

**Jobcentre Plus**

## Disability Equality Action Plan

Disability Equality Action Plan Description	Steps to Achieve	To be Achieved By (Date)	Intended Outcome	Progress
<p>1. Ensure services, specifically telephony through contact centres, do not disadvantage customers</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evaluate the impact of introducing telephony channels as the primary gateway to our services. Staff, customers and representatives from user groups will be involved in this work</li> <li>where our services are deficient we will undertake remedial action as soon as possible and publicise on our website what action we are taking</li> </ul>	<p>Autumn 2006 to March 2007</p> <p>June 2007 to October 2007</p>	<p>To ensure that customers who cannot access our services, or find it difficult to do so, have equal access and are not disadvantaged</p>	<p>We commissioned research by ECOTEC Research and Consulting to look into this for us. Their report, 'The use of Jobcentre Plus Telephony and Face to Face First Contact services by Customers with Specific Communications Barriers' was published this summer, and is available on the Department's internet site [<a href="http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2007-2008/rrep446.pdf">http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2007-2008/rrep446.pdf</a>]</p> <p>Completion of the research was delayed for five months, consequently our timetable to act on its recommendations is similarly delayed. The research showed a number of areas where we can improve our telephony service. These ranged from relatively simple actions (for example improving guidance to staff on using text phones) to more complex areas (for example changing our computer systems to allow them to record any communication issues customers may have)</p>

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<p>1. Ensure services, specifically telephony through contact centres, do not disadvantage customers (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>undertake a publicity campaign to publicise alternative methods of contacting Jobcentre Plus</li> </ul>	<p>(See above)</p>	<p>(See above)</p>	<p>Our director of contact centres leads on work to improve our customers' experience of using Jobcentre Plus services, which includes considering the ECOTEC report findings. An in-depth feasibility study of the recommendations has been undertaken and a comprehensive action plan has been drawn up to address the recommendations. As action is being taken, from December 2007 onward, we will publish details of this on our website</p> <p>Our customers had already told us that they didn't think that our textphone service was as efficient as it could be. We acted on this feedback by centralising all our contact centre textphones into two of our contact centres. This has enabled us to concentrate expertise on how to use textphones. In collaboration with the RNID, we gave staff in the two centres specific training on textphone protocols</p> <p>Training sessions on alternatives to using the telephone for contacting us were undertaken with all contact centre staff at the end of 2006</p>

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<p>1. Ensure services, specifically telephony through contact centres, do not disadvantage customers (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>monitor the success of this diversity challenge and analysis of customer feedback</li> </ul>	<p>Launch Spring 2007 and review 2008</p>	<p>(See above)</p>	<p>The diversity challenge was launched on 2 May 2007. (<a href="http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/jcp/stellent/groups/jcp/documents/webstecontent/dev_015071.pdf">http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/jcp/stellent/groups/jcp/documents/webstecontent/dev_015071.pdf</a>) Among other things the challenge requires all Jobcentre Plus outlets (from the Jobcentre local office to our contact centres) to examine the services that they provide to ensure that they are accessible, available and appropriate for all our customers. We will be reviewing the implementation of the diversity challenge in January 2008</p>
<p>2. Ensure our computer systems are sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of those customers who require written information in alternative formats</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>act on feedback from disabled customers and implement solutions, where appropriate</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Ensure computer systems meet the needs of our customers</p>	<p>We continue to support individual customer needs for reasonable adjustments. For example, we have recently worked with an individual customer with dyslexia to develop a solution specifically to meet their particular needs when using our Jobpoints</p>

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<p>2. Ensure our computer systems are sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of those customers who require written information in alternative formats <i>(continued)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>undertake a stocktake and assessment of flexibility for all our computer systems that interface with customers, for example Jobpoints that provide an interactive vacancy search facility which may not be fully accessible to customers with visual impairments</li> <li>seek to put in place a computer solution as quickly as practicable and where that is not possible develop alternative interim solutions</li> </ul>	<p>January 2007</p> <p>From January 2007</p>	<p>(See above)</p>	<p>The stocktake was undertaken in January and February 2007. From issues raised in the stocktake, we continue to identify and prioritise changes to make our computer systems more accessible. This is a long-term process as we change and update our computer systems to accommodate alternative formats</p> <p>Meanwhile, we have, for example, already put in place guidance to ensure that written communications that are automatically generated by our computer systems can be translated into alternative formats</p>

Disability Equality Action Plan Description	Steps to Achieve	To be Achieved By (Date)	Intended Outcome	Progress
<p>2. Ensure our computer systems are sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of those customers who require written information in alternative formats <i>(continued)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>disseminate guidance on the alternative solutions throughout the organisation and monitor progress through our diversity challenge</li> </ul>	Ongoing	(See above)	(See above)
<p>3. Work with and support employers in realising the benefits of employing a diverse workforce, including disabled people</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work with employers to examine and provide support on recruitment and retention policies</li> </ul>	Ongoing	More of our diverse customers are supported to move into the labour market	<p>We continue to offer all employers support to recruit a diverse workforce</p> <p>On 18 July 2007, the Work and Pensions Secretary announced a major extension of the ground breaking new initiative called Local Employment Partnerships. Aimed at helping our priority customers (which includes people with disabilities) into work, Local Employment Partnerships are based on a simple deal with employers. Local Employment Partnerships will include work trials, pre-employment training and mentoring. Our aim, over the next three years, is to help 250,000 people who are disadvantaged in the labour market into work. By 31 August 2007, 60 employers had agreed to take part</p>

