

Disability Equality Scheme Monitoring Report

1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010

The FC's Disability Equality Monitoring Report for the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010

The purpose of this report is to outline the progress made against the actions outlined in the Disability Equality Scheme, to provide annual monitoring statistics and analysis of the FC's staff and to highlight some examples of good practice through various initiatives undertaken during 2009-10.

Introduction

The Forestry Commission

The Forestry Commission (FC) is the Government department responsible for the protection and expansion of Britain's forests and woodlands.

Forestry is a devolved subject and the FC answers separately to Ministers in England, Scotland and Wales. The Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has responsibility for forestry in England as well as certain activities such as international forestry affairs that remain reserved at Westminster. Scottish Ministers have responsibility for forestry in Scotland and the Welsh Assembly Government has responsibility for forestry in Wales. Therefore, the FC is responsible for advising Forestry Ministers within the Westminster Parliament, Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales on forestry policy and for implementing the three separate forestry policy strategies across England, Scotland and Wales.

This devolved structure allows the FC to focus more clearly on delivering the policies of the individual Governments while still having the ability to take a GB-wide approach to 'cross-border' issues.

The FC has a Board of Commissioners with duties and powers prescribed by statute, consisting of a Chair and up to ten other Forestry Commissioners, including its Director General, who are appointed by the Queen on the recommendation of Ministers. The Commissioners' programmes to deliver each country's forestry strategy are set out in Corporate Plans for England, Scotland and Wales. These programmes are directed and financed by the three administrations to which the FC is directly accountable.

The FC also has three executive agencies that work to targets set by Commissioners and Ministers:

- Public forests, woodlands and other lands in England and Scotland are managed by Forest Enterprise agencies on behalf of the FC in that country.
- Forest Research is a GB-wide agency that delivers high-quality scientific research and surveys, to inform the development of forestry policies and practices, and promote high standards of sustainable forest management.

Ministers have agreed that, whilst most of the FC's work is now done at country level, a number of the FC's functions would be funded directly by Westminster and operated on a cross-GB basis by Corporate and Forestry Support Division. In this GB role, the FC provides advice and support to the UK Government and to the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales on the standards for sustainable forest management and encourages good forestry practice. In addition, as the FC operates across GB, central support services such as HR are provided to the entire organisation on a GB basis.

The FC works with a whole range of partners from private sector landowners to sports clubs, local communities to national businesses, on a whole host of recreation, regeneration and educational schemes.

FC responsibilities span research, commercial timber production, sustainability programmes and policy, as well as learning and leisure.

The FC's 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 while sustaining this great resource for the future.

The Forestry Commission's Mission and Values

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

The objective of the FC GB is to take the lead, on behalf of all three administrations, in the development and promotion of sustainable forest management and to support its achievement nationally.

We aim to be 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.

Forestry Commission's People Strategy

Our People Strategy demonstrates our commitment to our staff and how it will attract, manage and develop them.

The People Strategy outlines a fair and consistent approach in dealing with staff.

The People Strategy has the following high-level goals:

- to demonstrate excellence in the leadership and management of people;
- to support people in their professional and personal development and improve organisational performance;
- to maintain a safe and healthy environment and develop a diverse workforce;
- to adopt people practices for the future, which support efficient and effective processes of delivery

The People Strategy is presently in the process of being reviewed and updated and Diversity will be a key element within it.

The Disability Equality Duty

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 places both general and specific duties on public sector organisations such as the FC.

The General Duty requires public bodies to:

- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act;
- eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disability;

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons;
- take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons;
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons;
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life;

To support progress in delivering the general duty, there are the following specific duties:

- publish a Disability Equality Scheme demonstrating how it intends to fulfil its general and specific duties;
- involve disabled people in the development of the Scheme;
- carry-out impact assessments;
- make arrangements for gathering relevant information;
- develop an action plan;
- take the steps set out in its action plan, within three years;
- publish a report summarising the progress made with the action plan, the results of information gathering and how that information has been used

The Forestry Commission's Disability Equality Scheme

The FC's second disability Equality Scheme was published in November 2009 and is available [on our Internet pages](#). This outlines the FC's commitment to both the general and specific Disability Equality Duties.

The Scheme also outlines the details of how the FC will:

- address the requirements of the Disability Equality Employment Duties;
- provide services and initiatives that will embrace diversity and promote equality of opportunity;
- meet both the general and specific duties of the Disability Equality Duty

The Disability Equality Monitoring Statistics

The FC's employment monitoring statistics are attached at Appendix 1 and comprise the following tables:

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Tables will show Disability, FC Management Unit and staff in post at 31 March 2010*</p> <p>The Tables do not always break the information down to Management Unit Level. This is because the numbers involved are small and we wish to avoid inadvertent disclosure.</p> | |
| Table 1 | All Staff in post at 31 March 2010 |
| Table 2 | Full time / part time |
| Table 3 | Type of contract |
| Table 4 | Pay Band (grade) |
| Table 5 | Internal recruitment and promotion *during 2009/10 |
| Table 6 | External recruitment *during 2009/10 |
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| Table 9 | External training *during 2009/10 |
| Table 10 | Leavers *during 2009/10 |
| Table 11 | Discipline *during 2009/10 |
| Table 11a | Grievance *during 2009/10 |
| Table 12 | Work pattern |

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

Analysis of Statistical Monitoring

Table 1. Disability of all staff in post at 31 March 2010

74 of our staff have declared themselves as disabled to us; this is the same number as at 31 March 2009 and represents 2.1% of all employees. These figures have remained reasonably consistent since 2008.

We understand that this is a low representation compared to the numbers of working age people in GB with a disability. We know that we have more people with a disability than have declared, because we make reasonable adjustments for staff who require them, but who have not declared themselves disabled.

