

DTI EQUALITY SCHEME – screening exercise results

- **Energy Group**

Overall relevance to the Duty: **Low**

Fuel Poverty

There is a statutory government target to eliminate fuel poverty, with the first stage to eliminate fuel poverty in vulnerable households in England by 2010. The policy responsibility for England is shared with the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA): responsibility for tackling fuel poverty is devolved so each administration has its own targets and approach to delivery.

A vulnerable household is one containing children, or those who are elderly, disabled or long-term sick. Householders in these categories may be particularly susceptible to fuel poverty due to the fact that they may need to heat their homes for longer, and therefore have to make difficult decisions between heating and other essentials. Therefore all the actions relating to the delivery of fuel poverty targets will include those vulnerable households with elderly residents. The number of households in fuel poverty in England is monitored annually by DTI and DEFRA. Within this work, the number of households in the vulnerable category is also monitored and reported on.

DTI also works with the gas and electricity regulator, OFGEM and the consumer body, Energywatch, to mitigate the impact of price rises on vulnerable customers.

OFGEM/Energywatch

OFGEM, as the regulator of the gas and electricity industry, not DTI, oversees the energy market and monitors suppliers' activities in respect of vulnerable groups under its Social Action Plan. This document describes their work, and consequent industry initiatives from the sector, on fuel poverty and issues such as debt and disconnections.

OFGEM's principle objective is to protect the interests of consumers, and includes the needs of vulnerable consumers, particularly older people, those with disabilities and on low incomes. It is also open to Energywatch, which, like OFGEM, has a particular duty in respect of those of pensionable age, to advise OFGEM or DTI of impacts. OFGEM and Energywatch are also subject to the Gender Duty.

Assets and Liabilities Management

DTI is responsible for the management of various liabilities, such as nuclear liabilities, and residual liabilities from the coal, steel and shipbuilding industries. These activities do not generally relate directly to individuals or groups, but those

that do are coal and shipbuilder health, and coal non-health liabilities. However, the compensation schemes attached to these liabilities are administered in relation to strict eligibility criteria, and do not discriminate against any individual or group. Operation of these schemes is decided by statute. Payment to claimants eligible under the schemes are administered by contracted out third parties, and are based on medical advice in the case of health schemes, and the eligibility based on former employment (or widows of former employees), in the case of the Concessionary Fuel scheme.

In the case of coal health schemes, in recognition of the large number of cases and the finite resources to test for eligibility, under the Claims Handling Agreement (CHA), agreed with the claimants' solicitors, claims of the most elderly and ill living miners, and their widows are processed first, and those who have been diagnosed by their GP as having a limited life expectancy are prioritised above all others.

Nuclear Security and Export Control

Policies and regulations in this area are predominantly directed to the behaviour and actions of companies, exporters or other organisations/institutions, rather than individuals or groups.

Sustainability and the Environment

The majority of activity in this area is focussed on industry and markets, rather than individuals or groups. Where the focus is energy efficiency, remedies are focussed on technologies and market incentives, rather than individual circumstances.

- **Enterprise and Business Group**

Digital Television Switchover

Digital switchover will give near universal access to high-quality, free-to-view, digital TV.

To ensure everyone can benefit, there will be a help scheme for those that need it most. Practical support will be provided for all households where one person is either aged 75 or over, significantly disabled, or registered blind or partially sighted. The Department of Culture Media and Sport are leading on the development of the scheme, in consultation with the BBC, DTI, Digital UK and stakeholders from representative groups.

A 'Switchover Tracker' is published each quarter, reporting on understanding, awareness and take-up of digital TV. The data is broken down into segments including by gender, age, people who describe themselves as disabled, and eligibility to the help scheme. The tracker informs communications strategies.

The Digital Strategy

The Digital Strategy does not specifically look or cover issues involving gender, but age and access for those with disabilities are concerns which have been taken into consideration as the Strategy has developed. Action 7 in the Digital Strategy is specifically aimed at improving accessibility for the digitally excluded and ease of use for these groups.

