

# Equality Monitoring Report

1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011

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## 1. Introduction

The Forestry Commission is the Government Department responsible for the protection and expansion of Britain's forests and woodlands, including increasing their value to society and the environment.

Therefore, the Forestry Commission is committed to ensuring that the forests and woodlands we manage are accessible to and enjoyed by all groups in society including those with protected characteristics (sex, race, disability, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity).

We work with a wide range of partners from private sector landowners to sports clubs, local communities to national businesses, on a wide range of recreation, health, regeneration and educational schemes. Our responsibilities span research, commercial timber production, sustainability programmes and policy, as well as learning and leisure.

Our goal is always to ensure that, at a practical level, Britain can use its forests to contribute positively to as many of the nation's needs as we can whilst sustaining this invaluable resource for the future.

### 1.1 The Forestry Commission

- Welcomes more than 50 million visitors every year to our woodlands, which includes 36 visitor centres, almost 500 car parks, more than 150 accessible trails and many thousands of way-marked walks and trails, cycle routes and bridle paths;
- Welcomes more than 100,000 people per year to our concerts in the forest;
- Provides over 100 forest classrooms or educational facilities;
- Employs just over 3,000 people, most of whom are in rural areas;
- Plants 24 million trees every year;
- Sustainably harvests almost 5 million tonnes of timber every year, which equates to almost 44% of UK's total timber production;
- Cares for nearly one million hectares of sustainably managed woods and forests, two thirds of which lies within National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- Maintains 3,000 bridges (road and foot) and 24,000 km of forest roads;
- Provides grants, licences and advice to private woodland owners to encourage new tree planting and sustainable forest management;
- Provides research services relevant to UK and international forestry interests, providing an evidence base for UK forest practices and UK governmental policies; and
- Helped expand Britain's woodlands by an area more than three times the size of greater London in the last 20 years.

## 2. The Commission's mission and structure

### 2.1 Our mission

The mission of the Forestry Commission is to protect and expand Britain's forests and woodlands and increase their value to society and the environment.

### 2.2 Our structure

The Forestry Commission is a statutory body and non-Ministerial Government Department with responsibility for forestry throughout Great Britain. Under the Devolution Settlement, the Forestry Commission was designated a cross-border public authority. Therefore, it now exercises its powers and duties separately and receives separate funding in England, Scotland and Wales.

The Forestry Commission has a statutorily appointed Board of Commissioners consisting of a Chairperson and up to ten other Forestry Commissioners, including our Director General, who are appointed by the Queen on the recommendation of Ministers.

Each country is led by a Director who is also a member of the Great Britain Board of Commissioners. Delivery of policy, as well as progress against strategy objectives, is overseen in each country by the Commission's National Committee for England, National Committee for Scotland and National Committee for Wales.

The Forestry Commission also has an Executive Board which assists the Director General, Forest Research Chief Executive and Country Directors in the effective management of the Commission by providing leadership and setting direction for the organisation.

The Forestry Commission takes the lead, on behalf of all three administrations, in the development and promotion of sustainable forest management. We deliver the distinct forestry policies of England, Scotland and Wales through specific objectives drawn from the country forestry strategies so our mission and values may be different in each.

We also have three executive agencies that work to targets set by Commissioners and Ministers. Forest Enterprise England and Forest Enterprise Scotland manage our public forests, woodlands and other land in England and Scotland respectively on behalf of the Forestry Commission. Forest Research is a GB-wide agency which aims to be a robust, market-relevant and flexible organisation with a reputation for innovative applied science through the provision of research, technical development, monitoring, surveying and advice.

Throughout, we are an organisation that values:

- **teamwork** - working as teams with colleagues and others to ensure that trees, woods and forests meet the needs of people in each part of Britain
- **professionalism** - enjoying and taking pride in our work, achieving high standards of quality, efficiency and sustainability
- **respect** - treating one another with consideration and trust, recognising each person's contribution
- **communication** - being open, honest and straightforward with colleagues and others, as willing to listen as to tell
- **learning** - always learning, from outside the Forestry Commission as well as from within
- **creativity** - not being afraid to try new ways of doing things

## 2.3 Our People Strategy and our Equality and Diversity Strategy

The corporate plans for each country and for Forest Research have common themes defining how the Forestry Commission wishes to work; these determine the key strategic drivers for how the organisation manages its people and services.

Our [People Strategy, 'Fit for our Future'](#), is our people framework for taking the Forestry Commission through the next five years (2011 – 2017). Its vision is to ensure that employees are prepared, equipped and engaged to manage the changing work environment and to drive change in a positive and successful way.

The People Strategy (2011) focuses on five key themes, one of which is Equality and Diversity. Within that theme, we are committed to:

- Legal compliance
- Improving the diversity of our workforce
- Supporting our staff in engagement with communities to meet the General and Specific Duties placed on public bodies through the Equality Act 2010.

To help us embed the diversity elements of our People Strategy throughout the Forestry Commission, we are reviewing our 2008 Equality and Diversity Strategy and will publish the new strategy in 2012. The goals of this new Strategy will be;

- To recruit and employ people in order to make the Forestry Commission more representative of the population. This will ensure that the Forestry Commission is adaptable to the changing needs of society, more understanding and representative of the communities we serve and receptive to new ideas.

- To continue to ensure our departmental policies, organisational objectives and operational practice enable everyone to have access to our services and facilities.
- To continue to engage with communities to ensure our services and facilities are fit for purpose and tailored to meet their requirements.
- To continue to respect, support and value all our staff, treating them in accordance with our values.
- To continue build on our successes and work towards making our services and facilities available to all.

Further information on the Forestry Commission, including our aims and structure, can be found on our [website](#).

### 3. Our approach to the Equality and Diversity Agenda

Although forestry is devolved, the Forestry Commission adopts a GB approach to equality and diversity. Responsibility for the implementation of the equality duties as defined by the Westminster Government is shared across the Forestry Commission, with guidance and support being provided from the central diversity team based in Silvan House.

In developing our Monitoring Report we recognise that the Forestry Commission has made good progress in embedding equality and diversity into everyday business. However, we are not complacent and recognise that there is still much to achieve.

We have examined our relevant policies, functions, service planning and service delivery processes to ensure that no-one is in any way discriminated against or subject to unfair opportunity/adverse treatment. Further, as an employer we ensure that appropriate training is provided to all staff to raise awareness of the equality and diversity agenda and ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities. We are currently working on redeveloping our suite of diversity training.

As a service provider the Forestry Commission ensures that working with community groups, other public bodies, voluntary organisations and private organisations and individuals is done in an inclusive manner, offering fairness of opportunity to all. To this end, we also endeavour to procure goods and services from organisation and individuals that have or subscribe to equality and diversity values and objectives as set down in legislation.

## 4. Our approach to engagement

As a Government Department we comply with the current guidance on consultation and engagement. Therefore, regulatory consultations are conducted with key stakeholders when regulations change.

The provision of recreation is one of our principal objectives and we understand that recreation initiatives provide us with a major opportunity to meet the General Duties of the Equality Act. In our internal recreation guidance, we stress the importance and value of understanding the local community and being proactive in identifying and seeking views from 'hard to reach' groups, as well as those we are more used to working with and who are established visitors to our forests. The guidance includes checklists to assist field practitioners to include their whole community.

Through engagement we hope to improve our understanding of any barriers to visiting our forests and to work with local groups to identify and put in place solutions, events and facilities that will encourage more frequent visits from a more diverse range of the local and wider population.

### Case Study

To further improve and increase our staff understanding of the importance of consultation and engagement, in May 2011 we created internal guidance 'Involving people in your decisions', which supports and puts into Forestry Commission context a publication by our Forest Research Agency called ['A toolbox for public engagement in forest and woodland planning'](#). The Toolbox aims to assist both public and private sector forest and woodland managers to prepare for public engagement and select which tools to use to attract and include as wide a range of the community as possible in planning forest or woodland design, management and provision of services and activities. In both the Toolbox and the internal guidance, we have referred to the Equality Act Public Sector General Duties and offered tailored advice about how to identify and engage with minority groups to achieve positive outcomes.

Our recreation initiatives are managed locally and our local office teams are responsible for completing the consultation and engagement process. The guidance we have created to support those staff has been supplemented by specific training for recreation and other customer facing staff. The training includes reference to the Equality Act and its' General Duties, the economic and moral value of positive engagement, discussion of the protected characteristic groups and means to engage with them, interpersonal skills, and cross references to the Toolbox and other guidance.

## 5. Our approach to Equality Analysis

We have continued to mainstream the use of equality analysis, to ensure that our new policies or services, and any changes to existing policies or services, fully take into account any impact on our diverse customers and staff.

