



British Forces Post Office

Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2004 / 2005

For all civilian and
military staff



Policy Goal

‘Equality and diversity are fundamental issues against which our achievements will be measured. Without a policy of zero tolerance that values and learns from diversity and demonstrates commitment at every level, we will not succeed’.

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The Chief Executive's Policy

1. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) is subject to the law regarding equality and diversity. All employees are bound by Equality and Diversity legislation and have an obligation to ensure that all Service HR and MoD civilian employees abide by the law. Additionally, the MoD seeks to follow the Codes of Practice issued by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) and the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC).
2. As Chief Executive, I am responsible through the Chain of Command to the Chief of Defence Logistics for ensuring that the British Forces Post Office Agency complies with MoD policy. To assist me with achieving this goal, the following are appointed:
 - a. Equality and Diversity Officer (EDO).
Miss B Patel.
 - b. Equal Opportunities Adviser (EDA).
WO2 L Carlyle.
3. I am fully committed to the creation and maintenance of a working environment, which is free from unfair discrimination, intimidation, harassment and victimisation. I am determined that we, as an organisation, act together. I expect everyone, regardless of rank or grade, to foster an atmosphere of opportunity and understanding in the workplace. Further, I will personally ensure that any complaint regarding work-related issue is fully and properly investigated and that correct and appropriate action is taken.

P J T MAGGS
Brigadier
Chief Executive

Action Plan Aim

1. The Chief Executive is committed to operating a policy of equality and diversity for all staff currently employed, and for those applying for employment.
2. The Action Plan aims to ensure that all staff can achieve their full potential without fear of discrimination, harassment or intimidation.

Equality and Diversity Policy

Introduction

3. The Armed Forces Overarching HR Strategy (AFOPS) and the Civil Service Management Code set out clear Equality and Diversity (E&D) policy statements endorsed by the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) and the Permanent Under-Secretary of State (PUS). The British Forces Post Office is committed ensuring equality of opportunity is given to all employees, both civilian and military.

Leadership

4. Managers must actively consider, promote and, wherever possible, adopt flexible working practices for all posts. There must be a presumption in favour of alternative working methods, such as part-time, job share and home working, unless there is a clear business case against such enterprise. Managers must promote family friendly policies commensurate with the need to meet business requirements. Managers, both civilian and military, must be proactive in their approach. They are to lead by example and support the role of the Equality and Diversity Officer (EDO) and Equal Opportunity Adviser (EDA).

5. Whilst the manager's role is specified it is the responsibility of all employees to ensure that their fellow staff members achieve their full potential without fear of discrimination, harassment or intimidation. To this end there is a 'zero tolerance' towards bullying and harassment in the workplace and all employees must work towards this.

Recruitment

6. Staff selection will always be based on the best candidate for the job. This does not prevent the setting of challenging targets for initial recruitment, selection, and later for retention and progression. Recruitment campaigns are to reflect the positive view taken when considering, in particular disabled applicants.

Training

7. All employees will be given the training necessary to understand, recognise and implement equality and diversity issues. Training will be relevant and developed to be flexible to meet individual and business needs. This is also embedded in the Investors in People standard, to which BFPO is committed.

Resources

8. Funds will be made available to implement E&D Policies. So that, for example, disabled staff are provided with the means to do their job effectively; such as, ensuring

adequate access to buildings and offices or through the provision of an appropriate infrastructure to facilitate home working or other flexible working environments.

Policy Delivery

9. Managers will ensure that, subject to business and operational needs, employees are able to attend E&D training.

10. A forum for discussion regarding E&D, and liP issues is the 'Investing in Equality Group (IEG)'. The IEG will raise, investigate, discuss and cascade information regarding E&D and liP to all BFPO employees.

