

## **Foreword**

We are pleased to introduce the revised Criminal Cases Review Commission's Single Equality Scheme for 2014 to 2017.

This is the CCRC's updated equality scheme, and will meet its requirements under the Equality Act 2010, to comply with the general and specific disability equality duties.

The publication of this single equality scheme formalises the CCRC's aims to embed equality in all its functions, both as a public body and an employer, and to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Our casework processes are designed to be thorough and fair, and our case reviewers are trained to be impartial and unbiased, to ensure that each case is reviewed on the facts and materials available.

We aim to treat staff, applicants, and anyone affected by our work, with courtesy, respect and consideration. This single equality scheme will help us to achieve this, and to demonstrate our commitment to equality of opportunity within the criminal justice system.

**Richard Foster**  
Chair

**Karen Kneller**  
Chief Executive

## **1. The Criminal Cases Review Commission**

- 1.1 The Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) is the independent public body that reviews possible miscarriages of justice. The CCRC was set up in 1997 after growing public concern about miscarriages of justice in cases like the Birmingham Six.
- 1.2 The CCRC is based in Birmingham and employs around 100 staff plus 13 Commissioners.
- 1.3 The CCRC reviews cases (both convictions and sentences) to see if there is any new evidence or argument that may cast doubt on the safety of the conviction or fairness of a sentence. If so, it can refer the case back to the appeal court to be considered again.

## **2. Introduction to Single Equalities Scheme**

- 2.1 The CCRC recognises its duty to treat people fairly and with respect, both as an employer and as a provider of a public service. The CCRC therefore will seek to ensure that all its policies and procedures are developed in such a way that will not allow for unfair discrimination.
- 2.2 The CCRC is required to comply with the Specific Duties as laid out in Equality Act 2010. However, the CCRC is also committed to ensuring that there is no unjustified discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 2.3 This single equality scheme covers all of the CCRC's functions, including the way it deals with staff (including recruitment candidates and those who have left) as well as its dealings with case review applicants (actual and potential) and other external stakeholders.

## **3. The CCRC as a Public Authority**

- 3.1 The CCRC recognises its duty, as a public authority, to ensure its services are accessible to all and that it treats all people involved with respect. One of the CCRC's overall aims, as stated in its Business Plan<sup>1</sup>, says that it will aim to "*treat applicants, and anyone affected by our work, with courtesy, respect and consideration*".

The CCRC's application form and other documents are provided in an Easy Read format to make them as accessible as possible.

- 3.2 The CCRC switchboard is able to take calls through Talk Type, as well as having an induction loop available for visitors with hearing aids, allowing people with impaired hearing to contact the CCRC, although neither of these facilities have been used in some time.
- 3.3 If an applicant has difficulty expressing themselves they can nominate a representative to discuss the details of their case with the CCRC on their behalf. The CCRC will arrange to speak to an applicant face-to-face if it is thought that this will help progress the case. These facilities may apply to someone whose

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<sup>1</sup> Business Plan 2008-09 #1527334

first language is not English, or to someone with a learning disability that affects the way they communicate.

- 3.4 The CCRC FAQs are available to download from our website in 14 different languages. Other CCRC materials can be made available in languages other than English if necessary. Where English is not an applicant's first language, or where evidence is not available in English, the CCRC will accept documents in other languages or use translators where appropriate.
- 3.5 The CCRC will, where appropriate, take positive action to ensure that its services are accessible to all.
- 3.6 The CCRC encourages employees to take part in prison and court visits, to see the process that applicants have been through and, for those in custody, to see their current situation and facilities available. This assists employees in understanding the issues that applicants may be facing, and to help them communicate effectively and with respect.

