

The Scheme to Promote Disability Equality in The Treasury Solicitor's Department



Contents

	Page
Foreword by the Chair of the Diversity Group	5
Section One: Purpose of the Scheme	6
Section Two: Consultation and involvement of disabled people in its preparation	8
Section Three: Mechanisms for assessing the impact of practices and policies on disabled persons	9
Section Four: Compliance with the General Duty	10
Section Five: Monitoring arrangements	15
Section Six: Complaints	17
Annex A: Divisional Disability Impacts Assessments	18

Foreword by the Chair of the Diversity Group

On behalf of the TSol Diversity Group I am very pleased to endorse the publication of this our first Disability Equality Scheme, a copy of which is attached.



Philip Kent

What is it?

The Disability Equality Scheme has been established under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. The Act places duties upon designated organisations, including all government departments, to embed disability equality in their policy formulation and service delivery, as well as in the way they employ people.

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) has legal powers of enforcement and monitors the promotion of disability equality across the public sector.

Our scheme has been produced by the TSol Disability Equality Working Group and supported by senior representatives from all parts of TSol, who undertook wide ranging assessments of their divisions in accordance with the requirements of the Act. The Scheme will be subject to regular monitoring and review, which will be overseen by the Diversity Group.

The Scheme has been drawn up to promote disability equality in all our policies, functions and practices. This has been achieved by making arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of all proposed policies on the promotion of disability equality; monitoring policies for any adverse impact; publishing the results of these activities; and training staff. The Scheme has been through a consultation process, involving DRC, the Law Society, the Bar Council, disability support charities and the Trade Union side.

How does it affect me?

The Scheme forms part of the way each of us contributes to the conduct of TSol business. As it covers all aspects of TSol's dealings, internal and external, there is no aspect of our work to which it does not apply. As with our commitment to diversity generally, the scheme works best if everyone in TSol becomes familiar with it, and contributes to ways of improving it in the future and promoting equality and diversity generally.

Anyone wishing to comment or make suggestions on the Scheme should contact Tony Helliar, Secretary of the Diversity Group on 020 7210 3549 (tony.helliar@tsol.gsi.gov.uk). Copies of the detailed divisional assessments referred to above are also available.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Philip Kent'.

PHILIP KENT
Chairman, Diversity Group

November 2006

Section One: Introduction

The Treasury Solicitor's Department

The Treasury Solicitor's Department (TSol) provides legal services for many Government Departments. These comprise in-house advisory and litigation services. The Treasury Solicitor, as a statutory office-holder, has certain specific functions. He holds the office of the Queen's Proctor, and is responsible for collecting Bona Vacantia (ownerless property) on behalf of the Crown. He is also Head of the Government Legal Service, comprising over 1900 Government Lawyers.

The Department is organised into a number of Operating Divisions, as follows:–

- Litigation and Employment Group
- Bona Vacantia Division
- A number of Divisions which provide an advisory service to the following Departments:–
 - Cabinet Office
 - Department for Education and Skills
 - Department of Culture, Media and Sport
 - HM Treasury
- European Division
- Directorate of Corporate Strategy
- Attorney General's Office
- Government Legal Service Secretariat

The Purpose of a Disability Equality Scheme

Public bodies are obliged to publish Disability Schemes to show how they are fulfilling their obligations under section 49A(1) of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Disability Discrimination (Public Authorities) (Statutory Duties) Regulations 2005.

The General Duty

Section 49A(1) of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 provides that certain public authorities must, in carrying out their functions, have due regard to the need:–

- to eliminate discrimination of disabled persons;
- to eliminate harassment of disabled persons;
- to promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and others;
- to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating them more favourably than other persons;
- to promote positive attitudes; and
- to encourage participation by disabled persons in public life.
(This duty is referred to as "**the General Duty**", and the Treasury Solicitor's Department is a public authority for the purposes of the duty.)

Contents of the Scheme

The Scheme must include a statement of:–

- (a) the ways in which disabled people have been involved in its development;
- (b) methods for assessing the impact of its policies and practices, or the likely impact of its proposed policies and practices, on equality for disabled persons;
- (c) the steps which the authority proposes to take towards the fulfillment of the General Duty; and
- (d) arrangements for gathering information in order to monitor the effect of policies and practices on disabled persons and making use of such information to ensure effective fulfillment of the General Duty.

Section Two: Consultation and Involvement of Disabled People

The Diversity Group, which had oversight of the preparation of the Scheme, is the group within TSol charged with advancing and protecting the interests of disabled people. This group comprises Diversity Officers and representatives from relevant Trade Unions, all business areas of TSol and all grades of staff. The Diversity Group commissioned a group entitled the Disability Equality Sub-Group to take forward publication of the Scheme, reviewing the progress of the sub-group at monthly meetings. The sub-group comprised experienced and committed members of the Diversity Group, some of whom have disabilities. The composition of the sub-group ensured that disabled persons were involved in every decision relating to the drafting of the Scheme.

Steps were taken to involve disabled employees throughout the preparation of the Scheme. A message was posted on the TSol website inviting comments from all employees, and disabled employees in particular, on what they thought the Department was doing to promote equality of opportunity for, and elimination of discrimination towards, disabled employees. A designated email address was set up. Members of the sub-group volunteered to discuss issues and take them forward on an anonymised basis.

The sub-group drafted guidance on the conduct of Disability Impact Assessments. They then invited each Division to nominate a representative to conduct an assessment in respect of their Division which took into account the impact of policies and practices upon individual employees known to have disabilities. The representatives consulted individuals – including individuals who had identified themselves as disabled – in the context of these assessments.

A draft Scheme was drawn up, and consulted upon. Consultees included staff, with particular emphasis on disabled staff, clients, and users of TSol's facilities, the Diversity Group, relevant Trade Unions, clients, Government Departments, the Disability Rights Commission, the Law Society, and the Bar Council. Staff who have consented to being identified as disabled were asked particularly for comments, and given the opportunity to express their views in person or by any other means of choice, and were invited to request the Scheme in non-standard format to meet any particular individual requirements. A full list of consultees is at Annex B.

The Scheme takes full account of the comments received. Disabled staff, users of TSol's facilities and disability groups will be involved in any changes made to the Scheme.

Section Three: Mechanisms for assessing the impact of practices and policies on disabled persons

Each of the Divisions in TSol nominated a representative who would assess the impact of existing policies and practice on disabled employees and disabled persons having contact with the Department.

