



National Audit Office



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Disability Equality Scheme: Progress Report 2008

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Disability Equality Progress Report: December 2008

Statement from Janet Angus

Champion of the NAO's Disability Equality Scheme Working group

This year has been a busy and productive year for the Disability Equality Scheme Working Group. Under the strong chairmanship of Ken Foreman, the group has provided support for, and guidance to, the work space project in the refurbishment of our London office, which represents an excellent opportunity for the NAO to be at the forefront of employers with accessible accommodation. The group has also continued to support the office's internship scheme for disabled undergraduates.

I believe that the group has demonstrated clearly that the active involvement of staff can help the Office to improve the support that it provides to its people. We want to continue to drive forward the progress on disability equality and help the NAO to further strengthen the culture of inclusion and remove, wherever possible, the remaining barriers for groups of disabled people.

I would like to thank all those within the NAO and members of the working group who have worked hard to make progress with the Disability Equality Scheme and would encourage colleagues to provide views and comments to the group on areas where they would like to see further improvements and where they have seen good practice.

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Introduction

This is the second progress report of our Disability Equality Scheme 2006-2009. The scheme sets out the ways in which we intend to remove the barriers faced by disabled people in order to create a working environment which promotes inclusiveness and equality, consistent with our overall diversity strategy (http://merlin/Diversity/diversity_strategy_2009-11.pdf)

By involving disabled people in the production of our scheme we identified six core strategic priorities for 2006-2009:

- Accessibility and the built environment
- Employment
- Involving disabled people
- Communication
- Training
- Corporate Service Delivery

Highlights from this year include:

- Increased representation of disabled trainees joining our graduate scheme from 2.5 per cent in 2006/2007 to 5.5 per cent in 2007/2008;
- Advertised in “Diverse Britain 2008” and promoted our Summer internship scheme for disabled and ethnic minority undergraduates;

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- Ran the annual internship scheme for disabled undergraduates for the third year. One has been successful in their application for our graduate training scheme and will be joining the office in 2009. This makes two successful interns since we have started this programme;
- Agreed accessibility guidelines for internal publications.

A working group was set up in 2007 to monitor progress on the Disability Equality Scheme. The working group continues to meet quarterly and includes the following members:

Janet Angus, Director on financial audit

Richard Copeman, Audit Manager on financial audit

Ken Foreman, Audit Principal on value for money audit

Stephen Luxford, Senior Executive Officer on business development area

Daisy Hodgson, Analyst on value for money audit

Matt Cole, Executive Officer on international technical co-operation

Jill Morris, Diversity Manager

The activities of the working group help to contribute towards, and deliver against, the NAO's Disability Equality Scheme. We also have a Disability Support Network which provides a forum for disabled staff. The network's role is to promote the exchange of information and ideas as well as advising and influencing NAO management in the development and implementation of policies affecting disabled staff.

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The action plan outlines in further detail the progress made against the Disability Equality Scheme for 2008. While the office has achieved good progress in most areas we need to make further improvements in terms of employment monitoring and embedding the equality impact assessment process.

Action Plans

Action Plan	Title	Action Plan Lead
Action Plan 1	Accessibility and the Built Environment	AAG – Jim Rickleton and Facilities Director
Action Plan 2	Employment	Human Resources
Action Plan 3	Involving Disabled People	Diversity Manager
Action Plan 4	Communication	Electronic Information Team/ Desk top publishing/ Internal Communications
Action Plan 5	Training	Career, Skills & Development Team
Action Plan 6	Corporate Service Delivery	Facilities/ ITRC/ Finance/Procurement/Human Resources

Action Plan 1 – Accessibility and the Built Environment

Objective	Action	Target	Lead	Outcome	Progress at December 2008
Removal of barriers to accessibility in the built and working environment					
Remove barriers to accessibility in NAO buildings and improve accessibility generally.	The Office at BPR is commencing the workspace project in 2008. The Project is committed to implementing best practice on inclusive design and access. Disability and accessibility will be built into design specifications at the outset: The access plans should not just focus on ramps, lifts and steps, but should reflect the priorities of all disabled people including induction loops in training/meeting rooms; flashing fire alarms; lighting, air conditioning, acoustics, door furniture, colour contrast, seating, and telephone systems.	To ensure that accessibility and inclusion are built into the Workspace Project brief from an early stage, the Project will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Implement the principles of DPTAC's good practice guidance for inclusive design. For example, appointing an Access Consultant and designating an Inclusive Design Champion. ➤ Incorporate accessibility into design and construction contacts 	AAG Jim Rickleton and Director of Facilities	A built and working environment that meets best practice for inclusive design; and provides an accessible working environment that meets the needs of existing and future disabled workers and the NAO's clients.	An access consultant has been appointed and he has reported his initial findings. The Disability Support Network is being consulted.

