

## Leading the way on age equality

We are in charge of **age equality** for all government departments and making plans for when there will be more older people than now.

### Age equality

This means treating people fairly no matter how old they are.

#### A real life story – fairness for older people

Part of our work is to make sure older people are treated fairly in work. We have set up an Age Positive project to help us with this. These are the project's aims.

- To stop people treating older people as all the same.
- To tell **employers** the good things about giving jobs to older people.

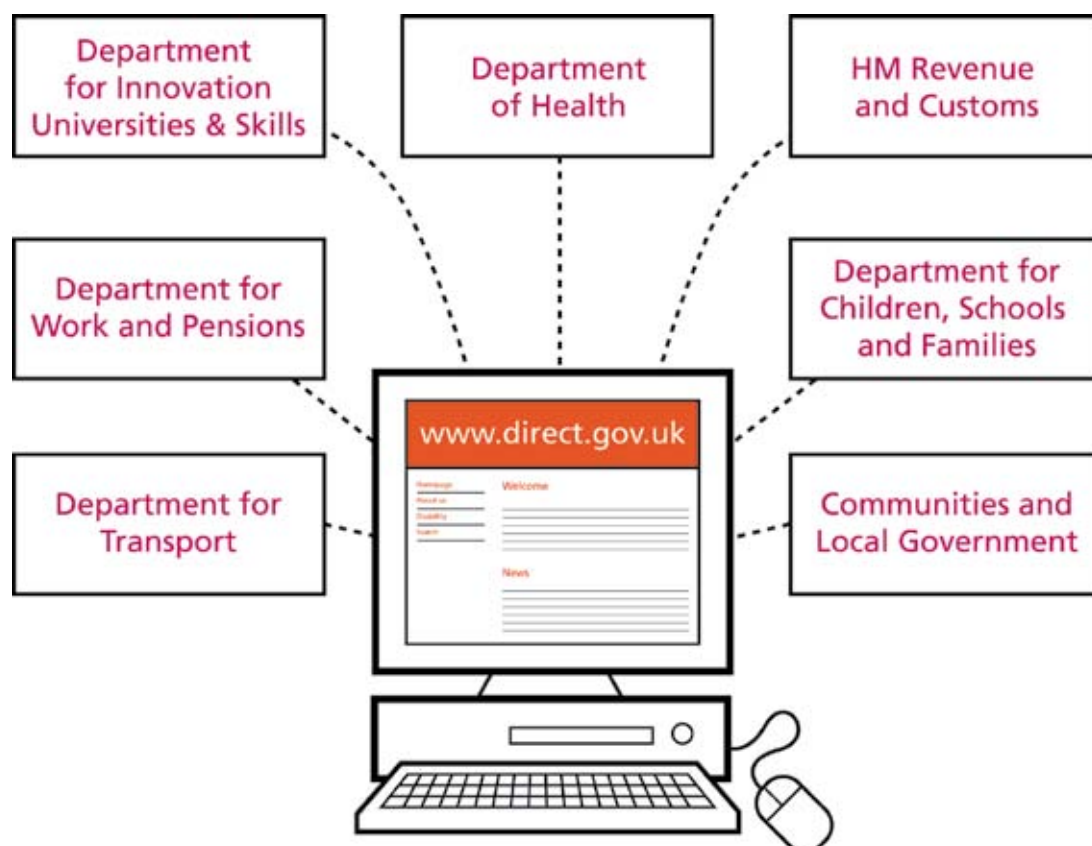


- To change the jobs market so older people are treated fairly. For example, in getting jobs, in training, and in getting better jobs.

We have done a lot of work with **employers** about age **equality**. We have written 11 booklets about it. We have also set up a project to find out what information people aged over 50 need to make decisions about work and retirement.

## Our other cross-government services

Since April 2008 we have been in charge of the Directgov website. People use the Directgov website to get government information and services. By 2011, we expect all government information, and a lot of its services, to be on Directgov.



We are also in charge of a project called Tell us once. We hope that by 2011 we will have a new system where **customers** need only tell central and local government something once. The information is then passed to all the other offices the **customer** deals with.

# Equality impact assessments

**Equality impact assessments** show how changes might affect **race, disability and gender equality**.

**Equality impact assessments** that affect our **customers** are shown on our website. Those that affect our workers are shown on our staff website.

We are a big department, and that means we have lots of plans. It is very important that each of these plans is checked to make sure they do not affect **race, disability or gender equality**. All parts of the department are following a timetable for doing **equality impact assessments**.