The Disability Equality sub-group convened a meeting with these representatives to discuss how this should be taken forward. Guidance was drafted on the conduct of Disability Equality Impact assessments. The guidance was circulated to, and commented upon, by the Diversity Group and others.

Assessments were produced, which are appended to the Scheme at Annex A. These produced a clear picture of where the General Duty is most relevant; the extent to which it is being complied with, and what more needs to be done. The duty is mainly relevant to recruitment employment conditions, communication methods, and access to premises and facilities.

Section Four: Compliance with the general duty

TSol's commitment to disability equality

TSol regards commitment to the promotion of disability equality as part of the Department's unconditional commitment to diversity. This commitment is published in the Corporate Plan and in all job advertisements. TSol's statement on diversity is as follows:-

'TSol supports and promotes the Government's Agenda for a dramatic improvement in diversity'.

Internally, it is essential that TSol provides a workplace environment and culture in which everyone is valued as an individual. An inclusive work environment is one, which nurtures the development of all staff. It is one in which everyone is encouraged and supported to meet their full potential.

Externally, TSol 's continued success is dependent upon our ability to anticipate, understand, adapt, and respond to the changing values, needs and expectations of our clients and of society. Having a culturally diverse workforce improves our ability to conduct our business.

In order to achieve success we all need to engage in this process.'

Impact Assessments

Promotion of disability equality will be considered in the operation of existing policies and practices and in the development of new policies and practices. In respect of new policies and practices project managers and/or policy makers will be required to sign a statement confirming;

- EITHER (A) 'A summary assessment has established that no Equality Impact Assessment is required because (state reason)';
- OR (B) 'An Equality Impact Assessment (attached) has been conducted in respect of ----- policy and concludes that there is no adverse effect'.
- OR (C) 'An Equality Impact Assessment (attached) has been conducted in respect of ----- policy. Potential adverse effect has been identified and action is being taken to limit that adverse effect on the promotion of equality or to ensure that it is proportionate and justifiable and that no unlawful discrimination is taking place'.
- With (A) and (B): A copy of the full Equality Impact Assessment, with evidence, must be lodged with the Secretary of the Diversity Group.

Compliance with the General Duty

It is not felt that the giving of professional advice on legal issues or the provision of litigation services to a client Department or body are matters to which the General Duty can apply. Advisory Divisions, however, have a role in assisting the client Department or body in carrying out its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act, including the General Duty.

The General Duty is relevant in TSol in the Department's methods of recruitment; treatment of staff; methods of communication with staff, the public, clients and external agencies; access to premises; work environment and purchasing of business services.

The Divisional assessments indicate that the Department is taking the steps below:–

Recruitment and employment

The text and placement of advertisements for Government Legal Services (GLS) and TSol posts are designed to ensure that disabled applicants are encouraged, and are able to, apply.

TSol has acquired the 'Two Ticks' symbol awarded by Jobcentre Plus indicating that the five requirements are met. The requirements are:–

- To interview all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and consider them on their abilities;
- To ensure there is a place to discuss, at any time, but at least once a year, with disabled employees what you and they can do to make sure they can develop and use their abilities;
- To make every effort when employees become disabled to make sure they stay in employment;
- To take action to ensure that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to make your commitments work;
- Each year, to review the five commitments and what has been achieved, to plan ways to improve on them and let employees and the Employment Service know about progress and future plans.

A guaranteed interview Scheme operates for disabled persons who apply for GLS and other posts in TSol.

All persons involved in sifting and interviewing candidates receive training on equality and diversity, and observe guidance for interviewers on diversity.

Advice is available on the Intranet to disabled staff.

All staff receive equal opportunities and diversity awareness training.

The Diversity Group and relevant Trade Unions contribute to policy development by considering the effect of policies on disabled employees.

Reasonable adjustments are made to ensure disabled staff are able to access training.

The availability of a central bursary scheme for disabled staff is publicised.

The handbook governing employment is DDA compliant.

Premises

All staff receive a work place assessment on appointment.

New staff who are known to be disabled are asked to advise Human Resources (HR) Division of any assistance, equipment or particular facilities they may need. An assessment is conducted and appropriate provision made. This may be in terms of adaptations, specialist equipment, home working, tailored duties or specific hours. Specialist assessments are arranged where appropriate.

Parking is provided for disabled employees.

Specialist arrangements are put in place for disabled employees in the event of fire.

Specialist arrangements are put in place for disabled staff wishing to use the café.

Access to premises and work environment is compliant with the requirements of disability discrimination legislation.

Facilities

Specialist IT equipment and software is provided where needed.

A web page is maintained on the TSol intranet relating to disability matters with links to the TSol disability officer, Disability Rights Commission, and other relevant organisations. It also contains extracts from relevant legislation and a link to useful contacts via the Directgov website.

The TSol public website complies with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (version1.0) Priority 1 checkpoints.

Further steps to be taken

TSol publications will be offered on request in alternative formats (Braille, audio, and large print). The availability of alternative formats will be made clear on TSol's external public website along with instructions for visitors to the website on how to use Adobe Acrobat Reader accessibility features. The availability of alternative formats will also be made clear on the standard version of our publications as new editions are published. The Business Services Unit (BSU) has already created a large print copy of the 06–07 Business Plan and have investigated the possibility of being able to utilise internal TSol resources to produce alternative publication formats. It has been agreed that the Information Services Helpdesk Manager will be the first port of call for any such requirements and can co-ordinate production of materials in various formats;

TSol's diversity statement or a paragraph explaining how TSol is compiling with disability/diversity policies will have a more visible presence in key business documents (Business Plan, Corporate Plan, Annual Report and Accounts and the Spring Departmental Report to Parliament). BSU's Internal Communications and Publishing Manager will liaise with the Diversity Sub-Group for suitable text to incorporate into our key business documents;

The requirement for carrying out Disability Impact Assessments will be embedded/cascaded into all TSol projects/policies that come before TSol's Programme and Senior Management Boards.

The Head of BSU will attend a meeting of the Disability Equality Sub-Group to advise how Impact Assessments might be mainstreamed into TSol's project and policies creation process;

The intranet technical team will investigate/carry out the following:–

- (i) run a commercial Windows-based tool to analyse the TSol public web pages for its accessibility to people with disabilities;
- (ii) review the TSol intranet to see if the sitemap can be extended to include the overview, navigation, contacts database, new starter information, litigation library, DQT and training directory (The sitemap currently includes all content pages);
- (iii) add Alt Tags to all non-content images;
- (iv) provide information so that content managers can be trained to add Alt Tags when adding images to their pages;
- (v) investigate whether speech enabled website software such as 'Jaws', 'Browsealoud' or an equivalent can be added to both the TSol public website and the TSol intranet site.