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	We will gain advice from experts regarding accessibility for disability standards and best practice.	➤ At all stages, the Office will gain advice from experts regarding accessibility for disability standards and best practice			
Consideration of accessibility of buildings should be a key component of future leasing arrangements	Ensure Decant building for Workspace project meets these requirements. The Workspace project board will consult with the Disability Support Network on issues of accessibility.	Ongoing	AAG Jim Rickleton and Director of Facilities	Seek to provide a working environment that meets the needs of existing and future disabled staff.	The decant is complete. The DES working group was consulted throughout this process
Provide appropriate signage	Develop guidelines for inclusive signage.	Ongoing	AAG Jim Rickleton and Director of Facilities	These guidelines should set the “benchmark” in terms of upgrading existing facilities.	To be looked at with the access consultant and other Workspace project commitments in 2009.

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Action Plan 2 – Employment

Objective	Action	Target	Lead	Outcome	Progress at December 2008
Recruitment and Retention					
Disability Monitoring Exercise	Disability monitoring exercise to collect information from all employees	Completed 2006 to be repeated in August 2008. We would like to improve response rates to this survey with a target of 80 per cent coverage.	Diversity Manager	Increase the number of declared disabled employees from 6 percent. Increase response rate of survey to 80 per cent. Continue to monitor and identify trends in the representation of disabled employees.	This was originally scheduled to be done in 2008. The remit has expanded and it is now part of the overall Diversity strategy and will be taken forward with other diversity strands.
Monitoring of equal opportunities	The Office will monitor the effectiveness of its equal opportunity policies across all diversity strands (including disability) to promote equality among its workers (e.g. recruitment, training, performance appraisals etc.)	Annually	Diversity Manager	To measure whether disabled staff have equality of opportunity compared with non-disabled staff.	Diversity Annual report completed November 2008. http://merlin/Diversity/publications/Diversity_Report_2007_08.pdf

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Objective	Action	Target	Lead	Outcome	Progress at December 2008
<p>Raise the profile of the NAO as an inclusive employer that positively welcomes applications from disabled people.</p>	<p>Monitor and take corrective action to increase the number/type of disabled people applying for graduate and non-graduate vacancies and those recruited to the Office</p>	<p>Bi- annually</p>	<p>Recruitment Team</p>	<p>Increase the number of disabled people applying for vacancies and those being recruited in graduate and non-graduate work streams. To become an employer of choice for disabled people.</p>	<p>An advert has been run with Diverse Britain, including an interview with a trainee from our internship scheme for disabled undergraduates. A further ad was run with Rehab UK. Rehab UK is a registered not-for-profit organisation which provides assessment, training and development programmes that enable and empower people with disabilities to break into the workforce or to sustain employment, and to become more socially and economically independent</p>
<p>Ensure full representation of disabled staff at all levels of the NAO.</p>	<p>Set targets for recruitment, representation, and promotion of disabled workers</p>	<p>November 2007</p>	<p>Diversity Manager</p>	<p>To ensure representation across the office of disabled people and ensure the NAO is seen as an inclusive employer.</p>	<p>Targets have been published in the Diversity strategy. An excerpt says: In terms of the number of staff with disabilities, our survey in 2006 indicated that 6.2% of our staff had a disability. We might, therefore, reasonably</p>

