

**Employee Policy Centre of
Expertise**

**DWP Employee Discount
Scheme**

Equality impact assessment for DWP Employee Discount Scheme

Introduction

1. DWP carried out an equality impact assessment (EIA) in July 2009 on the introduction of a DWP Staff Discount Scheme to meet the requirements of the:
 - Race Equality Duty.
 - Disability Equality Duty.
 - Gender Equality Duty.
2. This is a revised version taking into account the scheme's management information on diversity.
3. This process will help to make sure:
 - The Department's strategies, policies and services are free from discrimination.
 - Due regard is given to equality (specifically disability, gender and race) in decision making and subsequent processes.
 - Opportunities for promoting equality are identified.
4. This equality impact assessment considers the impact of the DWP Discount Scheme in relation to age, disability, gender, gender reassignment and race.

Purpose and aim of the DWP Discount Scheme

5. The DWP Discount Scheme facilitates the purchase of goods and services at discounted prices for all DWP employees. This is an integral part of our Reward and Recognition framework.
6. The purpose is to enhance employee engagement through DWP being seen as an employer of choice, offering the best in class within our reward package. This helps maximise employee engagement so that those who work in the Department are committed to the purpose of the organisation. Consequently we are contributing to improved performance, reducing unnecessary attrition (turn-over) and aiding any recruitment requirements.
7. The DWP Discount scheme is voluntary to join. However, the scheme benefits all DWP employees who wish to use the scheme to obtain discounts from a large number of retailers for their personal use. The

scheme can be accessed through the internet from both home and work computers.

Consultation and involvement

8. Between July and September 2009, all employees had the opportunity to give their views on the scheme by completing an online survey via the intranet and the DWP Discounts website. The response rate was good with over 1400 employees participating. Overall the responses were very positive with 96% of users saying they would recommend the scheme to a colleague.
9. Employees were asked if they found the site easy to use. Whilst 93% of employees agreed that it was easy to use some asked for simpler site navigation and improved usability. Asperity, who administer the scheme on behalf of the department, have designed a new site to improve usability giving employees the facility of structuring a BBC style to their home page.
10. Employees can also ask for retailers to be considered for inclusion or recommend improvements to the scheme via the DWP Discounts helpdesk.

Impact of the DWP Discount Scheme

11. In 2009, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) report showed that 70% of households had internet access with 90% having broadband connection.

Frequency of use of the Internet in 2009

		Every day or almost every day	At least once a week (but not every day)	Once a month or less
Per cent	Men	75	19	6
	Women	71	22	8
	All	73	20	7
Age groups	16-24	86	12	--
	25-44	75	20	5
	45-54	71	20	9
	55-64	65	24	11
	65+	52	32	16

Base: UK adults who accessed the Internet in the last three months
 Source: ONS report dated 28 August 2009

Purchasing over the Internet in 2009

		Ever purchased ¹	Of those who ever purchased ²	
			Within last 3 months	Over 3 months ago
Per cent	Men	69	83	17
	Women	60	82	18
	All	64	83	17
Age groups	16-24	81	78	22
	25-44	82	86	14
	45-54	69	83	17
	55-64	55	83	17
	65+	21	73	27

¹ Base: All UK adults

² Base: UK adults who had ever bought or ordered goods online

Source: ONS report dated 28 August 2009

12. Whilst most people may prefer to access the scheme from their home computers, employees can access it using a DWP computer.

13. The DWP Discount scheme has been tested to make sure that staff that use assistive technology can also access the site and use the scheme if they want to. The accessibility testing of the scheme was done by Corporate IT and tested using the following software:

- Colour Contrast Analyser
- HTML Validator
- JAWS v8.0.422
- Supernova v8.03.832
- Zoomtext v9.0.100
- Dragon v8.1

14. Overall the site received praise for the attention that has been paid to accessibility with users being able to fully navigate around the screens. Whilst some minor points were raised these were mainly suggestions for improvements to enhance the user experience in general rather than specifically for an assistive technology user. Asperity has made enhancements to the site to make site navigation simpler and improve usability.

15. Therefore employees with the following assistive technology are able to access the scheme:

- Zoomtext
- SuperNova
- JAWS
- Dragon

16. The scheme's website is fully compatible with popular screen reading software and with the RNIB See It Right standard, in addition to colour contrast guidelines set out by the BBC. The website's layout takes into account users who are blind or visually impaired and where appropriate directs them to the provider's telephone and textphone helpdesk teams who are able to provide assistance, including providing information in an accessible format for any user who requests it.

17. If there are situations where employees are unable to access the scheme online they can still benefit from a range of telephone discounts and vouchers. The provider also operates a helpdesk with textphone for the hard of hearing.

18. In March 2010 the scheme launched the Big In-Store cards (BISC) which gives employees the opportunity to obtain discounts at the point of sale at a number of local independent retail outlets, smaller chains and suppliers of services.