Disability Equality Action Plan Description	Steps to Achieve	To be Achieved By (Date)	Intended Outcome	Progress
<p>3. Work with and support employers in realising the benefits of employing a diverse workforce, including disabled people (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>survey employers to establish recruitment needs, including diversity issues</li> </ul>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>(See above)</p>	<p>Encouragingly our most recent survey tells us that employers have increasing levels of awareness of the Disability Symbol (46%) and the Access to Work Programme (37%)</p> <p>79% of employers in the survey said that they would consider employing disabled people, leaving a gap of 21%. These figures, therefore, show that there is some way to go in the education of employers on the benefits of recruiting a diverse workforce.</p> <p>One of our key employer marketing initiatives over the next three years is to target 100,000 employers to encourage them to work with us on diversity issues. We will use the results of the 2008/2009 employer survey to measure the outcomes of our initiatives</p>

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<p>4. Work with employers to ensure that vacancies placed with us are not discriminatory</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work with employers to ensure that vacancies placed are not unlawfully discriminatory, providing guidance and advice as appropriate</li> <li>issue guidance to support staff working with employers to ensure delivery of a high level of customer service</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>As appropriate</p>	<p>To ensure that vacancies we advertise are not unlawfully discriminatory</p>	<p>If an employer attempts to place a vacancy with us that we believe may breach the Disability Discrimination Act, we work with the employer to resolve any issues. Where we cannot resolve issues, we do not accept the vacancy. Where a customer tells us that they believe an employer has discriminated against them, we will give the customer advice about their rights and give them details of organisations, such as their local Citizens Advice Bureau that may be able to support them</p> <p>To help staff to deliver a high level of service in this area, revised guidance, supported by a training event, was put in place during July 2007</p>

Disability Equality Action Plan Description	Steps to Achieve	To be Achieved By (Date)	Intended Outcome	Progress
<p>5. Improve our customers' experience of the accessibility, availability and appropriateness of our services</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>involve and consult with disabled customers and representative groups</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Next national involvement exercise December 2007</p>	<p>To help us work towards ensuring all our activities are accessible, appropriate and available for all our customers</p>	<p>The accessibility of our contact centres is covered in Action 1 of this plan</p> <p>We launched our diversity challenge on 2 May 2007. (<a href="http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/jcp/stellent/groups/jcp/documents/websitecontent/dev_015071.pdf">http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/jcp/stellent/groups/jcp/documents/websitecontent/dev_015071.pdf</a>) Among other things the Challenge requires all Jobcentre Plus outlets (from the Jobcentre local office to our contact centres) to examine the services that they provide to ensure that they are accessible, available and appropriate for all our customers. We will be reviewing the implementation of the diversity challenge in January 2008</p> <p>Jobcentre Plus' district managers have been asked to review with Citizens Advice Bureau in September 2007 their perception of our service</p> <p>We plan to run another national involvement exercise in December 2007, where we will specifically seek customers' views on using our services</p>

Disability Equality Action Plan Description	Steps to Achieve	To be Achieved By (Date)	Intended Outcome	Progress
<p>5. Improve our customers' experience of the accessibility, availability and appropriateness of our services <i>(continued)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>where appropriate take action as soon as possible to implement recommendations to enhance or improve our services, adhering to the Departmental accessibility standards for customers</li> <li>consider recommendations, following the results of our customer satisfaction survey, and report against them</li> </ul>	<p>Next customer satisfaction survey 2007</p>		<p>The Department has developed a set of mandatory minimum customer service standards, an approach to implementation is being developed</p> <p>A customer satisfaction survey was undertaken earlier this year and the results will be published in January 2008, when we will consider any recommendations made</p> <p>We also plan to undertake a separate survey on how satisfied customers feel about the first time they make contact with us. We intend to start this work in December 2007/ January 2008</p>

Disability Equality Action Plan Description	Steps to Achieve	To be Achieved By (Date)	Intended Outcome	Progress
<p>6. Promote a positive attitude towards disability equality</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure all new policies and processes are impact assessed</li> <li>monitor the effectiveness of changes made to our procurement activity</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>To work towards mainstreaming diversity into everyday activity</p>	<p>The impact assessment process, which covers how to maximise the chance to promote equality of opportunity, is embedded in our formal change processes, as well as being an integral part of our diversity challenge. A number of staff training events have been run on how to complete impact assessments. A central team exists to both give advice and to ensure consistency across the organisation. All directors will be reminded in September 2007 of the purpose of impact assessments, including the need to use them to maximise the chance to promote equality of opportunity</p> <p>Disability equality requirements – including those on reasonable adjustments – are included in the Departmental procurement accreditation system. These requirements are included in our invitation to tender documents, bidding instructions and are incorporated into the Department's terms and conditions of contract</p>

