



## **GENDER EQUALITY**

### **Introduction**

#### **Equal Opportunities**

As an equal opportunities employer, and in line with our brand values, the Museum is committed to integrity and impartiality in dealing with our people, and other partners and organisations. We are committed to providing a work environment, which encourages people of all backgrounds and beliefs to work well together and achieve their potential. Within this context, we comply with the Sex Discrimination Act (S.D.A.) 1975, as amended by the Equality Act 2006. The Equality Act amends the S.D.A. and places a statutory duty on us to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

In anticipation of a single Equality Act, we are implementing a diversity plan that will reflect the aspiration of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights for,

'A Britain at ease with all aspects of its diversity, built on fairness and respect for all'

The Museum is committed to better-informed, equality-proofed decision-making and policy development, i.e. we ensure that impact assessments are made when developing new policies and that reviews are made of existing policies. The Directors Group signed up to pursuing the Investors in People (IIP) standard in order to improve the clarity that employees have about their roles, the equal support and development they can expect to have in those roles, and the way in which they are involved. Workshops and presentations have been held across the Museum and as a result the feedback from this work is already being acted upon by senior management. Current actions include the piloting of face to face briefings, the introduction of a Heads of Departments IIP forum and the implementation of an action plan following on an IIP diagnostic report.

Even before committing to IIP, the Museum had a well established and agreed method of consultation through two employee representation bodies, the Joint Negotiating Committee that deals with changes in pay and the General Purposes Committee, a forum for discussion of all people management issues. The consultation mechanisms have been reviewed in the light of the Information and Consultation of Employees (ICE) Regulations. All major policies are discussed at these meetings. These include the cornerstones of our gender equality scheme: our Equal Opportunities Policy and our Diversity Policy. Monitoring these policies is shared with Prospect and Public and Commercial Services (PCS) trades unions.

## **Diversity and Equal Opportunities Policies**

Diversity is a broad concept that builds upon the progress made through Equal Opportunities. Diversity promotes an understanding of the value that difference brings; and a respect for that difference. Promoting diversity at the Museum involves creating an environment that capitalises on everything that makes one unique – race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, mental or physical abilities, religion or belief, age, marital status, socio-economic background, linguistic abilities, trade union membership/non-membership, gender identity or any other appropriate distinction. It is about valuing all individual people for who they are.

The Natural History Museum operates to a global agenda, generating new scientific knowledge and engaging with a large diverse audience. Diversity and Equal Opportunities are at the heart of everything we do. Our collection is a model of natural diversity, but it is the variety of perspectives, knowledge, interest and understanding of many different people that gives it meaning. The collection itself is augmented by research findings from across the world; our public programme marries the collection with the wide-ranging talents of Museum people; our audience brings a limitless range of backgrounds and perspectives to the Museum. Without diversity, the Museum would be a mere repository of objects. In embracing diversity, it becomes relevant to people's lives: promoting the discovery, understanding, responsible use and enjoyment of the natural world.

We are passionately committed to valuing and reflecting diversity and equal opportunities at every level within our workforce. Our success as an organisation depends on making the best use of all the talents of our people. We recognise that the Museum does not yet fully reflect the diversity of our local population or the UK population as a whole, but our intention is to improve this year on year. Our Equal Opportunities policy is set within the wider context of the Diversity Strategy and the Audience Development Strategy which have the overarching aim of;

**Increasing the diversity of people engaging with the Museum's activities and enriching their knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of the natural world.**

## **GENDER EQUALITY**

### **Recruitment and Selection**

The Museum recognises that conscious or unwitting prejudice in the recruitment and selection of people is a serious threat to gender equality and diversity. We will fight to prevent and eradicate it. All stages of recruitment and selection will be conducted in accordance with our equality-proofed recruitment and selection policy and procedures. Following a **project called 'Women in Science'**; we have implemented career break and flexible working policies.