Under Action 1 of the Digital Strategy, there is a specific activity to promote and utilise the UK Online Centres. The Centres continue to be successful in enabling those that have been, or felt excluded, to get involved in the digital revolution. University for Industry is responsible for managing the UK Online Centre Network. It monitors its users across a number of indicators which highlight to what extent the network is addressing social exclusion, including for older people. Gender is not a useful determinant in this work.

Myguide

Myguide was established by DfES to overcome the perceived lack of use and interest barriers which prevent between 11 and 14m people using the internet. Using accessibility software and a radically simple design, the project has been able to offer guided, step-by-step internet use for older people, those with disabilities, and other target groups. Myguide has completed a 6 month pilot and the evaluation will soon be completed. A decision will then be put to Ministers on a possible roll out of the pilot in 2007. 24% of women (as opposed to 17% of men), reported feeling intimidated by the internet.

- **Fair Markets Group**

Overall relevance to the Duty: **High (for consumer and employment relations)**

N.B. – This Group has a significant interest in tackling issues faced by “vulnerable” consumers or employees. Whilst an individual’s gender, age, religion or belief or sexual orientation might be a factor in determining whether an individual is considered “vulnerable”, it is not always the most useful determining identifier. However, assessments of equality impact are often used in policy development in this area (see below)

Fair Treatment at Work Survey

This survey monitors the extent of employee discrimination, unfair treatment, bullying and sexual harassment. The first survey was conducted in 2005, and the results from this will help inform the second survey, to be conducted in 2008.

Age discrimination regulations

Regulations outlawing discrimination on grounds of age in employment and training came into force on 1st October 2006. The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 and Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 came into force in December 2003. This legislation is aimed at ensuring all individuals are treated fairly, and on the basis of competence to do

the job, rather than other factors. It is intended to apply equally to all employees regardless of their gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief. The effectiveness of the legislation will be monitored as it develops.

Extension of the right to request flexible working to carers of adults from April 2007

This legislative change will help employees balance their work and caring responsibilities. DTI has consulted with a wide range of representative bodies on this issue, and will look to monitor the effectiveness of the legislation once in place.

Employment Agency standards

DTI is working to ensure standards and policies are developed and enforced to enable all to contribute to a flexible labour market, and addressing problems facing workers classed as “vulnerable”. An informal consultation was carried out April/May 2006 and will be followed by a formal consultation paper (timescale to be decided). An equality impact assessment will be carried out as part of the formal consultation process. Monitoring is done by working with equality bodies and stakeholders, and by following up on complaints received about employment agencies.

Employment status and rights

DTI is working to raise awareness of employment status and rights by improving existing guidance and targeting specific groups of workers.

National Minimum Wage (NMW)

DTI continues to raise awareness of the NMW amongst vulnerable workers. Two thirds of minimum wage beneficiaries continue to be women. The gender pay gap has reduced by 4.8% since 1997 and the NMW has contributed to this reduction.

Increasing statutory paid leave entitlement

This work is a manifesto commitment to increase annual leave entitlements to be additional to paid leave for bank holidays. This is likely to be of benefit to low-paid workers, and in particular, those who work part-time. Further data is being collected on this issue to enable an equality impact assessment to be assessed. Equality Impact assessments will be carried out on the policy for the formal consultation.

Voluntary workers

DTI is undertaking a review of section 44 of the National Minimum Wage Act 1998. Voluntary workers are a narrowly defined category of worker excluded from eligibility for the national minimum wage because they work for certain types of organisation (i.e., charities, voluntary organisations, associated fund-raising bodies or statutory bodies) and may only receive the reimbursement of expenses and associated benefits in kind (e.g., accommodation). In addition, there are

individuals who are volunteers, who are entirely outside the scope of employment legislation, and offer their time and effort for free. The evidence available shows that there is not a marked gender bias amongst volunteers (27% of men and 31% of women formally volunteered in England at least once a month in 2005).

Employment Tribunals

DTI is working, alongside other Government Departments, to streamline and maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the employment tribunals system. In considering the development of policy relating to the Rules of Procedure governing access to, and proceedings in, employment tribunals, efforts are made to engage both informally and formally with a range of key interest groups, including equality groups.