We had hoped that the Staff Survey, conducted in September 2009, would give us a better indication of the numbers of disabled staff, but from a response rate of 61%, only 104 respondents declared a disability, representing only 5% of all staff who responded to the survey. This percentage is lower than we anticipated, but would suggest that we employ a minimum of 30 additional staff with a disability, but who have not declared it to us. We took a number of action points from the analysis of the staff survey and these are shown in this report under [Internal Initiatives, Staff Survey](#).

Action will continue to assist managers and staff to understand what the criteria for disability is and to provide information and support on a range of different disabilities. These actions form part of our Action Plan for 2010/11.

Table 2. Full-time/part-time split

83% of employees who have declared themselves disabled have full time contracts compared to 81% of staff who have not declared themselves disabled.

Table 3. Type of contract

96% of employees who have declared themselves disabled have a permanent contract of employment, compared to 85% of staff who have not declared a disability. 66% of those who have declared themselves disabled and who are not on a permanent contract are re-employed pensioners. This indicates that our declared disabled employees are more likely to be employed on a permanent contract of employment than their not declared disabled colleagues.

Table 4. Pay Band (Grade)

There is a slightly lower representation of disabled staff (7%) at Middle Management level than of not disabled staff (10%) and consequently a slightly higher

representation of declared disabled staff in the remaining grades (93% disabled staff compared to 90% not disabled staff). Because of the low number of staff who have declared a disability a small change in the number of disabled staff at any of the Pay Band levels would serve to make a significant impact on the comparison percentages. No employees who have declared a disability are employed at the senior levels (23 employees) in the FC.

Table 5. Internal recruitment and promotion

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

During 2009/10, only one employee with a declared disability applied for an internal vacancy. That person was interviewed, but was not successful in gaining the position.

With such low numbers of declared disabled staff, it is difficult to come to any conclusions about the likelihood of people with a declared disability to apply for internal moves, including those that involve a promotion. The percentage of declared disabled employees applying for internal posts is lower than that for their not declared disabled colleagues, but an additional 3 declared disabled applicants would have made the percentage of applicants from each group equal. We shall continue to monitor this area to establish whether there is any long-term reluctance from employees who declare a disability to apply for internal positions.

Table 6. External recruitment

We received applications from a higher number of people who declared a disability during 2009/10 than we did in any of the previous three years. However, the 109 applicants represented only 2% of all applications and this is a low figure considering the population of disabled people in GB. It may be that many disabled people rule themselves out from working with the Forestry Commission, perhaps considering that it requires high physical demands. To combat these perceptions our adverts are designed explain the physical and mental demands of each post and to encourage applicants from every diverse background.

We operate a guaranteed interview system for those disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for the position, regardless of how many applicants reach and surpass that minimum requirement. Disabled applicants are twice as likely to be invited to interview (18%) than not disabled applicants (9%) and this repeats the analysis for 2008/09.

During 2009/10 no disabled applicants were recruited. We shall continue to monitor this area to ensure no potential discrimination is occurring at interview. In 2008/09 two disabled people were recruited, representing 5% of all disabled applicants, which was the same percentage as for not disabled applicants.

Table 7. Performance marking

15% of employees who have declared a disability were awarded a Top Performance marking, compared to 19% of staff who have not declared themselves disabled. No staff member who had declared a disability was awarded a Not Fully Effective marking, compared to 11 staff who had not declared a disability.

Those on Probation (8 months), Short Term Temporary Contract, Senior Staff Grades and Office Holders do not receive performance assessments. Some permanent staff who left the organisation before 31 March will have received a performance mark and these marks are included in this table. This explains why the total of those who received a performance marking is different from staff in post at 31 March 2010.

Table 8. Internal Training (event attendance) during 2009/10

On average, of all staff who attended internal training events, staff who have declared a disability attended fewer events (2.15) than staff who have not declared a disability (2.49 events). The difference of 0.34 events per declared disabled employee is much less than during 2008/09, when the difference was 0.75 events and this is encouraging. The difference is that staff who have declared a disability received less Forest Management and Operational training than staff who have not declared a disability. This type of training mainly includes physical skills and activities, often based in an outside forest environment. Office centred training (IT, People Skills and Product Knowledge) was attended equally.

Our internal training team held specific diversity sessions at two of their team meetings, in addition to attending the compulsory diversity training, which all staff received during 2009/10. Their awareness of disability issues is high and they have reviewed and improved the information available to prospective attendees regarding course attendance (venue and course structure) to assist those with disabilities to understand what necessary adjustments they might require. The internal training team have also commenced monitoring of their Management Development Programme to ensure that attendees properly represent the staffing profile of the FC.

Table 9. External Training

Of staff who attended external training events, those who have declared a disability attended fewer events (0.24 per person) than staff who have not declared a disability

(0.40 events). This was similar in 2008/09, though the 'gap' has slightly reduced, which is encouraging. This is only the second year that we have been able to capture this data and we will continue to monitor it.

Table 10. Leavers during 2009/10

Staff who have declared a disability were less likely to leave the organisation than those who have not declared a disability. Two declared disabled staff resigned, three left at the end of their casual contract, two left on age retirement and two left early due to restructuring. No declared disabled staff were medically retired or dismissed.

Tables 11 and 11a. Discipline during 2009/10. Grievance during 2009/10

No member of staff who had declared a disability was disciplined and none raised a grievance. The tables have therefore been omitted from this report.

Table 12. Work Pattern

Employees who have declared a disability work very similar patterns to those who have not. 86% of those who have declared a disability work a standard five day week, compared to 85% of staff who have not declared a disability.

