Forestry Commission. I am proud to lead and support our BAME Inclusion Group.

In this report, we also focus on our visitors. Forestry England's aim is to connect everyone with the nation's forests. It is positive to see the wide range of community outreach programmes in line with this aim. Case studies in this report

range from our arts development programme for young carers through to our branching out programme for dementia patients.

Whilst this report highlights the great strides we are making, I am very mindful that we still need greater diversity in our workforce. For example, our diversity data tells us that only 1.5% of our workforce is from a BAME background, and we know from our focus group work that we must do more to support women in successful careers in forestry at all levels.

In summary I would like to say thank you to everyone across our business who is leading the great work in this area whether this is voluntary as a member of one of our networks or through our community outreach work. We can achieve more when we work together on this priority.

Ian Gambles
Chief Executive
Forestry Commission



This report highlights how we have run diverse focus groups and set up employee networks to help us understand what more we can do to increase the diversity of our workforce and build on our inclusive culture

The Forestry Commission family

Since April 2019, the Forestry Commission has been made up of three parts: **Forestry England**, **Forest Services** and **Forest Research**. In April 2019, Scotland moved to Scottish Government.

Forestry England aim to connect everyone with the nation's forests. It is England's largest land manager and custodian of the nation's public forests. It looks after more than 1,500 forests and woods. 99% of people live within an hour's drive of one of it's forests. It has around 1,000 committed staff looking after more land and more trees than any other organisation.

Forest Services is the government department responsible for protecting, expanding and promoting the sustainable management of woodlands. An example of Forest Services' work includes ensuring that England's Woodland and Tree cover expands both through enabling woodland creation and providing advice to reduce the impact of development on existing woodland and tree canopy cover.

Forest Research is Great Britain's principal organisation for forestry and tree related research and is internationally renowned for the provision of evidence and scientific services in support of sustainable forestry.



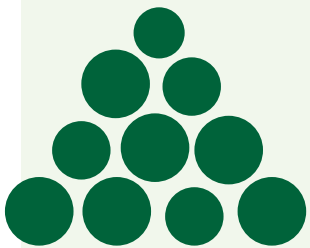
75K Acres per year

Working with government to help them deliver their commitment to plant **75,000 acres** of woodland per year across the UK



369 million

visits to woodland in England in 2018-19



2.8 million

green tonnes of timber was brought to market from England's forests in 2018

1,308,000

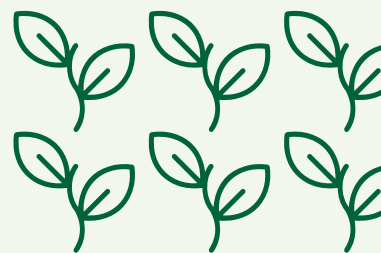
hectares of woodland in England equal to

10%

of the land area of England



16 million



Last year our nurseries produced nearly **16 million** new trees to replant and create new areas of woodland

Our values

Our values guide the way we go about our business, and act as a checklist for our actions, decisions and behaviour.

They are things that we value most as an organisation. Our Forestry Commission 'umbrella' values are for all staff in Forestry England, Forest Services and Forest Research. However, please note that Forestry England and Forest Research have further tailored these values to their own areas of the business.

Team Work

We work collaboratively with each other and our stakeholders, ensuring trees, woods and forests meet the needs of society.

Professionalism

We enjoy and take pride in our work, acting with integrity and political impartiality to achieve high standards of health and safety, quality, efficiency and sustainability.

Respect

We value each other and our stakeholders, recognising diverse perspectives and treating everyone with consideration.

Communication

We are open, honest and objective with each other and our stakeholders. We are prepared to challenge and be challenged.

Learning

We are always learning, developing the skills, knowledge and behaviours to support organisational success.

Creativity

We seek new ways of doing things, sharing ideas and embracing change.



The largest single provider of countryside leisure visits in England



24 concerts over 7 sites each year – over 1.75 million people have been to our concerts



Over 19,000



volunteers donating their skills and time to support our forests

56%

of England's rarest and most threatened species live in our landscapes

Our approach to Diversity & Inclusion

The Forestry Commission is part of the Defra family. Defra is the government department for environment, food and rural affairs. We are focused on embedding the Defra Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy which is based on four principles.

