

Specialist Schools
and Academies Trust
THE SCHOOLS NETWORK™

SSAT Single Equality Scheme 2008 - 2011



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Equality and diversity

Foreword

Welcome to the first single equality scheme (SES) produced by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT). This SES brings together in one document three discrete schemes to promote disability, ethnicity and gender equality.

The SSAT introduced a race equality scheme in September 2006 as a clear manifestation of our commitment to equal opportunities and diversity. This set out a coherent strategy with supporting actions highlighting how the SSAT intended to meet its obligations and duties in respect of race and equality. We have now decided to extend our commitment further by including two other key aspects of diversity – gender and disability.

The SSAT is not legally obliged to adopt any of these equality schemes. We have chosen to do so, however, in order to mirror the statutory obligations placed on schools and to demonstrate our commitment to encourage, value and promote equality and diversity within the organisation. The actions and activities underpinning the race, gender and disability equality schemes are designed to promote equality and impact on all areas of the SSAT's service delivery and employment practice.

1. Introduction

About the SSAT



The SSAT is taking a lead role in transforming secondary education in this country. We are also continuing to build and enable a world-class network of innovative, high performing secondary schools in partnership with business and the wider community. The SSAT works closely and successfully with government. With the increasing importance of its role, the SSAT recognises that it is a key player on the national stage and continues to lead on a number of major national and international initiatives.

Within the SSAT:

- There are approximately 430 staff employed by the SSAT in the UK, of whom approximately 134 are home based
- There are nine regional offices varying in size and number of employees based in these offices. These offices are also used as necessary by home based employees.

The SSAT's equality and diversity statement

The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust is committed to diversity and equality in all of its employment practices and throughout all aspects of its service delivery.

The SSAT will ensure to the best of its ability that all its staff, associates and consultants will treat all people equally whatever their ethnicity, national status, national origin, culture, religious affiliation, gender, marital status, age, sexual orientation or impairment. We also recognize that treating people equally can mean treating them differently. Policies, practices and programmes must not discriminate, but may be differentiated to accommodate and take account of differences of need, life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people face, in relation to:

- disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made, even when this involves more favourable treatment
- ethnicity, so that different cultural and religious backgrounds are recognised and different experiences of racism, discrimination and prejudice
- gender, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys and women and men are recognised.

The SSAT will also ensure to the best of its ability that its staff, associates and consultants are also treated with respect and dignity and not discriminated against whether dealing with each other or with other people who come into contact with the SSAT.

In order to underpin our commitment to equality and diversity, the SSAT is committed to monitoring its activities and its employment practices in order to ensure equality of outcomes and to ensure that it complies with all current equality and diversity legislation.

Current SSAT equality initiatives

We showcase below examples of SSAT's work to promote equalities. We have chosen these examples because they demonstrate our commitment in the equality arena.

- **SSAT Cultural Diversity Quality Standard**



The SSAT Cultural Diversity Quality Standard introduced in 2007 recognises and celebrates the excellent work done by many schools to promote cultural diversity, race equality and opportunities for all students. All schools have a critical role in developing community cohesion and ensuring that all students are equipped to live in a culturally diverse society. The quality standard was created with a number of headteachers from schools around the country and with representatives from a variety of key national bodies. It covers six key indicators:

- achievement
- curriculum
- ethos
- parental and community involvement
- staffing and governors
- specific projects and innovations.

The SSAT Cultural Diversity Quality Standard is achieved by completing an evidence file against the criteria, which is also available online. This is followed by a school visit to be validated and peer assessed by an SSAT approved school senior leader or consultant with success and experience in this field. Awards are made at three levels, dependent on the breadth of a schools' work, and are valid for three years. A special award is available to schools with outstanding and exceptional practice.

The award is available to all schools, and provides clear aspirations for both multicultural schools and those where a lack of awareness needs to be tackled to ensure that all children can make a positive contribution to the wider community in the longer term.

We are looking at the scope for broadening the award to celebrate disability and gender equality work in schools.

- **Diversity group/representatives**

In 2006, the SSAT introduced a diversity group to help inform the senior management team on policy issues in the diversity arena. The group, which meets on a monthly basis, is chaired by the Director of Finance and Corporate Services and includes nominated representatives from each SSAT directorate. The group has taken a very active role in helping to advance the SSAT's commitment to equality and diversity and has contributed significantly to the content of the equality schemes included in this document which have been developed in consultation with staff across the SSAT. The group brings together women and men from different community backgrounds.

- **Links with other organisations promoting diversity**

The SSAT has long established links with the Windsor Fellowship – a unique organisation that runs personal development and training programmes targeting black and Asian students with the aim of ensuring that learners can become leaders despite facing barriers of discrimination and disadvantage. The SSAT has been actively involved in supporting the Windsor Fellowship by offering work placements each year to students from the fellowship. In addition, the SSAT works closely with the UK Careers Academy Foundation which is helping to raise the aspirations of 16-19 year olds who are considering a career in business. By offering internships for students, the SSAT is helping to offer practical support for young people looking to achieve their potential as they embark on their careers.

- **Diversity open days**



The SSAT held its first diversity open day in February 2007. This was attended by representatives from over 20 different organisations including universities, community interest groups such as Stonewall and the Muslim Association of Great Britain, and a number of leading employers including Transport for London who are recognised for their excellence in diversity/equality practice. The aim of holding a diversity open day is to help share best practice and discuss issues of shared interest that relate to diversity and employment. A similar day is planned to take place in 2009.