#### **4. The CCRC as an Employer**

- 4.1 The CCRC is committed to equality of treatment of all employees, Commissioners, and temporary employees, and of those seeking employment with the CCRC, regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation. The CCRC is also committed to offering all employees appropriate opportunities for personal development, as well as being committed to complying with all current legislation.
- 4.2 All employees are expected to adopt these principles of equality when carrying out their duties for the CCRC, when dealing with other employees, case review applicants and their representatives, members of the public, and any other people with whom they have contact. The CCRC will take seriously all allegations involving incidents of discrimination or harassment.
- 4.3 To support this commitment the CCRC has an equality and diversity policy statement<sup>2</sup> and dignity at work policy<sup>3</sup>, as well as this single equality scheme. These documents will be given to all employees and highlighted at induction. The dignity at work policy outlines the CCRC's commitment to eliminating discrimination and harassment. These policies also describe the action that will be taken if any complaints of discrimination or harassment are raised.
- 4.4 The CCRC is committed to ensuring all staff and Commissioners are provided with training and awareness of Diversity and Equality issues.
- 4.5 To ensure a fair recruitment process all personal details (name, age, disability status, ethnic origin, gender) are removed from the application form before it is put forward for consideration for interview. Those involved in the selection process are never informed of the applicant's age, disability status or ethnic origin, and are only given their name once the person has been selected for interview. This process aims to remove the possibility of any discrimination in the recruitment process, and is outlined in the recruitment and selection policy<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Equality and diversity policy statement ([#1307707](#))

<sup>3</sup> Dignity at work policy ([#1371658](#))

<sup>4</sup> Recruitment and Selection Policy ([#1103440](#))

- 4.6 To encourage job applicants from diverse backgrounds, consideration is given to the appropriateness of advertisements in publications aimed at particular communities. The CCRC will consider other forms of positive action if it is deemed to be necessary and appropriate.
- 4.7 The CCRC aims to keep its offices physically accessible to all, regardless of disability or mobility impairment. An accessibility check list<sup>5</sup> highlights any areas of concern which need to be addressed, or where adjustments need to be made for visitors.
- 4.8 Where an employee has a disability which causes difficulties at work, reasonable adjustments will be carried out to their work station to allow them to carry on working. Adjustments will also be made for job candidates with a disability – for example, providing relevant materials in a larger font size, or allowing a candidate to complete an exercise by computer rather than writing by hand.
- 4.9 All internal materials are available electronically, where the reader can increase the font size and change the background colour to improve visibility, and the internal photocopiers have a setting available for those with visual impairments which will increase the text size of the relevant documents.

## **5. How the CCRC has Involved Relevant People**

- 5.1 The CCRC currently has no formal arrangement for involving employees or applicant representatives in the development of its policies and procedures to ensure fairness to all, regardless of disability, gender, race, age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, or religion or belief.
- 5.2 The CCRC has built a relationship with the Working for Justice Group. This is a service user group of people with learning disabilities themselves, who have gone through the Criminal Justice System. The Working for Justice Group provide training on learning disabilities to public bodies and are very accustomed to helping organisations within the Criminal Justice System create effective Easy Read Literature. We regularly consult with the Working for Justice for the creating of our Easy Read literature and the Group currently hold their quarterly meeting at 5 St Philip's Place where the CCRC act as hosts.
- 5.3 The CCRC recognises the PCS Union, and will also look into developing this relationship to include diversity and equality of opportunity, although it also recognises the need to consult more widely than union membership.

## **6. Information Gathering**

### ***Employees***

- 6.1 The CCRC's policies and procedures for monitoring diversity information for employment and recruitment are laid out in its equal opportunities monitoring policy.
- 6.2 The CCRC gathers and monitors statistics on the following areas:
- Gender
  - Disability

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<sup>5</sup> Disability Accessibility Checklist ([#578726](#))

- Age
- Ethnic origin
- Leavers

6.3 Human Resources collect, hold and monitor statistics for the following, to see if any patterns of inequality are evidenced:

- All job candidates at each stage of the recruitment process (applications received, shortlisted candidates and appointments)
- All employees
- Employees who apply for training loans for external qualifications
- Employees who apply to attend external seminars or conferences
- Leavers
- Employees involved in grievance or disciplinary action and the decisions made
- Part-time employees

6.4 These statistics are monitored by Human Resources, and reported on regularly to the Commissioners' meeting.

6.5 Benchmarking against local and national working population statistics has been carried out in the past, although is currently it is not carried out routinely.