The guidance and training for interviewers and the Induction process, together with the Staff Handbook will be kept under review, including materials relating to disability and reasonable adjustments.

The Bona Vacantia Division, which has regular contact with members of the public, intends to offer clearly and prominently that it will provide all of its written documentation in other formats, such as Braille, large print and audio tape. It also intends to investigate the possibility of using an intermediary service to enable communication by telephone with hearing impaired callers.

A programme to redesign the Bona Vacantia Division's website is under way with a launch date of the end of March 2007. The Website Project Board is aware of and will be guided by the Cabinet Office Guidelines for Government Websites (May 2002), Disability Discrimination Act 1995 Code of Practice (Rights of Access to Goods, Facilities, Services and Premises) s 5.23 & 5.26, Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0 (W3C Recommendations 5-May-1999) and the PAS 78:2006 Guidance To Website Commissioners on Commissioning Accessible Websites, as commissioned by the Disability Rights Commission. It is intended that the new website should achieve at least W3C Priority 2.

Consideration is being given to including in letters of instruction a statement of TSol's commitment to disability equality and its expectations that those acting on its behalf comply with the Disability Discrimination Acts of 1995 and 2005 and promote disability equality themselves.

Section Five: Monitoring arrangements

This Disability Equality Scheme is published on TSol's website. Twice yearly statistics will be circulated, including indication of progress against targets, together with other relevant information. The Diversity Group will be made known as the forum for receiving comments on the Scheme and is the forum for reviewing and making recommendations on further actions needed. Office News will be issued to announce both the publication of the Scheme and further developments

GLS, HR Division and the Diversity Group will continue to monitor the placement and wording of recruitment advertisements to ensure that applicants from disabled persons are being encouraged.

HR Division and the Diversity Group will continue to monitor compliance with the requirements of the 'Two Ticks' accreditation scheme through annual recruitment audits and the Diversity Group Work Programme.

Fitness for purpose of specialist equipment and facilities provided to disabled employees will continue to be reviewed, and the need to adapt/provide new equipment considered through work place assessments as necessary.

Equality and diversity awareness training, and feedback from the training, is reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure all staff understand the nature of TSol's obligations in relation to disability equality.

Staff appraisal markings will continue to be analysed annually to ensure that disabled employees are not being discriminated against. Random samples of reports will continue to be checked with particular reference to disability discrimination.

All new policies and changes in established practice will be assessed for disability equality impact.

The Diversity Group and Trade Union representatives will continue to provide input to policy development on potential effects upon disabled employees.

Any complaints about disability discrimination on the part of third parties employed to assist in carrying out functions will be monitored and taken into account in allocating work in the future.

All policies and practices operated by the Department, which have been identified in this assessment as having an impact on disabled people, will be considered on an on-going basis by TSol's Diversity Group. Membership of the Diversity Group includes the Diversity Officers, including a Disabilities Officer, who may be consulted by staff over disability equality issues.

All divisions will review their assessments annually, in the light of any changes in their responsibilities, policies or practices.

The Diversity Group will review these policies and practices at regular intervals in the light of reassessments, and will do so at other times if it wishes, for example if it wishes to do so in consequence of any complaint against the Department.

Disability monitoring is part of the twice yearly diversity monitoring carried out to ensure there is no imbalance apparent in any area of employment and the results of the monitoring are considered by the Diversity Group who will make any necessary recommendations on further action needed. These statistics are published twice yearly on the TSol intranet, and are additionally monitored against targets set by the Cabinet Office under the Civil Service '10 Point Plan for Diversity'.

Numbers involved in internal processes are likely to be too small to use statistical testing, and so an analysis of data over a period of time and against other Government Departments, including those using GLS recruitment, is likely to be more useful. The Diversity Group will consider any other disability equality implications of statistics produced.

The Government Legal Service Secretariat will continue to monitor the services, which it provides to the GLS. This is in addition to its commitments under the General Duty.

Section Seven: Complaints

Any complaints that TSol has failed to meet its duties under the Act can be made by means of the complaints procedure detailed on TSol's website. General complaints relating to the Disability Equality Scheme can be addressed to the dedicated e-mail address disabilityequality@tsol.gsi.gov.uk and will be investigated by a nominated member of the Diversity Group. The Group will then make a recommendation as to whether to accept the findings of the investigation but leave the final decision to the Senior Leadership Team. The Treasury Solicitor will reply to the complainant.

Complaints from TSol staff concerning disability equality issues, either from individuals in their own right or through the Diversity Officers, Trade Union representatives, or the grievance procedure, will be considered by management, with support available to the individual from the Disability Officer and other Diversity Officers and Trade Union representatives, in the normal way, as detailed in the Staff Handbook.

Annex A: Disability Impact Assessments

HR Division

Activities: The role of HR is to provide an efficient personnel service to all members of TSol, assist the Senior Leadership Team in meeting TSol's learning and development plan, and ensure that TSol's policies and procedures reflect a modern and diverse civil service. Chief among its activities are recruitment, appraisal, promotion and selection, pay and grievance procedures, and the organisation of in-house learning and development events.

'Two-Ticks' Accreditation – TSol is a holder of the 'Two Ticks' symbol, awarded by Jobcentre Plus, in recognition of our status as a good employer of disabled staff, in terms of meeting the five requirements in the recruitment and employment of disabled people. HR Division has a primary role in ensuring that TSol acts in accordance with the 'Two Tick' requirements.

Assessment: Much of the early stages of recruitment are carried out by Personnel and the Government Legal Service, who ensure that advertising for jobs in TSol is placed with the media which will best attract applicants from diverse sections of the community. Agents, who administer some of the early stages of the recruitment process for TSol, operate within the rules of Civil Service Commissioners for Civil Service recruitment, which ensure attention to disability equality in all processes. Additionally they provide details of the disability of all applicants, including indication of those who are applying under the Guaranteed Interview Scheme for disabled candidates. TSol interviews candidates applying under this scheme who meet the basic criteria for the job(s) advertised, in support of its commitments under the 'Two Ticks' accreditation. All those in TSol who are involved in sifting and interviewing candidates receive relevant training, which includes equal opportunities/diversity, and additionally are required to observe TSol 'Guidance for Interview Board Members', which includes guidance on diversity. This is currently being reviewed to ensure promotion of disability equality.