Combating Discrimination and Harassment

1. The aim of this section is to show how flexibility of choice can be provided for employees and to ensure that all employees are aware of current policy and procedures.
2. Discrimination. There are 2 types of discrimination:
 - a. Direct Discrimination. Direct discrimination occurs when one person is treated less favourably than another is in the same circumstances; e.g. The decision to promote a man purely on the basis of gender.
 - b. Indirect Discrimination. Indirect discrimination may occur when a condition or requirement is applied which may seem fair but which in practice puts one group at a disadvantage because those who can comply were less in number. e.g. stipulating age 25 – 35 may adversely affect the proportion of women applicants.
2. Harassment. Harassment is any behaviour, which an individual finds unacceptable, unwelcome or unreasonable. It may be non-verbal or verbal and may be motivated by gender, race, religious beliefs, disability or physical appearance. Harassment may be in the form of bullying, victimisation or a misuse of authority. Sometimes it may not be the intention of the perpetrator.

Note. It is also illegal to victimise anyone who has sought to exercise, or who has assisted another to exercise his or her rights under sex, race or disability legislation.

Ser	Objective	Action Required	Lead	Target Date
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
1.	CE to demonstrate an unequivocal commitment to the adoption of equality and diversity best practice.	Circulate E&D Action Plan and Policy Statement to all civilian and military employees.	CE EDO	Mar 04
		Review existing plans to ensure consistency with DLO E&D Implementation Plan.	CE EDO	Mar 04
		E&D plan to be consistent with the ethos of a fully integrated workforce.	CE EDO	Mar 04

Ser	Objective	Action Required	Lead	Target Date
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
2.	All employees represented at the Investing in Equality Group (IEG).	Identify and publish details of the EDO / EDA. Maintain periodic meetings of the IEG and publish details of representatives on a regular basis. EDO and EDA to meet on a regular basis to discuss any new guidelines for Service or civilian HR.	EDO EDO EDO EDA	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing
3.	Contribute towards the aims of the Civil Service Reform Action Plan by establishing a culture of 'Family Friendly' and work-life balance working practices.	Actively consider, promote and, wherever possible, adopt practices that maximise flexibility in all posts.	EDO EDA LMs	Ongoing
4.	All civilian posts filled via the JOB process should be open to employees of all ages and to staff with disabilities. All posts are to be open to part-time and job-share unless there is a clear business case against such enterprise.	Monitor JOB process to ensure compliance in line with MoD HR Manual Vol 4.	EDO EDA HR	Ongoing Ongoing
5.	All recruitment action announcements to include E&D statement.	Monitor process to ensure compliance with MoD PM Vol 2 and Civil Service Recruitment Code.	EDO HR	Ongoing
6.	Remove unwelcome factors that may lead to resignation and promote E&D awareness	Ensure that pregnant women are aware of the options available for return to work. Address working practices to eradicate 'long hours' culture. Raise exit surveys of all staff who resign from the MoD whilst employed by BFPO.	EDO HR CE LM HR	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing
7.	Requests for career breaks to be fully considered.	A clear business case to be produced when a request is not approved.	EDO HR	Ongoing
8.	Ensure staff on special paid / unpaid leave, career breaks, secondment loan or long term sick receive regular information of JOB, Focus, Paper Clips, DLO Newsletter etc.	Provide and maintain a Keeping In Touch (KIT) scheme, and ensure literature is issued to staff who have been absent for longer than 1 month on a regular monthly basis.	HR	Ongoing
9.	Maintain register of those interested in working part-time.	Keep register up-to-date and accurate.	HR	Ongoing
10.	Give full consideration to childcare facilities at the planning stage of new builds of office accommodation.	An assessment of childcare provision to be included in the business cases of all new build/refurbishment projects.	HR Spec Proj	Ongoing
11.	Ensure working arrangements take into consideration religious and cultural needs of individuals; i.e. non-Christian festivals, acts of worship and customs.	Record and report any complaints to HLB EDO.	EDO EDA LMs	Ongoing

Ser	Objective	Action Required	Lead	Target Date
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
12.	<p>Foster an environment in which all staff can achieve their full potential without fear of unlawful discrimination, harassment or intimidation.</p> <p>Behaviour must be consistent with the requirements of the following: AGAI Vol 2, Ch 75; AP 3392 Vol 4, Ch 18, Leaflet 1803; D/CNS/710/8 dated 23/06/99, MoD HR Manual Vol 13</p>	<p>All staff to treat their colleagues with respect.</p> <p>Lm to lead by example and take positive steps to ensure the working environment is free from harassment and discrimination.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>LMs</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
13.	Line Managers to be aware of their responsibilities when dealing with complaints and ensuring their effective and prompt discharged.	100% of cases dealt with in accordance with MoD policy and time scales in accordance with MoD PM Vol 13 Annex G.	LMs	Ongoing
14.	Ensure that the policy relating to the display of offensive material is enforced.	Investigate any complaints within 3 working days in accordance with MOD PM Vol 13, Annex G.	EDO EDA LMs	Ongoing

Education

The aim of this section is to identify the ways in which staff awareness of E&D issues can be improved through education and training.

