

Delivering Public Services to a Diverse Society

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Delivering Public Services to a Diverse Society

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PREFACE



1 In its 2004 Commission for Equality and Human Rights White Paper, the Government expressed its view that fairness for all is the basis for a healthy democracy, for economic prosperity, and for the effective delivery of public services – and that equality and human rights therefore matter to all of us, not just those who experience discrimination and unfair treatment.¹

2 The Government framework for promoting diversity and equality includes recent and forthcoming legislation; independent Commissions to promote and enforce diversity and equality; and new cross-government roles and structures. In addition to progressing towards a more diverse workforce in the Civil Service, more recently there has also been an increased emphasis on diversity in service delivery. Each individual government body is ultimately responsible for delivering services that address the diverse needs of their customers.

3 This is the first time we have undertaken a cross-cutting examination of this topic. We focused on examining the progress being made by central government bodies towards delivering services to meet the needs of diverse customers in the six recognised areas of diversity: disability; gender; race; religion and belief; age; and sexual orientation. Our examination included a major survey of 131 bodies as well as a more detailed review of selected government initiatives and international practices.

4 We found that many government bodies are making progress towards addressing the challenges of providing services to diverse customers, but that there is scope for significant improvements by focusing more on:

- **Working with customers, their representative organisations, and expert groups, to understand and address diverse needs:** by engaging at an early stage in service design with a wide range of stakeholders and sustaining this through implementation and delivery.
- **Leadership that empowers frontline staff to take the initiative in identifying and responding to diverse needs:** by recognising that frontline staff, the outward face of public services, must have sufficient freedom and support in meeting the needs of diverse customers. This requires managers to articulate their messages on diversity clearly, support these with appropriate actions, and actively monitor and intervene where necessary.
- **Integrating diversity into all areas of public service delivery:** by developing the appropriate organisational structures, recruiting and developing a workforce with the experience and skills to meet diverse needs, and targeting appropriate levels of resources to deliver diverse services.
- **Evaluating how well services are meeting diverse needs, and drawing on lessons from government bodies' own initiatives and those of others:** by using multiple evaluation methods that involve customers, actively feeding back the lessons into service design, and seeking out and learning from the experiences of others, both positive and negative, in the UK and abroad.

¹ Fairness For All: A New Commission for Equality and Human Rights (Cm 6185, 2004), DTI and DCA, May 2004, 1.2.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



A need for addressing diversity in delivering public services

1 In its 2004 Commission for Equality and Human Rights White Paper, the Government expressed its view that fairness for all is the basis for a healthy democracy, for economic prosperity, and for the effective delivery of public services – and that equality and human rights therefore matter to all of us, not just those who experience discrimination and unfair treatment.

2 Public bodies cannot meet the full range of needs which exist for their services unless they recognise, value, and address the diversity of the society which they serve. As society becomes increasingly diverse (**Figure 1**), this becomes only a more important requirement for their effectiveness.

1 Some key facts on the diversity of the UK population

- One in five adults and one in 20 children are disabled in some way.
- The proportion of women in the workforce has increased: in 1984, 58 per cent of women were in employment compared with 77 per cent for men, whereas in 2003 the employment rate was 70 per cent for women and 79 per cent for men.
- Around one in twelve people is from minority ethnic backgrounds; and the recent enlargement of the European Union is estimated to bring a net increase in migrants.
- Of the 77 per cent of the population of Great Britain who report having a religion, more than one in twenty belong to a religion other than Christianity.
- With current trends in population aging set to continue, it is projected that by 2041, one in four people will be aged 65 or over.
- It is estimated that around one in fifteen people is homosexual or bisexual.

3 There are a number of reasons for departments to tailor public services to address diverse needs. This can be seen as important, not simply as a moral end in itself, nor simply as a requirement of relevant legislative changes,² but also:

- To improve both the effectiveness and the efficiency of public services, by ensuring that the resources invested in public services actually benefit all those they are aimed at, or who need them. Additionally, making services diversity-sensitive can offer benefits to the general population; for instance, improving information access for disabled people generally benefits all service users.
- To address a lack of public confidence in the fairness of public institutions, and wider concerns for social cohesion which may go along with this.
- To foster economic growth, by developing the skills and potential of the whole workforce.

4 Based on existing and current legislation, and to help examine and understand the different needs associated with different people, the Government recognises six key strands of diversity in the population: (1) disability; (2) gender; (3) race; (4) religion and belief; (5) age; and (6) sexual orientation.

5 Individual government bodies are pursuing a range of initiatives to tailor their delivery of services in ways that meet the differing needs found within these diversity strands. These initiatives are underpinned by:

- **Legislation:** Major anti-discrimination legislation relating to certain diversity strands has been in place for over twenty-five years. More recent developments include: the Disability Discrimination Act 1995; the European Union Framework Directive issued under Article 13 of the Treaty of Amsterdam; and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, which introduced a general duty on all public bodies to promote racial equality, and specific duties in respect of service delivery and employment. The Government has also announced its intention that there should be a similar statutory duty to promote gender equality and equality for disabled people.

² For instance, implementation in the UK of European Council Directive 2000/78/EC on disability (implementation required by 2004, and transposition now complete) and age (implementation required by 2006). Other legislative changes include the Equal Treatment (Amendment) Directive, and the draft Directive on equal treatment of men and women in access to and supply of goods and services.

- **Campaigning, Research and Enforcement:** To support and go beyond the legislative structures, the Government sponsors three independent but publicly accountable Commissions, each established by legislation: the Commission for Racial Equality, the Disability Rights Commission, and the Equal Opportunities Commission. Among their tasks are: to tackle discrimination, to promote equal opportunities, to advise the Government on the law, and to keep the relevant legislation under review.
- **Co-ordination:** The Government has also introduced co-ordination procedures and processes to guide equality and diversity objectives, including new committees and high profile diversity posts at senior levels, and formal co-ordination roles across a range of departments that have lead responsibilities on particular strands of diversity.

6 Diversity and equality in employment issues are championed across the Civil Service by Martin Narey, the Chair of the Diversity Champion’s Network, with support from the Cabinet Office’s Leadership and Diversity Strategy Team. The Cabinet Office also has overall responsibility for ensuring that the Civil Service as a whole meets the Government’s commitment to achieving greater workforce representation. Ultimately, individual government bodies are responsible for meeting statutory duties and delivering services that address the needs of diverse customers.

7 The initial emphasis on diversity within government bodies was on addressing workforce representation. This has not declined in importance as a priority – indeed, new corporate diversity targets were announced for the Senior Civil Service as part of the outcome of the 2004 Spending Review (Figure 2), as well as a longer term aspiration for the Civil Service to become representative of the population. But in addition there is now an increasing emphasis on addressing the diversity and equality issues of service delivery. This is reflected by those Public Service Agreement targets that clearly focus on improvements in services relating to one or more strands of diversity, and by the resources committed for these ends.

8 The UK Government’s approach to promoting diversity and equality is in step with the approaches being adopted in other countries, such as Sweden, Canada, and Australia. For example, the UK embraces ministerial co-ordination, as in Sweden; it has announced plans to create a single Commission for Equality and Human

2 Cabinet Office’s Public Service Agreement targets for diversity within the Senior Civil Service				
	Target (%)		(%) at	Total
	2008	2005	1 April 2004	
Per cent to be women	37.0	35.0	27.8	1,081
Per cent of top management posts filled by women	30.0	25.0	24.4	208
Per cent to be from ethnic minority backgrounds	4.0	3.2	3.3	120
Per cent to be disabled	3.2	3.0	2.3	100

Rights, as exists in Canada; and, to some extent, it is developing broad strategies and principles of action in the interests of diverse communities, as in Australia. However, there is room for significant improvement and adoption of other initiatives which have shown their value elsewhere. For example, in the Netherlands cross-departmental networks and committees ensure co-operation and joined-up effort in delivering services to diverse communities.

Our Examination

9 With the increased emphasis on meeting the needs of diverse customers (as shown, for instance, in the Government’s statements in the 2004 Commission for Equality and Human Rights White Paper), it is important to have assurance that government bodies are making progress in achieving this. This report is the first examination of this topic by the National Audit Office and is forward-looking in providing a status report on diversity practice, highlighting existing good practices and lessons, and making recommendations for further improvement.

10 While recognising that the topic of diversity does not lend itself to precise judgements about value for money in a conventional sense, our examination aimed to identify the challenges and opportunities faced by departments, as well as existing innovative thinking and successful solutions with potential for wider application. We obtained evidence from a range of sources, most importantly through a major survey of 131 government bodies which deliver public services to diverse communities. We also carried out detailed case study examinations of specific diversity initiatives planned

and carried out by the Crown Prosecution Service, the Inland Revenue, the Learning and Skills Council, and the National Gallery; reviews of how the Governments of Australia, Canada, the Netherlands and Sweden are addressing the challenges of delivering services to diverse communities; and interviews with key individuals responsible for diversity in government departments and agencies, and stakeholder groups, including service recipients.

11 The main body of this report sets out the importance of addressing diversity, and the progress made by government bodies in addressing the needs of diverse customers. It also identifies the characteristics shared by government bodies that are making progress in delivering services to diverse communities. Here, we summarise the key features of organisations delivering diverse services; the steps taken by government bodies to address the needs of diverse customers; and we make recommendations based on high level principles of good practice.

Diverse services have a number of key features

12 Diversity in service delivery requires government bodies to:

- Identify and understand the diverse make-up and differing needs of the entire customer base, through data gathering and stakeholder consultations.
- Provide a clear vision and drive for mainstreaming diversity by setting targets that clearly underpin the service delivery needs of a diverse customer base, and by empowering all staff to take initiatives to move towards these targets.
- Integrate diversity into all aspects of the business, including the organisational structure, workforce representation, and resource allocation.
- Evaluate progress continuously through a number of methods, including public consultations where lessons are fed back into the design and delivery of public services.
- Share lessons and experiences within and across organisations, to gain an understanding of tools and processes that already exist and work well, and to avoid mistakes that others have already learnt from.

Findings

How well government bodies are currently meeting the needs of diverse customers

13 **On how well government bodies are meeting the needs of the diversity strands.** We asked 131 government bodies how well they assessed their own performance in meeting the needs of diverse customers (**Figure 3**). In themselves these responses, being self-assessments, do not give a definitive measure of performance for each surveyed body. However, taken together, they show repeated patterns which indicate areas of strength and weakness for government bodies as a whole:

- **In general, there is a positive relationship between rankings of performance in: workforce representation, service delivery, and knowledge of the customer population.** In four of the six strands, where one strand fared better than the next for workforce representation, it did the same for service delivery and knowledge of the customer population. Government bodies were most confident of their performance in the strands of gender and age; and least confident – or least able to say – in the strands of religion and belief and sexual orientation.
- **For almost all diversity strands, there are pronounced discrepancies between perceptions of workforce representation at “other grades” and those at “senior grades”.** For instance, on gender representation, the percentage of bodies which believed they were performing “very well” at “other grades” (63 per cent) is reduced by half when it comes to “senior grades” (32 per cent). These results are all the more marked considering they derive from the self-assessments of departments themselves. They reflect the reality of Civil Service staffing figures, which show, for instance, that 52 per cent of staff at all grades are women, but that this drops to 28 per cent in the Senior Civil Service.

- **Disability is one of only two strands for which government bodies feel they are doing no better in workforce representation at “other grades” than at “senior grades”.** (The other strand is sexual orientation; the lack of improvement in figures at “senior grades” here is likely to be strongly affected by a general lack of knowledge of staff members’ sexuality.) The suggestion that there are particular challenges in workforce representation for disabled people is backed up by the Civil Service staffing figures, which show a shortfall in the ratio between Civil Service staff and the wider population for disability, not just at senior grades, but at all grades. This is in contrast to the position for women or minority ethnic staff, for instance; here there is a shortfall only at senior grades, with the Civil Service as a whole being broadly representative of the economically active population.
- **Government bodies seem less confident about meeting the needs of a racially diverse society through their service delivery.** Despite reporting higher performance on the race strand than the disability strand in knowledge of the customer base, and much higher performance in workforce representation at “other grades”, departments believed they were doing less well in meeting the needs of the race strand in service delivery. It is possible that this reflects the use by government bodies of service delivery targets in their Race Equality Schemes: conceivably, this might play a role in focusing departments’ attention, both on the diverse needs they should be meeting, and on the areas where they still have progress to make. At the same time, it is possible that it also reflects awareness of a genuine underperformance in service delivery relating to race.
- **Government bodies possess much less information for religion and belief and sexual orientation.** This translates into a lack of knowledge as to how well departments are meeting the needs of diverse customers through service delivery: 59 per cent of surveyed bodies did not know or did not say how well they were meeting the needs under the religion and belief strand, and 71 per cent did not know or did not say for sexual orientation. While there are obvious sensitivities relating to capturing information about these strands, departments may be failing to meet certain important needs if they have wide gaps in their knowledge. Where bodies find it difficult to collect information on these strands, they should seek to use anonymised or third party methods of capturing this information, and do the same for encouraging feedback on their performance.
- **There is a sizeable discrepancy between knowledge of the customer base in terms of race and in terms of religion and belief.** Though 60 per cent of bodies said they had quantitative knowledge of their customer population under the heading of race, this declined to 18 per cent for religion and belief. While there is no simple relationship between these two strands, there will be some overlap: some of the same users of services who have specific needs because of their race will also have specific needs because of their faith. Greater knowledge of the specific needs of both staff and service users in connection with religion and belief might help to strengthen departments’ performance in addressing the needs of people, not just under this strand, but under that of race as well.
- **Considerable progress still needs to be made in meeting diverse needs through service delivery.** The number reporting meeting diverse needs “very well” is limited: for example, only 22 per cent report meeting the needs associated with the gender strand “very well”, and this is the highest score across all strands.

Other Findings

14 The information available to government bodies on the composition and needs of their customer population. This varied widely across bodies and according to diversity strands with particular gaps. For religion and belief and sexual orientation over 80 per cent of bodies do not have adequate information on their customers. Even in the best case, for gender, just under one third do not have quantitative information on their customer composition. There is a particular shortfall of data which cover more than one diversity strand simultaneously, such as for ethnic minority women, for instance.

15 We found that government bodies are using various channels to identify the different needs of service users, including national and local stakeholder organisations; for example, around 70 per cent of government bodies reported involving stakeholder groups in formulating their diversity-related policies. Reflecting on the differing needs identified and legislation in place, the efforts of government bodies are currently focused primarily on race and disability; however, age, where legislation is forthcoming, features less prominently in government bodies’ main priorities.

3 How well government bodies assess their knowledge of, and performance in addressing, diverse needs

Diversity strand	Workforce reflects the diversity of customers		Service delivery meets the needs of diverse customers	Extent to which have baseline customer information
	'Very well' (%) senior grades	'Very well' (%) other grades	'Very well' (%)	Quantitative knowledge of the diversity of customers (%)
Gender	32	63	22	70
Age	12	27	20	66
Disability	4	4	15	52
Race	3	21	12	60
Religion and belief	1	6	6	18
Sexual orientation	1	1	4	7

Source: NAO/RAND Europe survey

16 On the existence of clear targets and priorities for meeting diverse needs. To provide clear direction for public service improvements that focus on diversity, a number of departments have been set Public Service Agreement targets that explicitly link to one or more strands of diversity. These targets are being filtered down the delivery chain, with just under three quarters of government bodies now having diversity-specific goals which are designed to be given at least as much priority as other business objectives. There is evidence that these targets have raised the importance of diversity issues in senior decision making in government bodies. For example, 78 per cent of government bodies have board level representation of issues relating to diversity of service delivery; while 70 per cent of government bodies have appointed someone with specific responsibility for equality and diversity in service delivery. However, there is considerable variation across government bodies in terms of the responsible individuals' reporting chain, grade, the extent of their responsibilities, and the length of time this function has existed.

17 Integrating diversity into service delivery. Government bodies recognise a variety of ways to integrate diversity into service delivery. This includes both training of existing staff, and recruiting of staff, at all levels, to achieve a workforce with appropriately diverse skills, experience and backgrounds to meet the needs of the diverse population served. Almost 90 per cent of the government bodies provide at least some diversity-related training and professional development opportunities to staff, including invited speakers, internal and external seminars and conferences, and internal and external training courses. However, there is also considerable variation in the number and types of training opportunities

offered, and the staff grades to whom these opportunities are offered. Other training programmes to increase the proportion of underrepresented staff at senior levels of the civil service include cross-cutting leadership development programmes, designed for disabled and ethnic minority staff with the potential to reach senior grades.

18 Evaluating diversity-related service delivery initiatives and the sharing of lessons. Over 60 per cent of government bodies only evaluate their diversity-related service delivery initiatives in some cases; while over 10 per cent never carry out any evaluations. We found that of those which at least evaluate in some cases, the majority carry out both internal and external evaluations using process evaluations, customer surveys and focus groups; and more than half evaluate using two or more methods. More importantly, there was little evidence to suggest that the lessons from initiatives were being fed back into the design of initiatives and services; and we found little cross-fertilisation of good practices across government bodies.

19 Collaborating across organisations is an effective way of sharing lessons. Where collaboration exists, it is largely limited to work directed by departments with specific diversity area leads, such as where the Department for Work and Pensions works together with the Department of Health on issues relating to access to goods and services under the Disability Discrimination Act (the NHS is subject to the Act both as a service provider and an employer), and with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (on local planning standards and access to parks and play spaces). Staff responsible for diversity in government bodies whom we spoke to acknowledged the need for closer working and greater sharing of best practice between departments.

What more needs to be done - The requirement for addressing the needs of diverse customers

20 While many government bodies are making progress in addressing the challenges of providing public services to a diverse population, more needs to be done. For example, the good practices we found in the initiatives that we examined in greater detail (Annex 1), including discussions with the users of the services, suggest that there are four aspects of service delivery that need to be developed further. Even in these cases where selected initiatives are working well, the government bodies concerned also recognise that they still have progress to make in the initiatives in question, as well as in addressing diversity in other strands and in other areas of their business.

21 Working with customers, their representative organisations and expert groups to understand and address diverse needs. Both government bodies and stakeholder groups representing service recipients emphasise that to get the most out of consultation, government bodies need to:

- Engage with a wide range of key stakeholders and expert groups to understand the breadth and depth of customers' needs, even within a given diversity strand.
- Engage with stakeholders at an early stage, but after sufficient preparation. This means that bodies are prepared and equipped to address all perspectives at an early stage, leading to positive outcomes for all parties.
- Sustain the links established with stakeholders during the design and development of services throughout their implementation and review.

Further, local stakeholder groups, which are often voluntary or charitable organisations with limited staff and resources, require government bodies to make an ongoing commitment to build capacity in the consultation process rather than drop in and out to meet their immediate requirements. From our international review, we found that the Australian and Dutch Governments have taken this a stage further by forming strong links with customer groups by actively creating or funding independent or voluntary organisations to represent diverse groups and their needs; in forming this link, these organisations are available to government bodies to assist them in designing and delivering services for diverse citizens.

22 Leadership that empowers frontline staff to take the initiative in identifying and responding to diverse needs. It is not enough to simply encourage staff to take initiatives; managers must also be actively engaged in monitoring and directing progress to ensure services are effectively and efficiently delivered to all customer groups. Senior managers need to articulate their messages on diversity and equality clearly and support these with appropriate actions if they are to be understood by staff and citizens alike. For example, in recognising that the Muslim community consume significantly more mutton than other sections of UK society, the Chairman of the Food Standards Agency personally delivered a briefing to Muslim leaders on scrapie in sheep (the equivalent of BSE in cows), to raise awareness within the Muslim community, and to emphasise the importance to staff of tackling diversity issues in their work.

23 It is important that local managers and frontline staff are allowed enough scope to take the initiative in addressing the needs of diverse customers, since it is their interaction with their customers that will influence public perception of how responsive the organisation is to diverse needs. Staff can be encouraged to engage in delivering diverse services through the use of suitable incentives, such as personal objectives and award schemes.

24 Integrating diversity into all areas of public service delivery to include:

- **An organisational structure appropriate to the needs of customers and the maturity of the organisation in tackling diverse needs.** Although our survey results could not isolate any one structure as being more successful than another, the recent general shift in the location of Equality and Diversity Units from human resources functions to business functions, and their wider remit to include service delivery, suggests that bodies are embracing diversity as a business driver, and not just viewing it as an internal human resources task. Whether or not a Unit exists, regardless of its structure and location, the test is in making diversity a core part of the inward and outward facing business, which holds everyone responsible and accountable for progress in this area.

- **Recruiting and developing a workforce with the backgrounds, experience, aptitude and skills to meet diverse needs.** By appropriately harnessing the different backgrounds, experiences, and skills of their staff, government bodies can gain valuable insights into how to meet the needs of all their customers. But even when a workforce does not reflect the population it serves, it can still provide services that meet the needs of diverse communities. Here the key is to train staff to engage with stakeholder groups and to understand diverse customer needs. Although almost 90 per cent of government bodies provide at least some diversity related-training, more needs to be done to evaluate the effectiveness of various types of training.
 - **Targeting appropriate levels of resource to deliver diverse services.** Addressing diverse needs is often about varying existing resources to meet the needs of a wider customer base rather than injecting additional resources to meet a specific need. Initiatives to improve how services are delivered to diverse customers can be successful while being modest in terms of scale and resources required. It is however necessary to plan and arrange resource requirements to cover the whole-life costs of such initiatives, including maintenance, ongoing evaluation and improvements. The successful design and implementation of diversity initiatives also takes time, and there is value in recognising this by developing initiatives in an incremental fashion and allocating resources accordingly so that lessons can be taken on board.
- 25 Evaluating the delivery of services to diverse customers using multiple methods that involve customers and draw on lessons from government bodies' own diversity initiatives and that of others.** As supported by our discussions with stakeholder groups, involving a range of customer groups is particularly important since different customer groups can place different values on the same aspect of service delivery, reflecting their differing individual needs. The importance of evaluating diversity in service delivery is also recognised internationally; for example, the Swedish Gender Development Programme incorporates an evaluation process that allows it to compare the actual performance of agencies as well as the effectiveness of different types of support provided in fulfilment of its objectives, such as staff training, seminars and access to expert advisors.
- 26** In designing and delivering diverse services, government bodies are better placed to make progress if they draw on the insights, both positive and negative, from their own and others' approaches in this area. Where government bodies are active in feeding back the lessons from their own initiatives and in seeking out lessons from the experiences of others, they are able to implement diverse services more efficiently and effectively and are better placed to avoid potentially damaging mistakes. In our survey, we received 182 examples where government bodies consider that they have achieved good practice which other bodies could learn from.



RECOMMENDATIONS

27 To assist government bodies in delivering services to diverse customers, we make the following recommendations, where more needs to be done by government bodies to:

- 1 Gather adequate information on the needs and make-up of their customer base.** Where different service delivery needs are identified, the extent of this need must also be established. Baseline information may be obtained from the Office for National Statistics and the government departments which take lead responsibility across the strands; but more detailed service-specific data on user (and potential service user) profiles, must be collected through individual bodies' own research. It is particularly important to capture information in the strands where little is currently known, notably sexual orientation and religion and belief; and to collect and code information so as to identify needs across more than one strand simultaneously – for example, of older women or ethnic minority women. Where departments do not already do so, it would be valuable to routinely integrate diversity aspects into departmental research programmes.
- 2 Establish regular channels of communication with a wide range of stakeholders to engage them in the design, implementation and subsequent evaluation of services to meet the needs of diverse customers.** Long-term, supported engagement with stakeholders is required to help government bodies identify differing service delivery needs that may exist across diverse customer groups, and develop the most appropriate ways of delivering these services. In the process of working closely with customers and their stakeholder groups, government bodies also help to break down the “us” versus

“them” distinction between service providers and recipients. Departments already have a statutory duty to assess and consult on the impact of their policies on race equality; and there is a model here – which many departments have already begun to apply – for widening this impact assessment work to include the other diversity strands. Departments should also take note of the Cabinet Office Code of Practice on Consultation, which advises the use of proactive and imaginative means of engaging with diverse social groups.

- 3 Set clear diversity-related objectives and targets throughout the organisation that link to Public Service Agreements for all diversity strands.** Clear objectives and targets, linked to Public Service Agreements, focus departments on setting and aligning related targets throughout the delivery chain, and equally on encouraging staff at all organisational levels to take ownership and allocate resources appropriately. Even where specific diversity-related Public Service Agreement targets do not exist, government bodies should include diversity into their more generic targets, to improve service delivery for all customers.
- 4 Lead from the front at all levels of management.** The heads of government bodies need to articulate their messages on diversity and equality clearly and support these with appropriate actions so that these are understood by staff and citizens alike. Senior and middle managers need to empower staff by encouraging participation and innovation through awards schemes and other incentives. Local managers need to allow frontline staff the scope to take initiatives that address the needs of diverse customers.

- 5 Set up appropriate organisational structures that reflect the existing depth and breadth of organisations' experiences with, and need for, serving diverse customers.** Government bodies need to find the appropriate location in their organisation to place responsibility for diversity and its implementation that best fit their own particular situations and the challenges they face. In deciding whether or not a standalone unit to oversee diversity is required, government bodies need to consider the existing depth and breadth of their experiences with, and need for, serving diverse customers. A strategy that removes such units is only appropriate for organisations that already exhibit a strong culture and proven history of addressing diversity in all areas of their business.
- 6 Nurture a workforce with appropriate skills, training and support to deliver services to diverse customers.** Different experiences that come with a diverse workforce can provide insights into service delivery needs of diverse groups if a means can be established to identify and bring together such information. Where staff do not share the same background or needs with those groups they are serving, training can help to overcome any working cultures of discrimination there may be, as well as helping staff to positively identify and address the diverse needs of their customers in service delivery.
- 7 Target resources to initiatives that have well-focused objectives.** Although an abundance of resources does not guarantee an initiative success, a lack of resources is a formula for failure. Budgets for engaging with diverse customers and their representative groups must take realistic account of the often significant costs associated with ongoing communication and collaboration.
- 8 Evaluate progress on an ongoing basis using multiple methods that include customer feedback.** The existing statutory race equality duty on departments and other public authorities includes a duty to monitor policies for any adverse impact on the promotion of race equality. In this and in its other provisions, the statutory race equality duty provides a model that government bodies could choose to draw on in devising their own approaches to meeting the needs of the other strands.
- Tools for evaluating policies need to be designed alongside planning of the policies themselves; evaluations should reveal what works (outcome) and why (process), pointing to areas for further improvement. Combining at least three methods of evaluation gives some confidence to the measures
- of effectiveness; this is particularly important in the area of diversity where customers may have different priorities and experiences of receiving services from those who design, manage or deliver the services.
- 9 Develop ways to share good practice and lessons learnt among government bodies.** As the Government continues to seek ways to reduce duplication of effort and to implement cost-cutting strategies, it is imperative that departments learn from their own, and others', successes and failures. It is also important that, while avoiding an overly prescriptive approach to implementing the good practice of others, government bodies uphold the same standards of performance and behaviour towards similar groups. Currently, despite a widespread desire to communicate with those in different departments who are responsible for meeting similar service delivery goals and who are facing similar sorts of challenges, there exist no reliable or effective interaction mechanisms. Examples of possible information-sharing mechanisms include: networks of staff across different bodies within a departmental delivery chain to share lessons and promote good practice; cross-departmental teams formed to work collaboratively on substantive issues relating to diversity of service delivery and provide benchmarking opportunities; and a Whitehall-wide intranet dedicated to sharing service delivery lessons with regards to diversity.
- 28** To complement the guidance available from the Cabinet Office in addressing equality and diversity in the workforce, Annex 2 of this Executive Summary provides a self evaluation tool for government bodies to assess how they are performing in each of these areas and guidance on what more needs to be done.

Annex 1

The four case study bodies

Crown Prosecution Service

Development and launch of the Public Policy Statement on Racist and Religious Crime

The Crown Prosecution Service is responsible for prosecuting people in England and Wales who have been charged by the police with a criminal offence. As the actions of the Service directly impact on the public sense of justice and on an individual's freedom, it is important that prosecution decisions are free, and seen to be free, from bias and discrimination. In its efforts to demonstrate commitment to promoting racial and religious equality, the Service has developed and launched a public policy statement on its approach to the prosecution of racially and religiously aggravated crime.

Key lessons include:

- Personal commitment from leaders: the Director of Public Prosecutions takes a personal interest in all cases of racist and religiously aggravated crime.
- Learning from previous experiences: improvements made by sharing lessons from the development of earlier statements on homophobic and domestic crime.
- Consulting with stakeholder groups was “an essential ingredient”: consultation with a wide range of stakeholder and expert groups, at an early stage and on an ongoing basis, led to more acceptable and accessible policy.
- Balancing central co-ordination and monitoring with local ownership and decentralised implementation to avoid unexpected variations across regions.
- Establishing a working group with appropriate skills, experience and backgrounds to develop the policy: the composition of the working group which was diverse in terms of expertise, grade, gender and ethnic background was considered to have had a positive impact on the approach adopted and the resulting policy.
- Budgeting appropriately: funds were made available at the onset to meet all costs, including the extensive consultation process, and further funds were made available for unexpected costs of regional launches.
- Implementing incrementally: the policy was developed and launched in an incremental fashion over 16 months to build momentum and to integrate the lessons of each phase in subsequent work.