- **Local Government Equality Standard and diversity audit**

In the absence of any other nationally agreed equality standard for organisations, the SSAT undertook to adopt key elements of the Local Government Equality Standard as a framework to help shape good practice. Whilst it was recognised at the time that some aspects of the standard could not be imported as the SSAT was not a local government organisation, the senior management team felt that it was important for the SSAT to have some defined and measurable criteria against which its progress in the diversity arena could be measured. More recently in July 2007, the SSAT commissioned a diversity audit to assess the SSAT's position against best practice and some of the key criteria used in the Local Government Equality Standard which the SSAT had voluntarily adopted. The audit identified a number of areas of good practice in the equality and diversity arena. These included:

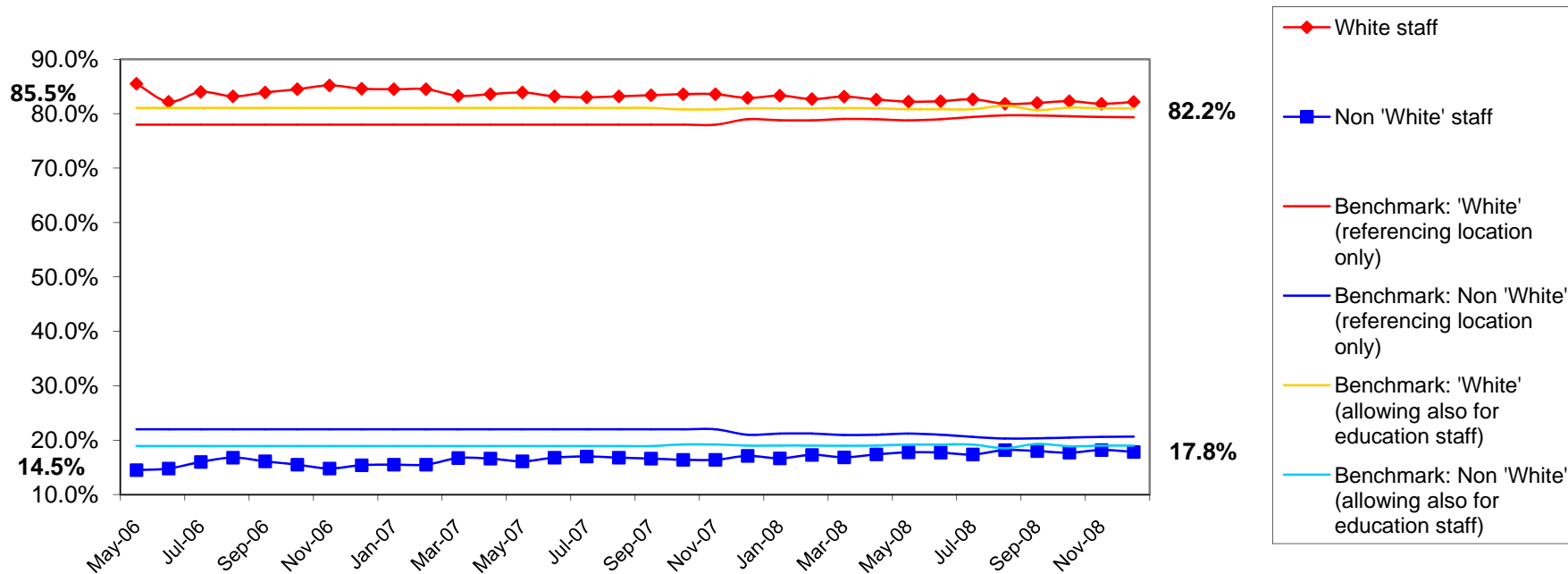
- The introduction of a diversity group
- Actions to widen employee diversity
- The involvement of external organisations such as the Windsor Fellowship, the UK Careers Academy and Stonewall
- The work with schools and academies, including the cultural diversity award and the network to support achievement by members of ethnic minority communities
- The willingness of the SSAT to mirror the public sector duties to promote equality on race, disability and gender although it is not legally required to do so

SSAT equality data

The SSAT is committed to ensuring that it attracts and retains a diverse workforce. The teaching profession overall is predominantly white (94.6% at January 2007 from DCSF data). This impacts upon the selection pool for many of the SSAT's specialist roles. We have developed benchmarks for the proportion of staff that we would expect to see in the 'white' and 'non white' categories within SSAT based on the proportion of teaching roles, and the location profile of non teaching roles weighted to the census for London and England. The graph below shows our progress over the past 16 months. We are currently at 17.8% of staff from ethnic minority backgrounds and we would expect to be at 18.9%.

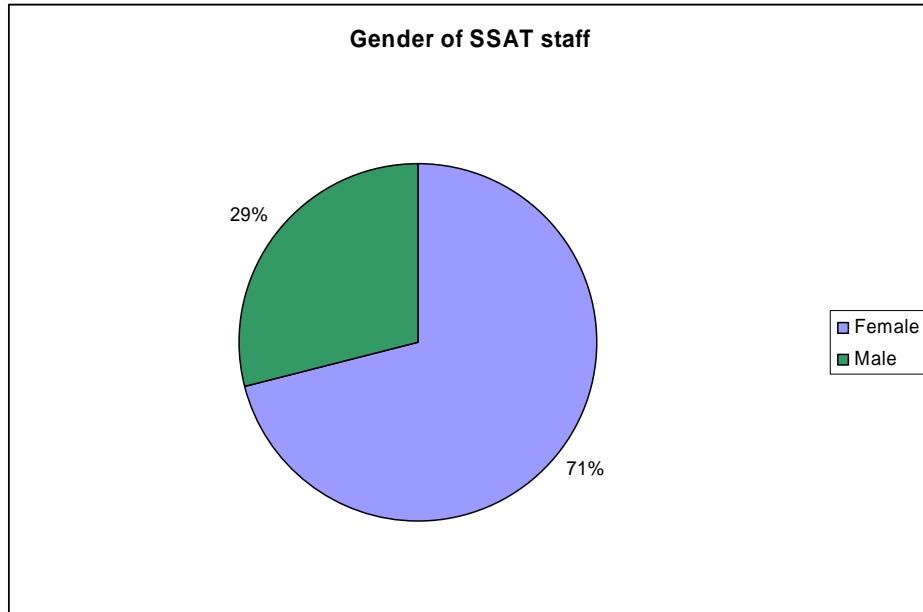
The actions that we are taking to increase the proportion of staff from minority ethnic backgrounds are outlined in our action plan.