In April 2011 we reviewed and updated our existing guidance on equality impact assessments in line with the Equality Act's General Duties on the public sector. This resulted in a more streamlined process and was announced via our all-staff communication bulletin. The revised guidance cross references to ['Involving people in your decisions'](#), intending to help those undertaking Equality Analysis (EqA) to achieve effective consultation, capturing the views of all the community at both local and national levels. The Equality Analysis guidance is supported by training delivered by the Diversity Team to those responsible for creating policies or delivering large initiatives that may have an impact on our staff or on the public.

All our HR policies, including Learning and Development strategies and initiatives are subject to Equality Analysis. Many of our customer-facing projects have been progressed through the EqA process and we have analysed the equality impact of the staff reductions, organisational reorganisation and customer-facing changes we are required to make to meet the Government's public sector spending review targets.

A summary of completed [Equality Impact Assessments and Equality Analysis](#) is available on our website.

## 6. Our approach to our Customers

The Forestry Commission recognises that forests and woods have the ability to contribute to the nation in terms of opportunities for people to participate in and enjoy woodlands. We deliver an extensive range of practical programmes to ensure that communities and individuals can get the most from them.

There are a number of ways in which we can reach and engage with people, for example, we offer:

- Education and learning initiatives;
- Healthy living initiatives and activities;
- Play, recreation and sporting opportunities;
- Volunteering; and,
- Community forestry and woodland creation in and around towns and cities, to be closer to where people live.

As the needs of communities change and develop, we will need to continue to adapt to ensure that we offer equality of opportunity for all.

We proactively promote that all our services and facilities are open to anyone who wishes to use them. However, we recognise that there may be perceived barriers and reasons why people may not be able to fully benefit from them. We are actively seeking to address this by adapting infrastructure, providing a wider range of activities and events, engaging with communities and in some cases providing specialist equipment and/or tailored activities. To achieve our objectives the Commission is working closely with a range of partner organisations at a local, regional and/or national level.

## 6.1 Some of our customer initiatives

The Forestry Commission provides facilities, services and events across GB for all protected characteristics. Some of those initiatives are outlined here.

- We offer Buggy Fit classes in a number of locations, aimed at providing an exercise and social experience for young mothers.
- Central Scotland arranged a number of events for Black History Month, including 'If you can paint one leaf, you can paint the world', and a family friendly multi-arts day in a woodland setting.
- Wherever we offer wedding ceremonies we also offer civil partnership ceremonies.
- Gay men and lesbian groups have enjoyed barbeques and den building in a number of our forests.
- We have attended Gay Pride Festivals to increase knowledge of local forests and encourage visits.
- Our teams in Sherwood and the New Forest have worked with The Spiral Dance Pagan Group to identify areas of semi-natural woodland for the use of worshipping and celebrating pagan festivals.
- Since 2009, our New Forest team has been engaged in the Mosaic project, led by the [Campaign for National Parks](#), that aims to build substantial links between black and minority ethnic communities and ten of the National Parks in England and the Youth Hostel Association. We have helped to train influential leaders from ethnic minority communities to become 'Community Champions', promoting National Parks to their community and encouraging visits from those communities.
- In Wales, a new mountain-bike trail has been specifically designed not only for beginners and families, but also for people with a disability using adaptive mountain bikes. The Forestry Commission worked closely with a number of disabled cyclists, who helped with design specifications.
- In the Lake District we are working with wheelchair user and multi-sensory impairment groups in the development of a new sound installation and sculptures Arts project along an existing all ability sensory access trail.

- In Surrey, we have worked with a college for physically disabled students to develop a discovery trail, activity packs and talking pictures.

### Case Study

Forestry Commission Project Officers from Wyre Forest identified that some groups from their local community were not accessing the forests, including females from certain ethnic groups. On further consultation with these groups it was recognised that due to cultural needs the women were not accustomed to visiting places without a chaperone, or where they were likely to come in to contact with non-community males.

Working with members of the Asha Bangladeshi Women's group, based in Kidderminster, Forestry Commission Officers arranged four different events, enabling the women to undertake activities such as guided walks, forest art, wild food and bush craft, and wildlife photography. To reduce the likelihood of encountering other male visitors, this was facilitated by female instructors in areas of the forest where there were fewer visitors.

Feedback from participants on the events was positive and the women felt that they had increased their confidence and learnt new skills.

## 6.2 Understanding our customers

As part of our on-going commitment to customer service we undertake a range of surveys. Some of these are conducted on a regular basis to compare and test customer satisfaction and explore needs. These range from public opinion surveys, site questionnaires, focus groups, feedback forms, etc. Where appropriate the surveys are analysed by the Forestry Commission Economics and Statistics team who are responsible for compiling reports based on their analysis. This team provides reports to the Management Boards within England, Scotland and Wales. The Diversity Team liaise with this team to use the data, explore where gaps exist within the data and agree how they can be filled.

The Forestry Commission also actively encourages site managers to use local demographic data to more strategically assess the potential demand for services and facilities and compare this with actual site usage. This type of analysis will become more prevalent as the Equality Analysis process is further embedded across the organisation.

We carry out research into better understanding attitudes, beliefs and barriers to people using and not using our services and facilities. This can be undertaken at both a site

level and also at the Regional and National level. Research and evidence we collate will be analysed and made available for all staff through our internal website, and where appropriate externally to our customers and partners through our external website.

### 6.3 Our approach to Internet accessibility

Our external website has to meet the demands of a wide range of users, including woodland owners seeking information about regulation and grant aid, school teachers and parents looking to understand how to use the forests as a learning environment, people looking for jobs, and those looking for recreation opportunities.

In line with Government guidelines, we are striving to meet the AA accessibility standard in all our website content and are committed to making our site accessible and easy to use. We had our site assessed in 2009, when we commissioned an independent user audit and our site was tested by people with total and partial vision impairments, physical disabilities and those with cognitive impairments, and in 2011 when we commissioned an accessibility test through the Employers Forum on Disability. The results of both tests were generally positive about the quality of information available, though issues were raised about the ease of navigation to that information and accessibility. In response to that feedback, we have been working to improve the site where we can, but have been limited by the existing structure of the site. That structure is now under review, with redesign of the home page and the recreation areas underway; the emphasis is to meet customer needs and the AA standard. The first prototype of the new pages will be available for testing in March/April 2012 and independent user testing has been built in throughout the project development.

### 6.4 Our forests in your home

In order to give people who are unable to visit, or are unsure of visiting our forests a taste of what we can offer, we have created new pages on our web site called [Our Forests in Your Home](#). The site shows many of the activities that can be experienced by visitors, gives information and videos on wildlife, recreation options and climate change. The site also offers a link to the pages that let people search for details of the nearest forest to their home and discover what events and facilities are available there. These pages are at an early stage and in order to make them as useful and interesting as possible for our intended audience, we will add to them and refine them over time as new content becomes available.

### 6.5 Monitoring our visitor numbers

During 2011 we conducted [Public Opinion Surveys](#) in UK, Scotland and Wales. The Surveys indicate that people have a great interest in visiting forests and that around two

thirds or more of all respondents said they had visited forests or woodlands in the last few years.

Disabled respondents were least likely to have visited forests or woodlands and personal mobility reasons (difficulty in walking etc) was one of the most commonly reported reasons for not visiting.

The number of BAME respondents in Scotland and Wales was so small that the results for those groups are statistically unreliable and not reproduced here.

The Public Opinion Survey records positive responses from respondents in different categories. In response to the question 'In the last few years, have you visited forests or woodlands for walks, picnics or other recreation?'

- 70% of not disabled and 57% of disabled respondents in the UK said Yes
- 67% of male and 68% of female respondents in the UK said Yes
- 71% of White and 34% of BAME respondents in the UK said Yes
- 69% of respondents age 44 or under, and 66% of respondents aged 45 or over in the UK said Yes

We are increasingly creating woodlands close to towns, to give more people and communities an opportunity to experience these rich green spaces. In response to the question 'Types of woodlands visited - Woodlands in and around towns.'

- 16% of not disabled and 14% of disabled respondents in the UK said Yes
- 14% of male and 17% of female respondents in the UK said Yes
- 14% of White and 37% of BAME respondents in the UK said Yes
- 19% of respondents age 44 or under, and 12% of respondents aged 45 or over in the UK said Yes

In response to the question 'Types of woodlands visited – Woodlands in the countryside'

- 37% of not disabled and 42% of disabled respondents in the UK said Yes
- 39% of male and 36% of female respondents in the UK said Yes
- 38% of White and 28% of BAME respondents in the UK said Yes
- 33% of respondents age 44 or under, and 43% of respondents aged 45 or over in the UK said Yes

[Quality of Experience Surveys](#) were conducted in a number of our forests in England and Wales during 2010 and these help to identify the proportion of visitors to our forests, which we can compare with population information for each country.