Inland Revenue

Outreach activities to address the needs of small and medium enterprises in the Bristol and North Somerset Area



The Inland Revenue collects direct taxes and pays tax credits and child benefits in line with Government policies. Through its business, the Inland Revenue interacts with a wide range of citizens and businesses. In meeting its core purpose of ensuring that everyone understands and pays what they owe, and understands and receives what they are entitled to, the Inland Revenue must recognise and respond to the diversity of its customers. One such example is demonstrated by the work of the Inland Revenue's Bristol and North Somerset Business Support Team with, and for, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises in the Sikh and Chinese communities. These outreach activities have been undertaken to help ethnic minority businesses improve their voluntary compliance and gain access to the full range of services and support on offer.

Key lessons include:

- Responding to local needs: non-prescriptive guidelines from regional and national levels allow local offices to respond to their local needs.
- Securing the commitment of front line staff by allowing them sufficient scope to take initiatives in addressing the needs of diverse customers, supported by incentives such as 'Diversity Awards'.
- Nurturing appropriate skills within the workforce: the ability to engage with individuals from diverse communities is the key personal attribute that enables frontline staff to meet diverse customers' needs.
- Engaging in long-term partnerships with stakeholder and representative groups to access previously isolated groups and help to identify their differing needs.
- Monitoring and evaluating initiatives, including customer feedback, to assess progress and make continual improvements to service delivery.

Learning and Skills Council

Provision of secondary education to women, supported by the Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College and hosted by Bordesley Green Girls' School in Birmingham.



The Learning and Skills Council, a non departmental public body of the Department for Education and Skills, is responsible for funding and planning education and training for over 16-year-olds in England, other than in universities. Local Learning and Skills Councils work in partnership with local colleges and sixth forms to meet national targets for post-16 education, including specific diversity targets. With support from the Birmingham & Solihull LSC, the Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College and Bordesley Green Girls' School in Birmingham have set up a Women's Study Group. The initiative provides learning opportunities for local women, particularly from ethnic minority communities, to take national exams in subjects including literacy and numeracy, and then go on to further training or employment.

Key lessons include:

- Continuously working closely with stakeholders, including users, to gain trust and help deliver services that best meet their needs.
- Complementing existing initiatives and building on previous initiatives to continuously improve the delivery of services.
- Sharing experiences among teachers and school administrators to enable learning, such that good practices are perpetuated and mistakes are not repeated.
- Collaborating with others in the delivery chain: partnership between local colleges and local Learning and Skills Councils encourages ownership.
- Finding a balance between demands for accountability (through qualifications) and the need for flexibility when reaching out to diverse groups (providing experience).

National Gallery

Art Through Words (ATW), a programme designed to make the collection of the National Gallery accessible to blind and partially sighted people.



The National Gallery, a non departmental public body of the Department for Culture, Media and Sports, houses the national collection of Western European painting from the 13th to 19th centuries. Its aims are to care for, and enhance, the collection for the education and enjoyment of as wide a public as possible, both at the Gallery and beyond. In order to achieve this aim, the Gallery has developed a range of access and outreach initiatives. For example, in response to the need to provide a sensitive, interactive way for visually impaired people to enjoy its artwork, the Gallery developed a groundbreaking programme, Art Through Words. This programme is based on pure verbal description that aims to bring to life an individual painting's content, atmospheric power, and historical context.

Key lessons include:

- Involving and collaborating with all areas of the business in the development and implementation of initiatives: for example, support from the Gallery's Access Group provided a route to all departments, and support from the Media Department helped to enrich the programme.
- Learning from previous experiences: the new initiative came into existence through critical analysis of existing provision and previous practices and on the basis of customer needs.
- Empowering staff: while there is strong top-level support, senior management adopt a hands-off approach, allowing frontline staff to select the work that they present, which brings a high degree of personal enthusiasm and commitment.
- Early and ongoing involvement with external stakeholders: for example, in addition to assisting with the design of the programme, the Royal National Institute of the Blind suggests ongoing improvement to the programme by drawing on their in-depth knowledge of the needs of visually impaired people.
- Informing customers of what is available to them: ongoing dissemination of information in the community and through representative groups is key to attracting new participants.

Annex 2

Self assessment questionnaire for government bodies to gauge their progress in delivering services to diverse citizens

Identify and understand the differing needs of your customers, through systematic and targeted data gathering and stakeholder consultations.

- How much do you know about the make-up of your customers and the significance this may have on the way you need to deliver services fairly and effectively?
- Do you have information on the service delivery needs of your entire customer base, both in terms of those that are being served well and those that are not?
- Do you have quantitative information on the make-up of your entire customer base?
- Are you engaging with a wide range of stakeholder and expert groups to improve the way in which your services are delivered to your customer groups?
- Are you engaging with them at an early stage, but after sufficient preparation?
- Do you provide appropriate support to these groups to sustain the relationship on an ongoing basis?
- How do you involve them in evaluating progress?

Provide a clear vision and set targets that underpin the service delivery needs of all your customers, and empower all staff to take initiatives towards these targets.

- What is your vision and how do you move everyone towards it?
- Have you set clear objectives and targets, linked to your Public Service Agreement targets, which set out what you want to achieve in terms of improving service delivery to diverse customers and by when?
- How do you relay your organisation's vision and mission to all staff?
- How are managers, at all levels, working to empower frontline staff to participate in taking initiatives?
- What incentives, schemes or initiatives do you have to encourage staff to take proactive steps in better serving their entire customer base?

Integrate diversity into all aspects of your business, including the organisational structure, workforce, and resource allocation.

- Are you confident that effective delivery of public services to diverse customers is integrated into all parts of your business?
- What organisational structures are in place to help address the needs of diverse customers?
- Is there someone senior in your organisation who has responsibility for addressing the needs of diverse customers?
- How do you recruit and manage your workforce such that you have the appropriate skills and experiences to meet the service delivery needs of your entire customer base?
- How well do your staff reflect the diversity of your customers, at all levels of your organisation?
- How do you target your resources in a clear and timely manner to achieve value for money for all customers?
- How do you manage your resources to reflect the priority you attach to delivering services that meet diverse needs?

Assess and evaluate your progress in meeting the needs of all your customers through a number of methods, including public consultations, that feedback into the design and delivery of your services.

- How do you know how well you are doing?
- Do you evaluate your performance against your targets?
- What and how many methods do you use?
- How do you feedback your findings for continual improvement?

Share experiences and lessons within and across organisations, to gain an understanding of tools and processes that already exist and work well, and to avoid mistakes of others.

- How can you fast-track your performance?
- How do you share your knowledge and experiences of addressing the needs of diverse customers within your organisation?
- How do you share your knowledge and experiences with other organisations in your delivery chain?
- How do you share your knowledge and experiences with other government bodies?
- Have you looked to learn from the knowledge and experiences of government bodies in other countries that are addressing the needs of diverse customers?

PART ONE

The challenge of delivering public services, fairly and effectively, to a diverse community



1.1 Recognising the diversity of our society is essential to the creation of fair, cohesive, and economically prosperous communities where everyone is given the opportunity to fulfil their potential irrespective of their differences (**Figure 4**). The Government has invested significant public resources to create and implement a framework for promoting diversity and equality. Addressing diversity, both in the Civil Service workforce and in the delivery of public services, is now a key objective of government departments as is explicitly set out in some Public Service Agreement targets. This part of the report sets out:

- The diverse make-up of our society;
- The social, business and economic case for addressing diversity;
- The Government's commitment to promoting diversity;
- Why and how we undertook this study.

4 There is no equality of opportunity if difference is not recognised

Diversity

Diversity is about the recognition and valuing of difference in its broadest sense. It is about creating a working culture and practices that recognise, respect, value and harness difference for the benefit of the organisation and individual.

Equality

Equality is about creating a fairer society where everyone can participate and has the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Source: Department of Health, October 2003, Equalities and Diversity in the NHS – Progress and Priorities, Human Resources Directorate (<http://www.publications.doh.gov.uk/nhsequality/progress-priorities.pdf>, last accessed 11 May 2004)

The diverse make-up of our society

1.2 We live in a diverse society. For example, 22 per cent of adults and 5 per cent of children in Great Britain are disabled; it is estimated that between 5 and 7 per cent of people are homosexual or bisexual; of the 77 per cent of the population in Great Britain who report having a religion nearly 7 per cent belong to religions other than Christianity; nearly 8 per cent of the population is made up of black and minority ethnic people. And British society is set to diversify further: for example, it is estimated that the recent enlargement of the European Union will bring with it between 5,000 and 13,000 net immigrants to the UK per year for the period up to 2010;³ it is also projected that by 2041, nearly 25 per cent of the population will be aged 65 or over.

1.3 The United Kingdom is also much more diverse in terms of gender than it used to be – not that the ratio of women to men has changed significantly, but the social roles and working lives of men and women have seen profound changes in the last decades, and are continuing to evolve. In particular, these changes relate to work and parenthood. For instance, the percentage of mothers with a child under five who are in paid employment has risen from 30 per cent in 1980 to 52 per cent today;⁴ while between 1974 and 1999 there was an eight-fold increase in the amount of time fathers of under fives spent on child-related activities.⁵ These changes mean that society has evolving needs, especially in terms of childcare and support for parenting.

1.4 Increasingly diverse communities are now a common characteristic of many nations. The broad challenges facing all Governments in meeting the needs of diverse communities are the same, but at any one point in time there are differences across countries that account for variations in definitions, political climate, economic situation and social pressures. For example, Canada currently receives more immigrants annually per capita than any other country in the world and has taken steps to embrace multi-culturalism within its legislative framework.

³ Home Office Online Report 25/03, The impact of European Union enlargement on immigration flows, www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/rdsolr2503.pdf.

⁴ ONS Labour Force Survey Spring 2003, dataset revised March 2004; General Household Survey for 1980.

⁵ Equal Opportunities Commission, Research Findings on Fathers: balancing work and family, March 2003, [http://www.eoc.org.uk/EOCeng/EOCs/Research/fathers%20balancing%20work%20and%20family%20\(english\).pdf](http://www.eoc.org.uk/EOCeng/EOCs/Research/fathers%20balancing%20work%20and%20family%20(english).pdf).

5 The diversity of the United Kingdom's population

Race	4.6 million (7.9%) of the UK population is made up of minority ethnic people: 4.0% Asian; 2.0% Black; 1.2% Mixed; 0.4% Chinese; and 0.4% Other.
Disability	One in six people (overall, one in five adults and one in twenty children) is disabled in some way. In Great Britain, approximately 10 million adults and 700,000 children (22% and 5% of the GB population) are likely to be covered by the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act.
Gender	The proportion of women in the workforce has increased: in 1984, 58 per cent of women were in employment compared with 77 per cent for men, whereas in 2003 the employment rate was 70 per cent for women and 79 per cent for men. The amount of time men have spent on childcare has increased: between 1974 and 1999 there was an eight-fold increase in the amount of time fathers of under fives spent on child-related activities.
Sexual orientation	Estimates are that between 5% and 7% of the UK population are homosexual or bisexual.
Age	In 2001, 15.9% of the UK population was 65 years of age or older. It is projected that by 2041, this figure will be 25.4%.
Religion and belief	Approximately 44 million (77.2%) of the population of Great Britain report having a religion: 71.8% Christian; 2.8% Muslim; 1.0% Hindu; 0.6% Sikh; 0.5% Jewish; 0.3% Buddhist; and 0.3% Other.

Sources: 2001 Census (<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/default.asp>).

Department of Work and Pensions press releases, "10 million reasons for businesses to open up", 31 March 2004 (<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/mediacentre/pressreleases/2004/march/cfd3103-ddanat.asp>), and "Estimate of the number of children in Britain covered by the Disability Discrimination Act (1995)", 21 July 2004 (<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/mediacentre/pressreleases/2004/july/iad210704cdda.pdf>).

"Key indicators of women's position in Britain", Angelika Hibbett, Women and Equality Unit at the DTI, and Nigel Meager, Institute for Employment Studies, http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_labour/Keyindicatorsofwomen_LMTOct.pdf

Equal Opportunities Commission, Research Findings on Fathers: balancing work and family, March 2003, [http://www.eoc.org.uk/EOCeng/EOCcs/Research/fathers%20balancing%20work%20and%20family%20\(english\).pdf](http://www.eoc.org.uk/EOCeng/EOCcs/Research/fathers%20balancing%20work%20and%20family%20(english).pdf).

House of Commons, 9 June 2003, Employment Equality Regulations; Religion and Sexual Orientation, Research paper 03/54 (<http://www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/rp2003/rp03-054.pdf>)

2002 Eurostat NewCronos Database.

1.5 As the diversity of our society increases, and because individuals' needs differ, it becomes increasingly important for the Government to promote social cohesion by designing public policy and delivering public services which recognise the needs of diverse groups. As set out in the 2004 Commission for Equality and Human Rights White Paper, the Government has expressed its view that "fairness for all is the basis for a healthy democracy, economic prosperity and the effective delivery of public services", and that therefore equality matters to all of us.⁶ Furthermore, in its 1999 Modernising Government White Paper, the Government made a specific commitment to deliver public services that are sensitive to the needs of different groups of people and for these services to be delivered in an accessible way:

There is no such thing as a 'typical' citizen. People's needs and concerns differ: between women and men for example, between the young and the old; and between those of different social, cultural and educational backgrounds and people with disabilities... The Government is determined that public services should address the needs of all groups

1.6 To help examine and understand the different needs associated with different people, the Government has recognised six key strands of diversity in the population: (1) race, (2) disability, (3) gender, (4) sexual orientation, (5) age and (6) religion and belief. The Government recognises and attends to other ways in which society is diverse, such as people with a primary language other than English and people with lower incomes, but these six strands are currently the focus of Government policies aimed at diversity.

6 Fairness For All: A New Commission for Equality and Human Rights (Cm 6185, 2004), DTI and DCA, May 2004, 1.2.

6 Diversity profiles for Australia, Canada, Netherlands and Sweden

	Australia	Canada ¹	Netherlands	Sweden
Race	97.8% Caucasian, Asian, and other 2.2% Indigenous origin (2001). ³	13.4% visible minority made up 10 named races including mixed plus other (2001).	Ethnic minority population of 17% of which 9% are of non-western origin (1999). ²	79% Swedish, 10% Nordic and European Union, 4% other European, 4% Asian, 2% American, 1% African (2000). ⁸
Disability	20% of the population consists of disabled people (2003). ³	12.4% of the population consists of disabled people (2001).	19% of the population consists of disabled people (2003). ⁴	6% of population aged 16-84 years are physically disabled (1996/99). ¹¹
Gender	51% women (2003). ³	51% women (2003).	51% women (2003).	51% women (2003). ⁷
Sexual orientation	19,722 same-sex couples declared themselves as such, accounting for about 0.25% of the population (1996). ¹⁰	0.48% of all couples identified themselves as living in a same-sex common-law relationship (2001).	3% of the 94,129 registered partnerships and marriages were single sex, following legalisation permitting single sex marriages (2002). ⁶	0.6% of the 78,798 registered partnerships and marriages were single sex (2003). ¹¹
Age	12.7% aged 65 and over (2003). ³	12.9% aged 65 and over (2003).	13.9% aged 65 and over (2003). ⁵	17.3% aged 65 and over (2003). ⁷
Religion and belief	87.4% report having a religion: 76.4% Christian, 11.0% other (1998). ²	83.5% report having a religion: 77% Christian, 2.0% Muslim, 4.1% Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu or Sikh, 0.3% Eastern religions or other (2001).	60% report having a religion: 52.0% Christian, 4.4% Muslim, 3.6% other (1998). ²	96.5% Christian, 3.5% other (1999). ⁹

Sources: last accessed 10 June 2004

1 Statistics Canada (2003), <http://www.statcan.ca>

2 Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Factbook, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/al.html>

3 Australian Bureau of Statistics, www.abs.gov.au/

4 http://www.peerreview-employment.org/pdf/netherlands03/THE%20NEL03%20DE_revised.pdf

5 Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics), www.cbs.nl/

6 Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics), www.cbs.nl/; *De Nederlandse Economie*, 2002; and Voorburg/Heerlen: Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek - Facilitair Bedrijf, 2003.

7 Statistics Sweden, <http://www.scb.se>

8 Befolkningsstatistik 2000 (2001), <http://www.nordicom.gu.se/reviewcontents/ncomreview/ncomreview203/069-088.pdf>.

9 Zickgraf, Ralph. Sweden, 1999, *Major World Nations series*, Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, pg. 9, http://www.adherents.com/adhloc/Wh_312.html.

10 Census of Australia, 1996, http://www.gaydemographics.org/OtherNationsCensus_Gay.htm.

11 Statistics Sweden: 1990/1991 Survey on living conditions, <http://www.euro.who.int/document/e62337.pdf>.

Recognising and addressing diversity makes sound social, business, and economic sense

1.7 Diversity and equality are high on the Government's current policy agenda due to:

- Heightened concerns for social cohesion and fairness;⁷
- Recognition of the service delivery benefits for departments and citizens;⁶
- Wider impact on the nation's economic performance;
- Priority attached to the implementation of related legislative changes.

1.8 Failure of government bodies to take account of diversity can lead to public distrust and social outcry, such as that which resulted from the 1999 Macpherson Report. Macpherson concluded that Police Services, the wider Criminal Justice System, and other institutions and organisations had exhibited collective failures and institutional racism.⁸

1.9 The uneven nature of how diversity tends to translate itself geographically and across socio-economic groups can also lead to exacerbated economic disadvantage and social exclusion. For example:

- Minority ethnic people are heavily concentrated in urban areas without access to a high quality of education, health care and housing: 70 per cent of minority ethnic people live in the 88 most deprived local authority districts, compared to 40 per cent of the general population.⁹
- Disabled people and their families are more likely than non-disabled people to be in low-income households. Disabled people are less likely to be employed or to have higher level qualifications, and are more likely to live in a household where no one is in work. They may also have higher living costs as a consequence of their health problem or disability.¹⁰

- Women are more likely to suffer from domestic violence. Currently, an average of two women a week are killed by their partners or ex-partners in the United Kingdom.¹¹

1.10 A diversity focus is essential not only for reasons of equal opportunities and fairness but because it makes good business sense to design and deliver better public services which respond to the individual needs of all groups and contribute to departments achieving their targets (**Figure 7**). Government sponsored research demonstrates that high performing public and private sector organisations are also those that integrate equality and diversity into their business culture and processes. For example, private sector companies have been able to improve their productivity and generate cost savings by better understanding and addressing the needs of their diverse customers, and stimulating increased creativity and innovation through employing a more diverse workforce.¹²

1.11 Recognition of diversity can also have a wider impact on the nation's economic performance. As set out in a statement by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, and Minister for Women and Equality in June 2004:

Equal opportunities and economic success go hand in hand. Our economy will only be truly successful when it harnesses the skills and talent of over half the population — women.

Following the same argument, a recent report by the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit found that minority ethnic groups are disadvantaged in the labour markets and not doing as well as they should be, given their education and other characteristics.¹³ With ethnic minorities set to account for more than half of the growth of the working age population over the next decade, failure to tackle this underachievement in the labour market will hold back UK's economic growth, particularly in the context of current skills shortages.

7 Institute for Public Policy Research, 2002, *Separate Silos: Race and the reform agenda in Whitehall*, Race and Government Series.

8 The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, 1999, Report of an inquiry by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny, Advised by Tom Cook, The Right Reverend Dr John Sentamu, Dr Richard Stone, Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, <http://www.archive.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm42/4262/4262.htm>.

9 Cabinet Office, Performance and Innovation Unit, July 2001, Scoping Note: Improving labour market achievements for ethnic minorities in British society, <http://www.pm.gov.uk/files/pdf/Scoping.pdf>.

10 Department for Works and Pensions, <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/ofa/reports/2003/chapter2-10.asp>.

11 Home Office, Crime in England and Wales 2002-04: Supplementary Volume 1 – Homicide and Gun Crime, January 2004, <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/hosb0104.pdf>.

12 Schneider-Ross, 2002, *The Business of Diversity*, Sponsored by the Cabinet Office, Government's Centre for Management and Policy Studies and Barclays; UK Government's Centre for Management and Policy Studies, *The Diversity Excellence Model*, <http://www.cmps.gov.uk/diversity/index.asp>.

13 Cabinet Office, Strategy Unit, March 2003, *Ethnic minorities and labour markets*, http://www.number-10.gov.uk/su/ethnic%20minorities/report/downloads/ethnic_minorities.pdf.

7 Addressing diversity issues can improve public service delivery

Requirements for addressing diversity	Benefits	Example
The diversity and differing needs of customers are fully identified and understood.	Provides valuable information on customer needs, enabling the adequacy of current service provision to be assessed and improved service delivery to address gaps or short-comings.	Joseph Chamberlain College, a further education college located in an ethnically diverse area, was able to improve and sustain the academic achievements of women from ethnic minority communities by responding to their specific needs, such as providing support in native languages and class times tailored to meet their child care and other domestic responsibilities.
Sustained consultation with customers and their representative groups to design and develop efficient and effective policies and services that meet diverse needs.	Services are accessible, taken up and meet the needs of all customers, and are communicated to customers to raise awareness of the services they are entitled to and address risks to social cohesion and equity.	In addressing the tens of thousands of low-income pensioners who fail to take up their benefit entitlements because they have little knowledge of what is available, the Department for Work and Pensions has been working together with stakeholder groups to develop and disseminate a Pensioners' Guide that sets out their entitlements in an accessible way. ¹
Targets and objectives that clearly underpin the service delivery needs of a diverse customer base, aligned throughout the delivery chain and linked to staff personal performance objectives.	Priorities are understood and shared by staff and delivery partners, and resources are targeted at achieving key service delivery outputs and outcomes rather than wasted on peripheral or low priority activities.	To improve health, education and social cohesion, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport has made a commitment to increase the uptake of sports and cultural activities by disadvantaged groups by identifying key indicators and setting targets against these to measure and monitor their progress.
Leadership at all levels in promoting best practice in delivering services to a diverse customer base, with an emphasis on staff participation.	All staff understand that diversity is at the heart of delivering public services and are empowered to address and respond to the diverse needs of customers.	The Inland Revenue has a panel of Diversity Champions, consisting of representative board members and directors from all business areas, which works to provide the Revenue with guidance and leadership on diversity priorities.
Diversity is embedded in the core business and organisational structures, with ownership of delivering services to diverse customers.	All organisational functions and structures to be responsive to the needs of all customers all of the time, avoiding inefficiencies and costs associated with 'bolt-on' corrective approaches.	A large UK based telecommunications company has seen a productivity increase between 15%-31% since it began its flexible homeworking scheme. The scheme has resulted in a 96% return rate after maternity leave and resulted in a saving of £220m in real estate costs. ²
A representative workforce provided with the appropriate support and training in delivering to diverse customers.	Staff at all levels have appropriately diverse backgrounds, experience and skills to productively and effectively meet the needs of the diverse population served.	One of the world's largest producers of consumer products has increased female representation at managerial levels from 25% to 42% over the 5 years to 2000. This was in response to recognising that, with 90% of its customers being women, its decision makers could better reflect its market. Over these 5 years, during which active promotion of diversity was one of the companies most consistent variables, productivity increased by more than 30%. ²
Recognition and allocation of relevant and sufficient resources throughout the delivery chain to deliver services to diverse communities.	Efficient allocation or re-allocation of resources to leverage more for the same amount of resource.	The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) invested a substantial amount of resources in the development of its public policy statement on racially and religiously aggravated crime, by setting up a working group of 11 CPS staff who worked together with external stakeholders for over 16 months to design a policy statement that fitted the needs of its customers.

7 Addressing diversity issues can improve public service delivery *continued*

Requirements for addressing diversity	Benefits	Example
Continually evaluating progress through a number of methods, including public consultations, where lessons are fed back into policy and service design and delivery.	Performance monitored against key service delivery targets to identify what works best and where such resources can be allocated in the most efficient and effective way.	By continually collecting feedback from visitors and stakeholders, the National Gallery has been able to adapt constantly its initiatives to better meet its visitors' needs. As a result of ongoing evaluations, the Gallery has moved away from using audio guides and raised line diagram books for blind and partially sighted visitors to design an 'Art Through Words' programme based on pure verbal description delivered by Gallery staff. This programme now draws the largest audience of visitors with sight problems in any gallery in the UK.
Sharing good practices within and across organisations.	Public resources are not used to reinvent tools and processes that already exist and work well, or to repeat mistakes that others have already learnt from.	Canada's National Human Rights Commission, which is one of the foremost of its type in the world, regularly scans human rights institutions in other countries to learn about successful practices. The lessons it learns are shared among the extensive system of provincial human rights commissions.

Source: NAO/RAND Europe, and
 1. Tackling Pensioner Poverty - Encouraging the Take-up of Entitlements (HC 37, 2002-03).
 2. Schneider-Ross, 2002, *The business of diversity*, Sponsored by Cabinet Office, Government's Centre for Management and Policy Studies and Barclays.

The Government's commitment to promote diversity: from workforce representation to delivery of services

1.12 The emphasis on diversity and equality within the Government's current policy agenda is set out in statements by the Cabinet Office¹⁴ and has been reinforced by Senior Civil Servants who have made clear public policy statements in support of diversity and equality (**Figure 8**).

1.13 Building on existing legislation, the Government has in recent years taken various steps to create a framework for promoting diversity and equality (**Figure 9**). The framework consists of legislation, campaigning and enforcement, strategy co-ordination, and delivery. Given that the Government wants the public sector to lead by example, its framework incorporates diversity in terms of both workforce representation and delivery of services to a diverse community.

8 Statements in support of equality and diversity

'[...] we want [...] a Service which recognises the value that the diverse workforce in our organisations bring to the way we do our business; [...] a Service where we develop policies and deliver services in ways which result in equality of outcomes for everyone, work with diverse communities and where we respond directly to the needs of all our customer [...]'

Sir Andrew Turnbull, Head of the Civil Service and Charles Cochrane, Council of Civil Service Unions (In a letter to all staff setting out the Civil Service-Wide Statement On Equality & Diversity, March 2004).

'I have seen the Civil Service change very much for the better in recent years, concentrating on making a real difference to public services. But we are still too far away from properly representing our communities, particularly at the senior levels of the Civil Service. We must make greater strides in this area, and as we do, we shall be more effective.'

Martin Narey, Civil Service Diversity Champion and Chief Executive of the National Offender Management Service (The Civil Service 'Diversity - What Works' website, May 2004).

'It is important that Government policies do not inadvertently discriminate against particular groups of people. Each Government department is responsible for ensuring that its own policies comply with anti-discrimination legislation, and that it follows the central requirements for assessing the impact of policies on particular groups, such as women, disabled people, ethnic minorities and older people.'

Cabinet Office (Cabinet Office website, June 2004).

14 Cabinet Office, 'Diversity – What Works' website: <http://www.diversity-whatworks.gov.uk/>.

9 Government's framework for promoting diversity and equality

Legislation

Some key legislation:

- The Disability Discrimination Act (1995)
- The Race Relations Amendment Act (2000)
- European Union Framework Directive (phased over 2003, 2004, 2006)

Campaigning, Research and Enforcement

Independent, government sponsored, statutory Commissions:

- Equal Opportunities Commission
- Commission for Racial Equality
- Disability Rights Commission

Co-ordination Strategy

Units within key departments take on lead responsibility for driving forward diversity priorities.

Area of responsibility	Lead Unit/Team	Sponsoring department
Gender	Women and Equality Unit	Department of Trade and Industry
Race	Community Cohesion Unit Race Equality Unit Employment Relations	Home office Home Office Department of Trade and Industry
Religion	Faith Communities Unit Employment Relations	Home Office Department of Trade and Industry
Disability	Disability and Carers Directorate Employment Relations	Department for Work and Pensions
Age	Employment Relations Adult Disadvantage Division	Department of Trade and Industry Department for Work and Pensions
Sexual Orientation	Employment Relations Women and Equality Unit	Department of Trade and Industry Department of Trade and Industry
Human Rights	Human Rights Unit	Department for Constitutional Affairs
Employment Diversity in the Civil Service	Corporate Diversity Team	Cabinet Office

Delivery

Departments, agencies and non departmental bodies have committed to delivering on diversity goals relating to workforce representation and service delivery.