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6. Promote a positive attitude towards disability equality <i>(continued)</i>	(See above)	(See above)	(See above)	<p>The contract terms include a specific requirement for providers to report annually on the proportion of their employees (and where possible those of their subcontractors) who are disabled</p> <p>Service provider progress in implementing and complying with disability equality requirements is checked annually by the external organisation responsible for the Department's accreditation system. This is then reported back to the contract holders to take any necessary actions</p> <p>Responsibility for procurement of employment programme provision moved from Jobcentre Plus to the Department's commercial and estates directorate in April 2007. Future updates on procurement activity will be captured in Departmental equality schemes and updates</p>

Disability Equality Action Plan Description	Steps to Achieve	To be Achieved By (Date)	Intended Outcome	Progress
<p>7. Encourage participation and involvement of our customers at local and national level</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop and disseminate guidance and advice to staff on involvement and consultation including how to respond to feedback and publish results of activity</li> <li>ensure that this guidance is adopted and implemented by all parts of the business through the launch and review of our diversity challenge</li> </ul>	<p>Spring 2007</p> <p>Launch of diversity challenge Spring 2007 and start review January 2008</p>	<p>We have in place effective and robust mechanisms for involvement and consultation using customer feedback</p>	<p>Our diversity challenge includes advice and guidance to staff on involvement and consultation. The diversity challenge is designed to ensure that involvement and consultation takes place at a local level</p> <p>We launched our diversity challenge in May 2007 and will be reviewing its implementation in January 2008</p>

Disability Equality Action Plan Description	Steps to Achieve	To be Achieved By (Date)	Intended Outcome	Progress
7. Encourage participation and involvement of our customers at local and national level ( <i>continued</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reinforce the importance of involvement/consultation activity as part of the impact assessment process to ensure processes and policies do not adversely affect our customers or staff</li> </ul>	(See above)	(See above)	<p>We have undertaken a large amount of work to encourage participation and involvement of our customers. At a national level, Jobcentre Plus has set up a customer representative groups forum. This forum meets every two months and membership includes a number of disability organisations such as the Disability Alliance, Royal National Institute for the Deaf and RETHINK. The forum provides an opportunity for its members to influence our operational policies. For example, the forum identified that an involvement exercise planned by the project charged with putting into place a new benefit (Employment and Support Allowance) would not be effective. As a result of this, and with the help of the forum, the project re-planned the exercise</p> <p>We have external relations managers in all our regions and districts. Their role is to engage with regional and district groups that represent our customers, including our disabled customers. We have stipulated those groups that the external relations managers must become involved with. This includes a number of disability organisations, such as the Disability Alliance, MIND and the Royal National Institute of Blind People and RNID etc</p>

Disability Equality Action Plan Description	Steps to Achieve	To be Achieved By (Date)	Intended Outcome	Progress
<p>8. Ensure that our diversity and equality training is effectively delivered to all our staff</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>introduce mandatory training on disability equality responsibilities for Jobcentre Plus staff</li> <li>continue to evaluate and make improvements to all diversity and equality products</li> </ul>	<p>December 2006 to April 2007</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Staff are confident in meeting the needs of diverse customers</p>	<p>Mandatory training for all staff on changes to diversity and equality legislation was completed by April 2007</p> <p>Our diversity challenge requires all staff and their managers to review their diversity and equality learning needs. A review of Jobcentre Plus equality and diversity learning and development products started in July 2007. The purpose of the review is to ensure products are up to date and relevant</p>
<p>9. Ensure that reasonable adjustments for staff are undertaken quickly and effectively</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pilot, on behalf of the Department, activity that explores options for improving the provision of reasonable adjustments for staff</li> </ul>	<p>Pilots taking place which will report Spring 2007</p>	<p>Improvements to the reasonable adjustment process are in place</p>	<p>Unfortunately, there were too few requests by staff for reasonable adjustments during the period of the Jobcentre Plus pilot to enable any conclusions to be drawn. However, our Departmental colleagues were able to get enough information from pilots running in other agencies to be confident that the revised processes would have a positive impact. As a result the Department issued revised guidance based on these pilots</p>

Disability Equality Action Plan Description	Steps to Achieve	To be Achieved By (Date)	Intended Outcome	Progress
9. Ensure that reasonable adjustments for staff are undertaken quickly and effectively ( <i>continued</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>report on the numbers of staff identifying and receiving support through reasonable adjustments</li> </ul>	On a quarterly basis	(See above)	As a result of the revision, our quarterly report to Ministers show that there has been an increase in staff asking for a reasonable adjustment and a tangible reduction in the time it takes to put the adjustment in place. Year on year comparisons show that requests for adjustments to March 2007 had increased by 40%, with cleared cases also increasing by 121%
10. Continue to analyse staff survey results and put measures in place to achieve positive changes	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>analyse the Jobcentre Plus annual people survey by disability. The staff disability network group will lead and flag issues for progression to the appropriate policy team</li> </ul>	Annually	Issues for disabled staff are identified and considered	<p>The appropriate data was passed to all our staff diversity network group chairs in May 2007</p> <p>The groups carried out an initial analysis between July and October 2007</p> <p>A full meeting of all the group chairs will take place by January 2008 to consider findings and develop recommendations</p>