Support to Disabled staff

In addition to 'Two Ticks' accreditation HR Division leads in the provision of support to disabled staff, both during the recruitment process and at any time during their employment in the Department. Recruitment literature asks candidates to notify any reasonable adjustments needed for any stage of the recruitment process, including interviews, and HR ensures that these are put in place. Once employed by the Department information is available on the Intranet and from the Disability Officer, on other sources of support. This includes reference to Jobcentre Plus, who are able to provide professional disability assessments for individuals, making recommendations to employers, and providing financial assistance to make the recommended adjustments affordable. TSol will also make use of its medical adviser for support as appropriate.

Ahead of external work place assessments all staff receive an initial work place assessment as detailed under the Facilities Management entry.

All TSol staff receive equal opportunities and diversity awareness training, and this also features in TSol's Induction course, and in training on the staff appraisal system and in management courses. The HR team has received diversity awareness training and participates in developing and facilitating diversity training, in liaison with the Diversity Group.

Staff Appraisal markings are analysed annually, both in HR and by the Diversity Group, to ensure there is no inappropriate bias against any group. This analysis is published on TSol's intranet. Additionally, a random sample of reports is checked in detail.

HR formulate the terms and conditions of TSol's staff in consultation with the Trade Union side, and the Diversity Group, following the receipt of legal advice on proposed policy. Such policy is also subject to diversity impact assessments, including for disability.

The allocation of places for in-house training events is done by an on-line booking system on the TSol Intranet and the disability of those applying is not known. However the on-line training introduction states that TSol promotes the full participation of disabled staff in all training and development activities and invites requests for reasonable adjustments, in order to enable this to happen. HR works with Facilities Management to ensure that such adjustments are put in place for in-house training events. These procedures therefore promote disability equality. The disability of applicants for training courses will be monitored by HR who will have the ethnicity records of the ethnicity of staff.

TSol has publicized annually the Cabinet Office sponsored Bursary Scheme for Civil Servants with Disabilities, inviting applications, and has made a financial contribution in recent financial years towards the cost of the bursary.

Facilities Management

We aim to provide a healthy, safe and secure working environment for staff at One Kemble Street (OKS), to deliver efficient and cost effective facilities management within OKS and to handle on a best value for money basis the procurement.

CAA and Facilities meet regularly to discuss and update all Building Related Services according to BS.

Facilities Management currently promotes Disability Equality by addressing the following:

- **Risk Assessment** – Importance of health, safety and environment Issues
- **Health & Safety** – Communicate and participate in Health & Safety Committees, liaise with CAA
- **First Aid** – Staff nominated for each floor, names of list provided on notice boards an Intranet

- **Fire Alarm** – tested regularly and nominated Fire Wardens for each floor.
- **Workstation Assessments** – carried out at staff requests by DSE certified staff
- **Disability Assessment** – liaise with HR and making reasonable adjustments, complying with DDA regulations.
- **Disability Parking** – Providing parking space ensuring a pre-arranged booking systems.
- **Lifts** – Monitor performance by liaising with CAA for specific requirements. Providing a Special Key Lock to control lifts for DDA usage only.
- **Incident Control** – Emergency Procedures and Incident Control Officer's responsible for dealing with incidents (fire alarm, activations, bomb threats, intruders)
- **Business Continuity Plan** – Distributed to the Control Strategic Team via the Agency's Incident Control Officer
- **Agency's Accident Book** – Accidents and dangerous occurrences to be registered in the Agency's Accident book kept in Reception.
- **FM Newsletter** – Published on monthly basis, providing update news and information on services.
- **FM Helpdesk** – Provide day-to-day services, i.e. Toners, Repairs, Stationery, Porter Maintenance.
- **FM and Baxter Storey** – liaise to ensure CAFÉ 15 are responsible for ensuring that support and facilities are available for disabled people to use according to DDA regulations.
- **Account Managers** – FM staff nominated to deal with allocated floors on H&S, Paper Waste Management including Classified Paper waste, Recycling awareness.

Finance Division

Activities: Finance Division is responsible for managing TSol's financial operations; management and financial accounting; Business Support and for financial policy and advice. Activities include budgeting; producing management information to enable monitoring of progress against key performance targets; payment and billing processes, including payment of T&S claims; debt recovery; preparation of and publication of Resource, Agency and Crown's Nominee Accounts. The Division is also responsible for the administration and maintenance of the integrated accounting package and banking systems used by the Department, including a help desk and support service for users. The Bona Vacantia (BV) Finance Section provides financial services to the Bona Vacantia Division in accordance with the BV service level agreement.

In carrying out its functions Finance pays due regard to the six limbs of the General Duty. All processes are carried out against defined criteria and there is no discrimination on grounds of disability.

All members of staff in the Division have equality of opportunity and there is no evidence of discrimination or harassment.

Information Services Division

- **A summary of TSol policies operated by the Division** – and a statement of how the Division promotes disability equality for employees in the operation of those policies
- **A summary of the work carried out by the Division** – a list of the persons/bodies they deal with, and a statement of how the Division promotes disability equality in its relations with those persons/bodies, and for employees in the way the work is managed.
- **An impact assessment** – which will involve them considering the policies and activities they have listed in accordance with the attached guidance. They will need to conduct a screening exercise to identify which policies/practices warrant a full assessment because they are likely to impact on disabled people. They will then need to conduct a full impact assessment on those policies/practices.

Records Management

- Description of Services: Setting Departmental Policies;
- For Records Management, Freedom of Information and Data Protection (set out in the Records Management Manual).
- Promoting Policies and Training
Through presentations and training sessions.
- Consultancy

Ensure that TSol's Records Management systems meet TSol's needs and work for you. Meet the requirements of legislation surrounding information (including the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Data Protection Act 1998 and Public Record Act 1958).

File Registration

Storage and Retrieval

IS Operations

Description of Services

IS maintains a continual development programme of upgrading hardware and software.

All Information Systems at OKS are delivered via the Agency's local area network (LAN).

- User & PC Support
- Network Administration
- Service Development
- Project Management
- Consultancy
- Advice to TSol staff and management on any aspect of IT and its business applications.
- Security

Developing IT security policies, ensuring our systems are secure, providing advice and help on IT security

Library Information Centre

The Library has a wide range of textbooks, including books on management, administrative and computer skills. We also house most of the major law reports and journals, current bills, statutes and secondary legislation.