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Objective	Action	Target	Lead	Outcome	Progress at December 2008
					<p>expect that our overall profile of staff with disabilities will remain around 6% to 8% of staff through to 2011. We will revisit this once we have a mechanism in place to get better base data. Our expectations need to be realistic but sufficiently challenging to ensure the NAO attracts talented people with disabilities.</p>
<p>Obtain Disability Two Ticks status</p>	<p>Complete 5 commitments to gain accreditation.</p>	<p>Obtain Two Ticks Status March. 2007</p>	<p>Diversity Manager</p>	<p>The double tick symbol will appear on all job adverts and website. Disabled people who meet the minimum requirements will be guaranteed an interview.</p>	<p>Disability Two Ticks obtained in 2007.</p>

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Objective	Action	Target	Lead	Outcome	Progress at December 2008
Set up a summer internship scheme for disabled undergraduates	Offer short-term internships to disabled undergraduates. Routinely monitor the effectiveness of the scheme.	First run was completed Sept. 2006 plan to repeat next summer	Diversity Team	Increase the number of disabled graduates applying for and being appointed to the graduate programme.	Internship scheme completed for 2008. Two interns from employability joined us for an eight week period. Two interns from previous years have been successful in joining our graduate scheme.
Ensure the Allocation system under OneNAO does not create barriers for disabled employees in accessing work/development assignments	Monitor the allocation of jobs to disabled employees to ensure they receive varied and suitable job assignments; and to ensure equal treatment.	Annually	Allocation Team	Disabled people are treated fairly and the allocation system makes the best use of their skills. This monitoring can be complemented through annual focus groups with disabled employees.	The Allocation team have consulted with the Disability working group on an equality impact assessment looking at disability issues and will be revisiting it now that we have four allocation pools. The revised assessment will be discussed with Disability working group in 2009. A focus group was run in April looking at Disability issues.
Retention - workplace adjustments – have a more joined up approach to making workplace adjustments by ITRC,	Diversity Manager has overall responsibility for co-ordination of workplace	April 2007	Human Resources/ITRC/Facilities	Ensure disabled people/Development managers and assignment managers are	We have a joined up approach and work closely with ITRC and Facilities to help put reasonable adjustments in place. In

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Objective	Action	Target	Lead	Outcome	Progress at December 2008
<p>Facilities, and HR. Develop a database to hold this information to allow the tracking of all cases.</p>	<p>adjustments. Set up a standard process for making reasonable adjustments. The Diversity Manager, or their diversity colleagues, to follow up the implementation of the workplace adjustment within four weeks and every six months thereafter. Ensure the Diversity Manager pro-actively offers to meet all new starters who have a declared disability within two weeks of appointment.</p>			<p>aware of the services available. Measurements will look at the number of workplace adjustments and timeframe required.</p>	<p>2008, we did around 50 work place adjustments and they were reviewed and implemented in two weeks or less.</p>

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Objective	Action	Target	Lead	Outcome	Progress at December 2008
Workplace adjustments – service level agreements	ITRC and Health and Safety Officer to develop service level agreements setting out the timescales for implementing workplace adjustments under their specific areas.	By March 2007	ITRC/Health & Safety Officer	Ensure workplace adjustments are implemented within the specified Service Level Agreement.	We have a service level agreement in place to respond to any initial requests for workplace adjustments within 3 working days. Follow up actions and timescales regarding further assessments, ordering equipment, etc. are then agreed with the client.
Exit interviews for disabled staff that leave the office to determine if the factors which influence their decision and whether they are different to non-disabled employees.	Exit interviews have been outsourced for all leavers. Monitor reasons for leaving the Office and cross reference with data on disabilities.	Annually	Recruitment/ Diversity Manager	Ensure discrimination is not taking place.	Reasons for leaving have been monitored for the Diversity Annual Report 2007/08. There was no evidence of differing factors for disabled and non-disabled employees.
To actively and regularly seek the views of disabled workers through, e.g. annual opinion surveys/ or focus groups	The results of the focus groups will be used to make recommendations to policies and practices which have a disability and disability equality element.	Annually	Diversity Manager/ Disability Support Network	Ensure actions are taken forward.	Focus group ran in April 2008. Views expressed were considered in the Diversity Strategy (i.e. further training for all staff needed on disability awareness)

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Action Plan 3 – Involving disabled people

