



**Department for Work and Pensions
Disability, Gender and Race Equality
Schemes Annual Progress Report 2007**

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Foreword by the Minister for Disabled People



I am delighted to introduce the Department for Work and Pensions' race, disability and gender annual progress reports. It has been a year since we published our first disability and gender schemes and these progress reports are designed to give you an update on what we have done so far.

Our actions are a public statement of our commitment to our customers and stakeholders about the changes we will be making and they set out how we are involving our customers in our work.

I see this as particularly important and although we are learning as we go, we have made real progress this year. We now have a strategy which builds on our good local practice and also ensures that we have a more joined-up approach to involving large organisations.

As Minister for Disabled People, there are two other areas where I am particularly pleased we have made advances:

- Equality 2025, an advisory body made up of 23 disabled people, was created during 2007. It meets regularly and is helping the Government to understand the needs and wishes of disabled people, crucial when developing policies and designing service delivery. It will help us to achieve the aim of equality for disabled people by 2025.
- I was also privileged to sign the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities on behalf of the United Kingdom on 30 March 2007. We will ratify the convention without undue delay.

I would like to thank the Department's customers, stakeholders and staff for their contribution this year in driving forward the equality agenda. You are helping us to make equality a reality.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne McGuire". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anne McGuire
Minister for Disabled People

Foreword by the Permanent Secretary



When we published our disability and gender equality schemes together with our race progress report in December 2006, we said that the Department's Executive Team had been considering our future business strategy. The outcome of these deliberations is a major change programme that involves putting our customers at the heart of everything we do. It will transform the way we deliver our services. But we will not be able to achieve our vision of 'Work, Welfare, Well-being, Well delivered' unless we also recognise – and respond to – the diversity of our customers.

I am particularly pleased therefore that we have made some important steps towards understanding what our customers want through our newly established Customer Insight Team; working on the premise that our starting point should be the customer not the transaction.

I was also delighted this year that we held a ground-breaking diversity event attended by 500 of our staff linked by video conference at five of our key locations across the country. Our six staff network groups chose the theme of 'spreading the word' for the event – and we did just that, sharing good ideas and examples of best practice across the Department. We also presented our first Departmental awards for 'excellence in diversity' at the event.

I am proud of the work we have done so far on diversity and equality. But we know that there is still much more to do. This report summarises our progress on those actions that are already being taken forward – but it doesn't stop there and we are constantly considering what more we can do to make equality of opportunity a reality for our customers and staff. I invite you to read this report and judge our progress towards making these plans a reality.


Leigh Lewis