- All race assessments must be done by the end of June 2008.
- All disability assessments must be done by December 2009.
- All gender assessments must be done by December 2010.



We want to make sure all our workers know how important **equality impact assessments** are. These are some of the things we are doing.

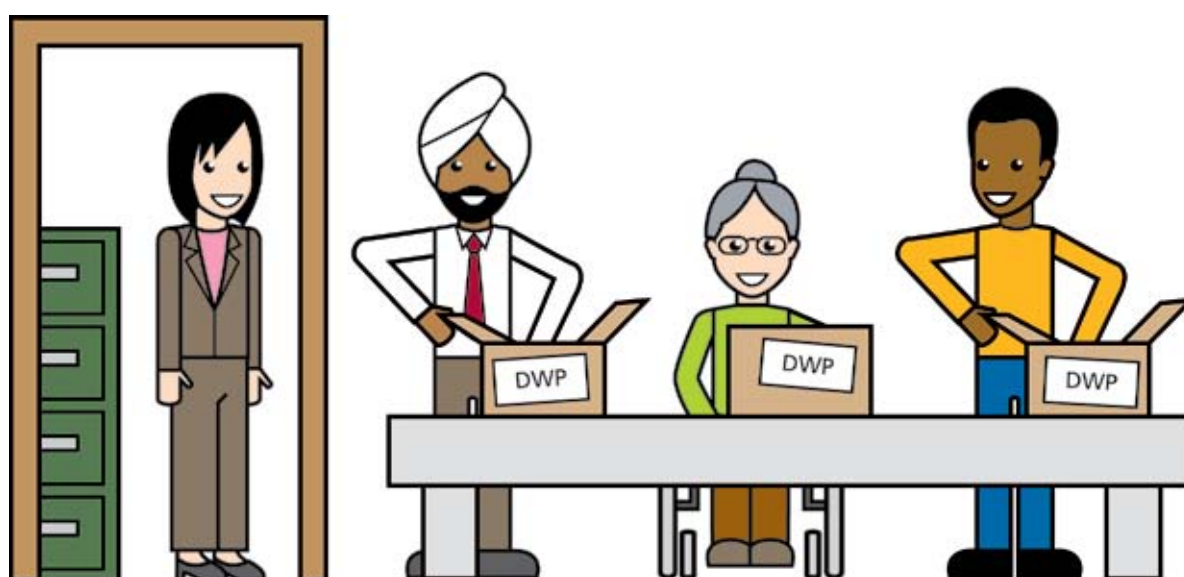
- We run **equality impact assessments** workshops for our workers, especially those who make the department's plans. This helps them do **equality impact assessments** in the future.
- We have a special team that is going to look at the way we do our **equality impact assessments** during summer 2008.
- We are training people who work in the **Secretary of State's** and other top people's offices to make sure all papers sent to them have **diversity** and **equality** information, and **equality impact assessments** if these are needed.



## Equality and how we buy things

We continue our work to make sure companies we buy things from know what they must do to help us with our **equality** plans.

We will make sure our suppliers know about our **equality** schemes when we make contracts with them. And we want to work with suppliers who have **equality** schemes of their own, because this is a good way of opening up jobs for our **customers**.



Information about how we buy things is shown in our report about **equality** schemes. It is in the chapter called Group Finance.

