



Our staff

At The National Archives we deliver our services within a constantly changing environment – and we seek to deliver them to a high standard.

The announcement, in July 2002, of the creation of The National Archives (from April 2003), impacted on all staff. Within the new structure, we will continue to explore new ways to ensure that staff are offered opportunities to enhance their skills, or develop new skills, to meet the continuing challenges.

In this chapter we focus on:

- Key Skills
- Getting the best from our people – equality of opportunity
- Communications
- Accountability
- Working with the trade unions
- Becoming The National Archives.

Key Skills

As reported last year, we started work in 2002 on a new development scheme for all staff called Key Skills. The scheme is designed to help staff perform more effectively and to plan their future development and career.

Key Skills is a direct response to comments from staff in recent Investors in People Assessments and staff surveys, seeking an organisation-wide development scheme to facilitate progress to different roles.

The framework was developed through focus groups in which 25% of staff across the PRO contributed their views. The framework defines 13 areas of key skills and behaviour that are important for present and future business efficiency. The programme was rolled out to 167 managers and all staff were thoroughly briefed as to what this means for them.

All job roles in the PRO were assessed to identify the key skills applicable to them. All roles and the key skills needed for them are displayed on our intranet to help staff plan their development.

From April 2003 the framework will be part of our staff development procedures. During 2003/04 we will monitor the use of Key Skills, seeking feedback from our staff, and integrate them further in our personnel and development policies.

"This is a superb organisation. I am impressed by the courtesy of the staff"

Comment by a visitor to Kew

Getting the best from our people – equality of opportunity

We recruit staff on the basis of fair and open competition and selection on merit. We comply with the recruitment code laid down by the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners and carry out regular internal audits to ensure compliance. Independent external audit also takes place.

Between April 2002 and March 2003, we ran 94 recruitment campaigns and appointed 136 staff. Of these appointments, 74 were women, 22 were from ethnic minorities and 2 declared themselves as having a disability.

There were no permitted exceptions, under the Civil Service Commissioner's Recruitment Code, to fair and open recruitment during the year.

In March 2003 we successfully achieved reaccreditation under Investors in People for the third time. Congratulations go to all staff for their participation and

Equality in employment

Bands	Total Appointments	Women	Ethnic Minorities	Disabled
1-2	23	12 (52.2%)	2 (8.7%)	1 (4.3%)
3-4	48	20 (41.7%)	7 (14.6%)	0
5-6	65	32 (49.2%)	13 (20.0%)	1 (1.5%)
Total	136	74 (54.4%)	22 (16.2%)	2 (1.5%)

support in this achievement.

In October 2002, 62% of staff responded to a staff attitude survey. Action plans have been put in place to address concerns as well as building on areas where staff had expressed satisfaction. A further staff survey will take place in spring 2004.

During the year we developed a diversity strategy, building on our existing equal opportunities policy. A representative group of staff is taking the work forward. From April 2003 all managers will have a diversity target in their individual target objectives.

Working jointly with the diversity group and local trade unions we reviewed the retirement age policy. Staff can now choose to remain in employment until the age of 65, subject to meeting

certain criteria. We have also undertaken an equal pay audit and the resulting action plan will be submitted to the Cabinet Office.

We published a Race Equality Scheme in 2002 as required by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act. This sets out our commitment to ensuring a socially inclusive service and how we intend to meet this commitment.

During 2002/03 staff used study, training and development time to research and update a number of publications and information leaflets. They also created training packages, contributed to the development of our online resources, and undertook a number of cataloguing projects as well as creating small exhibitions in our Museum.

These statistics are set out as part of our requirement to publish information under our Race Equality Scheme and reflect the ethnic classification used in the 2001 Census

Ethnic origin	Staff in post	Staff trained	Staff suffering detriment under performance assessment procedures	Staff involved in grievance procedures	Staff subject to disciplinary	Staff who ceased employment
Asian	35	33				5
Black	21	20				8
Chinese	3	3				0
Mixed	4	4				0
Other Ethnic Minorities	20	16				2
Total Ethnic Minorities	83	76		0	0	15
Unknown	57	48	2	0	0	9
White	394	359	1	0	10	77



Some of the staff who qualified this year for our Long Service Award – recognising their 25 years' service with the Public Record Office

To enhance their knowledge and expertise, staff also visited archives of other similar organisations such as the House of Lords, British Library, and National Maritime Museum. A series of shadowing initiatives has been set up.

A review of our pay and grading systems was undertaken in early 2003 to inform the pay negotiations for 2003/04.

Work experience – schools and the local community

We have improved our work experience programme – whereby students are offered work placements in our repositories. We write to the school or institution and ask for feedback on the experience gained.

For the first time we have also accepted a mature work experience placement – from the Kingston Training for Work scheme. This proved successful with the individual applying, and being offered, a permanent post.

Communications

Our intranet, re-launched in March 2002, has increased ease of communication across the PRO. In the staff survey, 91% of staff said they found it either useful or very useful as a primary means of communication. The intranet is now key to our internal communications approach.

Link Groups have continued to act as a valuable source of discussion for matters of PRO-wide interest. The Keepers Link Group, which meets regularly with the Keeper of Public Records, and the Director of Public Services' Link Group, dealing with Public Service issues, bring valuable information and feedback from staff. These are supported by a number of other groups such as the Investors in People Champions Group and less formal structures such as the Corporate Services Directorate information meetings.

In early 2003 we awarded the contract for the supply of Electronic Record Management software which will be implemented across The National Archives (PRO) by the end of 2003. This will meet the government target for electronic record management by 2004. It will also improve record keeping and communication across the organisation.

Accountability

We have developed a risk management framework which covers decision making. At all levels we assess the likelihood and impact of risks which may threaten the achievement of departmental and project target/milestones. A corporate risk register

informs the Management Board's decision-making.

Stewardship statements from each business area within the department, signed off by Heads of Departments, indicate that the functions for which they are responsible have been properly managed. This provides further assurance.

All these, together with the opinions provided by the Head of Internal Audit and statements of assurance from others who have taken independent reviews, inform the Keeper in her Statement on Internal Control.

Working with the trade unions

Throughout the year joint working with the departmental trade union side continued. A number of employment policies have been revised or developed and the trade union side continued to participate in employment matters across the PRO.

This contribution is welcome, in particular in taking forward aspects of development for all staff across the PRO.

Becoming The National Archives

Staff from both the PRO and HMC have worked closely together to achieve integration of the key service delivery aspects of both organisations. They are to be congratulated for the tremendous efforts expended in this area, in addition to carrying out their normal business.