Disability Equality Initiatives

Customer services

During 2009 three separate public opinion of forestry surveys were undertaken – across the UK, Scotland and Wales. These surveys give us a good indication of how people with disabilities consider forests as destinations for recreation.

| Public Opinion Surveys 2009 | Survey | Disabled respondents | Not disabled respondents |
|--|--------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Visited woodlands in the past few years | UK | 65% | 80% |
| Not visit more often or at all due to personal mobility problems | UK | 35% | 6% |
| Not visit more often or at all as don't have a car | UK | 18% | 9% |

The surveys show that disabled people have a wish to visit forests and give some indication of the barriers to their greater use of them. The Forestry Commission continues to engage with local disabled groups to establish what would encourage their members to visit forests more often and to create with them tailor made facilities

and events that allow access for all. The following examples indicate the type of work we are doing and more examples are shown at Appendix 2 of this Report.

External Initiatives

Civil Service Diversity and Equality Awards 2010

We are delighted to again have been shortlisted for the Civil Service Equality Awards. Our work at East Midlands District was nominated in the Understanding and Engaging with Communities category and covered a range of initiatives, including outreach for young people with autism and for deaf people.

Challenge Funding

Forestry Commission Scotland awarded a number of grants under its Woods In and Around Towns and its Forests for People challenge funds, targeted to help revitalise existing woodlands for local people and to encourage community based education and health initiatives. Four of the grants awarded across Scotland included funds to improve disability access and one to fund activities aimed to improve the mental health of people participating.

Small Grants Funding

Forestry Commission England repeated its Small Grants Fund to support activity focussed at attracting a wider diversity of people to visit woods and forests. The grants, worth up to £500 each, were available to not-for-profit organisations throughout England to run activities or events in woodlands. The Small Funds Grant has stimulated local action to encourage people from diverse communities to benefit from activities and events held in local woodland for their general health and well-being. The projects funded have been varied and covered a range of issues, including providing additional and tailored support to disabled people. Some of the projects that benefited from this scheme are listed in [Appendix 2 'Best Practice Examples'](#).

Award winning Branching Out

We are proud that Branching Out was awarded the UK Public Health Association Michael Varnam Award 2010 and the "Best Green Healthcare Provision" at the Scottish Green Awards 2010.

Our Branching Out programme aims to encourage people with mental health problems to take part in therapeutic woodland projects and was featured in our Disability Monitoring Report for 2008/09. Branching Out is based on partnerships, uniting organisations that would not normally work together. Partners include Forestry Commission Scotland, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Glasgow Centre for Population Health, Glasgow Clyde Valley Green Network and Glasgow City Council. The success of Branching Out has enabled it to expand from its original geographic base and the programme is now delivered in both Glasgow and Edinburgh with further expansion

scheduled during 2010. This programme was fully described in our 2008/09 Disability Monitoring Report.

Visitor Initiatives

The Forestry Commission continues to seek ways to engage people with disabilities to visit its forests.

East Midlands Forest District (FC England) has devised a work experience programme offering young adults with autism the opportunity to work with rangers in the environmental sector. After a month four young adults with autism could adapt to the outdoor environment, copy and repeat simple tasks and engage with a new leader, something that wouldn't have been possible without the experience.

The same District also developed a scheme to provide interpreters for the deaf community to enable participation in wildlife surveys and conservation work. 20 deaf volunteers took part and felt comfortable in different surroundings, forming new friendships and gaining confidence.

Forestry Commission Wales has provided 'sound-shuttles' (Audio Frequency Induction Loop Systems) in all its main offices and Visitor Centres and had them installed in time for Deaf Awareness week 2010.

Garwnant Visitor Centre, five miles from Merthyr Tydfil, has been fully refurbished and is now among the most disabled-friendly buildings in the UK, having worked with a local supplier of specialised equipment for disabled people, which donated over £16k of equipment. Coupled with extensions of the all-ability trails around the Centre, Garwnant provides first class facilities to enable people with disabilities to visit and enjoy the forest environment.

Advertising

We continued to place advertisements, both to consider FC as an employer and to consider visiting FC land for recreation, in a range of Disability specific magazines. We had editorial features on recreation opportunities in two of those magazines; one focussing on activities for disabled children and people in the younger age groups. We contributed to a special feature on encouraging people with disabilities to apply for public appointments in the Civil Service and we also ran an editorial encouraging disabled people to consider a career with us.

We placed a half page pictorial advert in the UK Metro paper, with images of people (including those with disabilities) visiting our forests and the word 'welcome' in nine languages. With details of our website and our strap line 'Diverse woodlands, diverse

communities' we hoped to encourage a wide range of people from all backgrounds to consider visiting our forests.

Internal initiatives

All staff training

A series of Diversity training events commenced in February 2009 and continued until March 2010. There are four different Diversity training events, each aimed at specific sectors of the organisation, depending upon their exposure to customers and their involvement in policy making. It was compulsory for all staff in the Forestry Commission to attend one of these events. The training looks at all aspects of diversity, including disability awareness.

Equality and Diversity sessions are run during each New Entrant (induction) course and all new and existing training events managed by the Forestry Commission have been reviewed to ensure diversity messages (including disability) are included appropriately.

Staff Survey

We conducted, in partnership with a private company to ensure confidentiality, a staff survey in September 2009. For the first time, the survey included specific equality questions. We also asked respondents to identify their ethnic origin, gender, age, sex, disabled status, sexual orientation and religion. We received a 61% response.

The total number of survey respondents who said they had a disability was 104 and this compares to 74 measured through self-declaration (at 31 March 2010). This is not as large a difference as we might have anticipated and the number declared disabled through the Staff Survey represents just 5% of all staff who took part in the Staff Survey.

We have been able to analyse the results of the Survey in a number of ways, particularly looking at minority group responses in relation to the majority and to gain an understanding of all staff attitude towards the equality and diversity agenda.

The analysis showed that those who had declared themselves to be disabled were more negative about their experience in the Forestry Commission than any other group identified by the Staff Survey. Those with mental health and physical disabilities were particularly negative in their responses; those who declared deafness were much closer to the whole FC response, except about communications.

