

The Scottish Executive Positive About You

The Diversity Strategy

2004 and beyond

Diversity Strategy

Where we want to be

Diversity and equality have been priorities for the Scottish Executive for a number of years. *Positive About You* launched in November 2000 showed what we wanted to achieve by 2005 and set out a number of specific action points aimed at recognising, respecting and valuing diversity in our staff and partners. More recently our HR Strategy 'Changing Through People' re-emphasised our commitment to be an organisation which values the diversity of its staff and which is broadly representative of the population of Scotland.

The overarching aim is to embed the commitment to equality and diversity in the way we do our work across the Executive and ensure that each of us contributes to what we do to become an organisation that values diversity. It is important that, wherever we work, we recognise and value what everyone has to offer and treat each other with dignity and respect. Only by doing this will we have an organisation where staff feel respected and valued as individuals; that is an employer of choice and an exemplar in equal opportunities; where managers understand and are equipped to manage diversity; that welcomes new ideas and new talents; that delivers excellent public services that people expect and that helps build a socially and economically viable Scotland.

Where we are now

We have already completed much of the work set out in '*Positive About You*' and have seen the changes this has made and the benefits achieved. The recent Staff Survey indicated that staff generally feel positive about how the Scottish Executive operates as an organisation and that job satisfaction was high at 82%. Work-related aspects, the perception that the Executive values its staff, team working and interaction, and training from line managers were found to be the most significant factors driving job satisfaction. A few of the key initiatives over the past few years which have supported the diversity culture are:-

Raising Awareness

- 864 Senior Civil Service (SCS) and Band C members of staff have attended diversity awareness training workshops and we now include diversity awareness training within our corporate learning programme. Diversity training is also part of the local induction process in a number of the Executive's Agencies.

Building Networks

- A range of networks –both formal and informal – have been established, including part time, disability, carers, multicultural and lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender staff – which provide support and information for individuals and helps inform HR policy development.

Leadership

- A mandatory corporate objective is included in 2004/05 SCS performance review record around reflecting diversity issues in management and policy work.
- Diversity is now embedded in the Competency Framework and in the management and behavioural objectives of the Performance Management System. Further training on the performance management system for all staff has been underway over the summer.
- The Dignity at Work Policy which was issued in November 2003, aims to ensure that all staff work in an environment that is free from discrimination.
- Introduction of the Changing to Deliver programme which provides a new framework to support the equality and diversity agenda.

Bringing on Talent

- Introduction of a number of arrangements, such as increased flexible working hours and part time working, aimed at giving you more flexibility and wider opportunities to achieve a successful work life balance.

Bringing in Talent

- Our Outreach Initiative aims to bring on and bring in talent. In summer 2004, our third diversity placement scheme gave twenty minority ethnic students paid training places in the Executive.
- As a Jobcentre Plus Disability Symbol User, we are positive about employing, retaining and promoting people with physical, learning, mental health and sensory disabilities.

What next

The Executive has a strong, committed and diverse workforce. We have taken into account in our policies, and will continue to do so, new regulations and changes in legislation in relation to discrimination, working practices and equality. But diversity is about more than just meeting legislative requirements it is about embracing the very spirit of diversity issues in the way we work together within the Executive and with our partners. We now need to consolidate and build on the diversity work to date to ensure that it is embedded in our everyday mainstream activity, policies and processes and that our culture and attitudes are those of a diverse organisation. Our intention is to meet all reasonable diversity needs as part of our normal operational processes and policy rather than as an extra duty or add on. We believe that this will ensure that diversity becomes a natural part of the Executive's culture. We will do this through:-

Leaders and Managers

Senior managers, in their day to day activity, will continue to lead by example in placing diversity at the heart of all our processes and policies. They will ensure

that all staff have the opportunity to contribute fully to the diversity agenda. In particular we will

- act as role models by supporting staff and colleagues in understanding the diversity culture and promote diverse behaviours in work areas;
- value diverse behaviours and ensure that they are a seamless component of business plans and everyone's performance and development appraisal process;
- ensure that everyone is aware of their equal opportunity to access training and support to realise their potential;
- assist all staff to embed equality and diversity principles into everyday tasks and decisions.

HR – Changing Through People

HR, in conjunction with managers, will continue to use the recruitment and interchange programmes, including outreach initiatives, to make the best of Scotland's available talent and embed equality and diversity in our behaviour towards each other and the quality of our public service. In particular we will

- put in place policies aimed at creating a working environment where you do not feel discriminated against or harassed; where you feel respected and valued and your individual contribution is recognised;
- continue to develop flexible working arrangements to help staff meet the business needs and have time for their lives outside work;
- ensure that the diversity and equality principles and legislative requirements are embedded in all our HR policies, in keeping with our HR Strategy Change through People and the wider Changing to Deliver agenda;
- monitor recruitment, promotions and retention to eliminate unlawful discrimination and ensure that we develop the talent we have.

Everyone

The challenge to everyone is to turn the Executive's diversity aspirations into reality and we all have a role to play in doing this. Everyone should be able to identify ways in which they can demonstrate their personal commitment, whether through their management and leadership style, by consulting widely on new policies and procedures or in the way we deal with colleagues and partners. In particular you should

- ensure that you undertake appropriate training to enable you to fully understand, and put into practice, the diversity culture and realise your full potential;
- take personal responsibility for challenging inappropriate remarks and behaviours – whether these happen between ourselves or between us and our partners;

- treat everyone with dignity and respect and value differences; ensure that you treat everyone in a way that you would wish to be treated;
- ensure that you have a mindset which is open to novel ideas and which are communicated in different ways.

The Executive has made significant progress over the last 4 years. This strategy sets out our continued commitment to equality and diversity and recognises its part in the wider reform and delivery agenda. The challenge now is to embed equality and diversity in our everyday behaviour and in the quality of the service we deliver.

November 2004