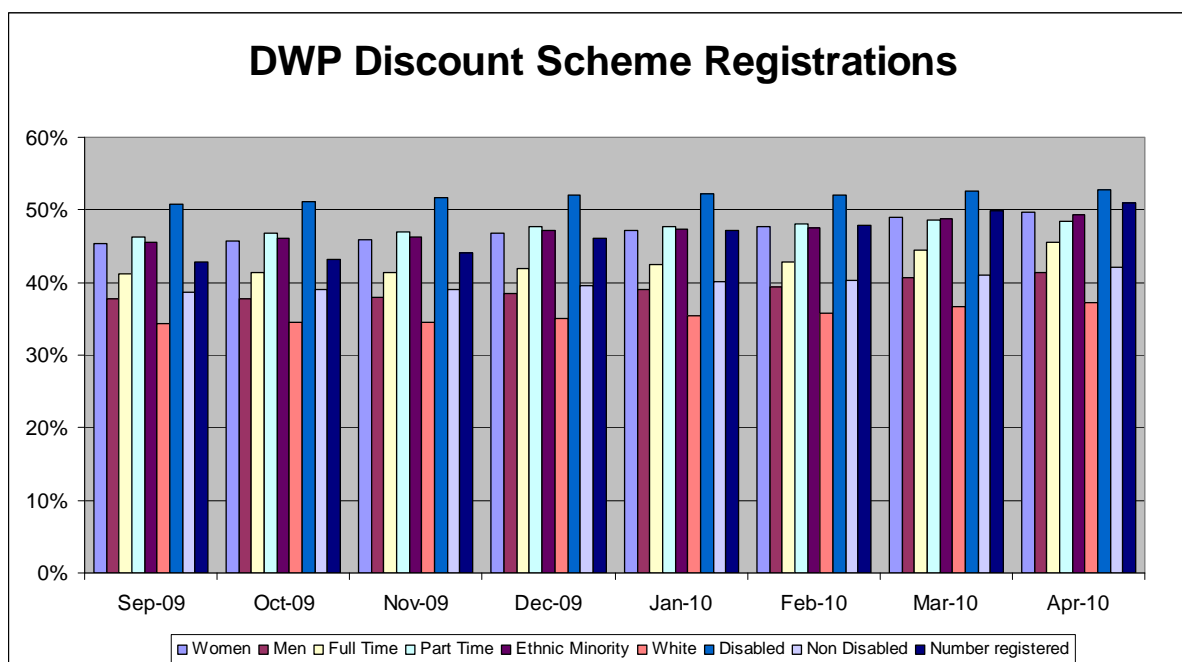
19. There should be no negative impact on people of different ages in relation to the actual scheme. However, employees under the age of 18 may have difficulty purchasing goods online as they may not have access to a credit card. Financial Services Authority regulations do not allow anyone under the age of 18 to have a credit card in their name. Employees are able to use a debit card to pay for goods online via the DWP Discount Scheme. The figures on RM as at May 2010 show that there are 17 employees up to and including age 17 employed by DWP.

20. The provider is committed to sourcing a diverse range of products that will appeal to diverse communities including gender, age, ethnicity, religion or belief, social background, sexual orientation and political affiliation.

Management Information

21. Since September 2009, diversity data has been collected on employees who have registered with the scheme.

22. The figures referred to in the graph and tables below show the percentage of employees in each diversity group who are registered with the scheme.



23. Overall the scheme is doing well with all of the diverse groups well represented.

24. The figures (Table A) show that there are less male employees registering with the scheme than women. This may be that culturally women tend to shop more than men although the Office of National Statistics show that 83% of men purchased goods or services online as oppose to 82% of women. Also there are more female employees (67%) in DWP than male employees (33%).

Table A - Gender

	Sep-09	Oct-09	Nov-09	Dec-09	Jan-10	Feb-10	Mar-10	Apr-10
Women	45%	46%	46%	47%	47%	48%	49%	50%
Men	38%	38%	38%	39%	39%	39%	41%	41%

Table B - Ethnicity

	Sep-09	Oct-09	Nov-09	Dec-09	Jan-10	Feb-10	Mar-10	Apr-10
Ethnic Group	46%	46%	46%	47%	47%	48%	49%	49%
White	34%	35%	35%	35%	35%	36%	37%	37%

Table C – Disability

	Sep-09	Oct-09	Nov-09	Dec-09	Jan-10	Feb-10	Mar-10	Apr-10
Disabled	51%	51%	52%	52%	52%	52%	53%	53%
Non Disabled	39%	39%	39%	40%	40%	40%	41%	42%

25. The figures in Table C show that there are more disabled employees registered with the scheme. This could be due to more disabled employees

preferring to shop online. A survey by Employers' Forum on Disability found that 54 per cent of disabled people consider Internet access essential, compared with only 6 per cent in the general population.

Table D – Work Pattern

	Sep-09	Oct-09	Nov-09	Dec-09	Jan-10	Feb-10	Mar-10	Apr-10
Full Time	41%	41%	41%	42%	42%	43%	44%	46%
Part Time	46%	47%	47%	48%	48%	48%	49%	48%

Table E - Age

	Sep-09	Oct-09	Nov-09	Dec-09	Jan-10	Feb-10	Mar-10	Apr-10
Under 25	26%	27%	27%	27%	28%	29%	32%	34%
25-29	42%	42%	42%	43%	44%	45%	46%	47%
30-34	44%	44%	45%	45%	46%	46%	48%	49%
35-39	50%	50%	51%	52%	53%	54%	55%	56%
40-44	50%	48%	49%	49%	50%	51%	52%	53%
45-49	43%	43%	44%	44%	45%	45%	46%	47%
50-54	42%	42%	47%	43%	43%	43%	44%	44%
55-59	40%	40%	40%	41%	41%	41%	42%	42%
60-64	37%	37%	37%	37%	37%	37%	37%	37%
65 and over	33%	32%	31%	30%	30%	30%	29%	29%

Monitoring and evaluation

26. The diversity information will continue to be monitored going forward. If there are any issues identified the project team will work with Asperity to progress these and if, as a result, any policy changes are made, a revised Equality Impact Assessment will be completed.

Next steps

27. The Project Team will continue to work with Asperity to try to identify the reasons why there are less white and male employees and less younger and older employees registering with the scheme.

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