The analysis suggested that people with disabilities were likely to feel marginalised and less valued than their colleagues without a disability; that their skills and opinions were not recognised, utilised or enhanced as much as they thought they should be.

Recommendations arising from this analysis were:

- Train and support managers to communicate better with people with disabilities, recognising that some additional input or different approach may be necessary in order to come to a good understanding.
- Help managers to identify the skills that disabled people have and encourage further skill development.
- Ensure that managers do not marginalise those staff with disabilities and recognise and encourage potential in everyone.
- Encourage managers to work with individual disabled employees and HR Case Managers via Occupational Health and other disability specialists to identify what tools and approaches would be most successful to maximise the performance and potential of each individual disabled person.
- Ensure disabled staff and managers understand the actions that must be taken to accommodate disabilities, including the provision of appropriate reasonable adjustments.

The Management Boards of the Forestry Commission were informed of this analysis by the Business Partners. Our in-house People Support Team (welfare) was briefed to be aware and to assist managers to deal with real situations. Our HR Case Managers were also informed, as they specifically assist both employee and managers to identify appropriate reasonable adjustments. All our in-house training events for managers include the requirement to promote equality and diversity.

Diverse Woodlands, Diverse Communities

The new strap line for diversity within the Forestry Commission reflects the Commission's environmental biodiversity agenda. A 21 page A4 booklet was designed in-house and distributed to all staff. The booklet serves to inform all staff of the importance of diversity, explains some equality terms and responsibilities and has separate sections for each strand of diversity. Although issued before the Equality Act 2010 received royal assent, it references that Act. A foreword by the Director General and a Forestry Commissioner and an end note by the Commission's Chair, demonstrates senior level commitment to this agenda. Featuring profiles of staff and customer services, the disability element focuses on our [Branching Out programme](#), running in central Scotland and detailed elsewhere in this report.

We commissioned the design of posters to be displayed in each office and these incorporate real life images of staff and of visitors to FC woods, including images of disabled visitors. Pull up banners using the same design have been purchased and

distributed to major FC offices for use in their reception areas and at external events where we have display capacity.

Equality and Diversity Staff Forum

The Forum is now fully established and includes staff with disabilities in its membership. The Forum meets quarterly and reviews all HR policies for their equality and diversity impact on FC staff and will consider other initiatives that have the potential to affect staff.

Action Plans

Progress against 2009/10 Action Plan

| Action Plan for 2009/10 | Progress during 2009/10 |
|--|--|
| Continue to assess the impact of our HR policies through the EqIA process in order to ensure that the needs of disabled staff and customers are fully considered. | Continuing; includes referring all HR policies to our Equality Staff Forum. |
| Continue to develop the profile of the FC as an employer in order to attract more applications from disabled people. | Advertised FC as an employer in a number of disability focussed magazines. Also contributed to a special feature in a disability magazine that encouraged disabled people to consider applying for public appointments. |
| Assess the results of the staff survey (conducted in September 2009) and if any disability bias or discrimination is identified, take the necessary actions to tackle the problem(s). | Completed and an action plan agreed and underway. Analysis widely disseminated, including to the Equality Staff Forum. Results and recommendations reported in this report. |
| Continue to encourage and support our Forest District teams to provide initiatives that promote disability equality. | Continuing through engagement with and support to our Forest Districts. |
| Continue to monitor the take-up of training within the FC. Explore with the Learning and Development team, the types of courses on offer and the suitability of those courses for attendance by staff with disabilities, to ensure that a wide range of development opportunities are offered and available to disabled employees. | The 'gap' between the number of events attended by employees who have declared a disability and employees who have not declared a disability has reduced compared to 2008/09. Learning and Development have revised their joining instructions, giving better information to enable disabled staff to decide what adjustments they might need to be able |

| | |
|--|---|
| | to attend the event. |
| Investigate and consider options for amending sick absence recording data for staff with disabilities, enabling managers to more easily identify those absences directly associated with a disabled person's disability. We would hope this would also encourage those with a disability to use those to declare their absences, rather than 'hide' them by inappropriate use of Annual Leave. | The HR Management Board considered a number of options and benchmarked against other Government Departments. It was agreed that there should be no change in the current recording system. Staff who have disabilities that lead to sick leave in excess of action-trigger-points will be individually managed. Making Reasonable Adjustments in consideration of total sick absence is current practice. All staff are treated with the same consideration (including Reasonable Adjustment), regardless of whether or not they have declared a disability. Benefits of an amended recording system were not demonstrated. |
| Create a suite of documents to improve information for disabled staff and managers, explaining the requirement and process for identifying and implementing reasonable adjustments, help, support and guidance available within the FC. | We are incorporating these considerations into our HR People Matters Guides as a matter of course, particularly in guidance on managing attendance and managing performance. We prefer this 'embedding' approach to creating separate guidance that deals only with disability issues, and we think that this will serve to better mainstream such considerations. |
| Apply for Two Ticks Accreditation. | Deferred until March 2011 as we put necessary preparatory building blocks in place and at which point the benefits of accreditation will be reviewed. |
| Actively explore the possibility of participating in Employers Forum on Disability Benchmark Survey. | The staff survey 2009 gave us a good amount of information about the experiences and perceptions of our disabled employees. A further survey is considered unnecessary at this time and the staff survey will be repeated in 2011. Although still a possibility, active consideration has been deferred. |

2010/11 Action Plan

The FC will take the following actions this year to further promote and support disability equality:

1. Review benefits of Two Ticks Accreditation.
2. Review benefits of participating in Employers Forum on Disability Benchmark Survey.
3. Contribute questions to the proposed 2011 Staff Survey that will indicate disabled employees' responses to the Forestry Commission as a service provider and as an employer. Proposed questions will be considered by our Equality Staff Forum before inclusion in the survey.
4. Start to create and publish a series of information sheets that give explanatory detail about individual physical and mental disabilities. These sheets will be considered by our Equality Staff Forum before publishing and will serve as aide memoire to staff and managers alike.
5. Continue to assess the impact of our HR policies through the EqIA process in order to ensure that the needs of disabled staff and customers are fully considered.
6. On recommencement of recruitment, formulate a recruitment approach aimed at encouraging more people with disabilities to apply for our advertised vacancies.