There is a selection of CD-ROM databases, which are not available on the network plus access to the Internet and LION subscription services.

The Library Basement contains a complete set of House of Commons and House of Lords Hansard, and a collection of Public Inquiries; for access please ask a member of staff.

Loans

Enquiries and Journal Circulation

Using Electronic Resources Effectively

Catalogues and CD-ROMs

We have study areas accessible to all staff

We take the broadsheet newspapers every day

We can arrange library tours and literature searches on request (see the attached form for details)

We have two internet access points in the Library

Each section in IS deals with all levels of the organisation and receives visits from external bodies both inside and outside of government

- All web pages designed and maintained by IS staff conform to BOBBY and W3C standards
- Library shelving is designed according to DDA requirements allowing at least 1m of space between all shelving
- IT equipment has been provided for those with special needs in order for them to carry out their job requirements
- Access to work area had been designed so that those with disabilities can use the work areas and spaces

Business Strategy Unit (BSU)

Activities: The Business Strategy Unit (BSU) is a key resource for TSol's modernisation programme. BSU has responsibility for developing and co-coordinating TSol's activities in business planning, performance measurement, risk management, client care and communication strategy. It provides a secretariat function for the Executive Board, Senior Leadership Team, three Programme Boards (Business Systems Group, Client Care Group & Human Resources Group) and the Audit Committee. It also controls the content for the TSol Intranet (a key internal communications channel) and the external TSol public web site.

Assessment: BSU is primarily an internal TSol support unit, however some of its activities do fall within the scope of the General Duty. This is by providing publications to the public either via TSol's public website or by ad hoc direct requests from the public. BSU are also responsible for co-coordinating and publishing TSol's key business documents, enabling effective business planning and reporting to Parliament.

BSU currently contributes to TSol's equality initiatives by:

- Reporting on aspects of Diversity and Disability issues in documents such as TSol's Annual Report and Accounts, and the Spring Departmental Report to Parliament;
- Confirming TSol's commitment to encouraging diversity in the Corporate Plan;
- Dedicating a page on the TSol Intranet to disability matters which has links to the TSol Disability Officer, Disability Rights Commission, external links to disability organisations as well as relevant legislation and useful contacts via the Directgov site;
- Providing a sitemap on the TSol Intranet to aid navigation of the site;
- Confirming TSol's commitment to equal opportunity policies by providing access on the TSol public website to TSol's Diversity Statement, 2005 Race Equality Scheme (2nd Edition) and disability/diversity employment statistics as at 1st October 2005;
- Indicating on TSol's public website TSol's commitment to a recruitment policy of equal opportunity and diversity, as well as displaying on the recruitment pages the 'positive about disabled people' two tick logo, which recognises TSol's commitment to good practice in employing people with disabilities;
- Ensuring that the TSol public website complies with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (version 1.0) Priority 1 checkpoints (defined as Level A);
- Ensuring that TSol's Disability Officer was consulted during the development of the new Corporate Identity, launched in May 2005.

Considerations: In making recommendations for BSU we have taken into account the following issues:

- We have considered the opportunity for BSU to perform a monitoring role to ensure that all new policies devised which go before the above Boards (for which BSU perform a secretariat function) have had a Disability/Diversity Impact Assessment carried out. After consultation with key members of BSU who provide secretariat functions it was concluded that the stage at which BSU receives Board papers is too late to perform an effective monitoring role. Best practice states that BSU should receive relevant Board papers 1 week before the date of the Board meeting, however in reality BSU often get the papers the day before or on the actual day of the meeting. By this time many decisions have already been made at project level. Therefore the most effective and appropriate time for a Disability/Diversity Impact Assessment to be carried out is when scoping the policy or at the design stage of a project;
- We have considered the Cabinet Office Guidelines for Government Websites (May 2002), Disability Discrimination Act 1995 Code of Practice (Rights of Access to Goods, Facilities, Services and Premises) s 5.23 & 5.26 and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0 (W3C Recommendation 5-May-1999) when deciding which alternative formats our publications should be provided in;
- All BSU team members have been consulted and have had an opportunity to contribute to BSU's assessment.

Recommendations: We have identified the following areas where BSU can improve compliance with the Disability Equality Scheme and diversity in general:

1. Our publications should be offered on request in alternative formats (Braille, audio, and large print). The availability of alternative formats will be made clear on TSol's external public website along with instructions for visitors to the website on how to use Adobe Acrobat Reader accessibility features. The availability of alternative formats will also be made clear on the standard version of our publications as new editions are published. BSU have already created a large print copy of the 06-07 Business Plan and have investigated the possibility of being able to utilise internal TSol resources to produce alternative publication formats. It has been agreed that the IS Helpdesk Manager will be the first port of call for any such requirements and can co-ordinate production of materials in various formats;
2. TSol's diversity statement or a paragraph explaining how TSol is compiling with disability/diversity policies should have a more visible presence on our key business documents (Business Plan, Corporate Plan, Annual Report and Accounts and the Spring Departmental Report to Parliament). BSU's Internal Communications and Publishing Manager will liaise with the Diversity Sub-Group for suitable text to incorporate into our key business documents;
3. The requirement for carrying out Disability/Diversity Impact Assessments should be embedded/cascaded into all TSol projects/policies that come before the Boards. The Head of BSU has recommended that the best way forward would be for HR to

prepare a paper or presentation for the Senior Leadership Team on the requirement for all TSol projects/policies to conduct Disability/Diversity Assessments at the initial feasibility study stage. The Head of BSU will attend a meeting of the Disability Equality Sub-Group to advise how Impact Assessments might be mainstreamed into TSol's project and policies creation process;

4. The intranet technical team will need to investigate/carry out the following:
 - (vi) run a commercial Windows-based tool to analyse the TSol public web pages for its accessibility to people with disabilities;
 - (vii) review the TSol intranet to see if the sitemap can be extended to include the overview, navigation, contacts database, new starter information, litigation library, DQT and training directory (The sitemap currently includes all content pages);
 - (viii) add Alt Tags to all non-content images;
 - (ix) provide information so that content managers can be trained to add Alt Tags when adding images to their pages;
 - (x) investigate whether speech enabled website software such as 'Jaws', 'Browsealoud' or an equivalent can be added to both the TSol public website and the TSol intranet site.