# Checking what we do and how it affects people

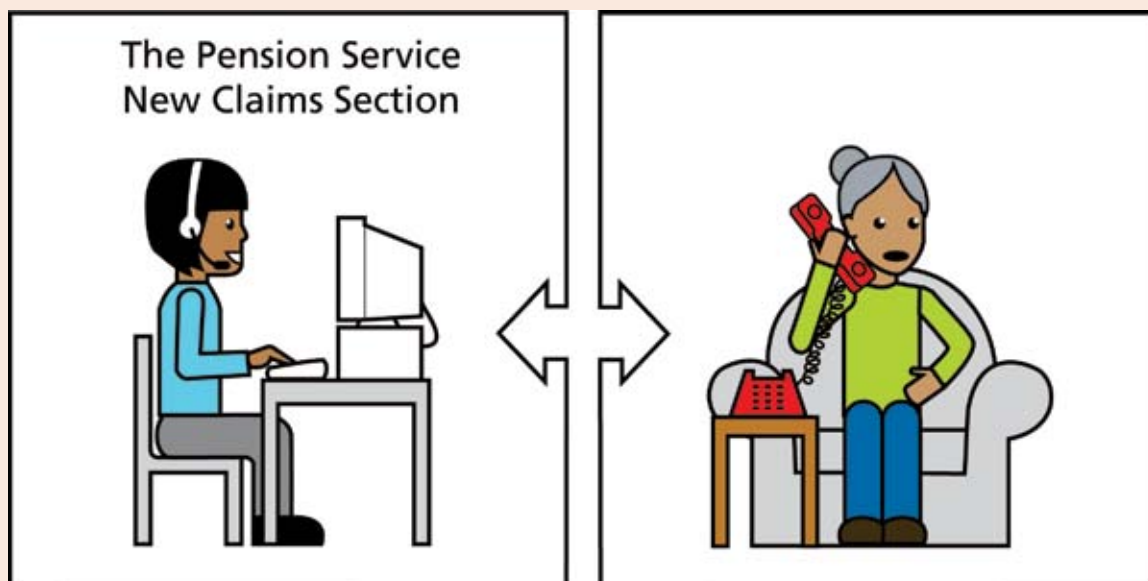
## People who use our services

We are working on new computer programs to record **customers'** personal **diversity** information. These programs will mean we only need to ask for this information once, then all parts of the department will know it.

We are finding out what other information we need for making plans and services for our **customers**. We can then make sure each part of our business collects information in the same way. That will mean we can share information easily.

### A real life story – collecting diversity information

The Pension Service collects **diversity** information (from **customers** who want to give it) at the very beginning of taking a claim.



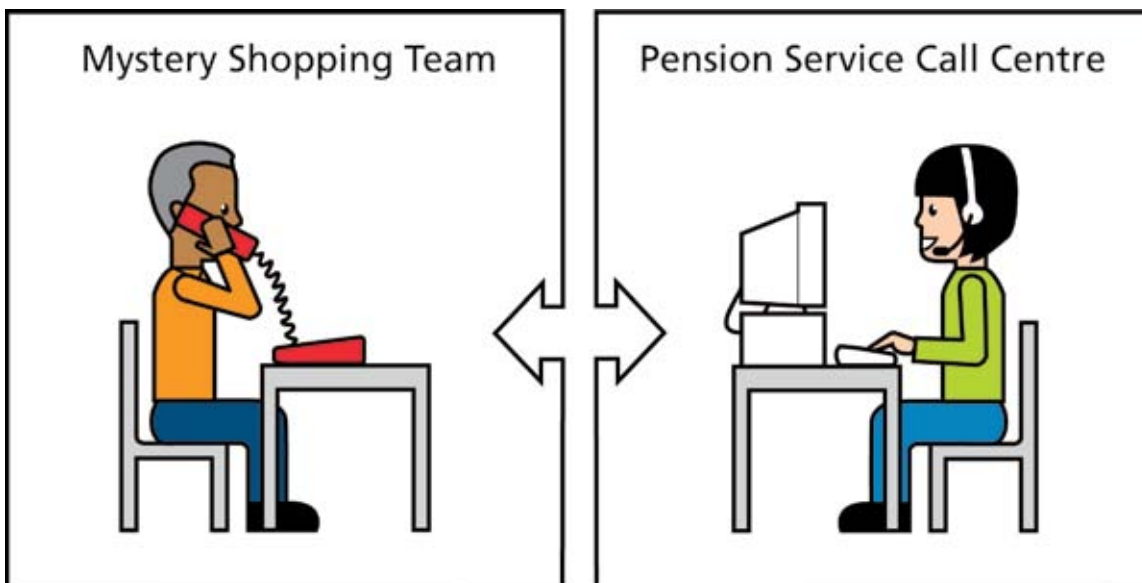
From July 2008, the new Pension, Disability and Carers Service will be able to use **diversity** information to make sure everyone gets the same good service when claiming State Pension and Pension Credit.

The Pension, Disability and Carers Service also records if the **customer** has any extra needs. For example, if they want leaflets printed in big letters, in Braille or on CD, or if they use a **textphone**.

They use **mystery shoppers** to check the service given to people who do not speak English, to people who do not hear well, and to people who find it hard to speak.

## Mystery shopper

This is where we ask an outside company to do surprise checks on the service we give. A report is then made about what the service to our **customers** is like.



## People who work for us

The law tells us we must keep information about **race**, disability and **equality**.

We use this information to make sure **all** our workers are treated equally and do as well in their work as they can.