Summary

This report, detailing employment monitoring data and progress in meeting the general and specific Disability Equality Duties, supports the Forestry Commission's aim of mainstreaming equality of opportunity and diversity of workforce and customer services. The report will be published on the Forestry Commission's Internet and Intranet and hard copies will be sent to the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Alternative Format and Contact Details

If you have any questions on the content of this report, or if you need this publication in an alternative format, for example in large print or in another language, please contact

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Appendix 1

Table 1. All staff in post at 31 March 2010

| | Declared disabled | Not declared disabled | Declared disabled percentage | Not declared disabled percentage | Grand Total |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| England | 26 | 1169 | 2% | 98% | 1195 |
| Scotland | 19 | 991 | 2% | 98% | 1010 |
| Wales | 10 | 365 | 3% | 97% | 375 |
| Forest Research | 5 | 267 | 2% | 98% | 272 |
| Business Units | 3 | 337 | 1% | 99% | 340 |
| Silvan House | 11 | 311 | 3% | 97% | 322 |
| Grand Total | 74 | 3440 | 2.1% | 98% | 3514 |

Appendix 1

Table 2. Full time / part time split at 31 March 2010

| | | Not declared disabled staff % of all not disabled staff in Unit | Declared disabled staff % of all disabled staff in Unit |
|-----------------|------------------------|---|---|
| England | Full Time | 79% | 81% |
| | Part Time | 21% | 19% |
| Scotland | Full Time | 83% | 95% |
| | Part Time | 17% | 5% |
| Wales | Full Time | 86% | 90% |
| | Part Time | 14% | 10% |
| Forest Research | Full Time | 84% | 40% |
| | Part Time | 16% | 60% |
| Business Units | Full Time | 91% | 67% |
| | Part Time | 9% | 33% |
| Silvan House | Full Time | 84% | 73% |
| | Part Time | 16% | 27% |
| | Total Full Time | 83% | 81% |
| | Total Part Time | 17% | 19% |

Appendix 1

Table 3. Type of contract at 31 March 2010

| | | Permanent contract | Other contract | Total |
|---|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------|-------|
| England | Not declared disabled | 1028 | 141 | 1169 |
| | Declared disabled | 23 | 3 | 23 |
| Scotland | Not declared disabled | 816 | 175 | 816 |
| | Declared disabled | 19 | | 19 |
| Wales | Not declared disabled | 316 | 49 | 316 |
| | Declared disabled | 10 | | 10 |
| Business Units | Not declared disabled | 284 | 53 | 284 |
| | Declared disabled | 3 | | 3 |
| Forest Research | Not declared disabled | 204 | 63 | 204 |
| | Declared disabled | 5 | | 5 |
| Silvan House | Not declared disabled | 275 | 36 | 275 |
| | Declared disabled | 11 | | 11 |
| Total not declared disabled | | 2923 | 517 | 3440 |
| Total declared disabled | | 71 | 3 | 74 |
| Grand Total | | 2994 | 520 | 3514 |
| | | Permanent contract | Other contract | |
| Percentage of all declared disabled staff | | 96% | 4% | |
| Percentage of all not declared disabled staff | | 85% | 15% | |

| Other contract | Not declared disabled | Declared disabled |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| | Fixed Term | 217 |
| Short Term Temporary | 194 | |
| Contractor | 6 | |
| Fixed Term Recurring | 5 | |
| Office Holder | 33 | |
| Part Year | 44 | |
| Re-employed Pensioner | 16 | 2 |
| Secondment In | 2 | |
| | | |
| Total Other contract | 517 | 3 |

Appendix 1

Table 4. Pay Band (Grade) at 31 March 2010

| | Declared disabled | Not declared disabled | Declared disabled % in the Pay Band | Not declared disabled % in the Pay Band | Grand Total | Declared disabled % of all declared disabled staff | Not declared disabled % of all not declared disabled staff |
|------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|---|-------------|--|--|
| Total Senior Staff | 0 | 23 | 0% | 100% | 23 | 0% | 0.7% |
| Total Middle Management | 5 | 338 | 1% | 99% | 343 | 6.8% | 9.8% |
| Pay Band 4 | 8 | 397 | 2% | 98% | 405 | | |
| Pay Band 5 | 12 | 317 | 4% | 96% | 329 | | |
| Pay Band 5 (operational) | 8 | 394 | 2% | 98% | 402 | | |
| Pay Band 6A | 8 | 529 | 1% | 99% | 537 | | |
| Pay Band 6A (operational) | 8 | 257 | 3% | 97% | 265 | | |
| Pay Band 6B | 25 | 897 | 3% | 97% | 922 | | |
| Pay Band 7 | | 160 | | 100% | 160 | | |
| Contractors & Office Holders | | 128 | | 100% | 128 | | |
| Total Other | 69 | 3079 | 2% | 98% | 3148 | 93.2% | 89.5% |
| Grand Total | 74 | 3440 | 2.1% | 97.9% | 3514 | | |

