

**Work, Welfare and
Equality Group**

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Work, Welfare and Equality Group (WWEG)

Introduction

This document sets out the Work, Welfare and Equality Group's revised equality schemes on race disability and gender and an update on other aspects of diversity.

Our Race, Disability, Gender and Equality Schemes in 2008

In our equality schemes 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 Commission for Equality and Human Rights 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.

Aims and objectives

The role of the Work, Welfare and Equality Group is to help Ministers in the Department for Work and Pensions deliver solutions to drive forward the Government's agenda to help people to achieve their potential through employment; promote opportunity and independence for all; and help to end poverty in all its forms. We promote work as the best form of welfare for people of working age and are committed to securing equality for both our customers and staff.

From April 2008 we are working to deliver the challenges of the new performance framework setting out the future and direction of the Department.

Work, Welfare and Equality Group

Alongside the two Public Service Agreements (PSAs) for which the Department has lead responsibility, Work, Welfare and Equality Group also contributes to nine other Public Service Agreements on which other departments lead within the 2008-2011 framework. The key Departmental Strategic Objectives (DSOs) and indicators that feed into the Public Service Agreements are:

- **Departmental Strategic Objective 1** Reduce the number of children living in poverty;
- **Departmental Strategic Objective 2** Maximise employment opportunity for all and reduce the numbers on out-of-work benefits;
- **Departmental Strategic Objective 3** Improve health and safety outcomes;
- **Departmental Strategic Objective 5** Promote equality of opportunity for disabled people; and
- **Departmental Strategic Objective 6** Pay our customers the right benefits at the right time.

Section 1 – Committed to Equality

What we have achieved and what more we plan to do

Diversity and Equality is at the heart of all the work we do in designing policies that will enable people to overcome disadvantage. We are working to adopt best practice consistently. Currently we are working with colleagues across the department to embed excellence in equality in our day to day policy making.

Work, Welfare and Equality Group through its lone parents policies is working to, wherever possible, ensure equality in pay for women and assist in achieving the child poverty targets of 2010 and 2020. There is a raft of evidence that work itself has a beneficial impact, both on poverty and on welfare more generally, including social inclusion. Sometimes, if a woman moves into low-paid work that itself can have a negative impact on the gender pay gap. But the other benefits are clear and we are increasingly looking at ways of promoting advancement through sustainable employment.

Case Study

The England and Gibraltar European Social Fund programme is adding value to national policies to extend employment opportunities to people who are at a disadvantage in the labour market. Key target groups include disabled people, lone parents, older workers and ethnic minorities. The programme will also contribute to tackling the gender pay gap by funding additional training for low-skilled women, including those in part-time and low paid jobs who often miss out on vocational training. Such support should help to give more women the potential to enter better skilled and higher paid employment. The European Social Fund programme can also fund activities to help men and women enter non-traditional occupations.

The European Social Fund programme has a gender equality and equal opportunities sub-committee which is currently developing a plan to mainstream gender equality and equal opportunities into the programme to ensure that it has a positive impact on the people it is trying to help.

Work, Welfare and Equality Group and Department for Work and Pensions are obligated to make certain that any job advertised on the Jobcentre Plus web site meets the minimum wage requirements and also our advisors actively advocate the advantages of in work benefits, as a means to moving customers towards independent living. We are working with employers to increase and highlight flexible working with our customers, enabling them to make informed life choices about the balance between work and its benefits and looking after development and growth of a child. Local Employment Partnerships are actively assisting in this process.

In all other areas, where possible, Work, Welfare and Equality Group is developing policies that enable customers to progress and develop in work. This includes active partnerships with Train to Gain employers and the Learning and Skills Councils. The Department for Work and Pensions promotes work first. This is a policy which does not in all cases meet gender pay gap requirements. Work, Welfare and Equality Group is actively engaged in working towards equalising wherever possible inequalities in pay and promoting the many benefits for employees, including well-being, health, and independent living.

The UK regularly ensures diversity issues are focused on in discussions in the European Union, for example, by ensuring that equality is embedded in all areas of the European Social Fund England 2007-2013 programme and that there is a significant focus on helping disabled people and people with health conditions, as well as lone parents, carers, ethnic minority groups and older workers.

The Joint International Unit within Work, Welfare and Equality Group promotes the jobs, skills and social cohesion objectives of the European Union Lisbon Agenda by working with other Member States, the European Commission and key participants.

Progress against areas covered by our Departmental Strategic Objectives

We have already made significant progress in the areas covered by our new Departmental Strategic Objectives, but there is clearly more that needs to be done.

Departmental Strategic Objective 1: Reduce the number of children living in poverty

In developing our policies we work closely with other government departments, our delivery businesses, other public sector organisations and the private and voluntary sectors.

- In October 2007 the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) announced the creation of a Joint Child Poverty Unit to take forward a national strategy to help children grow up poverty free and get the best start in life.

We are preparing for a new Non-Departmental Public Body, The Child Maintenance Enforcement Commission to replace the existing Child Support Agency in October 2008. The Commission will aim to tackle child poverty by ensuring more parents take responsibility for paying for their children.

Departmental Strategic Objective 2: Maximise the employment opportunity for all and reduce the numbers on out-of-work benefits

Work Welfare and Equality Group has dedicated staff that look at the social issues that get in the way of people who receive benefits, and want to work but find it difficult to make the transition.

Over the past year, Work, Welfare and Equality Group has delivered major pieces of work to start making this a reality and which will direct our focus over the coming year:

- **Ready to Work, Skilled for Work: Unlocking Britain's Talent.** A major achievement which sets out how we can unlock Britain's talent, ensure employers have access to the skills they need to prosper, and give millions of people the chance to realise their potential and change their lives;
- **Ready for work: full employment in our generation.** This paper responds to the 'In work, better off' consultation that ran from July to October 2007. It details the next steps to reform further the welfare system, ensuring that workless people have access to efficient, modern, personalised support, seeking work, improving their skills, and getting on; and
- Cities Strategies (engaging communities and other flexibilities to increase the number of ethnic minority people in work).

These and other measures are helping to close the employment gap for disadvantaged and under-represented groups, enabling the move from welfare to work.