Dispute Resolution Regulations

In accordance with Ministerial commitments, the 2004 Dispute Resolution Regulations are being reviewed to establish their effectiveness in facilitating the resolution of workplace disputes. During the evidence gathering phase, the Trade Unions Congress (TUC) and others contributed significantly in areas relating to making procedures accessible for those potentially vulnerable to discrimination during disputes.

Vulnerable workers Pilots

These pilots are designed to find ways to ensure that the most vulnerable workers benefit from the Governments' employment rights, alternatively they may be put in touch with opportunities to advance through skills, language training etc. The Government has announced that there will be two vulnerable worker pilots aimed at the cleaning and building services sector and hospitality sector. The pilots will aim to test ways to ensure that vulnerable workers get their employment rights and help employers overcome difficulties in complying with the law.

Detailed proposals are being developed by the partner organisations (TUC and Marketing Birmingham), but we would expect the pilots to offer help to workers in the target group enforce rights not to be discriminated against. The pilots will aim to help business see the benefits of complying with the law and treating workers fairly.

Guidance/helplines

As part of the Employment Law Simplification Review, DTI is developing proposals for the rationalisation, signposting and simplification of guidance and delivery channels on employment law so as to increase UK employers' confidence in employing people. The project will not be focusing on specific pieces of legislation, but will look to make proposals on how guidance and advice on employment legislation across the piece can best be provided to employers to ensure that employment rules are followed to the benefit of employees and businesses. A report on this work is due by May 2007.

Face-to-face debt advice projects

Equality of opportunity has made a central tenet of the project, and groups that suffer particularly from financial exclusion were to be targeted at the bidding stage of this work. Work was then undertaken to find evidence as to which groups within society would particularly benefit from the projects. One conclusion on gender was that there was evidence to suggest that men suffer disproportionately from debts associated with gambling. However, gender is not a huge determinate of where these projects target help because there are better determinates of indebtedness than sex.

State aids

Work on state aids includes assisting various parts of regional, local and central Government to make sure that their schemes to promote equality of opportunity are state aid compliant. This has included schemes to support entrepreneurship for women or disadvantaged groups.

Unfair Commercial Practices

Work is currently underway to implement this EU Directive into UK law. As well as introducing a general duty on traders not to treat consumers fairly, the Directive provides new protection against aggressive marketing and selling methods (either physical or non-physical). These protections will make it a criminal offence to use harassment, coercion or undue influence to try and persuade consumers to buy goods and services.

Consumer Credit Act implementation

Issues around money lending practices in Muslim communities are currently being discussed with the Islamic Bank of Britain.

- **Science and Innovation Group/Trans-Departmental Science and Technology**

Overall relevance to the Duty: Low-medium

A science workforce that is representative of the society that it serves

The UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology (UKRC) has been set up by the Office of Science and Innovation (part of DTI), to support the increased participation and progression of women in science, engineering and technology, where they have been underrepresented for some time. To support compliance by employers, UKRC have already written a good practice guide to the Gender duty which was launched by Industry Minister, Margaret Hodge in October 2006. The Guide outlines the requirements of the duty, and gives best practice case studies to illustrate how gender equality can work in practice. With respect to UKRC's own compliance, all staff have been briefed on the duty, and an action plan will be developed to further ensure compliance in UKRC's other functions.

Foresight/horizon scanning

Foresight, and its associated horizon scanning centre, aims to provide challenging visions for the future, to ensure effective strategies now. The outcome of three current Foresight projects have potential to impact upon equality and diversity issues: Tackling Obesities: Future Choices (due to launch its findings in October '07); Sustainable Energy Management and the Built Environment, and Mental Capital and Wellbeing (both due to launch their findings in '08). The research and other activities within each project will highlight potential equality and diversity issues and these will be reported fully.

