

PERMANENT SECRETARY'S 2005-06 EQUALITY REPORT ON STAFFING ISSUES

Background

1. 2005-2006 was dominated by the merger of 1,700 staff from the Welsh Development Agency, Wales Tourist Board, Education and Learning Wales, ACCAC, Wales Youth Agency and DYSG with the Welsh Assembly Government. A further 1,000 Assembly Government posts were also directly affected. In terms of background, experience and location the Welsh Assembly Government workforce is now significantly more diverse.
2. Work has progressed on the Location Strategy with the Merthyr Tydfil building opening this month. Planning for the regionally based offices in Aberystwyth and Llandudno Junction is well advanced. By relocating around 700 posts across Wales the strategy will promote and strengthen equality of opportunity and give staff the opportunity to develop a full career in their chosen locality.
3. The Human Resources staff database, which is vital to our success in monitoring progress on equality issues, developed considerably in 2005-06. The phased introduction of the system allowed more accurate analysis of data on the background and experience of staff. This was helped by the completion of a comprehensive diversity monitoring exercise. By the end of the year the return rate for this was 90.6 per cent of staff, which was recognised as an excellent achievement by the Civil Service Diversity Adviser. These data have now been added to our database to provide a baseline for future benchmarking and planning.

Staff in Post 31 March 2006

Welsh Assembly Government		Per cent
Total	4,299	100.0
Of which:		
Men	1,901	44.2
Women	2,398	55.8
Minority Ethnic ¹	116	2.7
Disabled ¹	215	5.0

Senior Staff in Post

Welsh Assembly Government – SCS				per cent
	Oct 2003	April 2005	March 2006	Target for April 2008
Proportion of women in the SCS	28	36	35	45
Proportion of women at SCS Pay Band 2 & above	30	25	19	30
Proportion of BME staff in SCS ¹	2.1	1.8	1.4	4
Proportion of disabled staff in SCS ¹	1	2.7	4.1	3.2

Welsh Assembly Government – SCS Feeder Grades				per cent
	Sept 2005	March 2006	Target for April 2008	
Proportion of women in feeder grades	44	44	50	
Proportion of BME staff in feeder grades ¹	1.1	2.7	3.1	
Proportion of disabled staff in feeder grades ¹	2.6	6.1	3.2	

1. Source: 2005 Diversity Survey – excludes APS, ESTYN, Wales Office, ASPBs and employees on Career Break, Secondments Out, Loans Out

Equal Pay

- The Welsh Assembly Government pay system, introduced for staff below the Senior Civil Service in 2001, has been successful in reducing the 'pay gap' between male and female employees and it has contributed substantially to the organisation's success in recruiting and retaining staff. Following the ASPB mergers we now have a significant number of staff on different pay and conditions. Maintaining and improving equal pay for staff will be a key objective of the review of pay and grading, which was planned as part of the mergers programme.

Bringing In Staff

- In the lead up to mergers in 2006, all Welsh Assembly Government vacancies were offered internally to merging staff before they were advertised externally. An external recruitment moratorium was put in place in the Cardiff region to ensure that staff displaced as a result of the mergers and in preparation for the new Merthyr office could be found posts.
- Recruitment continued for those posts scheduled for relocation, for posts outside the Cardiff area and for specialist posts. For the Merthyr Tydfil building 26 vacancies have been filled externally with 18 filled by local recruitment from the surrounding Valleys. A number of Cardiff based staff have taken the opportunity to take posts at Merthyr Tydfil

which will reduce their travel to work time, achieving a better work life balance.

7. In 2005-06, external recruitment was held for 238 posts compared to 178 in 2004-05. The posts were advertised in key newspapers chosen for their recruitment and/or Welsh language platform, together with relevant national newspapers and Trade Journals. The bilingual and professionally designed advertisements were presented in a format recommended by Disability Wales for people with visual impairment.
8. Since early 2005 we have concentrated on developing a web-based advertising capability. A comprehensive online recruitment system will be introduced by December 2006. Since July 2005 a generic press advert alerts potential candidates from under-represented groups to a web-site address, which displays all information relating to the Welsh Assembly Government's current vacancies, and offers downloadable application forms that can be returned electronically. Hard copy information packs are also available to those who email, fax or phone. The opportunity to advertise in Job Centres is also frequently used.

Recruitment Headlines

9. An integral element of our new recruitment policy was the creation of only 3 entry points for external recruitment, at team support level, entry level junior manager and middle manager. Following the merger announcement, we implemented a recruitment moratorium in the Cardiff area which limited the opportunity for external recruitment and explains, in part, why the level of internal promotion is higher than the number of external appointments.

Staff Recruitment 2005-06¹

	Applicants	Per cent	Appointments	Per cent
Total	1,975	100.0	238	100.0
Of which:				
Men	1,127	57.1	91	38.2
Women	848	42.9	147	61.8
Minority Ethnic	41	2.1	4	1.7
Disabled	41	2.1	4	1.7

1. Information provided as part of the application process by applicants. Includes internal staff who applied in open competition, and some candidates for whom diversity data are unknown.