Case Study

The command paper, Ready for work; full employment in our generation, published in December 2007 announced the introduction of more help for lone parents, of which the majority are women. The pre-employment support includes increasing work trials from three to six weeks; the introduction of group seminars to help prepare for work; a job interview guarantee for lone parents; and work focused pre-work training to give individuals the basic employability skills required to meet an employer's recruitment needs.

The Delivery Directorate, set up in April 2007, has responsibility for commissioning employment programmes like the New Deals which have made a significant contribution to the reduction in unemployment over the last 10 years. More than 1.85 million people have been helped into work through New Deal. We have a record number of people in employment although we now need to go further to eradicate child poverty and address the worklessness in our cities.

Case study

One of our core principles for tackling unemployment is to form strong partnerships with the public, private and third sectors, to assist more people into employment. The aim of the new Department for Work and Pensions Commissioning Strategy for Contracted Employment Provision is to bring a distinctive approach to service delivery based on specialist knowledge, skills and experience using the private, public and third sectors. Following the publication of the Strategy on 28th February 2008, we have started to develop detailed plans and practical arrangements that will start to turn the principles into new ways of working. Some of these will be implemented as part of the commissioning of the flexible New Deal. Others will be developed and tested separately. We will, for example, be working closely with Cities Strategy Partnerships to explore how the Department for Work and Pensions, its providers and local partnerships can build the joined-up relationships and delivery arrangements that are central to success. An impact assessment has been carried out on this strategy.

Departmental Strategic Objective 3: Improve health and safety outcomes

The personal capability assessment and work-related health-focused assessment affecting people with a disability or health condition has been redesigned. The new Work Capability Assessment will be implemented in association with the introduction of the Employment and Support Allowance in October 2008 for all new customers.

Work, Welfare and Equality Group

In Budget 2008 the Chancellor announced that the new assessment will be extended to cover existing incapacity benefits customers from 2010, as and when their entitlement to benefit is to be reassessed.

We are working with the Health and Safety Executive to deliver measures to make workplaces healthier and reduce absence due to illness, long-term health conditions and disability.

We are working to improve the work opportunities for people with mental health conditions in collaboration with organisations representing disabled people and customers with health conditions.

Departmental Strategic Objective 5: Promote equality of opportunity for disabled people

The Office for Disability Issues (ODI) is working to influence public perception and build awareness of disability issues.

Equality 2025 was set up in December 2006. Members are disabled people with a wide range of impairments and include appointees from England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

Equality 2025 held its first public meeting on 12 November 2007 in Birmingham. The views expressed by disabled people from across the UK have been fed into Equality 2025's 2008/09 work plan and those for future years. The Office for Disability Issues Annual Report 2007 is available at <http://www.officefordisability.gov.uk/publications/report/2007/>

Equality 2025 held its first regional meeting on 31 January 2008 in Plymouth. The meeting was well attended by disabled people from the region. Further engagement from disabled people at this meeting will also be fed into Equality 2025's 2008/09 work plan and those for future years.

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

According to the Labour Force Survey 1998 -2007, disabled people are far less likely to be in employment. Although there have been significant improvements in the employment rates of disabled people in the last decade, the employment rates of disabled people are just under 50%, compared with around 80% for the non-disabled population.

The Department for Work and Pensions has rolled out the Pathways to Work programme and will be introducing the new Employment and Support Allowance in October 2008.

Pathways to Work was first introduced in three Jobcentre Plus Districts in October 2003. Since then there has been a gradual rollout and the UK has been covered since April 2008. This will be delivered by external contractors across 60 per cent of the country, who have the flexibility to focus a range of programmes on individual customer needs.

The Pathways to Work programme helps prepare customers for the work available through the new initiative of Local Employment Partnerships (LEPs). These employers are working with the government to provide opportunities specifically for individuals who have had difficulties in getting into work.

There are 64 employers already committed to this partnership and a further 150 in discussion with government. Local Employment Partnerships will create 250,000 job opportunities for people in the UK. You can find more information on the Department for Work and Pensions' website.

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The Independent Living Strategy is intended to make progress towards the Government's aim that all disabled people, (including older disabled people), should be able to live autonomous lives, and to have the same choice, freedom, dignity and control over their lives as non-disabled people. The Review followed the commitment made by the Government in 2005 to deliver independent living for all disabled people, as set out in the Government's report 'Improving Life Chances of Disabled People'.

The Independent Living Strategy pieces together, into a single story, the new and existing Government commitments that will contribute to making progress on delivering independent living across a range of policy areas.

In particular, the Independent Living Strategy focuses on barriers faced by, and policies aimed at:

- young people in transition to adulthood (i.e. from beyond the age of 14);
- older disabled people (i.e. from retirement age to beyond the age of 85); and
- disabled parents.

Work, Welfare and Equality Group

The strategy makes commitments relating to spreading the independent living message and strengthening the evidence base to inform independent living policy development and future investment in independent living.

It also has a series of commitments relating to access to the following mainstream goods and services:

- Housing;
- Transport and Mobility;
- Employment and Economic Wellbeing; and
- Personalisation, Choice and Control (i.e. more personally tailored health and social care services).

Departmental Strategic Objective 6: Pay our customers the right benefits at the right time

The benefits system, designed to support people of working age who cannot work, is very complex and often difficult to navigate for our most disadvantaged customers.

We are working on major long-term benefit simplification to challenge existing complexity and ensure that the benefits system operates in ways that customers and staff can understand.

We are designing new benefits as part of the Welfare Reform programme, to reduce payment errors and delays in receiving the correct amount of benefit. One example is the Local Housing Allowance, which gives a set amount of money paid (in the majority of cases) to private tenants towards rent based on locality. This allowance addresses some of the inequalities identified in administering Housing Benefit and should help us increase the take-up from women and tackle areas such as overcrowding suffered by some ethnic groups.

The Department for Work and Pensions' Change Programme is in addition looking for ways to ensure that information is asked for only once, making certain that customers are at the heart of everything we do.

Seeking views and listening to our customers

Recently we gave a presentation to a group of disabled external stakeholders at a workshop. The presentation enabled delegates to learn more about the policy work of the group, whilst enabling us to ask stakeholders for comments and examples of good practice on how we can improve equality impact assessments.