We have had a preliminary meeting with the intranet technical team and they should be in a position by Friday 2nd June to provide an initial indication of how much work is needed on the TSol public website and the TSol intranet to make any necessary alternations/improvements. Following initial analysis the implementation work can be added to the Intranet Technical Team work programme. Meeting additional costs will need to be investigated following scoping.

Next steps:

1. BSU's Internal Communications & Publishing Manager will action and lead on recommendations 1 & 2;
2. Head of BSU will attend a Diversity-sub Group meeting in due course to advise on recommendation 3;
3. BSU's Internal Communications & Publishing Manager will liaise with IS regarding recommendation 4 once initial investigations have been carried out. Meeting additional costs will also be investigated once the initial investigations have been completed.

Litigation Group

Activities (the work of the Group)

The Litigation Group ('the Group') acts for over 180 different clients across 100 Government Departments and public bodies. The Group is divided into four divisions, which are then sub-divided into teams undertaking specific types of work:

Division 1 carries out both private and public law, including personal injury, judicial review, inquests, planning, charities and vexatious litigants. The biggest client is the Prison Service.

Division 2 carries out both private and public law, including immigration and asylum, personal injury, misfeasance and civil penalties. The biggest client is the Immigration and Nationality Directorate.

Division 3 carries out both private and public law, including judicial review, personal injury, commercial litigation, arbitrations and property related work. The biggest client is the Ministry of Defence.

Division 4 carries out employment, non-contentious commercial, company and regulatory work, public inquiries and costs work.

Assessment

In terms of the provision of legal services the view taken during the production of TSol's Race Equality Scheme, that as legal services already operate under professional codes to expected standards, and in the case of TSol, are delivered to Crown clients who will be working to their own Race (and Disability) Equality Schemes, it was considered that this does not fall under the requirements of the General Duty. Other elements of the Group's operation could, however, fall within the General Duty, and therefore these have been considered in detail below.

Communication

The Group does not generally have contact with members of the public in its daily work, but where this happens, for example during a court hearing, it is not thought to raise any DES issues.

The Group does interact closely with other Government Department lawyers and administrators ('colleagues'), both at One Kemble Street and elsewhere. Where colleagues visit One Kemble Street there are not thought to be any Group specific DES concerns over and above those catered for by Facilities Management. Where meetings are held elsewhere, the Group expects its Crown clients to be working to their own Race (and Disability) Equality Schemes covering visitors.

Employment of staff

The Group employs a considerable number of staff, from administrative grades, through legal grades, to senior civil servants. Where those staff are recruited through the normal on-going recruitment process this is dealt with by the **Secretariat** under its own DES compliant procedures. Where ad-hoc recruitment is undertaken, it is generally through specific **recruitment agencies**, which are expected to have their own independent DES compliant procedures, and again organized through the Secretariat. Where individual

team leaders are involved in the initial sifting of staff members they comply with the TSol's DES compliant guidance produced for that purpose. All members of staff undertake mandatory discrimination awareness training.

The Group has a number of disabled members of staff. Their day-to-day needs will be assessed by their designated line manager and the team leader, with assistance from senior management, Human Resources (in a co-ordinating role), Facilities Management, the Disability Officer and the Welfare Officer (as appropriate). Each litigation team has an induction process to be followed. Those induction processes should cover DES issues, but not all specifically mention that requirement. A review should therefore be undertaken. A wider Agency induction procedure will also be undertaken under processes compiled by **Human Resources**. The Group relies on those processes to be DES compliant. Reasonable adjustments have been made for specific members of staff – from specialist seating being provided, through tailored duties being arranged, to specific hours of work being agreed.

Management of Staff

The day-to-day management of staff (e.g. appraisal, annual leave, promotion, training and grievance) is dealt with according to the Staff Handbook, other processes/procedures and internal training, all compiled and updated by **Human Resources** in collaboration with staff members and unions. The Group relies on the various processes noted above as being DES compliant.

Instruction of Counsel and Agents

The Group employs, on behalf of its clients, specialist counsel and agents to act on individual cases. Agents can be solicitors and experts (of various specialisms).

Counsel are generally instructed through the Panel Counsel system administered on behalf of the Attorney-General. The Attorney-General has 4 Panels of Counsel approved to undertake government work. There are 3 London Panels (A, B and C) depending on experience and year of call, as well as a Regional Panel. Selection to the London Panels is held yearly and to the Regional Panel every 5 years. The Group relies on the **Panel Counsel selection process** to be DES compliant. Where non-panel counsel are required, such as Silks, a specific nomination process has to be followed direct with the Attorney-General's Office. That process does not specifically consider DES requirements, and so this should be reviewed.

On 1st April 2005 TSol ceased to provide in house Debt Recovery Services. In order to ensure that the Group's clients had a viable alternative, a panel of debt recovery service providers was created. The firms selected for the panel, which became known as Lit Cat (phase 1), were carefully evaluated to ensure that only those firms who offered the optimum combination of price and quality were selected. Following on from phase 1, the Agency has now expanded Lit Cat to include a panel of legal and paralegal agents, including solicitors' firms, to provide litigation support services to the Agency; and a panel of solicitors' firms to provide regulatory and criminal services to the Agency and its clients. The firms selected for phase 2 were also subjected to detailed and careful evaluation again to ensure those selected offered TSol and its clients a high quality legal services. The Group relies on the **Lit Cat selection processes** to be DES compliant.

TSol is considering compiling a panel of specialist experts to provide litigation services. Any process of selection to that panel will need to be DES compliant. At this stage there is no set process for selecting and instructing experts, and this may need to be reviewed in light of the DES requirements.

Management of work

The Group operates within numerous internal policies, procedures, protocols and Service Level Agreements to ensure compliance with professional standards and to provide a first class litigation service. The Litigation Manual and Quality Policies and Procedures detail the main processes and guidelines to be followed within the Group. It is not thought the implementation or following of those policies gives rise to DES concerns.

The Group relies upon numerous information technology resources in the handling of its work, including internet, intranet, software packages, telephones, facsimilies and e-mail. The Group relies upon **Facilities Management and the Secretariat** to ensure these resources are DES compliant.

Bona Vacantia Division

Activities: Bona Vacantia (BV) is the legal term for property that passes to the Crown from dissolved companies or persons dying intestate with no known relatives. BV Division administers the estates of persons who die domiciled in England and Wales, without leaving a will or any entitled kin (provided that they also resided outside the Royal Duchies of Lancaster and Cornwall). It also deals with the assets of dissolved companies registered under the Companies Acts where the last registered office was in England or Wales (outside the Royal Duchies of Lancaster and Cornwall).

