

CICA Disability Equality Scheme Report - 4 December 2006 to 30 June 2009

Introduction

1. Since our Disability Equality Scheme was published on 4 December 2006, the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority [CICA] has undergone major change. A detailed summary of the changes can be found in our leaflet *The way ahead* (<http://www.cica.gov.uk/TopNavigation/Publications>) published in 2008 which sets out CICA's plans to provide a better overall level of service. As part of the change programme, CICA aims to publish a new Single Equality Scheme encompassing all equality strands by 1 September 2010.

2. The Disability Discrimination (Public Authorities) (Statutory Duties) Regulations came into force on 5 December 2005 and required listed public authorities and cross border authorities to comply with specific duties relating to the promotion of opportunity for disabled people by 4 December 2006. The Disability Discrimination (Public Authorities) (Statutory Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2005 also came into force on 5 December and required listed Scottish public authorities to comply with the specific duties by 4 December 2006. CICA is named in both Statutory Instruments.

3. Listed public authorities are required to publish a disability equality scheme setting out what they plan to do to promote equality for disabled people. The scheme is required to state:

- the way in which disabled people have been involved in the development of the scheme;
- the authority's methods for impact assessment;
- steps which the authority will take towards fulfilling its general duty (the "action plan");
- the authority's arrangements for gathering information in relation to employment, and where appropriate, its delivery of education and its functions;
- the authority's arrangements for putting the information gathered to good use, in reviewing the effectiveness of its action plan and in preparing subsequent disability equality schemes.

4. This report provides an update on progress in relation to CICA's Disability Equality Scheme.

Background to CICA

Nature of CICA's business and its aims and objectives

5. CICA administers the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme throughout England, Scotland and Wales. We pay compensation to eligible applicants who have been the victim of a violent crime. Awards are determined by a tariff, with fixed compensation for each type of injury. Since the Scheme began in 1964, we have paid out more than £4 billion to over one million claimants.

6. Our aim is to provide an efficient and fair service to blameless victims of violent crime. In order to achieve this we will:

- process applications as quickly as possible while investigating claims fairly.
- treat applicants with sensitivity and courtesy at all times.
- help people understand the service we provide and keep applicants informed.
- support our staff to perform to their full potential.
- Be accountable for the service we provide and the public funds we spend.

7. In delivering the above objectives we will observe the key principles and values of the civil service: honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity. Additionally we have adopted some specific values which describe the way in which we will work.

- We will treat victims of crime with respect and sensitivity.
- We will talk to each other openly, honestly and politely.
- We will ask for help when we need it and we will give help when we are asked.
- We will make it easy for people to tell us when they are unhappy.
- We will deal with issues through proper processes.
- When an issue has been dealt with, we will let it go.
- We will listen to each other's views.
- We will do what is needed of us willingly and with good spirit.
- We will thank people when they have done a good job.

Employment policies

8. CICA doesn't employ its own staff, but as at the end of March 2009, 475 full-time equivalent staff worked for CICA. All our staff are employed on Ministry of Justice [MoJ] or Scottish Government [SG] terms and conditions. This means that we must ensure that our policies and practices are

consistent with the MoJ and SG. Our senior management team is also committed to working in a collaborative way with trade unions to improve industrial relations.

9. Although CICA is staffed by MoJ and SG employees, we have control over recruitment of our staff and we are actively aware of our responsibilities in terms of employing disabled people. Disabled candidates are automatically invited to interview for a post if they meet the defined minimum criteria, and reasonable adjustments are made to the recruitment process as required, for example amending the font size of written exercises. We monitor our recruitment processes and take positive action if this is required to address any particular area.

10. Although CICA's staff turnover rate is very small, we are committed to the retention of disabled staff. Our policies require that line managers should make reasonable adjustments to accommodate and retain disabled staff in their posts. We work closely with all disabled staff to ensure that their needs are met and that we continue to make improvements within the workplace. We have also provided a wide range of equipment and adjustments for our disabled staff, including new IT hardware and software.

Assessing the impact of our policies and practices

11. CICA has recently established a new Stakeholders Group which has responsibility for providing critical input and comment on policy proposals, and we plan to ask the Stakeholders Group to help us provide awareness sessions for staff. To ensure that we have a wide base for comment on our proposals, the Group includes representatives from Victim Support, the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Equality and Human Rights Commission. In addition, we plan to invite representatives specifically from disability groups.