We have some good examples of impact assessments carried out during policy development, engaging disabled people in policy making, evaluation and communicating effectively.

The Office for Disability Issues held a consultation in 2007 asking disabled people what equality means to them and to identify main areas of importance to measure progress towards Equality 2025. A summary of the consultation responses is at <http://www.officefordisability.gov.uk/consultations/>

We continue to work with the Women and Work Commission and have trialled a number of programmes to increase accessibility of services for women exploring new ways to increase their labour market participation, such as New Deal Plus for Lone Parents. The Department is fully committed to maximising opportunities for women.

Monitoring and evaluation

We will:

- continue to make consultation and feedback part of our everyday processes while allowing flexibility so that people can feedback in ways that work for them;
- drive forward improvements from the findings of activities listed in our action plans and the responses to the consultation on the Office for Disability Issues' 'Life Chances Indicator set' to track progress towards equality up to 2025;
- continue to build on our strengths – analysis of the evidence and evaluation of what works; and
- wherever possible, disaggregate performance data and research work by disability status.

Impact Assessments

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

Through consultation and engagement of our people we treat equality not as an 'add-on' but rather as an integral part of the policy process. We are identifying areas where staff sometimes lack confidence in handling the equality and diversity impacts of their day-to-day work. Where they do not always consult, involve and engage with the full range of disadvantaged groups as effectively as they should, we are actively devising upskilling programmes linked closely to excellence and the Department's values.

Work, Welfare and Equality Group

We will be holding a series of workshops, covering all equality strands, to embed best practice in developing impact assessments in policy making. We will share the lessons learnt with other parts of the Department.

We undertook an Impact Assessment covering both the Pathways to Work Programme and the development of the Employment and Support Allowance. This was published on the Department for Work and Pensions website in May 2007.

We have also published impact assessments in respect of the Child Support Bill and the July 2007 Green Paper 'In work, better off: next steps to full employment'

Published Impact Assessments

The following impact assessments have been published on the Department for Work and Pensions' website.

[In work, better off: next steps to full employment – Impact Assessment](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/welfarereform/readyforwork/impact-assessment.pdf)

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/welfarereform/readyforwork/impact-assessment.pdf>

<http://www.officefordisability.gov.uk/docs/eia-report1.pdf>

Timetable for impact assessing all functions and policies

We have provided a timetable for impact assessing the functions and policies that were in place when we first published the disability and gender schemes. A table can be found at Annex 2.

Section 2: Our Staff

We are committed to contributing to the achievement by 2008 of Departmental targets for improving the representation of women, ethnic minority and disabled staff at all grades where there is under-representation compared with the economically active rate.

We are currently encouraging our people to record personal diversity data so that we get a true picture of representation across the paybands.

We will be engaging in a skills audit of our staff. This information will be used alongside diversity data to develop staff and fill skills gaps. We are developing competencies in line with Professional Skills for Government specifically for G6 and G7's and looking to increase our internal capacity through professionalism in policy making. This will be tied into individual personal development plans, encouraging growth and succession planning across the group.

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.

Employment data

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 to ensure that our staff from under-represented groups receive equal outcomes and are able to fulfil their potential. Our employment data are reported in the chapter on Corporate Human Resources.

We have evaluated and reviewed our induction process to raise awareness of the duty to promote equality and we regularly hold induction days for new employees that include sessions on equality and the diverse nature of Work, Welfare and Equality Group. Our diversity and values champion is a member of the Departmental diversity and equality steering group.

Our ambition is to go further in making Work, Welfare and Equality Group a place where people are proud to work, with aspirations to excellence in meeting our business objectives and where:

- we all feel appreciated, treated with respect and valued for our different beliefs and cultures;
- we all live the Department's values of making a difference, looking outwards, respecting people and achieving the best; and
- all who have leadership roles lead by example and promote these aims, acting with honesty and integrity.

Our work is at the heart of making the Government's priorities a reality. We value our people as a key to making this happen. We are committed to the development and appreciation of talents and skills.

Case Study

We are currently running a leadership programme as a result of feedback from our people on their perceptions of the behaviours of our leaders. Investing in leadership development is regarded by the Senior Management Team as essential not only to retain and grow staff with potential to progress into senior posts, but to also increase the confidence and competence of less experienced managers of people. The Leadership Development Programme commenced in February 2008, and includes a focus on the skills around values and diversity. We have carried out an impact assessment on this programme.

Staff Survey and Investors in People review feedback

83 per cent of our people took part in the 2008 departmental staff survey. We also conducted an Investors' in People review in October and November 2007. We have consulted all staff on the Continuous Improvement Plan that is driven by this feedback.

As a result of the feedback we have already improved on the actions and behaviours of our leaders and made changes in the way we work, to ensure that all our people are consistently treated with respect and that we value each others' abilities. In particular:

- we have undertaken a full programme of 360 degree feedback allowing us to work better together;
- our managers have been 'back to the floor' getting to hear and see the reality of policies we make, listening and learning lessons for future policy making; and
- we have had a number of events for our line managers to build their confidence in using their people management skills, including mandatory training on equality legislation for all staff.

Reasonable adjustments

We make reasonable adjustments for our people who have a disability or health condition. We monitor quarterly the number of applications made and the amount of time they take to progress. We are represented on the Departmental Reasonable Adjustments LEAN initiative working group, in order to contribute to the streamlining and improvement of the Reasonable Adjustments process.

Involvement and consultation

We are currently:

- continuing to hold our successful “hour with” sessions which have covered a wide range of topics including presentations and discussions on language and ethnicity and unconscious racial bias in the decision making process;
- mainstreaming the equality duties into our business planning framework;
- developing guidance through the Office for Disability Issues for a coordinated approach to involve disabled people in research (based on the Equality 2025 project);
- monitoring issues arising from the assessments so that we can share good practice in how to involve people in identifying solutions; and
- continuing to involve our staff in ensuring that the Work, Welfare and Equality Group is a place where diversity is valued and we treat each other with thoughtfulness and respect.