Diversity of the SSAT: Trends



In terms of gender, the SSAT has both genders represented at all levels within the organisation, and employs proportionately more women. This proportion reflects the current gender balance in the wider education and voluntary sector.

We will fully investigate and look at developing policies for employees with carer responsibilities.



Like many employers, we are making efforts to attract a greater number of disabled employees to the organisation. At present, 2.8% of our staff have declared a disability. From our benchmarking we would expect that to be fully representative of the community as a whole, around 8.5% of our staff would be disabled people.

Where an under-represented group has been recognised, SSAT is committed to taking steps to encourage members of this under-represented group in terms of recruitment and access to the areas of work where the group is represented as is provided for within current legislation.

Aims of the single equality scheme

The single equality scheme, organized under the headings of race, disability and gender equality, is intended to set out the SSAT's approach to ensure inclusion and support for all its employees, and to promote equality in our policy and delivery functions.

The schemes aim to mainstream good practice and the principles of inclusion in everything the SSAT does.

Statutory obligations

The following legislation contains various statutory obligations placed on employers in the diversity arena:

- Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (as amended by the Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005 and other amendments)
- Race Relations Act 1976, Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and the Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Equal Pay Act 1970 as amended by the Equal Pay Act 1970 (Amendment) Regulations 2003
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended by the Disability Discrimination (Amendment) Regulations 2003 and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Equality Act 2006.
- Part-Time Workers Regulations 2000 as amended by the Part-Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) (Amendment) Regulations 2002
- Fixed-Term Employees (Protection of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002

The SSAT is committed to complying with the above legislation and ensuring that it is up to date with any changes in equality and diversity legislation. The SSAT will implement any changes to the legislation detailed above which relate to its practice accordingly.

Within each area of the single equality scheme, we have set out the key discrimination provisions which relate to the relevant area.

2. Race equality

Introduction

In 2001, the Race Relations Act 1976 (**RRA**) was amended to give public bodies a new statutory duty to promote race equality. The aim was to help public authorities in their efforts to provide fair and accessible services, and to improve equal opportunities in employment. While the SSAT is not a public body, we work in partnership with those that are, and therefore have voluntarily decided to adopt the requirements under the RRA in order to promote best practice among our workforce.

Definition

The term 'race' under the RRA includes race, colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin.

Unlawful discrimination

All employees must comply with the RRA which prohibit unlawful discrimination. Under the RRA 1976, race discrimination is defined as either 'direct' or 'indirect' as follows:

Direct discrimination is where a person treats another person less favourably than he treats or would treat another person on 'racial grounds' ie on grounds of colour, race, nationality or ethnic origin.

Indirect discrimination is where a person applies to another person a requirement or condition which he applies equally to persons not of the same racial group but which is such that the proportion of persons of the same racial group as that person who can comply with it is considered smaller than the proportion of persons not in that racial group and which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

The RRA also prohibits racial harassment which is defined as where a person engages in unwanted conduct which has the effect of violating the other person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for him.

Employees are also protected in the event that they assert their rights under the RRA. The RRA prohibits victimisation which is defined as less favourable treatment for the reason that the person has asserted a right under the RRA.

Race equality duty

General duty

The law states that there are three key aspects to a 'general duty' which must be complied with by all public bodies:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination
- To promote equality of opportunity

- To promote good relations between people from all diverse groups/communities.

The SSAT is committed to making race equality a central part of each of its functions and will ensure that the elements of the general duty underpin all policy and practice throughout the organisation. To fulfil the general duty, the SSAT will continually assess whether its function and policies comply with the duty and will implement any necessary changes to ensure full compliance.

Specific duties

The law sets out specific duties which should be set out in a race equality scheme. The specific duties set out ways in which the general duty is to be met as follows:

- To assess and consult on the likely impact of proposed policies on the promotion of equality and diversity
- To monitor existing policies for any adverse impact on the promotion of equality and diversity
- To publish the results of assessments, consultation and monitoring relating to the promotion of equality and diversity
- To train staff in connection with the requirements of the general and specific duties
- To monitor, by ethnicity, staff in post, and applicants for employment, training and promotion and publish details of the same
- To monitor, by ethnicity, the numbers of staff who are involved in grievance procedures, who are the subject of disciplinary procedures or who cease employment with the SSAT and publish details of the same
- To ensure public access to information and services which the SSAT provides.

Our commitment

The SSAT is committed to diversity and the very highest standards of equalities' practice in service delivery and employment. Equality at the SSAT means that it is a place where:

- Diversity is seen as a strength
- Promoting ethnicity equality is the responsibility of each and all of us
- People's differences are understood and respected
- Each individual has a responsibility to promote good relations
- Services are fully accessible to all groups throughout the community
- The workforce reflects the community that the SSAT works with
- There is zero tolerance of unlawful discrimination and harassment of any kind
- Everyone is able to access the opportunities and life chances on offer.