Objective	Action	Target	Lead	Outcome	Progress at December 2008
Involvement					
Continue to meet regularly with the NAO Disability Support Network to discuss disability issues and the implementation of the NAO's Disability Equality Scheme (DES).	Continue to meet with disabled groups to discuss current barriers to involvement and possible solutions	At least twice a year	Diversity Manager	Share knowledge and best practice on disability issues	Disability Working group (established in 2007) continues to meet up and to monitor progress against the action plan. Three of the members of the working group also are members of the Disability Network.
Set up a working group to monitor the implementation of the DES	To meet and discuss progress on the action plan.	February 2007	Diversity Manager and other relevant areas	To ensure disabled people are kept involved in the implementation of the DES.	Please see above progress note
Office-wide conferences/ projects	Ensure that office-wide initiatives are accessible to all and appropriate communication is in place	Ongoing	Director of Development Marketing and Communications	To ensure Office-wide events are accessible to all employees.	Programme manager on the Career, skills and development team responsible for all office wide conferences has attended disability training for planning events. Further guidelines for staff are being reviewed.

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External training events	Ensure all external training venues for NAO training events are accessible	Ongoing	Career, Skills & Development Team	To ensure external training events are inclusive and accessible for disabled employees.	The training team have received disability awareness training.
Continue working relationships with disability organisations to provide advice about current best practice in the recruitment and employment of disabled people	Continue relationships with Prospects, Employability, and Employers Forum on Disability	Ongoing	Diversity Team	Follow current best practice	We continue to build a strong relation with Employability who we work with on our internship scheme and regularly use prospects and Employers Forum on Disability for best practice guidance.

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Action Plan 4 – Communication

Objective	Action	Target	Lead	Outcome	Progress at December 2008
Communication					
Published documents	Develop processes for disabled people to access documents in alternative formats i.e. Easy-read, Large Print or Braille from the NAO	To process request for accessible information in line with FOI requirement and timeframes.	Desk-top Publishing team/ Library	Published documents are accessible in alternative formats in line with FOI requirements and within timeframes.	Completed
Accessible communication guide	Develop a standard communication guide on how to ensure posters/internal documents are produced in accessible format	August 2007	Knowledge & Communications Manager	A communication guide for the NAO which is adhered to by all internal teams.	Guidelines completed and are recommended to clients during design briefings concerning print only materials. Guidelines have been shared with the Disability Working group.
Disability Champion	Appoint a Disability champion preferably from the Directorate	March 2007	Disability Support Network	Have a spokesperson to promote Disability Equality in the Office and work with the Disability Support Network.	Completed. Janet Angus, financial Audit director, was appointed in 2007.

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<p>External website</p>	<p>The content and design of internet services should be accessible to all and conform to the double A standard of the WAI</p>	<p>Project due to be completed Nov. 2007</p>	<p>Internal communication team</p>	<p>The external website meets double A standard set by the web accessibility initiative.</p>	<p>The new website went live in December 2008. The website endeavours to conform to the Cabinet Office's guideline for UK government websites, TG102 - Delivering inclusive websites, which supports the W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0 (WCAG). Subsequently, the majority of the website meets level Double-A of the WCAG. Due to technical restrictions, we have been unable to bring the entire website up to Double-A standard but we are committed to rectifying this by the TG102 deadline of December 2009. The website's accessibility statement identifies which areas of the website are not fully compliant and informs site visitors who to contact if they experience any difficulty in accessing the website.</p>
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Action Plan 5 – Training

Objective	Action	Target	Lead	Outcome	Progress at December 2008
Training					
Corporate / Graduate Inductions – Ensure all new entrants are aware of the Diversity and Equality policy and their individual responsibilities to actively promote equality of opportunity.	Determine what needs to be included in the corporate / graduate inductions to promote positive attitudes towards disabled employees and workers and enable NAO staff to be more confident in the recruitment and management of disabled people and working alongside disabled colleagues.	January 2008	Career, Skills, and Development Team	E-training package will monitor all employees completing mandatory training. We should see an improvement in the management and the working environment for disabled employees. We can monitor this through focus groups with disabled employees.	The diversity e-learning package is being tested and is due for release early 2009.