We like to call this our RISE strategy. This stands for **respect, include, support and engage**. Throughout this report, we have showcased some examples of what we are doing on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion around the principles of RISE.

Respect

Include

Support

Engage

Respect

All employees feel valued, respected and treated fairly.

Include

We promote inclusive behaviours and use our data to drive workplace improvements.

Support

We ensure everyone is supported in the workplace to achieve their full potential.

Engage

Our employees, customers and the communities we serve are valued and feel included.

Case studies

In this section we have showcased some case studies of work which brings to life our RISE principles.



Case Study 3.1

Jack Drum and Hamsterley Forest partner to engage young carers

According to Young Minds, the BBC estimates that there are about 700,000 young carers in the UK.

A young carer is someone under 18 who helps look after someone in their family, or a friend, who is ill, has a disability or misuses drugs or alcohol. This may include tasks such as cooking, housework, shopping, helping someone dress, helping someone get out of bed, providing emotional support and looking after siblings¹.

Thanks to funding received from the Arts Council England for a two-year programme titled The Hunters and the Hunted, a young carer's project was successfully delivered at several Forestry Commission sites. There are many local community activities for young people generally across the UK including brownies, scouts or theatre groups. Young people are united over a common interest. Young carers are frequently diverse and disparate groups from varying backgrounds with many issues and concerns to deal with. This project's aim was to connect young carers through a unifying arts activity in a wonderful forest setting.

This story focuses on Jack Drum Arts and Hamsterley Forest. We engaged Jack Drum Arts as a partner to deliver this project. They are a long-running arts organisation who offer a wide range of arts activities for people of all ages and abilities across County Durham and particularly have experience of working with young carers. Jack Drum identified a group of 12-15 young carers keen to take part, who were supported by staff and care workers. Many young carers were based in local areas of low engagement. The project was delivered over several separate occasions which included a get to know you day and a creative arts workshop.

On the get to know you day, which included playtesting the Snarkhunter app, also developed as part of the wider programme, Mike Daynes from Jack Drum Arts said "The introduction day with the young carers group was fantastic. The young people arrived with excitement and willingness to take part. We started with a short

walk through the forest which gave them a chance to better understand their surroundings. After that we had a wonderful outdoor lunch and then introduced them to the app, which I have to say, they got so much out of. They were engaged and involved all the way through. It really brought the story to life and gave them some amazing ideas for how to create something for the artist day later in the month".

Jack Drum Arts then ran a 3 day creative arts workshop at Hamsterley Forest. During the 3 days, the young carers spent time learning about the story of the Hunting of the Snark. This involved creating artistic impressions of the Snark, creating willow sculptures of their snarks and then installing them in public locations within Hamsterley Forest.

¹ Source: Carers Trust - [carers.org/about-us/about-young-carers](https://www.carers.org/about-us/about-young-carers)



The young people arrived with excitement and willingness to take part"



Case Study 3.2

Wendover Woods engage local community to install new Changing Places facility

As part of the redevelopment plans at Wendover Woods, the installation of a Changing Places Facility was identified as an important addition to the site.

Some people with a disability are unable to take part in activities that many take for granted because standard accessible toilets do not meet their needs or the needs of their carers and families¹.

Funding was successfully sought from the London Marathon Charitable Trust (LMCT). LMCT provides funding towards projects which improves facilities for physical activity, sport and play. We know that adults with a disability are twice as likely to be physically inactive compared to those who don't have a disability (42% versus 21%)². We want to encourage visitors with a disability to get more physically active and it is through facilities like Changing Places that we can do this.

To ensure we achieved the best possible design and layout, a focus group was formed. This enabled members of the local community to help shape the look and feel of the facility, acting as champions for Changing Places at Wendover Woods. A group of local partners and community members came together for an initial meeting. This group consisted of representatives from the Chilterns MS Centre, Action for Children, Booker Park School and visitors to the woods who were either carers for family members or had a condition themselves.

The feedback gained from this meeting was crucial in the design and layout of the facility. Several key considerations were discussed which influenced equipment choices and highlighted areas of importance for potential users. As an example, the group highlighted the need for an adult sized, height adjustable bed with folding sides, this is the design we opted for. There was a strong theme around the need for space, whether it is either side of the bed, under sinks or around the room to be able to move a wheelchair around comfortably. We were able to meet this need by introducing movable equipment to the design. This includes a movable bed and screen and also a height adjustable sink.

