



Highways Agency single equality plan

Outcomes up to March 2011

Priorities up to March 2012





Why equality and diversity is important to us

Our overall business aim is to ensure that all our customers enjoy reliable journeys, are informed travellers and can travel on safe roads.

We believe that in order to achieve our vision of becoming the world's leading road operator, we must understand the different needs our staff and large, diverse customer base, and factor these requirements into the services that we, and our supply chain provide. Our evolving single equality plan is part of our strategy towards meeting this aim.



What we have achieved up to March 2011

We have met the majority of the targets we set ourselves to achieve by March 2011.

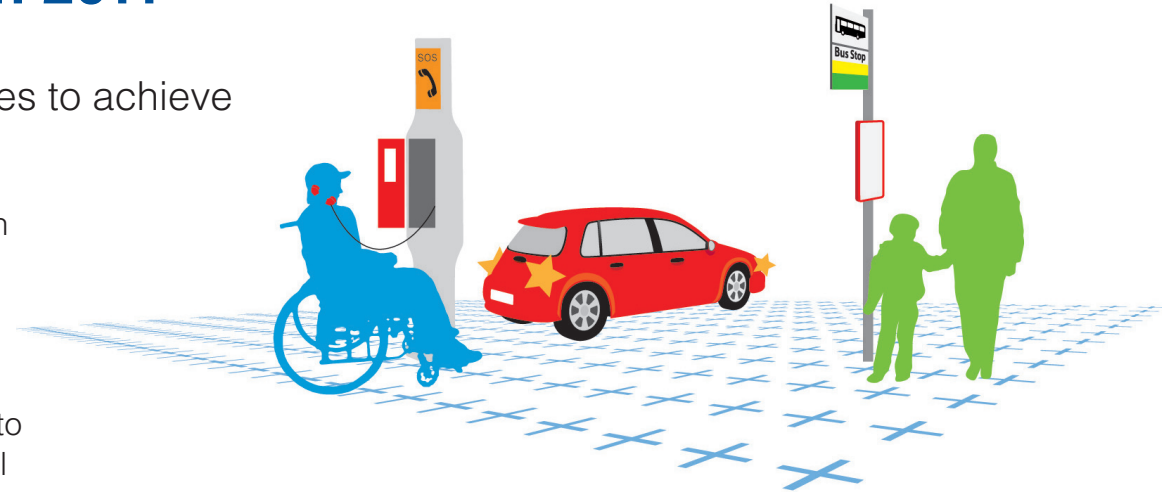
Gained a better understanding of road user needs and improved our services accordingly.

We have:

Around 80 per cent of the population in England use our network and it is important to understand how different groups are affected by it. To help us gain this understanding we have, for example:

- Included demographic questions into our national and area road user satisfaction surveys allowing us, for the first time, to find out whether satisfaction levels differ between different groups (defined by race, disability, gender and age).

- Provided specific information to assist older drivers, young pedestrians and people towing trailers.
- Integrated our 'Approaches to Consultation' toolkit into internal processes to promote inclusive consultation practice at relevant points in the life cycle of our projects.
- Engaged with disability organisations to help us identify priority accessibility issues in relation to the road network – the top three being footpaths (including pedestrian crossings), bus stops and emergency road telephones.
- Delivered about 440 improvements to facilities for disabled people, focusing on footpaths/pedestrian crossings, bus stops and emergency roadside telephones.



Developed our procurement processes to further encourage our supply chain to help us deliver improved equality outcomes.

We have:

- Strengthened pre-contract equality requirements.
- Delivered specific training for both our technical staff and the supply chain to increase expertise and awareness of the needs of disabled road users.

- Established a working group with volunteer contractors from our supply chain to identify how we can work collaboratively to deliver good equality outcomes.

Trained our staff.

We have:

- Delivered a mandatory diversity training programme for our office-based staff designed to challenge our own behaviours and perceptions – this achieved an overall success rating of 97 per cent.



What has changed since 2010?



Since we developed our original Single Equality Plan (2009-2012), as anticipated, the Equality Act 2010 has come into force

It has replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single act. It both simplifies and strengthens the law to tackle discrimination and inequality.

