

Shared Services

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Introduction

This document sets out Shared Services review of our race, disability and gender equality schemes.

It includes the action plans first published in December 2006 and updated in December 2007. Progress since December 2007 is detailed in the action plans themselves. However, a selection of the key highlights can be found under the following headings:

- progress for our customers
- progress for our staff
- impact assessments
- consultation and involvement
- monitoring and evaluation

Why we are reviewing our disability and gender schemes early

In our equality schemes and annual progress reports published in November 2007, we explained that we had decided to review all our equality schemes in 2008 for the following reasons:

- race legislation requires race equality schemes to be reviewed by May 2008;
- to take on board comments on our first disability and gender equality schemes;
- to move towards our objective of mainstreaming and aligning with the usual April-March planning cycle used across government, and to align our cycle with the spending review cycle; and
- to move towards a single equality scheme.

This will help to embed diversity and equality into the way we do business. As this review is significantly earlier than required for disability and gender, we discussed this decision with the Disability Rights Commission and the Equal Opportunities Commission before they became part of the Equality and Human Rights Commission in October 2007. They supported the proposal to carry out the third year review early with a 'light touch' review of our disability and gender equality schemes at the same time as we review our race equality schemes.

Shared Services: aims and objectives

DWP's Shared Services organisation is one of only a handful of such organisations in central government, and DWP is the only Department to have integrated Finance and HR services. We are a key player in various cross government groups aimed at shaping the future of Shared Services across government.

Since our creation in September 2006 and the publication of our first Equality Schemes in December 2006, our business strategy and strategic objectives have evolved to reflect that we are placing significant emphasis on:

- understanding what our customers need from us and deliver what they need to the time, cost and quality required
- developing a customer, process and target orientated culture through allowing our staff to develop their skills and increase their capabilities for the benefit of our customers

Our 2010 Vision is:

"To be the leader in the provision of shared services to the DWP and across the public sector"

Our Business Plan underlines how we will exploit our strengths, improve radically where we need to, and use all the energy, enthusiasm and commitment we have to deliver our vision.

Essential to the successful delivery of our vision is the deployment of our cultural development programme. The aim of our cultural development programme is to:

"Have a culture where we are skilled, efficient, flexible and actively engaged in delivering our services to strategic and operational targets"

We strongly believe that mainstreaming diversity and equality into our business and progress reporting creates an inclusive environment, eliciting the very best from our employees, thus providing the cornerstone to our success.

Overview of Progress

Since the publication of our Equality Schemes in December 2006, we have made progress in a number of key areas.

- We are proud of the contribution we are continuing to make towards the DWP's diversity agenda, in particular the Department's goal of achieving a more diverse civil service workforce, especially at senior levels. Our decision to pilot the Inspired to Succeed Development Programme, on behalf of the DWP, has illustrated our willingness to introduce new and challenging initiatives to equip staff from under-represented groups with the confidence and skills to realise their full potential.
- Our staff network group has been instrumental in sharing good practice and driving forward new initiatives. One member of the group has been responsible for developing and publishing a quarterly diversity newsletter providing an invaluable insight into topical issues and concerns.
- Our participation in the DWP's Community 5000 project has provided our staff with the opportunity to volunteer to work alongside a local voluntary or community organisation linked to DWP customers.
- We have introduced a process whereby all change requests received by our business management office are considered for their impact on race, disability and gender.

Progress for our customers

We have been actively involved in the Department's proposals for customer accessibility standards. We have assessed our debt management processes against these standards and identified areas for improvements. These improvements now form part of our action plans and include:

- raising staff awareness of the DWP Customer Service internal website
- guidance for staff on dealing with vulnerable customers
- the setting up of a telephony accessibility group

We are working with the Diversity & Equality Centre of Expertise and colleagues from other DWP businesses to share information gathered from customer consultation exercises, thus ensuring a more joined-up approach to consulting and involving our customers.

Shared Services

Our participation in the DWP's Community 5000 initiative has resulted in 63 staff placements within our local community. These have included:

- providing assistance at a Day Centre and Resource Centre for the Blind
- Christmas fundraising for a Hospice
- spending time at a shelter for the Homeless
- organising a Christmas themed event for the parents and children at a Family Centre

Feedback from our staff taking part in Community 5000 has shown that the experience has helped them gain a better understanding of the DWP's customers and the support they require.

Progress for our staff

We currently have twenty three staff participating in the DWP's Inspired to Succeed development programme. The programme is aimed at ethnic minority and disabled staff. Feedback from the participants include:

"I decided to apply for the programme because I wanted to better myself. I have had doors closed to me because of my disability and this was an opportunity to show that I can do my job effectively"

"The opening event was nothing like I was expecting, this isn't just another gimmick or stunt but is a real opportunity for the individuals on the programme to develop themselves. This is a unique opportunity for us all to grab and get the most out of"

"Inspired to Succeed is an inspirational, thought provoking and transformational programme. This is not just another project within the department; this is a programme that can realise in-house talent to reshape the organisation"

Our programme of workshops to discuss the findings from the annual staff survey enabled staff to provide feedback on how we can improve on the ways we deliver not only to our customers but also to our employees. Findings from the workshops have been captured on a staff survey action plan with our activities being taken forward by our senior management team and representatives from across all our business areas.