### **Training and development**

The Museum wants its people to flourish. We recognise training as a key means by which everyone can develop their knowledge, skills, qualifications and experience necessary for effectively doing their job. Where training needs are identified through the performance management process, training opportunities will be made available, subject to financial and operational resources. Equal opportunity issues are addressed at the induction stage and will be reinforced in other programmes including management development programmes and skills training (e.g. performance management, recruitment and selection). Training materials are free from bias and do not discriminate. Diversity and equal opportunities principles are incorporated into training plans for all employees, training programmes and other development activities. Training is made available throughout the working hours of the Museum staff, e.g. evening sessions are frequently held for those who have hours at this time. We are ready to implement the induction programme across

two separate segments for managers and employees so that the management of gender equality is transparent. We have implemented a new online appraisal system for all employees with appraisal training for all employees. Our management competency framework has formed the basis of our management development training which is delivered flexibly through modules. Through these processes we can identify the contribution towards achieving the Museum's diversity agenda.

### **Career progression/promotion**

We will provide equal opportunities for career progression/promotion to all of our people who have the required skills and aptitudes. Line managers are advised to continually assess the promotion potential of every employee.

### **Pay and reward**

We are reviewing our pay system to ensure it is transparent, based on objective criteria and free from bias. Everyone should be equally banded for the same work or for work of similar value. We have completed phase I of our review and are now in negotiations on Phase II. We will regularly review our pay practices for all employees including those who are absent on maternity leave.

### **Pension scheme**

The Principle Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS) is an equality-proofed scheme that has been reviewed to comply with equality legislation and recognise civil partnerships.

### **Work life balance**

We are a supportive employer: we understand that the time our people spend working for the Museum is only one part of their lives. We recognise the need for flexible working patterns such as job-share, part-time and home working where an individual may wish to change their working hours, contingent with business and operational needs. These methods of working will be fully considered by managers, in consultation with HR where appropriate. We have revised our established flexible working policy. All our policies when revised are subject to further equality proofing.

### **Communication**

We will proactively communicate and promote this policy in a variety of ways, including the HR section of our Internet and Intranet, and through equal opportunities and diversity awareness workshops.

### **Breach of policy**

Advancing diversity is about tough management as well as encouraging words. We will take very firm action against anyone proved to be in breach of this policy. Any such breach will be dealt with through the Museum's disciplinary procedure.

### **Monitoring**

We are monitoring the effectiveness of our equality and diversity policies by analysing employment data using diversity criteria. We publish statistics in the HR annual report and make improvements in accordance with relevant changes in legislation and best practice. This specifically targets recruitment, career progression and termination of employment processes and procedures.

## Roles and responsibilities

Everyone at the Museum shares a collective responsibility for equal opportunities. Equally, we understand the importance of powerful and passionate leadership: this leadership starts with our Trustees and runs throughout the management line. The Museum Director is responsible for ensuring development and implementation of the policy across the Museum, starting with Human Resources Director and the Directors Group – our senior management team. Directors develop their own action plans to support corporate initiatives for implementation throughout their own departments

## Steering Group

An Equality and Diversity Steering Group, made up of people from across the Museum will report to the Human Resources Director and will be responsible for facilitating policy initiatives and consulting people on developments. The Diversity Steering Group will act as advocates and champions and will help to steer the policy throughout its delivery.

The HR report will be regularly made to Directors Group who will oversee strategy and ensure delivery against objectives and targets.

## Managers

Managers at all levels of the Museum are working to ensure that equal opportunities and diversity are a living reality, not a paper exercise. Actions to deliver equality happen at recruitment, appraisal forward job, learning and development planning, competency framework implementation, phases I and II of our pay and reward agreements, pension scheme and in all our learning and development interventions. All managers should be aware of their role in setting standards that create the right environment for equality and diversity and ensure commitment to the policies.

## Employees

It is everyone's responsibility to:

- co-operate with any equality and diversity measures introduced to ensure opportunity and non-discrimination
- treat others fairly without prejudice
- promote a work environment that allows people to feel valued and realise their potential, and encourage others to do the same.

The following table gives the status of our current action plan:

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ACTION

Actions	Stakeholders	Resources Required	By when	Responsibility for Action
Implement Phase I of the pay agreement equality proofing former Bands 6 and 7	Treasury, DCMS Trustees, Directors, all staff	Agreed budget for pay increases 2006-08	August 2006	
Start Phase II of the pay agreement to equality proof further bands as agreed with TUS	Treasury, DCMS Trustees, Directors, all staff	Agreed budget for pay increases 2008 onwards	August 2008	
Set up and Equality and Diversity Steering Group	All Directors, managers and employees	time	August 2007	
Ensure the equal opportunities	All Directors,	tbc	Under	Directors