In order to achieve its inclusive vision, the SSAT developed and introduced its race equality scheme in 2006 based on the above principles. The scheme has been revised in 2007 and the commitment of the SSAT is as follows:

- To produce and publish, as part of our SES, a revised race equality scheme with an action plan demonstrating how it will meet the relevant general and specific race equality duties
- To collect information on the effect of its policies and practices in relation to race and in particular the extent to which the services the SSAT provides and the functions it performs promotes equality and takes account of the needs of different ethnic groups and addresses any issues arising which may be contrary to the general and specific race equality duties
- To continue to gather and monitor statistics on ethnicity in respect of:
 - Recruitment – applications and starters
 - Performance management
 - Discipline and grievance
 - Learning and development
 - Labour turnover
- To assess and consult on the likely impact of its policies and practices on race equality and make any changes which are necessary
- To consider the functions and policies within the SSAT which are relevant to the general duty to promote race equality and to review this list at least every three years
- Directorates to include in their business plans objectives, targets and action plans in relation to race equality
- To consult relevant employees, stakeholders and others to achieve the fulfillment of its overall objectives and take account of relevant information in order to determine its overall race equality objectives
- To continue to collaborate with organisations such as the Windsor Fellowship and the UK Careers Academy etc
- To implement as many of the actions identified in the action plan as possible within three years of the publication of the scheme
- To report annually on the actions taken towards achievement of the SSAT's overall objectives under its scheme
- To review the scheme and to prepare and publish a revised scheme within three years of the date of publication of the scheme and subsequently to review and revise the scheme at three yearly intervals.

Functions and policies to be considered in light of the race equality policy

- Recruitment
- Accessibility to prospective consultants and stakeholders
- Provision of SSAT programmes, work conferences and events
- Equal opportunities policy
- Procurement policy
- Training and development
- Provision of work experience
- Promoting ethnicity equality in schools, for example through the Cultural Diversity Quality Standard.

The SSAT has considered the above policies in light of the criteria below and has developed action points to ensure best practice in relation to the relevant functions and policies:

- whether there is any evidence that the function or policy is affecting some racial groups differently
- whether there is any public concern that the function or policy in question is causing discrimination
- whether there is any public concern that the function or policy is damaging good race relations
- to maximise the scope for promoting equality.

Race equality action plan 2008-2011

This plan outlines how the SSAT intends to deliver on its commitments and, in particular, sets out its arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of the policies and functions above on race equality.

Aim	Action	Lead/support	Timescale
To ensure that the SSAT is accessible to existing and prospective employees, consultants and stakeholders from various ethnic backgrounds	Review the SSAT recruitment process and the recruitment website to ensure that they are accessible to applicants from all ethnic backgrounds	Head of HR	Monthly and cumulative throughout the year
To ensure that SSAT programmes / work / conferences/events are accessible to existing / potential customers from various ethnic backgrounds	Collect data on the involvement in programmes, attendance at identified conferences/events	Head of Marketing and Stakeholder Relations	As per timetable of identified conferences
	Where under-representation is believed to have occurred, look at opportunities for making events more attractive to a diverse audience	Head of Marketing and Stakeholder Relations	As above
	Ensure any leadership related learning and development programmes being formulated include race equality considerations	Director of Leadership and Innovation Networks	As programmes are developed
Continue to develop the SSAT as an equal opportunity employer in respect of race equality	Monitor on a six monthly basis the ethnicity of consultants / lead practitioners engaged by the SSAT and take appropriate action as necessary to deal with under representation	Head of HR	Six monthly

Aim	Action	Lead/support	Timescale
	Monitor ethnicity and provide statistics in respect of workforce composition performance management, disciplinary/grievance, length of service, learning and development and leavers. Produce statistics in relation to the same, identify any adverse trends and take appropriate action as necessary	Head of HR	Monthly
Ensure that the procurement process and contracts with suppliers meet best race equality practice	Review the SSAT procurement process to ensure that organisations, when tendering for SSAT work, provide details of their diversity policies and practices, and are able to demonstrate that these are in active use (e.g. through offering evidence of equalities training for their staff) Encourage businesses owned by people from minority ethnic communities to tender	Director of Finance and Corporate Services	Each year
Communication and promotion of race equality	Publish the race equality scheme and action plan on the intranet and the SSAT website	Head of HR	Publication to take place post stakeholder consultation
	Diversity champions to communicate the race equality scheme through their directorate meetings	Diversity Champions	As above
	Quarterly lunchtime diversity forums to be set up from January 2008 onwards to communicate progress in diversity arena	Head of HR	January 2008 onwards

Aim	Action	Lead/support	Timescale
Training – race equality	Mandatory equality and diversity training workshops to be run on monthly basis Consult staff, and the diversity forum, on the content of such training, and also on the activities and delivery methods that seem best	Head of HR	Ongoing
	Ensure all employees within the SSAT have attended equality and diversity training	Directors, Head of HR	Ongoing
Equality impact assessments	Equality impact assessments to be completed for all internal restructurings/changes affecting existing staffing arrangements Make these web accessible	Head of HR	To coincide with first developments of such changes
	Identify and provide training for those carrying out the impact assessments	Head of HR	Ongoing
Ensure that the SSAT maintains a proportionately diverse workforce in relation to the local labour markets it operates in	Use employment data for local labour markets to conduct benchmark comparisons with diversity of the SSAT's workforce	Head of HR	Six Monthly
Cultural diversity in schools	Progress roll out of new SSAT cultural diversity standard for schools initiative taking steps to maximise uptake among schools	Director of Partnerships and Performance	Ongoing