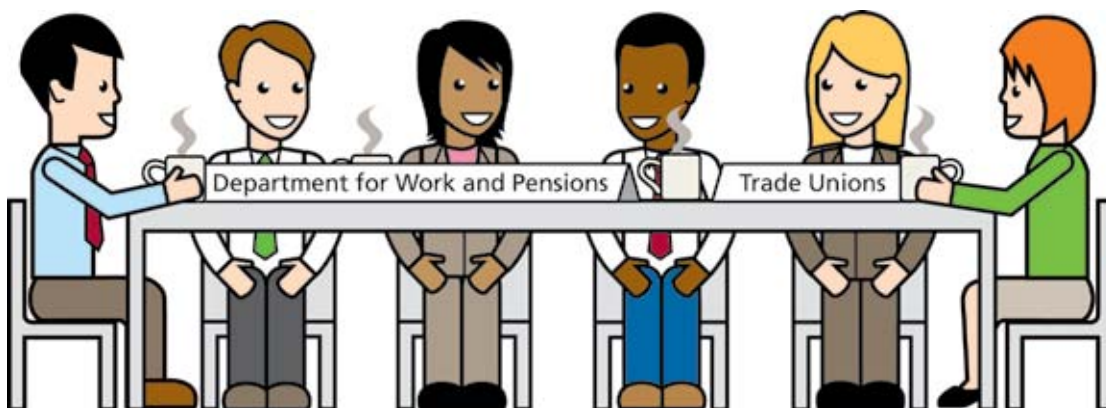
We put this information in our report about **equality** schemes. It is in the chapter called Corporate Human Resources.

In April 2008 we started asking our workers about their **sexual orientation**. We wanted to make sure heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual or asexual people get the same chances. To help this along, we included stories from gay and lesbian workers to show how their **sexual orientation** can affect their working life.

We work with our trades unions about things our workers talk to them about.

### Trades unions

These look after workers' rights, including talking to **employers** about pay and other conditions.



The trades unions helped us with our **equality** and **diversity** schemes. They are also working with us to ask workers to update their personal information on our computers. This is being done at the same time we ask workers about their **sexual orientation**.

## Reporting how we are doing

Every year we look at how well our **equality** schemes have done in the past year and then make a report about what we find out.



When making the report, we will **involve** our **customers**, our workers and others with an interest in our work.

The report will include information about the **equality impact assessments** that have been carried out on our plans and services during the year.

## A last few words

We are pleased with the progress being made on **diversity** in the department. But we also know there is still a lot to be done.

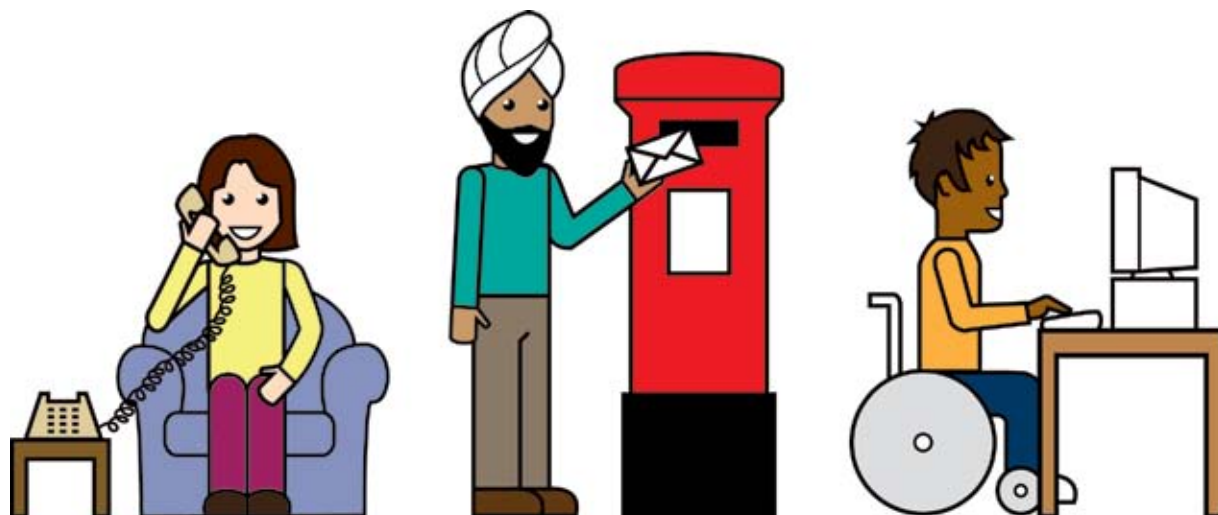
This work is not easy. It takes a lot of time and money to make **equality** happen. We have our plans and targets and we are working towards them. We know this work is making a real difference to our **customers** and workers.

