

# Our people

## In 2008/09 we supported our people by:

- continuing to equip them with the skills and knowledge to do their jobs, through over 100,000 learning and development days;
- continuing to invest in leadership and management skills (including 360 degree feedback);
- running a 'back to the floor' initiative for senior managers;
- encouraging staff to build a first hand understanding of our customers through the DWP Community 5000 initiative. This year staff spent 903 days with customers and their supporting organisations;
- undertaking staff surveys and addressing the issues they raise;
- ensuring our managers understood their role in engaging staff through the 'Making a Difference' events; and
- introducing a new Management Development Academy initiative, aimed at senior managers within our centres.



## Health and Safety and well-being at work

During 2008/09, 97 per cent of our managers and staff undertook Health and Safety training, display screen equipment training and risk assessments. Our staff continue to benefit from well-being policies such as the availability of flexi time, term-time working, part-time working or job share arrangements as well as hearing tests, eyesight tests and the availability of an Employee Assistance programme with our partners, Right Corecare.

## Sickness absence management

We reduced sickness absence, with the average working days lost as of March 2009 standing at 9.10 days (March 2008 was 10.15 days) against a target of 8.2 days for that period. We have reduced sickness absence by an average of one day during 2008/09. Average sickness absence in the agency has now fallen for four successive quarters.

## Diversity and equality

We launched our Diversity and equality scheme in May 2008. To date we have:

- delivered a series of events to publicise our commitment to diversity and equality;
- regularly monitored and published internally our staff's diversity policy;
- launched campaigns, focusing on DWP's interpretation policy;
- worked with the DWP's new reasonable adjustments specialist team who provide advice and delivery service for staff;
- continued to support our diversity coordinators in their work; and
- raised the profile of Equality Impact Assessments for functions, policies and services.

## Our values

The DWP works by reference to four values: achieving the best, respecting people, making a difference and looking outwards – each carrying equal importance.

We have demonstrated our commitment to these values in the following ways:

**Achieving the best** – learning and continuously improving in order to provide the best service to customers, actively seeking the best solutions for our business and our customers and getting the best from our resources.

**Mrs J from Oxford wrote to tell us about her experience when claiming State Pension, 'I was extremely grateful to have a named person to speak to and explain things to me to whom I did not need to explain things from beginning to end each time. I was grateful to have someone to go the extra mile for me to find out what was happening at each step of the way and to take the trouble to phone me back – even after normal office hours. I cannot find words to convey just how much of a difference you have made during what has been a very difficult time.'**

**Respecting people** – building effective working relationships with each other and with our customers, valuing diversity and learning from each other's different skills and experiences.

**Mr and Mrs N from Peckham are a proud couple and didn't want to be a burden on anyone as they struggled with absolutely no heating and no internal toilet. After we awarded them Pension Credit of £67 each week and an arrears payment of £730 we also ensured they were given all the help they were entitled to, including a Community Care Grant. They now have a new gas fire, carpeting and help from a number of community charities.**

**Making a difference** – delivering products and services in a flexible and responsive way to improve today's and future customers' lives. We have increased our customer insight so we can begin to deliver services in a more focused and streamlined way.

**We are clearing new claims to Attendance Allowance (AA) in an average of 16 days or less and this is making a real difference in people's lives. People like Mrs H from Hull; In reply to her award of AA, Mrs H said, 'I am very grateful. It will be of great help. I would rather have my freedom of movement back and not need help, but advancing years bring their own problems. Thank you.'**

**Looking outwards** – understanding the needs of all our customers and partners, learning about how other organisations deliver excellent service and being open to ideas and learning how to get better at what we do.

**Mrs C rang Swansea Pension Centre complaining that she was finding it hard to pay bills and was distressed. In conversation with the customer, the customer advisor soon discovered that the actual bill she was worried about was a vet's bill for her cat that was unwell. The customer advisor explained about the PDSA and sent information from the web. She wrote to thank us for the information, and to report she was feeling much less anxious.**