

Public sector

Management paper



Directions in diversity

Current opinion and good practice

The Audit Commission is an independent body responsible for ensuring that public money is spent economically, efficiently and effectively, to achieve high-quality local and national services for the public. Our work covers local government, health and criminal justice services.

As an independent watchdog, we provide important information on the quality of public services. As a driving force for improvement in those services, we provide practical recommendations and spread best practice. As an independent auditor, we monitor spending to ensure public services are good value for money.

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Introduction

‘A truly effective diverse organisation is one in which the differences individuals bring are valued and used’

Modernising Government White Paper, March 1999 (Ref. 1)

- 1 An effective response to diversity is at the heart of modernising public services. A comprehensive diversity policy embraces key elements of best practice in employment and service delivery:
 - addressing inequality;
 - recognising and valuing difference;
 - promoting a skilled, diverse workforce;
 - meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse population; and
 - acting in accordance with legislation.
- 2 The diversity agenda presents enormous challenges, but also extraordinary opportunities – to tap into underused talent in the workforce and to focus on all users and their experiences in order to enhance and improve the quality and effectiveness of our public services.
- 3 What constitutes good practice in this complex area? What outcomes can be expected and how can initiatives be sustained? The Audit Commission aims to demonstrate and promote best practice in equalities and diversity, but there are limitations in terms of the knowledge, evidence base and models available to enable effective change. This area is still a field of experimentation and debate.

- 4 This report, *Directions in diversity*, seeks to contribute to that debate. It forms part of a body of Audit Commission work, including the recent report *Equality and diversity (Ref. 2)*, which examined local government's progress in implementing equalities standards. *Directions in diversity* is, in contrast, a 'think piece', based on a review of recent literature and interviews with a wide range of experts and key practitioners. It aims to share learning, identify barriers to diversity and drivers for change, and proposes practical suggestions for the effective implementation of the diversity agenda across the public sector.
- 5 This paper summarises the full report (available at www.audit-commission.gov.uk). It outlines the legal, socio-demographic and policy contexts and sets out the main findings from the interviews and literature. Finally, it makes some suggestions for future action and identifies key messages from the research.
- 6 Groups referred to here include those experiencing discrimination on the grounds of gender, race and ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, faith and age; the report covers employment and human resource (HR) practice and service delivery.

Background and policy context

- 7 A number of key factors, both immediate and longer term, impact on the diversity agenda in the public sector.

Legislative changes

- 8 Most immediately, recent legislation introduces major new duties, responsibilities and rights for groups who commonly experience disadvantage. The new laws include
- The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 (**Ref. 3**). The DDA introduced new measures that aim to end the discrimination faced by disabled people in employment, access to goods, facilities and services, and property rights. Implementation is phased. For example, from 1999 service providers have had to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people to enable them to receive their services. Physical features will need to be adjusted from 2004.
 - The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (**Ref. 4**). This strengthens and extends the 1976 Race Relations Act by placing on public authorities a new positive general duty to promote race equality and good race relations, as well as outlawing racial discrimination in any of an authority's functions. It covers not only employment, but the provision of goods, facilities and services.
 - European Directives (under Article 13, Treaty of Amsterdam, (**Ref. 5**)) forbid discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation, and ethnic origin. These cover employment, working conditions and access to training. The Race Directive also covers access to goods and services. Again implementation is phased, with the first compliance required in the Race Directive by mid 2003.

9 Meeting these requirements will be a huge undertaking for the public sector, since baseline achievements within many organisations are minimal. Five years after the introduction of the Commission for Racial Equality's standard of good practice for local government (**Ref. 6**), for example, only one-fifth of English councils had progressed beyond level 1 (Audit Commission 2002 (**Ref. 2**)).