Progress reporting and reviewing

We will assess progress and provide an update on outcomes against action plans on a yearly basis, ensuring that we continue to involve customers and staff in this process and include outcomes from impact-assessing proposals in relation to policies and processes we have introduced.

We will revise and publish our action plans in accordance with legislation.

Comments on our schemes

We welcome comments from customers, stakeholders, members of staff and other interested parties. The schemes will be reviewed in the light of any comments we receive.

Comments may be directed to:

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People and Business Management Team
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E-mail: jenni.martin@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Annex 1 – Assessment of Functions and Policies

Functions	Related Functions/ Policies	Priority			Reason For Rating
		Race	Disability	Gender	
1. Ensuring the best start for all children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child maintenance and other payments • Worklessness and lone parenthood • Ready for work: full employment in our generation 	High	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners of people who are unemployed • Lone parents • Cultural issues • Negative publicity • Poor social housing
2. Promoting work as the best form of welfare for people of working age.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple disadvantage • Cities Strategies 	High	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple disadvantage • Gender pay gap • Employer engagement • Lone parents • Childcare costs • Engagement of communities
3. Improving the life chances of disabled people and carers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled people and carers' lives and experiences • Performance framework for Pension, Disability and Carers Service in promoting equality • Publication of refreshed carer's strategy May/June 	High	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective communication of entitlements • Employer vacancies or support • Complexities of benefits system • Multiple disadvantage

Functions	Related Functions/ Policies	Priority			Reason For Rating
		Race	Disability	Gender	
4. Improving workplace health and safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preventing sickness and disability • Enabling people to work despite their sickness or disability • Employment Support Allowance • Capability Assessments 	High	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illness • Mental health • Unsafe working practices • Low pay/long hours • Reasonable adjustments process
5. Reforming the design and delivery of benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty alleviation • Work incentives • Accessibility/transparency • Performance framework for Local Authorities and The Rent Service 	Medium	Medium	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complexities of benefits system • Effective communication of entitlements • Fraud and error • Housing (overcrowding)

Functions	Related Functions/ Policies	Priority			Reason For Rating
		Race	Disability	Gender	
6. Making WWEG a better place to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous Improvement Framework • 360 degree feedback • G6 & 7 leadership programme • Address concerns from Staff Survey and Investors In People review findings. 	Medium	Medium	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance required for managers to support staff with disabilities through the Reasonable Adjustments process and raise awareness of the specific duty to promote equality • Capacity Building • Leadership development • Development of our people

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 – Timetable for Assessment of existing functions and policies

Policies/Functions	Review Date	Progress
Child maintenance and other payments Bill	December 2007	Completed and published
Cities Strategies	2006	Completed and published (covered in the Welfare Reform impact assessment).
Creation of Equality 2025	2009	The duties were considered when setting up Equality 2025 to ensure that the perspectives of race and gender were included as well as disability. For example the recruitment process aimed to ensure as wide a representation of disabled people as possible (e.g. by gender, race, impairment type, geographical location), which has been achieved. We will review the functions and role of Equality 2025 on an ongoing basis.
European Social Fund	2006	The draft equality screening report follows the structure of the DWP screening report and impact assessment template. The report concludes that the draft new programme is likely to have a positive impact on the equality groups targeted and that a full impact assessment is not necessary. The Equal Opportunities Commission, Commission for Racial Equality and Disability Rights Commission were invited to comment on the draft report. The screening report will be regularly reviewed during the life of the programme. http://www.esf.gov.uk/_docs/introduction.pdf
Fair Cities Programme	May 2005	Completed. Project ended March 2008
Housing Benefit reform	September 2006	A baseline assessment of the impact of Housing Benefit on equality, and four sections covering our action plan in each of the main current work streams within the department on Housing Benefit. These sections cover the Local Housing Allowance, work incentives, delivery of Housing Benefit, and fraud and error.

Policies/Functions	Review Date	Progress
In Work Credit better off: next steps to employment	July 2007	Completed and published
Introduction of Employment Support Allowance	September 2007	Jobcentre Plus will continue to monitor the position in the Benefit Delivery Centres, where Employment and Support Allowance claims are not handled, throughout implementation and once the change has been implemented, to assess the actual impact and draw further conclusions
Work, Welfare and Equality Group Induction Days	May 2008	Currently being drafted
Leadership Development for Work Welfare and Equality Group managers at Grades 6 & 7	January 2007	Completed
Independent Living Strategy	February 2008	The Independent Living Strategy is intended to make progress towards the Government's aim that all disabled people, (including older disabled people), should be able to live autonomous lives, and to have the same choice, freedom, dignity and control over their lives as non-disabled people. The Review followed the commitment made by the Government in 2005 to deliver independent living for all disabled people, as set out in the Government's report 'Improving Life Chances of Disabled People'.

Policies/Functions	Review Date	Progress
Local Housing Allowance Rollout	September 2006	Emerging findings from the LHA pathfinder areas show that, compared to the control areas, where a roughly constant proportion of people are under-occupying, since the introduction of this allowance in the pathfinders this proportion has decreased – mainly because more people are living in appropriate-sized accommodation – though there is not yet sufficient evidence to link this directly to the Local Housing Allowance.
National Action Plan; Social Inclusion	2006	<p>Completed</p> <p>The UK's National Action Plan on Social Inclusion will be updated in 2008 and the Social Exclusion Task Force will continue its work on increasing and rationalising the support for the most excluded.</p> <p>http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2006/nap/WorkingTogether.pdf</p>
National Strategy for Carers	March 2008	Completed
New Deal Plus	2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Deal Plus Extension (April '06 - existing 5 districts / October '06 - new Scottish & Welsh districts) - Race Impact Assessment completed but not published • Further New Deal Plus Extensions (April '08) - Equality Impact Assessment completed and published.