Table 4: Quality of Experience Surveys, Visitor profile

	Male	Female	Age 16- 24	Age 25- 34	Age 35- 44	Age 45- 54	Age 55- 64	Age 65+	Disabled	Not disabled
England	59%	41%	5%	23%	38%	18%	9%	6%	4%	96%
Wales	58%	42%	3%	17%	25%	21%	18%	12%	4%	96%

This indicates that, compared to population data<sup>1</sup>, our visitor numbers for people with disabilities and for younger and older people is comparatively low, and that women are also slightly under-represented.

We have many recreation and education initiatives for children, including the popular [Forest Schools](#) programme, but this data suggests that interest sparked in school is not carried through to young adulthood. There may be a number of reasons for people in the 16-24 age group to be less frequent visitors than other age groups. Informal feedback suggests that this may be due to lack of disposable income to travel to forests, and less interest in rural based activities at that stage in life.

We know from the Public Opinion Survey that many people give personal mobility reasons (difficulty in walking etc) as a reason for not visiting forests. In England another reason cited was not having a car, while one of the most common reasons for not visiting woodlands by respondents to the Public Opinion Survey in Scotland was that woods were too far away. These reasons could offer an explanation for people with disabilities and for people aged 55 or over being less likely to visit Forestry Commission sites. We are always trying to make our forests more accessible and to provide accessible paths, resting and toilet facilities that will encourage and provide a successful visit. Our initiative of creating and facilitating the creation of woods close to towns should, over time, mean that more people can visit woods by public transport. We continue to work to understand the main barriers for people with disability visiting our forests and are working hard, with disability groups, to identify solutions to those barriers and to advertise what we already offer.

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<sup>1</sup> 20% of the GB population is disabled (Employers Forum on Disability 2008). 12% of the England and Wales' population is aged between 16 and 24 (Office for National Statistics 2010). 17% of Scotland's population was aged between 16 and 29 (Scottish Census 2001). 51% of the population in England and Wales is Female (Office for National Statistics, 2010). 52% of the Scottish population is Female (Scottish Census 2001).

### Case Study

A Phototrail / Accessibility survey project has been completed in Scottish Lowlands Forest District in partnership with [Fieldfare Trust](#) (a national charity promoting countryside access for disabled people). More than 150 km of paths, tracks and roads were surveyed and classified in terms of accessibility, with strategic recommendations made to help improve physical access to woodlands in the short, medium and long term. Maps have been produced for the woodland sites surveyed (Blairadam, Carron Valley, Callender Wood, Devilla, Easterhouse, Forth, Kilpatrick Hills, Larbert, Newbattle and Twechar/Croy) and 13 phototrails covering 27 km are now available at <http://www.phototrails.org/>.

Forestry Commission Scotland has plans to extend this project to more of their woods and forests.

## 7. Recognition for our work

### 7.1 Civil Service Equality and Diversity Awards

We made submissions to the [Civil Service Diversity and Equality Awards](#) in 2010 and 2011.

Peninsula Forest District (south west England) won the 'Excellence in Service Delivery' category in 2011. A works supervisor was involved in a highly successful scheme helping offenders from Dartmoor Prison gain valuable practical skills needed to secure employment on release. The partnership scheme between the Forestry Commission and HMP Dartmoor, running since 2004, is designed to deliver a mentored work experience programme and industry-recognised training to offenders from the prison's rehabilitation unit. To date 25 offenders have taken part in the Dartmoor rehabilitation project and 15 have secured full time employment in the private sector following their release. The 60% success rate is higher than many other programmes delivering in this field. Small teams of participants were helped to readjust from a prison regime to a working day pattern and experience teamwork, skills development and training, which helped to boost confidence and self-esteem. The Forestry Commission team had no previous experience in working with offenders, but have helped to shape and improve the programme to be of real value to participants.

In 2011, our Central Scotland's [Branching Out](#) initiative was shortlisted in the 'Leading Change in Equality and Diversity' category, with partners Glasgow Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership, Glasgow Centre for Population Health, NHS Grater Glasgow, and Clyde and Glasgow City Council. Branching Out is a referral programme for mental health patients to maximise the therapeutic benefits that green space has on a wide

range of physical and mental health issues. Branching Out groups include patients in medium secure units, community based services, women- and men-only groups and older adult groups. Each patient takes part in three hours of activity in woodland per week over a twelve week period and undertakes a range of activities such as walks, tai-chi, conservation activities, shelter-building and environmental art like photography and willow sculptures. Due to its success, Branching Out is expanding into two more NHS board areas.

In 2010, our East Midlands District won the category 'Understanding and Engaging with Communities' for;

- A work experience programme for young adults with autism;
- Providing interpreters for the deaf community to enable participation in wildlife surveys and conservation work;
- Intensive engagement within former coalfield and deprived communities through events and educational programmes;
- Working with the Council of Faith to involve 'all faiths and none' to create a 'sacred space' for reflection as well as encouraging traditional ceremonies in woodlands;
- Attending a Gay Pride festival resulting in involvement with the LGBT community, including lesbian outdoor groups enjoying ranger-led orienteering and overnight bushcraft sessions.

## 7.2 Other Awards

Branching Out won two other awards in 2010, the [UKPHA Michael Varnam Health, Humanity and Environment Award 2010](#) and the ['Best Green Healthcare Provider' at the Scottish Green Awards 2010](#).

Forestry Commission Wales were runners up in the Public Sector category of the Diverse Excellence Cymru 'Excellence in Equality' Awards in 2011 for their commitment to promoting equality in Wales. The award is sponsored by Cardiff and Vale Coalition of Disabled People, and Awetu (All Wales Black and Minority Ethnic Mental Health Group). Forestry Commission Wales have done much to provide accessible facilities in the forests they manage and have an active programme to engage protected characteristic groups throughout Wales and facilitate and encourage their use of the forests.

In 2011, Forestry Commission Scotland and NHS Tayside won the [Health Facilities Scotland Facilities Innovation Award](#) for excellence in healthcare in the Ninewells Hospital Green Space Project. The partnership project has revitalised woodlands and greenspace in the hospital grounds for health and wellbeing, improving access to woodland and open space for staff, patients and local people.

Forestry Commission Wales centres Bwlch Nant-yr-Arian near Aberystwyth and Coed-y-Brenin Forest Park near Dolgellau were voted the best free places to visit in Wales in a survey by [Netmums](#), the UK's fastest growing online parenting organisation.

## 8. Influencing the forest industry

The Forestry Commission led the review of the Government's standard for sustainable forest management; the [UK Forestry Standard](#) (UKFS) was published in October 2011. The UKFS sets the standard for all forest and woodland management in Great Britain, irrespective of whether it is in public or private ownership and it includes a number of forestry specific Guidelines, one of which is the Forests and People Guideline. This Guideline incorporates requirements from the Equality Act 2010 and encourages best practice for access, consultation and engagement, considering the needs of people from all protected characteristic groups.

## 9. Our approach to our staff

### 9.1 Building and retaining a diverse workforce

Traditionally, employment in the forestry profession has been male dominated and perceived as a practical, outdoors, and physical role. Whilst one part of the forestry sector continues to manage trees and process timber, the contemporary forestry profession is far broader in the scope and the variety of roles on offer.

Jobs in forestry today include the development of policy, the management of grants and regulations, sales and retail, public education, recreation, conservation, teaching and lifelong learning, resource planning, development planning, science and research, civil engineering, and partnership brokerage, as well as support roles in Human Resources, administration, finance, marketing, design and business development.

In order to attract a wider range of applicants to our advertised vacancies we have been proactive in trying to dispel some of the myths surrounding forestry. A key theme of our People Strategy is to recruit and employ more people with protected characteristics in order to make the Forestry Commission as representative of the population as possible. Spending restrictions meant that active advertising in media outlets specifically aimed at various protected characteristic groups ceased in April 2010. Our recruitment also decreased significantly from that date, due to the requirement to downsize the wider Civil Service. Improving the diversity of our staff is difficult under these continuing restrictions, but it remains an aim. Meantime, we shall do all that we can to understand and eliminate any issues of inequality towards our staff and to ensure our interviewing processes are not discriminatory.

