

BIS | Department for Business
Innovation & Skills

EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

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The Department of Business, Innovation and Skills: Equality Objectives

Foreword by Martin Donnelly, Permanent Secretary

The work of everyone in BIS to support growth and jobs across the UK economy is vital. In order to deliver on this ambitious agenda, we must ensure that our work fully reflects the diverse society we live in, and the needs of our communities and impacts on them.

We have therefore set ourselves central objectives, to ensure that the department is focused on delivering equality and diversity. All government departments are required to develop one or more 'Equality Objectives'. We have identified a series of precise commitments which, I believe, are challenging but achievable.

We take pride in our approach to equality and diversity. Externally, we have been working with businesses to implement Lord Davies' strategy, following up on his groundbreaking review 'Women on Boards'. Women now account for over 15% of all directorships (up from 12%), and 27% of all board appointments have been taken up by women (up from 13%). The business community remains on track to meet the 2015 aspirational goal of 25% of FTSE 350 board positions taken by women.

We are committed to integrating equality and diversity into our core business. This is reflected in our internal plans to improve our benchmark data, and achieve a minimum 80% target of diversity self declaration rates.

We are making real progress, and we want to do more. Our aim is to go beyond compliance to demonstrate best practice, leveraging the maximum benefits of a diverse UK workforce and ensuring we have the highest standards within the Department.

Martin Donnelly

Permanent Secretary

Department of Business, Innovation and Skills

Achievements

Externally, we have:

- Implemented a framework to ensure the widest possible access to HE
- Completed the first stage of the analysis in developing the business case for equality and diversity
- Started the STEM diversity programme
- Increased support for 'speakers of other languages' learning English
- Consulted on the Modern Workplace proposals and implemented additional paternity leave
- Considered equality and diversity in all growth reviews

Internally, we have:

- Improved our understanding of the diversity in BIS through an increase the rate of people declaring their diversity
- Embedded equality and diversity considerations into the major decision-making processes in BIS
- Dedicated part of the Learning and Development Strategy to diversity and delivered: a programme of inspiring speakers; workshops on 'valuing others in times of change'; legal workshop on assessing equality; and the launch of the Civil Service e-learning diversity package
- Made our leaders more accountable for equality and diversity

Where we will be in 2013

- It is our vision to mainstream E&D into our core business to achieve a position where it is in the foundation of our business and a part of everything that we do
- Our ambition is to ensure that our policies and services secure equality of opportunity for all, unlocking the talents of people from all backgrounds, through our policies and practices
- Our aim is not only to comply with the law, but to demonstrate best practice in all that we do in the field of E&D across the full range of our responsibilities.

The journey: what we are doing to get there

- We believe that a commitment to equality and diversity is critical to ensuring that we are able to deliver on BIS' priorities, as well as the Government's wider goals
- We can only deliver our important and ambitious agenda if we ensure that our work reflects the diverse society we live in and we take into account the needs of, and impacts on, all those in our communities
- We must seize the opportunity to engage with all individuals, communities and businesses so that we can create the conditions for business success, promote innovation, enterprise and science and give everyone the skills and opportunities to succeed
- Publication of the six BIS Equality Objectives (three internal and three external).

What is the role of the Executive Board in this

- John Alty is the Board Diversity Champion for BIS and Chair of the BIS Equality and Diversity (E&D) Governance Board
- Members of the E&D Governance Board include:
 - Group E&D Champions
 - The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) peer review group also reports to the Board.
- We also have the Equality Data and Evidence Group who oversee issues around collection and dissemination of E&D data
- We also have our external Equalities Advisory Group (EAG) who provide advice, support and external challenge

External Equality Objective 1: Maximising participation in the workforce

The journey – what we are doing to get there	Where we will be in April 2013 and beyond
<p>Children and Families Bill</p> <p>The children and families bill will contain legislation to extend the right to request flexible working to all employees (the current right to request is limited to certain groups of individuals at present)</p> <p>This will also create a system of flexible parental leave</p> <p>Bill will be introduced in 2013 with Royal assent expected in 2014</p>	<p>This policy will drive a range of benefits to business and will support individuals in reconciling work and home lives</p> <p>Flexible working has been shown to be good for business, including: raised productivity; reduced absenteeism; talent retention; improved employee attachment to the workplace; and labour market</p> <p>Flexible working is also good for employees as it allows individuals to reconcile work with other elements of their life, whether this be caring responsibilities for a child or a relative, or responding to changing circumstances, such as preparation for retirement</p> <p>The extension of the right will allow employers and employees to discuss a wider and more diverse range of working arrangements. This will drive culture change and will support greater diversity within the labour market</p> <p>It is also anticipated that any perception of special treatment, and associated stigma, attached to current flexible working arrangements will be removed, as any individual will have as much right as the next to make a request to work flexibly.</p> <p>What this will mean for workers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 64,000 new working patterns from 81,000 additional requests for flexible working