12. In addition to the Stakeholders Group, CICA has established a cross organisational team who meet regularly to discuss issues affecting all staff and to assess the impact of policy changes which affect both staff and applicants. We will also be utilising this team to consider further actions needed in relation to equality and diversity issues. Regular reviews of progress will be carried out by the team and evidence collated to support these reviews will be used to inform CICA's annual report on equality and diversity.

Key achievements in relation to our action plans

Organisational development

13. During 2008-09 our Organisational Development section reviewed all CICA's training programmes and undertook an organisationwide survey to

identify which new programmes were required. Following review, it was decided that CICA needed to deliver mandatory equality and diversity training in-house. Prior to this, all equality and diversity training was delivered externally by Scottish Government.

14. From feedback received during our in-house diversity training, CICA has recognised how important it is for all its line managers to have a full understanding of the key issues relating to diversity. As a result of this all line managers received additional diversity training between October and December 2009.

15. Following the review, in December 2008 the Management Board approved the purchase of a new learner management system and a set of integrated e-learning courses, which now form mandatory training included in our staff induction programme. The mandatory programmes were identified by a panel of subject experts from across the organisation. The other mandatory programmes selected were directly linked to our legal requirements in terms of equality and diversity training. Our “bullying in the workplace and managing stress” courses were made mandatory following the results of the 2008 staff survey which raised some concerns about the perception of bullying within CICA.

The mandatory tutor-led programmes are:

- Welcome to CICA (Induction programme). Day 3 of this programme is now an Introduction to Diversity. The programme enables staff to define key concepts, such as: diversity, equality, stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination. It covers why diversity is important, what is unacceptable behaviour and how to tackle it and CICA staff responsibilities.
- Practical management. This course introduces line managers to the Dignity at Work policy and the equalities policies of both the SG and MoJ. Line managers are given scenarios to discuss diversity issues and how to use the policies correctly.

The mandatory e-learning programmes are:

- An overview of diversity and discrimination. This covers policy and culture, dealing with discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Bullying in the work place. This covers what bullying is, organisational factors, the legal position, taking action, and the consequences of bullying for the individual and the organisation.

- Managing and handling stress at work. This covers the definition of stress, the consequence of stress, recognising stress, managing the causes of stress and control techniques.

Staff doing mandatory programmes

16. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the number of staff, up to June 2009, who have attended the mandatory programmes since their introduction. Figures are accurate to June 2009. All staff are expected to complete their mandatory programmes within the first 9 months of employment. All regional managers have been trained in how to use the learner management system to monitor the progress of their staff and identify individuals who have not completed the programme. Where this is the case, line managers will take appropriate action.

Table 1

Course title	Numbers attending courses
Welcome course (Introduction to Diversity)	93 staff. Out of these 93 staff 42 have also completed their e-learning courses.
Practical management	45 Line Managers
An overview of diversity and discrimination	203 staff
Bullying in the work place	194 staff
Managing and handling stress at work	111 staff

17. Between January and June 2009, 46% of staff had undertaken e-learning Diversity training. By 3 December 2009, every manager in CICA will have had Diversity training and by 31 March 2010, every member of staff will have completed e-learning on this issue.

18. CICA also has a number of additional non-mandatory e-learning programmes which are available to staff:

- (a) The law and disability discrimination
- (b) Race legislation
- (c) Gender legislation
- (d) Legislation relating to religion
- (e) Age legislation
- (f) Ex-offenders legislation

19. CICA will work with our Stakeholders Group to develop a series of awareness sessions. These sessions will focus on equality issues. The Stakeholders Group will be asked to contribute to this programme and where appropriate help deliver training to staff.

20. To further help CICA with delivery of its equality and diversity objectives, Equality Impact Assessment training will be provided to those staff specifically involved in assessing and monitoring equality and diversity within CICA. To date 2 members of staff have been trained in completing equality impact assessments and will provide coaching for other members of staff.