We were delighted to open the facility in January 2019 and offer something which is changing people's lives. When the facility was launched on social media, positive comments have been received such as how this is "fantastic news" and creates "a possible all day trip". Without a facility like a Changing Places, users who require this facility would not be able to stay very long at Wendover Woods.

1. Changing Places, 2019 - changing-places.org

2. Activity Alliance Source - activityalliance.org.uk/how-we-help/fact-and-statistics



We were delighted to open the facility in January 2019 and offer something which is changing people's lives"

Section 3

Case Study 3.3

Wild Women Days

In partnership with North East Wilds, we host Wild Women Days at Chopwell and Whinlatter Forest. They provide opportunities for groups of women to spend time immersed in nature, learning and foraging for edible plants, building fires and cooking meals together.



The group felt inclusive, welcoming and supportive within a space that often limits lone women from feeling comfortable”

Participant



I’m involved in a lot of mixed group activities but was drawn to this specifically because it was for women only. To see a group for women to feel supported and encouraged within a space in which they often don’t feel confident or sometimes even safe felt long-awaited for”

Participant

Case Study 3.4

Westonbirt Arboretum engages over 7,000 participants from harder to reach audiences

In 2013, Westonbirt Arboretum took on an ambitious Heritage Lottery Funded (HLF) project to raise the level of arboretum's visitor and learning facilities. This funding enabled the arboretum to engage with wider community groups and organisations at risk from social exclusion that may face barriers to visiting the arboretum.

Since 2014, Westonbirt's Community Programme has worked with over 7,000 participants from harder to reach audiences, supporting positive mental health and wellbeing through a diverse programme of onsite and outreach activities. Due to its success, since the end of the HLF project, the Community Programme has become a key element of the Westonbirt offer in supporting local communities to access the therapeutic benefits of the arboretum.

Nurtured by Nature

The Nurtured by Nature programme supports both youth and adult groups to participate in a multi-visit programme of led nature based intervention activities, with a wellbeing/mindfulness focus. Activities can include anything from learning traditional woodland management skills, to mindfulness based activities to campfire cooking. Where possible, we tailor each visit to meet the individual needs and interests of the group, rather than follow a set curriculum, as each group has its own reasons for taking part in the programme.

Due to the multi-visit aspect of the programme, valuable relationships are built based on trust. Participants have the opportunity to work towards a John Muir Award. To date, 286 awards have been gained. Organisations that Westonbirt have worked with include the Department for Work and Pensions, NHS Early Intervention Psychosis Team and Apperley Centre.



This has given me the chance to sit with myself and feel safe. My heart and soul always feels restored after being here"

Activity participant



One person who at first was isolated, had to be engaged in conversation and ate separately from the group...after 8 weeks she was the first to start work, started volunteering locally on others days, undertook any task and formed plans and is now in full time employment"

DWP Work Coach



Case Study 3.4

Westonbirt Arboretum



Westonbirt Wellbeing

Westonbirt Wellbeing offers single facilitated visits to adult and youth community groups. This is particularly suitable for groups that do not have the availability or resources to visit more frequently, or for introducing new groups to the arboretum, who may not be ready to commit to a multi visit programme.

Groups have included Allsorts Gloucestershire supporting children with additional needs and their families, ConnectAT youth group for young people on the autistic spectrum and Stroud Macular Group supporting adults with macular degenerative disease. Although regarded as one off visits, many of these groups now visit several times a year.



Thanks to our friends at Westonbirt Arboretum for another great day out for Allsorts Families. Our wind chimes and stained glass pictures were fun to create and we loved our guided walk. We look forward to coming back at Easter"

Allsorts Family Coordinator

Case Study 3.4

Westonbirt Arboretum

Branching Out

A study by the University of Exeter has found that just one hour a week of social interaction can improve the quality of life for dementia patients in care homes. However, the average amount of social interaction for people with dementia was just two minutes a day, which has a knock-on effect on quality of life.

Westonbirt's outreach programme supports people living in residential care homes, or attending dementia projects to connect with both the arboretum and others through a multi-sensory exploration of Westonbirt's tree collection. The guided activity plans provided enable care staff and family members to increase social interaction through reminiscence and creative based activities.