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<p>11. Ensure that our staff diversity network groups are empowered to make a real contribution to our business</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify good practice based on a stocktake of staff network groups at regional and district level; and make recommendations for change</li> <li>review the outcomes and recommendations</li> </ul>	<p>Quarterly</p> <p>July 2007</p>	<p>We have in place staff diversity network groups which can make a positive contribution to our business</p>	<p>The stocktake was completed by February 2007. Recommendations to achieve effective and empowered groups were agreed with the Chief Executive and all chairs of the groups in May 2007. A further review of the groups will take place in July 2008</p> <p>Already this approach has produced positive outcomes. Feedback from staff in our South East region's network groups has indicated that awareness of the Disability Discrimination Act amongst all staff has increased. This has led to improvements in the provision of facilities for disabled customers</p>
<p>12. Develop an informative and comprehensive diversity and equality internal website</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review content of pages and identify changes required and agree the content with the staff network groups</li> </ul>	<p>February 2007</p>	<p>Staff have easy access to the most up to date and comprehensive information on diversity and equality</p>	<p>Our internal website review was completed by the end of March 2007. As a result of the review, the site was updated between April and July 2007. This has resulted in a significant improvement in access to information on diversity for colleagues across the organisation. There is now a single site for information and guidance in respect of diversity and customer service issues</p> <p>Staff feedback on the improved accessibility of information has already been very positive</p>

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13. Jobcentre Plus will review its assessment of functions and policies	We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• review our original assessment.</li> </ul>	December 2009	We will identify whether our action plan requires amendment	N/A

## Gender Equality Action Plan

Gender Equality Action Plan Description	Actions Required	Timescales	Intended Outcome	Progress
<p>1. Work with and support employers in realising the benefits of employing a diverse workforce</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work with employers to examine and provide support on recruitment and retention policies</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>More of our diverse customers are supported to move into the labour market</p>	<p>We continue to offer all employers support, where needed, to recruit a diverse workforce</p> <p>On 18 July the Work and Pensions Secretary announced a major extension of the ground breaking new initiative called Local Employment Partnerships. Aimed at helping our priority customers (which includes lone parents) into work, Local Employment Partnerships are based on a simple deal with employers. Local Employment Partnerships will include work trials, pre-employment training and mentoring. Our aim, over the next three years, is to help 250,000 people who are disadvantaged in the labour market into work. By 31 August 2007, 60 employers had agreed to take part</p>

Gender Equality Action Plan Description	Actions Required	Timescales	Intended Outcome	Progress
1. Work with and support employers in realising the benefits of employing a diverse workforce ( <i>continued</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>survey employers to establish recruitment needs, including diversity issues</li> </ul>	Annually	(See above)	9 out of 10 employers said that they would employ lone parents. One of our key employer marketing initiatives over the next three years is to target 100,000 employers to encourage them to work with us on diversity issues. We will use the results of our annual employer survey to measure the outcomes of our initiatives
2. Work with employers to ensure that vacancies placed with us are not discriminatory	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work with employers to ensure that vacancies placed are not unlawfully discriminatory, providing guidance and advice as appropriate</li> <li>issue guidance to support staff working with employers to ensure delivery of a high level of customer service</li> </ul>	Ongoing  As appropriate	To ensure that vacancies we advertise are not unlawfully discriminatory	<p>If an employer attempts to place a vacancy with us that we believe may breach the Sex Discrimination Act, we work with the employer to resolve any issues. Where we cannot resolve an issue, we do not accept the vacancy. Where a customer tells us that they believe that an employer has discriminated against them, we will give the customer advice about their rights and give them details of organisations, such as the their local Citizens Advice Bureau that may be able to help and support them</p> <p>To help staff to deliver a high level of service in this area, revised guidance, supported by a training event, was put in place during July 2007</p>

Gender Equality Action Plan Description	Actions Required	Timescales	Intended Outcome	Progress
<p>3. Improve our customers' experience of the accessibility, availability and appropriateness of our services</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>involve and consult with all customers and representative groups</li> <li>where appropriate take action as soon as possible to implement recommendations to enhance or improve our services, adhering to the Departmental accessibility standards</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Next national involvement exercise December 2007</p>	<p>To help us work towards ensuring all our activities are accessible, appropriate and available for all our customers</p>	<p>The diversity challenge was launched on 2 May 2007. (<a href="http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/jcp/stellent/groups/jcp/documents/websitecontent/dev_015071.pdf">http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/jcp/stellent/groups/jcp/documents/websitecontent/dev_015071.pdf</a>) Among other things the challenge requires all Jobcentre Plus outlets (from the Jobcentre Plus local office to our contact centres) to examine the services that they provide to ensure that they are accessible, available and appropriate for all our customers. We will be reviewing the implementation of the diversity challenge in January 2008</p> <p>We plan to run another national involvement exercise in December 2007 where we will specifically seek views on customers' experience of using our services</p> <p>The Department has developed a set of mandatory minimum customer service standards, an approach to implementation is being developed</p>