Policies/Functions	Review Date	Progress
New Deal Plus for Lone Parents	2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1 of 6 Monthly Work Focussed Interviews for lone parents (April 2007) completed and published. • Quarterly Work Focussed Interviews for lone parents with a youngest child aged 11-13 in certain (New Deal Plus) areas completed and published. • Phase 2 of Lone Parent 6 Monthly Work Focussed Interviews (April '08) – covered by Phase 1 impact assessment. • 6 Monthly Work Focussed Interviews for Partners of Jobseeker's Allowance recipients with children (April '08) – assessment signed-off and awaiting publication. • Up-front Childcare Fund (April '08) – Equality Impact Assessment signed-off and awaiting publication. <p>All published Jobcentre plus Impact Assessments can be found at: http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/Aboutus/Impactassessments/National/index.html</p>
Opportunity for all	December 2008	<p>Completed</p> <p>Covered in the In Work Better off Impact Assessments</p>
Pathways to work programme rollout	May 2007	Completed and published
Flexible New Deal	December 2007	<p>Completed and Published. Covered in the Ready for Work: full employment in our generation Impact Assessment</p> <p>http://www.dwp.gov.uk/welfarereform/readyforwork/impact-assessment.pdf</p>

Policies/Functions	Review Date	Progress
Ready for work: full employment in our generation command paper	December 2007	Completed and published
Strategy for Contracted Employment Provision	February 2008	Completed
Work, Welfare and Equality Group recruitment and vacancy filling	July 2008	Currently being drafted
Welfare Reform Bill	2006	Completed and published

Annex 3 – Race equality action plan and progress report 2008 to 2011

Objectives	Action	Timescales	Intended Outcomes	Progress
1 To mainstream the race equality duty into the business planning process	Build current and future equality legislation into continuous improvement and business planning processes	Ongoing, in line with business planning and continuous improvement activity	To mainstream the race equality duty across all activity, not just to meet legislative requirements but because it builds on our ethos that it is the right thing to do	The duties are integrated into the business planning process and fed into the Group's annual Purpose and Priorities statement and Continuous Improvement Plan

Objectives	Action	Timescales	Intended Outcomes	Progress
<p>2 To promote and mainstream race equality into all areas of policy development</p>	<p>Improved take up of benefits following benefit simplification measures</p> <p>Ensure the development and implementation of the Employment Support Allowance meet the requirements of the duty</p> <p>Ensure race issues are integrated in policy development work in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • child support policy work • fraud and error • rollout of Local Housing Allowance • Welfare to Work 	<p>As appropriate to the policy development timescale</p>	<p>That we identify specific issues in relation to race at the outset and involve people in identifying solutions for end users</p> <p>That we increase take up of services by ethnic minority customers and measures show achievement of positive outcomes across all client groups</p>	<p>One of the indicators of success in fully integrating consideration of issues in relation to race in our welfare to work policies, is the key indicator of employment rates. The Department met the 2002 Spending Review Public Service Agreement target to reduce the difference between the ethnic minority employment rate and the overall rate. The department is on course to meet the corresponding target in the 2004 Spending Review</p> <p>Many of the policy initiatives listed were trailed in the 2006 Green Paper 'A new deal for welfare: Empowering people to work'. Nearly 5000 copies were distributed to stakeholders and over 600 responses received. The list of those who responded is contained in the consultation report</p> <p>We have published Impact Assessments in respect of the Child Support Bill and the July 2007 Green Paper 'In work, better off: next steps to full employment'. The Green Paper was sent to over 200 stakeholders</p>

Objectives	Action	Timescales	Intended Outcomes	Progress
2 To promote and mainstream race equality into all areas of policy development <i>(continued)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Work and Well-being programme • Improved information for Carers <p>Use analysis to benchmark data and involve people affected by these issues in identifying solutions</p>	(See above)	(See above)	<p>We will continue to ensure, through the statutory Impact Assessments, that relevant equality issues are fully integrated in policy development. In addition, the Group's Senior Management team had a full discussion about the importance of ensuring the full integration of race equality issues, and techniques for so doing</p> <p>We will ensure, in our sponsorship role that the opportunities provided by the creation of the Child Maintenance Enforcement Commission to address equality issues are fully explored</p>

Objectives	Action	Timescales	Intended Outcomes	Progress
<p>3 Through our ethnic minority employment division build new opportunities for ethnic minority people particularly those in the most disadvantaged areas</p>	<p>That we progress through our Ethnic Minority Advisory Group and other forums:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities Strategies • Fair Cities Programme • Public sector procurement • employer engagement (Olympics 2012) 	<p>Ongoing to 2012</p>	<p>That we build employability for people from ethnic minority backgrounds</p> <p>That we increase employer engagement and enterprise</p> <p>That we increase local ethnic minority employment rates</p>	<p>The Department met the 2002 Spending Review Public Service Agreement target to reduce the difference between the ethnic minority employment rate and the overall rate. The department is on course to meet the corresponding target in the 2004 Spending Review</p> <p>The Cities Strategies pathfinders have committed to reduce the number of people claiming benefit by an additional 3% by May 2009 and Pathfinders are asked where appropriate to consider targeting ethnic minority employment</p> <p>The Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force has set up 4 focus groups to take forward work against its priorities, including procurement and employer engagement. The Business Commission has also taken evidence and made helpful recommendations</p> <p>Procurement pilots have been implemented for New Deal Contracts</p>

Objectives	Action	Timescales	Intended Outcomes	Progress
<p>4 To raise awareness of the race equality duty as part of the wider programme of diversity awareness training</p>	<p>Raise awareness amongst all staff on the specific requirements of the race equality duty</p> <p>Continue to analyse staff perceptions from staff survey results and implement measures to achieve positive changes</p> <p>Invite external speakers to the 'hour with' sessions so that we can gain a wider perspective on race specific issues</p>	<p>Immediate and ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>That our people are aware of and deliver their responsibilities to customers, stakeholders and colleagues</p> <p>That Work, Welfare and Equality Group is a place where everyone feels valued and treated with respect</p>	<p>Mandatory training on equality legislation was delivered to staff across the Group to schedule</p> <p>Our internal website and induction process have been reviewed to raise the profile of the Group Diversity Champion and provide direct links to the support available to managers and the Duty to promote Equality</p> <p>The 'hour with' programme is ongoing and we will continue to ensure that it covers a range of issues including diversity issues</p> <p>Sessions have included presentations and discussions covering employer discrimination in relation to people from ethnic minorities, unconscious racial bias and the way it can affect a decision making process and the results of recent research examining racial bias in selection decisions</p>