The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry

- 10 The 1999 recommendations of Sir William Macpherson (**Ref. 7**) on institutional racism following the murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993 have been a powerful driver for change, prompting a proliferation of race equality action plans covering HR, training and service delivery in the public sector.
- 11 Among other examples, the Trades Union Congress established a Stephen Lawrence Task Group, aiming to produce guidelines jointly with the Confederation of British Industry (CBI); large-scale community and race relations training was rolled out across the police service; and the Home Office set up research and development into race equality, cultural diversity and criminal justice.

Socio-economic and demographic trends

- 12 The population of Britain is ageing, becoming more ethnically diverse and more mobile. Some examples that demonstrate this include:
- the numbers of minority ethnic people in the UK are rising. Minority groups are younger and they have a higher population growth rate than the white sector. In 2000/01, about one person in 14 in the UK was from a minority ethnic community (Social Trends, 2002 (**Ref. 8**));

- the picture is further complicated by recent growth in the refugee/asylum seeker population, who bring with them the likelihood of special needs in relation to experiences of violence, torture, displacement and exclusion;
 - with the increase in minority ethnic communities comes an increase in faith and religious groups. In Newham, East London, for example, there are 294 religious organisations (Copsey 2001 **(Ref. 9)**); and
 - the percentage of the population that is aged 65 or over has increased by over one-half since 1960 in the European Union. By 2014 there are likely to be more people aged 65 and over than aged under 16.
- 13** The current low rate of unemployment is perhaps the most salient point economically. The problem of recruiting and retaining staff, especially, but not only, in public services, is well-publicised, and was the subject of a recent Audit Commission report, *Recruitment and retention* **(Ref. 10)**. Difficulties in recruiting to posts in technology, finance (both of which are essential to public services) and also banking are notable private sector concerns.
- 14** But while more white people are in work, the employment rate for all minority ethnic people has remained constant over the past few years (Home Office 2001 **(Ref. 11)**). In 2000/01, unemployment among African/Caribbean and Pakistani/Bangladeshi people was three times greater than for white people (Social Trends 2002, **(Ref. 8)**). Men's incomes outstripped those of women in all age groups in 1999/2000, and the median gross income of women was just 49 per cent that of men.
- 15** So while unemployment is low, there is inequity in the system. This presents employers both with challenges – to recruit and retain staff – and opportunities – to tap into the available talent in the wider population.

Policy context

- 16** The Government's commitment to the modernisation programme is a further important agent for change. Diversity is one of six themes in the civil service reform programme set out in *Modernising Government* (**Ref. 1**). The theme's four key points underline the challenges of the diversity agenda for raising awareness; leadership; management capability; and delivering equal opportunities.
- 17** The Cabinet Office is taking the lead on promoting diversity, and the civil service is required to report annually to the Prime Minister on progress. The Home Office is leading on race equality and has set targets for improvement across the whole civil service for employment within government departments and service delivery on the part of public services (*Race Equality in Public Services*, **Ref. 11**).
- 18** Organisational change has blurred the distinction between policymakers and service providers and shifted departments into new, more customer-focused roles. The Inland Revenue, for example, now pays tax credit, administers student loans and monitors the minimum wage in addition to its traditional revenue collection role, and the Crown Prosecution Service is now accountable to victims.
- 19** The government is also considering a new 'equalities watchdog' – a single Equalities Commission to monitor discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion and disability. While there have been some significant challenges to this plan from individual equalities commissions, all have welcomed the increased momentum towards establishing a common set of rights and obligations to tackle all unfair discrimination.

Findings

20 This section summarises the evidence gathered through interviews with experts and key diversity practitioners and from a review of current literature. The full evidence base is available at **www.audit-commission.gov.uk**. Four main headings follow, which constitute key messages arising from the current debate:

The diversity agenda is not about treating everybody in the same way

Stephen Lawrence wasn't killed because he was Stephen Lawrence, but because he was a young black man.