21. Where required we ensure that arrangements are made for disabled staff to access all corporate courses offered. For example, visually impaired staff can access course materials online using assistive technology. Materials are also made available in large print or in dyslexia-friendly print if required. Our dedicated training and e-learning facilities are fully accessible to wheelchair users and disabled staff with mobility and other impairments. Each training room was evaluated by a member of staff who is a wheelchair user, and this helped us to ensure accessibility for disabled staff. Our learning resource centre has a large screen, adjustable desks and headphones for use with our audio programmes. Again the layout of this room has been assessed by disabled staff within the organisation.

Communications

22. Last year CICA's Communications Team developed a corporate style manual which sets out both a typeface and size that are recommended by the RNIB. We now use Trebuchet 12 point as a standard in all our literature and letters to applicants, ensuring maximum readability in our printed material.

23. We also redeveloped our website with a brand new design. The website offers Browsealoud software, which can read out any or all of the pages as well as all downloadable documents. The website is designed to be as accessible as possible and although not verified, meets AA rating requirements. We also tested the website on a range of users, including someone for whom English was not their first language. All our literature and website information is assessed for clarity before publication.

24. Our application forms underwent a similar process last year - they were edited for plain English and reorganised to make the application process as simple as possible (given that we do need to gather considerable information together to start an application). The forms are reviewed regularly and both on-line and telephone applications have now been introduced. To ensure we are able to assist all our customers with completing their applications, we will be asking our Stakeholders Group to support our reviews.

25. Plain English is a priority for us. All our system letters have been edited for clarity as have all our guides and other corporate literature.

26. Although our printed guides are not heavily illustrated, where they are, we aim to use images that represent a diverse range of applicants and we will work to ensure we do more of this wherever possible.

27. The application forms now make it very clear that applicants can get free help to complete their application from Victim Support. Our website also makes this clear with links and contact details available on several pages.

28. We also email our stakeholders a regular, quarterly e-magazine, 'In Touch', to which they are invited to contribute. Recent contributors have included Victim Support and the Red Cross.

29. A pilot poster campaign has recently been launched, aimed at raising awareness about CICA. This will be displayed in doctors' surgeries, health centres, public libraries, Accident & Emergency departments and police stations. Following the results of the pilot, we will consider rolling this out across the whole of the UK.

Operations

30. One of the most successful changes introduced has been the expansion of our Applicant Support Section to include a bespoke Telephone Support Team. Trained telephone advisers answer calls from applicants and representatives from a freephone telephone number. Our advisers are able to access the details and status of a claim from a new comments page on our claims management system, which allows them to view the most up-to-date information available on each case. CICA now operates this service from 08:30-20:00 Monday to Friday, and from 09:00-13:00 on Saturdays.

31. By the end of 2009, CICA plans to have introduced a new service which will enable customers to complete their applications by telephone. This new service will help customers who experience difficulties with reading or writing.

32. Additionally, to help customers with hearing difficulties, our advisers are able to adjust the volume of their voice during a telephone call.

33. Although we didn't make these operational changes specifically to help disabled applicants and didn't therefore involve disabled people in assessing the impact of the changes, we did recognise that making these improvements would also benefit our disabled customers.

34. We have also carried out particular tasks to aid individual applicants, for example providing a Braille translation of a completed application form, and accepting a review request from an applicant who was unable to complete a written request. Although these solutions were only identified to help

individual applicants, we will continue to explore avenues for assisting disabled applicants in our future plans.

Equal opportunities monitoring

35. CICA recently carried out a review of the application forms we use and, as a result, we revised the Equal Opportunities Monitoring [EOM] form which is now enclosed with every application form. The revision was carried out after consultation with the Equalities Unit at the Ministry of Justice to ensure that all information requested was appropriate and in line with current legislation. This data allows us to monitor key equality strands, although it is unlikely to be fully accurate as completion of the EOM is not mandatory.

36. From the information gathered between January and June 2009, we can say that of the 54% of applicants who provided information in relation to race and ethnicity, 12% were from Black and Minority Ethnic [BME] groups. Only 4% of applicants provided information in relation to disability, of which 8% confirmed that they were disabled. For the same time period, in relation to gender, 68% of applicants were male and 32% of applicants were female.

37. CICA intends to use this information to identify areas where we can improve our services. For example, if we find that there is disproportionate representation from an equality group, we can take positive action to promote our services to that group. By gathering feedback from customers with disabilities on their experience of CICA, we can use the information to develop our practices.