Extent to which our services and functions meet the needs of disabled people

Our customers

We are continuing to ensure that our services and functions meet the needs of our disabled customers by:

- addressing the findings from the recent DWP customer accessibility standards exercise
- undertaking customer surveys and capturing findings on our action plans
- undertaking impact assessments on our current services and functions
- introducing a process whereby all changes to our services and functions are monitored by our business management office and referred to the Diversity Manager to consider if an impact assessment is necessary

Our people

Our Well-being at Work team is responsible for raising awareness of the reasonable adjustments process across the organisation. The team is assisted by a network of Health and Safety representatives from within our businesses who collect and monitor reasonable adjustment data. The collection of this data allows us to ensure compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act and take action on cases where delays have occurred.

Consultation and Involvement (seeking views and listening to our customers and people)

We are continuing with our programme of customer surveys to consult and involve our customers on the delivery of our services. We have acted upon feedback received from our customers by:

- delivering diversity training to our staff (this includes training for new and existing staff)
- increasing the number of staff trained in using text phone technology
- local diversity champions establishing links with internal/external organisations

Shared Services

In addition to our customer surveys, we are fully committed to the DWP's involvement strategy and are seeking to play an active role in the formation of a 'Reference Group', enabling our organisation to seek the views and experiences of DWP customers.

We use our annual staff survey and internal website discussion group to identify areas where there is cause for concern. Members of our Executive Team have recently visited all our business areas to discuss the findings from the staff survey and agree the activities required to address these concerns.

Impact Assessments

We follow Departmental processes to ensure that we impact assess proposals and change for race, disability and gender.

As a relatively new organisation, we recognise the need to embed impact assessments into our business planning and change control processes. We have invited representatives from the DWP's Diversity and Equality Centre of Expertise to deliver Impact Assessment workshops to our staff, thus ensuring a greater understanding of:

- what an equality impact assessment is
- our legislative commitments to carry out such assessments
- what we must impact assess and when
- governance and accountability routes
- the process by working through examples

Plans are in place to assess all our policies and functions for their impact on:

- disability by December 2009; and
- gender by April 2010

Our network of diversity and equality representatives will work alongside their business managers to undertake full impact assessments within the given timescales, with the diversity manager overseeing all activities.

To date, impact assessments have been undertaken on changes to:

- our Debt Management IT system; and
- the arrangements for flexible working hours

We recognise that improvements are necessary to the way we publish the results of impact assessments and this is captured in our action plans.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Customers

We are working with our colleagues from the Diversity and Equality Centre of Expertise and other DWP businesses to establish what further information we need to collect to help us design and deliver the policies and services that our customers need.

We are continuing to improve our approach to monitoring by obtaining a better understanding of the data available from DWP's IT systems and have been actively involved in workshops hosted by the Diversity and Equality Centre of Expertise and attended by colleagues from other DWP businesses.

Staff

We monitor, analyse and evaluate a range of information on our staff to meet the specific requirements of the Race Relations Act, the Disability Discrimination Act and the Equality Act. This helps us ensure that our staff from under-represented groups receive equal outcomes and are able to fulfil their potential. Our employment data is reported in the chapter on Corporate Human Resources.

Equal pay review

We undertake regular equal pay audits to review our pay policies and their application. Our pay statement is included in the chapter on Corporate Human Resources and in others across the department where they have responsibility for recruiting professional staff.

Future annual progress reports

We are planning to publish future annual progress reports as part of our Business Planning process. The reports will be published during April/May each year.

Conclusion

We are pleased with the progress we are making in all aspects of diversity. However, we know that there is more that we can do and are committed to making a real difference for our customers and staff.

We recognise that the principles of diversity and equality are key to delivering the services we aspire to give our customers. We see the progression of our equality schemes action plans as the basis for successfully delivering these improved services.

Annex 1 – Shared Services: Assessment of functions and policies

Functions and policies have been impacted against the requirements of the diversity and equality legislation as detailed below

Owner: David Thorpe

Functions and Policies	Race	Gender	Disability	Reason for Rating
Provide a Debt Management service for the Department for Work and Pensions and local authorities covering recovery of social security benefits via deductions from current benefit, direct from debtors or their estate	High	High	High	We recognise the need to continually improve the service we provide to our customers. This includes the requirement to provide effective communications and fully understand the needs of our customers
To administer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the DWP Compensation Recovery Scheme; • the recovery of NHS Charges on behalf of the Department of Health; • the collection of Department for Work and Pensions Administrative Debt 	High	High	High	We understand the complexities of our systems and the need to provide services that are fully accessible to all our customers
Administer the Integration Loans Scheme on behalf of the Boarder & Immigration Agency	High	High	High	We aim to work closely with our partners to seek opportunities to improve the services we provide to our customers

