



# Serious Fraud Office

## **Strategic Equality Objectives**

**2016 – 2020**

**Serious Fraud Office**

## **Context and Legal Requirements**

The Equality Act 2010 (“the Act”) streamlined and strengthened existing equality legislation and extended legal protection to additional groups with protected characteristics. The protected characteristics under the Act are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

### **The General Duty**

Section 149 of the Act imposes a general duty on all public bodies covered by the Act to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between those who share protected characteristics and those who do not; and
- foster good relations between those who share protected characteristics and those who do not.

These are collectively referred to as the duty to promote equality.

The Serious Fraud Office (“SFO”) is a public body within the meaning of the Act and has a duty to promote equality across all groups with protected characteristics.

### **The Specific Duties**

The Act (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 requires all public bodies to:

- Prepare and publish one or more objectives within the timescales required by the Specific Duties and subsequently at intervals of not greater than four years beginning with the date of the last publication. The objectives must be specific and measurable.

- Publish information to demonstrate its compliance with the General Duty within the timescales required and at intervals of not greater than one year beginning with the date of the last publication. The information must be published in such a manner that it is accessible to the public.

We publish accessible information on our workforce to demonstrate our compliance with the General Duty. This information, which relates to all our equality and diversity policies and practices, can be found at:

<https://www.sfo.gov.uk/publications/corporate-information/transparency/>

## **Our mission, values and strategic objectives**

The SFO investigates and, where appropriate, prosecutes serious or complex fraud, bribery and corruption. In addition, we recover the proceeds of those crimes we investigate and assist overseas jurisdictions in their investigations into serious or complex fraud, bribery and corruption.

### **Our mission**

- Reducing the harm caused by high level economic crime
- Preserving and enhancing the reputation of the UK as a safe place to do business

### **Our values**

The SFO's work is underpinned by the following values:

A. Excellence: *we strive for excellence in all that we do*

B. Integrity and professionalism: *we make objective decisions whilst always mindful of quality and value for money*

C. Openness and transparency: *we share information with each other and, where appropriate, others; explaining our decisions and learning from our mistakes*

D. Respect: *we show respect to one another, to our external partners and to the wider public*

### **Our strategic objectives**

Our strategic objectives reflect our commitment to deliver fair and effective justice which calls for a multi-disciplinary approach and legislative powers available to the SFO (known as the Roskill model) to:

Investigate and, where appropriate, prosecute serious or complex fraud, bribery and corruption cases fairly and effectively

Recover the proceeds of serious or complex fraud, bribery and corruption fairly and effectively

Develop, and strengthen, constructive relationships with partners both in the UK and internationally

Build and maintain an effective workforce, treating our staff fairly and with respect and dignity

Provide value for money in everything we do



## Our Approach to Equality and Diversity

### ***Diversity Vision***

*Our vision is for a workforce that:*

- *is motivated to serve the public interest and has the public's trust;*
- *reflects the breadth of talent across society;*
- *values the unique contribution everyone can make;*
- *treats everyone fairly and with respect; and*
- *promotes equality of opportunity for all.*

### ***Background context***

From the SFO's inception in 1988, and central to the way we work, is the multi-disciplinary approach to team work known as the Roskill model. This brings together people with diverse skills and experience including investigators, digital forensic specialists, lawyers and accountants. Diversity of thought and skills is at the core of our business model and should be reflected in the composition of our workforce and the way we treat those with whom we work.

We will enhance the delivery of our strategic objectives by recruiting, developing and retaining a talented and diverse workforce. We will be inclusive and not tolerate unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or abuse.

We will treat people fairly as individuals, with dignity and respect.

In doing so we will enhance our operational effectiveness and meet the public's expectations of us.

## **Equality Objectives**

Equality and diversity is key to our success. Its importance is reflected in the implementation of equality and diversity action plans which are relevant to the requirements of the SFO. These action plans support the equality objectives which, in turn, align with our business priorities in respect of the exercise of our public functions and our workforce.

In setting these objectives, we have considered what we have learned from the equality information we hold and we have built on previous work undertaken. These objectives reflect the areas in which we consider we should be giving greatest attention and should not be taken to suggest that they reflect the entirety of our equality and diversity work.

To understand better the needs of our workforce and how to support them so that they can give of their best, we will continue to identify whether there are barriers in our policies, practices or processes that may disadvantage or discriminate against them. This will form part of our work to deliver on the objectives.

We will report annually on progress as part of the publication of equality information on our external website. Although these objectives relate to the period 2016-2020, it is envisaged that we will also update and review them where necessary.

## **Acknowledgements**

These objectives are produced on behalf of the SFO's senior leadership team by the People & Culture Committee. They were developed in consultation with representatives of the SFO's Equality & Diversity Working Group.

## **Equality Objectives**

### **Objective 1**

**To ensure that equality and diversity considerations are an integral part of our decision making**

We will know we have succeeded when:

- The impact on all our people is taken into account across the organisation and reflected in business decisions as a matter of course
- Equality and diversity is an integral part of all our training and recruitment

### **Objective 2**

**To understand better the experience of our female, Black and Minority Ethnic, disabled and LGBT staff in all parts of the organisation and to work to improve recruitment, retention and promotion by ensuring that due regard is paid to the experience of these groups**

We will know we have succeeded when:

- We have increased representation of each of these groups in more senior roles across the organisation with a sustainable upward trend and we see strong talent pipelines in the feeder grades
- There is evidence of steady, sustainable increases in the proportion of our BME, disabled and LGBT staff with the effect that the level of representation is proportionally more consistent with that of the general population
- Anonymous surveys show a steady, sustainable increase in levels of BME, disabled and LGBT staff, supporting improved recruitment and retention
- There is steady and increased completion of diversity data and declaration rates in respect of ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation to facilitate monitoring of diversity within the workforce

### **Objective 3**

**To reduce the incidence of bullying and harassment**

We will know we have succeeded when:

- We can demonstrate a reduction in the incidence of bullying and harassment
- Evidence from anonymous surveys shows that the reduction is not attributable (in whole or in part) to a general lack of confidence on the part of complainants and/or witnesses in our commitment to addressing these issues



## **Objective 4**

**To contribute to the Civil Service aim of removing the barriers to those from lower socio-economic backgrounds**

We will know we have succeeded when:

- We meet or exceed our apprenticeship targets and have enhanced our support for the Government's social mobility strategy by further developing our approach to increased social mobility in line with the Civil Service Workforce Plan 2016-2020

## **Objective 5**

**To ensure that the SFO is an inclusive place to work**

We will know we have succeeded when:

- There is a decrease in the number of employees reporting that they have been bullied, harassed and/or been discriminated against or witness to such behaviour
- Anonymous surveys and exit interview data show a steady, sustainable increase in levels of staff engagement supporting improved recruitment and retention
- Evaluation of the impact of diversity and inclusion activities shows that the SFO is moving positively towards creating an inclusive workplace culture