Objectives	Action	Timescales	Intended Outcomes	Progress
4 To raise awareness of the race equality duty as part of the wider programme of diversity awareness training <i>(continued)</i>	(See above)	(See above)	(See above)	Also, a senior Research Fellow in the Centre for Language, Discourse and Communication at Kings College London presented findings on the DWP funded research: 'Talk on Trial: Job interviews, language and ethnicity' (2006). This research examined the job interview process for low-paid jobs and a 'linguistic penalty' for candidates born abroad and whether systems put in place to reduce inequality - equal opportunities legislation and competency frameworks – contribute to this 'penalty'

Annex 4 – Disability equality action plan and progress report 2008 to 2011

Objectives	Action	Timescales	Intended Outcome	Progress
1 Mainstream the Disability Equality Duty into our business planning process	To build current and future equality legislation into continuous improvement and business planning processes (2008/09)	By April 2008	All activity within Work Welfare and Equality Group takes account of the impact on disabled people	The duties are integrated into the business planning process and fed into the Group's annual Purpose and Priorities statement and Continuous Improvement Plan
2 To promote and mainstream the disability equality duty into all areas of policy development	Improved understanding and take up of benefits and particularly disability benefits following benefit simplification measures	As appropriate to the policy development timescale	<p>That we use analysts to identify and benchmark data at the outset and involve people affected by these issues in identifying solutions</p> <p>That we carry out robust disability impact assessments in all areas of policy development</p>	We undertook a full Disability Equality Impact Assessment covering both the Pathways to Work Programme and the development of The Employment and Support Allowance, which was published on the DWP website in May 2007. Both of these policy initiatives were also covered in the 2006 Green Paper 'A new deal for welfare: Empowering people to work'. Nearly 5000 copies were distributed to stakeholders and over 600 responses received. We have also published impact assessments in respect of the Child Support Bill and the July 2007 Green Paper 'In work, better off: next steps to full employment'. The Green Paper was sent to over 200 stakeholders

Objectives	Action	Timescales	Intended Outcome	Progress
<p>2 To promote and mainstream the disability equality duty into all areas of policy development (continued)</p>	<p>Ensure the rollout and the development and implementation of the Employment Support Allowance meet the requirements of the duty</p> <p>Conduct a review of disability issues in relation to Child Support policy work</p> <p>As part of our fraud and error Strategy, carry out an analysis of inconsistencies and errors made in payments to disabled customers</p> <p>Ensure disability issues are integrated into policy development in relation to:</p>	<p>(See above)</p>	<p>That we publicise changes and provide accessible information to disabled people and carers</p> <p>That benefits and programmes are accessible and take up improves</p>	<p>We commissioned research on the take-up of disability benefits, particularly DLA/AA, to establish how we can increase take-up</p> <p>We are also considering whether benefit rules prevent people participating or volunteering and whether any changes to systems are necessary to encourage greater participation in public life</p> <p>The Office for Disability Issues published its progress report which provides an update on the Department's actions arising from the 'Improving the Life chances of Disabled People' report. It will highlight what the Department is doing to promote equality and disability employment</p> <p>We have commissioned the Office for National Statistics to develop plans for a new longitudinal disability survey of Great Britain. This would monitor progress towards the Office for Disability Issues' vision of equality by 2025 and underpin future policy development with improved evidence on the outcomes for disabled people</p>

Objectives	Action	Timescales	Intended Outcome	Progress
2 To promote and mainstream the disability equality duty into all areas of policy development (<i>continued</i>)	<p>child support policy work</p> <p>rollout of Local Housing Allowance</p> <p>Welfare to Work</p> <p>Health Work and Wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer Engagement • Use analysis to benchmark data and involve people affected by these issues in identifying solutions 	(See above)	(See above)	(See above)
3 To improve our evidence base	Office for Disability Issues to monitor compliance with requirement for public authorities to publish a disability equality scheme	Ongoing	Better policy making through improved understanding of impacts on disabled people	The Office for Disability Issues commissioned an audit of how public bodies were meeting their duties under the Disability Equality Duty. This was completed in January 2007 and outlines the rate of compliance

Objectives	Action	Timescales	Intended Outcome	Progress
<p>3 To improve our evidence base (<i>continued</i>)</p>	<p>Track progress on Office for Disability Issues outcome based indicators to measure progress towards equality</p> <p>Office for Disability Issues to develop guidance for a co-ordinated approach to involve disabled people in research (based on the 'Experiences and expectations of disabled people project')</p> <p>All Work, Welfare and Equality Group research to be commissioned in accordance with the guidance</p> <p>Ensure performance data and research can be disaggregated by disability status</p>	<p>December 2009</p> <p>August 2008</p> <p>December 2009</p>	<p>(See above)</p>	<p>The Office for Disability Issues involved stakeholders in developing measures of progress towards equality for disabled people, including a formal consultation exercise conducted between February and May 2007. The results from the consultation exercise were published in October 2007</p> <p>The Office for Disability Issues is currently conducting research about disabled peoples experiences and expectations. To support this work a reference network was established to advise them about the design of the research programme. The network's members include academics, disability activists and disabled people</p> <p>The Office for Disability Issues has worked with other Government departments to ensure that there is a disability element to some of the targets that the Treasury monitors, providing performance for disabled people against Departmental Strategic Objectives</p>

Objectives	Action	Timescales	Intended Outcome	Progress
4 To improve the way that Government communicates with disabled people and their organisations and involve them in policy development	Support capacity building for organisations of disabled people Develop comprehensive stakeholder strategy	Ongoing Ongoing	That the Office of Disability Issues will become a source of information and expertise on disability, providing support to other government departments and working to influence public perception and build awareness of disability issues	<p>Equality 2025 was set up in December 2006 and has 23 members who are individual disabled people with a wide range of impairments, and includes appointees from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales</p> <p>Equality 2025 held its first public meeting on 12 November 2007 in Birmingham. The meeting was well attended by disabled people from across the UK. The views expressed by disabled people at the meeting have been fed into Equality 2025's 2008/09 work plan and those for future years</p> <p>Equality 2025 held its first regional meeting on 31 January 2008 in Plymouth. The meeting was well attended by disabled people from the region. Further engagement from disabled people at this meeting will also be fed into Equality 2025's 2008/09 work plan and those for future years</p>