Key interviewee

- 21** The starting point is the acknowledgement that discrimination, unfairness and inequity exist both in employment and in the delivery of services. Despite some advances this still holds true across all of the groups considered – women, black and minority ethnic groups, disabled people, lesbian and gay people and older people.
- 22** Minority groups commonly experience poorer access to employment, poorer working environments, fewer training opportunities, less likelihood of promotion and under-representation in the workforce, especially in senior management positions.
- 23** Services are not delivered equitably to minority groups, delivery may be less favourable, and the experience of receiving the service poorer. Usually, the problem is one of under-representation among recipients; however, sometimes groups are over-represented in services. For example, black men are

more likely than white men or women to be admitted to hospital under the Mental Health Act (Alexander 1999) (**Ref. 12**).

- 24** In conclusion, services and employment strategies have an imbalance to redress. And this is not about treating everybody in the same way, but about acting to address evident disadvantage and diverse needs – levelling the playing field.

There is a strong business case for action on diversity

- 25** There is currently a strong emphasis on the business case for action on diversity. This includes widening the pool of potential recruits, improving service delivery to diverse groups by increasing the diversity of staff and meeting the requirements of legislation.

There is an essential link between workforce diversity and equal service delivery. A representative workforce will understand the needs of diverse customers and provide more credibility, and improve public confidence in the service.

Key interviewee

- 26** This current salience of the business case is clearly identified in the literature reviewed for this paper. Some of the empirical research used business case outcomes as measures, and the interviewees generally also accepted the value of the business case as a lever for effecting change.

If you are looking at service delivery, and compliance with the law, then this is core business.

Key interviewee

- 27 Social justice appears to be a common personal driver, but there was also an understanding that not everyone held the values that underpin the social justice approach.

There is a need for shared definitions

If you don't know where you are going, then any road will get you there.

(Dubovskaya-Saunes and Gordon Ward (2001) p1) (Ref. 13)

- 28 The concepts of equal opportunities, equalities, diversity and managing diversity are complex. Commentators argue about their definitions and value, and this has implications for policy and practice. But if there is no clearly discernible picture of 'what diversity looks like', how do we know whether we have achieved it? If we cannot distinguish positive outcomes, how do we know whether practice is 'good'?
- 29 The question of definition is a particularly important area of divergence between the the literature reviewed for this study and the interview data – with some interviewees dismissing the debate around definitions in favour of action. This could be problematic for a number of reasons.
- 30 Firstly, a definition of diversity enables services to set out a clear vision of where they want to be. Different models suggest different approaches and outcomes, but without a clear understanding of desired outcomes, it is difficult to achieve a clearly defined strategy.
- 31 Secondly, without clear definitions, outcomes cannot be identified nor, therefore, measured. This may be one of the reasons why evidence on the effectiveness of diversity strategies is scarce, and why there is more information on poor

practice than on good practice. Most current external measures are concerned more substantially with process than with outcome.

- 32** The issue of sustainability is important here, with analysis suggesting that a failure of organisations and services adequately to define and specify their diversity vision may adversely affect the sustainability of their interventions.

Action on diversity and equality must be managed effectively

You need to have a communications strategy, you need to have a training strategy, you need to set out a clear business case for equality – meeting the diverse needs of the people we serve. You need a clear employment case – modernising, and in public services, reflecting the communities we serve. Prioritise – you can't do everything. And be realistic – about the impact, timescale, time for things to have an effect and so on.

Key interviewee

- 33** There are many examples of good practice in the field; some of these are imaginative and creative models that have delivered demonstrable change. Several approaches are widely regarded as being likely to result in positive outcomes. These can be summarised as:
- introducing best management practice generally, and active top-level support specifically, backed up by the achievement of a diverse profile at the top of organisations;
 - mainstreaming diversity into all activities;
 - introducing strategies such as staff networks or flexible working, to help recognise and value difference in staff;

- introducing strategies to recognise, respect and meet the needs of diverse service users, including improving access to services and monitoring service use;
- introducing training and professional development packages in order to improve knowledge, understanding and behaviour;
- being specific – focusing on particular needs, groups, interventions and measurement; and
- monitoring the implementation of diversity strategies and measuring their outcomes to raise awareness, evaluate change and check out areas for improvement – in both employment and service delivery;