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<p>Disability Equality Training: will promote positive attitudes towards disabled employees and people and improve staff's knowledge across the Office on Disability issues and increase the appreciation of difficulties faced by disabled people. Training should be provided to all staff involved in making workplace adjustments.</p>	<p>Alongside the e-training package we will run disability equality workshops for Development Managers, Assignment Managers, and selection panels. Hold diversity training, deaf awareness training, mental health awareness training</p>	<p>January 2008</p>	<p>Diversity Manager/ Career, Skills, and Development Team</p>	<p>Increase employee's knowledge of disability issues especially those with people management responsibilities. Decrease in the attitudinal barriers faced by disabled employees.</p>	<p>Disability training was held in October 2007 for Development Managers and Development Directors. Further training is being looked at for staff under the Diversity strategy and Diversity e-learning will be released in early 2009.</p>
<p>Training and Development Design</p>	<p>Training contractors to take disability equality into account when designing courses to make the course inclusive.</p>	<p>April 2007 and onwards</p>	<p>Career, Skills, and Development Team</p>	<p>Training and Development Courses are inclusive and accessible for all disabled employees.</p>	<p>Equality Impact assessments are completed on all new training courses</p>

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Training Joining Instructions	Joining instructions for all courses will ask disabled employees to identify any workplace adjustments they need to actively participate in the course.	April 2007 and onwards	Career, Skills, and Development Team	Any reasonable adjustments are implemented.	Completed
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Action Plan 6 – Corporate Service Delivery

Objective	Action	Target	Lead	Outcome	Progress at December 2008
Corporate Functions					
Corporate Services take account of and actively seek to deliver services in ways which meets the needs of those with disabilities	Relevant corporate functions to complete Disability Equality impact assessments on policies and procedures to ensure disabled people are not adversely affected.	February 2007 and onwards	ITRC/ HR/ Facilities/ Finance/Procurement/Allocation Team	All policies are impact assessed.	An equality impact assessment for the flexible working policy has been completed and an assessment on the corporate service pay and grading review is in progress. An allocation system equality impact assessment is being revisited in light of changes to the way staff are allocated.
Procurement	Ensure Procurement staff are fully aware of Disability Equality Duty and it is included in the procurement framework. Disability equality is embedded in tender specifications and the contracts process.	December 2006	Procurement Manager and Diversity Manager	Increase knowledge and practical application of procurement	The Disability Equality duty is in the procurement manual and provides guidance to all staff included in tendering exercises.

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ITRC	Disability Equality training for all ITRC staff	November 2006 and onwards	ITRC	Increase ITRC staff's knowledge of the requirements of the DDA and the Disability Equality Duty. Ensure ITRC staff are conscious of potential workplace adjustments and show appreciation of Disability Equality.	Completed. A disabled intern worked in ITRC in the summer 2007. Team members attended a Disability awareness training prior to the intern joining the Office.
Monitoring systems	Develop a system for monitoring IT related reasonable adjustments	April 2007 and onwards	ITRC/ NAO Disability Support Network	Systems in place to ensure disabled employees receive IT related adjustments.	ITRC monitor and are able to report on reasonable adjustments; however, they do not differentiate between DSE requirements or disability requirements. A new recording system is being introduced in April 2009. Reporting and relationships will be looked at with the new system.

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<p>IT System development – ensure accessibility is built into any future system development.</p>	<p>Ensure the Accessibility and Diversity Checklist is used at the outset of system development for any IT projects which affects disabled employees.</p>	<p>March 2008</p>	<p>ITRC/ NAO Disability Support Network</p>	<p>Any IT systems developed meet the accessibility and diversity checklist aims.</p>	<p>All IT systems developed internally are checked against the accessibility and diversity checklist.</p>
<p>Corporate outputs</p>	<p>To continue to raise awareness of diversity issues including disabled people and their access and experience of public services in carrying out our VFM/good governance work.</p>	<p>A specific diversity question has now been added to the internal hot review process at the business case stage and draft report stage. The following question is now asked: <i>Has the study proposal/ draft report paid attention to the expectations of the VFM Diversity Guide?</i></p>	<p>Jeremy Lonsdale, Diversity team</p>	<p>Monitor how VFM teams are meeting the expectations of the guide.</p>	<p>As part of the new diversity strategy, we are looking at publishing good practice examples of diversity issues which have been covered in our VFM reports. In 2007/08 we published some reports with a clear diversity theme – such as our study of employment rates for ethnic minorities. This study included recommendations for improving employment rates of ethnic minorities in Britain.</p>