The main work of the Division is: (i) collecting bv; (ii) disposing of bv, including selling valuable assets; (iii) giving advice on bv matters (particularly through the website and telephone helpline) (iv) making discretionary payments (in effect gifts). In order to carry out the above, the Division needs to employ the services of others on an ad hoc basis.

The Division deals with, amongst others, the public, estate agents and auctioneers, private firms of solicitors, accountants and genealogists, banks and building societies, local authorities, the Valuation Office, the Probate Registry, the Family Records Centre HM Land Registry, Companies House and HMSO, as well as other government departments and agencies, The Crown Estate, NHS Trusts and hospitals, nursing homes, the police, utility companies, locksmiths, builders and gardeners.

Assessment

Some of the Division's activities fall within the scope of the General Duty as the Division provides information to the public via its advice line, written guidelines and website. As detailed above, the Division also has contact with a wide range of individuals and bodies outside the Department.

The Division acts fairly in disposing of assets and making discretionary grants and does not favour any particular group or individual against another. It recognises that potentially, on occasion, acting impartially could disadvantage individuals, such as those suffering from mental illness in respect of provision of information in support of applications for discretionary grants. Consideration is being given as to circumstances in which unfairness could arise and how this could be avoided.

TSol has been awarded "Two Ticks" accreditation by Jobcentre Plus in recognition of our status as a good employer of disabled staff. The Division promotes disability equality for its employees and in the way its work is managed through its operation of TSol's recruitment and employment policies and by being ready to consider and implement any reasonable adjustments/aids/variations to job descriptions as and when required. The Division is aware that this is of particular relevance and requires careful consideration where employees are required to carry out house searches.

The Division currently promotes disability equality in its communications with third parties by displaying the "Two Ticks" symbol on all letters.

The Division has identified that there is scope to promote disability equality in all areas where it interfaces with the public and potentially in its employment of others to assist in carrying out its functions. The Division intends to offer clearly and prominently that it will provide all of its written documentation in other formats, such as Braille, large print and audio tape. It also intends to investigate the possibility of using an intermediary service to enable communication by telephone with hearing impaired callers. The Division's BV Website is already World Wide Web Consortium ("W3C") Priority 1 Compliant. A programme to redesign the Division's website is under way with a launch date of the end of March 2007. The Website Project Board is aware of and will be guided by the Cabinet Office Guidelines for Government Websites (May 2002), Disability Discrimination Act 1995 Code of Practice (Rights of Access to Goods, Facilities, Services and Premises) s 5.23 & 5.26, Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0 (W3C Recommendations 5-May-1999) and the PAS 78:2006 Guidance To Website Commissioners on Commissioning Accessible Websites, as commissioned by the Disability Rights Commission. It is intended that the new website should achieve at least W3C Priority 2.

The Division does not employ others to provide services under contract and therefore has no direct control over the way in which they deliver their services. However, consideration is being given to including in letters of instruction a statement of TSol's commitment to disability equality and its expectations that those acting on its behalf comply with the Disability Discrimination Acts of 1995 and 2005 and promote disability equality themselves. Any complaints about disability discrimination on the part of third parties employed by the Division to assist in carrying out its functions, will be monitored and taken into account in allocating work in the future.

Advisory Divisions

Activities: TSol has four Advisory Divisions which provide legal advice to other Government Departments and certain public bodies. They are:

- Cabinet Office and Central Advisory Division
- Culture, Media and Sport Division
- Education and Skills Division
- Treasury Advisory Division.

In each case the activities consist of providing legal advisory services relating to the activities of the client Department or body. Advice to other Government Departments includes the drafting of statutory instruments and involvement in the passage of Bills through Parliament. The functions of the relevant Department, or body, are carried out by its Ministers or officials, acting on the legal advice given, and they too have responsibility for the related policies and any contacts with the public. Direct contacts between advisory Divisions and members of the public are few.

Assessment: It is not felt that the giving of professional advice on legal issues to a client Department or body is a matter to which the General Duty under section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 can apply.

However, Advisory Divisions have a role in assisting the client Department or body in carrying out *its* obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act, including the General Duty.

Communications with people in client Departments and bodies would fall within the duty, but raise no special considerations and are dealt with elsewhere.

Advisory Divisions instruct Counsel to give advice and, in some cases, instruct solicitors to act as agents in conducting prosecutions or other proceedings on matters for which the client Department or body has responsibility. This is considered generally under the section on Litigation Division above.

European Division

The work of the Division

European Division provides and co-ordinates legal services in support of the Government's policies in relation to the European Union. It is divided into two teams. One, Cabinet Office Legal Advisers, advises the European Secretariat of the Cabinet Office, and through co-ordination seeks to ensure a consistent approach to questions of Community law among UK departments and the Northern Ireland, Scottish and Welsh administrations. The other, the European Litigation team, conducts all litigation on behalf of the UK in the European Court of Justice.

The policies the Division operates

The managers of the Division implement TSol policies on recruitment, in particular those dealing with recruitment to the GLS and those dealing with recruitment to TSol specifically. The managers of the Division also implement TSol policies and procedures in dealing with employees in the Division as outlined in the HR section on the Intranet. Staff in the litigation team implement TSol policies on the instruction of Counsel and the use of business services, e.g. couriers and translation services. Staff in the Division are responsible for maintaining the European section on the LION site.

Assessment

The Division does not generally have any contact with members of the public in its daily work. Most contact is with other Government Departmental lawyers and occasionally administrators. This is not thought to raise any particular issues.

In selecting Counsel staff are constrained by the rule requiring Counsel acting for Government Departments to be nominated by the Attorney General. In most circumstances this means that Counsel are selected from a "Panel" which has been pre-selected by the Attorney General following an open competition. In a specialist case where no member of the Panel has the required expertise, or is available, an individual nomination must be sought. The main constraint for carrying out work in European matters, is that Counsel must be able to travel to Luxembourg if instructed for a hearing.

In purchasing business services such as translations, European Division is bound by TSol's rules on procuring services. The Division has an account with the FCO for translations.

LION is managed by the GLS Secretariat. Staff in the Division are responsible for maintaining the legal content and the correct contact details only of the European section.

All members of the Division have been offered a work station assessment.