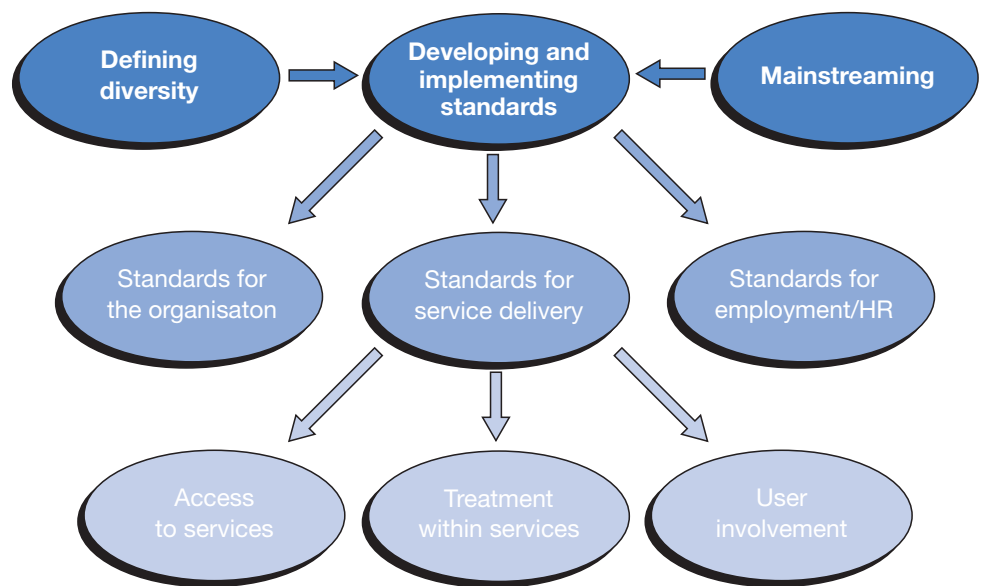
34 A related issue is the effectiveness of identifying targets and/or performance measures for change. The diversity literature explored for this study did not generally address this issue directly, but a brief search of more general literature suggests that there are three critical aspects involved in achieving organisational change, incorporating target-setting within a collaborative learning framework:

- building the ability to learn (having a positive attitude to risk taking, open communication, challenging existing practice and attitudes);
- collaborative setting of missions and strategies, involving gaining commitment to objectives and active participation in decision-making; and
- building the future together (supporting co-operative working, teamwork and personal development).

35 This analysis suggests that target-setting will only contribute to change when it takes place within such a learning framework (Lahteenmaki et al, 2001) (**Ref. 14**).

Suggestions for future action

- 36** This survey of key commentators and recent literature did not reveal a body of evidence pointing unequivocally to best practice in addressing diversity. There is no blueprint; this is a field of experimentation, and learning must take place as a result of that experimentation.
- 37** But there was a general consensus that some interventions and measures are more likely to work than others – and these approaches are the starting point for addressing issues of diversity systematically and routinely. This section explores three areas covering specific suggestions for action which have emerged from this study, referring to case studies to highlight particular points.
- 38** The three areas for action are: **[Exhibit 1, overleaf]**
- defining diversity;
 - developing and implementing standards; and
 - mainstreaming equalities and diversity

Exhibit 1**The three areas for action.**

Defining diversity

- 39** Defining diversity is not easy, but it is necessary in order to achieve a clear vision, a coherent strategy and for identifying and measuring outcomes. Some commentators gave examples of an inclusive approach to defining diversity that aimed to achieve buy-in from all parts of the organisation. One example included an awayday in which participants articulated a vision of what their organisation might look like if it embraced diversity, and then organised a strategy for how they could achieve this vision.
- 40** In some senses then, there is an argument for not following an external notion of diversity but for agreeing an internal definition. On the other hand, guidance about the ingredients of a comprehensive definition might be useful. One study offered

four definitions of diversity from basic non-discrimination through to a more complex definition that positively welcomed and valued differences in diverse groups. This was:

Our organisation promotes individual behaviours and actions that create the environment which leverages diversity in the broadest sense, including differences in culture, work style, thought, age, race, gender and sexual orientation. All employees seek out and utilise differing opinions to enable new solutions, creative ideas and added value for our customers.

