



THE BRITISH LIBRARY - GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME
GENDER, TRANSGENDER AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION ACTION PLAN
PROGRESS REPORT YEAR 1 – [May 2010 - April 2011]

Foreword

I am delighted to present our first combined Gender, Transgender and Sexual Orientation annual report on the progress of our action plans at the Library. As the Gender and Sexual Orientation champion, the Library has strived to continue to embed gender equality across the organisation and review our progress on Transgender and Sexual Orientation.

Our consultations in 2010, gave us an opportunity to consult with readers, stakeholders and the public which has given us a sound foundation to continue our work in these areas and enhance our reputation as an organisation committed to diversity.

This report outlines the progress we have made in our first year of our new actions plans. We are of course operating within an environment of reduced public sector funding which may affect the delivery of our plans. . Nevertheless I feel we can continue to make great strides in these areas.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Unified Generic Equality scheme; and our commitment to the statutory duties

In 2008, we published our new Unified Generic Equality Scheme which included our specific focus and commitment to Gender Equality as well as our work on promoting gender and race equality for the other public sector duties.

Our Unifying Generic Equality Scheme brings together into one document our commitment to equality across our public duties, (disability, gender and race) and the common generic areas that highlight the initiatives and interrelatedness across the diversity strands. However, it also importantly recognises the different and separate areas of disability, race, and gender which may require different approaches to achieve equality.

For more information see:

<http://www.bl.uk/aboutus/stratpolprog/diversity/schemes/unifyingdocument.pdf>

During 2010, the Equality Act 2010 came into force which unites and harmonises all previous equality legislation and conferred a new Public Sector Equality Duty comprised of a General and a Specific Equality Duty on public authorities. From April 2011, the new public sector duty replaces the separate Race, Disability and Gender duties, extending these to cover eight “protected characteristics” with: Age, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity, Religion or Belief and Sexual Orientation. The duty also partially covers Marriage and Civil Partnership and serves to extend current Age Employment Legislation to services.

The new requirements are broader, across more groups and expectations are higher, including provisions for procurement, and equality information. However, the Library has already made strong progress on work across the other protected characteristics for example, holding public consultations on Disability and Mental Health, delivering Religion and Belief training on employment and service provision, and reviewing the Libraries policies and practices on Age. Therefore, the Library is in a stronger position to meet the new broader legislative requirements.

Summary of Key Progress since May 2010

Our mission, values, strategic priorities, and organisational values are consistent with, and have a solid basis for, meeting the expectations and responsibilities of the Scheme, Duty and the Act which cover broad areas from employment, goods and services, to facilities and other provisions.

Gender and Transgender Action Plan 2010

We have a detailed action plan to cover these broad areas, which can be viewed at: <http://www.bl.uk/aboutus/stratpolprog/diversity/schemes/disabilityeqstatrep.pdf>

On this plan there were 26 actions out of which we have:

- 7 actions where we have completed our targets so far.
- 10 actions being implemented and;
- 9 are currently on hold / planning stages or planned for Year 2/3.

Sexual Orientation Action Plan 2010

The action plan can be viewed at:

<http://www.bl.uk/aboutus/stratpolprog/diversity/schemes/disabilityeqstatrep.pdf>

On this plan there were 12 actions out of which we have:

- 5 actions have been completed so far.
- 4 actions being implemented and;
- 3 are currently on hold / planning stages or carried over to the Year 2/3

Key Strategic Areas 2010

The action plan covers the broad areas and services of the Library where we have established further work was required to uplift service provision for readers, visitors and our employees. Our 1st year's key areas of progress on our gender, transgender and sexual orientation actions are below: These were:

- **Continued Leadership and commitment from the top**

Our Gender and Sexual Orientation Champion has championed the importance of Gender and Sexual Orientation Equality and this is periodically discussed at Executive and Board level on an annual basis. Throughout the duration of the action plans, budgets are reviewed annually to ensure diversity initiatives are resourced from Directorate budgets.

- **Ascribing Leadership in the directorates – Business Planning Strategy**

Ascribing leadership and accountability was deemed essential to the successful delivery of the action plans. We have maintained our strategic focus on achieving our Diversity Strategy by ensuring our action plans are linked to our corporate business plan and our performance dashboard each year.

- **Engagement and communication across the Library and with our stakeholders**

Our Directorates continue to engage externally with key stakeholders and service users to ensure we listen to their needs. The Library continues to raise awareness of LGBT Month held every February and International Women's Day by advertising public and staff events in celebration.

Optimisation of Organisation Capacity and Capability – Continuing to develop a cohesive Diversity Strategy with the engagement of staff is a priority of the Library.

- **Gender Action Group including the Sexual Orientation sub-group** - The action group members have contributed to raising the awareness of Gender, Transgender and Sexual Orientation across the organisation. Employees formed a LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual) Rainbow Group which is a network and social group for LGBT employees.
- Action members have cascading information to their teams and Directorates on the work of the Group. The implementation of the Equality Online training has also helped to raise awareness and improve the skill-sets of our staff in valuing the diversity of our employees and service users.
- **Gender Workforce profile** – The Library's workforce demographics as at 31st March 2011 illustrate a strong representation of women across the organisation. Our Chief Executive and 50% of the Executive Team are female whilst 53.1% of the workforce are female overall. The Library also monitors

Overview and Main Outcomes on Progress

These are samples of some of the highlights and achievements in our 1st year of our action plans. Further information can be found in the action plans at <http://www.bl.uk/aboutus/stratpolprog/diversity/schemes/index.html>.