Sources: NAO/RAND Europe

10 Diversity in the Civil Service workforce

	% at April 2004	Total	% UK economically active population
Staff that are female	52.3	289,970	46.1
Staff from ethnic minority backgrounds	8.2	33,430	7.3
Disabled staff	4.2	23,550	13.6

Sources:

- Cabinet Office Statistics website, *Civil Service Staff in post at 1 October 2003 for all staff and Senior Civil Service level by gender, ethnic origin and disability status (headcount)*, <http://www.civil-service.gov.uk/statistics/whatsnew.htm>;
- Office for National Statistics, *Labour Force Survey 2004*; and Cabinet Office analysis.
- Disability Rights Commission, *Table 2: Economic status of disabled men and women in Great Britain – based on Labour Force Survey 2002*, <http://www.drc-gb.org/publicationsandreports/campaigndetails.asp?section=oth&id=262#2>.

1.14 As an employer of over 523,000 people in the UK,¹⁵ the Government has an opportunity to influence workforce diversity. Overall, the diversity of the Civil Service workforce exceeds the national statistics for economically active women and ethnic minorities (Figure 10). Furthermore, the Government has recognised and made a commitment to address under-representation at its most senior levels as manifested in the Cabinet Office's Public Service Agreement to achieve by 2004-05 targets for diversity within the Senior Civil Service (Figure 11).

1.15 Long term trends show that the Civil Service is making steady progress against its Senior Civil Service targets on minority ethnic staff and women. However, figures on disabled staff show that significant challenges remain; and there is a larger shortfall between Senior Civil Service staff and the wider population for disability than there is for either women or minority ethnic staff. The Cabinet Office recognises that further progress is needed to meet diversity targets and is putting in place a number of policy interventions to address these.¹⁶

11 Cabinet Office's Public Service Agreement targets for diversity within the Senior Civil Service

	Target %		% at 1 April 2004	Total
	2008	2005		
Per cent to be women	37.0	35.0	27.8	1,081
Per cent of top management posts filled by women	30.0	25.0	24.4	208
Per cent to be from ethnic minority backgrounds	4.0	3.2	3.3	120
Per cent to be disabled	3.2	3.0	2.3	100

Sources:

- 'Target' from http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/Spending_Review/spend_sr02/psa/spend_sr02psaco.cfm, last accessed 11 May 2004; http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/B66/61/sr04_psa_ch19.pdf.
- Cabinet Office Statistics website, *Civil Service Staff in post at 1 April 2004 for all staff and Senior Civil Service level by gender, ethnic origin and disability status (headcount)*, http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical_information/statistics/whats_new/index.asp.
- Figures for numbers of women in Senior Civil Service and in top management posts at 1 April 2004 from email from Cabinet Office.

15 Cabinet Office press release, "Latest Civil Service Numbers Published", 21 October 2004, http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical_information/statistics/publications/pdf/21-10-04pressnotice.pdf. At 1 April 2004, the number of permanent Civil Servants was 523,580 (full time equivalents).

16 Cabinet Office press release, "Senior Civil Service diversity statistics show women in top management posts nearly doubling since 1998", 21 October 2004, <http://www.diversity-whatworks.gov.uk/documents/pressrelease21-10-04.pdf>.

Potential issues for diversity following the Gershon and Lyons Reviews

1.16 One of the major recent developments within the public sector is an increased emphasis on finding efficiency savings which can be rechannelled into frontline services. In the implementation of this agenda there are potential issues relating to diversity, both in terms of workforce diversity and the tailoring of services to meet diverse needs. The Gershon Review on efficiency projected that over £20 billion in annual savings across central and local government could be generated by 2007-08, by increased efficiency in a number of areas. The Lyons Review on relocation examined the savings which could be made by shifting government bodies and staff to locations outside London and the southeast. There is a potential for this efficiency agenda to conflict with that of diversity if, for instance, job reductions or relocations disproportionately affect minorities and disadvantaged groups.

1.17 In recognition of this, and of the commitment of the Civil Service to moving towards achieving a truly diverse workforce that works with diverse communities more effectively, the Cabinet Office has issued guidance to departments, outlining the factors they need to consider when developing their plans to implement the outcomes of the Gershon and Lyons Reviews. This includes guidance on the need to ensure that their procedures do not result in unlawful discrimination directly or indirectly, to ensure that specific groups of staff are not disproportionately disadvantaged, and to consider the impact of their plans on the diversity of the workforce. In particular, departments have been made aware of the need to consider whether a race equality impact assessment is appropriate. The new Civil Service Diversity Adviser will play a role in supporting departments in their consideration of the potential diversity impacts of their implementation plans.

Emphasis on diversity in service delivery

1.18 The initial emphasis of government bodies on addressing the diversity of their workforce has not declined as a priority, but in addition there is now an increasing emphasis on addressing the diversity and equality issues of service delivery. By recognising that people who use public services are diverse and have different needs, government bodies can work to tailor the delivery of their services to address these needs. To do this successfully, government bodies have had to rethink the way that services are delivered. The benefits of addressing diversity in service delivery can be illustrated by certain examples in which the Government has been able to improve its services by explicitly focusing on the specific needs of women and minority groups (Figure 12).

1.19 Government has invested significant public resources to implement its framework for promoting diversity, but it is difficult to provide accurate estimates for the sums involved. The large variety of initiatives undertaken by government bodies, and the fact that they are often integrated into mainstream service provision, management and monitoring activities, makes it difficult to isolate and separate the level of resources that have been targeted at addressing the needs of diverse communities from those being used to deliver services more generally. For example, the Bristol Inland Revenue's Business Support Team provides services to local minority ethnic communities as part of its core business activities; resources devoted to serving these communities are not earmarked or clearly separated from the resources devoted to serving other small businesses in their area.

1.20 However, budgetary figures on direct costs attributable to maintaining the framework provide an indication of the sums involved. From our survey, as a rough indication of the costs associated with the delivery part of the framework, we identified 487 specific initiatives. Although these initiatives vary in size and resource requirements, it is clear from the number of diversity initiatives identified that a substantial amount of resource is being deployed towards delivering a broad range of initiatives to meet the needs of diverse customers. In 2002-03, the direct costs associated with co-ordinating strategy across gender, race, disability and civil service workforce representation accounted for over £19 million.¹⁷ For the same year, Government sponsorship of the three Commissions accounted for just under £41 million.¹⁸

¹⁷ Budgetary information from the Disability Unit, Race Equality Unit, Women and Equality Unit, and the Cabinet Office's Corporate Diversity Team.

¹⁸ Budgetary information from the Disability Rights Commission, Equal Opportunities Commission, and the Commission for Racial Equality.

12 Tailoring public services to address diverse needs

Department of Health

- Incidences of diabetes (to be exact, type 2 diabetes) are up to six times more common in people of South Asian descent and up to three times more common in those of African and African-Caribbean descent, compared with the white population. They are also more common in people of Chinese descent and other non-white groups. These differences are recognised in the National Service Framework for Diabetes, which is designed to help centre diabetes services around the needs of individuals.
- While young men are a high risk group, neither death registration nor coroners collect information on sexual orientation, so no robust statistical data on the prevalence of suicide among gay men is currently available. For this reason, young gay men have not been identified as a high risk group in the National Suicide Prevention Strategy. However, due to evidence from studies in other countries, anecdotal evidence, and concerns expressed by lesbian, gay and bisexual groups, the Department are currently in the process of commissioning a literature review to look at this issue.

Department of Work and Pensions

- The Pensions Service has pursued a number of initiatives to refine and target its services to make them more accessible for people with diverse needs. This includes:
- Independent research into the service delivery needs of elderly people from ethnic minorities to help inform the design of service delivery to different groups;
- Use of telephone interpreting facilities to aid communication;
- Leaflets and information products available in eight supported languages, and in large print, Braille and audio-cassette.

Home Office

- Previously, anti-drugs publicity campaigns have tended to address heroin - where users are typically white and male. As patterns of drug misuse have changed, services including communications campaigns have evolved to address the needs of a diverse population. After focused consideration on the diversity of the affected populations, new research and anti-drugs campaigns include using the Frank campaign to communicate to crack cocaine misusers, in a way which takes account of patterns of use in different groups.

Crown Prosecution Service

- Statistically, deaths of subjects in custody are rare occurrences. However, because some have involved members of minority ethnic communities, and have received extensive media coverage, they are politically sensitive. As a result of a community engagement program the Crown Prosecution Services re-prioritised its policies to bring them in line with public priorities for equality.

Department for Education and Skills

- In recognition of its diverse customer needs, the Department has set up a Post-16 Equal Opportunities Policy Team that is responsible for checking that equality and diversity issues are considered in all aspects of post-16 education and learning, including adult learning. For example, its skills strategy considers the impact of training on different groups of people, to improve employment levels across all groups.

Department for Transport

- The Department sponsors a broad programme of research and consultation on issues of age, disability, gender and ethnicity in transport, reducing transport crime (a particular concern of these groups), and reducing social exclusion by improving access and transport links. It has issued advice on good practice (e.g., Women and Public Transport Checklist, The Transport Requirements of Minority Ethnic and Faith Communities, Older Peoples' Audit, Children and Young People Action Plan), which are used to assist planners and providers to design and deliver services that address the varied transport needs of different groups.
- Under Part 5 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Secretary of State has powers to make accessibility regulations for land-based public transport. The Department has introduced the Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 2000 (which apply to new buses and coaches with a carrying capacity of more than 22 used on local and scheduled services). It has also introduced the Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 1998 (for new rail vehicles). Through the accessibility features they stipulate - such as boarding devices and reserved spaces on vehicles for wheelchair users - these regulations are enabling disabled people to travel by public transport more easily, in some cases for the first time.

A National Audit Office examination of how government bodies are delivering public services to a diverse population

1.21 Given the strong social and economic case for recognising diversity, the expected benefits in terms of improvements in service delivery, and the public resources invested in promoting diversity, it is important to have assurance that government bodies are making progress in meeting the challenge of providing services to diverse communities. This report is the first examination of this topic by the National Audit Office and is intended to be forward looking by providing a status report on diversity practice, highlighting existing good practices and lessons, and pointing the way forward.

1.22 Given the constitutional arrangements that exist between Whitehall and the devolved administrations, our examination did not extend to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. However, the functions of some Whitehall departments (such as the Inland Revenue) extend across the UK, while the remits of the Commission for Racial Equality, the Disability Rights Commission, and the Equality Opportunities Commission, extend across Great Britain (though not Northern Ireland). In the light of this, we consulted the National Assembly for Wales and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland for contextual information.

1.23 In conducting this examination, we obtained evidence using a number of methods as detailed in Annex A. A key element of our methodology was a major cross-cutting survey of 131 government bodies which deliver public services to diverse communities. The main aim of the survey was to obtain, for the first time, an inventory of current practice to address diversity issues (**Figure 13**). In the survey, government bodies reported their progress and efforts in identifying and meeting the needs of a diverse population. A detailed analysis of the survey results may be found at www.nao.org.uk and www.rand.org/randeurope/.

1.24 Further detailed evidence in support of the cross-cutting survey included:

- case study examinations of the valuable lessons from diversity initiatives planned and carried out by the Crown Prosecution Service, the Inland Revenue, the Learning and Skills Council, and the National Gallery;
- review of how the governments of Australia, Canada, the Netherlands and Sweden address the challenges of delivering services to their diverse communities within the strands where they are generally regarded as leaders; and
- interviews with key individuals responsible for diversity in government departments and agencies, and stakeholder groups.

The full case studies are in the companion Volume II to this report. Details of our international reviews are available at www.nao.org.uk.

1.25 From the evidence collected, and while recognising that the topic of diversity does not lend itself to precise judgements about value for money in a conventional sense, this report aims to identify the challenges and opportunities faced by departments, and to share innovative thinking and successful solutions. In the following parts of this report we:

- Review the progress made by government bodies in addressing the needs of a diverse community (Part 2);
- Identify characteristics shared by government bodies that are making progress in delivering services to diverse communities with a view to share and promote good practice (Part 3).

13 A survey on equality and diversity of service delivery of central government bodies including: departments, executive agencies, non-departmental public bodies, government offices and special health authorities

This cross-cutting survey was the first attempt to profile the Government's progress in promoting diversity. The findings provided insights into:

- The extent to which diversity of service delivery is important;
- What government bodies are doing to diversify the delivery of the services they provide;
- The determinants of and barriers to success in this area; and
- Factors that differentiate government bodies that believe they are meeting the needs of diverse groups effectively and those that believe they are not.

The survey questionnaire contained 36 questions relating to five key aspects:

- The importance of diversity of service delivery to respondents' organisations;
- Organisational structure and staff composition;
- The formulation and evidence-based evaluation of diversity initiatives;
- The organisation of the customer base; and
- Good practice examples.



PART TWO

Meeting the challenge – steps taken by Government to address the needs of a diverse community



2.1 This part of the report sets out how the Government has sought to achieve diversity in service delivery and what progress it has made in meeting this objective against its framework for promoting equality and diversity, focusing on:

- Legislation designed to address equality and diversity;
- Bodies to promote and enforce equality and diversity;
- Cross-government co-ordination activities;
- Efforts to address the delivery needs of diverse customers.

Legislation designed to address equality and diversity

2.2 Over the last ten years new legislation has introduced rights for women, and disadvantaged and minority groups, by placing specific duties and responsibilities on employers and service providers. Major legislative developments include the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the European Union Framework Directive issued under Article 13 of the Treaty of Amsterdam (**Figure 14**). Given these rapid, widespread and forthcoming legislative changes and the political priorities currently attached to their implementation, government bodies are faced with the challenges of preparing for and meeting the requirements set by these laws.

2.3 Most other comparable countries follow this legislative model, implementing specific acts to address discrimination in a named diversity strand. Canada, however, is an example where key elements of diversity are collectively addressed through one central piece of legislation: the Human Rights Act. The purpose of this Act is to extend the laws to give effect to the principle that all individuals should have equal opportunities, without being hindered by discriminatory practices including those based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex (including discrimination relating to pregnancy or child-birth), sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability, and conviction for which a pardon has been granted.

2.4 The Government sponsors three independent but publicly accountable Commissions, focusing on different diversity strands: the Commission for Racial Equality, the Disability Rights Commission, and the Equal Opportunities Commission (**Figure 15**).²⁰ Their significant size and budgets are in themselves a signal of the Government's commitment to diversity. Their enforcement powers include authority to:

- Conduct formal investigations;
- Serve non-discrimination notices;
- Act over persistent discrimination;
- Assist individuals to bring proceedings in connection with discrimination;
- Issue Codes of Practice.

2.5 More generally, the Commissions seek to tackle discrimination, promote equal opportunities, disseminate successful practice, and keep their founding legislation under review. Their work spans both the public and private sectors. Some functions common to them all include:

- Providing information and advice to people who think they have suffered discrimination;
- Engaging with public bodies, businesses, and organisations from all sectors to promote policies and practices that will help to ensure equal treatment;
- Running campaigns to raise awareness of their role, of the need to overcome discrimination, and of legislative rights and duties;
- Undertaking research into inequality issues;
- Keeping under review the legislation which gives protection against discrimination relating to their diversity strand, and where possible checking relevant new legislation to ensure that it does not discriminate in its application.

The Commission for Racial Equality also has the role of funding other organisations which are concerned with the promotion of equality of opportunity, and of good relations, between persons of different racial groups.

²⁰ These apply to England, Scotland and Wales. Under the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the separate equality bodies in Northern Ireland were merged to form a new Equality Commission, which works alongside the Human Rights Commission for Northern Ireland.

14 Recent and forthcoming legislative changes

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995

- Implemented in phases since its inception in 1995, this Act encompasses rights to employment, access to goods, services, facilities and premises, education, and transport. Since 1996, organisations delivering services have had a duty not to discriminate for reasons related to disability. Since 1999, that duty has been extended to require reasonable adjustments to improve access for disabled people to services. From 1 October 2004 the duty has required reasonable adjustments to physical features of buildings to improve access. The education and transport sections of the Act are also central to ensuring that disabled people are not discriminated against in their access to government services and other services to the public. Thus the Act has implications for change in central government bodies' employment and service delivery practices.

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

- The Act places a general duty on public bodies to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups. This is applicable to all public functions, including employment, training, education, housing, public appointments, regulation and enforcement, and the provision of goods, facilities and services.
- Public bodies responsible for delivering important public services have had to undertake specific duties relating to the Act, such as preparing and publishing a Race Equality Scheme by 2002. In these schemes, public bodies are required to monitor the effects of their policies on racial equality and to publish the results, and to detail the functions and policies relevant to meeting their duties in areas of policy-making and service delivery.
- This legislation has led central government bodies to re-evaluate how they deliver services in light of the racial diversity of their customers, and prompted efforts to 'diversity-proof' services and policies throughout departments. The statutory duties brought in by this Act (as well as those in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998), have been regarded as setting a precedent for the other five diversity strands, as is, for instance, being investigated by the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Diversity Forum.¹⁹

The EU Race Directive

- The EU Directive on Race (2000/43) is concerned with the principle of equal treatment between persons, irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, in the areas of employment, social protection, social advantage, education and access to and supply of, goods and services which are available to the public, including housing.

The European Union Employment Directive

- European Council Directive 2000/78/EC directive prohibits discrimination in employment and occupation in relation to sexual orientation, and religion and belief (2003). The phased directive calls for the future elimination of discrimination in relation to disability (2004) and age (2006).

The Equal Treatment (Amendment) Directive

- The European Equal Treatment Directive already provides that there should be no discrimination on grounds of sex, either directly or indirectly, nor by reference to marital or family status, in access to employment, training, working conditions, promotion or dismissal. The Equal Treatment (Amendment) Directive (2002/73) amends this most importantly by adding a definition of "sexual harassment" and of "harassment". The UK is required to implement the changes required by the Directive by September 2005.

Duty to promote gender equality

- The 2004 White Paper on the proposed Commission for Equality and Human Rights confirmed that the Government would start detailed, preparatory work on the nature and shape of a new statutory duty on public bodies to promote gender equality. This duty will oblige public bodies to ensure that their actions (either as employers or service providers) will promote equality of opportunity between women and men and make public services more responsive to their different needs.

Revised Disability Discrimination Act

- The Government is committed to further extending and strengthening the Disability Discrimination Act during the lifetime of the present Parliament. The revised Act would introduce major reforms in respect of access to transport vehicles, the letting of premises, private clubs and the definition of disability. It would also introduce a positive duty on public sector bodies to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people, paralleling the duty which already exists on race.

¹⁹ Equal Opportunities Commission, 2002, Promoting Gender Equality in the Public Sector, Working Paper Series No. 2; Equality and Diversity Forum, 2003, Invitation to tender for a research paper on the examination of the positive duty to promote equality across the six equality strands.

15 Roles and resources of the statutory Commissions

Body	Sponsoring department	Focus	Staff employed (2003-04)	Government funding 2003-04 (£ million)
Disability Rights Commission	Department for Work and Pensions	Stop discrimination against and promote equality of opportunity for disabled people.	186	15
Equal Opportunities Commission	Department of Trade and Industry	Eliminate gender discrimination and promote equal opportunities.	121	8
Commission for Racial Equality	Home Office	Tackle racial discrimination, and promote racial equality and good race relations.	223	20

Source: Disability Rights Commission; Equal Opportunities Commission Annual Report 2002-03, <http://www.eoc.org.uk/cseng/abouteoc/annualreport2003.pdf>; and Commission for Racial Equality Annual Report 2002, http://www.cre.gov.uk/pdfs/ar02_main.pdf.

2.6 In October 2003, a parliamentary written statement by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and Minister for Women and Equality, announced the Government's plans for a single equality body for Great Britain. In May 2004, the Government published its White Paper on setting up a single equality and human rights body²¹ - the Commission for Equality and Human Rights. It is not yet clear when the new single commission will come into operation, but it is likely that the current equality bodies will continue their work until at least late 2006.

Cross-government co-ordination activities

2.7 The Government has introduced administrative procedures and processes within the Civil Service, over and above existing departmental structures, that facilitate efforts to meet equality and diversity objectives. This has included new committees and posts at high levels within Government and civil service:

- At ministerial levels, these include the appointment of Ministers for Women and a Minister for Disabled people, in addition to the post of Minister for Race, Community Policy and Civil Renewal;
- New committees such as the Inter-Ministerial Group on Older People, and on Ethnic Minorities in the Labour Market;

- The Civil Service Management Board sub-group on Equality and Diversity sets corporate objectives for diversity in the Civil Service. These are being taken forward by a new network of senior Diversity Champions across departments and agencies. This network is chaired by the Civil Service Diversity Champion, Martin Narey;
- Other high profile appointments, including the new Civil Service Adviser on Diversity, Waqar Azmi, who took up his post in October 2004.

2.8 Formal co-ordination of the development and implementation of legislation exists across a matrix of departments with lead responsibility for driving forward the Government's priorities on particular strands of diversity (**Figure 16**).

2.9 The DTI not only reports to the Minister for Women on gender related issues, but also has a responsibility for co-ordinating the policy and bill work on civil partnerships and the development of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights. The Cabinet Office has overall responsibility for co-ordinating workforce diversity in the Civil Service. However, staff responsible for diversity in government bodies whom we spoke to acknowledged the need for closer working and greater sharing of best practice between departments. Where collaboration was reported across departments, it was largely initiated as a result of legislative practices directed by the departments that have lead responsibility for specific diversity strands (**Figure 17**).

21 Fairness for All: A New Commission for Equality and Human Rights (Cm 6185).

16 Lead responsibility by strand and government department

	Department of Trade and Industry		Home Office			Department for Work and Pensions	
	Employment Relations	Women and Equality Unit	Race Equality Unit	Community Cohesion Unit	Faith Communities Unit	Disability and Carers Directorate	Adult Disadvantage Division
Gender		X					
Race	X		X	X			
Religion & belief	X				X		
Disability						X	
Age	X						X
Sexual orientation	X	X					

NOTE

The Cabinet Office has overall responsibility for workforce diversity in the civil service. The Human Rights Unit at the Department for Constitutional Affairs takes lead responsibility for holistic human rights matters. The Disability and Carers Directorate has responsibility for taking forward proposals for disability discrimination legislation.

17 Examples of collaboration across departments

Inland Revenue

- The Revenue’s ‘Business Through Diversity Team’ has provided support and advice to other departments in helping with one-off projects.
- The Cabinet Office has organised presentations from the Equality and Diversity Unit to other departments and senior teams.

Department for Education and Skills

- Considerable collaboration exists with other departments in the drafting of legislative proposals.
- Facilitated through informal channels, the Department’s ‘Fair Way’ web-tool has aided other departments in developing policy that is sensitive to equality considerations.

Department for Work and Pensions

- The Department works closely with colleagues across government, including the Department of Health on issues relating to access to goods and services under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). The National Health Service, for example, is subject to the DDA both as a service provider and employer. The Unit also chairs a cross government group of officials (the Inter Departmental Group on Disability) on which DH are represented.
- Other examples include collaboration with the Department for Education and Skills (regarding special needs education), Department for Transport (with respect to access to and usability of transport), and Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (in relation to local planning standards and access to parks and play spaces).

Crown Prosecution Service

- The CPS gives advice and guidance on equality and diversity issues to other departments on an ad hoc basis.
- The CPS contributes to seminars and conferences for other central government departments on equality and diversity.
- The CPS works closely with a range of co-ordinating bodies including the Criminal Justice System Race Unit based in the Home Office.

Department of Trade and Industry

- The DTI’s Women and Equality Unit provides joint secretariat support for the Cabinet sub-committee on Equality.
- Work relating to the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights has been taken forward through a collaborative framework involving both government officials and a Task Force of external stakeholders, chaired by Jacqui Smith, the Deputy Minister for Women and Equality. The Task Force has produced a summary of its discussions up to 1 April 2004 on the Women and Equality Unit website: <http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk>.
- The Employment Relations division works with other government departments on legislation covering issues relating to employment rights and workers’ pay and conditions. It also negotiates and implements European employment directives; and promotes workplace partnership and effective employment relations with the aim of improving the quality of working life as well as the competitiveness of UK organisations.

2.10 Our international reviews revealed that deliberate co-operation across departments is a key feature of the successful provision of services to meet diverse customer needs (**Figure 18**). The UK compares well with international good practice in embracing ministerial co-ordination and in its plans to create a single Commission for Equality and Human Rights, and to some extent in developing broad strategies and principles of action in the interests of diverse communities. However, there is room for significant improvement in creating cross-departmental networks and committees to ensure co-operation and joined-up effort in delivering services to diverse communities.

Efforts to address the service delivery needs of diverse customers

2.11 Government bodies' approach to service delivery to meet the needs of diverse customers has changed considerably over the last five years. For example, in our survey, of the 64 government bodies that report a service delivery focus on disabled customers, over 90 per cent stated that their approach to addressing diverse delivery needs has changed over the last five years. The general nature of changes in approach includes increased staff resources, awareness, and training; and the monitoring of progress. Also, in line with a general trend towards more customer focused services, there has been a move towards greater customer involvement in service design and delivery, raising awareness through publicity campaigns and more locally responsive initiatives.

2.12 In four of the six strands (gender, age, disability, and race), the majority of surveyed bodies felt they were meeting the needs of diverse customers "satisfactorily" or better, with few bodies reporting that they met these needs poorly (**Figure 19**). However, the number which felt they were meeting diverse needs "very well" is limited: for example, gender fares best of all strands here, but even so only 22 per cent report meeting the needs associated with this strand "very well". It is notable that the diversity strands do not fare equally well; for example, government bodies consider they are meeting the needs associated with religion and belief and sexual orientation considerably less well than the other strands. Some 71 per cent of bodies did not know or did not state how well they were doing on sexual orientation.

18 Co-ordination structures found in the international reviews

Ministerial co-ordination

Some countries have a cabinet level minister charged with ensuring the interests of a particular diversity strand are represented. For example, in Sweden there is a Gender Equality Minister and in Australia there is a Minister for Health and Ageing.

Co-ordination through a non-departmental commission

The Canadian government provides a strong example of cross-departmental attention to diversity. Canada has one of the world's most prominent National Human Rights Commissions (NHRC), supported by an extensive system of provincial human rights commissions. Its mandate is threefold: to process individual complaints; to promote human rights and principles of equality; and to assist in reducing barriers to equality, especially in education and access to social services. Administration of these policies is the responsibility of the Chief Commissioner Minister for the Status of Women, who is also Minister for Multiculturalism.

Co-ordination through a broad strategy

High level leadership is also often provided in the form of over-arching strategies that identify the main challenges, objectives and principles of action that should be taken in the interests of diverse communities. A prominent example of this is the National Strategy for an Ageing Australia. The Strategy was formulated after extensive consultations amongst Commonwealth, State and Territory governments. It identifies the responsibilities of governments, businesses, community organisations and individuals in meeting the challenges of an ageing population and thereby relates to several areas of service provision, including health care, housing and pensions. This strategy helps keep the relevant issues on the agenda and provides a basis for designing diverse services.

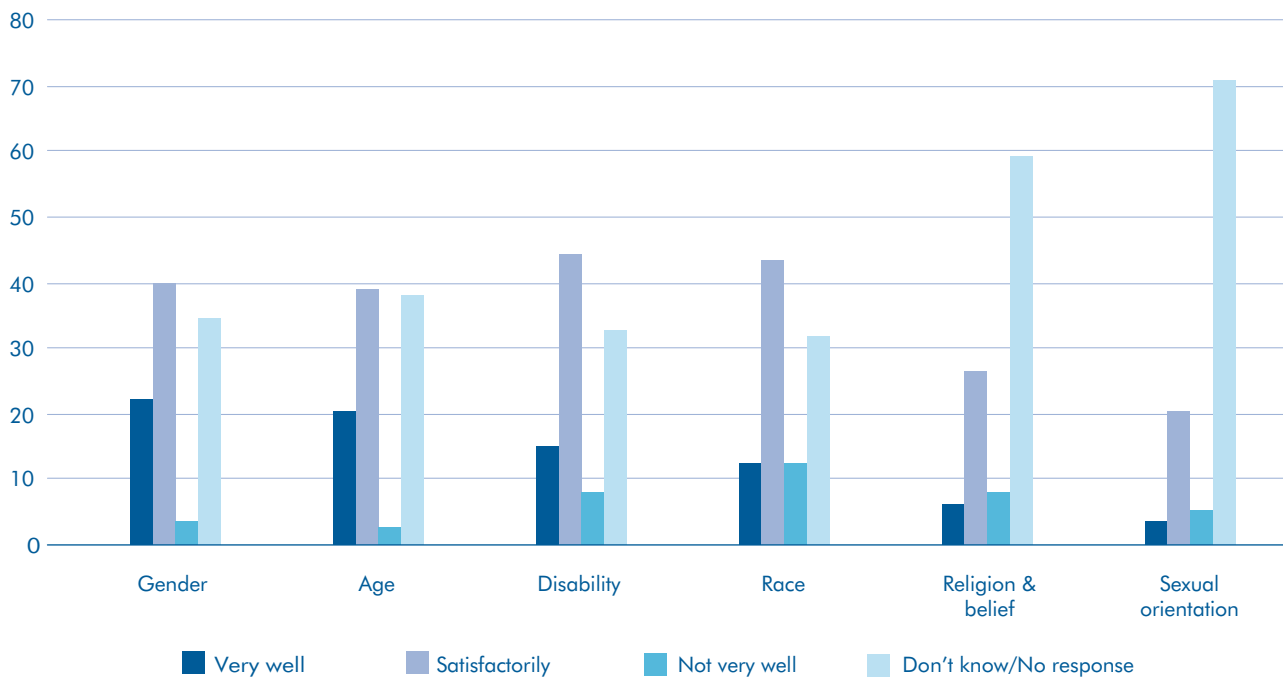
Co-ordination through cross-departmental networks and committees

Other countries create network structures to provide inter-departmental co-ordination. For example, the Dutch Working Group on National Policy and Homosexuality consists of representatives of ten government departments. It is intended to facilitate the development of proposals and the co-ordination of policy.

