
NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY COMBINED EQUALITY SCHEME

FOREWORD

This document represents, for the first time, a comprehensive Equality Scheme. It sets out the Gallery's duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, new duties arising from the Disability Discrimination Act, anticipated legislation on Gender Equality and the Gallery's own determination to act in the most responsible manner in relation to other equality matters including age, religion and sexual orientation.

The National Portrait Gallery is an institution dedicated to acknowledging significant achievement across all ages and of all kinds. The determination to widen interest in portraiture is matched by the recognition that broadening interest in all aspects of the Gallery's work, and reaching out to all parts of society, is part of the core mission of the organisation. In 2004 the Gallery received the Adapt Trust Award for excellence for accessibility, and the national Tourism for All Award. In 2006 the Gallery won the London Large Tourist Attraction of the Year Award.

For a number of years the Gallery has sought to promote equality at work, and consulting with staff and creating action plans has been important part of our work. In April 2003, the first Equality Policy and Action Plan was created, followed by an Equality Survey in October 2003, a revised Equality Action Plan in June 2005 and a full Employee Survey in 2006.

I hope that in the next phase of the Gallery's work, the continued determination to promote equality at work will find the most creative and wide-ranging of forms. Equality is something that matters for everyone in the organisation.

Sandy Nairne
Director

THE GALLERY'S AIM AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

The Gallery's overall aim is:

... to promote through the medium of portraits the appreciation and understanding of the men and women who have made and are making British history and culture, and ...to promote the appreciation and understanding of portraiture in all media.

The six strategic objectives for the period 2006 – 2009 are:

- To extend and broaden the range of audiences for the National Portrait Gallery and its work
- To develop the Collection, creating opportunities for acquisition and commission, while improving its care and conservation
- To increase the understanding of and engagement with the Collection and its subjects through bringing more of the reference collections into use, and through outstanding research, displays and exhibition, education, access, publishing, information, regional and digital programmes, and a higher national and public profile.
- To maximize the financial resources available through both public and private sector support, trading and licensing and through the effective management of the Gallery's assets and resources
- To develop staff as an essential resource through the extension of staff diversity, training, development and learning programmes
- To bring the buildings, technical and managerial infrastructure of the Gallery to the highest standards, including processes, systems, collection storage and staff accommodation

THE GALLERY'S GENERAL DUTY

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 required public institutions to publish a Race Equality Scheme setting out how they would eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and promote good relations between people of different racial groups. The Gallery interpreted this more broadly and although the Act specified race the Gallery's Employment Equality Action Plan was aimed at all groups that face discrimination. Legislation has now extended the concept of the Race Equality Scheme to Disability (Disability Equality Scheme Duty 2006) and Gender (Gender Equality Scheme Duty, 2007). Rather than producing separate Equality Schemes the Gallery has decided on a combined Equality Scheme that harmonises with the Government's proposal for single legislation to cover all forms of equality and the implementation of the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights.

Under the legislation the Gallery has a general duty to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities
- 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 people
- encourage participation by disabled persons in public life.
- eliminate unlawful sex discrimination and harassment
- promote equality of opportunity between men and women
- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups.

EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

To help meet our 'general duties' the Gallery has drawn up an Action Plan (Appendix 1) that comprises two parts:

Public Access and Social Inclusion:

This part of the plan looks at the Gallery's aims and objectives in the context of our duties to promote equality and sets out how we will achieve:

- the widest and most appropriate forms of access to the Gallery's collections, expertise, facilities and services
- overcome physical, sensory, intellectual, cultural, attitudinal and financial barriers
- work in partnership with others to help tackle social inequality, discrimination and disadvantage
- empower communities, improve the quality of people's lives, contribute to social cohesion, and act as a catalyst for cultural and social change.

Employment Equality:

This part of the plan sets out our employment strategy for achieving:

- Fair recruitment, selection and employment practices
- A workplace that is attractive to all and that does not impose conditions that exclude particular groups
- The commitment of all staff to equality in employment

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SCHEME AND ACTION PLAN

Primary responsibility for approving the scheme and ensuring that it is effective rests with the Director.

Day to day realisation of the scheme is the responsibility of every head of department, manager and employee. Further information and guidance about the Action Plan can be sought from: Head of Personnel, Learning & Access Manager or representatives of the Access Steering or Disability Action Groups.

An annual report is made to the Senior Management Team by the Director, Head of Personnel and Head of Learning and Access.

CONSULTATION

The Gallery's progress in meeting and developing its equality scheme is also informed by the work of internal and external groups:

- Access Steering Group (Internal) representatives from each department
- Disability Action Group (External – includes representatives from MENCAP, RNIB, RNID, Connect, and disabled visitors.
- MAGIC (External) Access Managers across Museums and Galleries in London
- Whitley Staff and Management Meeting (Internal)
- NMDC Cultural Diversity Group (external: National Museum Director's forum for improving cultural diversity)

TIMETABLE, IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING

The Action Plan will be effective from April 2007 and covers a three-year period. Interim annual reviews will also be undertaken with recommendations being made at this time to the Gallery's Senior Management Team. Progress will be noted within the Gallery's Annual Report from 2007/8 onward (and available on-line).

The Gallery will meet its legislative requirements under Disability, Race, and Gender to assess its services and policies. Targeted policies and areas of work will undergo an equalities impact assessment over the period of the Plan using appropriate guidance (e.g. Disability Rights Commission for the impact on people with disabilities) to identify any negative impact.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Internal Information/Communication

An employee Equality Survey was conducted in October 2003 with 92% of the workforce participating. The Gallery conducted a wider ranging employee survey in 2006 and a follow up to this survey will be undertaken in 2008. Results of these surveys are available to all staff at the Gallery.

Minutes from Senior Management Team, Access Steering Group and Disability Access Meetings are available to all staff via the internal intranet.

External Communication

Providing Informative and useful information about the Gallery's and its collections and services is important for current visitors and also in attracting new audiences. Information is provided in a variety of formats including large print, on-line and in specialist media sources that target particular groups.

Accessible communication equipment (induction loops) is provided at all of the Gallery's information points.

The Gallery has an established range of formal and informal educational programmes and activities aimed at improving the participation of particular groups to the Gallery. These include talks and workshops for visitors with a visual or hearing impairment through for example the use of British Sign Language interpreted events and picture descriptions.