



Delivering Public Services to a Diverse Society

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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?