The six week programme starts with a visit to the care home or group by the community team and includes hands on activities designed to introduce participants to the arboretum and prompt reminiscence, conversation and laughter. The activities can be easily adapted to suit the differing needs of the group participants such as craft activities, using stiffer, larger materials for people with arthritis who have limited dexterity in their hands. We then leave the group with a box of sensory activities to enable them to continue exploring the arboretum themselves.

During week six the programme is rounded off with a visit to the arboretum for a gentle stroll, coffee, cake and a woodland craft that people can make and take away with them to decorate their rooms such as botanical bunting to provide a reminder of their time with us.

One care home used the current resource box, based around the book *The Lost Woods*, to run an intergenerational project between care homes and primary schools to create an art exhibition of their work.



I joined in with activities because I like feeling included and being part of something"

Care Home Resident



Case Study 3.5

Wellbeing at work and how we are breaking the stigma around mental health

Our wellbeing aim is to integrate wellbeing into everything we do. One way that we are achieving this is through our aspiration to break the stigma around mental health.

We have supported staff to share their lived mental health experiences with staff. These stories have also signposted to best practice resources to support staff that may be going through something similar. We have shared dozens of stories and these have been very powerfully received across the organisation. Stories have been shared about depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), caring for others with cancer to name but a few. Between November 2018-2019, these pages received 18,305 views, and are frequently the most liked and commented on blogs for staff to read.

We now have approximately 200 mental health first aiders trained and qualified across the organisation. A mental health first aider is a go-to person for anyone who has concerns about their mental health. The first aider will be there to listen, spot the signs of someone who may be developing a mental health condition and therefore able to signpost them to best practice professionals, resources and support. Mental health first aiders are not experts but they are trained to listen and signpost staff to where they can get support.

We also have approximately 25-30 wellbeing champions across the organisation. They have been organising wellbeing promotion events such as talks and activities for staff to learn about what resources are available to them to support their wellbeing. This has included mindfulness sessions, learning about OCD through to staff barbeques encouraging colleagues to come together and talk.

During the autumn of 2018, this included 9 Health Kiosks at our sites across England. Health Kiosks measure and help staff understand their physical health such as their weight, body mass index (BMI) and blood pressure. It will also calculate their heart age and their potential risk of getting cardiovascular disease and diabetes in the future. Staff will then get the results straight away with recommendations of how they can make lifestyle changes to improve their physical health. Due to the popularity in 2018 we have just completed our 2019 Health Kiosk tour which saw the tour expand to cover 13 sites.

Other activities include launching new guidance on how our staff can use their 3 days of volunteering pro-rata each year. Over 100 members of staff have volunteered already and they have told us about the huge benefits this had on their wellbeing. All staff also benefit from our confidential 24 hours a day, 7 days a week Employee Assistance Programme and Occupational Health services. We are also delighted that Mind have recognised all of our work as part of their annual Workplace Wellness Index and awarded us Bronze which means we are achieving positive change. Our wellbeing work continues to grow in strength and we are aspirational to get to Gold through our revised staff wellbeing offer.





We now have approximately 200 mental health first aiders trained and qualified across the organisation”



Our diversity and inclusion objectives

We are focused on the following objectives. They all contribute in some way to our RISE strategy:

1.

Supporting new Employee Networks

We will support the creation of 2 new employee networks: our LGBTQ+ Supporters Network and BAME Champions Network. The LGBTQ+ Supporters Network is open to everyone and provides a place to champion and support lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning colleagues across the organisation. This includes but is not limited to support with coming out at work, fairness and respect at work, and ensuring that our policies and practices are inclusive to LGBTQ+ colleagues. At the Forestry Commission we want everyone to be themselves at work so that they can achieve their best.

Only 1.5% of our workforce is from a BAME background (Black, Asian and minority ethnic background). We will support the creation of a new employee run BAME Inclusion Group who will look at what we can do to increase the diversity of our workforce and ensure our workplace is inclusive for all. We will support the network review our staff engagement survey results by ethnicity and take action where needed.