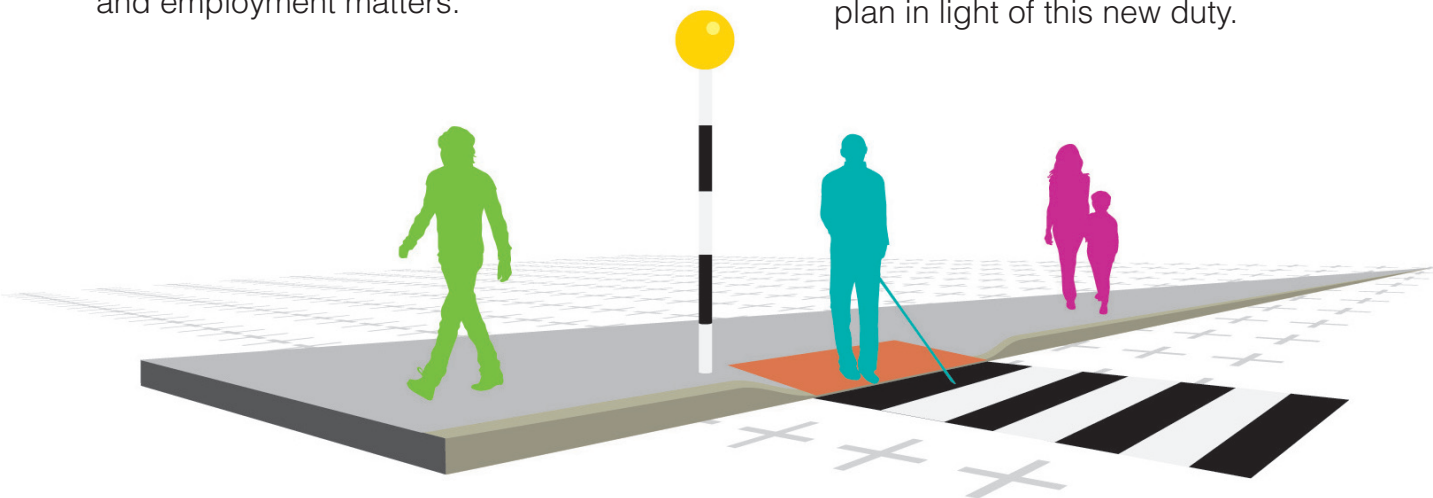
It expands coverage from gender, race and disability to incorporate other 'protected characteristics' under the new Equality Duty that include: age, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, civil partnerships and marriage, and sexual orientation.

It also focuses attention on service delivery and employment matters.

The Equality Duty requires public bodies to give 'due regard' to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

We have developed the second year of the plan in light of this new duty.



Our commitments up to March 2012'

The following pages outline the specific activities that we are undertaking from April 2011 to March 2012.

They focus on:

- Providing an effective customer service
- Delivering through the supply chain
- Being a good employer

By April 2012 we will have assessed the impact of these activities and will use subsequent feedback and evidence to shape our key equality objectives for 2012.

These objectives will be made available on our website.



Highways Agency single equality plan

(April 2011 - March 2012)

Providing effective customer services

High level objectives	Action	Performance outcome
<p>1. Ensure direct customer service consistently gives due consideration to needs stemming from 'protected characteristics'</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand traffic officer capability in terms of diversity, and on an ongoing basis, monitor how this translates into providing an inclusive service to road users. 2. Review HAIL service to assess the extent that it takes account of the needs of different customers. 3. At the preparation stage identify where 'Approaches to Consultation' could be used in consultation with the public and ensure it is used effectively in major project's programme of work. 4. Assess the extent to which our acquisition compensation, property rental, maintenance and disposal policies and procedures meet our public sector equality duty, and identify appropriate action and formulate an action plan with milestones. 	<p>Monitoring data shows staff (Agency's or those contracted to provide service on our behalf) are consistently providing an appropriate service to customers whose needs differ as a result of a protected characteristic.</p>
<p>2. Ensure accessibility and equality issues are consistently considered in the renewal and development of the strategic road network.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To give due regard to the likely effect of the managed motorways programme on groups with protected characteristics . 2. Continue to progress the principles of the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty compliance in developing major road schemes. 3. Continue to progress the principals of the disability discrimination act compliance programme, delivering appropriate improvements alongside maintenance schemes wherever possible, and check compliance. 4. Embed consideration of equality into research and development work. 	<p>Where changes to the Strategic Road Network will/are likely to affect different equality groups in different ways adequate information is consistently gathered to inform decisions before these changes are made.</p>
<p>3. Review existing customer service performance data to determine whether there are issues and/or opportunities in equality terms that need to be addressed through 2012 equality objectives.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By Sept 2011 analyse disaggregated Road User Satisfaction Survey (RUSS) findings and report on any issues and opportunities in equality terms. 2. Collate information and report on the Agency's performance in considering and meeting the needs of customers stemming from protected characteristics. 	<p>The Agency has sufficient information from which to determine where to focus its resource in equality terms to make the greatest contribution to eliminating discrimination/fostering good relations and/or eliminating discrimination.</p>



Highways Agency single equality plan

(April 2011 - March 2012 continued)

Delivering through the supply chain

High level objectives	Action	Performance outcome
4. Strengthen our supply chain's delivery against the Agency's equality duties.	1. By December 2011, gather and report on base-line data on workforce profile of supply chain delivering HA major projects.	Evidence suggests that our supply chain is further embedding equality practices into their services.
	2. By December 2011, determine and publish what good diversity practice in action looks like for the road sector.	
	3. Capture information on Supply Chain performance through the StART assessment pre-qualification process and the post award process.	

Being a good employer

High level objectives	Action	Performance outcome
5. Monitor the outcomes of policies and practices on different groups of staff and use to identify & address priority areas for improvement.	1. Publish equality report, analyse data and take action to address issues/ capitalise on opportunities as appropriate.	Evidence demonstrates that areas of priority concern to staff are identified and effective action is taken to address.
	2. Monitor the outcomes of estates and facilities policies and practice in relation to staff with protected characteristics and implement reasonable actions to make improvements.	
	3. Determine effect of Future Operating Model for Traffic Officer Service in relation to equality and take steps to address relevant issues and/or take opportunities to advance equality of opportunity.	
	4. Ensure the development and implementation of the Agency Resource Plan has due regard to equality and diversity, and monitor the outcomes.	
	5. Analyse the results of the people survey by the demographic classifications to identify areas of concern and identify and prompt appropriate actions to address these.	
	6. Improve declaration rates for sexual orientation rates from the 2010 base of 60%.	



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