## 9.2 Equality and diversity training

During 2009/10 all our staff attended in-house equality and diversity training and we continued to deliver needs-based training until summer 2011. We devised four different levels of training event, tailored to suit the needs of staff and depending upon their level of exposure to customers and their involvement in policy making. The training looked at all aspects of equality and related it to the Forestry Commission's business; sessions are also run on our New Entrant (induction) courses.

All new and existing training events managed by the Forestry Commission are reviewed to ensure appropriate equality and diversity messages and considerations are included. All our in-house Learning and Development trainers have attended learning sessions with the Diversity Team to increase their understanding of equality and diversity and how it might impact upon their work.

We wish to continue to ensure that all staff are trained in equality and diversity, but with relatively few new entrants have been looking for an alternative way of supplying that training. We have sourced an online training package from a similar business to the Forestry Commission and will deliver that early in 2012. We have also taken the opportunity to review the training we offered to policy makers, which has additional time devoted to [Equality Analysis](#). This will continue to be delivered face to face. Both training packages include all appropriate references to the Equality Act 2010. We intend the training is delivered not only to our new staff, but as a refresher to all staff and that our customer facing contractors, who work in Forest Shops, Cafes and Bike Hire franchises, will also take advantage of this online opportunity.

## 9.3 Impact of the Government's 2010 Spending Review (SR10)

As a public sector organisation, the Forestry Commission is going through a period of considerable downsizing, particularly in England, Forest Research and supporting central services (Silvan House). This requires us to be aware of any impact on the diversity of our staff and to ensure fairness and appropriate adjustments are built in to all the processes we have introduced to achieve our downsizing targets over the next three years. However, SR10 is unlikely to have a positive impact on our staff diversity and the resulting limitations on recruitment restricts our options to improve the diversity our staff profile.

We have worked closely with the Trades Unions and have Equality Analysed our

- Early Retirement, Early Severance Scheme
- Redeployment Process
- Voluntary Exit Scheme
- Outplacement Support Scheme
- Implementation of HM Treasury Civil Service Pay Guidance 2011-12

- Impact of budget reductions in Silvan House, Forestry Commission England and in Forest Research

We know that the posts being reduced will have a larger impact on women than on men, because women provide the majority of the administrative support, which is being further streamlined to allow continuing and enhanced delivery of the Commission's core forestry functions. However, the Equality Analysis has not indicated any significant impact on disabled or BAME employees.

We have introduced a Voluntary Exit Scheme and we will monitor the impact of that scheme as it progresses. Indications are that it will prove more attractive to employees with longer service who will, as a result, be older than 45. The full impact of SR10 on the diversity of the workforce will not be known until 2012 and will be included in our next report.

The pay freeze has halted progression from minimum to maximum of our short Pay Scales, which has an impact on our [Equal Pay figures](#).

#### 9.4 Equality and Diversity Staff Forum

Our Staff Forum membership is drawn from volunteer employees from across the Forestry Commission and includes people from a range of different protected characteristic groups. Formed in 2008, the Staff Forum meets quarterly to provide advice and feedback on policies and services that affect staff, to highlight any equality and diversity issues that require attention and to support the Equality and Diversity Team in promoting equality and diversity throughout the organisation.

During 2009/10 the Staff Forum was invited to make contributions to the formation of the new [People Strategy](#), the [Gender Equality Scheme](#), guidance on public holidays and time off for religious festivals and other religious observances, the Competency Framework, Performance Management policy, Procurement, Travel and Subsistence, Paternity Leave, Career Breaks, Redeployment, the impact of [SR10](#), the Staff Survey and Dogs at Work. The Staff Forum has been briefed on the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector General Duties and has been invited to make proposals for the Forestry Commission Equality Objectives, which we shall publish in April 2012.

#### 9.5 Staff Survey 2011

We conduct Staff Surveys every two years and have just completed the 2011 Staff Survey. In 2011 60% of all employees responded, compared to 61% in 2009 and we consider this is positive in the present climate of downsizing and SR10.

In 2011, as a result of changes to equality legislation, we took the opportunity to ask more questions about experiences of discrimination and bullying and harassment in the workplace and we asked employees to identify against all of the protected characteristics.

We wanted to understand how our flexible working policies are working and to gather evidence to support the development of the guidance we offer to employees with caring responsibilities. Therefore we used the 2011 Survey to get some measure of the number of carers we have amongst our employees, whether they have joint or sole caring responsibility and the number of hours per week they provide care.

Respondent numbers for BAME, gay, bi-sexual and transgender employees were low and a single respondent will have a significant impact on the data. This does not mean that their responses are not significant, but that we have to treat them with care when interpreting the results of the Survey.

[The Staff Forum](#) will be asked to comment on the Survey results and may be able to offer more specific insights into the answers from the minority groups that we have received.

Once the Staff Survey has been fully analysed and we have had feedback from the Staff Forum, we shall use the information we have to inform our Equality Objectives.

### 9.5.1 Staff Survey 2011 preliminary results

For the first time we asked employees to respond to the statement 'I am treated with respect by the people I work with'.

- 83% of all respondents either Strongly Agreed (23%) or Agreed (60%) with this statement,
- 12% neither agreed nor disagreed and only 5% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- Women responded more favourably (87% either Strongly Agreed or Agreed).
- Respondents with disabilities responded less positively (72% Strongly Agreed or Agreed).
- 92% of gay men and lesbian respondents either Strongly Agreed or Agreed.
- All other protected characteristic groups responded within the significant parameter of 83%;

Only 7% of all respondents had personally experienced discrimination in the workplace, but the figure for respondents with disabilities was 27%. Respondents were asked to identify, from a list of 17 suggestions, on which grounds the discrimination they experienced had been based.

Of the 27% (30) of disabled respondents who said they had experienced discrimination at work the reasons were;

- 21% (6) due to disability,
- 48% (14) due to grade, pay band or responsibility level,
- 21% (6) due to working location and
- 17% (5) due to working hours.

5% of respondents said they were currently being harassed or bullied, which is an improvement from 2009 when 10% of respondents said they were being harassed or bullied.

- 19% (21) of respondents with disabilities said they were being harassed or bullied at work.
- No gay man or woman who responded said they were currently being harassed or bullied.

The number of respondents who said they had a disability was 111, compared to our staff records, which identify 89 staff as having a disability. As the Survey response level was 60%, we can reasonably assume that we have more than 111 disabled staff. We have also been able to gather an indication of the numbers of staff who are gay, bi-sexual, transgender, carers and have specific religious beliefs. This information will assist us to prioritise our action planning over the next year.

The results from the Staff Survey will receive more detailed analysis and the attention of the [Staff Forum](#). It is clear that the disabled respondents felt more likely to be bullied, harassed or discriminated against than other respondents and we shall pursue these results to identify appropriate measures designed to minimise such instances. This surprised us, as none of our staff with a disability raised a grievance during the year.

## 9.6 Carers

The Staff Survey shows that 37% of respondents have some caring responsibilities; 72% of carers share responsibility with a partner or spouse and 6% have sole caring responsibility with no support from relatives or other social care options. 36% of those carers provide care for more than 50 hours a week, 23% for between 1 and 7 hours a week. We have not previously been able to assess the number of carers in the Forestry Commission, the support they have or the hours they spend providing care. This information indicates that there are a significant number of employees with such responsibilities and supports further action to support them in the workplace. We have redrafted guidance for carers, bringing together information on all practices that may support them (payment of additional child care, flexible working, career breaks etc.). It is also useful to note that the 2011 Staff Survey responses do not indicate that carers are experiencing discrimination or bullying or harassment at work.

## 9.7 Gay, lesbian and bisexual staff

Staff Surveys are the only vehicle we use to try to establish our population of gay, lesbian and bisexual staff. We understand that such questions can be difficult for people, so it is useful to compare numbers between the 2009 and the 2011 Surveys, to see if there is any consistency.

In the 2011 Survey we gave a full explanation of the terms 'gay', 'lesbian' and 'bisexual', which we did not do in 2009 and fewer respondents than in 2009 disclosed that they were gay, lesbian or bisexual. However, we feel we have sufficient data to be confident that between 1% and 3% of our employees identify themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual.

In the 2009 Survey there was no evidence to suggest that gay, lesbian and bisexual employees felt any differently about being employed in the Forestry Commission than their colleagues. All gay men and lesbians, and 93% of bisexual staff who responded to the 2011 Survey said that their team 'has a culture where discriminatory treatment, harassment and bullying is not tolerated'.

In response to the 2009 Staff Survey we published guidance in our People Matters suite called Sexual Orientation; this guidance was validated by Stonewall before publication. The purpose is to

- provide a fair and welcoming environment for all our staff;
- help managers treat everyone fairly and correctly, with support and guidance from HR; and
- make sure that the Forestry Commission follows best practice and complies with the law.