Ser	Objective	Action Required	Lead	Target Date
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
15.	Ensure that LMs are aware of the implications of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995.	Publicise and communicate information on DDA Include discussions at the LMs Seminar.	EDO EDA	Ongoing Quarterly
16.	Accessibility for staff with disabilities.	Continuous monitoring of work areas to ensure compatibility with requirements laid down in the DDA.	EDO EDA Facility Mgrs LMs	Ongoing
17.	Assessment of access requirements, including emergency evacuation, and equipment for people with disabilities.	All employees with a disability assessed prior to taking up duty and reasonable adjustments to be considered and implemented.	AAUSA LMs	Ongoing
18.	Professional advice on the needs of staff with a disabilities (i.e. PACT) to be sought.	Liase with Welfare Officer regarding individual cases as required.	EDO	Ongoing
19.	Proposals for new build to meet DDA requirements.	Assessment for DDA provision to be included in every new build/refurbishment business case - 100% compliance as proposals emerge.	Facility Mgrs Spec Proj	Ongoing
20.	Increase awareness of the funding for equipment held by CEDU.	Advertise CEDU funding and access criteria. Collate requests for E&D initiatives to ensure that available equipment and funding are used appropriately.	EDO EDO EDA	Ongoing Ongoing
21.	Establish links with the local organisations representing people with a disability.	Report on steps taken to establish links in annual Stewardship Report.	EDO	Jun 04
22.	Promote a positive image of BFPO by developing long-term local and regional relationships with community leaders, community groups, schools and colleges aimed at improving the image of the MoD within the local community and ethnic minority groups.	Continue to improve performance against targets set by DLO E&D Action Plan 2000/01 section 10. Report performance progress biannually on the Balance Scorecard and in the HLB Stewardship Report.	CE EDO EDA HR	Ongoing Jun 04
23.	Fair representation of ethnic minorities in all internal and external publications.	Publications to be monitored to ensure they reflect the diversity of the BFPO workforce and comply with the principles of E&D.	EDO Comms & PR HR	Ongoing

Ser	Objective	Action Required	Lead	Target Date
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
24.	Formal E&D training for all employees commensurate with grade and role within the organisation.	<p>All newly recruited, promoted and advanced officers at B2 and above (or equivalent) to attend a 1-day E&D seminar at RMCS within 1 year of taking up appointment.</p> <p>EDO, EDA to attend the 5-day E&D course at RMCS within 6 months of taking up appointment.</p> <p>90% of industrial and non-industrial staff below B and B2 (or equivalent) to undertake E&D training consistent with Single Service requirements or as set out in MOD PI 65/01.</p> <p>All staff to undertake Bullying and Harassment (B&H) training as soon as possible after employment.</p> <p>All staff to undertake E&D refresher training within 4 years of initial course. Encouragement to be given to utilise classroom-based events.</p> <p>Newly promoted Band D LMs (or equivalent) and all new LMs to undertake classroom-based E&D training within 6 months of taking up appointment. Suitable courses are identified in MOD PI 65/01.</p>	<p>RTO</p> <p>RTO</p> <p>RTO</p> <p>RTO</p> <p>RTO</p> <p>RTO HR</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
25.	Provide information on request to disabled employees regarding appropriate training available to them.	<p>All new staff to be briefed on the 'Unlocking Potential' package within 6 months of joining.</p> <p>Encourage disabled staff to use distance learning material.</p>	<p>RTO LMs</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
26.	HR on alternative working patterns have equal access to training.	Provide flexible training packages where possible.	RTO	Ongoing
27.	Awareness of training and discussion groups available in specific areas; i.e. ethnic minorities, women in employment and disabled.	Maintain and periodically disseminate details of any special training or discussion groups.	EDO RTO	Ongoing

Recruitment, Selection and Development

1. The aim of this section is to ensure that staff recruited to BFPO, either through internal or external processes, reflect the diversity of the community within which we work.