Objectives	Action	Timescales	Intended Outcome	Progress
<p>4 To improve the way that Government communicates with disabled people and their organisations and involve them in policy development (conitnued)</p>	<p>(See above)</p>	<p>(See above)</p>	<p>(See above)</p>	<p>Office for Disability Issues initial set of indicators by Dec 2007:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Office for Disability Issues held a consultation asking disabled people what equality means to them, and what they feel are the important things for the Office for Disability Issues to measure progress towards equality in 2025. A summary of the consultation responses is available at http://www.officefordisability.gov.uk/consultations/ • Responses to this consultation have been used to develop the <i>ODI Life Chances Indicator set</i>, which will be used to track progress towards equality up to 2025. The first publication of indicator data was an annex to the Office for Disability Issues Annual Report 2007, and is available at http://www.officefordisability.gov.uk/publications/report/2007/

Objectives	Action	Timescales	Intended Outcome	Progress
5 To aim to be an exemplar in ensuring accessibility at meetings, in outreach work, on websites and in publications	Work, Welfare and Equality Group to follow guidelines issued by Office for Disability Issues on what 'accessibility' means and to maintain a list of accessible venues	Ongoing	Accessibility requirements will include ensuring physical accessibility and producing material for meetings in easy read, Braille, audio, and British Sign Language (BSL) formats	The Office for Disability Issues has held a number of public events during the year which have generated a great deal of expertise in terms of hosting accessible events as well as involving disabled people in its work. The Office for Disability Issues had its website awarded AAA status (highest form of accessibility) but continues to keep this under review with the help of disabled organisations
6 Raise awareness of the Disability Equality Duty and wider disability issues	<p>Continue to deliver mandatory training to all Work, Welfare and Equality Group staff on the specific requirements of the disability equality duty</p> <p>Continue to analyse staff perceptions from staff survey results and implement measures to achieve positive changes</p>	<p>Line manager training to be delivered Individual training for all staff. Ongoing to March 2009</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	To build understanding so that our people are aware of, and deliver, their responsibilities to customers, stakeholders and colleagues	<p>Mandatory training on equality legislation was delivered to staff across the Group to schedule</p> <p>We regularly update our information on reasonable adjustments, to ensure that all requests are progressed in good time</p> <p>The 'hour with' programme is ongoing and we will continue to ensure that it covers a range of issues including diversity issues</p>

Objectives	Action	Timescales	Intended Outcome	Progress
6 Raise awareness of the Disability Equality Duty and wider disability issues (continued)	Provide support to managers so that they are comfortable in supporting their disabled staff	Ongoing Ongoing	That Work, Welfare and Equality Group is a place where everyone feels they are valued and we treat each other with thoughtfulness and respect To monitor progress towards the Office for Disability Issues' vision of equality by 2025 and underpin future policy development with improved evidence on the outcomes for disabled people	Our internal website and induction process have been reviewed to raise the profile of the Group Diversity Champion and provide direct links to the support available to managers and the Duty to promote Equality Work, Welfare and Equality Group has provided representation on the Departmental Reasonable Adjustments LEAN initiative working group, in order to streamline and improve the Reasonable Adjustments process
	Making reasonable adjustments, to ensure our staff have access to a safe and suitable working environment	2008/9 – involve disabled people in topic prioritisation and survey design		
	Invite external speakers to the 'hour with' sessions so that we can learn directly from end users of services we are developing	2008/9 – technical development and piloting.		
	Commissioned the Office for National Statistics to develop plans for a new longitudinal disability survey of Great Britain	2009/10 – survey fieldwork and first results		

Annex 5 – Gender equality action plan and progress report 2008 to 2011

Objectives	Action	Timescales	Intended Outcomes	Progress
1 To mainstream the gender equality duty into our business planning process	Build current and future gender equality duty legislation into continuous improvement and business planning processes	In line with business planning and continuous improvement activity Ongoing	To mainstream the gender equality duty across all activity within Work, Welfare and Equality Group, not just to meet legislative requirements but because it builds on our ethos that it is the right thing to do	The duties are integrated into the business planning process and fed into the Group's annual Purpose and Priorities statement and Continuous Improvement Plan
2 To promote and mainstream gender equality into all areas of policy development	Improved take up of benefits following benefit simplification measures	As appropriate to the policy development timescale	That we identify gender specific issues at the outset and involve people in identifying solutions for end users	We will continue to ensure, through the statutory Impact Assessments, that relevant equality issues are fully integrated in policy development. Many of the policy initiatives listed were trailed in the 2006 Green Paper 'A new deal for welfare: Empowering people to work'. Nearly 5000 copies were distributed to stakeholders and over 600 responses received. The list of those who responded is contained in the Consultation report

Objectives	Action	Timescales	Intended Outcomes	Progress
<p>2 To promote and mainstream gender equality into all areas of policy development <i>(continued)</i></p>	<p>Ensure the rollout and implementation of the Employment Support Allowance meet the requirements of the duty</p> <p>Ensure gender issues are integrated into policy development in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • child support policy work • rollout of Local Housing Allowance • Welfare to Work • Health Work and Well-being programme • Employer Engagement 	<p>(See above)</p>	<p>(See above)</p>	<p>We have published Impact Assessments in respect of the Child Support Bill and the July 2007 Green Paper 'In work, better off: next steps to full employment'. The Green Paper was sent to over 200 stakeholder groups</p> <p>We will ensure, in our sponsorship role that the opportunities provided by the creation of The Child Maintenance Enforcement Commission to address equality issues are fully explored</p> <p>We have published impact assessments in respect of Welfare Reform Bill 2006. The assessment contains assessment for the welfare reform agenda as a whole and short impact assessments are included as necessary including Local Housing Allowance. The Local Housing Allowance final evaluation from the nine Pathfinder areas have been published and we will continue to ensure that relevant equality issues are fully integrated in this policy area</p>