Attorney General's Office

Activities: The Attorney General's Office provides high-grade legal advice and support to the Attorney General and the Solicitor General (the Law Officers). The Attorney General, assisted by the Solicitor General, is the chief legal adviser to the Government. The Attorney General also has certain public interest functions, for example, in taking action to appeal unduly lenient sentences, in taking action to protect charities, bringing proceedings for contempt of court, consenting to the prosecution of certain, serious, offences, and appoints amici curiae (or friends of the court).

The Attorney General has overall responsibility for the Treasury Solicitor's Department, superintends the Director of Public Prosecutions as Head of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), the Director of the Serious Fraud Office (SFO), the Director of the Revenue and Customs Office, the Director of Army Legal Services, the Chief Inspector of the Crown Prosecution Inspectorate and the Director of Public Prosecutions in Northern Ireland. The Law Officers answer for these Departments in Parliament. The Attorney General supervises the system of Panel Counsel.

In their Ministerial role the Law Officers play a full part with the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs in delivering the Government's policy and targets for criminal justice.

The Attorney General and the Solicitor General also deal with questions of law arising on Government Bills and with issues of legal policy. They are concerned with all major international and domestic litigation involving the Government and questions of European Community and International Law as they may affect the Government.

Assessment: The giving of legal advice is outside the General Duty, save that in advising account must be given to the legal framework of duties the Act creates. The advice given to Government Departments needs to be definitive and in giving advice the Law Officers take account of the six limbs of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 insofar as it is appropriate to do so. Where issues of discrimination, equality of opportunity and the promotion of positive attitudes are not directly relevant to the advice given, it is for the Department receiving the advice to ensure it is applied in such a way as to ensure compliance.

When acting in the public interest, the Law Officers act quasi-judicially and impartially. This impartiality is brought to bear in all aspects of public interest work, including charities, family cases, instructing the Queen's Proctor and in bringing applications under section 42 of the Supreme Court Act 1981 (vexatious litigants). The doctrine of impartiality requires actions to be non-discriminatory and to promote equality of opportunity, thereby promoting positive attitudes. When acting in the public interest, therefore, the Law Officers are, by definition, promoting all six limbs of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005.

In consenting to prosecutions, the Attorney General has to act quasi-judicially and consider the papers before him solely with a view to determining whether there is sufficient evidence to afford a realistic prospect of conviction and whether prosecution is in the public interest. The General Duty does not apply to this prosecution function.

In appointing an *amicus curiae* or friend of the court, the Attorney General would first try to choose counsel from within the Panel system with the requisite experience and expertise. If no appropriate counsel from within the Panel can be found, he must choose from outside the Panel. Choosing from both within the Panel and outside are actions where the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of equality are relevant.

In exercising a Ministerial role in relation to the Law Officers' Departments there is no direct application of the six limbs under the Act other than in the appointment of the Directors. There is an indirect role in ensuring the Departments for which the Attorney General is responsible apply the six limbs imposed by the Disability Discrimination Act.

Positive steps have been taken to encourage application from disabled persons including encouragement in advertisements. The Attorney General will appoint advocates who appear to him to be best qualified regardless of disability. All applicants for Panel counsel posts are encouraged to complete a 'two-ticks' scheme, where they can be open about their disability and know that it will not be held against them.

Government Legal Service (The Secretariat)

The Secretariat provides effective advice and support to the Government Legal Service and to the Head of the GLS in support of his role in providing leadership and strategic direction to the Service, which properly balances the needs of clients and lawyers and which is consistent with the overall direction of the Civil Service.

Its aim is to meet this purpose by putting in place corporate arrangements designed to:–

- i. ensure that the GLS consists of able, well trained and motivated lawyers who can deliver effective legal services to Government and is diverse;
- ii. maintain and develop the GLS in a way which is consistent with developments in the rest of the Civil Service and the wider legal profession and to do so in a way which is cost effective and adds value to what is done on a departmental basis;
- iii. enhance and widen the reputation of the GLS.

Assessment: The Secretariat's activities are geared towards providing services for legal teams across a range of Government Departments including TSoI. In carrying out its functions, the Secretariat interacts with the public in the provision of its recruitment processes.

In providing recruitment services, the Secretariat is operating in a field which is governed by the Civil Service Commissioners' rules on fairness and openness, whose aims are to find the best available person regardless of race, gender or disability. All decisions on recruitment reside with the Departments for whom the Secretariat provides the services. For those departments that use the Secretariat organised central recruitment services, the Secretariat monitors the processes and outcomes of the decisions made in order to draw attention to any areas of possible discrimination. The monitoring is carried out through mechanisms agreed with TMP Worldwide as the Secretariat's agent analysing the diversity data gathered as part of the application process. Individual departmental information is passed on showing performance at sift and interview stage. The recruitment procedures carried out by the Secretariat on behalf of Departments are also audited by the Commissioners.

In recruitment, GLS Departments are signed up to the "two ticks scheme". In operating its recruitment procedures departments offer the Guaranteed Interview Scheme for those who qualify and meet the minimum requirements. Additionally the Secretariat has limited influence on where advertisements for posts are placed. In respect of the General Duty, it is important to ensure that the text and the placements encourage applications from all areas of the population. There is no evidence to suggest that GLS advertising erects barriers to access but this is kept under review and action taken if it appears necessary.

The consistent monitoring undertaken by the Secretariat demonstrates the team's constant awareness of the need to alert clients to the duties introduced by the Act.

Annex B: List of Consultees

Disability Equality Scheme – List of Consultees

External

Legal

- The Law Society
- The Bar Council
- The Group for Solicitor's with Disabilities

General

- Disability Rights Commission
- British Council of Disabled People (independent lobbying and information group)
- Employers Forum on Disability
- Disabled Living Foundation

Visual Impairment

- RNIB

Hearing Impairment

- RNID

Dual Impairment

- Deafblind UK

Speech Impairment

- British Stammering Association

Mental Health/Disability

- MIND
- Rethink (formerly National Schizophrenic Fellowship)
- Royal Mencap Society

Learning Difficulties etc.

- British Dyslexia Association
- Speakability (Action for Dysphasic Adults)
- National Autistic Society

Physical Disabilities

- Multiple Sclerosis Society
- Arthritis Care
- SCOPE
- Diabetes UK
- Epilepsy Action
- ME Association

Internal

- TU Side
- FDA
- PCS
- Client Care Group
- Disabled Staff
- All staff
- Diversity Group



One Kemble Street, London WC2B 4TS