We will also commission research to understand what more we can do to diversify the visitors to our nation's forests. We are particularly interested in this research from an ethnicity perspective. The BAME Champions Network will be pivotal in supporting this piece of work and actions that follow from the research.

2.

Women in Forestry

We will run focus groups across the organisation to understand what more we can do to embed a culture of inclusion for all. We will share these findings with our Forestry Commission Executive Board. We will then embed these recommendations to make our workplace stronger. These recommendations will come directly from the focus groups and we will ensure that focus group participants and wider staff members feel part of bringing about the changes as a result.

3.

Bullying and Harassment Ambassadors and Line Manager Training

Across the Forestry Commission we have a zero tolerance approach to any form of discrimination, bullying and harassment. In support of achieving this we will continually raise awareness of what staff can do in case they ever feel they need to report any behaviour which is not aligned to this approach. We will train up go to Bullying and Harassment Ambassadors and roll out refresher line manager training.

4.

Continuing to outreach to diverse community groups

Similar to our case studies, we will continue to outreach to diverse community groups across England.

5.

Launch of FC wide revised wellbeing offer

We will use our Mind Workplace Wellness Index recommendations report, our 2018 Health Kiosks report and focus group feedback to revise our wellbeing offer. We will launch this to all staff to ensure they understand the benefits of what the offer involves. This offer will build on the work we have already started and support us in our aspiration to be awarded Gold by Mind in a future accreditation.

6.

Forest Live are working towards the Attitude is Everything Charter

For Forest Live annually, we host approximately 22 concerts over 7 sites. Accessibility is an important part of our concerts. During 2018, we introduced a positive change in that accessible toilet wristbands were introduced for all concerts. This enabled visitors who had both visible and non-visible disabilities/ health conditions to use the accessible toilets without feeling they needed to continually share their personal details. We received very positive feedback on this change in our post-concert survey. This change is one aspect of wider work we are doing to work towards the Gold Standard of the Attitude is Everything Charter. 'Attitude is Everything' are leaders in ensuring inclusive music for all.

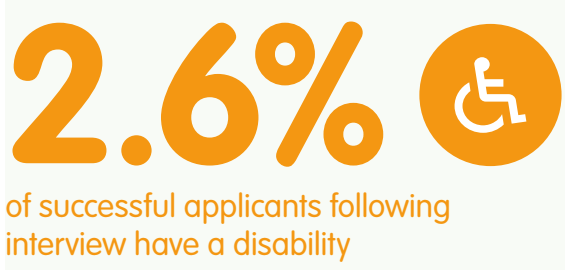
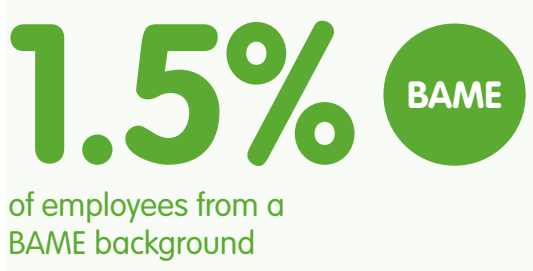
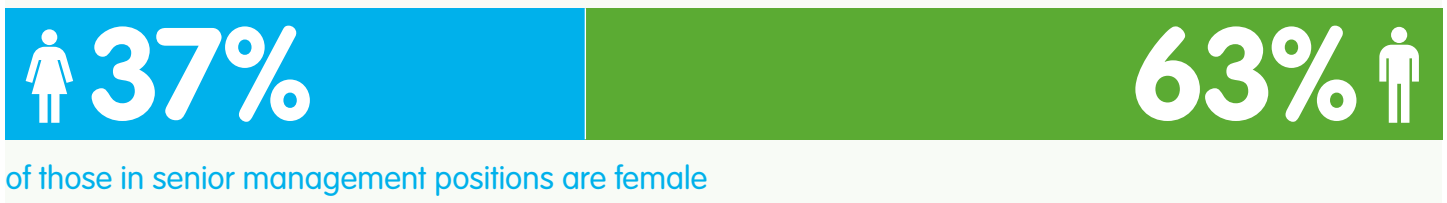
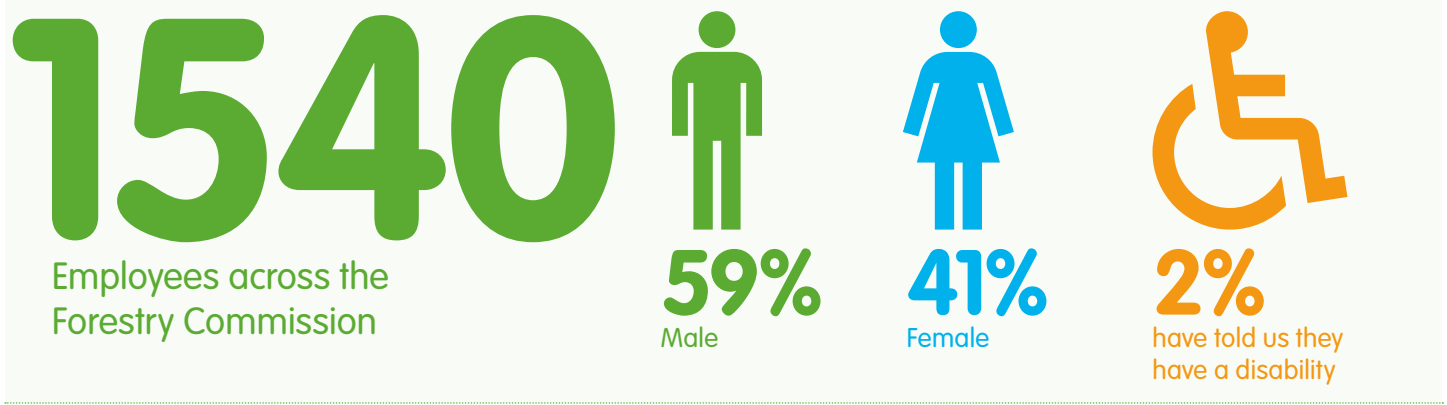
7.