## 9.8 Transgender and gender identity

We have used the Staff Surveys to identify whether we have any transgender employees. We also wanted to establish whether transgender employees have experienced any difficulties in the Forestry Commission and to prioritise what support and guidance we should have in place. To avoid any misunderstanding, the 2011 Staff Survey asked the question 'Are you a person who intends to live and work, or is living and working, permanently in the opposite gender from the one you were given at birth?'

Both the 2009 and 2011 Surveys gave similar results, and around 0.5% of our employees identified as transgender. The 2009 survey did not suggest that transgender employees experienced any discrimination in the Forestry Commission. The 2011 Survey shows that 15% (2) of transgender employees feel they have experienced

discrimination at work, though none said they experienced any discrimination due to their gender identity.

In 2011 we published guidance in our People Matters suite called Gender Identity and Gender re-assignment; this guidance was validated by a:gender (the Civil Service transgender network) before publication. The purpose is to

- provide support and guidance to help managers to treat everyone fairly and correctly;
- set out a framework of best practice and legal requirements when managing transsexual employees;
- explain some of the terminology around gender identity, and;
- give some information about gender identity.

Our Gender Equality Scheme 2010 included reference to gender identity and a:gender was included in the Scheme consultation process, providing useful feedback.

## 9.9 Religion and Belief

The Staff Surveys indicate that around 46% of our employees are Christian and 27% have no belief. However, Buddhism, Judaism, Hindu and Islam are also represented, though in low numbers. The results from the Survey are positive for discrimination, harassment and bullying. The 2009 survey did not indicate that staff with religious belief felt any differently about their employment in the Forestry Commission than staff without religious belief and early analysis of the 2011 results suggests the same.

In 2010 we published guidance in our People Matters suite called Religion and belief. The purpose is to

- provide a fair open attitude to religion and beliefs in the workplace;
- help managers work with those who have beliefs and religions they may not be familiar with; and
- make sure that the Forestry Commission follows best practice in the process and complies with the law.

## 10. Monitoring data

The Forestry Commission consists of six discrete management units as follows:

<b>England</b>	– staff working directly for Forestry Commission and Forest Enterprise England
<b>Scotland</b>	– staff working directly for Forestry Commission and Forest Enterprise Scotland
<b>Wales</b>	– staff working directly for Forestry Commission Wales
<b>Forest Research</b>	– staff working directly for the Forest Research Agency throughout Britain
<b>Business Units</b>	– staff working directly for the Business Units (Mechanical Engineering and Forestry Commission Nurseries) throughout Britain.
<b>Silvan House</b>	– staff working in centralised divisions and serving every Management Unit of the Forestry Commission (e.g. HR, Finance, IT)

These six areas impact on the reporting and analysis of our employment data and service provision.

We have completed a detailed monitoring process for employment data collected between April 2010 and March 2011. In the outcomes detailed in the following Tables, we have represented the total Forestry Commission figures, though breakdown for each management unit is available on request from the [Diversity Team](#).

Please note that staffing data used to complete these tables covers all staff deemed to be in paid employment by the Forestry Commission, including Public Appointments, office holders, and some apprentices. As such, figures may differ from other published reports, which only include people deemed as Forestry Commission staff.

### 10.1 Overview of our analysis

The following tables show the detail of our workforce and specific comments have been made against each Table. However, we know that our workforce is predominantly male (68%), White British (97%), not disabled (97%), and aged 41 or over (65%).

Forestry continues to be perceived as a male career requiring high levels of mobility and dexterity and, whilst we have increased the numbers of women in forestry related jobs, core forestry jobs remain filled by predominantly male, white and not disabled people. We offer a wide range of careers besides forestry; these include engineering, science, IT, mechanic, cartography, land agency and administration.

Approximately 30% of our BAME employees are in administrative positions, 30% in forestry posts and 10% each in IT and science posts. 46% of our female employees are in administrative posts, compared to 6% of male employees. 15% of women are in forestry related posts compared to about 50% of our male employees. 29% of our disabled employees are in administrative positions, and 36% of disabled employees in forestry posts.

In our internal post filling and promotion process, women applicants were more likely to be successful and promoted than their male colleagues, but overall the greater number of male applicants meant that more men were successful and promoted than women. Whilst this starts to even-out the percentage of women who are at middle and senior grades compared to the percentage of men, it does not significantly reduce the actual numbers gap, which is heavily influenced by the greater number of men in the Forestry Commission (68%). Disabled applicants were almost as likely to be successful as people without disabilities, but were much less likely to be promoted. A higher number of disabled employees applied for vacant posts in 2010/11 (14% of all disabled staff) than in 2009/10 (1% of all disabled staff). We shall continue to monitor this, but the low numbers of disabled staff make it difficult to draw conclusions over a short time frame. BAME applicants were least likely to be successful and none were promoted during the year. However, 58% (7) of all BAME applicants applied for one post, one of whom was successful. Such a large percentage of applicants for one post necessarily results in a high disappointment rate.

As a result of the 2010 Spending Review, we have ceased the advertising programme which promoted our job opportunities in media outlets specifically targeted to women, people with disabilities and people from minority ethnic backgrounds. We took this action, as although a very limited recruitment programme remained, we did not want to raise expectations beyond our capacity to recruit while the organisation was downsizing. However, our [External Recruitment](#) data shows that a higher percentage of applications were received from disabled people and from people from Black and Asian Minority Ethnic backgrounds this year than had been recorded in the previous year. During the year we moved from a manual, paper based application system to an on-line recruitment system and it is encouraging that this appears to have had a positive impact on the applicant profile, supporting the conclusions of our Equality Impact Assessment on the change.

We provide a wide range of [internal training](#), to suit the requirements of the business and have introduced our Management Development Programme to provide our managers with the necessary skills to progress, or to improve their performance at their present level. This programme is targeted more individually towards managers' individual skill sets than our previous management training events. The Forestry Commission has its own in-house Learning and Development team, who design and

deliver training in response to business needs. [External training](#) is widely used to cover areas of particular expertise. Our in-house Learning and Development team receives regular updates on equality and diversity issues and offer flexible training options to those who request them because they have a disability or caring responsibilities. This enables more people to access training by removing barriers created by the training materials, or by the need to travel to a training venue or commit whole days to training.

For the first time, using data going back to 2005, we have analysed our return to work after [maternity leave](#). We are encouraged that, on average 84% of women return to work following their pregnancy and that this figure will increase if those who remain absent return to work in due course. Many women have more than one period of maternity leave and we offer unpaid leave and Career Break options to extend periods of absence and offer flexibility.

Our analysis allows us to identify and investigate any apparent discrepancies in the year, but the low numbers of disabled and BAME employees means that the data can be significantly changed by just one or two people being promoted, taking training, receiving top performance marks etc. We compare data gathered over the years to see whether any trends are developing, and whether discrepancies are repeated year on year.

#### **Case study**

We had some concerns after our 2009/10 Race Monitoring Report that BAME employees were less likely to receive a Top Performance rating than other employees and completed an analysis, looking at past data, including age and length of service and comparison with other ethnic groups in the Forestry Commission. We found that length of service has a significant impact on the probability of being regarded as a Top Performer; more than half (56%) of all employees receiving a Top Performance rating had more than ten years service. At 31 March 2010, only 9% (2) of our BAME employees had more than 10 years service. We therefore concluded that there was no evidence for discrimination and note that the small numbers of BAME staff make it difficult to draw conclusions based upon statistics alone. One or two additional BAME staff receiving a Top Performance would make a significant difference to the percentage and the comparisons with other staff groups.

### 10.1.1 Staff in post at 31 March 2011

Disabled	Not disabled	Female	Male	BAME	White Other	White British	Age 40 or less	Age 41 or over
85	3186	1055	2216	20	78	3173	985	2129
2.6%	97.4%	32%	68%	0.6%	2.4%	97%	35%	65%

The table shows that our workforce is predominantly male, not disabled and White British. We are aware that this is not representative of today's society in Great Britain and this data has driven our commitment to improve our workforce diversity.

As a result of the Government's Spending Review 2010, we are in the process of downsizing. We know, from Equality Analysis of our efficiency plans, that women employees are potentially at higher risk of redundancy than male employees because women provide the majority of the administrative support, which is being further streamlined to allow continuing and enhanced delivery of the Commission's core forestry functions. We will report on the outcome of the downsizing in our next Equality Report, when the exercise has been completed.