Shared Services

Functions and Policies	Race	Gender	Disability	Reason for Rating
Administer the Eligible Loan Deduction Scheme on behalf of Treasury	High	High	High	We aim to work closely with our partners to seek opportunities to improve the services we provide to our customers
Customer Payment service for benefit and programme payments including Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support and Third Party Payments	High	High	High	We understand the complexities of our systems and the need to provide services that are fully accessible to all our customers
Provide an Accounts Payable service for Goods and Services Purchases, Client related Programme Payments, compensation payments and payments to prisoners on early Custody License	High	High	High	As we take on new work we recognise the need to fully understand the requirements of our customers and equality impact the services we provide
Integrated Employee Services for all customers covering a full range of HR, Payroll and Pensions services	Low	Low	Medium	We need to continually provide a high-quality service to our staff and ensure that these services remain fully accessible to all
Ownership and maintenance of the Department's Resource Management System for finance, procurement and HR users throughout the DWP	Low	Low	Medium	We need to ensure that any changes to the Resource Management System are assessed for negative impacts on DWP staff

Functions and Policies	Race	Gender	Disability	Reason for Rating
Provision of a comprehensive accounting service to meet the needs of the Department for Work and Pensions and other Government Departments	Low	Low	Low	There is no outward facing function. The assessment is based on current work methods and service provided to internal customers.

Priority Ratings

Key to high, medium or low

- High** actions included in the action plan that are being acted upon immediately or in the near future
- Medium** actions included in the action plan that require longer-term/ ongoing actions
- Low** actions not included in the action plan

Annex 2 – Race Equality Action Plan

Objectives	Activities required	Timescales	Outcomes	Progress
1 Shared Services will implement and fully comply with the Department's monitoring strategy to meet business and legislative requirements	<p>We will do this by:</p> <p>Raising staff awareness of the Department's monitoring strategy</p> <p>Monitoring our policies to ensure that our services are accessible to everyone and identify whether our policies have a disproportionate or unfair impact on customers/staff from ethnic minorities</p> <p>Ensuring that diversity impact assessments are undertaken to existing policies and functions and when changes are identified to policies, service delivery and people issues</p>	<p>December 2009 for existing policies and functions</p> <p>All new policies and functions to be impact assessed as per the Department's impact assessment guidance</p>	Assurance that our functions and policies are fully compliant with legislative requirements	<p>Impact assessment workshops have taken place with key stakeholders across the business</p> <p>Staff bulletins, together with articles on our internal website have been used to raise awareness of the requirement to impact assess our policies and functions</p> <p>Assessment of our existing policies and functions has commenced on those functions/policies attracting a 'high' rating following our initial assessment exercise. These are scheduled to be completed by April 2009 with the remaining policies and functions due to be impact assessed by December 2009</p> <p>The assessments will be undertaken by our diversity and equality representatives alongside their business managers, with the diversity manager taking responsibility for overseeing all activities</p> <p>We have reconsidered our existing policies and functions as part of the 2008 review of our Equality Schemes. These have now been amended in view of new business initiatives</p>

Objectives	Activities required	Timescales	Outcomes	Progress
<p>1 Shared Services will implement and fully comply with the Department's monitoring strategy to meet business and legislative requirements <i>(continued)</i></p>	<p>Publishing the results of all diversity impact assessments</p>	<p>(See above)</p>	<p>(See above)</p>	<p>We have introduced a process whereby our business management office is responsible for identifying possible impacts on race when business change requests are received. Any change request which may have an impact is then referred to the Diversity & Equality manager for further investigation</p>
<p>2 We consult and involve our customers and stakeholders and act on feedback received</p>	<p>We will do this by: Continuing with our programme of customer surveys to consult and involve customers on the delivery of our services</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>Assurance that we are fully compliant with legislative requirements by consulting and involving customers to promote and evaluate equality</p>	<p>The results from Debt Management's most recent customer survey were measured against Public Service Agreement targets and customer service standards</p> <p>Customers' comments suggested that improvements could be made to our communications. An action plan has been developed to address the concerns raised by customers</p> <p>Our customer payments team has also undertaken customer surveys. Results from one such survey has resulted in changes to one of our telephony systems, thus improving the way we communicate with our customers</p>

Objectives	Activities required	Timescales	Outcomes	Progress
<p>2 We consult and involve our customers and stakeholders and act on feedback received (<i>continued</i>)</p>	<p>Working with our Departmental colleagues to use existing customer networks and involvement exercises to listen to the concerns of our customers and act upon these to improve our customer service</p> <p>Engaging with our customer relationship team to ensure that all service level agreements cover diversity and equality</p>	<p>June 2008</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>(See above)</p>	<p>We are engaging with the DWP Diversity and Equality Centre of Expertise to ensure that we play an active role in the development of the DWP 'Reference Group'</p> <p>Our participation in the DWP's Community 5000 initiative has resulted in 63 staff placements within our local community</p> <p>We are in the process of developing a customer strategy. This will ensure a consistent approach across our organisation to the way we conduct our customer surveys and respond to customer feedback</p> <p>Our 2008/2009 business plan outlines our commitment to working with our customers to define their requirements and provide them with a highly efficient and cost effective service</p> <p>The services we provide to the Department and other Government Departments are documented within service level agreements. This enables our customers to define their requirements. This also ensures that our staff know what is expected of them and raise awareness of our customers' expectations</p>