Diversity Data Declarations

We will continue to build a culture of trust to encourage staff to update their diversity information which will in turn help us understand the diversity of our workforce and positive steps we can take. In addition to the above objectives, we will continue to review our diversity data sources to take positive steps to meet our public sector equality duties.



Our employees



We will continue to use our data sources to drive workplace improvements (as referenced in our RISE strategy)

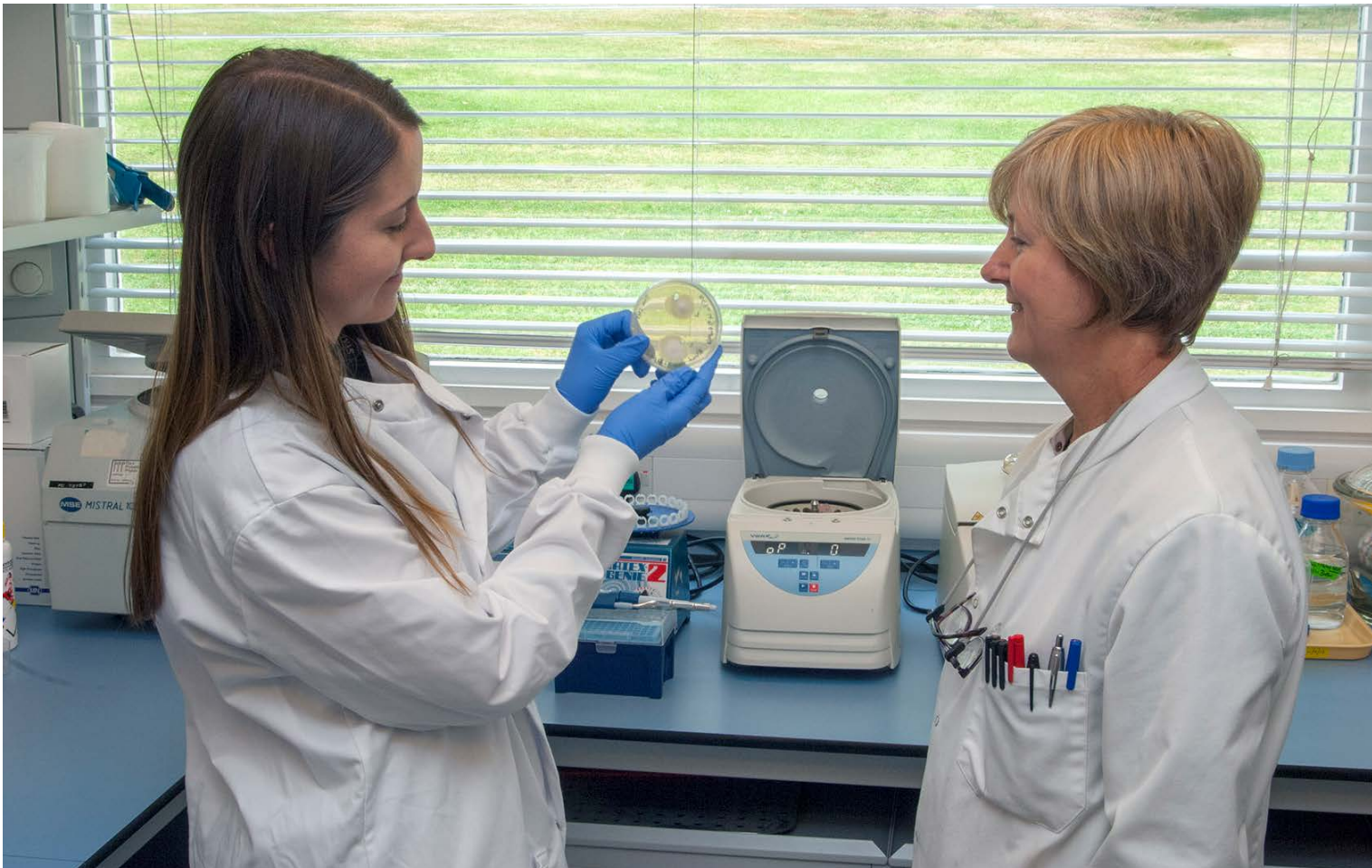
Conclusion

As this report is the first time we are reporting on the new federated model of the Forestry Commission, we are unable to draw comparisons with previous reports. However, we are proud and encouraged by the positive work we are doing in Diversity and Inclusion to outreach to diverse groups and to build a diverse and inclusive work environment that values each member of staff for what makes them unique.

We believe that the work we are already doing and our objectives will continue.

However, we are fully aware of the challenge ahead to make our workforce more representative of society. This will not be an easy challenge and will take time but we believe that the work we are already doing and our 2019-2020 objectives will continue to make progress in this area.

If you would like further information on this report or require this report in an alternative format, please do not hesitate to contact our Wellbeing and Inclusion Team on diversity@forestryengland.uk



Appendix