Appendix 1

Table 5. Internal recruitment and promotion during 2009/10

| | Total Applicants | Invited to Interview | Successful | % of applicants interviewed (within disability category) | % of applicants successful (within disability category) |
|-----------------------------|------------------|----------------------|----------------|--|---|
| Declared Disabled | 1 | 1 | 0 | 100% | 0% |
| Not Declared Disabled | 175 | 128 | 64 | 73% | 37% |
| No response | 18 | 7 | 3 | 39% | 17% |
| Total All Applicants | 194 | 136 | 67 | 70% | 35% |
| | All applicants | All interviewed | All successful | | |
| Declared Disabled | 1% | 1% | 0% | | |
| Not Declared Disabled | 90% | 94% | 96% | | |
| No response | 9% | 5% | 4% | | |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | | |

Appendix 1

Table 6. External recruitment during 2009/10

| | Total | Invited to interview | Successful | % of applicants interviewed (within Disability Category) | % of applicants successful (within Disability Category) |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------|--|---|
| Declared Disabled | 170 | 30 | 0 | 18% | N/A |
| Not Declared Disabled | 5392 | 494 | 109 | 9% | 2% |
| No Response | 1686 | 134 | 32 | 8% | 2% |
| Total All Applicants | 7248 | 658 | 141 | 9% | 2% |
| | | | | | |
| | All Applicants | All Interviewed | All Successful | | |
| Declared disabled | 2% | 5% | 0% | | |
| Not declared disabled | 74% | 75% | 77% | | |
| All No Response | 23% | 20% | 23% | | |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | | |

Appendix 1

Table 7. Performance marking for year ending 31 March 2010

| | Top Performer | Good Performer | Not Fully Effective | Total receiving PMS |
|---|---------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Declared disabled | 10 | 58 | 0 | 68 |
| Not declared disabled | 605 | 2578 | 11 | 3194 |
| Totals | 615 | 2636 | 11 | 3262 |
| Distribution of Performance marks within disability category | | | | |
| Declared disabled | 15% | 85% | N/A | 100% |
| Not declared disabled | 19% | 81% | 0% | 100% |

Appendix 1

Table 8. Internal training (event attendance) 2009/10

| | | Total Events Attended | Events per head of staff (at 31 March 2010) |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Forest Management (FM) | Not Declared Disabled | 1534 | |
| | Declared Disabled | 28 | |
| Operational (Ops) | Not Declared Disabled | 1898 | |
| | Declared Disabled | 29 | |
| Total FM and Ops | Not Declared Disabled | 3432 | 1.0 |
| | Declared Disabled | 57 | 0.8 |
| Information Technology (IT) | Not Declared Disabled | 230 | |
| | Declared Disabled | 3 | |
| Product Knowledge (PK) | Not Declared Disabled | 204 | |
| | Declared Disabled | 4 | |
| People Skills (PS) | Not Declared Disabled | 4446 | |
| | Declared Disabled | 95 | |
| Total IT, PK and PS | Not Declared Disabled | 4880 | 1.4 |
| | Declared Disabled | 102 | 1.4 |
| EVENTS ATTENDED | | Total Internal Training Events | |
| Not Declared Disabled | | 8312 | |
| Declared Disabled | | 159 | |
| All Training | | 8471 | |
| Average number of training events for staff in post at 31 March 2010 | | | |
| Not Declared Disabled | | 2.5 | |
| Declared Disabled | | 2.1 | |
| All staff | | 2.4 | |

Appendix 1

Table 9. External training (number of events) during 2009/10

| | Events Attended | | Total events attended |
|--|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Declared Disabled | Not Declared Disabled | |
| Interpersonal Skills | 3 | 108 | 111 |
| Information Technology | 3 | 168 | 171 |
| Management Training | 5 | 201 | 206 |
| Personal Development | 3 | 403 | 406 |
| Technical Training | 4 | 502 | 506 |
| Grand Total | 18 | 1382 | 1400 |
| Average number of events per member of staff (at 31 March 2010) | | | |
| | 0.24 | 0.40 | 0.40 |

Appendix 1

Table 10. Leavers during 2009/10

| | Declared disabled | Not declared disabled | Grand Total |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| End of Casual/STT Appt | 3 | 399 | 402 |
| Resignation | 2 | 78 | 80 |
| Age Retirement | 2 | 43 | 45 |
| End of Fixed-Term Appt | | 17 | 17 |
| Voluntary Redundancy | | 11 | 11 |
| Re-employed Pensioner Retired | | 9 | 9 |
| Dismissal | | 8 | 8 |
| Break in Perm Part-Year Appt | | 7 | 7 |
| Death in Service | | 7 | 7 |
| Flexible Early Retirement | 1 | 5 | 6 |
| Compulsory Redundancy | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Actuarially Reduced Retirement | | 4 | 4 |
| End of Secondment to FC | | 3 | 3 |
| Medical Retirement | | 3 | 3 |
| Career Break | | 3 | 3 |
| Approved B Retirement | | 2 | 2 |
| Transfer out of FC | | 2 | 2 |
| Compulsory Early Retirement | | 2 | 2 |
| Total Early Leavers | 9 | 606 | 615 |
| Proportion of disabled & not disabled leavers to staff in post at 31 March 2010 | 12% | 18% | |
| Proportion of all leavers | 1% | 99% | |

Table 11, Discipline during 2009/10

Table 11a, Grievance during 2009/10

These tables are not shown as no declared disabled employee was disciplined or raised a grievance during the period.