Objectives	Activities required	Timescales	Outcomes	Progress
<p>3 All Shared Services staff will receive awareness training on changes to race legislation and refresher training will be provided on an ongoing basis</p>	<p>We will do this by:</p> <p>Asking all our staff to complete the diversity learning available on the internal website</p> <p>Inviting staff to attend race awareness sessions</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>All staff will be aware of their roles and responsibilities under the revised legislation</p>	<p>Staff have received mandatory training on changes to race legislation</p> <p>Debt Management's one day diversity workshop (as outlined in our equality scheme) is in the process of being rolled-out across Debt Management</p> <p>Our new internal website has a diversity and equality page containing information on changes to equality legislation and the impact this will have on customers and staff</p> <p>Our diversity and equality representatives have attended a one day training event to raise awareness of equality legislation and gain a better understanding of the needs of people from ethnic minorities</p> <p>We are working with the Diversity & Equality Centre of Expertise to review the learning & development guidance on diversity currently available to staff</p> <p>Shared Services Induction package now includes a section on diversity and equality</p>

Objectives	Activities required	Timescales	Outcomes	Progress
<p>4 We will make a positive contribution to the achievement of Departmental 2005 to 2008 targets to increase the representation of ethnic minority people at higher grades</p>	<p>We will do this by:</p> <p>Communicating these targets to all staff, ensuring consideration is given to these during any recruitment exercise</p> <p>Participating in the Department's Positive Action Pilot</p>	<p>December 2006 (communication of targets)</p> <p>Ongoing for consideration on recruitment exercises</p> <p>Due to be completed by September 2008</p>	<p>Contribution towards the achievement of the Departmental ten-point plan to increase the representation rates of ethnic minority staff at higher grades</p>	<p>We have used staff bulletins, face-to-face presentations and internal web-site articles to raise awareness of Departmental targets</p> <p>We are taking part in a positive action development programme for ethnic minority staff. We are piloting this programme on behalf of the Department</p> <p>The aim of the programme is to ensure that staff from an ethnic minority can complete on equal terms for job opportunities and promotion. Stage one of the programme is now complete, with stage two due for completion in September 2008</p> <p>We have representatives at diversity and equality and talent management forums to ensure that we contribute to, and are kept fully informed of, all initiatives relating to increasing the representation of staff from ethnic minorities at higher grades</p>

Objectives	Activities required	Timescales	Outcomes	Progress
5 We will monitor the views of all staff through the annual staff survey	<p>We will do this by:</p> <p>Analysing the results of the annual staff survey</p> <p>Developing action plans to ensure we address the areas of concern raised by staff</p>	Annually	<p>Race equality issues are addressed resulting in improved staff survey results</p> <p>Assurance that employee-related processes are meeting the requirements of the human resources policy framework</p>	<p>Following the results of the 2006 staff survey, we have been conducting staff survey workshops across all our locations to discuss the results of the survey and agree the actions required to address concerns. This information has been captured on an action plan which has the full backing of our Executive Team</p> <p>The findings from the staff survey contribute towards our cultural development programme. This programme supports the Department's goal to welcome diversity and equality of opportunity for all by recognising and respecting people's differences and similarities, ensuring that all individuals make their own unique contribution to our organisation's success</p>

Objectives	Activities required	Timescales	Outcomes	Progress
6 Shared Services annual accountancy recruitment exercises adhere to the principles of equality legislation	<p>We will do this by:</p> <p>Monitoring all applications for accountancy training</p> <p>Contributing to the work being undertaken by our learning and development colleagues to improve the monitoring of learning and development data</p> <p>Agreeing a monitoring process on take-up of learning and development activities from ethnic minority staff</p>	<p>Annually</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Our annual accountancy recruitment exercises adhere to the principles of equality legislation</p> <p>Effective monitoring of the take-up of learning and development activities by staff from an ethnic minority</p>	<p>Details of our 2007 professional accountancy recruitment exercise were cascaded to staff via a selection of communication channels, thus ensuring that all staff had an opportunity to apply</p> <p>Applications for accountancy training were monitored to ensure that equality legislation was fully adhered to</p> <p>We will repeat this process for the 2008 accountancy recruitment exercise</p> <p>We have nominated representatives at various Departmental forums to ensure we fully contribute to the monitoring strategy</p>

Objectives	Activities required	Timescales	Outcomes	Progress
<p>7 Shared Services will have a diversity and equality network representing all parts of our organisation</p>	<p>We will do this by: Reviewing the current membership of our diversity network and invite representatives from all business areas</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>All our areas will have a diversity and equality network representative/ champion</p>	<p>The inaugural meeting of our diversity and equality network took place in January 2007. All areas of the business are represented. Roles and responsibilities have now been agreed and the network meets on a quarterly basis</p> <p>We have a diversity champion at board level thus illustrating commitment to our diversity goals</p> <p>Our diversity and equality representatives will be instrumental in ensuring that diversity impact assessments are undertaken on existing policies/functions to meet agreed timescales</p>