2. Staff will be recruited or promoted as the best person for the post, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, age, religious belief, marital status, sexual orientation or disability.

Note. It is unlawful to discriminate in matters of recruitment or training either in favour, or against, a particular racial group or sex. Positive Action is permissible to assist disadvantaged or under-represented groups to help redress previous discrimination.

Ser	Objective	Action Required	Lead	Target Date
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
28.	Recruitment and career literature to reflect BFPO's commitment to E&D and the promotion of work-life, family friendly policies and working practices.	Compliance with DLO's E&D Plan	HR	Ongoing
29.	All job descriptions, recruitment, JOB advertisements, and selection criteria written in a manner that does not discriminate.	Written to comply with Civil Service Recruitment Code.	HR	Ongoing
30.	All staff involved in the recruitment and selection of staff to be trained to the appropriate level in equal opportunities.	Before participating in recruitment and selection activities staff must have attended 1 of the following courses: a. E&D for Managers. b. LMs role in achieving E&D. c. Tri-Service E&D Training. d. Interactive Learning Centre E&D.	HR RTO	Ongoing
31.	All staff participating at either internal or external interviews to have attended E&D for Managers in addition to Selection Interviewing training.	Maintain register of employees who have attended the DbLearning Selection Interviewing course.	HR RTO	Ongoing
32.	Promote a positive image through the development of Outreach programmes.	Develop relationships with appropriate community groups, education authorities etc.	All	Ongoing

Ser	Objective	Action Required	Lead	Target Date
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
35.	Provide all staff with full access to career development and promotion opportunities without fear of intimidation, harassment or unlawful discrimination.	<p>Promote the importance of E&D in relation to civilian performance appraisal in accordance with the standing objective contained within performance appraisal reports.</p> <p>Appraisal Reports for Military staff are to be free from bias and unlawful discrimination.</p>	<p>HR LMs</p> <p>LMs</p>	<p>Jun 04</p> <p>Jun 04</p>
36.	Promote a positive image of the Agency through the development of outreach strategies.	<p>The Agency is to develop meaningful relationships with appropriate community groups, education establishments, Princes Trust Volunteers, Employment Opportunities for the Disabled etc</p> <p>Liase with area Commander Regional Recruiting (CRR) to identify areas where contributions toward marketing activities designed to attract service recruitment applications from target groups might be made.</p>	<p>CE</p> <p>CE</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Retention

The aim of this section is to ensure that a strategy is developed to achieve equal opportunity for women and to promote a positive image of the MoD and BFPO as a good employer.

Ser	Objective	Action Required	Lead	Target Date
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
37	Remove all unwelcome factors that may lead to the resignation of staff.	Verify compliance with the working time directive in accordance with statutory requirements. Promote the adoption of alternative working patterns. DLO policy requires that there must be a presumption in favour of alternative working methods, such as part-time, job share and home working, unless there is a clear business case against such enterprise.	CE CE HR EDO	Jul 04 Ongoing

Monitoring and Reporting

The aim of this section is to monitor progress against the goals listed within the HLB E&D Plan and to report on progress made.