Gender Equality Action Plan Description	Actions Required	Timescales	Intended Outcome	Progress
<p>3. Improve our customers' experience of the accessibility, availability and appropriateness of our services <i>(continued)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consider recommendations following the results of our customer satisfaction survey, and report against them</li> </ul>	<p>Next customer satisfaction survey 2007</p>	<p>(See above)</p>	<p>A customer satisfaction survey was undertaken earlier this year and the results will be published by January 2008, at which point we will consider any recommendations</p> <p>We also plan to undertake a separate survey on how satisfied customers feel about the first time they make contact with us. We intend to start this work in December 2007/ January 2008</p>
<p>4. Promote and mainstream gender equality into all areas of Welfare Reform policy development and implementation</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work with colleagues throughout the Department to develop and implement new policies to ensure they meet the requirements of the duty, for example the Employment Support Allowance</li> </ul>	<p>Initial meeting October 2006, with implementation by 2008</p>	<p>To work towards mainstreaming diversity into everyday activity</p>	<p>Work with Departmental colleagues has been ongoing on new policies. For example our Employment and Support Allowance project has a dedicated diversity sub-group which analyses all aspects of operational design to ensure that they maximise any opportunity to promote diversity and eliminate discrimination. Work has involved representatives of the sub-group considering the staff job roles in delivering Employment and Support Allowance to ensure that they were gender neutral</p>

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<p>5. Promote a positive attitude towards gender equality</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that all new policies and processes are impact assessed</li> <li>monitor the effectiveness of changes made to our procurement activity</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>To work towards mainstreaming diversity into everyday activity</p>	<p>The impact assessment process, which covers how to maximise chances to promote equality of opportunity, is embedded in our formal change processes, as well as being an integral part of our diversity challenge. A number of staff training events have been run on how to complete impact assessments. A central team exists to both give advice and to ensure consistency across the organisation. Additionally, directors will be reminded in September 2007 of the purpose of impact assessments, including the need to consider how to maximise the chance to promote equality of opportunity</p> <p>Equality requirements are included in our procurement accreditation system. These requirements are included in our invitation to tender documents, bidding instructions and incorporated into our terms and conditions of contract</p> <p>Provider progress in implementing and complying with gender equality requirements is checked annually by the external organisation responsible for our accreditation system. This is then reported back to contract holders to take any necessary action</p> <p>Responsibility for procurement moved to the Department from April 2007. Future updates on procurement activity will be captured in Departmental equality schemes and updates</p>

Gender Equality Action Plan Description	Actions Required	Timescales	Intended Outcome	Progress
<p>6. Encourage participation and involvement of our customers at local as well as at a national level</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop and disseminate guidance and advice to staff on involvement and consultation, including how to respond to feedback and publish results of activity</li> <li>ensure that these standards are adopted and implemented by all parts of the business through the launch and review of our diversity challenge and reinforce importance of consultation activity as part of the impact assessment process to ensure processes and policies do not adversely affect our customers or staff</li> </ul>	<p>Spring 2007</p> <p>Launch of diversity challenge Spring 2007 and start review January 2008</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>We have in place effective and robust mechanisms for involvement and consultation using customers' feedback</p>	<p>Our diversity challenge includes advice and guidance to staff on involvement and consultation. The diversity challenge is designed to ensure that involvement and consultation takes place at a local level.</p> <p>Our diversity challenge was launched in May 2007. We will be reviewing it's implementation in January 2008.</p>

Gender Equality Action Plan Description	Actions Required	Timescales	Intended Outcome	Progress
<p>6. Encourage participation and involvement of our customers at local as well as at a national level <i>(continued)</i></p>	<p>(See above)</p>	<p>(See above)</p>	<p>(See above)</p>	<p>We have undertaken a large amount of work to encourage participation and involvement of our customers. At a national level, Jobcentre Plus has set up a customer representative groups forum. This forum meets every two months and membership includes, for example, Child Poverty Action Group and Gingerbread. The forum provides an opportunity for its members to influence our operational policies. For example, the forum identified that an involvement exercise planned by the project charged with putting into place a new benefit (Employment Support Allowance) would not be effective. As a result of this, and with the help of the forum, the project re-planned the exercise</p> <p>We have external relations managers in all our regions and districts. Their sole role is to engage with regional and district groups that represent our customers. We have stipulated those groups that the external relations managers must become involved with, such as Child Poverty Action Group and One Parent Families</p>