The tables below include employment data collected between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019 for Forestry Commission employees. As at 31 March 2019, the Forestry Commission had 1540 employees.

Please note that we have recently introduced new HR systems for employees to update their diversity information. We have more work to do to encourage staff to declare their diversity information hence the high 'not yet shared' results.

Overall employees

Gender		Disability			Ethnicity				Age	
Male	Female	Yes	No	Not yet shared	BAME	White	Other	Not yet shared	39 or under	40 or over
59%	41%	2%	22%	76%*	1.5%	95%	<1%	2.5%	35%	65%

Grade by gender

Senior Management		Management		Employees	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
63%	37%	60%	40%	57%	43%

For the purposes of this grade analysis, senior management is classified as senior staff grades, official office holder positions (e.g. non-executive positions) and pay bands 1 and 2. Management has been classified as pay bands 3, 4 and 5. Employees have been classified as pay bands 6 and 7.



Recruitment Data

Disability

	Yes %	No %	Prefer not to say %
Total Applicants	4.2%	93.0%	2.8%
Interviewed	3.8%	94.3%	1.9%
Successful	2.6%	95.2%	2.2%

Ethnicity

	BAME %	White %	Prefer not to say %
Total Applicants	8.5%	88.7%	2.8%
Interviewed	4.2%	93.1%	2.7%
Successful	1.9%	95.2%	2.9%

Gender

	Male %	Female %	Prefer not to say %
Total Applicants	61.4%	37.4%	1.2%
Interviewed	59.6%	39.0%	1.4%
Successful	55.0%	43.1%	1.9%

Age

	39 or below %	40 or over %	Prefer not to say %
Total Applicants	65.0%	32.8%	2.2%
Interviewed	60.6%	37.0%	2.4%
Successful	63.6%	34.8%	1.6%



For alternative formats,
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