and diversity policies are constantly energised and new starters are aware of their responsibilities and rights.	managers and employees		review	Group
Review consultation mechanisms with recognised unions in the light of the Information and Consultation of Employees (ICE)	All Directors, managers and employees		Completed April 2007	
Ensure equality and diversity principles are incorporated into training plans for all employees, training programmes and all other development activities. Identify through this process the contribution towards achieving the Museum's diversity agenda.	All employees	time	Completed	L&D, All managers
Tailor the induction program across two separate segments: managers and employees.	All employees	time	Ready to implement in May 07	HR
Implement the revised flexible working policy.	HR All employees	tbc	Completed	HR
Implement the revised appraisal system and policy.	All employees	time	Completed	HR
Implement management development programmes and skills training.	HR All managers	time, funding	Completed	HR
Examine methods by which the Museum can attract more candidates for employment at all levels from under represented groups.	HR	time	Implemented online system Reporting on applicant data via i-grasp Budget agreed by Human Resources Director	HR
Attend Young Graduates steering group meetings and join the programme in September 2007	All Directors, managers and employees	funding	Budget agreed by Directors Group for HR in 2008. Attendance at Young Graduates steering group June 2007 onwards	
Deliver <i>train the trainer</i> seminars and equality and diversity workshops to meet demand. Set	HR All employees	time, funding	Completed	HR

up a process to ensure all managers have access to equality and diversity training.				
Implement workforce equality and diversity monitoring system.	HR	Compel setup	Completed and published in HR Annual report	HR
Implement recommendations following the review of our consultation processes with our recognised unions and the Consultation of Employees (ICE) Regulations				
Implement Learning and Development policy.	L&D	time, funding	Completed	HR
Establish prayer room facilities for staff and visitors.	HR, NA Team, Staff, Visitors, Way finding, Communication	budget, time,	Completed	New Audiences Team and HR
Set up steering group/champions	HR NA Team, HR, Science reps, Trades union rep, Communications team, member of senior mgmt. Admin support	Regular time commitment	Under review	HR

## Pay and reward

With foresight, five years ago, the Museum started to review its pay and reward system. The aim was to equality proof the system and to ensure that all employees got equal recognition for their competence. As a result, seven competency frameworks were designed over two years through a Museum-wide collaboration and after scores of meetings with forty-five employees the frameworks were completed. They cover seven occupational groupings for Curation, Research, Facilities (technical research), Information Management (library and information technology), Specialist functions (Communications, Development, Human Resources management, Finance, Audit and Assurance), Front-line and Supervision, and Management. These frameworks were designed to underpin the long and comprehensive review of our pay and reward system.

Competency frameworks will be essential for the future as we anticipate EU legislation, which is due to be implemented in 2009. This will require us to harmonise our qualifications and accreditation systems across Europe. We are well equipped to lead in our sector with our preference for equality-proofed and evidence-based competency systems and our continuing implementation of our highly-developed competency frameworks prepare us for this change.

With the frameworks in place we went into our pay and reward negotiations to agree a two-year pay deal. In its first phase, the deal focused on rectifying inequalities in two of our pay bands.

### **Implementation of first phase of equality proofing pay and reward 2006-2008**

Prior to 2006, the Museum had a seven band pay system. An analysis of the history of our pay deals showed that aside from the four year period of performance related pay, the differences in pay and positions on pay scales resulted from a succession of union-negotiated and correctly implemented pay agreements. Nevertheless pay progression had varied for individuals and anomalies were emerging that needed management expertise in pay, job evaluation and negotiation in order to resolve them. Our most recently implemented pay deal changed pay terms and conditions for c. 250 employees (over one-quarter of the Museum's people) by removing their posts from Bands 6 and 7, which are now abolished, and reforming them into seven job families. Each job family has just two salary points i.e. a 'starter' salary and a 'fully competent' salary. Transitional arrangements will be completed by 2008, and in the meantime the implementation of the competency frameworks for the new job families is being supported by our Learning and Development team.

### **Negotiation of second phase of equality proofing pay and reward 2008**

Early in 2007 we began negotiating with the Joint Negotiating Committee with its representatives from Prospect and the PCS unions. These are the two unions recognised by the Museum to review further bands. Without prejudicing the progress and outcome of these negotiations, our approach will be to further a competency based system that gives equal recognition without gender or any other bias.