Ser	Objective	Action Required	Lead	Target Date
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
38.	Assess integration of DLO E&D policy and strategies into the culture of the organisation.	<p>Contribute to the DLO Stewardship Report through production of an annual report on E&D to include in-year performance and progress towards achievement of the DLO E&D Implementation Plan.</p> <p>Monitor the number of registered informal and formal harassment complaints involving civilian staff. Report quarterly to Def SC and DLO providing brief details of each incident. A similar mechanism for monitoring complaints involving Service HR to be developed.</p>	<p>HR</p> <p>CE EDO EDA HR</p>	<p>May 04</p> <p>Quarterly</p>
39.	Maintain statistical records sufficient to satisfy annual Stewardship Reporting process.	<p>Monitor recruitment, selection, promotion and development practices and procedures to ensure they are free from discrimination.</p> <p>Report numbers of part-time, female, disabled or ethnic minority staff promoted and advanced in-year.</p> <p>Monitor numbers of ET applications relating to discrimination/harassment. Breakdown by Sex / Racial / Disability / Religious / Constructive Dismissal.</p> <p>Monitor numbers of formal grievances raised, upheld or rejected during the year.</p> <p>Maintain records of harassment, intimidation and discrimination; analyse and report trends.</p> <p>Monitor numbers of staff adopting alternative working patterns</p>	<p>EDO RTO</p> <p>EDO HR</p> <p>EDO HR</p> <p>EDO HR</p> <p>EDO HR</p> <p>HR</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>May 04</p> <p>May 04</p> <p>May 04</p> <p>May 04</p> <p>May 04</p>

Ser	Objective	Action Required	Lead	Target Date
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
39.	Continued	<p>Monitor number of posts filled by job share and home working.</p> <p>Monitor the number of staff placed on part-time register on a yearly basis.</p> <p>Monitor the number of requests for part-time work or home working satisfied in year.</p> <p>Monitor the number of career breaks approved in year and the number of career breaks rejected in year.</p>	<p>HR</p> <p>HR</p> <p>HR</p> <p>HR</p>	<p>May 04</p> <p>May 04</p> <p>May 04</p> <p>May 04</p>
40.	Report annually on progress towards 100% E&D trained workforce.	Monitor progress towards achievement of training targets.	EDO RTO	Jun 04
41.	Report annually on of progress towards achievement of targets set for increasing representation of women, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities.	<p>Monitor numbers of staff within under-represented groups.</p> <p>Review and report performance against HLB targets.</p>	EDO HR	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Apr 04</p>

Legislation

The Equality and Diversity Action Plan has been developed within the framework of the following legislation:

- a. Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (Amended in 1986). This Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person on grounds of sex or marital status. The Act has, from its inception, applied to Civil Servants but was extended to cover the Armed Forces by Statutory Instrument (SI) No. 3276/94 which came into force on 1 Jan 95. This SI declares that any action that ensures the combat effectiveness of the Armed Forces is not rendered unlawful by the 1975 Act.
- b. Race Relations Act 1976 (As Amended). This Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person on grounds of his or her race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin. Sections 41(2) and 75(5) of the Race Relations Act permit the continuance of the nationality and residence rules allowing entry to the Civil Service and the Armed Forces.
- c. Equal Pay Act 1970 (As amended). This Act forbids any distinction between men and women in terms and conditions of service such as pay, allowances and leave where the work performed is the same, broadly similar or rated as equivalent under a job evaluation scheme.
- d. Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1989. The Act reflects the Government's determination to ensure equality of opportunity in employment for both Protestants and Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland. The Act has 4 main aims: The active practice of fair employment by employers; the close and continuous audit of that practice by new and stronger enforcement agencies; the use of affirmative action, and goals and timetables, to remedy under-representation; and the use of criminal penalties, and economic sanctions, to ensure good fair employment practice.
- e. Public Order Act 1986 (As amended by the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994). Under certain circumstances, charges may be brought under this Act when an individual causes harassment, alarm or distress to another.
- f. Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994. This amended the policy on homosexuality as contained in the Sexual Offences Act 1967 so that Service HR who engage in homosexual activities are no longer prosecuted under Service law. Military HR managing civilians need to bear in mind that, as far as civilian MOD policy is concerned, discrimination or harassment against a person because of his or her sexual orientation may be a disciplinary offence.
- g. Treaty of Rome Article 119 and EEC Directive on Equal Pay (75/207/EEEC). These apply the principle that men and women should receive equal pay for equal work.
- h. EEC Directives on Equal Treatment (76/205/EEC and 76/207/EEC). These cover the implementation of the principle of equal treatment of men and women as

regards access to employment, vocational training, promotion and working conditions.

i. The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003. It is unlawful to discriminate against workers because of sexual orientation.

j. The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003. It is unlawful to discriminate against workers because of religion or similar belief.