Gathering evidence on progress

38. In November 2008 we conducted a staff survey in which we asked staff for their views on a number of equality and diversity issues. The results were promising, for example, in relation to the service that CICA provides to customers, 79% of the staff who completed the survey thought that CICA treats all its customers with sensitivity and courtesy, and 80% felt that CICA makes it easy for our diverse range of customers to complete an application form for compensation. In relation to their work in CICA, 79% of the staff surveyed confirmed that they were fully aware of their responsibilities in relation to diversity within CICA, and 87% were fully aware of our “Dignity at Work Policy”.

39. CICA will continue to work towards improving the results. We utilise an action tracker to monitor the action on all the issues staff raise and the commitments that our Board members make. This is taken to our monthly Making People Matter forum to keep staff updated and allow them to have input.

40. CICA also maintains records from a continuous customer survey which has provided positive responses. For example, more than 77% of people who completed the survey between January and June 2009 confirmed that they were treated with sensitivity and courtesy at all times throughout the application process, and 69% confirmed that they were provided with good customer service.

41. Although these statistics are encouraging, CICA wants to ensure continued improvements in customer service. We aim to use the results of our surveys to monitor areas of weakness and enhance our service through training.

42. CICA has already made significant changes to the way it works and these are beginning to show positive results in terms of reducing our caseload. We are aware that there are still customers for whom we have not provided the level of service we would have hoped to. With time, our new processes should ensure that cases are dealt with more quickly. We have already reviewed all our system letters to make sure they are in plain English and explain our decisions clearly and sympathetically. It is likely to take a while for these improvements to filter through.

New action plans

43. The public sector Equality Duty requires all listed public authorities to consider and address equality issues in all their functions as far as is relevant and proportionate.

44. As a public authority, CICA is committed to ensuring that all staff and service users are treated with respect and dignity. In line with the requirements of the new Equality Bill which is expected to come into force in autumn 2010, CICA is planning to publish a Single Equality Scheme by 1 September 2010. This will replace the current Disability Equality Scheme.

45. In creating the new scheme, we will consult with a wide range of stakeholders including disability groups to enable us to take on board the thoughts and concerns of our customers. Responses will be collated and used to inform our action plans for the next three years.

46. We recognise that, although CICA has made significant improvements over the last three years since our Disability Equality Scheme was published, there are still improvement opportunities in relation to equality and diversity.

47. Our specific action plans for the next three years will be contained in our new Single Equality Scheme. However, in line with our statutory duties, our high level plans are set out below.

Service Delivery:

We will ensure equality impact assessments are conducted as early as possible on all new and changed policies and functions		
How	By When	Who
Each business area will identify its equality gaps and priorities for action.	Annually	Management Team
All projects initiated to deliver CICA's end-to-end change plan will incorporate equality assessments. By projects we mean temporary assignments that are needed to produce unique and pre-determined outcomes or results by a specified time.	December 2010	Change Management Board

We will ensure compliance with our statutory duties in both current and future equalities legislation		
How	By When	Who
Supporting our business areas in development of EQIAs.	Continuous	Management Team/HR
Engage with and challenge business areas on equalities compliance responsibilities.	Continuous	Management Team/HR
Monitor and review progress against actions in our Single Equality Scheme and publish the results annually.	Continuous	Management Team/HR
We will promote the involvement of stakeholders and disability groups in developing new policies and processes.	December 2010	Management Team
Actively promote equality of opportunity for staff and applicants.	December 2010	Management Team/HR
Take steps to meet the needs of disabled staff and customers.	December 2010	Management Team/HR

CICA's staff:

We will inform, empower and encourage our staff to support CICA's equality and diversity aims		
How	By When	Who
We will ensure that all members of staff have received equality and diversity training to enable them to understand their responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity.	March 2010	Organisational Development Team
We will assess and consider how best to recognise and reinforce activity that supports equality and diversity through the annual staff performance review process.	Continuous	All managers
We will run awareness sessions for staff to promote positive attitudes.	December 2010	Organisational Development