Gender Equality Action Plan Description	Actions Required	Timescales	Intended Outcome	Progress
7. Ensure that our diversity and equality training is effectively delivered to all our staff	<p>We will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>introduce mandatory training on gender equality responsibilities</li> <li>continue to evaluate and make improvements to all diversity and equality products</li> </ul>	<p>December 2006 to April 2007</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Staff are confident in meeting the needs of diverse customers</p>	<p>Mandatory training for all staff on changes to diversity and equality legislation was completed by April 2007.</p> <p>Our diversity challenge requires all staff and their managers to review their diversity and equality learning needs.</p> <p>A review of our equality and diversity learning products started in July 2007. The purpose of the review is to ensure that all the products are up to date and relevant.</p>
8. Continue to analyse staff survey results and put in place measures to achieve positive changes	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>analyse the Jobcentre Plus annual people survey by gender. The staff gender network group will lead and flag issues for progression to the appropriate policy team</li> </ul>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>Issues for male and female staff are identified and addressed</p>	<p>The appropriate data was passed to all our staff diversity network group chairs in May 2007.</p> <p>The groups carried out an initial analysis between July and October 2007.</p> <p>A full meeting of all the group chairs will take place by January 2008 to consider findings and develop recommendations.</p>

Gender Equality Action Plan Description	Actions Required	Timescales	Intended Outcome	Progress
<p>9. Ensure that our staff diversity network groups are empowered to make a real contribution to our business</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify good practice based on a stocktake of staff network groups at regional and district level. Make recommendations for change</li> </ul>	<p>July 2007</p>	<p>We have in place staff diversity network groups that can make a positive contribution to the business</p>	<p>The stocktake was completed by February 2007. Recommendations to achieve effective and empowered groups were agreed with the Chief Executive and all chairs of the groups in May 2007. A further review of the groups will take place in July 2008</p>
<p>10. Develop an informative and comprehensive diversity and equality intranet site</p>	<p>We will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• review content of pages and identify changes required and agree the content with the staff network groups</li> </ul>	<p>February 2007</p>	<p>Staff have easy access to the most up to date and comprehensive information on diversity and equality</p>	<p>Our intranet site review was completed by the end of March 2007. As a result of the review, the site was updated between April and July 2007. This has resulted in a significant improvement in access to information on diversity for colleagues across the organisation. There is now a single site for information and guidance in respect of diversity and customer service issues</p> <p>Staff feedback on the improved accessibility of information has already been very positive</p>
<p>11. Jobcentre Plus will review its assessment of functions and policies</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• review our original assessment</li> </ul>	<p>December 2009</p>	<p>We will identify whether our action plan requires amendments</p>	<p>N/A</p>

# Race Equality Action Plan

Race Equality Scheme Description	Steps to Achieve	To be Achieved By (Date)	Progress
<p>1. Fair Cities is a pilot currently being developed in 3 areas by the National Employment Panel. The pilot aims to connect people from disadvantaged ethnic minority communities with employer demand for job-ready candidates and skills, increasing employment opportunities</p>	<p>We aim to increase the number of disadvantaged ethnic minority customers who gain steady work and new careers</p> <p>We aim to meet employer demand for job-ready candidates</p> <p>We will encourage fair and effective employer recruitment and promotion practices</p> <p>We aim to increase the responsiveness of the employment and skills system to business and ethnic minority needs</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>'Fair Cities' has been operational since January 2006. From April 2006 – March 2007 the National Employment Panel with over 130 employers in sectors as diverse as social care, banking and logistics</p> <p>As of June 2007 we had helped over 600 people into work, three quarters of who were from ethnic minority communities. The average starting salary in Birmingham, Bradford and Brent was around £7.60, £6.10 and £7.30 per hour respectively – well above the national minimum wage</p> <p>Jobcentre Plus is working with major employers to market themselves amongst the ethnic minority communities, helping people to think about working for big name employers they would otherwise have thought out of reach. 'Fair Cities' is making its own contribution to increasing social mobility through expanding people's choices and changing the perception of large employers amongst disadvantaged communities</p>

Race Equality Scheme Description	Steps to Achieve	To be Achieved By (Date)	Progress
<p>2. Support the 272 Local Authority wards that have 3 times the national average ethnic minority population and 1.5 times the national unemployment rate</p>	<p>We will take in to consideration recommendations made by the ethnic minority business focus group</p> <p>We will promote best practice in delivering services to ethnic minority customers</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The ethnic minority business focus group ceased to function in 2006. Our partnership matters board and our job outcome target key performance group now progress on ethnic minority performance issues</p> <p>We continue to progress the wider ethnic minority performance issues as well as those in the 272 wards by providing districts with: in depth performance data analysis; advice on deployment of resources to tackle ethnic minority specific barriers to work; and advice on partnership working with ethnic minority organisations</p> <p>The evaluation of both ethnic minority outreach and ethnic minority flexible fund activity has provided Jobcentre Plus with a great deal of information and examples of good practice. This has been used to support the development of the disadvantaged areas fund and cities strategy in those areas where disadvantaged areas fund wards and funding form part of cities strategy areas</p>