Bartlett Merton 2000 p8 (Ref. 15)

- 41 This could be regarded as the ‘gold standard’ for defining diversity. In order to achieve this vision, specific standards are needed for employment/HR and delivering services, and commentators and the diversity literature were agreed that, only when diversity activities are mainstreamed into everyday practice, will the vision become a lasting reality.

Developing and implementing standards

- 42 Quality, and not just quantity, should be measured. Furthermore, standards need to address both access to services and employment and *subsequent experiences and treatment*. It is important to note, however, that measurement may only identify compliance rather than best practice.

Standards for the organisation generally

- 43 Is there a strategy incorporating diversity issues, a diversity action plan, and measurable processes and outcomes?

Examples of useful questions could be:

- Is there a clear vision of what the organisation wants to achieve in terms of diversity? Whose vision is it? Is it shared?

- Are senior managers public advocates of diversity?
- Is there consistency of message across different departments and between the internal and external image?
- Is challenge welcomed?

Standards for service delivery

- 44 Are service users representative of the local communities, have their needs been assessed, are they consulted and involved in service delivery, are staff culturally competent or competent to respond to a diverse public? Examples of useful questions could be focused around **access, treatment/service experience, user involvement and consultation**, as follows:

Access

- 45 When considering access, the key question is whether services are actively engaging with all members of the community.
- Who receives the service?
 - Is service use monitored by gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, age and other diverse groups, as appropriate?
 - How representative of local communities is the service user profile?
 - Who doesn't receive the service? Why not?
 - How are very small minority groups catered for?
 - Do services actively seek out non-users?
- 47 Case study 1 shows an example where traveller children, who might easily slip through the net of the education system, were provided with more inclusive education opportunities. This was achieved through engagement with their families and supporting the education system to meet their needs.

Case study 1

Improving education for traveller children through the use of a whole-family approach

Who? London Borough of Southwark: The STEP project

What?

Aimed to improve access, attendance and attainment of traveller children in schools through (for example)

- offering all 4 year olds early years places;
- involving and supporting the whole family in making choices, dealing with homework, school and extra-curricular activities, and so on;
- liaising with other council departments/other bodies;
- producing differentiated curriculum materials with particular relevance to traveller students;
- targeting specific schools;
- working with class teachers; and
- making a video containing only traveller students speaking.

Why?

According to OFSTED, ‘gypsy travellers are the group most at risk in the education system.’ (Raising the attainment of minority ethnic pupils, OFSTED, 1999, **(Ref. 16)**)

The results:

- the number of traveller placements doubled in four years;
- secondary enrolment rates increased to more than four times higher than national rates;
- secondary school attendance improved; and
- there was an increase in pre school placements.

Critical success factors:

- engaging families and involving them in the children's learning;
- engaging the schools;
- recognising adult learning requirements within the same community and creating opportunities for them too;
- using a wide variety of methods; and
- having only traveller students talk about their experiences in the video.

Source: personal communication and Cabinet Office good practice website: www.diversity-whatworks.gov.uk

Treatment/service experience

48 There need to be standards in place to ensure that services meet the specific – and if necessary, different – needs of minority groups and that they are not disadvantaged in their needs for receiving information, services and treatment. Examples of questions for services to ask themselves include:

- Is service information available in local community languages and in non-written formats?
- Do staff know how to obtain interpreters or specialist communication support, and can they do so easily?
- Are there policies and procedures to protect service users against harassment, abuse or bullying?
- In residential or similar settings, are food and places for prayer/worship culturally diverse?
- For one-to-one services, are same sex practitioners/key workers easily available?
- Do staff know that they are expected to reach disadvantaged groups? Are they aware of the needs and requirements of particular groups?