We identify and put in place a number of reasonable adjustments each year for employees who have not formally told us that they have a disability; this leads us to believe that we have more disabled staff than have declared their disability to us. Additionally, the Staff Surveys of 2009 and 2011 have also shown more respondents identifying themselves as disabled than our recorded figures. To encourage more staff to tell us they have a disability we have;

- explained disability and the process of formally recording a disability on our internal website;
- contacted each person who has told us they have a disability to check whether they require any reasonable adjustments, or a review of their current adjustments;
- reviewed the information given to all new employees about disability and reasonable adjustments to ensure they are aware of the process, should they require it on appointment or later in their career with us;
- drafted a new management guide that will help managers to better recognise signs that indicate a disability and to manage staff appropriately.

We have a predominantly older workforce, with 65% of our staff aged 41 or over. Our staff turnover was 18% in 2009/10 and 22% in 2010/11; this was high for the Forestry Commission because of the Voluntary Exit Scheme. A total of 48% of our staff have 10 years or less service with us. Only 2% (57) of our staff are aged 20 or under and 80% of

these are on Short Term Temporary Contracts, the majority of these staff are on our Modern Apprentice Scheme, run mainly in Scotland, but with apprentices also in England and Wales.

As we reduce our staff numbers and are able to offer a Voluntary Exit Scheme, we anticipate the age balance changing, as the Early Exit schemes have attracted more applications from older employees. We are monitoring the take up of the scheme, which we also anticipate opening opportunities for younger staff who remain in the organisation.

### 10.1.2 Full/part time split at 31 March 2011

	Disabled	Not disabled	Female	Male	BAME	White Other	White British	Age 40 or less	Age 41 or over
Full time	78%	83%	65%	91%	95%	84%	83%	82%	83%
Part time	22%	17%	35%	9%	5%	16%	17%	18%	17%

Women and staff with disabilities are more likely to be part time than others; Black and Asian Minority Ethnic employees are least likely to work part time. The reasons why women and people with disabilities are more likely to work part time are generally well understood and the Forestry Commission has good family friendly policies, including a range of working pattern options, in place to support staff. We are in the process of reviewing our guidance on support for [Carers](#) and will publish that in early 2012.

In our 2009 Staff Survey, women gave a more positive response than other groups to the question 'People working part time, or who have flexible working hours, or who work from home or job share have as much opportunity to progress as people working full time about people working part time, or job sharing'. At that time 37% of our female staff worked part time, compared to 6% of male staff; it is encouraging to know that many women do not appear to consider such flexible working a barrier to their career progression in the Forestry Commission. The 2011 Staff Survey also shows a more positive response from women against all questions and particularly positively to the statements 'I am treated fairly at work', 'I feel that I have a good work/life balance' and 'I would recommend the Forestry Commission as a great place to work'.

### 10.1.3 Type of contract at 31 March 2011

	Disabled	Not disabled	Female	Male	BAME	White Other	White British	Age 40 or less	Age 41 or over
Perm	88%	88%	87%	88%	85%	65%	89%	78%	93%
FixedTerm									
Temp	1%	4%	7%	3%	5%	14%	4%	8%	2%
ShortTerm									
Temp	9%	4%	3%	5%	-	1%	5%	11%	1%
Other	1%	3%	3%	3%	10%	19%	3%	2%	4%

The table shows that most of the Forestry Commission's employees are on permanent contracts, but that fewer staff under age 40 or from a White Other ethnic background are likely to be permanently employed.

BAME staff and White Other staff are more likely to be employed on an Other basis. This includes Part Year appointments, used in our Business Unit Tree Nursery in Cheshire, where the work is seasonal and employees come from a large Polish community in the area. With such small numbers of BAME (20) and White Other staff (78), a few people who are not on permanent contracts can make a large difference in the percentage distribution.

### 10.1.4 Pay Band at 31 March 2011

	Disabled	Not disabled	Female	Male	BAME	White Other	White British	Age 40 or less	Age 41 or over
Senior Pay Bands	1%	1%	1%	1%	5%	-	1%	-	1%
Middle Pay Bands	6%	10%	8%	11%	10%	8%	10%	5%	13%
Other Pay Bands	87%	85%	89%	83%	85%	91%	85%	87%	84%
Contractors and Office Holders	6%	4%	2%	5%	-	1%	4%	8%	2%

Senior Pay Bands include our Chair and Forestry Commissioners.

The table shows that distribution of protected characteristics across the Pay Bands is quite even, although not disabled, over age 40 and male employees are slightly more likely to be in a higher pay band than disabled, younger and female employees. The differential for age at Middle Management level is explained by longer experience, which generally leads to increased application for higher graded posts. The most significant difference is for White Other Employees, none of whom are in the Senior Pay Bands and who are less likely to be in the Middle Pay Bands than other employees. 19% of our White Other staff are employed in our Business Unit on Part Year Appointments to work in our Tree Nursery in Delamere, which are not management positions.

### 10.1.5 Internal post filling and promotion during 2010/2011

	Disabled	Not Disabled	Female	Male	BAME	White Other	White British	45 or less	46 or over
Number of Applicants	12	345	107	250	12	28	317	265	92
All applicants	3%	97%	30%	70%	3%	8%	89%	74%	26%
All Interviewed	3%	97%	33%	67%	2%	7%	91%	72%	28%
All Successful	3%	97%	34%	66%	3%	3%	94%	72%	28%
All Successful and Promoted	1%	99%	39%	61%	-	6%	94%	76%	24%
As % of applicants within each Protected Characteristic Group									
Interviewed	75%	73%	80%	70%	33%	61%	76%	71%	78%
All Successful	25%	29%	33%	27%	<1%	18%	31%	28%	32%
Successful and Promoted	8%	20%	26%	17%	-	14%	21%	20%	18%

With the exception of Forest Research, which holds traditional promotion boards for its scientific staff, the Forestry Commission holds open internal competition for many of its vacancies. Success in an internal competition will result in promotion when the job advertised is at a higher pay band than that of the successful applicant.

The table shows that staff over the age of 45, and women, are more likely to be successful in their application for vacant posts than their colleagues. Women are more likely to be successful for applications to a higher pay band. Disabled, BAME and White Other applicants were less likely to be successful or promoted. On closer inspection, 7 of the 12 applications from BAME staff were for one position, which was secured by a BAME applicant. Lower numbers of applications from disabled, BAME and White Other staff mean that any additional single success would have a significant impact on the figures.

We shall continue to monitor this data and establish whether there is any trend, or any indication that staff from BAME or White Other backgrounds are less likely to apply for vacant

posts than other staff are. If so, we shall invite the [Equality and Diversity Staff Forum](#) to help us understand any barriers and identify solutions, to encourage more of our BAME staff to enter internal competitions.

### 10.1.6 External recruitment during 2010/2011

	Disabled	Not disabled	Disability not known	Female	Male	Gender not known	BAME	White Other	White British	Race not known	45 or less	46 or over	Age nNot known
Number of Applicants	68	1545	249	574	1059	229	77	121	1413	251	1332	253	277
All applicants	4%	83%	13%	31%	57%	12%	4%	5%	77%	13%	72%	14%	15%
All Interviewed	7%	82%	10%	31%	61%	8%	2%	3%	85%	11%	71%	16%	13%
All Successful	4%	91%	6%	42%	55%	4%	-	8%	89%	4%	77%	13%	9%
As % of applicants within each Protected Characteristic Group													
Interviewed	21%	10%	8%	10%	11%	7%	4%	8%	11%	8%	10%	13%	9%
Successful	3%	3%	1%	4%	3%	1%	-	3%	3%	1%	3%	3%	2%

The number of posts advertised externally was reduced due to the downsizing process particularly in our England, Forest Research and supporting central services (Silvan House) management units. As a result of the Government spending review, we have stopped promoting our job opportunities in targeted media outlets to avoid raising expectations beyond our current capacity to recruit. The number of applicants for 2010/11 was 1862, compared to a total of 7248 for a greater number of positions offered during 2009/10. A higher percentage of applications were received from disabled people and from people from Black and Asian Minority Ethnic backgrounds this year than had been recorded in the previous year.

We operate a guaranteed interview scheme for all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum criteria for the post, and who ask for the consideration. This explains the higher incidence of invitation to interview for disabled candidates, who are as likely to be successful as not disabled applicants.

A higher percentage of women applicants was successful than male applicants, although the percentage of women invited to interview was lower than the percentage of male applicants

invited to interview. There was no difference in the percentage of applicants we appointed aged over 46 to those who were aged under 46, although the number of older applicants was considerably lower.

Male applicants and those from a BAME background were least likely to be successful, with no BAME successes during the year. We also note that BAME applicants are less likely to be invited to interview than other applicants. We shall investigate past data and review our process to ensure there is fairness throughout our recruitment process.