External Equality Objective 1: Maximising participation in the workforce

The journey – what we are doing to get there	Where we will be in April 2013 and beyond
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 624,000 parents will be able to consider using FPL • The number of adopters eligible to use the new system equates to 4,000 adoptions per year • 440,000 new fathers will be eligible for 6 weeks paternity leave • 5.1 million parents will be able to use the Parental Leave Directive (18 weeks of parental leave up to the child's 18th birthday).
<p>Women on Boards Work with, and encourage business to implement Lord Davies' strategy</p> <p>Proactive media campaign and Ministerial engagement</p> <p>Commitment to Annual Report</p> <p>Periodic review of the head-hunter code of conduct</p> <p>Use our influence to shape the views of Member States and any upcoming relevant European Legislation.</p>	<p>We are on track to meet the 2015 aspirational goal of 25% of FTSE 350 board positions taken by women</p> <p>Our support and influence helps increase pressure on Boards, head-hunters, etc to continually seek diverse candidates, and on business to ensure a sustainable supply of credible women</p> <p>The business-led, voluntary approach is maintained.</p>

External Equality Objective 2: Making the most of a diverse workforce

The journey – what we are doing to get there	Where we will be in April 2013 and beyond
<p>Increase the diversity of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) community by:</p> <p>Providing funding and oversight to the Royal Academy of Engineering (RAEng) and Royal Society to develop STEM Diversity</p> <p>Establishing a baseline of available data on the STEM community</p> <p>Monitoring development and running of RAEng pilots on developing the case for increased diversity</p>	<p>In the medium to long term, the diversity of the professional registered technicians and engineers will rise year-on-year as the demand for diversity is articulated more strongly and coherently by the profession.</p>
<p>Apprenticeships</p> <p>Work with National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) to increase access for disabled young people and other protected groups</p> <p>Publish and disseminate the Peter Little report on ‘Creating an inclusive apprenticeship offer’ with an action plan in April 2012</p> <p>Make a reality of the Apprenticeship ‘offer’ in the Education Act 2011.</p>	<p>Although the number of apprentices identified as being Learners with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities (LLDD) has increased in recent years, the rise has not kept pace with the overall increase in apprenticeship numbers</p> <p>This work will address that issue and official figures will show an increase in the percentage of apprentices with LLDD by April 2013</p> <p>The offer will prioritise support offered to all disabled apprentices who secure an apprenticeship place.</p>

External Equality Objective 3: Building the evidence base for E&D

The journey – what we are doing to get there	Where we will be in April 2013 and beyond
<p>Peer reviewing the current study looking at the evidence of a business case for E&D and produce short findings paper</p> <p>Undertake a policy orientated review including strategic discussions in BIS and GEO</p> <p>Develop a dissemination strategy including policy workshops, engagement with Ministers, senior officials and stakeholders</p> <p>Developing the next phase of work.</p>	<p>Well received study recognised as a significant contribution to the evidence base</p> <p>Positive engagement with stakeholders and OGDs with the findings of the study being used to influence policy and behaviour</p> <p>We will have a clear idea where we need to go next and a plan on how to get there.</p>

Internal Equality - Objective 1: The diversity profile of our workforce reflects UK population

The journey – what we are doing to get there	Where we will be in April 2013 and beyond
<p>Analysing the levels of success in all future major selection and assessment exercises, noting trends and mitigating any unintended under-representation</p>	<p>We fully understand the impacts and levels of representation in all major selection exercises and are able to take steps to increase under-representation where noted</p> <p>Action plan in place to help address any under representation</p> <p>BIS as an employer is helping people realise their potential and ensuring equality of opportunity in widening out prospects.</p>

Internal Equality - Objective 2: Improve our knowledge of the BIS workforce

The journey – what we are doing to get there	Where we will be in April 2013 and beyond
<p>Improving our benchmark data through an on-going concerted communication and HR-led campaign to improve diversity self-declaration rates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – We have set a target of 80% (rising to 90% of staff making a diversity declaration) – Roll out of telephone support by Group started in February 2012 and on-going <p>Circulate monthly workforce analysis to Director Generals and the E&D Governance Board to note changes in trends and act where necessary.</p>	<p>BIS has a fuller understanding of the workforce. BIS is able to, with confidence, understand the impacts on particular groups as the data on groups will be robust</p> <p>Staff feel confident in disclosing their diversity data and understanding the importance of it in significant decision-making</p> <p>We will have reached our target of 80% of all staff self-declaring their diversity and be making progress towards our enhanced 90% target.</p>

Internal Equality - Objective 3: An engaged and accountable leadership

The journey – what we are doing to get there	Where we will be in April 2013 and beyond
<p>E&D reflected in the objectives and end-of-year appraisals for the Permanent Secretary, the BIS SMT and all E&D Group Champions</p> <p>Unconscious bias training for the BIS Board (Autumn 2012)</p> <p>E&D Challenge panels for Directors and the EAG.</p>	<p>Openness and accountability in E&D activities in BIS</p> <p>Key decision makers in BIS are aware of unconscious bias and the way in which to mitigate this</p> <p>BIS remains open to challenge and ambitious in ensure E&D is considered in all that we do.</p>

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