19 How well government bodies assess their performance in meeting diverse customer needs

Percentage of government bodies that responded to the question “How well does your organisation deliver services to meet the needs of customers in each of the diversity strands?” by answering ‘Very well’, ‘Satisfactorily’, ‘Not very well’, or ‘Don’t know/No response’. For example, 22% of government bodies reported that their services meet the needs of gender ‘very well’, whereas just over 3% reported that their services met the needs of sexual orientation ‘very well’.

Percentage (%)



Source: NAO/RAND Europe survey

2.13 Government bodies which meet the needs of customers very well in one of the diversity strands tend also to report doing so for other strands. For example, from our survey we found that those that report meeting the needs of gender also report meeting the needs of age. This suggests there may be certain factors that enable government bodies to meet the needs of several diversity strands (which we will discuss in Part 3), and that developing the ability to identify and respond to different needs associated with one strand also helps organisations meet the different needs of other strands.

2.14 Overall, we found that government bodies have in place different structures, processes and approaches for promoting equality and diversity in service delivery, and are at different stages of development and experimentation. This variation reflects several factors, including the differing service delivery needs identified,

the targets set, the resources committed, and the progress made. The remainder of this section sets out the efforts and progress made by government bodies in their attempt to address the needs of diverse customers by asking:

- What information do government bodies have on the diverse make-up and needs of their customers?
- How are targets used to measure performance in delivering services to diverse customers?
- What role does leadership play in promoting diversity in service delivery?
- How do government bodies embed diversity in service delivery?
- How do government bodies evaluate and learn from their experiences?

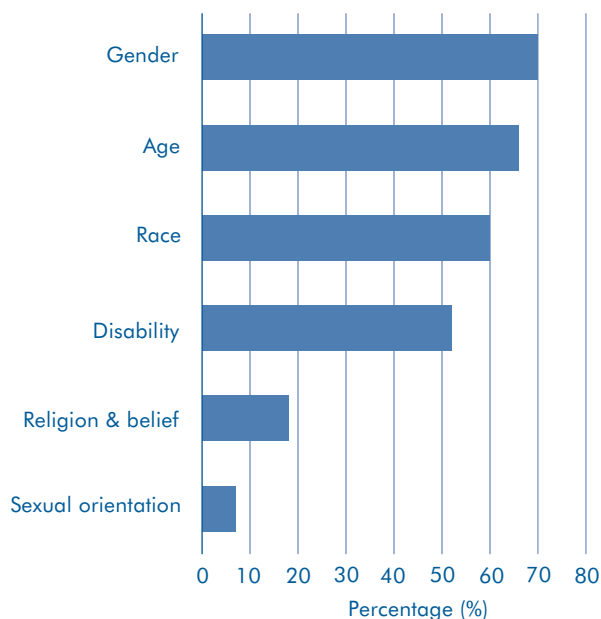
What information do government bodies have on the diverse make-up and needs of their customers?

2.15 Where different service delivery needs are identified, the extent of this need must also be established. For this, it is essential for government bodies to have adequate information on the make-up and diverse composition of their entire customer base; with this information, they can begin to identify and target customer groups. In our survey we asked government bodies whether quantitative information regarding the composition of their customer population was available to them. The availability of information varied widely according to diversity strands, and there were particular gaps (**Figure 20**). For religion and belief and sexual orientation, over 80 per cent of bodies do not have quantitative information on their customers. However, even in the best case, for gender, just under one third do not have quantitative information on their customer composition. Furthermore, over half of government bodies have some concerns about the reliability of their data across all diversity strands.

2.16 Even where there is a good baseline understanding of the customer population at large it does not follow that the service delivery needs of different groups will be identified or that, indeed, they have different needs. We found that government bodies see very different service delivery needs for disability, age and race and less so for religion and belief, gender, and sexual orientation (**Figure 21**). However, without adequate information on the composition and service delivery needs of their entire customer base, government bodies are unlikely to know whether this view is valid.

20 Extent to which government bodies have baseline customer information

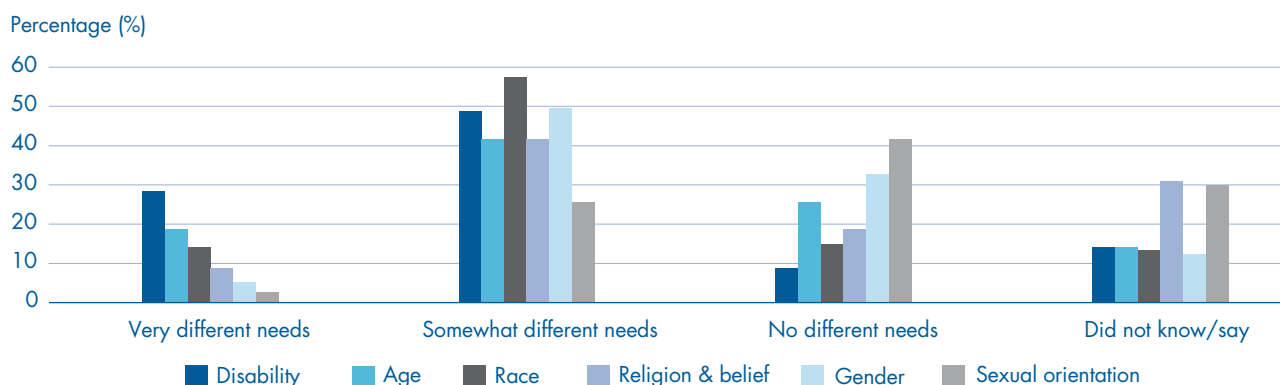
Percentage of government bodies that have information available to them regarding the composition of their customer population. For example, 70% of government bodies reported that quantitative information on the gender characteristics of their customers was available to them, whereas just over 8% reported that quantitative information was available on the sexual orientation of their customers.



Source: NAO/RAND Europe survey

21 "To what extent do customers from these diversity strands have different needs regarding the services provided by your organisation?"

For each strand, the percentage of government bodies that responded: "To what extent do customers from these diversity strands have different needs regarding the services provided by your organisation?" by answering 'very different needs', 'somewhat different needs', 'no different needs', 'don't know', or gave no response. For example, 28% of government bodies thought that their disabled customers have 'very different needs', whereas only 3% reported 'very different needs' with regards to the sexual orientation of their customers.



Source: NAO/RAND Europe survey

2.17 Currently, government bodies’ efforts to promote fair and effective delivery of services are focused primarily on race and disability (Figure 22), reflecting the thrust of current legislation, and the fact that most bodies have relatively more information about, and recognise the different needs associated with, these strands. However, even though bodies are generally well informed about age profiles and recognise age-specific needs for public services, age features less prominently in government bodies’ main priorities. This may conceivably change, once forthcoming legislation on age comes into effect.

2.18 We found that government bodies are using various channels to identify the needs of customers, including national organisations such as the Law Society and the Royal National Institute of the Blind, and local stakeholder or interest groups such as the Bristol and Avon Chinese Women’s Group. For example, among a broad range of factors involved in helping to formulate policies around 70 per cent of government bodies reported using stakeholder groups. Feedback from their own frontline staff was also identified as an important channel of information; for example, almost half of the government bodies we surveyed use feedback from frontline staff to understand the needs of their disabled customers. However, although several information channels are available to government bodies, we found that they tend to rely on one channel alone to identify customer needs. For example, of the 72 government bodies consulting on gender specific needs, more than half use a single channel to source their information.

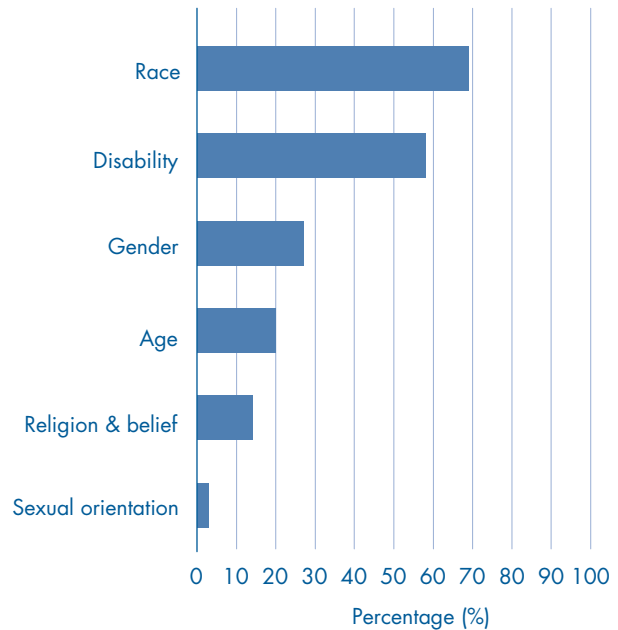
How are targets used to measure performance in delivering services to diverse customers?

2.19 Some departments have clear Public Service Agreement targets that explicitly focus on one or more strands of diversity. Such targets complement legislative changes: for example, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act places a statutory requirement on public bodies to promote equality and diversity in all areas; this obviously includes service delivery. More generally, just under three quarters of government bodies now have diversity specific goals which are meant to have at least as much priority as other business objectives.

2.20 While departments are moving forward towards delivery of their Public Service Agreement targets, it is difficult to compare progress across strands and departments since the targets and indicators differ, and data are not yet available on some of the more recent measures (Figure 23).

22 Diversity strands that are the current primary focuses of service delivery

Response to request: “Name the two diversity strands considered to be the most important foci of your organisation’s current efforts to ensure fair and effective delivery of services”. For example, 69% of government bodies voted that race was one of their top two diversity priorities, whereas only 3% reported sexual orientation as being one of their top two priorities.



Source: NAO/RAND Europe survey

2.21 Following discussions between the Commission for Racial Equality, the Home Office, and HM Treasury, race equality has recently been more effectively integrated into the PSA target regime. As part of the 2004 Spending Review, a new requirement has been introduced for departments to monitor and annually report performance in tackling race inequalities against key PSA targets over 2005 to 2008. This requirement has been linked to mainstream departmental targets in educational attainment, access to higher education, housing supply and housing conditions, health inequalities, and public confidence in the Criminal Justice System. This is in addition to those PSA targets which have a specific race equality element to them, such as the Department of Work and Pension’s employment rate target for ethnic minorities. The Home Office will report annually on progress and has its own targets to reduce perceptions of racial discrimination in public service outcomes and in employment; and an increase in perceptions of community cohesion where the risk of the disturbance is high.

23 Examples of Public Service Agreement targets linked to equality and diversity in service delivery

Department	Target(s)	Indications of progress against targets
Department for Constitutional Affairs	To increase year on year the number of people who receive suitable assistance in priority areas of law involving fundamental rights or social exclusion.	Over 2002-03 to 2003-04, there has been an increase in the percentage of successful attempts to obtain suitable assistance in priority areas of law. For 'concluded' problems this has risen from 31.2% to 33.9%; for 'ongoing' problems it has increased from 26.8% to 39.6%.
Department of Health	To improve the quality of life and independence of older people so that they can live at home wherever possible. To improve the life outcomes of adults and children with mental health problems through year on year improvements in access to services and to reduce mortality rates from suicide and undetermined injury.	By 2003 the number of those supported intensively at home had increased to 29% of those supported by social services at home or in residential care in relation to a target of 30%. Death rates from intentional self harm and undetermined injury have fluctuated but have fallen slightly over the four year period from 1998 to 2002 to 8.9 per 100,000. Target of 7.5 per 100,000 by 2010.
Department for Transport	To improve accessibility, increase the percentage of vehicles with wheelchair access.	Target expressed as 50% overall by 2010 although, since 31 December 2000, all new buses and coaches used on local and scheduled services have had to meet accessibility legislation. Recent performance shows a rise in accessible vehicles to 33% of the fleet nationwide.
Department for Work and Pensions	Over three years to Spring 2006 to increase employment rate of disadvantaged groups, including ethnic minorities, and people aged 50 and over, and significantly reduce differences between their rate of employment and overall rate.	Difference in the employment rate of people aged 50 and over and that of the overall rate has fallen from around 8% in 2000 to around 5% in 2003; the difference for ethnic minority groups has only fallen slightly from 17.1% in 2001 to 16.6% in 2003.
Home Office and Crown Prosecution Service (shared targets contributing to improving Criminal Justice System (CJS))	To improve the level of public confidence in the CJS including that of ethnic minority communities. To support strong and active communities in which people of all races and backgrounds are valued and participate on equal terms. To bring about measurable improvements in race equality and cohesion across a range of indicators.	Performance shows for example that in relation to 2004 target of 7% in race equality employment in the police service, levels of 3.8% and 2.9% had been achieved overall and for officers specifically.

23 Examples of Public Service Agreement targets linked to equality and diversity in service delivery continued

Department of Trade and Industry

By 2006 to bring about measurable improvements in gender equality across a range of indicators.

Much of delivery rests with other Government Departments. Proxy data on equal pay suggests that the pay gap for both full and part time working has narrowed slightly.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport

To increase significantly the take up of cultural and sporting opportunities by new users aged 20 and above and from priority groups.

Among the individual targets which underlie the Department's PSA is a target for increasing the visits to DCMS-sponsored museums by people from less privileged backgrounds by 8 per cent over three years (from April 2003 to March 2006). In 2003-04, this rate of increase was exceeded; in 2004-05, the trend appears to be continuing.

In the first two years after the introduction of free admission in DCMS-sponsored museums (2002-03 and 2003-04) the number of visits by people from less privileged backgrounds increased by 29%.

Source: <http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/performance/index.cfm>, last accessed 9 June 2004; and Department for Constitutional Affairs, Departmental Report 2003-04, www.dca.gov.uk/dept/report2004/01.htm. DCMS Annual Report 2004, http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive_2004/Annual_Report_2004.htm; and email from DCMS, 17 November 2004.

What role does leadership play in promoting diversity in service delivery?

2.22 There is evidence that increased government focus on diversity has raised the importance of diversity issues in senior decision making in government bodies. For example, from our survey, we found that:

- 70 per cent of government bodies have appointed someone with specific responsibility for equality and diversity in service delivery. However, only 35 per cent of bodies hold team meetings where this topic is often on the agenda.
- 78 per cent of government bodies have board level representation of issues relating to diversity of service delivery, and 50 per cent have diversity champions at board level (**Figure 24**). However, only 23 per cent of government bodies have "often" had diversity of service delivery on the agenda at board meetings in the past year, although a further 63 per cent have had an "occasional" appearance.

How do government bodies embed diversity in service delivery?

2.23 Our survey identified a wide range of activities undertaken by government bodies to embed diversity practices in service delivery (**Figure 25**).

2.24 Training at all levels is important to equip staff with the skills to help them understand and respond appropriately to the diversity of their colleagues and the customers they serve. Almost 90 per cent of the government bodies surveyed provide at least some diversity related training and professional development opportunities to staff, including invited speakers, internal and external seminars and conferences, and internal and external training courses (**Figure 26**). However, there is also a considerable amount of variation among respondents in the number and types of training opportunities offered, and the categories of staff to whom these opportunities are offered (senior staff, middle managers and/or other staff). Internal training courses, offered by 73 per cent of the government bodies surveyed, and internal conferences and seminars, offered by 62 per cent, are the most commonly offered types of training opportunities; 50 per cent also offer training in the form of conferences and seminars run by other government bodies.

24 Examples of board level representation on diversity

Department for Education and Skills

- The Equality and Diversity Unit is represented at a high level in the Department: the Unit Head reports to the board and ministers, and provides a support function to directors in embedding equality in their policies, whether external or internal. Four board members each sponsor equality advisory groups which are a medium for discussion of the Department's personnel policies on gender, race, sexual orientation and disability issues.

Crown Prosecution Service

- The Equality and Diversity Unit reports directly to the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) and the Chief Executive, where the Head is a board member. The work in this area is championed by the DPP, ensuring top-level commitment.
- Responsibilities are clearly divided among a Senior Members Advisory Group on Diversity, 11 Regional Equality Officers, a Diversity Accountability Committee, Area Equality Committees, and local Staff Networks.

The Department for Transport

- The Permanent Secretary is the Department's Diversity Champion, giving a clear top-down commitment to equality. The Department's Mobility and Inclusion Unit is responsible for embedding equality in the Department's external policies, whilst the Equality and Diversity Unit is responsible for embedding equality within employment policies and practices. The Heads of both Units report to the Board and to Ministers.

Home Office

- Derrick Anderson, a non executive director, is the Diversity Champion on the Home Office Board; the Permanent Secretary has a Race Adviser who reports directly to him in that role.

25 Typical activities to embed diversity in service delivery

Customer-focused

- Plans to integrate diversity in service delivery into the organisation's business activities;
- Research, monitoring and consultation to determine customers' needs;
- Measures to facilitate access to services for diverse customers (for example, access to buildings for the disabled, providing services in a range of languages, organising local surgeries for members of communities who would otherwise not make use of services). Measures to facilitate access are directed largely, but not exclusively, towards the disability strand.

Workforce-focused

Mostly directed towards the race and disability strands, and including:

- Training programmes to inform staff of diversity issues;
- Recruitment initiatives that promote diversity in the workforce;
- Adaptation of working conditions to suit diverse staff.

26 Inland Revenue training programmes addressing diversity of service delivery

There are various training programmes that have a diversity focus. For example, during 2001-2002, all Inland Revenue's 8,000 managers attended 'Diversity Training' by participating in workshops. The internal training programme also includes a number of diversity learning products that people can attend as part of their personal development plans. Other "one-off" initiatives have also taken place, e.g. culture awareness events. There are also other specific training courses on cultural awareness.

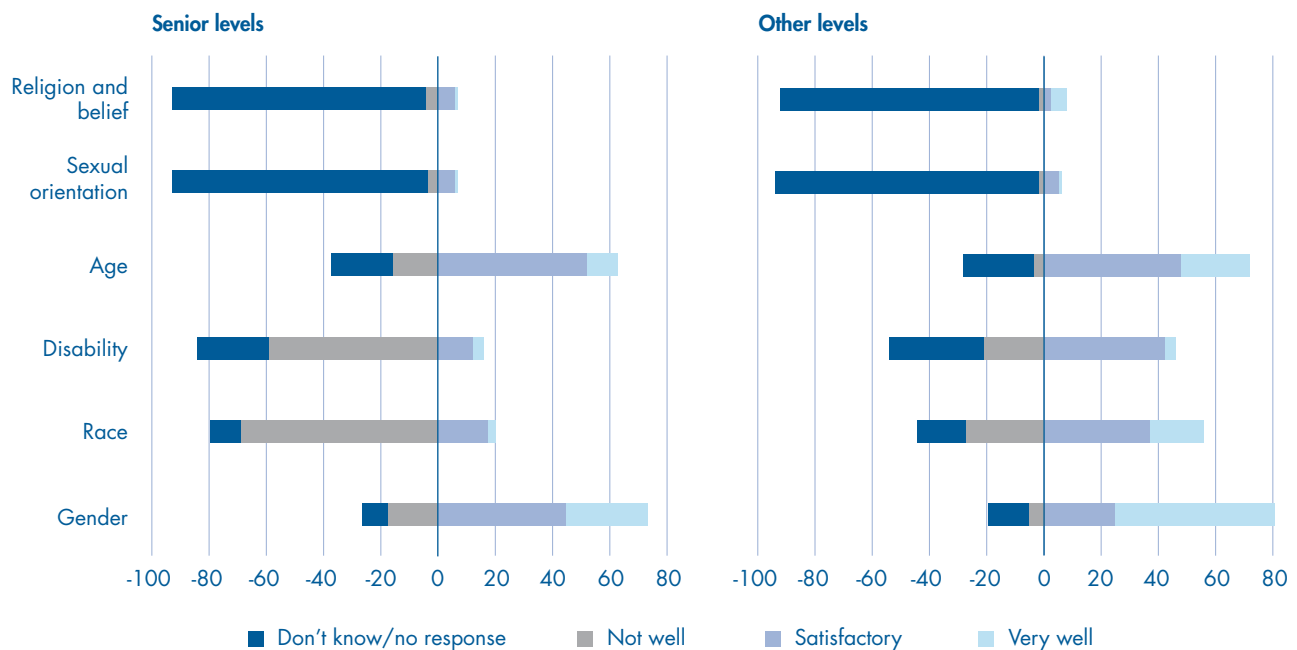
All staff participate in a 'Core Purpose' programme, which is run by the Marketing and Communications Unit. The programme addresses the image and brand of the Revenue and is rolled out periodically in a modular format. Although the programme is not labelled as a diversity initiative, the topics addressed - such as relationships with customers - are integral to incorporating diversity principles into the core of the business.

2.25 Cross-government training is available for staff and managers across all departments to draw on. CMPS, the government’s learning and development organisation, provides a range of courses focusing on diversity, as well as the Diversity Excellence Model, a strategic business tool that helps organisations to evaluate their approach to delivering to a diverse society. Other training programmes are focused on increasing the proportion of underrepresented staff at senior levels of the civil service, including cross-cutting leadership development programmes designed for disabled and ethnic minority staff with the potential to reach senior grades. In 2003, 26 disabled staff participated in the Disability Bursary Scheme²² for Disabled Staff and 27 ethnic minority staff were selected for the Pathways²³ programme. Although these schemes are administered by the Cabinet Office, in order to increase representation among the 4510 Senior Civil Service staff, the participants are funded by a range of departments.

2.26 In our survey, over 70 per cent of government bodies stated that it is important for their internal staff composition to reflect to some degree the diversity of customers served.²⁴ However, the extent to which the civil service workforce reflects the diverse composition of their customer population varies across strands and grades (Figure 27). At senior levels, the civil service is not very representative in terms of the disabled and minority ethnic people that it employs, but is making progress on age and gender. For all four strands, the Government fairs better at other levels. Not surprisingly, given the often very private nature of sexual orientation and religion and belief, over 80 per cent of government bodies did not know how representative they were at both senior and other levels.

27 Government bodies’ self-assessment of how well their staff reflect the diverse composition of their customer population at senior levels and other levels

The percentage of government bodies that responded ‘very well’, ‘satisfactorily’, ‘not well’ or ‘don’t know’ when asked ‘To what extent does the composition of your staff reflect the diverse composition of customer population?’ at senior levels and at other levels for the six diversity strands. For example: on race, 21 per cent of bodies reported performing “very well” for “other levels”, while 3 per cent reported performing “very well” at “senior levels”.



Source: NAO/RAND Europe

22 Set up in 1997 to provide funding for a two-year programme of career training and development for disabled civil servants with the potential to reach senior grades. To fund one bursary costs £10,000.
 23 Launched in 2001 to provide funding for a two-year leadership programme to identify and develop senior managers from ethnic minorities with the potential to reach the senior civil service in the short term. To fund one bursary costs over £15,000.
 24 Government bodies were asked to rank on a scale of 1 (not important) to 5 (very important) ‘How important is it to meeting the needs of diverse customer populations, that internal staff composition reflects to some degree the diversity among your organisation’s focal population?’ 73 per cent ranked the importance as being 4 or 5.

2.27 The differing approaches to embedding diversity, including customer-focused and workforce-focused activities, have different resource demands placed on them. For example, there is considerable variation among the 79 government bodies that have a Head of Diversity or equivalent person responsible for service delivery in terms of the responsible individuals' reporting chain, grade, extent of responsibilities, and the length of time this function has existed. For example, of these 79 government bodies:

- 40 per cent of the roles are held by board members or those that report directly to the board;
- 61 per cent of the roles are held by Senior Civil Servants, 39 per cent by those at other grades;
- 16 per cent have as many as 20 or more full time equivalent staff reporting to them regarding diversity of service delivery, compared to 37 per cent that only employed between 1-5 staff;
- 61 per cent of the roles also have responsibility for internal workforce diversity, with 19 per cent of the roles located in the human resources department or equivalent;
- 43 per cent have been in operation for 3 or more years.

Although this variation reflects, to some extent, the differing needs of government bodies, it is also an indication of their varying commitment to diversity as measured by the amount of resources invested.

How do government bodies evaluate and learn from progress?

2.28 Evaluation and sharing of lessons are key aspects of making continuous improvements. In our survey we asked government bodies whether they evaluated their initiatives in the area of diversity of service delivery. In the 100 cases where this question was applicable, 16 responded "always"; 71, "sometimes"; and 13, "never". We found that of those who at least evaluate "sometimes", the majority carry out both internal and external evaluations using process evaluations, customer surveys and focus groups. More than half evaluate using two or more methods.

2.29 To get an indication of how much learning took place through the sharing of experiences within the organisation, we asked survey respondents to what extent they agreed with the statement: "experiences with new diversity of service delivery initiatives are shared throughout the organisation". Half of the government bodies surveyed agreed with this statement, indicating that some sharing of experiences took place; but 15 per cent disagreed. However, 67 per cent of them were able to suggest ways in which information on this topic could be better shared within their organisation, including: internal forums such as board meetings; staff discussion groups and networks; and internal publications such as intranet, newsletter and notice boards.

PART THREE

Requirements for addressing diversity and equality in service delivery



3.1 Drawing on the results of our survey, case studies and international reviews, this part sets out four key aspects of managing diversity in service delivery. Generally, these are not unique to addressing diversity, but instead correspond to good business practices that support overall performance, which all government bodies need to follow:

- Identifying and engaging with diverse customers;
- Setting clear diversity targets and empowering the workforce;
- Embedding diversity into the delivery of public services through organisational structure, workforce representation and resources;
- Evaluating performance and sharing lessons.

Identifying and engaging with diverse customers

3.2 To tailor services to a diverse population, government bodies must first have:

- Adequate baseline information on the nature of the customer base;
- Sustained consultations with stakeholders to identify differing service delivery needs that may exist across diverse customer groups.

(i) Adequate baseline information on the nature of the customer base

3.3 Information on the make-up of the customer base is necessary to establish, in the first instance, the extent of customer diversity. Although our survey did not draw direct links between the availability of quantitative data on the customer population and the degree to which service delivery needs are met, in four of the six strands, where one strand fared better than the next for knowledge of the customer population, they did the same for service delivery. Moreover, some 25 per cent of government bodies identified a lack of information on customers and their needs as one of the main barriers to success of initiatives regarding diversity of service delivery.

3.4 Armed with comprehensive information on the customer base, government bodies can start to identify the various service delivery needs associated with differing customer groups. For example, in order for the Bristol based Inland Revenue Business Support Team to advise all businesses effectively, they first needed to establish the make-up of the small and medium sized businesses in the Bristol area. They were then, and only then, able to investigate whether these communities were being served appropriately, and if not, how service delivery could be tailored to meet their needs.

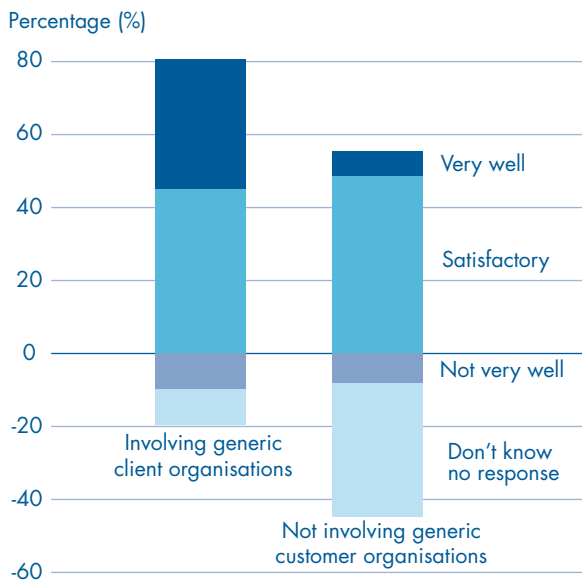
3.5 Government bodies can gather basic information on the make-up of their customer base from several sources; but more detailed service-specific data on their customer base, including those groups that are currently not served adequately, must be collected through their own research. There is no one central government body that collects and compiles a comprehensive set of diversity related data. However, the Office for National Statistics provides overall national population statistics through its census and Labour Force Surveys, and the government departments that take lead responsibility across the strands have access to data sources that are specific to their strands.