During 2010/11 we moved from a paper based application system to an on-line system, with the option of paper-based applications on request. We are encouraged that this does not appear to have had a negative impact on the levels of application from any protected characteristic group, which supports the conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment.

### 10.1.7 Performance marking for the year ending 31 March 2011

	Disabled	Not disabled	Female	Male	BAME	White Other	White British	Age 40 or less	Age 41 or over
Top Performer	15%	19%	22%	17%	12%	24%	18%	22%	17%
Good Performer	85%	81%	78%	83%	88%	76%	82%	78%	83%
Not Fully Effective – less than 1%, figures would be disclosive									

The data show that employees with a disability are slightly less likely to be awarded a Top Performance rating than those without a disability and the percentage difference is exactly the same as it was during 2009/10. Women are more likely than men to be awarded a Top Performance and this repeats the 2009/10 data. The data also shows that BAME employees are less likely to receive a Top Performance rating than any other employee.

We had some concerns after 2008/09 that BAME employees were less likely to receive a Top Performance rating than other employees and completed an analysis, looking at past data, including age and length of service and comparison with other ethnic groups in the Forestry Commission. We found that length of service has a significant impact on the probability of being regarded as a Top Performer; more than half (56%) of all employees receiving a Top Performance rating had more than ten years service. At 31 March 2010, only 9% (2) of our BAME employees had more than 10 years service. We therefore concluded that there was no evidence for discrimination and note that the small numbers of BAME staff make it difficult to draw conclusions based upon statistics alone.

### 10.1.8 Internal training, events attended per person during 2010/11

	Disabled	Not disabled	Female	Male	BAME	White Other	White British	Age 40 or less	Age 41 or over
Forest Man'ment and Operations	1.20	1.39	0.68	1.72	1.75	0.91	1.40	1.73	1.20
IT, Product Knowledge People Skills	0.51	0.69	0.75	0.65	1.55	0.76	0.68	0.87	0.58
Man'ment Dev'ment Prog	0.24	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.25	0.27	0.21	0.25	0.19
All training	1.94	2.29	1.64	2.58	3.55	1.94	2.29	2.86	1.28

The table shows that those under age 40 received more training than those over 40 during the year and this is to be expected, as our new recruits are predominantly under age 40. Our BAME staff received the most training per individual and this can be explained by the relatively short length of service in that group compared to other groups. Men received more training than women, but that additional training is all focussed in the Forest Management and Operations category, predominantly staffed by men and concerned with the physical and technical aspects of forestry.

Staff with disabilities received less internal training than staff without disabilities. However, we note that disabled staff received slightly more external training (10.1.9) than their colleagues during the year. We will continue to monitor this annually and will instigate further examination if a trend becomes apparent.

#### Case Study

All candidates to all training events are invited to inform us if they require any assistance to participate fully. The Learning and Development team have changed the dates of events to accommodate people with caring responsibilities, and where that has not been possible, have delivered training on a one-to-one basis at the person's home location. Other adjustments have been increasing a module completion time from a

standard 18 months to 24 months to assist a person who works part time, and providing course material and workbooks well in advance to a person with dyslexia, helping them to participate more effectively on the day of the training. We have also changed a traditional practice, where delegates stayed together overnight during their attendance at a Development Centre, to allow delegates to spend the night in their own home if they need to.

### 10.1.9 External training, events attended per person during 2010/11

	Disabled	Not disabled	Female	Male	BAME	White Other	White British	Age 40 or less	Age 41 or over
IT	0.02	0.05	0.04	0.02	0.50		0.02	0.03	0.02
Interperson Skills	0.01	-	0.01	-	-		0.01	0.01	0.01
Man'ment training	0.02	0.06	0.04	0.02	-		0.02	0.03	0.02
Personal Dev'ment	0.19	0.14	0.15	0.21	-		0.20	0.19	0.19
Technical training	0.24	0.18	0.18	0.27	-	0.46	0.24	0.25	0.24
All training	0.49	0.42	0.41	0.52	0.50	0.46	0.47	0.50	0.48

External training covers Continuous Professional Development, specialist courses and conferences. The number of events is roughly even for each group. In previous years employees with disabilities have attended fewer events than staff without disabilities, but during 2010/11 attended more. The Table does not suggest any uneven access to external training.

### 10.1.10 Leavers during 2010/2011

	Disabled	Not disabled	Female	Male	BAME	White Other	White British	Age 40 or less	Age 41 or over
Leavers in group	15%	23%	24%	22%	20%	29%	23%	37%	15%
End of contract	23%	62%	59%	63%	67%	80%	61%	82%	34%
Retirement	54%	18%	15%	21%	17%	3%	20%	-	44%
Resignation	8%	15%	19%	13%	17%	17%	15%	15%	15%
Compulsory Early Leaver	-	2%	5%	<1%	-	-	2%	1%	3%
Dismissal	-	1%	1%	2%	-	-	1%	1%	1%
Death in Service	8%	<1%	-	1%	-	-	1%	-	1%
Transfer / Secondment	-	1%	<1%	1%	-	-	<1%	<1%	1%
Career Break	8%	-	<1%	-	-	-	<1%	<1%	<1%

The most common reason for leaving was due to termination of contract. The end of Short Term Temporary Appointment contracts (STTAs) accounts for 61% of all leavers during the year. STTAs are short term appointments that last up to two years and are used for seasonal and short term jobs and to cover for staff absences like maternity leave, or to cover naturally occurring vacancies when downsizing and re-organisation is anticipated and the recruitment of replacements by permanent appointment is inappropriate.

Generally, STTA staff are younger than other staff and this accounts for the higher level of leavers aged 40 or under. We have a high proportion of White Other staff on temporary contracts and that also accounts for the higher leaver rate for White Other staff as a result of termination of contract. Disabled employees were least likely to leave because their contract had terminated, although the percentage of disabled staff on temporary contracts is comparable to other staff. The low disabled population means that one or two additional leavers would have had a significant impact on the proportions shown in the table.

More than half the disabled staff who left did so because they retired (which includes voluntary early retirement options). Employees with disability were less likely to resign

than other staff. Other resignation levels are comparable and indicate no underlying difficulties that might prompt a heavier turnover from some groups than from others.

### 10.1.11 Discipline during 2010/11

Disabled	Not Disabled	Female	Male	BAME	White Other	White British	Age 40 or under	Age 41 or over
0	19	2	17	0	0	19	8	11
-	100%	11%	89%	-	-	100%	42%	58%

Nineteen staff were disciplined during the year, representing less than 1% of staff in post. All disciplinary proceedings resulted in a penalty. There is no evidence from the table, or from the reasons for discipline (not shown) of any discrimination.

### 10.1.12 Grievances raised during 2010/11

Disabled	Not Disabled	Female	Male	BAME	White Other	White British	Age 40 or under	Age 41 or over
0	12	5	7	1	0	11	6	6
-	100%	42%	58%	8%	-	92%	50%	50%

Only twelve grievances were raised during the year, representing grievances from less than 1% of staff in post. The data and the reasons (not shown) for the grievances do not indicate any discrimination in our management practices.

Of the grievances, three were partially upheld, two were resolved through mediation, one was informally resolved and six were not upheld.

### 10.1.13 Work patterns at 31 March 2011

	Disabled	Not disabled	Female	Male	BAME	White Other	White British	Age 40 or less	Age 41 or over
Five weekdays	79%	84%	71%	91%	95%	92%	85%	80%	88%
1 – 4 weekdays	12%	6%	15%	2%	-	4%	6%	6%	6%
Other	9%	10%	14%	7%	5%	4%	10%	14%	8%

Staff with disabilities and female staff are more likely than others to work a one to four day week. This reflects what would be expected when considering traditional caring responsibilities and difficulties that some people with disabilities may have to sustain a five day week working regime. Male employees are much less likely to work one to four weekdays, and no BAME staff work between one and four weekdays.

Other work patterns include Annualised Hours, which allow for attendance to vary through the year, and Rostered contracts, which generally include duty turns over weekends. This flexibility is important to the Forestry Commission, as it allows us to manage both recreation and forest management needs and accommodate seasonal peaks and troughs.