Contracts/grants

Diversity questions are included within our standard monitoring and evaluation of contracts and grant awards process

- **Shareholder Executive**

Overall relevance to the Duty: **medium (for Post Office)**

Proposed Post Office Network Strategy and Public Consultation

The Government's proposed future strategy for the Post Office Network, underpinned by investment of up to £1.7 billion to 2011, was announced on 14 December 2006. A 12-week national public consultation on the proposals was launched on the same day and ended in March. Key elements of the proposals are recognition of the need for an ongoing subsidy for the social network, access criteria to ensure a national network with particular protection for vulnerable customers in deprived urban areas and rural and remote areas and a strategic and structured programme to close up to 2,500 post offices mitigated in part by the opening of Outreach services in small rural communities.

As part of this consultation exercise, DTI has sent its consultation to a range of national organisations representing minority groups and invited comments. In developing detailed area closure proposals, Post Office Ltd will be required to ensure that no one part of the network or no particular group of people is significantly more adversely affected than any other.

- **Legal Services Group**

Overall relevance to the Duty: **Low-medium**

Provision of Legal Advice on DTI Policy:

DTI Legal Services Group provides the Department with ongoing advice on age, religious belief and sexual orientation discrimination issues. Feedback, on individual cases in regular client care meetings, and through annual client surveys, highlight any shortcomings, deficiencies in understanding or effectiveness of implementation. Legal developments are captured in weekly

reports to the Solicitor and widely shared with DTI lawyers. Responsibility for advice on gender discrimination lies with the Department for Communities and Local Government.

An appropriate awareness and understanding of discrimination on grounds of age, sexual orientation and religious belief is diligently promoted across the Department and the wider Government Legal Service through a programme of tailored in-house training events and the dissemination of information via the Group's Intranet. Presentations have been delivered by DTI lawyers to colleagues and counterparts in the Treasury Solicitors' Department.

Recruitment of Specialist Staff (and intake of legal trainees and summer placement students):

All recruiting managers are appropriately trained, and vacancies for lawyers and investigation officers are advertised in publications that target a broad spectrum of potential applicants. Monitoring is done at each stage of the recruitment process on the make up of prospective and actual applicants and of those to whom the offers are made. A broad mix of summer vacation students are selected for summer placements each year under a scheme sponsored by the Government Legal Service.

Generally – in all aspects of providing Excellent Legal Services

Close attention and consideration is paid to the needs of those providing and receiving legal services, and Human Resources Statistics from the Centre are discussed at Human Resources focussed Senior Management Team meetings.

Legal Services has a very active Diversity GINGER Group, a "Speaking Up" Group and a Flexible Working Group. These groups meet regularly with a view to sharing best practice across the Legal Services Group, informing the training and planning activity, and keeping the senior management team and staff informed when any issues of concern arise. Each group has their own site on the Legal Services Intranet. The Diversity GINGER Group also networks with, and has open invitations to other Departmental diversity group meetings (such as the Disability Advisory Group and the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Trans-gender Group, and actively promotes ideas for, and helps organise, regular diversity events.

The 2006/07 Legal Services Group training programme included a career development talk for lawyers by the Solicitor and Director-General of Legal Services Group, the Legal Services induction event (with Diversity GINGER Group representation), Legal Services mentoring training, an age discrimination event and a race equality event. We plan to have a presentation from the Multi-Faith group in the coming year.

Legal Services Group is keen to promote a better work-life balance and acknowledges that, statistically, more women than men have a need to work

more flexibly. Flexible working has increased considerably in Legal Services Group over recent years and adjustments in working patterns made (for example: meetings are held on various days to try to capture everyone who works flexibly and training events are scheduled on dates to provide optimum opportunities for attendance, within budgets constraints).

The Senior Management Team commissioned the Diversity GINGER and Flexible Working Groups to undertake some work in order to follow up the results of the 2006 Staff Survey on equal opportunities issues. Consultative events were held, questionnaires issued and recommendations, backed up by a comprehensive report, made. The Senior Management Team has responded to the recommendations, and among other things, has pledged commitment to ensuring that any inappropriate behaviour is investigated and, where appropriate, treated as a disciplinary issue.

Planned/Proposed Actions

Legal Services Group will be undertaking a full impact assessment of those affected by Departmental restructuring. Greater publicity will be given to the Government Legal Services job share register (via our intranet site), and a local job share register is to be set up.