(ii) Sustained consultations with stakeholders to identify customers’ needs

3.6 Government bodies which reported performing very well in diversifying service delivery often collaborated with a combination of stakeholder groups, including customers themselves, and expert groups. Such collaboration allows customer needs to be identified and defined. For example, regarding delivering to the specific needs of disabled people, government bodies working with organisations representing the interests of the disabled were much more likely to report meeting the particular needs of this group (Figure 28).

28 More government bodies report meeting the needs of disabled customers very well when they involve customer representative groups in identifying these needs

Extent to which respondents believe they are meeting the needs of the disability strand.



Source: NAO/RAND Europe survey

3.7 In designing diversity initiatives, government bodies need to examine the present relationships that exist between staff and customers, and consider the behaviour and perceptions they need to change within these groups. We found, for example, that in the process of working closely with customers to design the delivery of services to meet customer needs, government bodies reduce the considerable social distance that often exists between them and their customers (Figure 29).

3.8 To get the most out of consultation, government departments need to:

Engage with stakeholders at an early stage, but after sufficient preparation. For example, the Department for Transport’s formulation of regulations for access to rail, bus and coach services for disabled people is an example where the early involvement of stakeholders strengthened the development of policy. The regulations were drawn up in discussion with the transport industries and with the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee representing users. This inclusive approach meant that all perspectives were addressed at an early stage, leading to positive responses during the public consultation and to a reduced number of disputes over interpretation.

Engage with a wide range of key stakeholders and expert groups to understand the breadth and depth of customers’ needs, even within a given diversity strand, particularly where the needs of customer groups are scarcely represented in national forums or are poorly articulated. The Crown Prosecution Service, for example, involved over 100 stakeholder and expert groups in developing its Public Policy Statement on racist and religiously aggravated crime. These consultations included both umbrella organisations and specific faith groups at national and regional levels. The wide engagement improved the policy statement considerably, in particular by making it more accessible to the diverse communities to which it is addressed.

Sustain the links established from the design and development of policies and initiatives through to their implementation and review. For example, the Royal National Institute of the Blind remains involved in the evolution and further improvement of the National Gallery’s ‘Art Through Words’ initiative, having worked closely with the Gallery in its early design and development. RNIB is able to assist the Gallery on an ongoing basis by bringing its own experience of successful initiatives in other organisations and its in-depth knowledge of the needs of visually impaired people.

3.9 Government bodies also need to invest in stakeholder groups to develop and sustain strong links with them:

‘[Government] agencies must make an ongoing commitment to build capacity in this [consultation] area and not merely drop in and out to meet their immediate requirements’

Director, Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Racial Equality Council

29 Involving diverse customers in the design of service delivery

Design of 'Art Through Words' initiative to meet the needs of blind and visually impaired participants



"The Archers" by Sir Henry Raeburn, © the National Gallery, London

The National Gallery's 'Art Through Words' initiative was designed and developed in close collaboration with blind and visually impaired participants. Close customer involvement from the very inception to the day-to-day running of the programme allows service delivery to respond to visitors' needs. As a result, the programme involves the Gallery staff making verbal presentations to describe as clearly as possible what a picture looks like. For example, the introductory description of Henry Raeburn's 'The Archers', paints a verbal picture as follows:

"This is a portrait of two brothers, showing them in half-length. The brother on the left stands with his body turned towards us, his head in profile with his nose facing towards the right. He holds a bow and arrow. The bow and arrow occupy the right half of the painting. The string is pulled towards him and he holds his right arm up to pull the string taut, creating a horizontal with his right forearm. This horizontal is continued through the arrow he holds and below the arrow is his extended left arm. His left hand is placed upon the curve of the bow. Standing behind his extended left forearm is the second brother. He faces us and is looking at us. The arrow held by his brother (and the brother's left arm) cuts across the front of his body. The brothers are standing outdoors – there is a faint suggestion of a mountain in the distance and foliage on the left and along the top."

Evidence of the success of this approach to service delivery is that the monthly sessions typically attract 15-20 participants, who regularly take the materials home and repeat the sessions with their families and friends.

Design of the Women's Study Group to meet the needs of ethnic minority women participants



The Women's Study Group at Joseph Chamberlain College in Birmingham was established in 1995, and has a current enrolment of 40. The ideas for course content came primarily from the students instead of the College staff. A history of developing close contact with the local community and listening to their needs is one of the reasons for the success of the Group. Being seen to respond to expressed needs is essential to establishing long-term relationships with stakeholders. The College does so by incorporating requests for particular courses into its development plan; tailoring the content of courses provided by the Women's Study Group; organising the provision of education opportunities so that they respond to students' practical needs; and communicating this to target groups.

In order to establish trust, the College has maintained ongoing contacts with the community by visits to the local mosque and forming a network with current pupils from these communities. In designing the structure and organisation of the courses offered in the Group, teaching staff consider aspects of students' lives, such as the expectations of their families, which would not usually be considered by education providers. In order for this to happen, the staff had to abandon a "traditional" role of authority and expertise and join with the students in defining the nature of the service provided; in doing so the staff reported benefiting from the experience since it provided them with more insights into their students' needs.

Evidence of the success of this approach to service delivery is that 80% of the women who enrolled in 2002 took national examinations in spoken and written English, Numeracy, and Information and Communication Technology.

From our international review, we found that some Governments had formed strong links with stakeholder groups by actively creating or funding independent or voluntary organisations that represent diverse groups. For example:

The Australian Office for the Status of Women provides financial support to four National Secretariats that are charged with collaborating with women's organisations and representing their views to government.

In the Netherlands, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport subsidises a foundation specialised in providing information about psychosocial health care for, among others, the elderly and homosexuals (the Schorerstichting). The foundation is also funded to provide services directly to members of these communities.

Setting clear diversity targets and empowering the workforce

3.10 There are two elements that provide a clear vision and drive for mainstreaming diversity:

Set clear diversity-related objectives and targets that link to Public Service Agreements;

Demonstrate empowering styles of leadership.

(i) Clear objectives and targets

3.11 Clear diversity-related targets encourage people at all organisational levels to take ownership and to allocate resources appropriately. Given clear objectives and targets, linked to Public Service Agreements, departments can work to align these throughout the delivery chain. For example:

The Department for Education and Skills sets the overall parameters, in line with its Public Service Agreements, within which the Learning and Skills Council promotes diversity. The department communicates with and influences the Council through regular contacts, its yearly grant letter, and its response to the Council's equality and diversity report. This cascades down, as local Learning and Skills Councils, guided by the National Council, work with local education and training providers to set objectives and targets that reflect the department's overall Public Service Agreement targets. These objectives and targets that help identify areas for improvement in meeting diverse customers' needs, are set using the LSC's newly developed Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (**Figure 30**).

The Department of Trade and Industry, on the other hand, has to achieve its Public Service Agreement target of bringing about measurable improvements in gender equality by 2006 by influencing other government departments and the private sector, in addition to working with its own agencies. Shared responsibility for delivery means that progress towards this target is measured against a basket of sub-targets covering issues such as voluntary take-up of pay reviews by the private sector; increasing awareness and action on work/life balance options; and increasing the number of women entrepreneurs to the number in comparable countries.

30 Learning and Skills Council's Equality and Diversity Impact Measures

Monitoring of the impact of equality and diversity work undertaken by local Learning and Skills Councils and education and training providers are developed within the framework for Equality and Diversity Impact Measures.* These measures are set for each of the 47 local Learning and Skills Councils in England on the basis of local education, demographic, and socio-economic data. For example, the measures of the Birmingham and Solihull Learning and Skills Council consist of some 25 targets, including a 5% increase in female participation and a 9% increase in participation of people of ethnic minority origin in Work Based Learning. Others aim to close retention and achievement gaps between different groups of learners.

The national Learning and Skills Council provides guidance on the formulation of these measures that states, for example, that they must be both challenging and achievable. These measures are used to focus activities, but not to micro-manage. Local Learning and Skills Councils and education and training providers, including further education colleges, are the main organisations involved in proposing these measures for their area, which are then reviewed and approved by an advisory committee. Having a system where measures are formulated from the bottom-up brings ownership of the targets to the local level. This is a clear example of a partnership approach that promotes equality of opportunity in the delivery of services.

* Source: Learning and Skills Council, 2002, *Equality and Diversity Impact Measures, Equality and Diversity Guidance 2001-2002*

3.12 As in all areas of business, commitment from staff is a key determinant for meeting diversity targets. In this case, incorporating diversity-related goals into individual performance appraisals is an effective way of distributing ownership and accountability to everyone in the organisation. However, our survey results indicate that only half of all government bodies with diversity-specific objectives at the organisational level also evaluate individual staff performance against these objectives.

(ii) Empowering the workforce

3.13 Clear leadership is relevant to many aspects of organisational performance, but our case studies revealed that success in delivering diverse services is helped by a leadership style at all levels of the organisation that empowers staff to identify and respond to different needs by promoting networking, participation, and initiative taking.

3.14 The heads of government bodies need to articulate their messages on diversity and equality clearly, and to support these with appropriate actions so that they are understood by staff and citizens alike. For example, because the Food Standards Agency recognised that Muslim communities consume significantly more mutton than other sections of UK society, the Chairman made it a personal priority to deliver a briefing on scrapie (the sheep equivalent of BSE in cows) to UK Imams (spiritual leaders of Muslim communities).

3.15 Where senior and middle management encourage frontline staff involvement in the formulation and implementation of strategies to improve diversity of service delivery, these strategies are more likely to be successful. For example, awards schemes and other incentives can be helpful ways of: demonstrating the importance attached by management to such work; encouraging participation and innovation; and raising a wider awareness of good practices (**Figure 31**).

3.16 Local managers and frontline staff are often in a better position than more senior managers to identify customers' needs due to their more immediate contact and relationship with customers. Frontline staff are the public face of government bodies, and their actions will largely determine the response and perceptions of customers to the Government's delivery of public services. It is important, therefore, that local managers allow frontline staff the scope to take initiatives that address the needs of diverse customers. For example, while there is strong top-level support for the National Gallery's Art Through Words initiative, senior management adopt a hands-off approach, allowing frontline staff to give it form. In particular, by having the describers choose the artworks they present, they bring to the experience a high degree of personal enthusiasm and commitment.

3.17 A balance must be struck, however, between empowering staff and intervening to provide more focused guidance. For example, after the release of the Public Policy Statement on racist and religious crime, the Crown Prosecution Service applied a fairly hands-off management style. Regions were given guidance on how to roll out the statement, but were charged with elaborating their own implementation and dissemination plans to meet local needs. The subsequent implementation has been more successful in some regions and areas than others. The service recognises that, to avoid unexpected variations across regions and areas in the future, it needs to provide more co-ordination and monitor progress centrally, while maintaining the advantages of local ownership and decentralised implementation.

31 Diversity awards can be important in motivating staff and managers

Events such as the 'Diversity Awards' and 'Diversity Week', as staged by the Inland Revenue, allow good practice examples to be acknowledged and publicised, bringing national recognition to local initiatives. Over 200 examples of good practice (internal and external) have been communicated throughout the Revenue. In each case, the benefits of the initiative to the individual, team and community at large are highlighted. Following a recent evaluation of the 'Diversity Awards', the Inland Revenue is set to run another one. The evaluation found that the quality of the initiatives was high; the strategic goals - to draw out and share good practice - were met; and participants viewed the event to be worthwhile. At the Inland Revenue's Diversity Day in 2003, the Bristol and North Somerset Inland Revenue office, and the business advisor who invested most in its diversity initiatives, received several awards.

Embedding diversity into the delivery of public services

3.18 To embed diversity in the delivery of public services, government bodies need to take active steps to integrate diversity into all areas of their business, including:

- organisational structure;
- workforce representation;
- allocation of time and resources.

(i) Organisational structure

3.19 Government bodies need to find an appropriate location in their organisation to place responsibility for diversity and its implementation, one that best fits their own situation and challenge. We found three different organisational forms: one where an equality and diversity unit is located in the human resources function; another where the unit is located within a business function; and a third where no such unit exists.

3.20 Although our survey results could not isolate any one structure as being more successful than another, the recent general shift in equality and diversity units from human resources functions to business functions suggests that bodies are embracing diversity as a business driver and not just viewing it as an internal human resources task. Where a unit exists, regardless of its location, its test is in making diversity a core part of the inward and outward facing business, which holds everyone responsible and accountable for progress in this area.

3.21 In deciding whether or not a standalone equality and diversity unit to oversee diversity is required, government bodies need to consider the existing depth and breadth of their organisation's experiences with, and need for, serving diverse customers. A strategy that removes such units is only appropriate for organisations that already exhibit a strong culture and proven history of addressing diversity in all areas of its business. For example, the Learning and Skills Council has had an Equality and Inclusive Learning Unit for three years, which has worked to promote and embed equality and diversity into all aspects of the LSC's business. Given the team's commitment in mainstreaming diversity, the LSC is disbanding the team, explicitly making diversity a responsibility for all. However, although the ultimate goal of such Units is to become invisible, for government bodies that are still learning to embed diversity, there is a risk that removing such Units could result in a lack of direction and overall co-ordination, resulting in a failure to address diverse needs.

(ii) Workforce representation

3.22 In our survey, government bodies that reported doing very well in meeting the needs of the gender and race strands through service delivery also tended to report doing well in terms of the gender and racial compositions of their workforces.

3.23 For strands other than gender and race, the analysis did not reveal any significant relationships between the diversity of staff and government bodies' reported performance on service delivery. For sexual orientation, and religion and belief, this may be due to the limited data available for these strands within the Civil Service workforce. Government bodies need to engage with stakeholder bodies to determine whether obtaining such information is necessary, and, if so, how to use less intrusive means of gathering it. An example might be to use independent parties to carry out studies.

3.24 A diverse workforce can provide insights into the service delivery needs of diverse groups – especially if a means can be established to identify and bring together such information. For example, the Crown Prosecution Service set up an internal working group to develop its Public Policy Statement on racially and religiously aggravated crime. The composition of the working group was diverse in terms of expertise, grade, gender, and ethnic background. The internal mix of the group is considered to have had a positive impact on the approach adopted and the resulting policy, as members were able to discuss issues both as experts in their field

and from personal experiences. In this case, having a diverse working group brought credibility to the policy development process.

3.25 Even when the workforce does not reflect the population it serves, services can still be provided that meet the needs of diverse communities. For example, the Business Advisors of the Bristol Inland Revenue office are all white, but have been delivering diverse services to their local Chinese and Sikh communities. The Business Advisors report, and the service recipients concur, that a willingness to engage with individuals from diverse communities is the key personal attribute that enables frontline staff to meet diverse customers' needs.

3.26 Training staff to understand diverse customer needs can help them to address these needs when delivering services. Where government bodies are able better to understand their customers' position, they are also better able to identify customers' needs and translate these into the design of their initiatives. The attempts to integrate homosexuals into the Dutch military are illustrative of efforts to bridge the divide between staff and the members of a minority community. While other armed forces tolerate or permit homosexuality, the Dutch are unique in their efforts to integrate this group.¹⁰ All recruits receive a course on sexual orientation, and there is a free telephone helpdesk to report discrimination and violence within the army. The Dutch Ministry of Defence also actively supports other initiatives. For example, it funds a Foundation on Homosexuality and Defence (Stichting Homosexualiteit en Krijgsmacht), which develops and disseminates information about homosexuality and related matters.

(iii) Allocation of time and resources

3.27 Almost universally, government bodies rank adequate resources, in terms of money and time, as one of the three most important factors associated with the success of initiatives regarding diversity of service delivery. As with general good practice, there is a need to plan and arrange resource requirements in advance, to cover the costs of initiatives. For example, central funds were made available at the onset by the Crown Prosecution Service to meet the costs of developing their Public Policy Statement on racist and religiously aggravated crime; supplementary funds were also made available from the CPS's Equality and Diversity Unit to meet the additional costs of launching the policy statement regionally.

¹⁰ National Defense Research Institute (1993). *Sexual Orientation and U.S. Military Personnel Policy: Options and Assessment*, Santa Monica, California: The RAND Corporation, Report MR-323-OSD.

3.28 Initiatives to diversify the delivery of services can be successful, while remaining modest in terms of scale and resources required. For instance, when describing diversity in service delivery in the Bristol Inland Revenue Office, staff emphasised that diversity objectives were part of the routine activities of a small team of business advisors; and as such, did not have significant additional costs. Similarly, the Women's Study Group in Birmingham's Joseph Chamberlain College is an initiative that manages to have a clear impact on the lives of students, while investing a modest amount of resources. What these initiatives have in common are their relatively small size and well-focussed objectives, making them manageable and owned by service delivery staff.

3.29 Adequate resources have to fit as one part of a much wider strategy to take adequate account of diversity when delivering services to diverse customers. The successful design and implementation of diversity initiatives also takes time, and there is value in developing initiatives in an incremental fashion to make sure that lessons can be learnt and improvements made. For example, the timeline for the completion of the Crown Prosecution Service's Public Policy Statement on racist and religious crime was designed to cover a period of 16 months (Figure 32). It contained periods of internal working group deliberations, external consultations (both national and regional), and a launch phase. This period was necessary to allow CPS enough time to build momentum behind the initiative, to carry out consultations, and to integrate the lessons of each phase in subsequent work.

Evaluating performance and sharing lessons

3.30 Many interviewees in organisations with responsibility for delivering front line services expressed a need for more centrally co-ordinated planning and monitoring, and the sharing of good practices. Without exception, they all welcomed the idea of an overall co-ordination mechanism to facilitate learning from the experiences of other government bodies.

3.31 Government bodies can secure improvements in delivering services to diverse communities through:

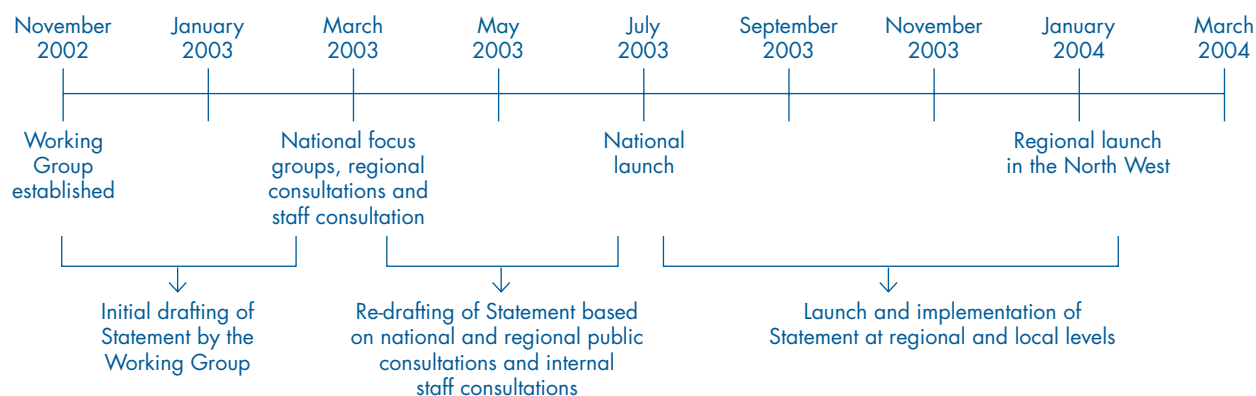
Continuously evaluating existing initiatives in several ways;

Sharing good practice and lessons learnt.

(i) Continual evaluation of progress using several methods

3.32 For management to have an overview of the extent to which equality and diversity objectives are being achieved, effective means of appraisal and evaluation must be developed. Increased attention to evaluation has been stimulated by the Government's recent focus in this area, and by the extra focus on diversity in service delivery, bringing with it more targets and measures. While some bodies have developed their own evaluation systems to monitor their progress in delivering services to diverse customers, others have applied standardised evaluation frameworks. For example, the Inland Revenue has adapted standard evaluation frameworks to monitor its progress in addressing the needs of diverse customers (Figure 33).

32 Schedule for the development and launch of the Crown Prosecution Service's Public Policy Statement on racist and religious crime



Source: Key information interviews and official timetable of CPS working group on racially and religiously motivated crime

33 The Inland Revenue’s policy shift towards service delivery - implications on evaluation

Shift towards service delivery

Although the Inland Revenue’s Equality and Diversity Unit is based within the Human Resources function, about 80% of the total effort is spent in working with the Business function. The structure in the planning process has changed from having divisional plans for the Business and Human Resources functions to having one medium term, cross-cutting, strategic plan that embeds equality and diversity.

The Unit’s priorities are decided by business objectives, where senior teams are accountable for the Business function and the equality and diversity embedded into it.

This shift in focus towards service delivery is further consolidated through Public Service Agreements that now include equality and diversity targets.

Evaluation frameworks

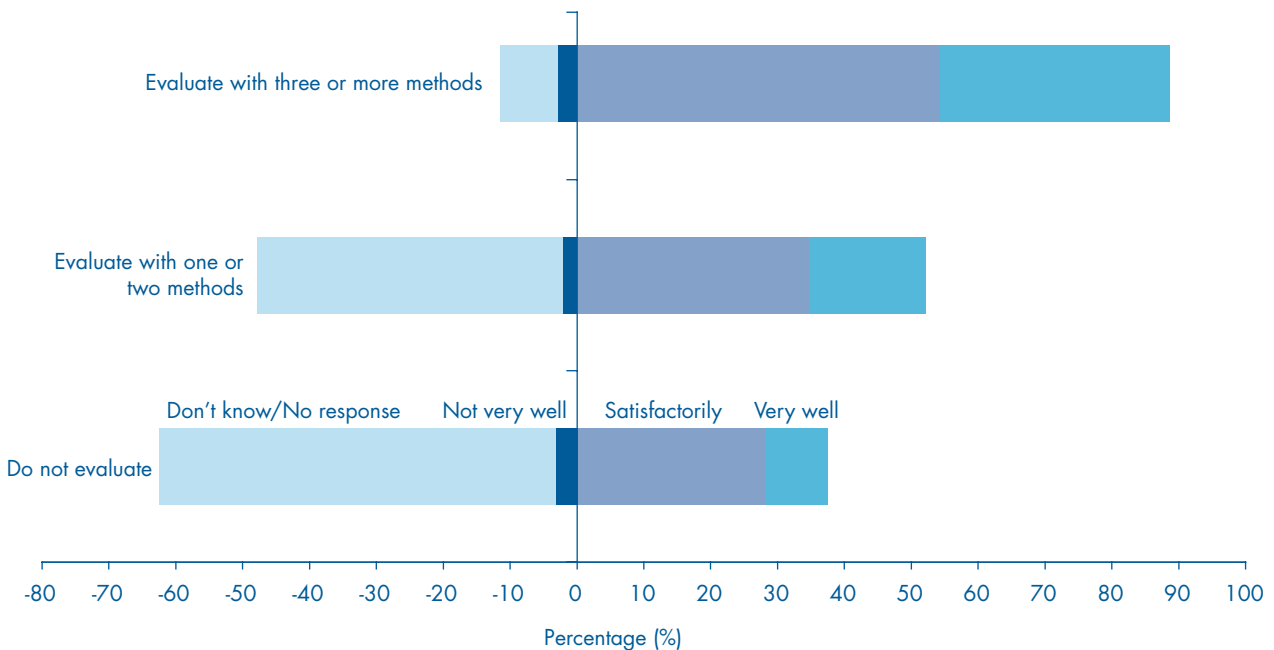
The Inland Revenue has adopted European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) tools and Balanced Scorecard evaluation approaches to link equality and diversity into the management processes.

3.33 We found a positive relationship between government bodies that use several evaluation methods and those that report doing very well in meeting diverse needs (Figure 34). Combining at least three evaluation methods (for example, process evaluations, customer surveys and focus groups) gives greater confidence to the measures of effectiveness. This is particularly important in areas of diversity where customers may have different priorities and experiences of receiving services from those who design, manage, or deliver the services.

3.34 In the context of diversity, the involvement of customer groups is particularly important in delivering effective evaluation, since different customer groups can place a different value on the same aspects of service delivery, reflecting their individual needs. To take account of variations in customer perceptions, the Inland Revenue’s Business Support Team in Bristol continually obtains feedback from all customers with which it deals. Feedback methods include an evaluation form that is used to assess customer satisfaction (Figure 35).

34 Government bodies in which more methods of evaluation are used report meeting the needs of different age groups better

Extent to which respondents believe they meet the needs of the age strand



Source: NAO/RAND Europe survey

35 The Inland Revenue is using and improving evaluation forms

The Inland Revenue Business Support Teams collect information on the extent to which their customers are satisfied with the service they receive. This information is collected using specially designed evaluation forms provided to customers after they have had contact with a Business Advisor, or after they have attended a session run by the Business Support Team. The questions focus on whether contact with the Business Support Team has helped people deal with their tax affairs.

At present, the vast majority of customers report that they are better able to manage their tax affairs as a result of their interaction with the Business Support Team. However, the Inland Revenue recognised that further improvements are needed to allow managers to compare the effects of different initiatives including:

- 1 Anonymised evaluation forms; and
- 2 Follow up questions on customers' behaviour to see whether they subsequently submitted more timely and accurate tax forms.

3.35 The importance of evaluating diversity in service delivery is also recognised internationally. For example:

Australia's annual Review of Government Service Provision, chaired by the Chairman of the Australian Productivity Commission, the Government's principal advisory body on microeconomic reform, provides an authoritative statement of the way in which diversity of service delivery is addressed by Australian public sector service providers. Alongside efficiency and effectiveness, equity is identified as a main performance indicator, measuring the gap between the services delivered and expectations of groups with specific needs.

The Swedish Gender Development Programme, incorporates an evaluation process that allows it to compare the actual performance of agencies as well as the effectiveness of different types of support provided in fulfilment of their objectives, such as staff training, seminars and access to expert advisors. The evaluation process includes feedback and follow up activities with agencies, through which the Government monitors and evaluates their progress.

In Canada, the Ministry of Justice evaluates the expected effects of government policies on diverse groups before they go live (**Figure 36**).

36 Canadian Ministry of Justice's Integrated Diversity and Equality Screen

The Canadian Ministry of Justice has developed an Integrated Diversity and Equality Screen. This screening instrument is intended to provide an assessment of the impact policy initiatives have on groups that are frequently disadvantaged in their dealings with the justice system, whether as parties to proceedings, as witnesses, as victims or as members of the public. Based on key guiding principles, it uses a few focused questions, such as the potential impact on specified groups, to elicit information that might otherwise not come to the attention of decision makers.

In an attempt to guarantee that the screening guidelines are used in the work of the Justice system, the Federal, Territorial and Provincial Deputy Ministers of Justice have decided that any proposals they consider must be able to indicate that a diversity assessment has been carried out.

(ii) Sharing good practice and learning lessons

3.36 In our survey there was a positive relationship between bodies that reported doing very well in meeting the needs of diverse customers and those which reported sharing their experiences in this area (**Figure 37**). We found that government bodies are able to make progress in delivering services to diverse customers by drawing inspiration and insights, both positive and negative, from their own and others' histories of serving diverse customers (**Figure 38**).

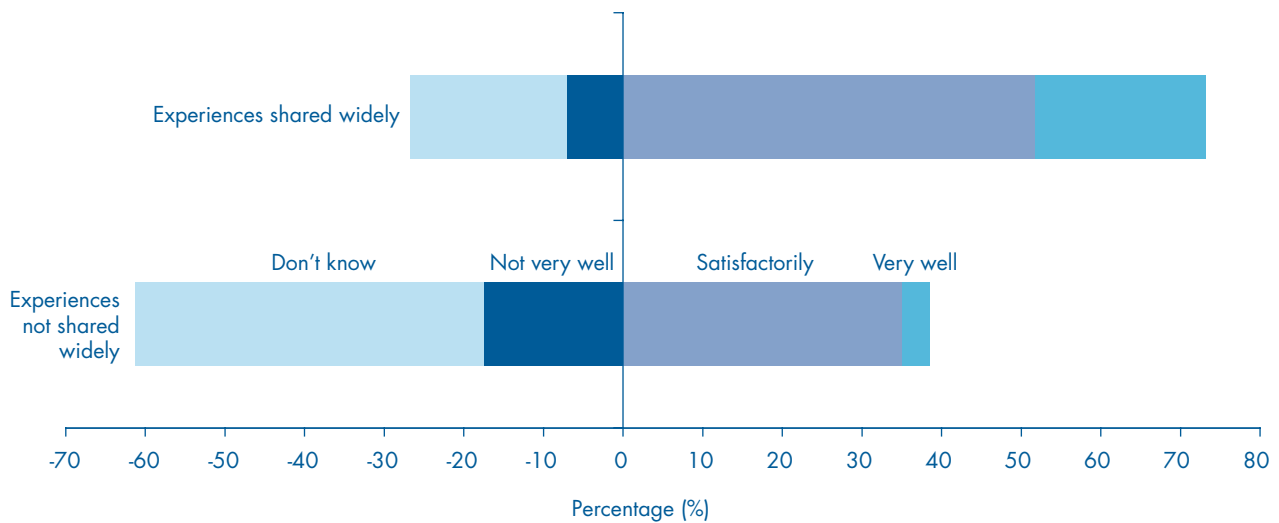
3.37 It is important to nurture networks within and across government bodies to encourage individuals and organisations to share good practice and exchange lessons learnt about relevant initiatives they would otherwise not know about. Exchanging knowledge and experience about the various efforts made by government bodies to meet the needs of diverse customers can help identify tools and processes that already exist and work well, and avoid repeating mistakes that others have already learnt from. This is particularly important given the need to prepare for new legislation concerning age, religion and belief, and sexual orientation.