### **Competency as an equality proofing measure**

Competencies are a set of personal attributes, including skills and knowledge which enable employees to do their jobs effectively. They are relevant to equality proofing because they are not related to years of experience or to specific cultural or institutional qualifications. Individually they can be used to measure performance objectively against pre-set criteria, help individuals and their managers look at how they do their job. Importantly, they can be used to establish eligibility for promotion and for learning and development as well as underpinning the objectives agreed for annual review.

### **Job evaluation**

The Museum uses JEGS, a Treasury developed job evaluation scheme which was gender equality-proofed in 2000. We comply with the legal requirement to have such an analytical scheme in resolution of disputes about the level of remuneration for a job. The Museum has a database of JEGS scores and all personnel managing the JEGS process are trained in the system.

### **Family friendly policies**

It is important to try to find the right balance between work and commitments outside of work. As a result, the Museum introduced a series of policies aimed at supporting people to help create a healthy work life balance and enabling people with domestic responsibilities to return to work. The aim of these policies is to retain employees who would otherwise leave the organisation in order to maintain their skills and experience for the benefit of the Museum. As a high proportion of employees make use of these benefits, the Museum has gained the advantage of recruiting and retaining a more diverse workforce and giving current and prospective employees equal access to work.

Our raft of family friendly policies includes:

### **Flexible working**

The purpose of the flexible working scheme is to give employees the freedom to arrange their working hours to suit their lifestyles, providing this meets organisational needs and does not have an adverse effect on the standard of service.

On 6 April 2003, the Flexible Working Regulations 2002 came into effect. Employees with parental responsibility for children under six or disabled children under 18 and who have been continuously employed for 26 weeks now have the legal right to apply to work flexibly. We go beyond this legal right and give all employees the opportunity to request flexible working. We consider all applications and try to accommodate employee requests wherever possible. However, there is not an automatic right to work flexibly as there may be circumstances when it is not possible to accommodate the desired work arrangement. The decision will be made based on the viability of your request and the operational requirements.

### **Career breaks**

Prior to implementing its flexible working policy, the Museum agreed requests for career breaks. This policy is being updated. There is a graduated commitment, i.e. decreasing with the duration of the career break, to ensuring either the same, similar or open guarantee of work on return. It sets up 'keeping in touch' practices to maintain the relationships with employees away from work for periods of up to four years.

### **Working at home**

We recognise the need for employees to meet the demands of work, personal commitments and interests. In this respect the Museum is committed to enabling its employees achieve an appropriate work-life balance by offering alternative working arrangements. Some employees may be able to do their job at home, generally on an *ad hoc* basis or for a limited period of time. It requires a working relationship that is based upon trust and encourages employees to manage their own work.

### **Maternity**

For those who qualify, the Museum exceeds statutory requirements by paying full pay for the first 20 weeks of maternity leave and 19 weeks at the lower statutory rate. During this period continuity of the contract of employment is retained and entitlement to statutory terms and conditions with the exception of pay.

### **Parents request for flexible working**

Requests to work a flexible working pattern are made to line managers and copied to Human Resources and to Heads of Department. Replies are written within 28 days of receipt of request.

### **Paternity and adoptive parent's leave**

A new right to adoption leave and pay may allow one member of an adoptive couple to take paid time off work when their new child is placed with them for adoption. Paternity leave and pay may be available for the other member of the couple, or an adopter's partner.

### **Special leave and care of dependants leave –**

The Museum gives special leave for reasons of urgent domestic distress and unpaid leave available for care of dependants.

## **Bullying and harassment policy**

It is the Museum's commitment to ensure that staff are able to work with dignity in a safe and comfortable environment where they are free from harassment of any kind. This policy is part of the commitment to achieve that aim and in particular to ensure gender equality is embedded in all employee relationships.

## **Complaints**

Anyone who has a complaint should use the Museum's Grievance and Harassment procedures set out in the Staff Handbook.

## **Projects to further gender equality**

### **Women in Science**

In 2004 the Museum commissioned a report to be written by women from Science Group, which recommended a number of actions that have been progressed over the last three years. There were a number of specific actions and progress is given as follows.