Aim	Action	Lead/support	Timescale
Community cohesion – supporting schools' legal duty to promote community cohesion	Deliver range of workshops for schools that address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - what community cohesion is - what defines a school's community - what is current best practice Work with iCoCo and with local community groups to create a programme that celebrates effective practice	Head of Community Development	Ongoing
Maintain up to date HR policies to ensure that they comply with the race equality legislation	Review of HR policies to that they are compliant with the race equality legislation, in particular with respect to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Pay and reward -Recruitment -Performance management -Learning and development -Discipline and grievance -Harassment and bullying 	Head of HR	Ongoing
To develop, where appropriate, measurable interventions in respect of race equality into directorates' service delivery	Directorates to include race equality objectives, targets and action plans in their business plans	Directors	April 2009
Retain commitment to earmark specific resources to improve race equality practice	Budget within HR for diversity initiatives such as diversity open days to be ring-fenced for budget setting purposes	Head of HR	Ongoing (incorporated into budget setting process for each financial year)

Aim	Action	Lead/support	Timescale
Provision of work experience opportunities in collaboration with BME organisations	Work in conjunction with the Windsor Fellowship to provide an internship annually subject to funding provision Debrief interns to establish how useful the experience has been and how, if at all, it could be further enriched	Head of HR	Annually
	Work in conjunction with the UK Careers Academy to provide an annual internship subject to funding provision	Head of HR	Annually
Reporting and review	Report annually on the actions taken towards achievement of the SSAT's overall objective in respect of the race equality scheme	Head of HR	August 2008 and annually
	Review the scheme and to prepare and publish a revised scheme within three years of the revised race equality scheme	Head of HR	August 2011
	Publish the results of any assessments consultation and monitoring in relation to race equality	Head of HR	Annually
Ensuring that members of the public have access to the information about SSAT and the services it provides	Review distribution of published information in relation to the SSAT and ensure that it is widely available to all groups	Head of Marketing and Stakeholder Relations	Monthly

Disability equality

Introduction

The Disability Equality Duty came into force on 4 December 2006 under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (**DDA 2005**). This legal duty requires all public bodies to look actively at ways of ensuring that people with disabilities are treated equally and have equality of opportunity within organisations. The part of the implementation of the duty involves public bodies producing and implementing a disability equality Scheme to demonstrate how it intends to fulfil its general and specific duties (as described below). While the SSAT is not a public body, we work in partnership with those that are, and therefore have voluntarily decided to adopt the requirements under the DDA 2005 in order to promote best practice among our workforce. The SSAT is keen to promote equality for people with disabilities as part of the culture of the SSAT. Although the SSAT is aware of the importance of considering specific disabilities, the SSAT is also keen to consider disability equality from the outset.

The SSAT is committed to promoting equality throughout its organisation including equality of opportunity for people with disabilities. The SSAT has taken steps to ensure that its organisation is accessible for people with disabilities. Currently all SSAT offices have disabled access including the addition of a hearing loop facility in its Millbank headquarters. The SSAT is an accredited user of the 'two ticks' disability symbol.

Definition

The DDA defines a person with disabilities as someone who has 'a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse impact on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. For the purposes of the definition, one should ignore the effects of medical or other treatments or aids and appliances.

Definition of the terms:

- 'Physical impairment' includes sensory impairments
- 'Mental impairment' includes learning difficulties and an impairment resulting from or consisting of a mental illness but not addiction to alcohol, nicotine or any other substance
- 'Substantial' means 'more than minor or trivial'
- 'Long term' is defined as 12 months or more (ie the condition has lasted for at least 12 months or is likely to last at least 12 months)

A physical or mental impairment will be taken to affect a person's ability to carry out day-to-day activities only if it affects one of the following:

- Mobility
- Manual dexterity
- Physical coordination
- Continence
- Ability to lift, carry or move everyday objects
- Speech, hearing or eyesight

- Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- Perception of the risk of physical danger.

The definition includes a range of impairments, including hidden impairments such as dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). These conditions may potentially amount to a disability, but only if the effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities is substantial and long term, as defined above. Some progressive conditions such as cancer, multiple sclerosis and HIV/AIDS are included before they have an effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Disability legislation

The SSAT will carry out its duties under disability legislation. This includes:

- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) as amended by the DDA 2005
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- The Children Act 2004 (which includes provisions for disabled children)

Unlawful discrimination

The DDA 1995 (as amended by the DDA 2005) defines unlawful discrimination as follows:

- 'Direct' discrimination is defined as where an employer treats a disabled person less favourably than he treats or would treat others, by reason of that person's disability, and such treatment is not justified
- Failure to make 'reasonable adjustments' for a disabled employee who is disadvantaged by a provision, criterion or practice which is applied by the employer.

Employees are also protected in the event that they assert their rights under the DDA 1995. The DDA 1995 prohibits victimisation against disabled employees which is defined as less favourable treatment for the reason that the person has asserted a right under the DDA 1995.

The DDA 1995 (as amended) also prohibits harassment against disabled employees which is defined as where a person engages in unwanted conduct which has the effect of violating the other person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for him.

General duty

The DDA 2005 states that all public authorities must, when carrying out their functions, have due regard to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the DDAs 1995 and 2005
- Eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disabilities
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encourage participation of disabled people in public life
- Take steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

The overarching goal of the duty is to promote equality of opportunity, and the other elements of the duty will both support this goal and require due regard in their own right.

Specific duties

Public authorities are obliged to fulfill certain specific duties in their implementation by the general duty, as follows:

- Publish a disability equality scheme demonstrating how it intends to fulfill the disability equality duty (which involves disabled people in its design and development)
- Take steps set out in its action plan within three years of the disability equality scheme being published
- Publish a report containing a summary of the steps taken under the action plan.