Objectives	Activities required	Timescales	Outcomes	Progress
8 Shared Services will adhere to Departmental accessibility standards	<p>We will do this by:</p> <p>Gathering information on our current accessibility standards</p> <p>Identifying gaps between our current standards and the new accessibility standards</p> <p>Reporting findings to the Department's diversity and equality team</p> <p>Raising staff awareness of customer accessibility standards</p> <p>Implementing customer accessibility standards</p> <p>Monitoring standards once they have been implemented</p>	<p>Information to be supplied to the Department's Diversity and Equality team by September 2007</p> <p>April 2008</p> <p>September 2008</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Assurance that we comply with Departmental accessibility standards</p>	<p>Information gathering process has now been completed. Information on the gaps between our current standards and the new accessibility standards have now been forwarded to the Department's diversity and equality team</p> <p>The areas for improvement identified via the accessibility standards exercise have been captured on an action plan and improvements made to date include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raising staff awareness of the DWP Customer Service internal website • guidance for staff on dealing with vulnerable customers • the setting up of a telephony accessibility group

Annex 3 – Disability Equality Action Plan

Objectives	Activities required	Timescales	Outcomes	Progress
1 Shared Services will implement and fully comply with the Department's monitoring strategy to meet business and legislative requirements	<p>We will do this by:</p> <p>Raising staff awareness of the Department's monitoring strategy</p> <p>Monitoring our policies to ensure that our services are accessible to everyone and identify whether our policies have a disproportionate or unfair impact on customers/staff with a disability</p> <p>Ensuring that diversity impact assessments are undertaken on existing policies/ functions and when changes are identified to policies, service delivery and people issues</p>	<p>December 2009 for existing policies and functions</p> <p>All new policies and functions to be impact assessed as per Departmental impact assessment guidance</p>	Assurance that our functions and policies are fully compliant with legislative requirements	<p>Impact assessment workshops have taken place with key stakeholders across the business</p> <p>Staff bulletins, together with articles on our internal website have been used to raise awareness of the requirement to assess our policies and functions</p> <p>Assessment of our existing policies and functions has commenced on those functions/policies attracting a 'high' rating following our initial assessment exercise. These are due to be completed by March 2009. The remaining policies and functions will be impact assessed by December 2009</p> <p>The assessments will be undertaken by our diversity and equality representatives alongside their business managers, with the diversity manager taking responsibility for overseeing all activities</p> <p>We have reconsidered our existing policies and functions as part of the 2008 review of our Equality Schemes. These have now been amended in view of new business initiatives</p>

Objectives	Activities required	Timescales	Outcomes	Progress
1 Shared Services will implement and fully comply with the Department's monitoring strategy to meet business and legislative requirements <i>(continued)</i>	Publishing the results of all diversity impact assessments	(See above)	(See above)	We have introduced a process whereby our business management office is responsible for identifying possible impacts on disability when business change requests are received. Any change request which may have an impact is then referred to the Diversity and Equality manager for further investigation

Objectives	Activities required	Timescales	Outcomes	Progress
<p>2 We will ensure that the needs of disabled people are met through consultation and involvement with our customers and stakeholders</p>	<p>We will do this by:</p> <p>Continuing with our programme of customer surveys to consult and involve customers on the delivery of our services</p> <p>Working with our Departmental colleagues to use existing customer networks and involvement exercises to listen to the concerns of our customers and act upon these to improve our customer service</p> <p>Engaging with our customer relationship team to ensure that all service level agreements cover diversity and equality</p>	<p>Annually</p> <p>June 2008</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Assurance that we are fully compliant with the Disability Equality Duty by consulting and involving customers to promote and evaluate equality</p>	<p>The results from Debt Management's most recent customer survey were measured against Public Service Agreement targets and customer service standards</p> <p>Customers' comments suggested that improvements could be made to our communications</p> <p>An action plan has been developed to address the concerns raised by customers</p> <p>Our customer payments team has also undertaken customer surveys. Results from one such survey has resulted in changes to one of our telephony systems, thus improving the way we communicate with our customers</p> <p>We are engaging with the DWP Diversity and Equality Centre of Expertise to ensure that we play an active role in the development of the DWP 'Reference Group'</p> <p>Our participation in the DWP's Community 500 initiative has resulted in 63 staff placements within our local community</p>

Objectives	Activities required	Timescales	Outcomes	Progress
<p>2 We will ensure that the needs of disabled people are met through consultation and involvement with our customers and stakeholders <i>(continued)</i></p>	(See above)	(See above)	(See above)	<p>We are in the process of developing a customer strategy. This will ensure a consistent approach across our organisation to the way we conduct our customer surveys and respond to customer feedback</p> <p>Our 2008/2009 business plan outlines our commitment to working with our customers to define their requirements and provide them with a highly efficient and cost effective service</p> <p>The services we provide to the Department and other Government Departments are documented within service level agreements. This enables our customers to define their requirements. This also ensures that our staff know what is expected of them and raises awareness our customers' expectations</p>