3.38 Our survey highlighted a variety of mechanisms to encourage the sharing of good practice including: networks of staff across different bodies within a departmental delivery chain to share lessons and promote good practice; cross-departmental teams formed to work collaboratively on substantive issues relating to diversity of service delivery and to provide benchmarking opportunities; and a Whitehall-wide intranet dedicated to sharing service delivery lessons with regards to diversity. In response to our survey, we received 182 good practice examples; it is evident that many lessons could be learnt from sharing these experiences across government.

3.39 Government bodies in the UK might also learn from how other countries are approaching diversity in service delivery. Eighty-eight per cent of our survey respondents stated they would find it helpful to know how government departments and agencies in other countries are tackling these issues. Learning from other countries is made more effective by systematic collection and dissemination of relevant lessons, rather than individuals haphazardly stumbling across good practices. As part of our international review we found that the Canadian National Human Rights Commission regularly scans human rights institutions in other countries to learn about successful practices. Drawing relevant lessons from other countries however requires knowledge of the way in which services are organised in other countries and the different needs of diverse populations of those countries.

37 Government bodies in which experiences are shared widely within their organisations report greater success in meeting the needs of different ethnic minority groups

Extent to which government bodies believe they are meeting the needs associated with the race strand, when experiences are shared widely within their organisation and when they are not.



Source: NAO/RAND Europe survey

38 Examples of organisations learning from their own and others' histories of diversity in service delivery

Crown Prosecution Service

In developing its Public Policy Statement on racist and religious crime, the Crown Prosecution Service drew on the lessons they learnt in developing previous statements on homophobic crime and domestic violence. Several key lessons were learnt including: that external consultation was “an essential ingredient” in the development of a credible public policy statement; and that rather than drafting a statement directly with external stakeholders, it was more efficient to present an existing draft to external groups for comment.

The National Gallery

The National Gallery drew valuable lessons from previous attempts to make its art collection accessible to blind and partially sighted visitors. It found that visitors were disappointed by previous initiatives which provided them with an audio guide and a raised line diagram book. Regular visitors found these uncomfortable and unsatisfactory ways of exploring the art, and many expressed a preference for receiving information through human contact. In response, the Gallery developed the 'Art Through Words' initiative, where artwork is described by Gallery staff. The Gallery has started to share its experiences of developing the 'Art Through Words' initiative to other organisations in the arts and heritage sector through conferences and visits.

The Swedish Gender Development Programme

The Swedish Gender Development Programme made a systematic effort to learn from past experiences when developing new service delivery initiatives. As a standard first step in the development of new initiatives they made an analysis of gender impact. This analysis involved breaking down available data on customers by gender. This identified previous developments and thereby revealed the mistakes of the past and reasons for present problems.

APPENDIX

Our Approach

This study employed a variety of methods consisting of:

Cross Government Survey

We conducted a survey across 131 government bodies (96 per cent response rate). Of these, 113 were received in time and in the appropriate format for inclusion in the analysis, including: 26 departments, 33 executive agencies, 49 non-departmental public bodies, 3 special health authorities, the Government Offices Regional Co-ordination Unit, and the Disability Carers Directorate.

Diversity of service delivery is potentially relevant to all the bodies surveyed. The surveys were addressed to the heads of the bodies selected, and were completed by individuals with responsibility for equality and diversity and/or service delivery.

The aim of the survey was to obtain an inventory of the organisational structures and processes used in addressing diversity, and to provide a comprehensive picture of the main barriers, facilitators and challenges that affect the Government's mission to deliver services to diverse citizens.

The questionnaire included items that elicit responses in the forms of both predefined answer categories and open texts, thereby ensuring both comparability and flexibility. The design of the survey and the variation in respondents' profiles mean that the results provide an overview of current practice regarding diversity of service delivery across government.

The survey questionnaire contained 36 questions covering:

- The importance of diversity of service delivery to respondents' organisations;
- Organisational structure and staff composition;
- The formulation and evidence-based evaluation of diversity initiatives;
- The organisation of the client base; and
- Good practice examples

Case Study Examination

We undertook four case studies of known successful initiatives identified through the survey results, and in consultation with the Cabinet Office and the individual bodies concerned:

- The Crown Prosecution Service's development and launch of the *Public Policy Statement on Racist and Religious Crime* and its implementation in the North West region. This included interviews with the representatives from the Black Racial Attacks Independent Network (BRAIN); Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Racial Equality Council; Board of Deputies of British Jews; The Community Security Trust; and Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate.
- The Inland Revenue's outreach activities in the Bristol and North Somerset Area to address the needs of small and medium sized enterprises in the local Chinese and Sikh Communities. This included interviews with Business Advisors from the Bristol and Somerset Area and interviews with representatives from the Bristol Sikh Resource Centre; and the Bristol and Avon Chinese Women's Group.

- Learning and Skills Council's support of diversity in service delivery as illustrated by the provision of basic skills tuition to women from ethnic minorities, hosted by Bordesley Green Girls' School in Birmingham and supported by Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College. This included interviews and focus groups with the staff and students of Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College.
- The National Gallery's 'Art Through Words' programme, designed to make the collection of the National Gallery accessible to blind and partially sighted people. This included interviews with Gallery staff and the Royal National Institute of the Blind, and participant observation at an 'Art Through Words' event.

The case studies involved in-depth interviews, focus groups with stakeholder groups and document reviews. The detailed findings and lessons are set out in the companion volume to this report.

Semi- Structured Interviews

Further to case study interviews, we conducted over 15 semi-structured, in-depth interviews in more than 10 government bodies with staff members responsible for diversity. From these interviews we were able to obtain an understanding of the variety of ways government currently aims for diversity in service delivery and to identify in a preliminary way what the major obstacles were to achieving service delivery objectives.

We also interviewed representatives from the three equality commissions and key people from other important organisations including, for example, the Institute for Public Policy Research.

Copies of all interview protocols may be obtained from RAND Europe.

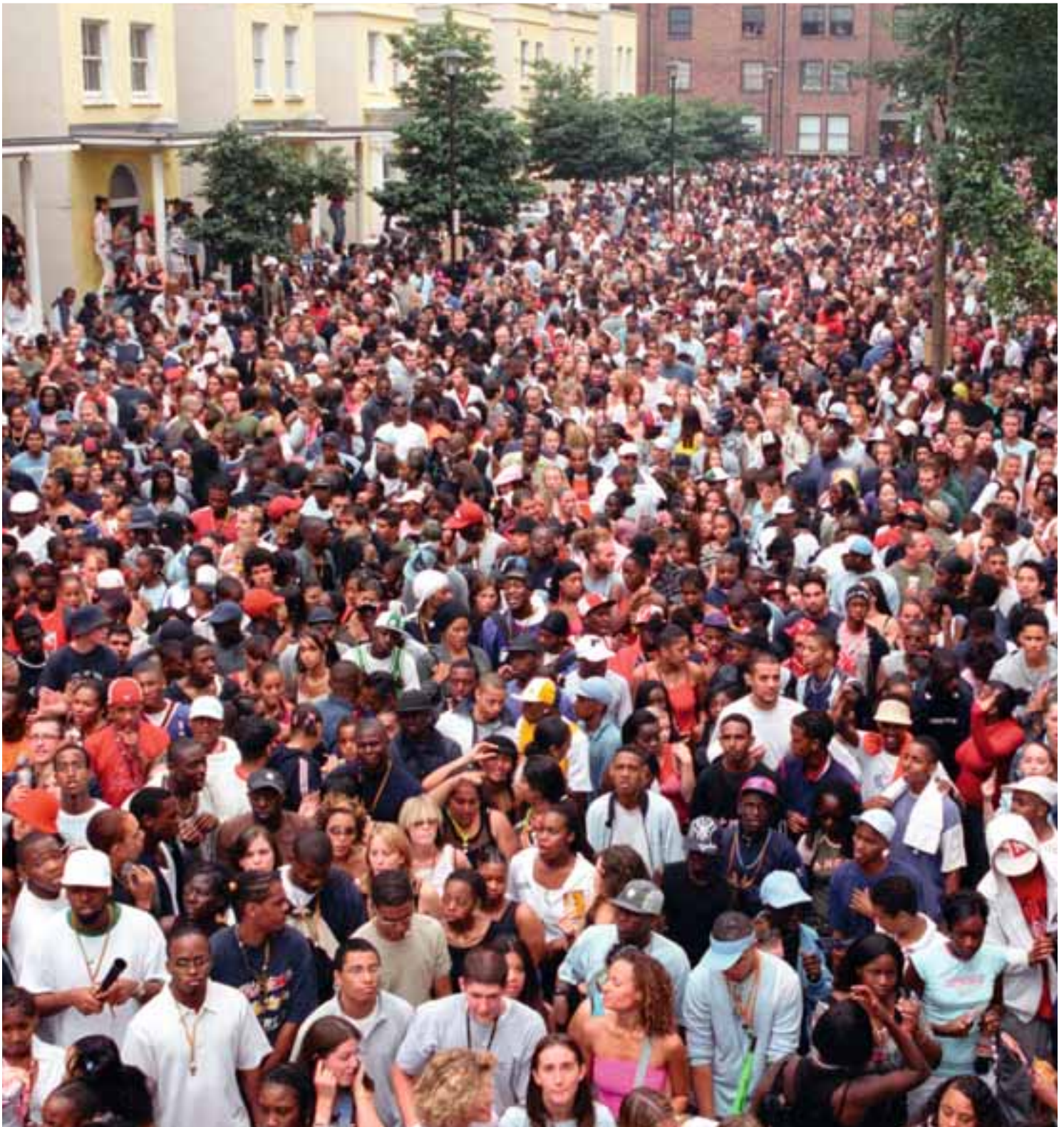
International Review

We conducted a review of how the Australian, Canadian, Dutch and Swedish Governments take account of diversity in delivering their public services to identify potential lessons for Government bodies in the UK.

The international review framework distinguishes a number of categories for analysis of foreign practices. To provide a context for the international case studies, the framework includes basic country characteristics and information on areas of national policy attention. The main body of the framework focuses on the identification and selection of specific agencies by the selected strands within which the diversity issues are dealt addressed. At the level of an individual agency the framework incorporates:

- Policy strategies and management
- Organisational structure
- Resource availability
- Implementation of service delivery/interaction with the client groups

Copies of the international review framework may be obtained from RAND Europe. The full reviews are set out on the NAO website: www.nao.org.uk.



CASE STUDIES

Delivering Public Services to a Diverse Society

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CASE STUDIES

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John Bourn
Comptroller and Auditor General
National Audit Office
6 December 2004

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CASE STUDIES



Four case studies were undertaken to identify planning strategies behind initiatives that have led to progress in meeting the needs of diverse clients, and that can provide lessons for other government bodies. We began by identifying government bodies that are undertaking service delivery initiatives which they themselves consider to be 'good practice', largely through the results of the RAND Europe/NAO survey carried out as part of this study. From an initial shortlist of potential case studies, a final selection was made through consultations amongst RAND Europe, the NAO, the Cabinet Office and the individual government bodies concerned. The bodies studied and their 'good practice' service delivery initiatives are:

Crown Prosecution Service

Development and launch of the Public Policy Statement on Racist and Religious Crime.

Inland Revenue

Outreach activities to address the needs of small and medium enterprises in the Bristol and North Somerset Area.

Learning and Skills Council

Provision of secondary education to adult women, supported by the Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College and hosted by Bordesley Green Girls' School in Birmingham.

National Gallery

Art Through Words (ATW), a programme designed to make the collection of the National Gallery accessible to blind and partially sighted people.

Each case study included document reviews and in-depth interviews with staff involved in the initiatives at various departmental managerial levels, including front line providers. Additionally, information from service recipients was obtained via focus groups, group interviews, or participant observation, depending on the case.

The protocol used to guide all of the information gathering for the case studies is presented in the Annex to this volume.

CROWN PROSECUTION SERVICE



1.1 This chapter examines the formulation and launch of the Crown Prosecution Service's (CPS) public policy statement on racist and religious crime. This public policy statement (the Statement) was launched nationally in July 2003. Public policy statements aim to set out clearly, for both CPS staff and members of the public, the CPS's prosecution policy. Public policy statements are published in a user-friendly booklet format and set out policy in plain and easy to understand language. Previous CPS public policy statements have addressed domestic violence (November 2000) and homophobic crime (November 2002). The formulation of the Statement on racist and religious crime is particularly noteworthy for the way in which consultations with stakeholder representatives were organised.

The role and structure of the Crown Prosecution Service

1.2 The Crown Prosecution Service prosecutes people in England and Wales who have been charged by the police with a criminal offence. From Spring 2004, the CPS began to take over charging responsibilities from the police. According to the CPS's race equality scheme, its role is to prosecute cases firmly, fairly and effectively when there is sufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction, and when it is in the public interest to do so.¹

1.3 The Director of Public Prosecutions heads the CPS; the Chief Executive is responsible for the administration of the CPS; and the Attorney General superintends the Service and reports to Parliament. The CPS is organised into 42 geographical areas, essentially matching the 43 police authorities in England and Wales (the discrepancy arises because there are two police forces in London, the Metropolitan Police and the City of London Police). Each area is headed by a Chief Crown Prosecutor who is responsible for the quality of prosecution services in their local area. Each Chief Crown Prosecutor is supported by an Area Business Manager who is responsible for delivering the administration in support of prosecution services in the local area. The CPS has two HQ buildings – in London and York – that deal with administrative and other national issues. The CPS also has a Policy Directorate (PD) and an Equality and Diversity Unit (EDU).

Equality and diversity in the Crown Prosecution Service

1.4 Public confidence in the British Criminal Justice System is low, particularly among Black and Minority Ethnic communities. The 2000 British Crime Survey² indicates that (i) Black and Minority Ethnic people are more likely to be victims of crime than are White people; (ii) a high proportion of assaults, threats and vandalism experienced by Black and Minority Ethnic people are judged by victims to be racially motivated; and (iii) people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities worry about crimes more than do White people (**Figure 39**).

1.5 Together with the other bodies that make up the Criminal Justice System, the CPS is responsible for promoting public confidence in the system. The CPS can promote such confidence by ensuring that prosecution decisions are free - and seen to be free - from bias and discrimination. The CPS aims to remove barriers that prevent different groups of people from having equal access to services. To do so, it recognises the need to identify differences amongst the communities it serves, in terms of their access to criminal justice services and their perceptions of these services.

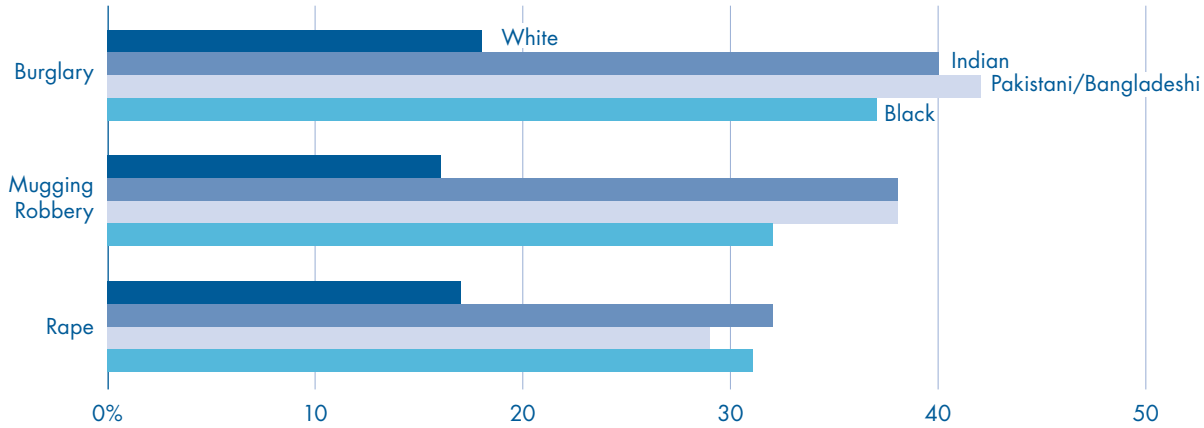
1.6 The CPS has several organisational structures and mechanisms designed to address equality and diversity issues regarding staff composition and, crucially for the present case study, the conduct of prosecutions. These consist of individuals with specific responsibilities relating to equality and diversity, committees and networks, and a central unit with equality and diversity responsibilities (**Box A**).

¹ Crown Prosecution Service Race Equality Scheme: Meeting the needs of diverse communities and improving prosecutions, May 2002.

² Findings 146: Ethnic minorities' experience of crime and policing – findings from the 2000 British Crime Survey, 2001, Home Office (<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/r146.pdf>).

39 Black and Minority Ethnic people worry more about crimes than do White people

Proportion of respondents who are very worried about crime by the type of crime and ethnic group



Source: 2000 British Crime Survey, Home Office Findings 146

BOX A

How the CPS organizes to address equality and diversity

- Overall Diversity Champion: The Director of Public Prosecutions and the Chief Executive act as the overall champions for diversity.
- Equality and Diversity Unit: A small unit reporting directly to the Director of Public Prosecutions, Chief Executive and the Service Board.
- Area Diversity Champions: Each of the 42 Chief Crown Prosecutors or Area Business Managers is a champion for equality and diversity in their areas. Further, each region has a nominated regional champion.
- Regional Equality and Diversity Officers: Advising the 11 regions.
- Diversity Accountability Committee: A small group that ensures accountability on equality and diversity from the 42 areas to the CPS Board.
- Senior Managers Advisory Group on Diversity: A policy group of senior staff that considers work in progress and makes recommendations to the CPS Board on policy issues.
- Staff Networks: For example, the National Black Crown Prosecution Association.

Source: Crown Prosecution Service Race Equality Scheme, May 2002; Key informant interviews

The initiative: Public Policy Statement on Racist and Religious Crime

1.7 In November 2002, the CPS established a working group to formulate a public policy statement on the CPS's policy on the prosecution of racially and religiously aggravated crimes.³ The objectives of the Statement were.

- To contribute to improving Black and Minority Ethnic communities' confidence in the Criminal Justice System by 2006. This objective is contained in the Criminal Justice System's joint Public Service Agreement for 2003 and beyond.
- To demonstrate a commitment to promoting racial and religious equality by ensuring broad public access to information, as set out in the CPS's Race Equality Scheme.
- To improve the way in which cases with an ethnic minority dimension are dealt with, as recommended in the CPS Inspectorate's thematic review of such casework.⁴

The formulation of this public policy statement was an important priority for the CPS, since the Service recognised that a failure to produce it would put at risk its ability to achieve its Public Sector Agreement targets, and to improve its public reputation and its partnerships with other bodies in the Criminal Justice System.

³ Racist and religious crime – CPS prosecution policy, Crown Prosecution Service (<http://www.cps.gov.uk/home/CPSPublications/docs/rrpbcbook.pdf>).

⁴ Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate, Report on the Thematic Review of Casework Having a Minority Ethnic Dimension, April 2002.

1.8 The working group on racially and religiously aggravated crime was given the task of formulating the Statement through external consultations and ensuring its implementation (**Box B**). The Statement was published and launched nationally in July 2003. Since the national launch, CPS regions and areas have been given the responsibility for launching and implementing the Statement in their localities.

BOX B

Membership of the CPS working group on racially and religiously aggravated crime

The working group, established in November 2002, consisted of 11 CPS staff

- Members from the Policy Directorate took the lead in drafting the policy statement.
- Members from the Equality and Diversity Unit provided overall support.
- Members from the Casework Directorate provided expertise on racial incitement cases.
- Regional Equality and Diversity Officers provided community perspectives and led regional and local consultations.
- CPS prosecutors with expertise in this area provided additional expert advice.
- A Chief Crown Prosecutor, as Chair, led the Group.
- The Director of Public Prosecutions, the Attorney General, the CPS Board and the Senior Managers Advisory Group on Diversity provided wider leadership and support to the formulation of the Statement.

In March 2003, following the national consultation event, the working group's membership was extended to include external community representatives to ensure that a broad range of perspectives were taken into account.

The composition of the working group was diverse in terms of expertise, job grade and ethnic background. The internal mix of the group is considered to have had a positive impact on the approach adopted and the resulting policy. For example, given the ethnic diversity of the team, members were able to discuss issues both as experts in their field and as informed members of minority communities. It would have been more difficult for a homogenous working group to bring credibility to the policy development process.

1.9 This case study examines the development and launch of the Statement on racist and religious crime. The case study also provides some early indications of how the Statement is being implemented at the levels of the regional and local areas. In particular, the launch in the North West Region of the CPS was examined. The findings presented in this case study are based on key informant interviews (including representatives from community groups) (**Box C**) and supporting document reviews. Figure 32 provides an overview of activities and key milestones in developing the Statement.

BOX C

Key informant interviews

This case study is based on 13 key informant interviews: nine with CPS staff; one with the CPS Inspectorate; and three with representatives from community groups. In more detail:

- Seven of the eleven CPS members of the working group:, including the Chair, the Equality and Diversity Officer for the North West region and at least one member from each representative unit;
- Chair of the Senior Managers Advisory Group on Diversity and the Chief Crown Prosecutor for South Wales;
- Chief Crown Prosecutor for Cheshire (North West region)
- HM Chief Inspector, HM CPS Inspectorate; and.
- Representatives from three local/national community groups; two of whom were members of the working group, the other being involved in the North West regional launch.

These interviews provided information on the:

- Development of the Statement by the working group;
- Implementation of Statement in the North West and other regions;
- Involvement of community groups in the development, launch and implementation of the Statement; and
- Performance of the CPS in dealing with race related cases.

A key success factor: External consultation

1.10 External consultation is considered to have been an essential part of developing a credible Statement on racist and religious crime. The attention given to external consultations was partly a response to lessons learnt from developing past public policy statements on homophobic crime and domestic violence. In these cases, the CPS received some criticism that the consultations had not been representative enough, resulting in some unfavourable media reports questioning the credibility of the policy. The working group on racist and religiously aggravated crime learnt from these experiences by organising external consultations with a wide range of affected stakeholder groups. Events were organised at national and regional levels to involve stakeholder groups, and internal consultations were held with staff (**Box D**).

1.11 The involvement of external stakeholders allowed the working group to gain access to valuable information on racist and religious crime that would not otherwise have been available to them. Some of the stakeholder groups included in the consultations have third party reporting centres. Crimes that are not directly reported to the police are often reported to these centres. In formulating its public policy statement, the working group was able to use these local data, in addition to official statistics, to provide a more complete picture of the situation.

1.12 These consultations had a clear impact on the draft Statement in terms of its substance, style and format. As a result of the feedback from the consultations, the final Statement is written more from the perspective of the communities it aims to address, rather than from the perspective of the CPS itself. For example:

- The policy statement begins by explaining why these issues are important to society as a whole, rather than beginning with the importance of this area in terms of CPS's responsibilities and targets.
- It devotes more attention to setting out clearly the decision-making processes within the CPS and where the CPS sits within the Criminal Justice System.
- It uses clear and easy to understand language, which is more accessible to the community at large.

BOX D

Consultations for developing the Statement on racist and religious crime

■ National consultations

Representatives from national and regional interest groups were given the opportunity to contribute to the Statement. The Statement lists 121 organisations as consultees. They were invited to participate in a national consultation by taking part in a focus group in March 2003 or by providing written comments on drafts of the Statement. Of these, representatives from 19 organisations attended the focus group and 16 responded with written comments. The working group considered this response to be high.

■ Regional consultations

Following the national consultation, most regions, led by Regional Equality and Diversity Officers, carried out consultations with local umbrella groups (that represent several communities) to take local community concerns into account.

■ Internal consultations

Later drafts of the Statement were also circulated internally to the CPS Board, Chief Crown Prosecutors, Equality and Diversity Officers, Area Staff Sounding Boards, and other staff groups, associations and networks for comments.

- It devotes greater attention to the policy on accepting pleas (plea bargaining), which emerged as an issue of great concern during the consultation process.
- It states that direct communication between prosecutors and victims is required to explain decisions taken by the prosecution. Such face-to-face meetings between victims and lawyers existed for other serious crimes and have been extended to racist and religious crimes.
- Compared with earlier drafts, the final policy statement also focuses more on establishing enduring links with community organisations. A list of consultees is included in an annex to the statement.

1.13 In addition, CPS staff and some of the representatives of stakeholder groups we interviewed reported that consultation has also had a positive impact on the way in which the statement is perceived by Black and Ethnic Minority community groups. It strengthened the credibility of the policy statement. Identifying the impact of a particular consultation exercise is, however, fraught with uncertainty. As our respondents pointed out, improvements in the public's perception of the CPS and the Criminal Justice System cannot be attributed to an isolated event, such as this particular consultation exercise. Rather, these gains can only be won through sustained efforts by many individuals and agencies throughout the Criminal Justice System.

1.14 The impact of consultations is also evident in the implementation of the public policy statement. The consultation process helped to gain the support of minority communities in implementing and monitoring the Statement. For example, following the consultation process in the North West, the local consulted groups have been involved in launching and rolling out the Statement, and are currently involved in the monitoring process.

Challenges faced in conducting an effective consultation

1.15 The working group faced two challenges in undertaking the external consultation process:

- Changing community groups' negative views of the consultation process. At the early stages of the regional consultations, the Equality and Diversity Officers had to work hard to change community groups' views – partly resulting from negative experiences in earlier consultation exercises - that the consultation process was a formality and that the policy had already been decided.
- Managing short lead-times. The timeframe for regional and local consultations was limited to three weeks to meet the scheduled Statement launch date of July 2003. National guidelines suggest a period of three months for full consultations. Although there were calls for more time for the regional consultations, the planned timeframe was changed only marginally.

1.16 The main challenge for the consulted groups in participating in the consultations was a lack of resources (in terms of staff, time and money) required to respond to the working group's draft Statement. This was particularly the case for the smaller local organisations. For example, the Racial Equality Council of Cheshire, Halton and Warrington reported that a lack of resources was the reason they did not respond to the draft statement sent by the working group, although they were later involved in the local implementation. The CPS endeavoured to ensure that limited resources was not a major factor preventing participation in the consultation events. Participants' expenses were met by the CPS.

Lessons learnt

1.17 "[Government] agencies must make an ongoing commitment to build capacity in this [consultation] area and not merely drop in and out to meet their immediate requirements".⁵ The ability of community groups to participate in consultation exercises emerged as a key issue that needs to be addressed by government bodies. In addition to resources, longer lead times would also aid the consultation process. These would enable community and voluntary groups to consult the communities they represent.

1.18 Investing in consultation pays off. Despite the demands on time and resources, the CPS promotes this model of consultation for developing Statements because it increases public confidence and strengthens the credibility of the CPS and its policy.

The ongoing challenge: Implementation

1.19 In addition to formulating the Statement, the working group was also responsible for defining the monitoring and reporting framework to support effective implementation of the Statement. Since the policy statement was launched in late 2003/early 2004, it is too early to identify the impact of the statement clearly. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify some of the challenges currently being faced in rolling out the Statement that are relevant to other initiatives to diversify service delivery.

⁵ Director, Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Racial Equality Council.

1.20 With a view to implementing the Statement, the working group drew up a communication strategy to provide general guidance on how to launch and implement the Statement locally. The responsibility for communicating the Statement was given to Chief Crown Prosecutors and regional Equality and Diversity Officers. The communication strategy contained recommendations on the actions that should be taken in the regions. For example, it was recommended that there be a regional launch and that the Local Community Justice Boards be used as conduits in connecting with the public and community organisations. A formal launch event was not the only way of promoting the Statement; some regions and areas undertook other activities including communication with local communities and groups and other parts of the Criminal Justice System. **Box E** gives an overview of how the PPS on racist and religious crime was launched and implemented in the North West region. **Box F** gives an overview of how the Statement was launched and implemented in South Wales.