Race Equality Scheme Description	Steps to Achieve	To be Achieved By (Date)	Progress
<p>3. Jobcentre Plus will work with employers accessing our services to place vacancies to ensure they are not discriminatory</p>	<p>We will work with employers to ensure that vacancies placed are not unlawfully discriminatory, providing guidance and advice as appropriate</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>If an employer attempts to place a vacancy with us that we believe may breach the Race Discrimination Act, we will work with the employer to resolve the issue. Where a customer tells us that they believe that an employer has discriminated against them, we give the customer advice about their rights and give them details of organisations, such as their local Citizens Advice Bureau that may be able to help and support them</p> <p>To help staff to deliver a high level of service in this area, revised guidance, supported by a training event was put in place during July 2007</p>
<p>4. Jobcentre Plus will support and deliver services to Refugees</p>	<p>Jobcentre Plus will develop and deliver services to support the Department's refugee employment strategy</p> <p>We will work with the Home Office to respond to the Home Office refugee integration strategy and other Home Office policies that may impact on refugee employment and access to Jobcentre Plus services</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>We maintain an internal web page to support Jobcentre Plus people in all aspects of delivering services to refugees</p> <p>We continue to work closely with the Home Office. For example we worked with them and the Border and Immigration Agency to respond to the Home Office restructuring, new refugee integration model and other Home Office/Border and Immigration Agency policies</p>

Race Equality Scheme Description	Steps to Achieve	To be Achieved By (Date)	Progress
<p>5. Jobcentre Plus will evaluate services delivered to ethnic minority customers via results obtained through customers' surveys and feedback</p>	<p>Jobcentre Plus will consult with customers and representative groups from ethnic minorities</p> <p>Where appropriate, action will be taken to implement recommendations to enhance or improve our services</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Our diversity challenge (<a href="http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/jcp/stellent/groups/jcp/documents/webcontent/dev_015071.pdf">http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/jcp/stellent/groups/jcp/documents/webcontent/dev_015071.pdf</a>), launched on 2 May 2007, includes advice and guidance to staff on involvement and consultation. The diversity challenge is designed to ensure that involvement and consultation takes place at a local level. We have also undertaken work to encourage participation and involvement of our customers. At a national level, Jobcentre Plus has set up a customer representative groups forum. This group meets every two months and membership includes The Refugee Council. The forum provides an opportunity for its members to influence our operational policies. For example, the forum identified that an involvement exercise planned by the project charged with putting into place a new benefit (Employment Support Allowance) would not be effective. As a result of this, and with the help of the forum, the project re-planned the exercise. We have external relations managers in all our regions and districts. Their sole role is to engage with regional and district groups that represent our customers, including our ethnic minority customers</p>

Race Equality Scheme Description	Steps to Achieve	To be Achieved By (Date)	Progress
5. Jobcentre Plus will evaluate services delivered to ethnic minority customers via results obtained through customers' surveys and feedback ( <i>continued</i> )	Following the results of the customer satisfaction survey we will consider recommendations and report against them	(See above)	The results of our customer satisfaction survey will be available in January 2008 at which point we will consider any recommendations made
6. Jobcentre Plus will race impact assess all proposed policies, functions and changes	We will ensure race impact assessments are undertaken when changes are identified to service delivery and our people.	Ongoing	The impact assessment process is embedded in our formal change processes, as well as being an integral part of our diversity challenge. A number of staff training events have been run on how to complete impact assessments. A central team exists to both give advice and to ensure consistency across the organisation. Additionally, directors will be reminded in September 2007 of the purpose of completing impact assessments, including the need to consider chances to increase equality of opportunity
	We will consult with customers, representative groups and staff	Ongoing	Details of how we have involved and consulted customers are given at action point 5 above

Race Equality Scheme Description	Steps to Achieve	To be Achieved By (Date)	Progress
<p>7. Jobcentre Plus will mainstream race equality into all areas of service delivery in frontline services, building on the race equality scheme challenge</p> <p><b>Please note, the diversity challenge has since replaced the race equality scheme challenge</b></p>	<p>Staff will consult and work with customers and representative groups from ethnic minority communities to improve access to services</p> <p>Jobcentre Plus will monitor progress in meeting the responsibilities under the duties of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000</p> <p>All proposed changes will be impact assessed against race equality</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>From July 2005</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Our diversity challenge – based on the principals of the race equality scheme challenge, but covering all diversity areas – was launched in 2 May 2007. The challenge will help Jobcentre Plus to baseline where we are against the requirements of diversity legislation and to make improvements to the delivery of our services to our priority customer groups. It further raises the profile of race impact assessments and will ensure that staff and managers review their diversity learning and development needs. Further details of the work we have been doing to consult are given at action point 5 above</p> <p>In January 2008 we will review the impact that the diversity challenge has had and consider what actions to take on any areas identified for development</p> <p>For information on progress to impact assess all changes, see the update at action point 6</p>