- Remove the concept of the science posts pool; this acts as a barrier to talented and motivated individuals returning from part time to full time work. **Done 2004**
- Rather than having a separate approach to equal opportunities within the various departments of Science Group, we recommend that each science department operates within the same Museum-wide equal opportunities framework. **Done 2004**
- We recommend that a single approach towards flexible working is introduced across Science Group and the whole Museum. **Done 2004**
- The urgent need for a clear, consistent and available statement on the Museum's policy on career breaks (as distinguished from corporate development leave) was supported by all. **Renewing 2007**
- Undertake a major review of gender distribution in the science departments to be considered after three years (end of 06-07). **Now due**

## **European Distributed Institute of Taxonomy (EDIT)**

For implementation of the Gender Action Plan there is an internal liaison group constituted by one representative from each EDIT member institution. This Gender Liaison Group will determine its own terms of reference but will probably have to constitute a core group which will actually organise the work, develop a Gender Action Plan page in the EDIT website. The Museum is represented on the Gender Liaison Group of this Institute in order to:

- work towards achieving gender balance in all activities
- raise gender awareness among EDIT participants
- promote women in science
- consider family-friendly policies

## **Diversity enabling forums**

The Museum has encouraged the establishment of groups designed to empower particular groups of employees and provide them with a voice and a platform. The Museum recognises the importance of not making assumptions or stereotyping. We want to enable people from all communities to feel fully a part of the organisation and ensure that they are able to contribute their uniqueness in the most effective way possible.

Two groups (for sexual orientation and ethnicity) are already established with a scope designed and agreed by these groups and the Museum's Human Resources Director who serves as their sponsor and their link into the Directors Group, the senior decision making body in the Museum (this should be noted the first time DG is mentioned, not the last). Three further groups are being established (for culture, gender and disability) with more to follow if the earlier groups prove successful.

Once these are embedded it may be appropriate to form an umbrella group to see what opportunities exist for sharing information, perspectives and priorities across the groups and also further progressing ideas for considerations and funding to Directors Group.

## **Gender enabling forum**

This is one of a number of forums sponsored by the Director of HR to give groups of employees a voice on any matter they would like to see the Museum's management act upon. A small number of employees are currently agreeing the scope and remit of the forum.

## **Talent management and succession planning**

The Museum recognises the need to nurture talent and develop leaders to succeed in all areas of its activities. Our newly established coaching service will support our talent management and succession planning. This project is new and will ensure that diversity and gender equality are robustly integrated into the programme.

Reporting progress on our gender equality scheme the Museum will continue to report progress on its action to deliver gender equality via the Human Resources Director, the Employee Relations Manager, the Joint Negotiating Committee, the General Purposes Committee, the People Group (addresses Investors in People), the HR Annual Report, and the Corporate Plan. All staff has responsibilities to ensure that our plans are fully implemented.

## **Conclusion**

As a non-departmental public body, the Museum can claim a long history of striving for a best practice administration. In its more recent history, however, its management recognised the need to progress its diversity and social inclusion agendas with transparent action. Numerous reviews of our people management systems have resulted in the activities described for recruitment, pay and reward, learning and development, working practices and policies and pension scheme. We have come a long way in the last five years with special projects like our Women in Science review resulting in some rapid policy development to recruit and retain women in science jobs.

The development of our HR and online recruitment databases is enabling us to benchmark and monitor our progress in improving equality of access to employment. Our HR database enables us to analyse employee and volunteer data on the whole range of diversity factors and to analyse our employee relations functions, e.g. disciplinary, grievance, flexible working, turnover, etc as well as analysis of learning and development, pay progression and reasons for leaving. The ability to monitor the progress of our initiatives and projects is a new and valuable mechanism for ensuring

that we continue to strive for optimum performance in the management of our aims for gender equality and diversity.

Our equal opportunities and diversity action plan will focus on equality proofing our pay and reward systems. Our project based initiatives will raise awareness of our commitment to gender equality and in particular our commitment to Investors in People will ensure that we improve on our development of leadership, communication and consistency across the Museum.

### **Publishing and publicising our gender equality scheme**

Public authorities are required to publish annually a report summarising the steps they have taken to meet the general duty, i.e. the steps set out in our action plan. This can be published in our Annual Report as a summary of our assessment of the impact of our actions. We will communicate our plans through:

Trustees meetings

Directors Group meetings

People Group project meetings – covers Investors in People

Trades Unions meetings

The Internet

HR Annual Report

Museum Annual Review