Thank you for looking at this report. You can tell us what you think about our equality schemes and our report.

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Sheffield S11 8JF

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# Words list

## **Age equality**

This means treating people fairly no matter how old they are.... 43

## **Business Taskforce on Accessible Technology**

This is a group of people from government departments, local councils and private businesses. They help companies find out how they can benefit by thinking about the needs of disabled people ..... 33

## **Call centre**

This is a place where we have people who answer telephone calls from our customers ..... 28

## **Convention**

This is an agreement between countries saying what they will do to protect people's rights ..... 4

## **Customers**

These are the people who use our services..... 3

## **Disability Equality Duty**

This is a law for groups like government departments, schools, hospitals and councils. These groups are called Public Authorities. The law tells Public Authorities to work towards equality and make things better for disabled people ..... 19

## **Disability Rights Commission**

The **Disability Rights Commission** was a group that looked after the rights of disabled people.

In October 2007 it became part of the Equality and Human Rights Commission ..... 17

## **Diverse or diversity**

This is a mix of different kinds of people ..... 9

## **Employers**

These are people or companies that give jobs to other people... 12

## **Equality**

This means having the same chances in life as everyone else ..... 2

## **Equality impact assessment**

This is a way of working out if a change affects **race, disability and/or gender equality** ..... 27

## **Equal Opportunities Commission**

The **Equal Opportunities Commission** was a group that made sure men and women were treated equally.

In October 2007 it became part of the Equality and Human Rights Commission ..... 17

## **Equality and Human Rights Commission**

This brings together the work of the previous equality commissions. These were the **Equal Opportunities Commission**, the Commission for Race Equality, and the **Disability Rights Commission**.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission looks after the rights of all people ..... 18

## **Ethnic minority**

This means people who are part of a group that comes, or came in the past, from other countries. They may have a different skin colour to other people in their area.....20

## **Independent Living Strategy**

This is a 5-year plan for helping disabled people live a full life in which they get respect from other people, and in which they have the same choice and control as other people .....4

## **Involve**

Being involved is not the same as being asked about work done by others. It means playing a full part in making plans and decisions .....3

## **Managers**

These are people who tell workers what to do. .... 33

## **Mentoring**

This is when an experienced person (the mentor) works with a less experienced person to act as their guide and teacher..... 35

## **Mystery shopper**

This is where we ask an outside company to do surprise checks on the service we give. A report is then made about what the service to our customers is like ..... 49

## **Office for Disability Issues**

This is part of the government that works with all departments to look at disability issues..... 41

## **Partners**

This means the people and groups who work with us to help deliver our services..... 3

## Poverty

This is when the money a person or family gets is not enough to pay for the things they need. For example, food, clothes, somewhere to live, and heating ..... 11

## Public Service Agreements

These are government targets for us to do in the next 3 years... 12

## Race, disability and gender equality

**Race, disability and gender equality** is about making sure people are not treated unfairly because of their

- **race** – for example, someone being treated less well because of the colour of their skin or where they were born.
- **disability** – for example, a blind person being treated less well than someone who can see.
- **gender** – for example a woman being treated less well than a man ..... 1

## Secretary of State

This is the person who is the chief minister in charge of a government department. Our Secretary of State is James Purnell ..... 19

## **Sexual orientation**

This is about whether a person is heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual or asexual.

Heterosexual means someone who is sexually attracted to people of the other sex. For example, men who are attracted to women.

Lesbian means a woman who is sexually attracted to another woman. Sometimes they are also called homosexual.

Gay means a man who is sexually attracted to another man. Sometimes they are also called homosexual.

Bisexual means someone who is sexually attracted to men and women.

'Asexual' means someone who is not attracted to men or women .....8

## **Single equality scheme**

This is a plan that brings together all the different kinds of **equality** into 1 plan .....2

## **Survey**

This is when we talk to customers about what happened when they used our services, and if they were happy or unhappy with it .....22

## Textphones and hearing loops

**Textphones** are special telephones for people who find it hard to speak or hear well. With a **textphone** you use a keyboard to type in your questions. The people at the other end of the line reply to you in the same way.

A **hearing loop** is a system that picks up the sounds of people talking on telephones or on TV. The system then sends it as a clear sound to people with hearing aids ..... 23

## Trades unions

These look after workers' rights, including talking to employers about pay and other conditions ..... 50





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