Objectives	Activities required	Timescales	Outcomes	Progress
3 Shared Services will develop the way it supports staff through reasonable adjustments	<p>We will do this by:</p> <p>Continuing to monitor and collect data on a quarterly basis on staff requesting reasonable adjustments</p> <p>Ensuring that reasonable adjustments are made within acceptable timescales</p>	<p>Quarterly</p> <p>Quarterly</p>		<p>We have been working towards improving the experience of our staff by reviewing our process for identifying and obtaining reasonable adjustments</p> <p>We have introduced a disabled person's officer who is responsible for supporting and assisting line managers and individuals with disability issues</p> <p>We have appointed Health and Safety representatives located at all our sites that are responsible for collecting reasonable adjustments data and reporting these findings to the disabled person's officer</p>
4 All Shared Services staff will receive awareness training on changes to disability legislation and refresher training will be provided on an ongoing basis	<p>We will do this by:</p> <p>Asking all our staff to complete the diversity learning available on the internal website</p> <p>Inviting staff to attend disability awareness sessions</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	All staff will be aware of their roles and responsibilities under the revised legislation	<p>Staff have received mandatory training on changes to disability legislation</p> <p>Debt Management's one day diversity workshop (as outlined in our equality scheme) has been rolled out across Debt Management</p> <p>Our new internal website has a diversity and equality page containing information on changes to equality legislation and the impact this will have on customers and staff</p>

Objectives	Activities required	Timescales	Outcomes	Progress
4 All Shared Services staff will receive awareness training on changes to disability legislation and refresher training will be provided on an ongoing basis (<i>continued</i>)	(See above)	(See above)	(See above)	<p>Our diversity and equality representatives have attended a one day training event to raise awareness of equality legislation and gain a better understanding of the needs of disabled people</p> <p>We are working with the Diversity and Equality Centre of Expertise to review the learning & development guidance on diversity currently available to staff</p> <p>Stage one of the programme is now complete, with stage two due for completion in September 2008</p>
5 We will make a positive contribution to the achievement of Departmental 2005 to 2008 targets to increase the representation of disabled people at higher grades	<p>We will do this by:</p> <p>Communicating these targets to all staff, ensuring consideration is given to these during any recruitment exercise</p> <p>Participating in the Department's Positive Action Pilot.</p>	<p>December 2006 (communication of targets)</p> <p>Ongoing for consideration on recruitment exercises</p> <p>Pilot to be completed by September 2008</p>	<p>Contribution towards the achievement of the Departmental ten point plan to increase the representation rates of disabled staff at higher grades</p>	<p>We have used staff bulletins, face-to-face presentations and internal web-site articles to raise awareness of Departmental targets</p> <p>We are taking part in a positive action development programme for disabled staff. We are piloting this programme on behalf of the Department</p> <p>The aim of the programme is to ensure that disabled people can compete on equal terms for job opportunities and promotion. Stage one of the programme is now complete, with stage two due for completion in September 2008</p>

Objectives	Activities required	Timescales	Outcomes	Progress
5 We will make a positive contribution to the achievement of Departmental 2005 to 2008 targets to increase the representation of disabled people at higher grades <i>(continued)</i>	(See above)	(See above)	(See above)	We have representatives at diversity and equality and talent management forums to ensure that we contribute to, and kept fully informed of, all initiatives relating to increasing the representation of disabled staff at higher grades
6 We will consult with disabled staff to ensure that staff are not treated unfairly as a result of their disability	We will do this by: Analysing the results of the annual staff survey Developing action plans to ensure we address the areas of concern raised by staff	Annually	The concerns of disabled staff are addressed resulting in improved staff survey results Assurance that employee related processes are meeting the requirements of the human resources policy framework	Following the results of the 2006 staff survey, we have been conducting staff survey workshops across all our locations to discuss the results of the survey and agree the actions required to address concerns. This information has been captured on an action plan which has the full backing of our Executive Team The findings from the staff survey contribute towards our cultural development programme. This programme supports the Departmental goal to welcome diversity and equality of opportunity for all by recognising and respecting people's differences and similarities, ensuring that all individuals make their own unique contribution to our organisation's success

Objectives	Activities required	Timescales	Outcomes	Progress
<p>7 Shared Services annual accountancy recruitment exercises adhere to the principles of equality legislation</p>	<p>We will do this by:</p> <p>Monitoring all applications for accountancy training</p> <p>Contributing to the work being undertaken by our learning and development colleagues to improve the monitoring of learning and development data</p> <p>Agreeing a monitoring process on take-up of learning and development activities from disabled staff</p>	<p>Annually</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Our annual accountancy recruitment exercises adhere to the principles of equality legislation</p> <p>Effective monitoring of the take-up of learning and development activities by disabled staff</p>	<p>Applications for accountancy training were monitored to ensure that equality legislation was fully adhered to</p> <p>We will repeat this process for the 2008 professional accountancy recruitment exercise</p> <p>We have nominated representatives at various Departmental learning and development forums to ensure we fully contribute to the monitoring strategy</p>