- **The Corporate Centre (includes Strategic Policy Analysis, Finance and Resource Management, Ministerial and Parliamentary Support, Strategic Communications and Operations)**

Overall relevance to the Duty: **medium (high for Human Resources)**

Comprehensive spending review

DTI, alongside other Government Departments, is currently working to feed into HM Treasury's work on the Comprehensive Spending Review, to decide Government spending for the next spending period. As required in the guidance provided to Departments for the Review, the race and disability duties are being taken into account as a part of DTI's planning work. Alongside this guidance, DTI has also factored in its duty to promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

Human Resources

Activities relevant to the Duty include planned diversity training across the Department during 2007, and meeting our commitments in the Cabinet Office 10 Point Plan for the civil service. A new leadership programme for staff just below the senior civil service is planned as part of this work. Applications will be encouraged from women, British minority ethnic staff, staff with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender staff. DTI is working with staff diversity groups on the development of this programme and is operating a robust monitoring system.

DTI is currently undergoing relocation and restructuring programmes. Equality impact assessments will be carried as part of this work, as well as for our staff reporting process, the employee opinion survey and sickness absence monitoring.

DTI currently monitors promotion and exits rates by gender, and will, from 2007, begin to assess performance management issues by gender. Applications and exits for the current and previous restructuring programmes have been assessed by gender.

Public appointments

The DTI's Appointment Plan contains an equality statement highlighting our commitment to providing equal opportunities for all. This statement is included in all advertisements and information packs. The Appointment Plan also presents targets for the appointment of women, disabled people and minority ethnic groups to public bodies for 2007 and 2008. Actions to support progress towards these targets include reviews by officials and Ministers at the beginning of each appointment exercise, and maintaining close links with appointment units in other Government Departments to share best practice. Vacancies are also routinely circulated to a range of diversity organisations with the aim of expanding the pool by wider publicity. Applicants are asked to provide monitoring information, although this plays no part in the selection process.

Procurement

DTI has recently amended its statement to tender document to include a section alerting bidders to the requirements of the public sector duties to promote equality, and how the Department expects bids to be in accordance with the duties. To monitor the behaviour of existing contractors, the invitation to tender document has been amended to include a requirement for DTI's top 50 suppliers to provide management information on compliance with the duties.

Corporate Communications

DTI will seek to ensure that its corporate communications include images of diversity (this is already covered in our branding guidance).

- **UK Trade and Investment (UKTI)**

Overall relevance to the Duty: **medium**

Performance and Impact Monitoring System (PIMS)

UKTI monitors performance against its Departmental Strategic Objective and other performance measures through its recently developed Performance and Impact Monitoring System (PIMS). The first set of results from PIMS has now been published on UKTI's website. This data includes information relating to the gender of company directors UKTI has assisted. PIMS results will allow UKTI to

monitor the extent to which there is an increase in the number of currently underrepresented groups accessing its services as a result of the targeted initiatives taken. This, in turn, will provide a robust evidence base to help inform future policy direction.

Outreach initiatives

UKTI undertakes a range of outreach initiatives specifically targeted at minority groups, including female entrepreneurs. These activities are delivered, for the most part, in the UK regions through UKTI's Business Group, and in collaboration with key partners. UKTI currently produces a quarterly internal report which looks at the range of initiatives it has undertaken across the UK regional network in this timeframe. The initiatives are varied. They may include ongoing support for a particular group or network, support for a specific event or delivery of tailored training. For example, from October to December 2006, initiatives specifically targeted at female entrepreneurs include:

- The North West region reported strong commitment from the female business community to the region's second Women's Trade Mission to India that took place in October 2006. This was led by UKTI's Cheshire and Warrington International Trade Team, which has responsibility for the regional strategy for supporting women-owned businesses.
- In the East of England, UKTI support the Women in Trade Group in Hertfordshire. A number of the group have reported expanding their businesses. Worthy of particular note, is the expansion of the Hertfordshire Women in Trade model into Cambridgeshire, focusing on the 'education and training' sector, which saw six women led companies attend a recent 'children's book network group', and which has already generated a number of companies signing up to the UKTI's flagship "Passport to Export" programme.
- In London, the Regional Team sponsored the International award for the European Federation of Black Women Business Owners.
- In Yorkshire and the Humber, the UKTI team continues to work with the Regional Development Agencies' Yorkshire Ladies network, which has a membership of around 1500. UKTI is supporting a mission to Hong Kong, and a visit to Paris in 2007, to coincide with International Women's Day.