Commitment

- To meet the requirements relating to implementation of the disability equality duties by reference to the DDA 2005
- To produce and publish a disability equality scheme with an action plan demonstrating how the SSAT will meet its general and specific duties
- To involve disabled people, where possible, in the creation and development of the scheme by consulting with appropriate interest groups
- To assess and consult, where possible, on the impact of its policies and practices or the likely impact of any proposed policies and practices on the promotion of disability equality principally, by ensuring that decisions made by the SSAT do not disadvantage disabled people, and also to identify where they might better promote equality of opportunity such policies and procedures
- To build all aspects of the disability equality duty into the SSAT's policies and procedures as appropriate
- To support schools in their work with disabled pupils whether they be in a mainstream school or a special school
- To become a partner with The Communications Trust and to work in collaboration with I CAN for schools to access good practice in respect of children with communication difficulties
- Directorates to actively consider schools that cater for disabled students in all new programmes

- Directorates to include in their business plans objectives, targets and action plans in relation to disability equality
- To publish the results of any assessments, consultation and monitoring in relation to disability equality including a report containing a summary of the steps taken as part of its action plan within three years of the date of the action plan (see below)
- To gather and monitor information on disability in respect of:
 - Recruitment – applications and starters
 - Performance management
 - Discipline and grievance
 - Learning and development
 - Labour turnover
- To implement as many of the actions identified in the scheme as possible within three years
- To report annually on the progress of the action plan
- To review the scheme and to prepare and publish a revised scheme within three years of the date of publication of its first scheme and subsequently three yearly intervals.

Disability equality action plan 2008-2011

This plan outlines how the SSAT intends to deliver on its commitments

Aim	Actions	Lead/support	Timescale
To ensure that the SSAT adopts best practice in order to enhance disability awareness and equality throughout the organisation	Devise and implement strategies for employees to feel comfortable to disclose their disability. Include Disability as part of quarterly lunchtime Diversity sessions	Head of HR	Ongoing
To maximise website accessibility for all SSAT's online services	Review the SSAT website to ensure compliance with best practice in accessibility Involve disabled staff, and other service users, in this review and act on the issues that they identify	Head of Marketing and Stakeholder Relations	Ongoing
Conference feedback	Review feedback from disabled delegates who have attended SSAT events. Act on this feedback to enhance future events	Head of Marketing and Stakeholder Relations	Ongoing
Publications	New publications to include photographs of disabled students and employees	Head of Marketing and Stakeholder Relations	Ongoing (as new publications are created)
	Provide guidance/information relating to promoting disability equality using the networks of mainstream and special schools to support publications	Head of Marketing and Stakeholder Relations	September 2008
Recruitment of employees and engagement of consultants	Review existing access for employees, prospective employees and consultants Monitor the number of applications received from disabled people, consider where we advertise for	Head of HR	Ongoing

Aim	Actions	Lead/support	Timescale
	staff and consultants, and what steps we can take to promote our organisation as one which welcomes applications from disabled people and the support we shall offer, including through reasonable adjustments		
To improve schools' access to best practice in dealing with children with communication difficulties	To work with the Communications Trust to provide joint events to enable schools to access effective school-based practice in dealing with children with communication difficulties	Director of Academy and Achievement Networks	Ongoing
To retain the 'two ticks' disability accreditation	To continue to meet the 'two ticks' requirements	Head of HR	Annually
To ensure that the procurement process and contracts with suppliers meet best practice	Review the SSAT procurement process to ensure that that it meets best practice in respect of diversity and equality Suppliers must demonstrate their commitment to diversity and equality; we shall be asking to see details of their policies and evidence of their implementation	Head of Business Development	Quarterly
	Ensure that organisations, when tendering for SSAT work, provide details of their diversity policies and practices	Directorates/Head of Business Development	Ongoing
To ensure that all employees are aware of the SSAT's equal opportunities policies through diversity training	Mandatory equality and diversity training workshops to be run on monthly basis	Head of HR	Ongoing

Aim	Actions	Lead/support	Timescale
	Ensure all employees within the SSAT have attended equality and diversity training	Head of HR	Ongoing
Equality impact assessments	An initial screening will be carried out on all current and new policies, functions and services, full impact assessment will be carried out where a need has been identified	Head of HR	Ongoing
	Identify and provide training for those carrying out equality impact assessments	Head of HR	Ongoing
Maintain and enhance up to date HR policies to promote equality and eliminate harassment	Review HR policies to ensure that there is no negative bias in respect of disabled employees, in particular on the grounds of: -Pay and reward -Recruitment -Performance management -Learning and development -Discipline and grievance -Harassment and bullying	Head of HR	Ongoing
Continue to develop the SSAT as an equal opportunity employer in respect of disability equality	Continue to monitor the workforce and the recruitment process ie applicants and new starters in respect of disability	Head of HR	Monthly and ongoing
	Monitor on a timely basis the disability status of consultants/lead practitioners engaged by the SSAT	Head of HR	Every six months

Aim	Actions	Lead/support	Timescale
To develop, measurable interventions in respect of disability equality into directorates' service delivery	Directorates to include disability equality objectives, targets and action plans in their business plans	Directors/Heads of Programme	April 2009
To increase the number of affiliated special schools to 300 and to support special schools in their bids for affiliation	To support special schools with applications for specialist status in the curricula and the special educational needs (SEN) specialism	Inclusion Coordinator	September 2008
	To actively promote and develop the special schools network	Inclusion Coordinator	September 2008
	To support High Performing Specialist Schools to take on the SEN specialism as an additional specialism	Inclusion Coordinator	September 2008
To increase the SEN agenda within schools	Run SEN conferences throughout the regions on personalising learning through the inclusion context	SEN Designation Manager	September 2008
To help schools benchmark themselves against the inclusive schools agenda	Mentors to be engaged in each region to work with schools in each region to share best practice in relation to the inclusion schools agenda	Inclusion Coordinator	September 2008 and ongoing