Objectives	Activities required	Timescales	Outcomes	Progress
<p>8 The internal helpdesk functions that we offer to the rest of the Department meet the needs of internal disabled customers</p>	<p>We will do this by: Engaging with our customers to ensure access is available to internal disabled staff</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Assurance that the internal helpdesk functions we offer meet the needs of internal disabled customers</p>	<p>We have customer standard targets in place and these are agreed in conjunction with representatives from all our Departmental business units. We publish these targets on a monthly basis, ensuring that our customers can judge our performance against these standards</p> <p>Our internal help desk functions engage with customers via a variety of customer surveys</p> <p>Our employee services section has customer service managers in place and their details can be found on the Department’s internal website</p> <p>Our HR Investigations Service has appointed champions for disability, race, age, gender and bullying/harassment. They have responsibility for keeping up with developments in their field and ensuring that the rest of the team are up-dated</p>

Objectives	Activities required	Timescales	Outcomes	Progress
9 Shared Services will have a diversity and equality network representing all parts of our organisation	We will do this by: Reviewing the current membership of our diversity network and invite representatives from all business areas	Ongoing	All our areas will have a diversity and equality network representative/ champion	<p>The inaugural meeting of our diversity and equality network took place in January 2007. All areas of the business were represented. Roles and responsibilities have now been agreed and the network meets on a quarterly basis</p> <p>We have a diversity champion at board level thus illustrating commitment to our diversity goals</p> <p>Our diversity and equality representatives will be instrumental in ensuring that diversity impact assessments are undertaken on existing policies/functions to meet agreed timescales</p>

Objectives	Activities required	Timescales	Outcomes	Progress
10 Shared Services will adhere to Departmental accessibility standards	<p>We will do this by:</p> <p>Gathering information on our current accessibility standards</p> <p>Identifying gaps between our current standards and the new accessibility standards</p> <p>Reporting findings to the Department's diversity and equality team</p> <p>Raising staff awareness of customer accessibility standards</p> <p>Implementing customer accessibility standards</p> <p>Monitoring customer accessibility standards</p>	<p>Diversity and Equality team by September 2007</p> <p>April 2008</p> <p>September 2008</p> <p>Ongoing once standards have been implemented</p>	Assurance that we comply with Departmental accessibility standards	<p>Information gathering process has now been completed. Information on the gaps between our current standards and the new accessibility standards have been forwarded to the Department's diversity and equality team</p> <p>The areas for improvement identified via the accessibility standards exercise have been captured on an action plan and improvements made to date include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raising staff awareness of the DWP Customer Service internal website • guidance for staff on dealing with vulnerable customers • the setting up of a telephony accessibility group

Annex 4 – Gender Equality Action Plan

Objectives	Activities required	Timescales	Outcomes	Progress
1 Shared Services will consult and involve our customers and stakeholders and act on feedback received	We will do this by: Continuing with our programme of customer surveys to consult and involve customers on the delivery of our services	Annually	We will be fully compliant with legislative requirements by consulting and involving customers and stakeholders to promote and evaluate equality	The findings from Debt Management's most recent customer survey were measured against Public Service Agreement targets and customer service standards Customers' comments suggested that improvements could be made to our communications. An action plan has been developed to address the concerns raised by customers
	Working with our Departmental colleagues to use existing customer networks and involvement exercises to listen to the concerns of our customers and act upon these to improve our customer service	June 2008	Assurance that our functions and policies (in particular those rated with a 'High' marking) are fully compliant with legislative requirements	Our customer payments team has also undertaken customer surveys. Results from one such survey has resulted in changes to one of our telephony systems, thus improving the way we communicate with our customers We are engaging with the DWP Diversity and Equality Centre of Expertise to ensure that we play an active role in the development of the DWP 'Reference Group'
	Engaging with our customer relationship team to ensure that all service level agreements cover diversity and equality	Ongoing		

Objectives	Activities required	Timescales	Outcomes	Progress
<p>1 Shared Services will consult and involve our customers and stakeholders and act on feedback received (continued)</p>	<p>(See above)</p>	<p>(See above)</p>	<p>(See above)</p>	<p>We are in the process of developing a customer strategy. This will ensure a consistent approach across our organisation to the way we conduct our customer surveys and respond to customer feedback</p> <p>Our 2008/2009 business plan outlines our commitment to working with our customers to define their requirements and provide them with a highly efficient, cost effective service</p> <p>The services we provide to the Department and other Government Departments are documented within service level agreements. This enables our customers to define their requirements. This also ensures our staff know what is expected of them and raises awareness of our customers' expectations</p>

Objectives	Activities required	Timescales	Outcomes	Progress
<p>2 All Shared Services staff will receive awareness training on the changes to gender legislation and refresher training will be provided on an ongoing basis</p>	<p>We will do this by:</p> <p>Asking all our staff to complete the Departmental diversity toolkit awareness material</p> <p>Inviting staff to attend diversity awareness sessions</p>	<p>December 2007</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>All staff will be aware of their roles and responsibilities under revised legislation</p>	<p>Staff have received mandatory training on changes to gender legislation</p> <p>Debt Management's one day diversity workshop (as outlined in our equality scheme) has been rolled-out across Debt Management</p> <p>Our new internal website will have a diversity and equality page containing information on changes to equality legislation and the impact this has on our customers and staff</p> <p>Our diversity and equality representatives have attended a one day training event to raise awareness of equality legislation</p> <p>We are working with the Diversity and Equality Centre of Expertise to review the learning and development guidance on diversity currently available to staff</p> <p>Shared Services Induction package now includes a section on diversity and equality</p>