- Are staff culturally competent? How is this assessed? What training is provided?
- Are crèche facilities available for service users?
- Are there local examples of good practice that can be shared and/or adapted?

Case study 2

Recognising diverse skills

In one local authority that deals with significant numbers of non-English speakers, council staff are invited to demonstrate their bi-lingual competency to qualify for a special additional payment recognising their language skills.

They can then be called upon as appropriate to help service users who might otherwise suffer detriment through not having English as their first language.

Source: Interviewee

User involvement and consultation

49 Standards should also be developed to ensure that services reach out to diverse groups, are sensitive to their needs and respond to challenge. Examples of questions for services include:

- Have service users' needs, requirements and opinions of services been sought? Have the issues raised been acted on?
- Have complaints been investigated and practice changed as a result?
- Are diverse groups of service users consulted about new service developments? What mechanisms are in place to ensure that consultation is inclusive?
- Are services being challenged and changed in response to diverse needs, for example, through best value reviews?

- 50 Case Study 3 provides an example where user involvement in services research served to confront the specific issues faced by a particularly stigmatised group: people with severe mental illness.

Case study 3

Challenging stereotypes of mental illness by training and employing service users with severe mental illness

Who?

User-Focused Monitoring, Dr Diana Rose (then at The Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health)

What?

Service users with severe mental illness were trained in all aspects of service evaluation for a study of Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster mental health services. They helped to design interview schedules, were paid the 'going rate' to conduct face-to-face interviews with other service users and were involved in data analysis, writing up and presentation of findings.

Why?

Mental illness makes it difficult for service users to get jobs and they are often socially excluded. Providing employment was one aim but there was also a business case: the project anticipated that potential interviewees would be more open to discussing their experiences and views with people who had had the same experience and who knew about local services. So the project offered two distinct benefits: empowering and increasing service users' self-esteem, and valuing them (through proper training and payment) as workers on a project to which they could genuinely add value.

The results:

The service users conducted interviews with 500 other users who were often the most severely ill and least engaged with services. They produced excellent data, which, alongside quantitative data, resulted in several publications. The study achieved service improvements, particularly an increase in local users' knowledge of the service, including medication effects and who to contact in times of crisis. Staff involved users more in medication management and gave them more and better information. User involvement itself gained a higher profile locally and nationally.

Critical success factors:

- the project manager herself had a diagnosis of a severe mental health condition and used services, including inpatient care. At the same time, she was a very experienced researcher and project manager;
- the interviewers and interviewees had shared experiences. The interviewers were not 'professional' user representatives but people who knew services locally, knew what questions to ask and knew what mattered. All had been inpatients at various times;
- extensive support was provided, including post-interview telephone support by the project manager; and
- earning money for the interviews achieved results. Interviewers were paid, and interviewees were also paid for their time.

Source: Interviewee

Standards for employment/HR

- 51** Employment and HR practice needs to address whether staff at all levels are representative of the local community and whether they have fair access to training, development and

advancement? Examples of useful questions for standard-setting could be focused **around recruitment, retention and advancement of a representative workforce at all levels, operating within the law and well-being at work.**

- Is recruitment and retention monitored, with figures broken down by gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, age and other diverse groups?
- How representative of local communities is the staff profile?
- Are different ethnic groups separately identified and monitored?
- Recognising that full representation is not always possible, does the workforce at each level nevertheless reflect the diverse composition of the local area? Who gets promotion; who doesn't? Are opportunities to take on new roles and opportunities equally available to all, with positive development schemes for those who are disadvantaged? Are criteria for appraisal and advancement measurable and transparent?
- Do some elements of the promotion system make it difficult for some grades, part-timers or types of jobs to achieve advancement?
- What are the proportions of gender, minority ethnic groups, and disabled people at different grades?
- Is there a system for people to report concerns about unfair treatment? Are there mechanisms in place to obtain help outside the line management structure?
- If facilities and services are provided at work (for example rest rooms, working lunches) do these reflect (welcome) the cultural diversity and specific needs of the local workforce?