### 10.1.14 Return to work after Maternity Leave FY 2005/6 – 2010/11

	Number of absences started	Returns before 31/3/11	% returning	Still absent at 31/3/11	Running absence balance	Leavers
FY 05/06	29	24	83%	3	3	2
FY 06/07	40	36	90%	0	3	4
FY 07/08	30	29	97%	0	3	1
FY 08/09	32	27	84%	2	5	3
FY 09/10	40	35	88%	1	6	4
FY 10/11	33	21	64%	9	15	3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>84%</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>

Recognising that maternity leave spans reporting years and can last longer than a year, we

reviewed data since 2005/06 to give a more complete picture of our return rate. An average return rate of 84% compares favourably with the GB percentage of women who return to work after maternity leave, which the [Health and Safety Executive](#) calculated at 69% in 2002.

A number of our female employees have had more than one maternity absence; each is counted as a separate event in the data. We have counted those women who returned to work for three months or more after maternity leave as returners, not as leavers. Those who returned for less than three months and then left, have been counted as leavers.

A combination of paid and unpaid Maternity Leave is available and some women have also taken a Career Break to extend their period of absence while keeping in touch with the organisation. 88 women took the paid and unpaid leave combination and seven extended their absence further by a Career Break.

## 11. Equal Pay

The Forestry Commission is committed to the principle of equal opportunities in employment. We believe it is in the Commission's interest and makes good business sense that all aspects of pay are awarded fairly and equitably.

Below the Senior Staff Group there are 10 pay bands, reflecting 8 levels of job responsibility. At pay band 5 and 6a level, there are 'Operational' pay bands for staff in roles which require longer and more variable working hours than the norm, and on-call duties. Staff in these pay bands receive a higher basic salary than their non-operational peers, but do not generally qualify for paid overtime.

The Forestry Commission undertakes regular pay audits to review our policies, their application, and to identify any direct or indirect causes of pay inequality. For the past ten years, we have been actively re-structuring our pay system, shortening the length of pay scales and the time it takes to progress from entry point to pay band maximum. This approach is steadily reducing the gender pay gaps in our system, as measured by the two primary indicators (mean average salary and mean average earnings).

The shortening of the pay scales means employees can theoretically reach the maximum of the Pay Band within four years. However, the Civil Service pay freeze since 2010 has halted this annual progression and scope to address outstanding Pay Gap issues will be extremely limited until the pay freeze is lifted.

## 11.1 Average earnings at 31 March 2011

Average earnings include Salary and Overtime. Protected characteristic earnings are compared to all-staff earnings by Pay Band.

	All staff average earnings	Disabled // All staff	Not disabled // All staff	Female // All staff	Male // All staff	BAME // All staff	White Other // All staff	White British // All staff	Age 44 or under // All staff	Age 45 or over // All staff
SSG1A	74,373		0.0%	-3.5%	1.2%			0.0%	-3.5%	2.1%
SSG1	69,201		0.0%	-3.2%	0.6%			0.0%	-0.7%	1.5%
PB1	63,789		0.0%	3.3%	-0.3%			0.0%	0.5%	-1.1%
PB2	52,584		0.0%	-0.5%	0.2%	-10.1%	-10.1%	0.2%	2.0%	0.0%
PB3	41,611	-1.6%	0.0%	-4.4%	1.1%	1.9%	-0.2%	0.0%	-2.2%	1.0%
PB4	34,339	-1.6%	0.0%	-2.9%	1.1%	-0.7%	-4.6%	0.2%	0.7%	-1.2%
PB5Op	30,678	1.8%	0.0%	-3.4%	0.6%	-6.7%	-8.8%	0.3%	-0.5%	0.3%
PB5	26,474	0.9%	-0.1%	-0.9%	1.1%	-4.8%	-2.3%	0.1%	-0.4%	0.3%
PB6AOp	26,922	3.7%	-0.1%	-4.0%	1.1%	-8.9%	-3.1%	0.1%	0.7%	-1.0%
PB6A	25,084	-2.0%	0.1%	-9.3%	2.8%	-7.7%	-9.1%	0.2%	-2.2%	1.9%
PB6B	20,100	-1.6%	0.1%	-1.6%	1.5%	-2.7%	-3.3%	0.1%	-1.0%	0.8%
PB7	15,621	-7.5%	0.2%	0.4%	-0.2%		1.5%	-0.1%	1.1%	-1.4%
All Staff	28,156	-5.8%	0.3%	-10.0%	4.9%	-4.0%	-8.8%	0.5%	-3.2%	2.6%

We do not show the average salary for Pay Bands SSG3 and SSG2, as there is only one person in each, to do so would be disclosive and there is no comparator.

The data indicates some significant differences in average earnings per Pay Band between the different protected characteristics for which we capture data. However, seniority and overtime working can explain the major discrepancies as follows;

- PB2 BAME: the majority of BAME employees in this Pay Band are on the Minimum of the scale as they have less than one years' service.
- PB2 White Other: the majority of White Other staff in this Pay Band are on the Minimum of the scale as they have less than one years' service.
- PB5Op BAME: none of the BAME staff are on the maximum of the pay scale, which is not typical of the profile for this Pay Band.
- PB5Op White Other: none of the White Other staff are on the Maximum of the pay scale, 29% have less than one years' service.
- PB6AOp BAME: the few BAME staff in this Pay Band are on the Minimum +1 of the pay scale, which is not typical of the profile for this Pay Band.
- PB6A Female: female employees have worked less overtime than the all-staff average for this Pay Band; women earned an average of £247, compared to the all-staff average of £2147 in the year. On average women work less overtime than men across all Pay Bands, where the all-staff average for all overtime worked was £710, but only £258 for

all women.

- PB6A BAME: BAME employees worked less overtime than their colleagues, earning £427 compared to an all-staff average of £2147 in this Pay Band. BAME employees work less overtime across all Pay Bands than their colleagues, with an average of £419 for the year compared to £710 for all staff across all Pay Bands.
- PB6A White Other: 70% of White Other employees in this Pay Band are either at the minimum or the minimum plus one of the Pay Scale, which is not typical of all staff. Additionally, White Other employees worked less overtime in this Pay Band than their colleagues, earning an average of £773 compared to an all-staff average of £2147 in the year.
- PB7 Disabled: the majority of disabled employees in this Pay Band are on the minimum step. This is not typical of the Pay Band, which has only two steps, the maximum and the minimum. The overtime earnings were also lower at £97 compared to £201 for the Pay Band.
- All BAME staff. The overall difference of -4% looks low compared to higher differences in individual Pay Bands. The explanation is that the majority of the 20 BAME employees are at Pay Bands 5 and 6B, where the difference between them and their colleagues is comparatively low. BAME employees also earn more than their colleagues at PB3.

Our forest-based roles such as forest crafts, machine operators, etc were mostly perceived in the past as a male profession. With the average length of service being 15.8 years, this is still apparent in the structure of the workforce today, as our longer-serving employees tend to be male, therefore proportionately we have more men at the maximum of the pay scales than women, which gives rise to a 'natural' pay gap.

These roles also had a greater business need to work additional hours, and this continues, although to a lesser extent than in previous years.

Median salaries for all staff are equivalent to the maximum of each Pay Band, reflecting how few steps there are between the minimum and maximum salary. There are differences in the median salary of some Pay Bands within each protected characteristic but these are explained by the few numbers of staff in those Pay Bands and their relative lack of seniority.

## 11.2 Occupational segregation

We have a large number of different 'professions' within the Forestry Commission; foresters, engineers, land agents, finance, audit and HR specialists, IT experts, scientists, conservationists etc. All these professions are subject to the same pay and pay band system as each other and many span a range of Pay Bands. We have examined occupational segregation for gender and have established that any differences result from the numbers in each Pay Band and their seniority. We do not consider that further examination of data in this

way would reveal any different answer, but we will continue to monitor this.

## 12. Our approach to monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is a key priority for the Forestry Commission and will form the basis, along with Equality Analysis, of future action. Comprehensive and meaningful data, information and research will be collected and used to build an evidence base to help us assess our progress in meeting our objectives for equality.

We will ensure that monitoring information in relation to employment and service provision offers:

- Comprehensive benchmarks against which we can monitor progress
- A quantitative basis for Equality Analysis with which we can highlight areas of required action.

The Forestry Commission will continue to monitor the required areas under the Equality Act and will report and benchmark progress on an annual basis. This information will be used to identify gaps in representation. Where gaps are identified, action will be taken to investigate reasons and to address discrepancies appropriately.

## 13. Conclusion

We continue to be encouraged with the progress we are making on all aspects of diversity, however we are very aware that we still have a challenge ahead of us and know that there is more to do. This will not be an easy challenge, many of the issues will take time, but work is underway and we are committed to making a real difference to our customers, our partners and our staff.

Thank you for reading our annual monitoring report. If you have any views, please write to us at:

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If you would like a paper copy of this document or to receive it in an alternative format, please contact us at the address or email above or phone us on **0131 314 6575**.