Bringing Staff On

Staff Promotion 2005-06 ¹

	Applicants	Per cent	Promoted	Per cent
Total	858	100.0	309	100.0
Of which:				
Men	390	45.5	128	41.4
Women	468	54.5	173	55.9
Minority Ethnic	27	3.1	10	3.2
Disabled	19	2.2	7	2.3

¹Includes some candidates for whom diversity data are unknown

Training and Development Headlines

10. Statistics for 2005-06 on the members of staff attending equality/diversity training include:
- 17 Merger Reception events were held throughout Wales, attended by 949 ASPB staff
 - 59 Developing Confident Manager courses –529 attendees.
 - Reception Stage 3 (Equality and Diversity Awareness) – 281 attendees
 - Equality Awareness has been delivered to staff as hotshot sessions. The Equality and Diversity Team have delivered 10 sessions on the new Age Legislation and Disability Duty to up to 20 staff in each session. Each session covers both areas in 2 hours.

Benchmarking

11. The Welsh Assembly Government has participated successfully in a number of benchmarking exercises with other organisations in Wales and Whitehall Departments:
- Race for Opportunity (RfO)– The Welsh Assembly Government improved on the previous year's Bronze Award and attained a Silver Award for 2005-06. This indicates a marked improvement in our performance. We were also recognised as one of the top 10 most improved organisations. RfO is an employer led forum sharing best practice on race issues.
 - Employers Forum on Disability Standard – the Welsh Assembly Government achieved an overall score of 66 per cent putting us 9 percentage points higher than the average and 7 percentage points higher than the public sector average.
 - Opportunity Now Benchmarking – The Welsh Assembly Government maintained its Gold standard, first achieved in 2004. Our overall benchmark score was 81 per cent.

- Age Champions – The Welsh Assembly Government was awarded Age Positive Employer Champion status in January 2006.

Assembly Government Estate

12. In managing the Welsh Assembly Government's estate our continuing aim through 2005-06 has been to provide, as far as practicable, buildings which provide equal access and functionality for all people, disabled and able-bodied. Mergers saw the number of buildings in the estate growing from 61 property holdings at 31 March 2006 to 85 from 1 April 2006. Disability access audits are regularly undertaken at all sites and a programme of improvement work was undertaken during the year. All new property acquisitions, fit-out works or alterations to existing buildings are sourced/designed to ensure compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act regulations.

Positive Action/Placement Schemes

13. The Welsh Assembly Government participated in the Cabinet Office Summer Placement Scheme and the Summer Development Scheme for minority ethnic and disabled students and was the most active participant outside London with 10 students. Feedback from students and line managers was very encouraging and the scheme has been expanded for 2006-07. The Assembly Government also maintains its commitment to the Windsor Fellowship and Chevening Schemes and placed 3 Windsor Fellows and 2 Chevening Scholars during the year.

Perceptions of the Welsh Assembly Government as an Employer

14. Research on perceptions of minority ethnic groups, disability groups and socially excluded groups towards the Welsh Assembly Government as an employer/potential employer was commissioned and reported during the year. The report concluded that many in these groups perceived the Welsh Assembly Government as not providing career opportunities for them. Internal and external recruitment processes were seen as long and cumbersome, and a barrier to under-represented groups applying for posts. It recommended that the Welsh Assembly Government:
 - Make more effective use of e-recruitment to speed up the recruitment process and reach some under represented groups
 - Develop new and more innovative approaches to promoting the diversity of the current Welsh Assembly Government workforce and the accessibility of careers to those from under-represented groups
 - Develop placement schemes within the workplace to allow more people from under-represented groups to experience working within Welsh Assembly Government teams.
 - Target outreach better, towards under represented groups and improve links with key representative organisations.

- Improve the take up of diversity training for Welsh Assembly Government staff and make more effective use of staff networks for those within under-represented groups.
15. The recommendations were used immediately to inform the development of the full online recruitment system and a diversity micro site, which will go live by the end of this year. The findings have also been used to build on existing recruitment outreach activities, and in particular to develop a programme of outreach designed to meet the needs of under-represented groups. This includes involvement in recruitment fairs in the Cardiff, Newport and Merthyr Tydfil regions and more targeted marketing campaigns. Stronger contacts with local representative organisations and Job Centres in the Cardiff region have been established to help us engage more effectively with local minority ethnic communities. An e-learning equality package which staff will be able to access from the desktop is under development to increase the number of staff who have participated in equality training.
16. Outreach teams have also been set up to support closer local engagement in the Aberystwyth and Llandudno areas. The issues of under-representation are different in these locations and action plans are being drawn up tailored to the local populations.

Diversity Delivery Plan

17. We have developed a Diversity Delivery Plan in response to a key Cabinet Office requirement that all Government Departments should set equality targets for senior staff for achievement by 2008. The plan was drafted in accordance with the Cabinet Office guidance for 'Delivering a Diverse Civil Service: A 10-Point Plan'. The plan has now been agreed. A detailed report on progress will be made next year.

Priorities for 2006-07

- Adding data from the merged organisations to the HR Information System
- Launching e-recruitment
- Launching the diversity microsite
- Refocusing our outreach strategy in relation to the effects of the Location Strategy and better targeting of minority ethnic communities in South Wales.
- Expanding use of placements
- Publishing the Diversity Delivery Plan
- Developing Modern Apprenticeships

JON SHORTRIDGE

October 2006