- Are there clear and well-publicised procedures for dealing with harassment and bullying? Does everyone know about them?
- Are schemes in place actively to support and welcome difference in the workplace?
- Is the workforce changing?
- Are staff consulted by and satisfied with their employers? Are there mechanisms to discover whether their diverse needs at work are being met?

52 Case study 4 provides an example of a targeted approach to recruitment, which involved working in partnership with an external organisation with a positive reputation amongst the targeted group. Interestingly, this innovative approach resulted in recruiting other commonly excluded groups as well.

Case study 4

Targeted recruitment

Who?

Multi-national financial organisation and Stonewall.

What?

The financial organisation worked in partnership with Stonewall to organise a recruitment event specifically for lesbian and gay graduates. Eye-catching publicity was sent out and a reception was held in the city.

Why?

It is good business sense to target recruitment of lesbian and gay people. The financial services industry is a highly competitive area where organisations are struggling to recruit high-quality staff. Lesbian and gay people are often well qualified in financial services. The financial organisation wants to project a gay-friendly image. Stonewall exists to promote legal equality and social justice for lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

The results:

Over 100 people attended the event and around 80 were recruited. About one-half were lesbian and gay people. The remainder were nearly all from other under-represented groups, such as black and minority ethnic groups. So an unexpected result was that a campaign to recruit one minority group was also successful in recruiting other groups.

Critical success factors:

- the high-profile presence of Stonewall lent credibility to the proceedings for the lesbian and gay community;
- the financial organisation had sponsored Stonewall events in the past, so the two organisations had already developed a working relationship;
- Stonewall suggests that, unless they are specifically mentioned, lesbian and gay people can feel that so-called inclusive policies do not include them; and
- it is unclear why the campaign succeeded in recruiting other under-represented groups. Other under-represented groups seem to feel that, if something includes lesbian and gay people, they might be welcome too.

Source: interviewee

- 53** Case Study 5 is an example where an organisation took a risk in employing only older people as a pilot on one of its sites.

Case study 5

Recruiting older people

Who?

B&Q: Commercial sector range of national DIY stores.

What?

Staffed one store completely with people aged over 50.

Why?

B&Q had to achieve challenging recruitment targets at a time of low unemployment in several areas and high staff turnover. An advertisement in Macclesfield revealed high unemployment in the over 50 age group. The company wanted to make a radical statement by employing only those over 50 in one branch and to use it as an experiment to measure results.

The results:

600 people applied for the 50 jobs in the experimental store. Over a 6-month period, profits were higher by 18%, staff turnover was 6 times lower, there was 39% less absenteeism, the skill base was increased and customers were more satisfied. A second over-50s store was opened in Exmouth. A staff survey showed high employee satisfaction, especially from those aged over 60 who had been unemployed. The positive results have encouraged B&Q to change its policy elsewhere, eg. there is now a formal commitment to age diversity and age is not a criterion for recruitment, training or any other aspect of employment.

Critical success factors:

- top level commitment, including the Diversity Manager reporting directly to the Chief Executive;
- monitoring success, learning from the experiment, and disseminating the lessons;
- testing the employment pool beforehand; and
- recognition of the business case.

Source: B&Q literature and personal communication

NB The experimental stores were initiated several years ago and B&Q now espouses the need for a balanced workforce from all age groups. They are currently commissioning research on older workers to use as comparative data to match against the original research.