Objectives	Activities required	Timescales	Outcomes	Progress
<p>3 We will make a positive contribution to the achievement of Departmental 2005 to 2008 targets to increase the representation of women at higher grades</p>	<p>We will do this by: Communicating these targets to all staff, ensuring consideration is given to these during any recruitment exercise</p>	<p>December 2006 (communication of targets) Ongoing for consideration on recruitment exercises</p>	<p>Contribution towards the achievement of the Departmental ten-point plan to increase the representation rates of women at higher grades</p>	<p>We have used staff bulletins, face-to-face presentations and internal web-site articles to raise awareness of Departmental targets</p> <p>We have representatives at diversity and equality and talent management forums to ensure that we contribute to, and are kept fully informed of, all initiatives relating to increasing the representation of women at higher grades</p> <p>We have positively marketed human resource policies, such as childcare vouchers, to promote a positive and inclusive image</p>

Objectives	Activities required	Timescales	Outcomes	Progress
4 We will monitor the views of all staff through the annual staff survey	<p>We will do this by:</p> <p>Analysing the results of the staff survey</p> <p>Developing an action plan to ensure that we address the areas of concern raised by staff</p>	Annually	<p>Gender issues are addressed resulting in improved staff survey results</p> <p>Assurance that employee related processes are meeting the requirements of the human resources policy framework</p>	<p>Following the results of the 2006 staff survey, we have been conducting staff survey workshops across all our locations to discuss the results of the survey and agree the actions required to address concerns. This information has been captured on an action plan which has the full backing of our Executive Team</p> <p>The findings from the staff survey play a major role within our cultural development programme. This programme supports the Department's goal to welcome diversity and equality of opportunity for all by recognising and respecting people's differences and similarities, ensuring that all individuals make their own unique contribution to our organisation's success</p>

Objectives	Activities required	Timescales	Outcomes	Progress
5 Shared Services annual accountancy recruitment exercises adhere to the principles of equality legislation	We will do this by:			
	Monitoring all applications for accountancy training	Annually	Our annual accountancy recruitment exercises adhere to the principles of equality legislation	Details of our 2007 professional accountancy recruitment exercise were cascaded to staff via a selection of communication channels, thus ensuring that all staff had an opportunity to apply
	Contributing to the work being undertaken by our learning and development colleagues to improve the monitoring of learning and development data	Ongoing	Effective monitoring of the take-up of learning and development activities by gender	Applications for accountancy training were monitored to ensure that equality legislation was fully adhered to
	Agreeing a monitoring process on take-up of learning and development activities from all staff	Ongoing		We will repeat this process for the 2008 professional accountancy scheme We have nominated representatives at various Departmental learning and development forums to ensure we fully contribute to the monitoring strategy for learning and development take-up

Objectives	Activities required	Timescales	Outcomes	Progress
<p>6 Shared Services will implement and fully comply with the Department's monitoring strategy to meet business and legislative requirements</p>	<p>We will do this by:</p> <p>Raising awareness of the impact assessment process</p> <p>Ensuring that diversity impact assessments are undertaken on existing policies and functions</p> <p>Ensuring that diversity impact assessments are undertaken when changes are identified to policies, service delivery and people issues</p> <p>Publishing the results of all diversity impact assessments</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>April 2010</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Assurance that existing, and changes to, our policies, service delivery and people issues are impact assessed against discrimination on the grounds of gender</p>	<p>Impact assessment workshops have taken place with key stakeholders across our business</p> <p>Staff bulletins, together with articles on our internal website have been used to raise awareness of the requirement to impact assess our policies and functions</p> <p>Assessment of our existing policies and functions has commenced on those functions/policies attracting a 'high' rating in our original assessment. These are scheduled to be completed by April 2009 with the remaining policies and functions to be impact assessed by April 2010</p> <p>The assessments will be undertaken by our diversity and equality representatives alongside their business managers, with the diversity Manager taking responsibility for overseeing all activities</p> <p>We have reconsidered our existing policies and functions as part of the 2008 review of our Equality Schemes. These have now been amended in view of new business initiatives</p> <p>We have introduced a process whereby our business management office is responsible for identifying possible impact impacts on gender when business change requests are received. Any change request which may have an impact is then referred to the Diversity and Equality manager for further investigation</p>

Objectives	Activities required	Timescales	Outcomes	Progress
<p>7 Shared Services will have a diversity and equality network representing all parts of our organisation</p>	<p>We will do this by: Reviewing the current membership of our diversity network and invite representatives from all business areas</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>All our areas will have a diversity and equality network representative/ champion</p>	<p>The inaugural meeting of our diversity and equality network took place in January 2007. All areas of the business are represented. Roles and responsibilities have now been agreed and the network meets on a quarterly basis</p> <p>We have a diversity champion at board level thus illustrating commitment to our diversity goals</p> <p>Our diversity and equality representatives will be instrumental in ensuring that diversity impact assessments are undertaken on existing policies/functions to meet agreed timescales</p>