Race Equality Scheme Description	Steps to Achieve	To be Achieved By (Date)	Progress
<p>9. Jobcentre Plus will mainstream race equality into all areas of our national tier business via a race equality scheme challenge framework.</p>	<p>We will develop a new framework to raise staff awareness at the national tier of Jobcentre Plus duty with regard to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 that will allow us to baseline all areas of business</p>	<p>October 2006</p>	<p>This action has been superseded by the launch across the whole of Jobcentre Plus of the diversity challenge. The diversity challenge includes a new framework for national tier staff to raise awareness, identify training needs and complete diversity impact assessments. More details on the challenge can be found at action point 5</p>
<p>10. To ensure that our procurement policies and functions do not discriminate on grounds of race we will review and implement changes where appropriate</p>	<p>We will ensure race equality is part of our provider pre-qualification accreditation system</p> <p>We will change our invitation to tender to include a statement on race equality</p> <p>We will change provider terms and conditions to incorporate race equality</p> <p>We will maintain equality via a Jobcentre Plus quality monitoring strategy</p>	<p>October 2005</p> <p>July 2005</p> <p>September 2005</p> <p>July 2005</p>	<p>All actions were met within the deadline</p> <p>Equality requirements are included in our procurement accreditation system. These requirements are included in our invitation to tender documents, bidding instructions and incorporated into our terms and conditions of contract</p> <p>Provider progress in implementing and complying with race equality requirements is checked annually by the external organisation responsible for our accreditation system. This is then reported back to contract holders to take any necessary action. Responsibility for procurement moved to the Department from April 2007. Future updates on procurement activity will be captured in the Departmental equality scheme updates</p>

Race Equality Scheme Description	Steps to Achieve	To be Achieved By (Date)	Progress
<p>11. Jobcentre Plus will work in partnership with external stakeholders to meet the needs of ethnic minority communities</p>	<p>Supporting guidance will be introduced to ensure a consistent approach is adopted to encourage partnership working with ethnic minority representatives, groups and communities</p> <p>We will forge joint agreements with other Government Departments to agree lead responsibilities</p> <p>We will work proactively with other organisations to deliver services to ethnic minority customers; ensuring staff have access to and receive appropriate training and support</p>	<p>February 2006</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Guidance, supported by training events, was put in place in December 2006</p> <p>We work with other government departments to provide timely, consistent and co-ordinated information for customers and external organisations. For example, we work closely with the Home Office on their refugee strategy</p> <p>Information on the work we have done to consult customers and groups representing them can be found at action point 5 above</p>

Race Equality Scheme Description	Steps to Achieve	To be Achieved By (Date)	Progress
<p>12. Jobcentre Plus will make a positive contribution to the achievement of Departmental 2005 to 2008 targets and increase the representation rates of ethnic minority staff at higher grades</p>	<p>Ensure use of Cabinet Office, Departmental and Jobcentre Plus development and positive action schemes</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>This year, Jobcentre Plus launched the 'Emerging Talent Scheme'. Jobcentre Plus is also in negotiation with the Department about specific early talent provision for staff from ethnic minorities</p>
<p>13. Jobcentre Plus will contribute to the review of Departmental staff policies and procedures to ensure fairness with respect and promotion of race equality</p>	<p>Input to the development of a new Departmental computer system to monitor to produce better staffing and monitoring statistics</p> <p>Produce action plans for Jobcentre Plus as appropriate dependant on the outcomes of the review process</p> <p>Review relevant Jobcentre Plus monitoring statistics</p>	<p>2005 to 2006</p> <p>As required</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Action completed. The system is now in place and we consider that the data is robust</p> <p>No action plan was required as the review did not show any areas where action was needed by Jobcentre Plus</p> <p>The data is reviewed regularly. No issues have so far been identified</p>

Race Equality Scheme Description	Steps to Achieve	To be Achieved By (Date)	Progress
14. Jobcentre Plus will monitor the views of ethnic minority staff through the Department's annual people survey	<p>The Jobcentre Plus annual people survey will be segmented by race.</p> <p>The staff race network group will lead and flag issues for progression to the appropriate policy team.</p>	Annually	<p>The appropriate data was passed to our staff diversity race network group chair in May 2007</p> <p>The group carried out an initial analysis between July and October 2007</p> <p>A full meeting of all the group chairs will take place by January 2008 to consider findings and develop recommendations</p>
15. Jobcentre Plus will support the development of staff from ethnic minority groups to prepare for work at higher grades	We will ensure that Cabinet Office, Departmental and Jobcentre Plus positive action schemes and other development schemes are promoted in Jobcentre Plus	Ongoing	As well as launching the 'Emerging Talent Scheme', see action 12 above, our London region continued its innovative staff development programme. The programme works on the principals of mentoring, with every applicant matched with an experienced manager. Over 300 staff are now taking part in London. Other regions, for example the West Midlands, are now also implementing this staff development programme
16. Jobcentre Plus will review our functions and policies		2009	We reviewed our functions and policies in December 2006. A further review is due in 2009