Aim	Actions	Lead/support	Timescale
To support schools in dealing with children with cancer	To collaborate with The Royal Marsden Hospital to publish detailed guidance for schools and parents on meeting the educational needs of children with cancer	Director of Partnerships and Performance	June 2008
To support disabled children in gaining access to the music curriculum and musical performances	To collaborate with the Drake Project and the City Academy in Bristol	Director of Partnerships and Performance	Ongoing
	To publish a case study in the SSAT and the Academy Networks newsletters	Director of Partnerships and Performance	January 2008
Communication and promotion of disability equality	Publish the disability equality scheme and action plan on the intranet and the SSAT website	Head of HR	Publication to take place post stakeholder consultation
	Diversity champions to communicate the disability equality Scheme through their directorate meetings	Diversity Champions	As above
	Quarterly lunchtime diversity forums to be set up from January 2008 onwards to communicate progress in diversity arena Involve disabled staff and service users in the review and development of policy and practice Set up a steering group	Head of HR	January 2008 onwards

Aim	Actions	Lead/support	Timescale
Retain commitment to earmark specific resources to improve disability equality practice	Budget within HR for diversity initiatives such as diversity open days to be ring-fenced for budget setting purposes	Head of HR	Ongoing (incorporated into budget setting process for each financial year)
To review and report on the disability equality scheme and action plan to ensure that it is meeting the SSAT's aims	Report annually on the actions taken towards the achievement of the SSAT's overall objectives in respect of the disability equality scheme	Head of HR	August 2008
	Review the scheme and to publish a revised scheme within three years of the first disability equality scheme	Head of HR	August 2011

4. Gender equality

Introduction

A Gender Equality Duty was introduced by the Equality Act 2006 (**EA 2006**) which requires public bodies to promote equality between women and men and eliminate unlawful sex discrimination and harassment. This means the public sector will have to develop policies, design services and develop and implement employment practices with the different needs of women and men in mind. The duty covers all the functions of a public authority, such as policy-making, public services, and employment. Whilst the SSAT is not a public body, it works in partnership with those that are and has therefore voluntarily decided to adopt the requirements under the EA 2006 in order to promote best practice among its workforce.

Definition

The Gender Equality Duty seeks to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of gender and does not refer to discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. Whilst the SSAT is not required to monitor specifically for sexual orientation, it has taken steps to do so in line with best practice as different groups of men and women may have different needs. For example, heterosexual women may have different needs from health services than lesbian or bisexual women.

Unlawful discrimination

All employers must comply with the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (as amended) prohibitions in relation to unlawful discrimination

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 defines unlawful discrimination as:

- Direct discrimination ie a women is treated less favourably than a man by reason of her sex (or vice versa) on grounds of her sex
- Indirect discrimination ie a provision criteria or practice is applied which puts or would put women at a particular disadvantage when compared with men, which puts an individual at that disadvantage and which cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim
- Discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity leave
- Discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment
- Direct and indirect discrimination against married persons and civil partners
- Employees are also protected in the event that they assert their rights under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 which prohibits victimisation which is defined as less favourable treatment for the reason that a person has asserted a right under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 also prohibits harassment which is defined as where a person engages in unwanted conduct which has the purpose of effect of violating a person's dignity or creating a hostile, intimidating, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for her either on the grounds of sex or where the conduct is of a sexual nature.

The Equal Pay Act (EPA) gives an individual the right to the same contractual pay and benefits as a person of the opposite sex in the same employment, or where the source of the pay is the same, where the man and the woman are doing:

- The same or broadly similar work
- Work which has been rated as equivalent under an analytical job evaluation study or
- Work that is proved to be of equal value.

Gender Equality Duty

The Gender Equality Duty is a legal obligation on public bodies which came into force in April 2007. It was introduced by the EA 2006, which amended the Sex Discrimination Act 1975. The Gender Equality Duty requires public authorities to promote gender equality and eliminate sex discrimination. Instead of depending on individuals making complaints about sex discrimination, the duty places the legal responsibility on public authorities to demonstrate that they treat men and women fairly. The duty will affect policy making, public services, such as transport, and employment practices such as recruitment and flexible working.

General duty

Under the Gender Equality Duty, all public authorities must meet the general duty under the Gender Equality Duty which requires them to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

Specific duties

Under the Gender Equality Duty, there are a range of specific duties which are designed to help the public body in question meet the general duty.

The specific duties are as follows:

- To prepare and publish a gender equality scheme, showing how the public authority will meet its general and specific duties, and setting out its gender equality objectives
- In formulating its overall objectives, to consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap
- To gather and use information on how its policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services
- To consult stakeholders (that is, employees, service users and others, including trade unions) and take account of relevant information in order to determine its gender equality objectives
- To assess the impact of its current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality
- To implement the actions set out in its gender equality scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so
- To report against the scheme every year and review the scheme at least every three years.

The SSAT is committed to mirroring the obligations on public bodies created by the Gender Equality Duty as set out in the 'Commitment' paragraph below.