6.6 As well as statistical data, the CCRC carries out exit questionnaires<sup>6</sup> for all leaving employees, giving them the opportunity to raise any concerns they may have had and their reasons for leaving.

6.7 Staff satisfaction surveys are carried out from time to time, and the results are analysed and actioned as appropriate.

### **Casework**

6.8 The casework application form has an equal opportunities section, which asks for the applicant's ethnic origin, date of birth, sex, and whether they have a disability. This section is detached from the main application before being forwarded to a case reviewer. The information about sex, disability and ethnicity is recorded on the case management system, Statistics in relation to applicants' ethnic groups are currently monitored and recorded, on to make sure no ethnic groups are adversely affected. This information is not, though, attributed to particular applicants. Information about the applicant's inability to discuss their case in English is recorded on the case record and is recoded on the case management system . This information is also monitored and recorded on.

6.9 Information about the applicant's inability to discuss their case in English and an indication of their language of habitual use is recorded as part of the main section of the Easy Read application form, this ensures that the case reviewer is aware of the need for an interpreter or translator in their dealings with the applicant.

6.10 Statistics on applicants' ethnic origin gender and disability are collected, and reported on.

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<sup>6</sup> Exit Interview Form ([#69477](#))

## **7. Statement of our methods for impact assessment**

- 7.1 The CCRC carries out equality impact assessments (EIAs) on all policies and procedures<sup>7</sup>. This has been built into the process of developing and amending all policies and procedures across the CCRC.
- 7.2 Initial equality impact assessments are carried out on all new policies and procedures, which includes working practices, formal memoranda, project work and the use of contractors.
- 7.3 For those policies and procedures which are deemed to be of major significance for the CCRC's activities as a public body or employer, or where the initial assessment has revealed the likelihood of a significant impact on specific groups, a more in-depth assessment is carried out to ascertain whether any action should be taken to minimise, reduce or counter the affect.
- 7.4 A plan to carry out and review equality impact assessments on all policies and procedures is overseen by the Equality Group.
- 7.5 HR will monitor actions arising from EIAs and will report on them in future equality schemes.

## **8. Procurement**

- 8.1 The CCRC occasionally uses contractors to carry out work on its behalf, although it does not use contractors to carry out any of its main functions.
- 8.2 To ensure that the use of contractors will not cause the CCRC to breach its obligations under equality legislation, they will be asked to provide details of how they comply with current equality legislation, for example by providing a copy of their equal opportunities policy.
- 8.3 Where a specific project is being contracted out, an equality impact assessment will be carried out to ensure that the project's possible impact is considered. Where appropriate, this assessment will be carried out with the contractors.

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<sup>7</sup> Equality Impact Assessment Procedure ([#1373630](#))

## 9. Objectives

No.	ACTION	PARA	OWNER	RESOURCES / NOTES	TIMESCALE	MEASURE
1.	To improve benchmarking of employment statistics	7	Human Resources	Liaise with MOJ and other Government Bodies	March 2018	Meaningful benchmarking of employee data
2.	Raise mental health awareness	6	Human Resources	Liaise with MOJ, Occupational Health and other outside organisation such as MIND	March 2018	Better management and understanding of mental health issues
3.	Consult with possible applicant representative group	5.2	Human Resources	Liaise with SMT and Head of Communications	Rolling member of the Equality and Diversity Group to attend quarterly Working for Justice Group meeting with the Complaints Manager, where the CCRC acts as host at 5 St Philips' Place Initial Meetings complete - ongoing	Better understanding of applicants accessibility needs
4.	Review procurement and use of contractors procedures to ensure that equality procedures are followed	8	Human Resources		The Head of HR to add documents when contract out for tender March 2018	Publication