Appendix 1

Table 12. Work Pattern for staff in post 31 March 2010

| | Disabled | Not declared disabled | Grand Total | % of all declared disabled staff | % of all not declared disabled staff |
|---|----------|-----------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Five weekdays | 64 | 2910 | 2974 | 86% | 85% |
| Annualised Hours | 1 | 46 | 47 | | |
| Rostered | 1 | 251 | 252 | | |
| One weekday | | 12 | 12 | | |
| Two weekdays | 3 | 12 | 15 | | |
| Three weekdays | 4 | 101 | 105 | | |
| Four weekdays | 1 | 66 | 67 | | |
| Other working patterns | | 42 | 42 | | |
| Total not working a standard 5 day week | | | | | |
| | 10 | 530 | 540 | 15% | 13% |
| Grand total | 74 | 3440 | 3514 | | |

Appendix 2

Best practice examples of disability initiatives during 2009/10**Example 1****Garwnant Visitor Centre refurbishment**

The Welsh Assembly Government's Rural Affairs Minister opened the FC's refurbished Garwnant Visitor Centre near Merthyr Tydfil in July 2010. The refurbishment has taken three years to complete and is now amongst the most disabled-friendly buildings in the UK thanks to donations by Mountway Limited, who donated over £16,000 worth of special equipment that will enable people of all abilities to enjoy the facility. In addition to the Visitor Centre, an all-ability trail has been created to give disabled people access to the woodlands. Work with local disabled groups and Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, to identify further suitable improvements to the area, continues.

Example 2**Mobility Scooters**

We have a large number of collaborations with groups who enjoy the forest using mobility scooters and we have designed paths and gateways with advice from those groups to improve their opportunities to explore the landscape.

Tay Forest District (FC Scotland) worked with a group called 'Walking on Wheels Trust' to test accessibility to a newly built shelter that overlooks a spectacular view. The group's participation and feedback very much helped to create a fully accessible path up a gentle gradient to a high viewpoint. The accessible path, and its use by the group, was highlighted on BBC Scotland's 'Landward' programme.

Borders Forest District (FC Scotland) organise regular mobility scooter 'safaris' in Dalbeattie Forest to encourage mobility scooter users to discover the opportunities available for them. Borders Forest District also offers mini-bus tours that are suitable for less mobile people.

Dean Forest District (FC England) has been working with a not-for-profit charity 'ForestMobility', which provides simple-to-use buggies for people with mobility problems, helping them to explore the Forest of Dean. ForestMobility hires robust, long-distance buggies to people who wish to ride the forest roads and enjoy the

Appendix 2

Best practice examples of disability initiatives during 2009/10

Example 2 continued

freedom of the outdoors with family and friends. They can also provide a 'volunteer buddy' to accompany people around the trails, where required.

A number of our most popular destinations have wheelchairs and mobility scooters for hire on site.

Example 3

Cycling and mountain biking for disabled riders

The FC is helping to test and provide trails and facilities for different types of cycles designed for disabled people, which lets them move off the 'safer' all access trails and do some off-road work. We continue to work with a group called Rough Riderz to solve issues of suitable downhill trails, and getting to the top of a downhill track. In partnership with Rough Riderz, we have held all-ability bike days at some of our most popular mountain bike locations.

Borders Forest District (FC Scotland) held an all abilities demonstration bike day at their 7Stanes mountain bike trails at Ae. One of these downhill trails is suitable for four-wheeled mountain bikes and has been adapted in collaboration with Rough Riderz. The route is open for both disabled and not disabled riders, integrating everyone and allowing all to experience the same thrills and risk. However the demonstration day also offered less extreme options on flatter trails and had a number of different types of cycle or scooters available to test.

North East England Forest District held an all ability bike demonstration day, offering a range of bikes, including hand-pedalled and side-by-side-seater options. This was the third year they have run this event and hope to encourage more disabled people to take advantage of their 35 miles of mountain bike trails, some of which are on relatively flat terrain.

North West England Forest District have also worked with Rough Riderz and held a number of taster days at Whinlatter Forest this year to give disabled people an opportunity to try out downhill mountain biking.

Alice Holt Forest District (FC England) have joined together with CTC and Get Active East Hampshire to create East Hampshire Cycling for All, aiming to enable as many people as possible to enjoy cycling and its benefits. CTC offers a range of cycles that

Appendix 2

Best practice examples of disability initiatives during 2009/10

Example 3 continued

are easy to ride and suitable for a people with various disabilities, and for people recovering from illness. Regular, inclusive, cycling sessions have been run by CTC in both Alice Holt Forest and Queen Elizabeth Country Park (Hampshire).

The Forestry Commission is working with Rough Riderz in Scotland, England and Wales and is inviting them to advise on any improvements to the current facilities available, and to discuss possible venues available for building new sites.

Example 4

Engaging deaf people in conservation work

Forestry Commission England funded the cost of an interpreter to enable a deaf conservation group to come out for a project of 5 sessions in March 2009 to create a new 'forest experience' area at Bentley Community Woodland. The group was run in partnership between the Sherwood and Lincs Forest District (FC England), Sue Ryder Care and Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council Sensory Team.

The aim of the project was for deaf people to be able to come out and feel confident in environmental conservation work and for them to learn some new skills. The project of creating a new 'forest experience' area for the site enabled the group to see a project through from beginning to end.

Example 5

Rural art events for people with mental health issues.

FC England's Small Grant Fund enabled registered charity Wyldwoods to arrange for a group of adults with learning difficulties and mental health issues from the Shropshire area to participate in a full day workshop where they learned to play drums and take part in a tree Ogham trail and create a performance within the woodlands.

15 people were actively engaged in the workshop and learned about the trees within and around the site, and discovered something about folklore relating to trees.

Example 6

Provision of MP3 Audio Trails

We are steadily expanding the number of audio trails available for people to either download or borrow from a Visitor Centre. The Audio trails are generally linked with accessible signage and detail the human and natural history of the area described.

Coed y Mynydd Forest District (FC Wales) liaised with Meirionnydd disabled access group and a number of other individual potential users of the four planned audio trails at Coed-y-Brenin Forest Park. Three of the Audio Trails are at least partially on all-ability trails. Marker posts along the trail indicate where to stop and listen. Subjects include local droving and mining history as well as forest wildlife and information about the trees. All Audios are available as scripts and linked to information boards, making them equally useful for deaf users. Welsh TV wildlife expert Iolo Williams has recorded the audios and he opened the trails with the help of children from a special needs unit in Dolgellau.