Commitment

The commitment of the SSAT is as follows:

- To produce and publish a gender equality scheme with an action plan demonstrating how it will meet its general and specific duties
- To collect information on the effect of its policies and practices on men and women, and in particular the extent to which the policies and procedures promote equality between male and female staff, and the extent to which the services the body provides and functions it performs take account of the needs of men and women equally
- To take account of any external research findings which may highlight gender issues that may be relevant to SSAT
- Directorates to include in their business plans objectives, targets and action plans in relation to gender equality
- To consult relevant employees, service users and other interested parties in order to determine the SSAT's overall gender equality objectives by actively seeking out the views of relevant stakeholders
- To gather and monitor information on gender in respect of:
 - Recruitment – applications and starters
 - Performance management
 - Discipline and grievance
 - Learning and development
 - Labour turnover
- To use any data gathered to improve implementation of policies and practices in line with the Gender Equality Duty
- To implement as many of the actions identified in the scheme as possible within three years of the publication of the scheme
- To report annually on the actions taken towards achievement of the SSAT's overall objectives under its scheme
- To review the scheme and to prepare and publish a revised scheme within three years of the date of publication of its first scheme and subsequently at three yearly intervals.

Unlawful discrimination

All employers must comply with the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (as amended) prohibitions in relation to unlawful discrimination

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 defines unlawful discrimination as:

- direct discrimination ie a women is treated less favourably than a man by reason of her sex (or vice versa) on grounds of her sex
- indirect discrimination ie a provision criteria or practice is applied which puts or would put women at a particular disadvantage when compared with men, which puts an individual at that disadvantage and which cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim
- discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity leave

- discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment
- direct and indirect discrimination against married persons and civil partners
- discrimination against victimised persons
- harassment including sexual harassment.

The Equal Pay Act (EPA) gives an individual the right to the same contractual pay and benefits as a person of the opposite sex in the same employment, or where the source of the pay is the same, where the man and the woman are doing:

- the same or broadly similar work
- work which has been rated as equivalent under an analytical job evaluation study
- work that is proved to be of equal value.

Gender equality action plan 2008-2011

This plan outlines how the SSAT intends to deliver on its commitments.

Aim	Actions	Lead/support	Timescale
Maintain up to date HR policies free from any negative bias on the grounds of gender equality	Review of HR policies to check for any negative bias on the grounds of sex in particular respect of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Pay and reward -Recruitment -Performance management -Learning and development -Discipline and grievance -Harassment and bullying 	Head of HR	Ongoing
To highlight the changes and employment trends in the workforce in respect of gender equality	Provide statistics on respect of SSAT workforce composition in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Recruitment -Leavers -Performance management -Learning and development -Discipline and grievance -Harassment and bullying In relation to recruitment compare statistics as against community as a whole. Analyse data to determine whether action needs to be taken	Head of HR	Monthly
The SSAT develops and implements a policy outlining the SSAT's approach to equal pay and equal pay reviews	Draw up an equal pay policy incorporating procedures for carrying out equal pay reviews	Head of HR	September 2008

Aim	Actions	Lead/support	Timescale
	Communicate the details of the policy across the SSAT	Head of HR	Upon completion and approval of the equal pay policy
Audit to identify pay differences between male and female employees and to address these as appropriate	Carry out an annual equal pay audit to establish any pay differences between male and female employees of the SSAT in respect of work of the same or equal value	Head of HR	July 2008 and annually thereafter
Review flexible working, part-time, term-time and job share opportunities	<p>In conjunction with directorates to explore areas where flexible working, part-time, term-time or job share opportunities would meet business requirements</p> <p>Promote such opportunities as they arise through the SSAT's recruitment process</p>	<p>Head of HR</p> <p>Head of HR</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
To develop, where appropriate, measurable interventions in respect of gender equality into directorates' service delivery	<p>Directorates to include gender equality objectives, targets and action plans in their business plans</p> <p>These will be specific: outcome focused rather than process based</p>	Directors	April 2009
Ensure that the procurement process and contracts with suppliers meet best practice in respect of gender equality	Review the SSAT procurement process to ensure that organisations, when tendering for SSAT work, provide details of their diversity policies and practices	Director of Finance and Corporate Services	Ongoing
Communication and promotion of gender equality	Publish the gender equality scheme and action plan on the intranet and the SSAT website	Head of HR	Publication to take place post stakeholder consultation

Aim	Actions	Lead/support	Timescale
	Diversity Champions to communicate the Gender Equality Scheme through their directorate meetings	Diversity Champions	As above
	Quarterly Lunch time Diversity Forums to be set up from January 2008 onwards to communicate progress in diversity arena	Head of HR	January 2008 onwards
Training - gender equality	Mandatory equality and diversity training workshops to be run on monthly basis	Head of HR	Ongoing
	Ensure all employees within the SSAT have attended equality and diversity training	Head of HR	Ongoing
Equality impact assessments	Equality impact assessments to be completed for all existing and new policies and practices.	Head of HR	Ongoing
	Identify and provide training for those carrying out equality impact assessments.	Head of HR	Ongoing
Retain commitment to earmark specific resources to improve gender equality practice	Budget within HR for diversity initiatives such as diversity open days to be ring-fenced for budget setting purposes	Head of HR	Ongoing (incorporated into budget setting process for each financial year)

Aim	Actions	Lead/support	Timescale
Reporting and review	Report annually on the actions taken towards achievement of the SSAT's overall objectives in respect of the gender equality scheme	Head of HR	August 2008
	Review the scheme and to prepare and publish a revised scheme within three years of the introduction of the first gender equality scheme	Head of HR	August 2011
	Consult with employees (and other individuals where relevant) throughout the implementation of the gender equality action plan where appropriate to continually assess Gender Equality Duty objectives by appropriate dialogue with stakeholders	Head of HR	Ongoing