Objectives	Action	Timescales	Intended Outcomes	Progress
2 To promote and mainstream gender equality into all areas of policy development <i>(continued)</i>	Use analysis to benchmark data and involve people affected by these issues in identifying solutions	(See above)	(See above)	(See above)
3 To adopt 'gender neutral' language across the group	Ensure that we review the language used when referring to particular customers groups and use (where appropriate) gender-neutral language or, where more appropriate, gender-specific language across the group	Immediate and ongoing	That assumptions are not made about particular customer groups as these may be construed as discriminatory	This is ongoing and monitored on a constant basis

Objectives	Action	Timescales	Intended Outcomes	Progress
<p>4 To develop further objectives building on the Women and Work Commission's recommendations and 'one year on' findings reports, to examine the gap in earnings of male and female lone parents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review report when available • Agree actions • Take forward actions 	<p>Evaluation of the extension of New Deal Plus to Scotland and Wales is currently ongoing, with a final report due for publication in Spring 2008. Further evaluation work on the extension of the pilot outside of London and also on the measures being introduced in London Districts is being planned for after their implementation in 2008</p>	<p>Our policies and practices reflect recommendations made by the Women and Work Commission</p>	<p>The command paper, <i>Ready for work: full employment in our generation</i> (published in December 2007), set out the next phase of welfare reform - moving to a new system of active support rather than passive benefits</p> <p>The command paper announced the introduction of even more support to help work pay for lone parents as well as help sustainability and progression in work</p> <p>The announced pre-employment support includes: Increasing Work Trials from 3 to up to 6 weeks, the Introduction of Group Seminars to help prepare for work, Job Interview Guarantee to guarantee lone parents a job interview with an employer and Work focused pre-work training to give individuals the basic employability skills and/or specific skills required to meet a employer's recruitment needs</p>

Objectives	Action	Timescales	Intended Outcomes	Progress
<p>4 To develop further objectives building on the Women and Work Commission's recommendations and 'one year on' findings reports, to examine the gap in earnings of male and female lone parents (<i>continued</i>)</p>	<p>(See above)</p>	<p>The In Work Credit Pilot impact assessment provides information on the effect of In Work Credit on the earnings of male and female Lone Parents. The next report is due to be published Summer 2008</p>	<p>(See above)</p>	<p>The in-work support includes: the National extension of In-Work Credit, piloting the use of In-Work Credit as an aid to retention, In-Work Advisory Support from Jobcentre Plus to help resolve any difficulties and direct individuals towards other support and the National rollout of the In-Work Emergency Discretion Fund to provide in-work financial help to overcome unexpected financial barriers which crop up when a lone parent first starts work</p> <p>In addition, a number of other measures are being implemented from April 2008 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extension and expansion of New Deal Plus for Lone Parents Pilots – In the current pilot areas it will be extended until March 2011. It will also be expanded to cover all lone parents in London • Piloting the provision of up-front childcare costs in London – such as registration fees, deposits and advance payments <p>There will be an extension of six-monthly Work Focused Interviews to lone parents with a youngest child aged 0 to 4</p>

Objectives	Action	Timescales	Intended Outcomes	Progress
5 To increase the retention of people moving from benefit into work and increase their scope for advancement, making a significant impact on breaking the low pay no pay cycle	Pilot the Employment Retention and Advancement Demonstration project	Launched in 2003 the Employment Retention and Advancement project had final customers flowing off at the end of February 2008 The evaluation will continue until 2010/2011	To promote a work based welfare policy to break the low pay no pay cycle and help customers that are furthest away from the labour market to sustain and advance in work	The project has a clear focus on the labour market position of women as two of the three groups eligible for the programme are lone parents who volunteer for the New Deal for Lone Parents and lone parents on Working Tax Credit who work between 16 and 29 hours a week Findings 12 months after customers entered the programme were published in March 2007, and indicate positive outcomes for lone parents. Evidence from 24 months after entering ERA are due to be published in Spring 2008
6 Raise awareness of the gender equality duty and wider gender issues through a programme of mandatory training and awareness opportunities	Deliver training to all Work, Welfare and Equality Group staff on the specific requirements of the gender equality duty Continue to analyse staff perceptions from staff survey results and implement measures to achieve positive changes	Immediate and ongoing to March 2009 Ongoing	That our people are aware of and deliver their responsibilities to customers, stakeholders and colleagues	Mandatory training on equality legislation was delivered to staff across the Group to schedule The 'hour with' programme is ongoing and we will continue to ensure that it covers a range of issues including diversity issues

Objectives	Action	Timescales	Intended Outcomes	Progress
6 Raise awareness of the gender equality duty and wider gender issues through a programme of mandatory training and awareness opportunities <i>(continued)</i>	Invite external speakers to the 'hour with' sessions so that we can gain a wider perspective on gender specific issues.	Ongoing	That Work, Welfare and Equality Group is a place where everyone feels valued and treated with respect	(See above)

Annex 6 – Other Areas of Diversity

Work, Welfare and Equality Group is committed to all areas of diversity and raising awareness of the wider issues. We recognise that there are many unique challenges for each area of diversity, as well as overlaps, parallels and commonalities.

We are looking to mainstream all areas of diversity, and are making steps towards a single equality scheme in the long term. One way we are doing this is in the way we do our impact assessments. We are aiming to equality impact assess not only the areas where there is a duty, but other areas such as sexual orientation, age and religion and belief.

Case Study

Independent Living Strategy Impact Assessment

Consultation began on 3rd March 2008 and runs until the 20th June 2008. The consultation will seek to address all equality issues raised in the impact assessment, by working with disabled people, including disabled members of black and ethnic minority communities, and with disabled people who have particular experiences relating to their religion or belief, sexual orientation and gender.

The Review did not identify any specific issues in the context of religion and belief and independent living or around religion and disability. However, there is often a close link between race, religion and belief, and culture and independent living will help people to exercise choice and control over how they live all of their lives.

The Review found that an important element of independent living is enabling disabled people to develop relationships and have a social life that non-disabled people take for granted.

It is planned that the Independent Living Strategy Consultation will reach out to lesbian and gay people. The consultation on the Strategy will focus in particular on identifying the issues for lesbian and gay people, seeking means of involving them in the monitoring and implementation of the Strategy.