- **Business & Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC)** – continues to support business women whose attendance forms more than 50% of business advice sessions. For Women's History Month and the centenary year of International Women's Day 2011, the BIPC hosted the Camden Women's Forum for an evening of peer-to-peer business coaching and networking, and celebrated with BIPC partner Women Unlimited with an all day event '*Ready to take on the world*'. <http://www.bl.uk/bipc/workevents/ready.html>. The March BIPC Success Story of the Month was Karen Mattison MBE, co-founder of 'Women Like Us', an office recruitment agency to help mothers find flexible work to fit around their families. As a mother, she saw the demand from mothers and organisations for flexible arrangements and now has 20,000 candidates and 2,000 employers on the books.

- **LGBT Events** – A member of staff presented the Library's first talk to celebrate LGBT month in February 2010 following a resource discovery project on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual (LGBT) materials in the collections by a member of staff. In 2011 this information was included in the Library's 2011 Censorship exhibition. Events for staff and the public in 2011 included: (1) Discussion day on the origin of the 'language of camp', with panellists such as theatre director Neil Bartlett, performer Chris Green (aka Ida Barr), broadcaster Amy Lamé and broadcaster and writer Simon Fanshawe; (2) The En Travesti vocal ensemble group performed their Love: Sacred and Profane programme which explores gender roles in opera.

- **Accessibility** – The Building Services and Services team is responsible for the maintenance and operation of the Library's building and services as well as new building projects. At Gate 3 a ramp was built in 2010 to increase accessibility for visitors and readers for example, parents with prams, mobility impaired visitors and wheelchair users. Thereby increasing the accessibility of the St. Pancras site.

- **BL Conservation Centre** – Provides visitor tours to the centre. During the period April 2010- March 2011 the Centre ran 46 tours with a total number of 411 individuals attending. 67% of the individuals attending the tour were

female.

- **Marketing Material, BL Website and Internal Communications** – The Library promotes our work and exhibitions taking into account diversity and representation in our print publications and our web strategy. Our internal communications team ensuring our colleagues are up to date with latest developments in the Library, and provide a channel for their views and opinions.

- **Access to the Collections** – The Library has two manuscripts offering a fascinating glimpse into Jane Austen’s apprenticeship as a writer. One of the Notebooks can currently be seen in the Treasures Gallery along with Jane Austen’s writing desk. The Jane Austen’s Fiction Manuscripts Project, an AHRC-funded project, in which the Library was a partner, has recently produced a digital edition of all of the surviving Austen manuscripts and can be accessed at <http://www.janeausten.ac.uk/index.html>. In April 2011 the Library acquired the archive of the critically and popularly acclaimed poet, Wendy Cope. At the core of the archive are 67 poetry notebooks dating from 1973 up to the present day. The notebooks include drafts of poems, jottings of ideas, notes on form and rhyme scheme juxtaposed with transitory glimpses of everyday life, in meticulous ‘to do’ lists. Showing the progressive re-workings of poems, the notebooks give insight into the labour of the creative process

- **Organisation Capability -** The Library vision, values and mission are supporting by our aim to develop as organisation in which diversity is a business benefit for the organisation.
 - During 2010, we carried out an Equal Pay Audit in conjunction with Trade Union Side. The audit report showed any differences in pay within our grading structure were below the 5% as recommended by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

 - As a Government led National initiative and supported by the Library’s Gender, Transgender and Sexual Orientation consultation in 2010, a Domestic Abuse Policy was developed and launched to employees on 6 May 2011.

 - A new front-line staff training course has been developed which aims to provide a broad understanding of the British Library’s equality and diversity policies and procedures for the participants; increase their ability to demonstrate confidence and awareness in dealing with a diverse range of

readers and visitors and create a positive and accurate image of the Library as a service provider and employer. The course was devised to be practical and informative by enabling the participants to increase their awareness of accessibility and how to provide an inclusive service.

- The Library held an Equality and Learning at Work Day in May 2010 at Boston Spa, St. Pancras and Colindale for staff. Action Group members for Disability, Gender and Race had an opportunity to engage with employees and promote the work of the groups and achievements to date as well as raising awareness of Mental Health. MIND also were invited to have a stand at Boston Spa and St. Pancras. Complimentary feedback from staff who attended the events included the benefits offered.
- The Library continues to undertake Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) to assess the impact of restructures or policies on equality groups.
- **Partnering Internally** - There has been increased partnering of HR, trade union staff side at quarterly Equality and Diversity Working Group (EDWG) meetings, where EDWG continue to discuss, consult and share progress on Gender, Transgender and Sexual Orientation. Service leads continue to liaise over diversity requirements and initiatives with increased networking and share of information to improve accessibility and inclusion.
- **Partnering Externally** - The Library employees have worked in partnership with disability organisations such as HR Forums, Stonewall, the Gender Trust and Opportunity Now.
- **Monitoring statistics** - We currently monitor our workforce statistics annually by gender and use the findings to measure our performance against our HR policies. This includes staff in post, job applicants, promotion, training, performance appraisals, grievances, disciplinary action and leavers. We are currently considering a broader declaration to include the new protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 as well as sexual orientation.

NB: Further information about Library activities around disability and diversity can be found (a) in the Annual Progress Report to the Equalities Commission Northern Ireland ECNI – which can be found on the Library website under diversity; (b) in the Unified Scheme and bespoke areas for Disability.