1.21 Although all regions received the same guidance on the implementation of the Statement, there is a substantial amount of variation between regions in the extent to which it has received attention. The follow-up report to the thematic review by HM CPS Inspectorate finds that there are large differences among areas in the communication of the Statement to staff. For example, only a few regions have held a regional launch event. The differences in local implementation can be attributed, at least partly, to:

- Varied levels of priority devoted to the Statement at a local level. Time is the real constraint in ‘championing’ work. Although all Chief Crown Prosecutors are diversity champions for their respective areas, this is an extra role that they undertake in addition to their primary responsibilities. HM CPS Inspectorate found that in CPS areas where the Statement had been launched successfully, the enthusiasm and commitment of senior managers have been transmitted to staff.
- Resistance from front line staff, particularly regarding the granting of face-to-face meetings with lawyers to victims to discuss decisions that had been taken in racist and religious cases. At the outset of developing the Statement, some front-line staff questioned whether this was ‘the most important thing to be done’.
- Emergence of other priorities: the CPS has been undergoing a major organisational change by taking over all charging responsibilities from the police, beginning in Spring 2004.

BOX E

North West launch

The regional launch

The five CPS areas in the North West came together, led by the region’s Equality and Diversity Officer, to launch the Statement. The purpose of the regional launch event was to:

- Raise awareness of the Statement on racist and religious crime and the role of the CPS;
- To engage in and develop a dialogue with local minority communities; and
- To increase public confidence by being open and transparent.

The launch took place in Manchester on Saturday 10 January 2004. The place and time were considered carefully. Although Manchester is a central location in the region, it did make it difficult for individuals from further afield to attend. Holding the event on a Saturday meant it was outside work time, but also relied on people giving up their own time to attend.

Over 200 delegates attended, made up of community organisations, voluntary groups, Criminal Justice Agencies and members of the public. The regional launch event was designed to be interactive. It featured a ‘walk through case study’ with interactive voting, question and answer sessions, and an appearance by a television personality. The organisers of the regional launch received positive feedback from participants.

However, given that a large percentage of attendees were from the Greater Manchester area (due to the location of the event) there was some concern that some areas, such as Cumbria and Cheshire, that were not represented as well, may have received a better return on their money if their contributions had been spent locally. In response to this, local area launches are also planned.

The local implementation in Cheshire

In Cheshire the policy was launched internally by circulating copies of the policy to all staff. This was then followed up with team meetings. In this case, the Chief Crown Prosecutor for Cheshire did not personally carry out a Statement ‘road show’; that was instead left to local teams.

- Lack of specific reporting requirements on the local launch and implementation of the policy.
- Variations in regional requirements. Local CPS offices have a local focus, centred on local activities. In general, they are autonomous units that devise independent methods for following general guidelines set centrally.

BOX F**Launch and implementation in South Wales**

The Chief Crown Prosecutor for South Wales has responsibility for the local launch and implementation of the Statement. The Statement was communicated internally within local CPS offices and externally to the community.

Internally, the agenda was set for local senior management teams to hold training and awareness sessions, and for each office to make policy presentations to the staff. On an ongoing basis, the front line staff are encouraged to lead on the ground on diversity issues, by linking performance reviews to diversity outcomes. One such example in the South Wales region is the local target for lawyers, who are expected to visit four schools each year to increase public awareness around these issues.

Externally, several publicity initiatives were taken in South Wales, including:

- Press and media coverage, including an interview on BBC local radio, Wales (prime time);
- Public meetings, including 40 school visits highlighting the policy document;
- Criminal Justice Board contacting all key agencies through various committees;
- South Wales police committee on race, incorporating community involvement; and
- Over 40 speeches delivered by the Chief Crown Prosecutor.

To further promote the Statement launch, the local CPS, with support from the Criminal Justice Board, made an educational video tracking a racist case through the Criminal Justice System. The video was recorded as a part of a Criminal Justice Open Day in which 15 students took part over two days. The video will be sent to 58 schools in Wales, with accompanying classroom material for teachers. A larger-scale media launch of the video by the local CPS is likely to result in wider audiences. The video was recognised by an independent panel as a best practice example at the CPS's Diversity Awards.

1.22 In view of the differences amongst areas and regions in the implementation of the Statement, the Chair of the working group recognises that the communication strategy should, perhaps, have been set as a requirement rather than as a recommendation. The CPS is currently working to address the regional differences that exist regarding implementation. In doing so, it is seeking to accommodate the justifiable differences across local offices, due to differences in local situations, whilst setting strong guidelines and monitoring progress from the centre.

Looking to the future

1.23 To ensure successful implementation, particular attention is being devoted to establishing mechanisms to ensure that local areas and regions report back on the steps they are taking. To move the current situation forward the following mechanisms are being established:

- The Diversity Accountability Committee will monitor implementation activities across the CPS areas as part of its role in monitoring the general performance of local areas. All Chief Crown Prosecutors report quarterly to the Diversity Accountability Committee on the community engagement activities undertaken. Although this reporting structure does not specifically request feedback on the implementation of the Statement, this information may be elicited and appropriate action taken.
- The CPS will identify a limited set of equality outcome measures over the next year and some of these will cover the handling and prosecution of hate crimes, including racist and religiously aggravated crimes. Areas will report to head office on how they deal with racist and religiously aggravated crimes alongside other key business targets and measures.
- Regions and areas that have successfully launched and implemented the Statement will share experiences with others that have not. The sharing of 'good practice' will be co-ordinated through the central unit.
- Community groups will be involved in monitoring and evaluating the impact of the Statement.

1.24 In its follow-up report on CPS casework with a minority ethnic dimension HM CPS Inspectorate⁶ found that (i) the racist and religious crime policy has been well received, (ii) the level and effectiveness of community engagement has improved significantly, and (iii) all prosecutors have received national awareness training. However, the follow-up report also found that the overall service provided to victims and witnesses has not improved significantly, and that all racist incidents are still dealt with by a relatively small number of designated prosecutors. This highlights the real and ongoing challenges which the CPS faces in mainstreaming equality and diversity issues throughout the Service. While acknowledging the progress made by the CPS, it is imperative that CPS staff at all levels understand the policy on racist and religious crime and apply this when providing services to clients from diverse communities.

⁶ HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate, April 2004, Follow-up Review to Assess the Progress Made by the CPS Since the Report on the Thematic Review of Casework Having a Minority Ethnic dimension, Confidential Draft.

INLAND REVENUE



2.1 The case study presented in this chapter focuses on initiatives undertaken by the Bristol and North Somerset Inland Revenue Office to meet the needs of diverse Black and Minority Ethnic communities amongst their clients. These initiatives are instructive for the way in which the initiators identified and responded to their diverse clients' needs, and how this process was managed. The particular initiatives examined here were developed and implemented by the Bristol Inland Revenue Office's Business Support Team (BST). The Bristol BST is a small group, consisting of twelve Business Advisors, managed by the Business Service Team Manager and given strategic direction by the Area Services Director and the Area Customer Relations Manager.

The role and structure of the Inland Revenue

2.2 The Inland Revenue collects direct taxes and pays tax credits and child benefits in line with Government policies. In recent years there has been close co-operation between the Inland Revenue and the Department for Work and Pensions, particularly regarding the implementation of the new Tax Credit System. This has expanded the diversity of the customer base of the Inland Revenue considerably, to include people who previously had little to no contact with the Inland Revenue. If it is to succeed in its core purpose of ensuring that everyone understands and pays what they owe, and understands and receives what they are entitled to, the Inland Revenue must recognise and respond to the diversity of its customers.⁷

2.3 The Bristol Business Support Team developed the initiatives addressed in this case study. BSTs were established in 1999 to help Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) with their tax affairs. They are also part of the broader aim of promoting entrepreneurship. They conduct workshops, seminars and one-to-one sessions to help ensure that SMEs meet their tax obligations and receive tax credits to which they are entitled. Diversity of service delivery is part of this objective since the services they provide help individuals from communities that are less likely to start small businesses to set up and run their own firms.

2.4 The Bristol BST is supported not only by local area management, but also by regional and national management structures. The Inland Revenue is divided into seven regions of which Southern England is one.

There is a system of area management, whereby Inland Revenue Southern England is divided into 14 areas, of which the Bristol and North Somerset area is one. The Inland Revenue Southern England region has responsibility for ensuring that business processes (such as movements, posts, customer relations, accounting, compliance and training) are uniform across the areas, and for spreading best practice in this area. The regional office is informed of local area business activities via monthly reports (on compliance, service delivery and corporate services) that are sent from the local offices to the regional office. Moreover, each region has a BST co-ordinator to oversee the activities of the BSTs within their region and who act as conduits between the area and national levels. The regional co-ordinators receive monthly reports from their area level BST managers. At the national level, the Service Delivery Stream identifies the overall service delivery strategy of the Inland Revenue and the place of the BSTs within this strategy. All BSTs report directly to the Service Delivery Stream, providing quantitative and qualitative information on area-level activities, including initiatives that involve diversity in service delivery. With this information, the Service Delivery Stream aims to identify good practices and the extent to which these are transferable to other locations.

Equality and diversity of service delivery

2.5 To meet the needs of all SMEs the Inland Revenue must identify and meet the needs of diverse communities. Of the 3.8 million or so businesses in the UK, ethnic minorities own about 7 per cent. This is not representative of society as a whole, where 9 per cent of the population is made up of ethnic minorities.⁸ If more individuals from ethnic minorities are to set up their own firms, they must understand the tax regulations. Local Inland Revenue offices, and in particular the local Business Support Teams, can contribute to increasing this knowledge.

2.6 The Inland Revenue has several mechanisms, structures and programmes in place to mainstream equality and diversity in service delivery. These efforts, co-ordinated at the national level, aim to enable regions and local areas to respond to local needs, without prescribing activities from the national level. Some of these co-ordinating efforts are outlined in **Box G**.

⁷ Diversity in the Inland Revenue, 2003, Preface by Sir Nick Montagu, Inland Revenue.

⁸ <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/profiles/commentaries/ethnicity.asp>.

BOX G

Mechanisms, structures and programmes to mainstream equality and diversity

Structures

- The Diversity Advisory Group (DAG) is a 'moving group' consisting of a rotation of staff. DAG meets quarterly over a two-hour lunch to discuss current issues at hand. Emerging good practices are included in the minutes and shared on the intranet.
- A panel of Diversity Champions, consisting of a Board member/Director from all business areas, works to provide the Revenue with guidance on diversity priorities. The panel consists of voluntary members, who usually rotate every three to four years or if they move to other jobs.
- Regional Diversity Co-ordinators, organise and facilitate local focus groups and collect examples of best practice using a format designed by the central team. These are used on both the central Intranet site and the Region's Intranet site.
- An Equality and Diversity network, consisting of regional Equality and Diversity Officers (EDOs), acts as a communication channel from the regional to the national level. The network collects and shares examples of good local practice, which are then shared more widely via the intranet. This group meets approximately twice yearly at an event facilitated by the central team.
- A centrally based, Business Through Diversity (BtD) team provides a consultancy-type service to other parts of the organisation to help them deliver their diversity objectives. The BtD team provides tools to help with the 'how to' questions. The Schemes' co-ordinator oversees implementation via a cross-cutting team of representatives from throughout the Revenue. The team meets regularly and develops products and tools for business use e.g., BtD developed a video and facilitator guide.

Mechanisms

- Events such as the 'Diversity Awards' and 'Diversity Week' allow good practice examples to be acknowledged and publicised. Over 200 examples of good practice (internal and external) have been shared through these initiatives. In each case, the benefits of the initiative to the individual, team and community at large are highlighted. Following a recent evaluation of the 'Diversity Awards', the Revenue is set to run another one. The evaluation found that the quality of the initiatives was high; the strategic goals - to draw out and share good practice - were met; and that participants viewed the event to be worthwhile.
- The Revenue's intranet site contains accounts of good practice examples, such as the initiatives undertaken by Bristol's Business Support Team.
- There is also a virtual network (facilitated electronically). Key information is forwarded from the centre via an e-service network. The central team also have a contact box for enquiries from the network as well as taking telephone calls for advice. This links all the diversity focus groups throughout the Revenue's current and past DAG participants, the EDO network and the central team.

Programmes

- There are various training programmes that have a diversity focus. For example, during 2001/2002, all Inland Revenue's 8,000 managers attended 'Diversity Training' by participating in workshops. The internal training programme also includes a number of diversity learning products that people can attend as part of their personal development plans. Other "one-off" initiatives have also taken place, e.g. culture awareness events. There are also other specific training courses on cultural awareness.
- All staff participate in a 'Core Purpose' programme, which is run by the Marketing and Communications Unit. The programme addresses the image and brand of the Revenue and is rolled out periodically in a modular format. Although the programme is not labelled as a diversity initiative, the topics addressed - such as relationships with customers - are integral to incorporating diversity principles into the core of the business.

The initiative: reaching out to minority Small and Medium Enterprises in Bristol

2.7 The Bristol and North Somerset Business Support Team (BST) has been recognised at the national level by the Inland Revenue for the outreach activities undertaken by the team in working with, and for, SMEs run by individuals from Black and Minority Ethnic communities. Since early 2003, a Bristol-based Business Advisor has been working to establish a local network of contacts with community leaders and representatives, and to co-ordinate a wide range of activities with ethnic minority businesses. At the 2003 Inland Revenue Diversity Day Awards, the Bristol and North Somerset area performed very well overall, winning two awards. The Prince of Wales also visited the Bristol office in December 2003 in recognition of the work it had done. The BST has a proactive approach to forging links with local ethnic business and community groups.

2.8 The BST carries out engagement activities with minority businesses and communities through workshops, seminars and 'one to one' sessions. These allow the BST to provide appropriate and practical assistance, giving staff members a better understanding of diverse clients' tax-related needs. For example, where there are language barriers, clients can be assisted by the provision of translated material or one-to-one advice. Furthermore, outreach activities allow support to be taken to the minority communities, rather than expecting them to find support themselves. This is particularly important in cases where isolated communities are unaware of the services available to them, do not know how to access them, or are daunted by the prospect of having to initiate contact.

2.9 This case study is based on key informant interviews (**Box H**) and document reviews. The interviewees included representatives of the community groups involved in the outreach activities, and Inland Revenue staff at the local, regional and national levels. In the following sections we describe the links with the Sikh Resource Centre and the Bristol and Avon Chinese Women's Group that formed the basis of these outreach initiatives. The objectives of these initiatives and how these objectives were achieved is then described.

BOX H

Key informant interviews - Inland Revenue

Community Groups (representing minority community)

- Director, Bristol and Avon Chinese Women's Group.
- Project Co-ordinator, Sikh Resource Centre in Bristol

Bristol and Somerset Inland Revenue (local office, based in Bristol)

- Area Services Director
- Area Customer Relations Manager
- Four Business Advisors.

Southern England Inland Revenue (regional level)

- Director and 'Diversity Champion of Champions'
- Assistant Director of Customer Services, Regional Consumer Champion and Manager of Regional Co-ordinator of BST.

Inland Revenue (national level)

- Head, Equality and Diversity Unit
- Small Businesses Champion, Service Delivery Stream
- Team Leader, Out of Office Activities, Service Delivery Stream.

2.10 Links were established with the Sikh community as part of a process of establishing a network of contacts with community leaders and representatives. The Sikh Resource Centre in Bristol (**Box I**) plays an important role in the Bristol Inland Revenue office's contact with the local communities it serves. The Sikh Resource Centre does not restrict itself to providing services to Sikhs; for example, it also represents Muslims in the area.

BOX I**Sikh Resource Centre in Bristol**

The Sikh Resource Centre, a registered charity funded by the Council, represents and provides services to the Sikh community of approximately 5,000. The activities undertaken by the Centre include daycare for elders, sporting activities for the young, and the production of newsletters and information guidance on government bodies.

The Centre's official status in the community allows it to:

- Identify the needs of the community through regular community meetings; and
- Communicate relevant needs to government and statutory bodies.

In engaging with government bodies, the Centre aims to give community members the information resources and confidence they need to access services directly.

In working together with the Inland Revenue, the Centre aimed to address the needs of many self-employed individuals in the Sikh community – many are self-employed taxi drivers.

Links with the Sikh Resource Centre

2.11 At the initial meeting between staff of the Bristol Inland Revenue and the Sikh Resource Centre, the community needs to be addressed were identified. These consisted of:

- A lack of knowledge about the tax codes;
- A lack of knowledge about national insurance contributions; and
- Low levels of trust amongst the community of government bodies in general.

2.12 Following this meeting, the Sikh Resource Centre arranged for the BST to give a presentation to 200 Sikhs at the local Gurdwara (Sikh temple) on the services it offers. The Gurdwaras are appropriate venues because they are a focal point for the local community, allowing contact to be made with several generations of the community at the same time. Following this presentation, the BST arranged four outreach sessions at the Sikh Resource Centre, which the Centre publicised throughout the community. The outreach sessions consisted of presentations and individual consultations, where individuals could ask questions about their own cases. For instance, a preacher from one of the local Gurdwaras put his tax affairs in order after one of the outreach sessions. Preachers are classed as self-employed individuals.

2.13 The series of outreach activities with the local Sikh community have now been completed, as the Centre felt that the community and the Centre had received sufficient information and assistance from the BST. This allows community members to use the regular communication channels and information services. However, the Centre continues to be available as a point of contact between community members and the Inland Revenue.

Links with the Bristol and Avon Chinese Women's Group

2.14 The link with the Chinese community was made when the Bristol and Avon Chinese Women's Group requested a meeting with the BST in response to a leaflet that they received from the BST outlining the services the BST provides (**Box J**). The BST sent leaflets outlining the services it provides to all local voluntary organisations as part of its community engagement. The initial meeting took place in early 2003, to discuss the needs of the community and the ways in which the BST could help address these needs. From this meeting it emerged that the Chinese community felt excluded by language barriers; many individuals in the community did not have sufficient command of English to deal with the finer points of the taxation system.

2.15 Following the initial meeting, the BST undertook three workshops for members of the Chinese community. All three workshops were translated into Cantonese by the Chinese Women's Group; the accompany handouts and workbooks were translated by Inland Revenue's International Services. The first workshop, presented by two Business Advisors and attended by approximately 40 people from the Chinese community, focussed primarily on what services the BST could provide. The second workshop, presented by two Business Advisors and attended by approximately 30 people, focused on Self Assessment and filing tax returns. The third, attended by approximately 50 people, was held in conjunction with the AGM of the Chinese community organisation; it focused on the New Tax Credit system. Further BST workshops are planned with the local Chinese community, as part of a continuing outreach programme.

BOX J**Bristol and Avon Chinese Women's Group**

The Bristol and Avon Chinese Women's Group is a local organisation that represents the needs of the Chinese community. Although referred to as the Women's Group, its services are available to all. It provides services to the community, including advice in contacting and dealing with government bodies.

A substantial proportion of the Chinese community is in the restaurant and food take-away business, often self employed or employed in family businesses; because of language barriers, many individuals had trouble understanding the tax system.

Objectives of the outreach activities

2.16 Through minority outreach activities, such as those undertaken with the Sikh and Chinese communities, the BST aims to gain an understanding of the factors that hinder or prevent voluntary compliance with tax obligations and the uptake of tax credits. The BST uses its outreach activities to identify differences in clients' needs and to direct services towards meeting these needs.

2.17 The outreach activities aim to contribute to the achievement of the Inland Revenue's organisational objectives by:

- Ensuring voluntary compliance and accurate tax returns. By gaining a better understanding of their tax responsibilities and how to fulfil these, individuals can assist the Revenue in processing claims efficiently, for example by completing tax returns accurately. Avoiding processing mistakes can save the Inland Revenue large amounts of resources in correcting errors.
- Enhancing the public image of the Revenue. Through interaction with communities, negative attitudes towards the Inland Revenue can be addressed. Gaining the confidence and trust of minority communities who are often suspicious of the Inland Revenue (and government departments in general) is essential to improving the Revenue's public image.
- Supporting the Revenue's core business purpose to make it as easy as possible for everyone to understand and comply with their obligations and receive their entitlements.

2.18 At a local office level, the outreach activities aim to:

- Establish strong links with local community groups. These links can be drawn upon when developing specific initiatives and means of responding to the needs of individuals from different cultural backgrounds.
- Establish strong links with other government and support agencies. As a result of the outreach activities undertaken by the BST, they are regarded as leaders in taking forward diversity and community initiatives that achieve genuine business and social benefits. For example, the Bristol office works together with DTI's Business Links, Jobcentre Plus, and the South West Regional Development Agency, as part of the New Deal in the Community initiative.
- Support (i) the Inland Revenue Southern England regional business plan, "Working towards Educating Customers"; (ii) the Bristol and North Somerset area business plan, "Develop the Outward Facing Role of the Inland Revenue"; and (iii) the Bristol and North Somerset area's "Joint Declaration on Racial Equality".
- Contribute to the BST's performance indicators, such as the number of contacts made by each of the business advisors each year. This is considerably higher than in other areas.
- Develop staff by broadening their awareness of the challenges faced in delivering services to a diverse customer base.

What have been the successes?

2.19 There are several strong indications that the outreach activities described are having an impact. Nevertheless, their impacts have not been specifically evaluated by the BST. Furthermore, the impacts of specific outreach activities are difficult to quantify in the short term and cannot be isolated with a high degree of certainty from those of other developments.

Measurable feedback

2.20 The BST seeks feedback from community groups on whether they are more satisfied with the relationship with Revenue as a result of the outreach activities. This feedback is received through formal evaluation following presentations and seminars and informal verbal feedback. Formal performance monitoring indicates that 99.7 per cent of BST clients are satisfied with the services they receive (**Box K**). A further signal of success is that community groups are now approaching the BST for support rather than the BST having to seek them out.

Mainstreaming minority groups

2.21 A real indication of the success of minority group outreach activities is when minority groups develop the resources that enable them to make use of mainstream services. The outreach activities with the Sikh community are viewed as an example of such success, where regular support sessions from the BST ceased after it had increased the confidence of the community to a level that enables them to use the regular contact channels for help and support. Members of the Chinese community are also reported to be making contact directly with the Inland Revenue.

Evidence of effects on individuals

2.22 Despite the lack of quantitative evaluation of outreach activities focusing on minority SMEs, anecdotal evidence from staff and community groups suggests that the impact of such targeted activities is considerable. The director of the Chinese Women's Group reports a substantial change in the approach of the Inland Revenue, where the Revenue is considered to be proving its commitment to diversity of service delivery 'by actions'. The Chinese Women's Group reports that the contacts with the Revenue have had a considerable effect on the tax affairs of individual citizens in the Chinese community. Members of the Chinese community appear to have a better understanding of their tax affairs, and have filed more tax returns on time, as a result of the services offered by the BST.

BOX K

'Happy sheets'

BSTs have targets against which they are evaluated regarding the number of people who attend their workshops and the satisfaction levels of participants. The collection of data on customer satisfaction ("happy sheets") is currently being revised, so that they allow managers to differentiate between performance levels more effectively.

At present, these measures show very high levels of satisfaction. One of the reasons for this may be that the forms for obtaining these data are not anonymous.

In addition, data on the behavioural effects of BST contacts would be useful, as data on the effects of contact with BST advisors in terms of customers' behaviour are not yet available at national level.

How successes were accomplished

2.23 Several factors account for the success of the BST in reaching out to minority SMEs in the Bristol and Somerset area.

Motivation and drive of individuals

2.24 In this case, the personal initiatives taken by individuals in the BST were critical in making this initiative work. This illustrates the importance of ensuring that the right people, with the right skills and motivations, are placed in key service delivery positions. To some extent, such individual activity is encouraged by the fact that community engagement activities are woven into the normal workload and job descriptions of Business Advisors.

Commitment and dedication of the team

2.25 To make a success of outreach activities, frontline staff are often called upon to work outside their normal hours. For example, many of the outreach workshops and seminars were scheduled on weekends or evenings to ensure maximum community involvement. This required staff to work flexible hours without extra remuneration. The commitment and dedication of the team ensured that enough Business Advisors were present to facilitate the activities.

Leadership from all levels

2.26 While the Bristol-based initiatives were formulated in a bottom-up manner, leadership at many levels has been important. When he was head of the Inland Revenue, Sir Nicholas Montagu set out a broad agenda that recognised the necessity of changing the public's - and particular ethnic communities' - perception of the Inland Revenue. His leadership was widely acknowledged as being highly supportive. Full support is also given by the Director of Southern England. Within the Bristol Area, leadership is provided by the Area Services Director and the Area Customer Relations Manager who steer local activities. The style of local leadership is one that empowers staff to take initiative, rather than handing down detailed instructions: described as a style that "does not stop people from doing things".

Main barriers and how they were overcome

2.27 In the process of undertaking outreach activities, the BST faced and learnt to overcome some generic barriers that arise in this type of work.

Overcoming negative perceptions through partnerships with intermediary organisations

2.28 In making contact with members of the community, one of the initial barriers that had to be overcome was the negative perceptions they held of the Inland Revenue. Working in partnership with organised community groups, such as the Sikh Resource Centre and the Chinese Women's Group has been especially rewarding for the BST because these organisations are already trusted by the communities they serve. Using intermediary organisation allows the BST to access previously isolated groups and individuals more easily.

Finding finances to meet additional costs

2.29 Such activities are subject to the need to balance the use of resources across all of the Department's activities. A 'resource model' is used to allocate regional resources to local areas. The model takes into account the customer type in each area (in terms of the complexity of the tax work), but does not specifically take account of customer profile (cultural issues) in each area. One of the barriers that needed to be overcome in developing links with the Chinese community was to have promotional leaflets translated into Cantonese. The Bristol office funded production of the leaflets, with the translation provided by the Inland Revenue's International Services Office.

Dealing with cultural unknowns

2.30 The area office's staff receive limited formal guidance on dealing with diverse religions and cultures. Before initiating contact with community groups, the Business Advisor concerned had little involvement with minority communities and was "terrified" that she "might commit a religious or cultural faux pas". As a source of guidance, she first referred to the publications issued by the Inland Revenue and then contacted a Religious Studies Teacher who talked her through various religious protocols.

2.31 Currently, the diversity of Business Advisors at Bristol does not reflect the diversity of the community. It is acknowledged that diversity among staff can be an aid in meeting different needs in the client base by providing knowledge of different cultures. However, Business Advisors believe it is not necessary for staff to share exactly the same characteristics as their clients for them to deliver services effectively; a willingness to engage with all customers is the key factor.

Looking to the future

2.32 Not all Inland Revenue staff view outreach as the answer to meeting diverse communities' needs. Some of the staff in the Bristol office believe that the Revenue should not have to differentiate the way it delivers services to the public. Instead, all clients should be able to use mainstream forms of access. In the short-run, however, differentiation is necessary to take into account different cultures and provide positive help to communities that need it. Outreach activities that promote services to minority communities present an obvious way to bring minority community members into the system. Looking to the future, there are several factors that might influence how the Revenue works to mainstream minority communities.

Sharing good practice

2.33 For lessons from diversity in service delivery to have a greater impact, a variety of communication channels need to be used. These range from national, regional and local meetings, newsletters and electronic formats, and specially designed locally-focused events, such as 'diversity awards', that provide platforms for sharing good practices. Diversity awards bring national recognition to local initiatives. The awards are seen as important to motivating staff and managers.

Managing organisational change

2.34 The planned merger with HM Customs and Excise may have implications for the way services are delivered. Good practices from both organisations must be considered before moving forward jointly. As with any organisational changes, the merger could bring about an initial sense of uncertainty until staff and the public adjust to the new system. However, the Treasury's Review of the Revenue Departments, published 17 March 2004, which recommended the merger, stresses improvement to customer service as a key driver for the creation of the new department.

Responding to calls for cost effectiveness

2.35 Following the Review of the Revenue Departments and the Gershon Review, there is an increased emphasis on finding efficiency savings, which can then be rechannelled to frontline services. The Inland Revenue is reflecting this in its delivery strategies, but is not withdrawing from one-to-one and face-to-face contact where they believe this approach will best meet customer needs.

Building evaluation into the design of initiatives

2.36 Although local offices such as Bristol find it difficult to quantify the benefits of outreach activities, the message from the regional and national level is clear: cost-effectiveness, although sometimes difficult to quantify, can and should be demonstrated. In October 2003, the Inland Revenue published an "Out of Office Service Delivery Guide", which provides local area managers with guidance, including advice on how to build evaluation into the design of initiatives and how to implement it. In recognising that a system for monitoring and evaluating activities is a critical part of being able to deliver value for money services, area managers have agreed to use this guide in the development of initiatives in the future.

Promoting an 'enabling' agenda

2.37 The Inland Revenue recognises the need to be a move away from organisationally-prescribed service delivery to a customer-led delivery of services. While areas are encouraged from a regional level to expand their impact on the wider community, specific outreach activities and local initiatives are decentralised to allow local areas to respond to the needs of the local community. This means that there is a substantial amount of variation between areas, which is likely to continue. This is inevitable, given the large differences between areas in terms of the diverse composition of their client bases.



LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL



Background

3.1 The Women's Study Group, supported by the Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College, and hosted by Bordesley Green Girls' School in Birmingham, is an example of diversity in the delivery of adult learning services. The Women's Study Group is an ongoing initiative to meet the educational needs of women from Black and Minority Ethnic communities in the local area, particularly women from Pakistan and Bangladesh. The positive impact of the Women's Study Group is recognised by the College staff and students. The contributions it makes to meeting the needs of the diverse community are due to efforts by the education providers in co-operation with the community, and the organisations that support and monitor the activities of the education providers. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) supports such diversity in service delivery through its planning and funding of education and training for post-16 year olds outside higher education in England.

3.2 The main sources of information used for this case study consist of interviews with students, teachers and policymakers. The interviews were held at different levels, from the classroom to government department level. We interviewed the Principal and Assistant Principal of Joseph Chamberlain College, and held focus groups with students and staff. Within the LSC, we interviewed the Regional Director of the Birmingham and Solihull LSC, and staff of the national LSC, including the National Director of the Learning Group, the Director of Equality and Diversity, and the Policy Manager for Equality and Diversity. At the Department for Education and Skills, the Head of the Post-16 Equal Opportunities Policy Team was interviewed.

The Women's Study Group - objectives and successes

3.3 The Women's Study Group aims to provide learning opportunities for local women whose family circumstances prevent them from travelling far from home, or from making a commitment to attend courses regularly or punctually. The lessons provided in the Group focus on strengthening students' self-confidence and on providing information and developing skills of practical use. Students also have the opportunity to take nationally recognised examinations in Literacy, Numeracy, Information and Communication Technologies and Urdu. The Group also offers other classes, such as dressmaking. This initiative began in Bordesley Green Girls' School in the summer of 1995 as the "Mothers' Group". It aimed to improve the literacy of pupils' mothers to support family learning. After a promising pilot, funding and tutors for the class were secured through a partnership with Joseph Chamberlain College. Bordesley Green's designation as a Business and Enterprise School has promoted further expansion of the project.

3.4 Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College's main task is to provide learning opportunities for 16 to 19 year olds. The College is located in one of the country's most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, with high levels of unemployment and low levels of formal education. Many of the students' parents did not receive secondary education, and a high percentage of students are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The College views support for adult women as an important part of its activities.

3.5 The impact of the Women's Study Group is evident in the effects it has had on its students and their achievements, and development of the Group as a community asset. Signals of success can be assessed against the five criteria set out below:

- Sustainability. The Group has been active since 1995 and its enrolment has grown to 40 women each year;
- Academic achievement. The students often make substantial progress in terms of language proficiency and literacy. Of the 40 women enrolled in the period September 2002 to April 2003, 32 took national examinations in spoken and written English, Numeracy and ICT;
- Students' career development after attending the Women's Study Group. The Group's tutor reports that after attending for around two years, many students go on to further training or employment;
- Personal development and support. The Group has benefited women suffering from stress and depression, as it provides a safe, positive environment outside the home; and
- Use of the Group as a point of contact with the community. The Group is recognised as an important link with the women's ethnic minority communities and is used as a forum to disseminate information. For example, the Group has been used to trial school documents aimed at parents.

Many of our interviewees emphasised that while some of these signals of success are of great importance, they are difficult to measure and quantify.

Important factors in achieving successes

3.6 The achievements of the Women's Study Group are made possible by a number of factors, ranging from front line engagement with the community to identify students' needs, the consistency between this initiative and other activities undertaken by the College, and support from the LSC and the broader policy framework within which the education providers operate.

Community engagement

3.7 A history of developing close contact with the community and listening to community members needs is undoubtedly one of the critical success factors. This is evident in the activities of Joseph Chamberlain College and Bordesley Green Girls' School in publicising their activities, and their decisions on the content of courses. Classes are advertised through word of mouth, a newsletter and contacts at the local mosque. Links with prospective adult learners are often provided by their children who study at the College or School. If requests for particular courses are voiced by the community, these are incorporated into its development plan, on the basis of which funding is raised. The teaching staff involved in the Women's Study Group estimate that 90 per cent of ideas for course content are generated by students themselves.

3.8 Listening to students and prospective students helps teaching staff to identify specific needs. In addition to course content, these needs also refer to the organisation of the courses. For example, there is a crèche facility for students with children, support is available for students in their native languages, and class times are tailored to meet the women's child care and other domestic responsibilities. Late start / early finish times have been found to be most appropriate for women enrolled in classes in English for Speakers of Other Languages. Meeting these needs requires the education providers to adopt a far more accommodating and flexible approach than usual.

Learning from experience

3.9 The Women's Study Group is not an isolated initiative. On the contrary, it complements many other activities and initiatives undertaken by the providers. Experience of these initiatives helps build expertise in meeting diverse students' needs. For example, the Women into Self Employment (WISE) initiative is an EU sponsored initiative of which Bordesley Green Girls' School is a partner. WISE helps women in the local community move into self-employment in childminding, dressmaking and retail, by providing them with the skills required to write a business plan and manage small business affairs. Joseph Chamberlain College also funds courses at the Bangladeshi Women's Employment Resource Centre. The Centre provides learning opportunities to Bangladeshi and other Black and Minority Ethnic women in the local community. Moreover, in its mainstream activities, the staff of Joseph Chamberlain College are well aware of the need to be sensitive to the needs of diverse groups. Female students' families often expect them to focus on the home.

To make students aware of other opportunities available to them, former students, whose photos and short biographies are displayed throughout the College, function as role models. Such initiatives provide teachers with the experience required to teach classes composed of students who are diverse in terms of age, previous education and family circumstances.

Open lines of communication

3.10 Experience with related initiatives is of little help if this is not shared among teachers and school administrators. Joseph Chamberlain College reports that its staff are organised in a fairly flat structure, and that teachers are involved in all aspects of College life. Co-operation among staff is supported by personal ties made possible by the College's manageable size. Morale is also fostered by high quality training and paid training time for staff.

Support from the Learning and Skills Council and the Department for Education and Skills

3.11 The education providers believe that they have a good relationship with the local Birmingham and Solihull LSC, to which they report. The Principal of Joseph Chamberlain College explained that the LSC not only monitors the College's activities closely, but also facilitates them. LSC does so by recognising the College's achievements and by being open and flexible with the College. For example, in the event of unexpected developments that affect the College's performance, the LSC is prepared to listen to the College's explanation and to consider renegotiation of the College's contract.

3.12 LSC staff also support education providers in data management. The College draws together data on its sixth form students and adult learners three times a year in individual learner records. These data are the basis upon which performance is assessed. In recent years, the LSC has improved considerably the quality of information systems available to planners. Previously, further education colleges, work based schemes, sixth form colleges and adult and continuing education schemes maintained their own data collection procedures. There is now a common format for all education and training providers consisting of individualised learner and staff records.

3.13 Objectives are used to target activities, but not to micro-manage. Monitoring of the impact of equality and diversity work undertaken by local LSCs and education and training providers has developed within the framework for Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs).⁹ 2003-04 is the first full academic year in which EDIMs have been in place. These are objectives referring to particular equality issues of relevance to the geographical areas for which they are set. The 47 local LSCs in England set their own EDIMs, on the basis of local education, demographic, and socio-economic data. The above-mentioned improvements in the information infrastructure were important in making EDIMs possible. Local LSCs and education and training providers, including further education colleges, are the main actors involved in proposing EDIMs for their area; EDIMs are then reviewed and approved by the local advisory committee. This is an example of the partnership approach adopted by the national LSC in fulfilling its statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity in the delivery of its services. EDIMs are not designed to penalise local LSCs or providers, but rather to get them to challenge themselves, and to identify areas for improvement in meeting the needs of diverse client groups. The national LSC provides guidance on the formulation of EDIMs that states, for example, that EDIMs must be both challenging and achievable. The EDIMs of the Birmingham and Solihull LSC consist of some 25 EDIMs, including a 5 per cent increase in female participation and a 9 per cent increase in participation of people of ethnic minority origin in Work Based Learning. Others aim to close retention and achievement gaps between different groups of learners.

9 Learning and Skills Council. 2002. Equality and Diversity Impact Measures, Equality and Diversity Guidance 01/2002.

3.14 Diversity in the delivery of learning opportunities is an important part of the plans formulated by the Birmingham and Solihull LSC for the area's future education, learning and skills needs. These plans are based on careful analyses of economic and demographic trends relevant to each of the area's main economic sectors. Recent plans have considered the impact of economic restructuring, defined by the shrinking manufacturing base that nevertheless remains an important part of the economy. Demographic change has also been identified as a development that has substantial impacts on employers. The LSCs plans identify the critical skills needs of the area and, by definition, have implications for the training needs of diverse communities. The Regional Director of the Birmingham and Solihull LSC emphasises the importance of helping employers understand the changing skills needs and characteristics of their workforces. For the education and learning opportunities of diverse communities to have a positive impact, employers must also be prepared to respond to diverse needs in their workforces. An important part of LSC's role is to facilitate the matching of supply and demand in the area's labour market.

3.15 The Department for Education and Skills sets the overall parameters within which the LSC promotes equality and diversity. Within the DfES, the Post-16 Equal Opportunities Policy Team plays an important role in ensuring that equality and diversity issues are considered in all aspects of post-16 education and learning, including adult learning. Issues relating to equality and diversity are integral parts of the main strategies that guide government policy in this area, *Success for All* and the *Skills Strategy*.¹⁰ For example, the Skills Strategy considers the impact of training on different groups. It includes the introduction of the entitlement for all adults without a good foundation of employability skills to receive the education required to achieve level two qualifications. The DfES also communicates with and influences the LSC through regular contacts, its yearly grant letter and its response to the LSC's annual equality and diversity report.

Main challenges

3.16 Winning the trust of the local community was cited as one of the main challenges that must be overcome by initiatives such as the Women's Study Group if they are to be successful. The slow build up of trust and respect for the tutor has been crucial to the success of the Group. This has helped to break down barriers, such as the initial reluctance of students' families to allow them to participate in class excursions. Trust and support is required not only from prospective students, but also of the wider communities of which they are part. This can be developed over time by visiting local community centres regularly and responding to the needs of community members. In addition, for the Women's Study Group it has been important to consider the interests of the women's families, since their attendance often depends on family approval. This has had implications for the timing of classes, and attendance policy, so that the women could combine participation with other duties.

3.17 Another main challenge faced when implementing such initiatives was summarised by the LSC's Director of Equality and Diversity, as the need to find a balance between demands for accountability and the need for flexibility when reaching out to diverse groups. The demand for accountability means that funding for the provision of courses is often tied to qualifications. However, when designing curricula and learning opportunities that encourage diverse groups to take advantage of them, courses that lead to qualifications are not always the most appropriate option. Not all students see the need for qualifications, and the possibility of failure can be daunting to some, particularly if they have not enjoyed formal education in the past. There is no easy solution to finding the optimal balance between accountability and flexibility. However, it was suggested that those charged with monitoring should have trust in the education providers they hold accountable. This does not mean being soft on monitoring; it does mean taking a nuanced approach to supervision: measuring and quantifying rigorously when appropriate, and taking a broader view when the situation calls for it. In the case of the Women's Study Group, the LSC supports these classes as a form of lifelong learning and family learning, recognising the value of reaching women who would otherwise not participate.

¹⁰ DfES. *Success for All: Reforming Further Education and Training*, November 2002; DfES, DTI, HM Treasury, DWP. *21st Century Skills: Realising our Potential*, July, 2003.

Next steps

3.18 Given the Women's Study Group's past success, and the support it receives from the community, teachers, learning providers and local LSC, it is likely to continue in its present form in the foreseeable future. The Joseph Chamberlain College and Bordesley Green Girls' School recognise the importance of continuing to respond to the needs of the communities they serve. New challenges have emerged in recent years due to the arrival of new groups; for example, a Somali community. Identifying and meeting their needs requires that the same process be followed of engaging with the community and identifying and using the relevant lessons from other initiatives.

3.19 With regard to Equality and Diversity Impact Measures, the challenge for the future is to keep the framework under review and to develop these so that they can be used to monitor progress on an ongoing basis. Part of this challenge involves improving the data used to measure progress on EDIMs. While great progress has been made in improving data collection procedures, these improvements have also made certain gaps in the data visible. In particular, improvements are needed in the completeness of data on disability and ethnicity. To achieve this, providers have to be convinced of the importance of collecting, registering and using this information to monitor the impact of their initiatives.

3.20 The LSC is also active in the broader context of helping other actors recognise the roles they have to play in tackling issues of equality and diversity. For example, the LSC works closely with the Equal Opportunities Commission, and acknowledges its concerns as to continued occupational segregation (the concentration of women and men in different kinds of job), gender imbalances in the workforce, and inequality in Modern Apprenticeships. In May 2003, the Equal Opportunities Commission began an investigation into these issues (Plugging Britain's Skills Gaps, interim report published in May 2004)¹¹, as part of which it drew on case studies from local LSCs, as well as focus groups of employers and employees. The LSC has responded to the EOC report with a series of actions to be taken forward as part of its Programme Board overseen by a Ministerial Steering Group.

3.21 At the local level, Birmingham and Solihull LSC is engaged in strategic partnerships with employers, helping them address their staff diversity. Furthermore, in large development projects, such as the Bullring shopping centre and Birmingham University Hospital, the local LSC co-ordinates the activities of job centres, colleges, work based learning providers and private companies, so that these projects benefit the areas with the highest levels of unemployment. Such efforts ensure that the effects of small scale initiatives of learning providers, such as the Women's Study Group, are consistent with and reinforced by developments elsewhere.

11 Plugging Britain's Skills Gaps, <http://www.eoc.org.uk/cseng/policyandcampaigns/occseg.asp>.

NATIONAL GALLERY



"The Archers" by Sir Henry Raeburn, © the National Gallery, London

4.1 The National Gallery houses the national collection of Western European painting from the 13th to 19th centuries. Its aims are to care for, and enhance, the collection for the education and enjoyment of as wide a public as possible, both at the Gallery and beyond. The Gallery is open 360 days a year, and admission is free.

The initiative: Art Through Words

4.2 Art Through Words (ATW) is a four-year-old programme designed to make the collection of the National Gallery accessible to blind and partially-sighted people. In monthly sessions, selected paintings are explored through description, interpretation and discussion. Sessions last one and a half hours and typically attract 15-20 participants. As such, ATW is one part of the National Gallery's efforts to make the art it houses accessible for disabled visitors.

4.3 ATW sessions are held in a conference room, where staff and students sit around a large table. Regardless of their visual abilities, all participants at ATW sessions are first issued with a large scale colour photocopy of the painting under discussion, as well as photocopies of details of the painting. Visitors with some sight use optical devices to assist them in exploring this material. At the beginning of the session, the describer introduces the painting, including its artist, and the historical context. This introduction is followed by a detailed description, which focuses not only objects, colours and composition, but also the atmosphere of the work and the describer's own response to it.

4.4 The choice of paintings for ATW is determined by the National Gallery's team of five describers, with the aim of combining individual interests with a balanced programme that allows participants to become acquainted with the wealth of the collection. Depending on the nature of the work, the describers adopt different approaches, such as verbal description or encouraging participants to imitate the postures taken by figures in the paintings. In some cases, the verbal description of the atmosphere is complemented by purpose-designed soundscapes, such as the splashing of oars in water for a river boating scene. Painting utensils are also used during the sessions, such as modern paint brushes, to help illustrate developments in techniques and textures.

4.5 Participants are encouraged to contribute their knowledge, thoughts and emotional response in the following discussion of the painting. The visit concludes with a visit to the Gallery, to the place where the original painting is displayed.

BOX L

ATW introductory sketch – Henry Raeburn's 'The Archers'

This is a portrait of two brothers, showing them in half-length. The brother on the left stands with his body turned towards us, his head in profile with his nose facing towards the right. He holds a bow and arrow. The bow and arrow occupy the right half of the painting. The string is pulled towards him and he holds his right arm up to pull the string taut, creating a horizontal with his right forearm. This horizontal is continued through the arrow he holds and below the arrow is his extended left arm. His left hand is placed upon the curve of the bow. Standing behind his extended left forearm is the second brother. He faces us and is looking at us. The arrow held by his brother (and the brother's left arm) cut across the front of his body. The brothers are standing outdoors – there is a faint suggestion of a mountain in the distance and foliage on the left and along the top.

The painting can be viewed on the National Gallery website, www.nationalgallery.org.uk

4.6 ATW sessions are free of charge. Information on aspects of paintings that may be offensive to some participants, for example nudity and religious content, is available in advance. To facilitate the preparation of materials, visitors are encouraged to inform the Gallery of their intention to attend, but this is not a condition for participation.

4.7 This case study is based on interviews with the National Gallery's Head of Education, the Adult Learning and Access Officer, and the Director of Administration, as well as an interview with the Royal National Institute of the Blind's (RNIB) Arts and Heritage Office. These interviews were complemented by attendance of an ATW session. Contextual information on the provision of services for visually impaired visitors at museums, galleries and heritage sites was obtained from the Talking Images Guide and Research report (2003).¹²

¹² RNIB / Vocaleyes, Talking Images Guide. Museums, Galleries and Heritage Sites: Improving Access for Blind and Partially Sighted People, 2003; RNIB / Vocaleyes, Talking Images Research. Museums, Galleries and Heritage Sites: Improving Access for Blind and Partially Sighted People, 2003.

The objective of the initiative

4.8 In the early 1990s, the Gallery's Education Department produced *A Sense of Art*, an audio guide for blind and partially sighted visitors. Along with a walkman containing the audio guide tape, visitors were issued with a large print book and a raised line diagram book, which traced the main outlines of the pictures discussed by the guide. However, the Education Department grew increasingly aware of drawbacks in this provision. The materials were awkward to carry, especially for visitors using walking aids, and some of the directions provided on the tape were no longer valid because paintings had been moved. Moreover, regular visitors found the basic outlines of the raised line diagrams an unsatisfactory way of exploring art. Many visitors expressed a preference for information delivered through human contact.

4.9 Having identified the shortcomings of the existing provision, and the preferences of the visitors concerned, the Education Department set out to create a new form of access that would be better able to convey the content and spirit of the Gallery's paintings, and that would take into account the visitors' preference for access facilitated by human interaction. For this, the Department sought the advice of the Arts and Heritage staff at RNIB, who have in-depth knowledge of the needs of visually impaired people, and of art.

4.10 As custodian of a paintings-only collection, the Gallery was precluded from making its artworks accessible via a touching collection, an approach highly popular with other galleries and museums. However, for the Department, this apparent limitation became a positive challenge: to venture beyond the idea that visually impaired people could explore art through their sense of touch only.

4.11 ATW was devised as an access route based on intellectual, rather than physical experience. It aims to help visitors to engage directly with paintings, rather than via translation techniques such as simplified raised line images. Developed in collaboration with teachers and clients at the RNIB, it was the first programme in any gallery to be based on pure verbal description.

4.12 As well as taking into account the nature of the collection, Gallery staff believe this responds better to the letter of the Disability Discrimination Act. The participants are not treated as 'handicapped', but as a group from which the educational staff can learn. Essentially, disabled customers are treated in the same way as other customers who receive guidance through verbal explanation, and whose interactive, dynamic engagement is one of the Gallery's key objectives.

"But nobody sees with their eyes, everybody sees with their brain."

ATW participant

Signal successes

4.13 With around 15-20 participants at each session, ATW draws the largest audience of visitors with sight problems in any gallery in the UK. The programme has proved highly successful at engaging a broad age range of visitors, from late teens to over eighty, with various levels of visual handicap. Sessions are followed by occasional visitors as well as a contingent of dedicated regulars.

4.14 Learning facilitated by ATW is not necessarily limited to the group present at the sessions. Some participants report displaying the paintings discussed in their home and passing on their knowledge to other family members, such as grandchildren. We also observed participants recording the sessions to listen to again later at home. The Art Through Words programme is particularly important as there is a lack of other sources of information on art history, such as spoken books, for visually impaired people.

4.15 Far from being a one-sided initiative, the programme has proved a rich source of instruction and satisfaction for educational staff. ATW participants are amongst the liveliest, most enthusiastic people educational staff have encountered. The programme has taught the staff much about how to approach their practice as teachers, for example in terms of awareness of how a work is described and how to structure descriptions.

4.16 As a pioneer in verbal description sessions, the Gallery has inspired similar provision in a number of other galleries and museums, some of which now use descriptions alongside touch tour materials. The Gallery's educational staff has striven to disseminate knowledge of the programme amongst its touring exhibition partners, as well as other venues. A sample session of ATW was re-created at the 2003 Talking Images conference, which discussed ways of overcoming barriers faced by visitors with sight problems in museums, galleries and heritage sites.

Key success factors

4.17 The implementation and ongoing support of ATW and the National Gallery's other access initiatives has been supported by the following elements and structures:

- **Embedding:** According to the RNIB's Arts and Heritage Office, a key factor in successful service delivery is an access policy that involves all staff - a holistic approach balanced by well-defined monitoring responsibility. The National Gallery answers to both of these needs through its internal Access Group. Chaired by the Head of Education, and reporting to the Gallery's management group, the Access Group brings together representatives from a number of departments. In addition, the group has designated contact links in all departments within the Gallery, deliberately including those that have no direct contact with customers. This embedded structure has greatly facilitated access work, as the group is linked with everything that the Gallery does, and its objectives are central to the organisation.
- **Internal co-operation:** Beyond the internal network provided by the access group, individual initiatives have greatly benefited from close collaborations amongst departments. The Media Department is an important partner of the Education Department, for example in producing custom-made soundscapes for ATW sessions. It also designs web-based information for disabled visitors, as the website is an important means of making the Gallery more accessible to disabled visitors. The Gallery's web site was the first to earn the RNIB "See it Right" logo.
- **Customer involvement:** ATW was conceived by the Education Departments in dialogue with teachers and clients at the RNIB. The RNIB's Arts and Heritage Office confirms that the most successful initiatives are those that involve customers all the way through, from the first stages of inception through to ongoing monitoring. Educational staff regularly collect feedback from participants, and have fine-tuned the programme accordingly. For example, it was found that the fabrics which were originally used in some sessions to suggest textures did little to enhance the participants' experience of the descriptions. Soundscapes, on the other hand, have been well received, and have been used accordingly.
- **Staff experience and enthusiasm:** Skilful and dedicated staff have been the backbone of ATW's creation and success. Some of the freelance members of the team were selected because they were already interested in the area and had worked on other aspects of diverse provision, for example children with special education needs. All staff on the team have participated in training sessions with the RNIB.
- **Dissemination among customers:** The Education Department works vigorously to spread knowledge about ATW, and attract new participants among the blind and partially sighted. To meet this objective, the Department liaises with the local community and representative groups, and continues to seek out fresh communication channels, such as newsletters, ceefax pages and events.

Barriers overcome

4.18 The Education Department believes that in the creation of the Access Group, and the access initiatives, the Gallery has managed to avoid the following major barriers to successful diversity in service delivery:

- **Marginalisation:** Due to the embedding of the Access Group within the Gallery, access initiatives are at the centre of the Gallery's activities. As a result, the Group has never had to struggle against organisational barriers, the belief that something was not worth doing, or lack of support amongst staff.
- **Disruption:** The embedded approach has also ensured the sustainability of initiatives. The Gallery is aware of the danger that very good work developed and driven by individuals often comes to an end when that person leaves the organisation, leading to disruption and subsequent reinvention of the wheel. This danger is particularly serious in the arts and heritage sector, where staff turnover is high.
- **'Drowning':** The Gallery values being of a small enough size for its staff to be able to communicate and network with relative ease, and retain an overview of the organisation's activities as a whole.
- **Lack of resources:** Although two lecturers are required for each ATW session, the programme takes up a relatively modest amount of resources, and is considered excellent value. Art through Words is supported by 'London's Museums, Archives and Libraries'.

Next steps

4.19 ATW sessions will continue at the Gallery, as well as the activities that have underpinned its success to date: development of the initiative through feedback from the participants, training, and varied outreach work to attract new participants.

4.20 The Education Department also plans to continue to disseminate information about the programme to other organisations in the arts and heritage sector. So far, this dissemination has taken place through conferences, staff from other venues visiting the Gallery to observe ATW sessions, and Gallery staff giving training sessions at a touring partner gallery. As an added benefit, it is hoped that the wider advertisement of its innovative work will also help to dispel the lingering perception of the Gallery as a conservative, 'elitist' institution.

4.21 Despite the popularity of the ATW sessions, the Gallery recognises that for individual visitors who visit the Gallery outside lectures, the provision of an audio guide is still highly desirable. Resources permitting, the production of a new audio guide, which would benefit from the lessons learnt through ATW, is therefore a further aim for the future.

ANNEX

Data Gathering Design

This annex presents the protocol used to structure the interviews and other information gathering methods of the case studies.

The case studies involved in-depth interviews along the vertical structure of the object of the case study, including the department level, the field office level, and the service provider level. In addition, interviews or focus groups or participant observations were held with service recipients for each case. **Figure A.1** shows the protocol used to structure the interviews.

A1 Protocol for Case Study Interviews

RAND Europe is assisting the National Audit Office (NAO) undertake a value for money study on how government departments and agencies are meeting the challenges of delivering services to a diverse population. As part of this project, we are conducting a good practice case study of [department/government body]'s efforts to engage more effectively with [diversity strand], through its [name of] initiative. We are carrying out interviews at different levels within the [body] to explore this initiative in further detail. The aim of these interviews is to identify the facilitators, barriers, and ongoing challenges associated with delivering this initiative successfully from concept to practice.

i Background on Initiative

- 1 What are the main aims of this initiative?
- 2 Is there a business case for this initiative; if so, could you briefly explain?

ii Roles and Responsibilities

- 3 Could you give a brief description of your roles and responsibilities, with particular emphasis on how they relate to the initiative?
[Probe: main challenges fulfilling responsibilities, major stumbling blocks]

iii Leadership

- 4 Is there a champion for this initiative?
If yes:
What is the role of this champion in delivering the initiative from concept to practice?
What do you consider to be the strengths, weaknesses and challenges of such a role?
- 5 Are there other senior figures/authorities that you would associate with this initiative?
If yes:
Who are they and what are their roles within the initiative?
What do you consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of their involvement?

iv Client Involvement

- 6 Was there any client involvement in the design and implementation of this initiative?
If yes:
Who was involved, how were they involved, and what stages were they involved?
What are the barriers and facilitators to involving clients at these stages?
What have been the benefits and drawbacks of involving clients?
- 7 Is client involvement an ongoing practice?
If yes, how is it managed?

v Involvement of Front Line Staff

- 8 Are front-line staff involved in this initiative?
If yes:
At what stage of the initiative are they involved and how?
How has their involvement affected the success of the initiative?
What influences the involvement of front-line staff both positively and negatively?

A1 Protocol for Case Study Interviews *continued*

vi Communication, Feedback and Vertical Relationships

- 9 Within the scope of this initiative, how does communication flow up and down the relevant links in the chain - from senior management all the way down to the clients, and back?
- 10 What influences effective communication, both positively and negatively?
- 11 What do you see as the ongoing communication challenges?
- 12 Do all levels of the organisation see this initiative in the same way?
If no:
What differences exist?
How are they resolved?

vii Diversity Among Staff

- 13 Does the internal diversity of the workforce reflect the diversity of the target clients?
If yes:
Is this a deliberate policy?
What impact, if any, does this have on the success of the initiative?
- 14 Is diversity, both internal and external, measured?
If yes, please explain.

viii Resources

- 15 Would you describe delivering this initiative effectively as "resource intensive"?
If yes:
Is it more so than other services delivered to less targeted clients?
What accounts for the extra resources needed (e.g., extra training, more staff)?
Could you provide an estimate of the extra resources required (in terms of cash, staff)?
- 16 Does the outcome merit the extra resource required?
If no, why not?

ix Evaluation

- 17 Does information on client needs exist?
If yes:
How is this information gathered?
How is it used?
- 18 Was this initiative evaluated during its implementation phase?
If so, when, how and what did you learn?

- 19 Is the initiative evaluated on an ongoing basis?
If yes:
How, and how often?
What are the benefits and drawbacks to ongoing evaluation?
What helps and what impedes the evaluation process?
- 20 Has the initiative contributed to improved service delivery as reflected in departmental and agency Public Service Agreement targets and/or other business targets?
If yes:
Which targets have these initiatives contributed towards?
What are the measurable contributions to service delivery targets?
- 21 Has this initiative benefited from a 'joined-up government' approach?
If yes, please explain.

x Learning

- 22 How is the experience about this initiative shared within and/or across the organisation, or to a broader audience?
- 23 What affects information sharing, both positively and negatively?
- 24 What are the ongoing challenges and how are you planning to address them?
- 25 What might have happened if efforts were not made in this area?

xi Looking to the future

- 26 How sustainable is this initiative in the long-run?
- 27 What are the ongoing challenges likely to be?
- 28 What, if anything, renders this initiative a useful model for others seeking to deliver services to a diverse population?
- 29 Do you have plans to expand this initiative?
If yes, what are the barriers and facilitators to scaling up the initiative?

xii Are There Any Other Important Issues That We Should Be Aware Of?