Coed y Mynydd Forest District have created a fifth audio trail in Dyfi forest and this describes the work of the 'Timber Jills', a part of the Women's Land Army who kept the forests operating during the second world war.

The New Forest (FC England) has a number of available MP3 files describing the natural history of the forest.

Example 7

John Muir Trust Conserver Award

North West England Forest District has been working with Cedar House School in Cumbria since 2006. Cedar House is a special school catering for children between the ages of 7-16; its primary aim is to meet the needs of pupils who exhibit behavioral, emotional & social difficulties, alongside a range of other associated needs. A 16 year old Cedar House pupil gained the John Muir Trust Conserver Award after completing over 120 hours work on a number of conservation and landscape projects, many of which have been on Forestry Commission land.

Example 8

Working with Ninewells Hospital, Dundee

Perth and Argyll Conservancy (FC Scotland) have been able to grant funds to Ninewells Hospital to assist them to improve the access to the hospital grounds for patients, staff and visitors. All paths will be built to Access For All Specification.

Appendix 2

Best practice examples of disability initiatives during 2009/10**Example 8 continued**

Hospital staff, visitors, patients, long-stay patients and neighbours were involved in the planning process.

Example 9**Heart of the Forest Education Project**

Dean Forest District (FC England) worked with Heart of the Forest Community Special School, which cares for children aged 2 – 19 who have profound, multiple and severe learning difficulties. The school is bounded by Forestry Commission land and the aim of the project was to plan and design woodland activities appropriate to the needs of the school's pupils.

The Forestry Commission and the school worked in partnership to design activities that were appropriate to the ability and age of the children. Many of the children have a hearing impairment and special signs were devised to ensure the children received vital safety messages. Three woodland activity sessions were delivered to four classes across a range of Key Stages. The project has been very successful and popular with both children and teachers. The FC is creating new links with other special needs schools in the area and hopes to provide similar activities to those schools in the future.

Example 10**Initiative/Project name: - Inside Out**

Forestry Commission England and Forestry Commission Wales have worked in partnership with a number of other organisations to support Inside Out, which is centred in Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Inside Out is designed to allow under-represented groups access to the landscape environment, where they can work through relevant health issues appropriately. Inside Out tailors specific workshops to individual needs by working closely with primary care trusts and with community, health, art and voluntary organisations. Inside Out engages with people of all disabilities and uses art and music in the forest as therapy, focused on involving the local community.

Appendix 2

Best practice examples of disability initiatives during 2009/10

Example 11

Improvements to Loch Dunmore

Tay Forest District (FC Scotland) has been working to improve access and facilities at Loch Dunmore in Faskally Forest for the past three years. Loch Dunmore is a key recreation area all year round, and is the current venue for 'The Enchanted Forest', Perthshire Big Tree Country's award winning annual sound and light show. 'The Enchanted Forest' offers visitors a unique opportunity to experience the outdoors at night and with spectacular imagery. Using the forest as a natural backdrop, visitors experience a lighting show that is renowned to be Scotland's premier sound and light experience, attracting around 20,000 visitors every year.

Improvements include upgrading the path around the Loch and resurfacing the disabled car park, installing loch-side benches, creating easy access platforms for fishing and building a new toilet block with a cubicle for disabled users. Tay and Forth Disabled Ramblers were consulted about the toilet block and the local anglers' club was consulted about the fishing platform.

The Enchanted Forest event runs from October to November every year and its suitability as a destination for disabled people is prominently advertised. However, the improvements mean that Loch Dunmore is fully accessible for a range of activities all year round.

Example 12

Events and activities

The Forestry Commission runs many events and activities at its forests throughout the year. Many of these are inclusive events and many others are specifically designed for people with disabilities.

The New Forest (FC England) specifically advertised 'Easy Access Events', making it easier for disabled people to understand whether or not an event would be accessible for them. Apart from using all ability trails, New Forest also arranged nature trips (including deer watching) on an open air trailer, which wheelchair users could travel on and which allowed them to get deeper into the forest than might otherwise have been possible.

Best practice examples of disability initiatives during 2009/10

Example 13

Woods for Health

Under the Scottish Forestry Strategy Theme 'Access and Health', Highland and Islands Conservancy (FC Scotland) have appointed a part time Health Advisor, working with NHS Highland, Highland Council, Community Woodland Association and other external bodies to fund and provide other assistance to a number of initiatives for people with disabilities.

They are supporting Abriachan Forest Trust (community owned) to deliver a number of health initiatives, including mountain biking for younger service users of New Craigs Psychiatric Hospital in Inverness. The Trust will also provide a series of practical activities for users of Birchwood Highland, a charity dedicated to the independence, inclusion and recovery of some of the Highland's most vulnerable adults and young people with mental health difficulties.

They are helping Birchwood Highland to engage with Milton Community Woodland Trust 'Stepping Stones' programme, which is aimed at helping people with mental health difficulties build their personal capacity.

In partnership with Paths to Health, Scottish Natural Heritage and NHS Highland, Highland and Islands Conservancy (FC Scotland) have funded the appointment of a walks co-ordinator for the Highland and Islands to create a Step Up Highland programme. Walks are delivered for those with specific health needs, and where social circumstances hinder healthy living.

The Conservancy has been working with NHS Lawson memorial Hospital in Golspie, Sutherland to identify where greenspace can be enhanced around the hospital, with the long term aim of increasing the therapeutic benefits of greenspace to patients. This is a pilot project; the objective is to extend this work to map all NHS Highland greenspace, establish the potential for greening-up the NHS estate and to support the community in bringing about change. Published research has demonstrated that improvements to greenspace and access to it are effective in reducing health inequalities.