- **Companies House**

Areas of Companies House's work that are of high relevance to the Duty:

First Incorporations

Companies House's Race Equality and Accessibility Group is currently considering whether there is anything in the first incorporations process (the process of setting up a company), that is a barrier to someone of either sex.

Customer Satisfaction Surveys

Companies House is of the view that its Customer Satisfaction Survey provides the best vehicle by which to introduce a level of diversity monitoring to the information it receive on its products and processes. The survey questionnaire (which is published on Companies House's website), is currently being amended to include a comprehensive section on monitoring, completion of which will be voluntary. It is hoped that the surveys will provide more comprehensive information in a number of areas of Companies House's business.

Companies House does not monitor diversity as part of the information it collects on company Directors. To do so would require an amendment to the Companies Act.

Focus Groups

Companies House uses focus groups as consultation forums to provide it with feedback on products and services. Invitations to join focus groups are issued to a variety of professions, and attendees represent large and small businesses. Companies House is currently reviewing the process through which participants are selected for the groups to ensure a diverse mix. It also invites feedback after each meeting, information that is monitored by gender and age.

Human Resources

Companies House has an active and participative Diversity Forum. It views and opinions are taken into account in developing policies and making decisions on diversity issues.

Companies House employs a Diversity Manager who advises on people related policy as appropriate.

Companies House annually monitors its staff profile and recruitments across all the diversity strands and the data is used to address any evidence of under-representation. It also audits its recruitment process for any diversity bias.

All policies, projects and programmes are required to consider the diversity strands at the design stage, and to assess any possible impact on staff or customers.

As part of its restructuring, Companies House is currently running a Flexible Early Retirement/Severance Scheme. An assessment of the equality impact is being made as part of this work.

- **Patent Office**

Innovation Support Strategy

Part of the Innovation Support Strategy will be to encourage innovation among women and other under-represented groups, including minority ethnic groups. This will include investigating why such a small proportion of applications are from women inventors (possibly as low as 2.5%), and other under-represented groups. The Patent Office will be collaborating with partners to devise and implement a campaign to help boost intellectual property awareness among these groups. Consultation with a range of stakeholders will be an important part of this work.

- **Insolvency Service (INSS)**

Areas of INSS's work that are of high relevance to the Duty:

Human Resources

INSS operates a job share register and runs non-residential management development modules.

On an annual basis, INSS monitors the demographics of women and part-time staff and how female staff perform in the following employment processes:

- Recruitment
- Promotion
- Management assessment centres
- Reward arrangements
- Uptake of central training and development provisions
- Discipline and grievance
- Leaving INSS, including dismissal.

The monitoring information is analysed and used to inform an action plan to address issues.

Internal staff survey analysis can also be broken down to identify any issues that appear to impact to a greater extent on women or part-timers, and so inform subsequent action.

Policy

INSS is currently working on 3 Equality Impact Assessments

- The introduction of Debt Relief Orders
- The introduction of Streamlined Individual Voluntary Agreements
- Consideration of the removal of Court from the debtor's petition process

All 3 are still at the screening stage.

Quantitative data

In all cases, quantitative data indicates that a higher proportion of men enter into insolvency proceedings. However, men are economically active than women (73.8% of men aged 16-74 are economically active compared to 59.5% of women in the same age range). Therefore, this is probably why more men are subject to insolvency proceedings. However, at this stage, we need further evidence to properly state that this quantitative difference is not as a result of discrimination.

- **National Weights and Measures Laboratory**

No actions and activities identified as relevant to the Duty. NWML is a small Executive Agency with 49 members of staff and does not provide services directly to the public.