Mainstreaming action on equality and diversity

- 54** Equalities and diversity dimensions can be mainstreamed by ensuring that the framework for developing standards (above) is translated into everyday business activities. For example:
- when scoping, planning, commissioning, implementing and reviewing services, new developments and research;
 - through audit in relation to legal requirements and good practice;
 - when addressing the user focus of service design, delivery and satisfaction
 - in recruitment approaches;
 - in planning, implementing and reviewing all people development and training programmes;
 - in conducting and reviewing the results of internal staff surveys; and
 - in employment benefits across the organisation.
- 55** Case Study 6 provides an example of how diversity was embedded into a training programme required because of changes in procedure. By bringing practitioners face to face with people normally excluded from the system, practice was changed to ensure they were included in the future.

Case study 6

Mainstreaming diversity in Crown Prosecution Service training

Who?

Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)

What?

To meet new requirements for supporting victims and witnesses, and improving community relationships, training events were held for CPS lawyers. Diversity issues were integral to event programmes. Three events were held nationwide, each focusing on one diversity issue: race, disability and gender (violence against women event). Only people from the relevant diverse group acted as presenters, for example, only disabled people for the disability event.

Why?

It was anticipated that it would be difficult to engage CPS lawyers with diversity training, because it would not immediately appear relevant to their day-to-day work. Guidance for dealing with witnesses, victims and families had changed following the MacPherson enquiry and lawyers needed to receive training about this. Diversity was clearly an issue here, and it was therefore appropriate to bring diversity into the training. The aim was to raise awareness of discrimination, share good practice (where available) and engage with community groups. Using only women, disabled and black presenters brought the CPS lawyers face to face with diverse groups in (for them) completely different situations and with different power relations.

The results:

The first event was not particularly well attended, but following a letter from the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP, see below), around 250 participants attended each of the subsequent

events. Events were very positively evaluated. More dramatically, CPS lawyers' practice has changed as a result. The CPS has been instructed by the DPP and through the staff newsletter to be more confident about the credibility of witnesses/victims in the prosecution of racist crime, domestic violence and rape. (Previously, the CPS would often not call a witness with a learning disability, for example, because of 'lack of credibility' – this has now changed).

Critical success factors

- the Head of Equality and Diversity was determined to implement the events, in a radical way, despite opposition (for example, opposition to using only disabled presenters from national disability campaigners!);
- top level support/ persuasion: the DPP wrote to all lawyers encouraging them to attend;
- using only women, disabled and black presenters as the experts at the seminars was a very powerful tool. The impact of their testimonies was very strong;
- advertising the events widely and in different ways;
- paying lawyers expenses to attend; and
- focusing the diversity issues around an area that the lawyers need to know about and that relate to service delivery requirements rather than their practice.

Source: Interviewee

Key messages

- 56** A number of simple key messages have emerged from this project.
- 57 The diversity agenda is not about treating everybody in the same way**, but about:
- recognising and valuing difference; and
 - recognising and accounting for inequality and disadvantage.
- 58 There is a strong business case for action on diversity:**
- to get, keep and motivate the best talent, you need the biggest pool possible;
 - to deliver services effectively to diverse groups you need a diverse workforce; and
 - to work within the law.
- 59 There is a need for shared definitions because:**
- we need a definition of diversity to enable services to set out a clear vision of where they want to be. Without this clear understanding of outcomes, there is little likelihood of a clearly defined strategy to achieve them.
- 60 Action on diversity and equality must be managed effectively.** This means:
- addressing the agenda at strategic and policy level;
 - active top level management support; ‘walking the talk’, not just lip service;
 - middle management buy-in; building diversity issues into management as well as strategic objectives;
 - mainstreaming diversity into organisational strategies, planning and performance, objectives and targets;

- a co-ordinated and varied package of procedures within employment and retention, training and other HR areas;
- training to include not just awareness, but understanding to achieve 'cultural competence';
- recognition of the needs of the different groups or people who are in receipt of goods, facilities and services and having procedures in place to meet those needs;
- monitoring the implementation and outcomes of diversity initiatives to measure and evaluate effectiveness;
- involving service users and consulting them and diverse staff groups when changing practice; and
- perhaps, above all, determined and passionate leadership.

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