We will find out more about what is really happening to our staff		
How	By When	Who
We will analyse the results of staff survey(s), and put in place a strategic approach to enable the business to deliver.	Annually	Corporate Services
We will continue to hold sessions of our focus group to provide a forum for staff to bring areas of concern to our attention, and will then take action to address the issues raised.	Monthly	All business areas
We will conduct exit interviews of all staff as a mechanism to capture the views of individuals who leave the organisation because of equality and diversity issues.	Continuous	HR Team
We will publish the information we gather in relation to diversity.	Annually	Corporate Services

We will tackle behaviour that fails to support the Department's equality and diversity aims		
How	By When	Who
CICA will prepare robust action plans based on the results of the staff survey to tackle any issues identified. We will ensure that we pick up common themes across our business areas, share best practice and identify any gaps.	December 2010	Management Team
We will identify the issues raised by staff and look at trends to inform future plans.	Continuous	Management Team

Leadership:

We will ensure that our leaders' commitment to diversity is clearly communicated		
How	By When	Who
All managers will communicate CICA's vision on diversity, and what this means for individual business areas, to staff.	Continuous	All managers
Equality and Diversity will be a regular feature of senior managers' events, the outcome of which will be cascaded to staff.	Continuous	Management Team

We will role model equality and diversity best practice at all levels		
How	By When	Who
Line managers will at all times behave in a way consistent with equality and diversity policy and model best practice both in how they deliver their work and in their interactions with staff and stakeholders.	Continuous	All managers
Line managers will explain to staff the relevance of equality and diversity within their business areas.	Continuous	All managers
Line managers will challenge any unacceptable behaviour in their business areas.	Continuous	All managers

We will constantly strive to improve representation across all levels		
How	By When	Who
Set challenging year-on-year targets taking into account natural wastage forecasts.	Annually	Management Team/HR
Take action to improve the diversity of CICA and ensure that improvements are firmly embedded - including, if necessary, putting in place positive action programmes appropriate to the business needs.	December 2010	Management Team/HR

Involvement of disabled people in the development of the scheme

48. One of our priorities in our Disability Equality Scheme was to engage with our key stakeholders by means of stakeholder conferences. We held two stakeholder events in 2008, to which we invited a range of representative organisations including:

- British Association of Women in Policing
- Citizens Advice
- Ethnic Minorities Law Centre
- Equal Opportunities
- Lesbian and Gay Foundation
- LGBT Youth Scotland
- MIND
- Moira Anderson Foundation
- National Black Police Association
- National Disabled Police Association
- National Victims Association
- North of England Refugee Service
- Office of the Public Guardian
- PETAL - People Experiencing Trauma and Loss
- Rape Crisis
- REFUGE
- Refugee Action
- Refugee Council
- Scottish Child Law Centre
- Scottish Womens Aid
- See Me
- Victim Support
- Victimcare
- Victims of Crime Trust
- Womens Aid

49. We are aware that this is not an exhaustive list and we aim to extend our communication with stakeholders to also include more disability groups.

50. At the stakeholder meetings, we introduced our plans to implement new policy changes, for example our plan to retain awards to minors until the age of 18, and invited comment from the stakeholders. We used these comments to inform our implementation plans.

51. From the end of 2009, we plan to undertake an internal impact assessment, including an equality impact assessment [EQIA], to develop effective policies and processes for staff and customers, which minimise or eliminate negative impacts and capitalise and maximise any positive impacts. Our EQIA will be distributed to stakeholders for consultation and this will help us to identify whether the proposed changes are likely to have any positive or negative impacts on specific equality groups.

Monitoring and Reporting

52. CICA's Management Board has ultimate responsibility for overseeing our performance in relation to our equalities duties. Meetings are held monthly and progress on individual projects is reported to the Board.

53. CICA also has a Policy and Performance Board which is tasked with scrutinising our operational delivery and approving new policy. Quarterly meetings are held and representatives from both the MoJ and SG attend.

54. Our Annual Report and Accounts for 2008-09 provided a breakdown of CICA's achievements over the course of the year and also included a section on equality and diversity.

Conclusion

55. Overall, CICA has taken major steps to improve the services and support we provide to both our customers and staff. Over the next three years, we plan to build on the improvements already made, and to include the views of disability groups to further enhance our performance.

56. CICA's decision to publish a Single Equality Scheme including action plans for the next three years from 2010-2013 will help us to focus on further enhancing our performance in this area.

CICA
December 2009