

Equality & Diversity Committee terms of reference

1. Purpose

1.1. The ICO is committed to extending the ICO's reach into all parts of the country and sections of society to achieve equality of access to information rights and our services. It also seeks to fully integrate diversity into our operational and decision-making processes. To achieve this, the ICO must:

- extend its reach so that a wider range of individual and organisational users are aware of and able to access its services and
- mainstream equality understanding and skills within its workforce in order to improve employee experience and its capacity to meet diverse user needs

1.2. The purpose of the Equality & Diversity Committee is to provide guidance and support to the ICO to ensure it meets those aims. It will achieve this by:

- Supporting the ICO in the review and development of inclusive practices and the integration of equality and diversity issues into all aspects of our work.
- Supporting the development, and monitoring the progress, of appropriate strategies and action plans that enable the ICO to provide inclusive and accessible services and create a diverse and inclusive workplace.
- Supporting the ICO to fulfil its statutory obligations in respect of equality and diversity, including the Public Sector and Specific duties.
- Harnessing insights and ideas across the ICO to incorporate into policies and working practices.
- Supporting the production of the reports required to fulfil the statutory duties
- Collecting and collating examples of E and D activities

1.3. In addition, the Committee will:

- Monitor progress against equality objectives, action plans and any associated targets, advising and recommending as appropriate and producing various reports to fulfil statutory duties.
- Ensure that communication about equality and diversity is effective, appropriate and raises awareness about our obligations and progress.
- Work with L&D to ensure that appropriate equality and diversity training to meet these is provided.
- Receive reports from Heads of Departments on feedback from staff, customers and other sources regarding E&D matters.
- Provide the knowledge management framework for equality and diversity issues.
- Introduce and maintain a network of departmental leads or champions

2. Composition

2.1. The Equality & Diversity Committee will be co-chaired by two members of Leadership Group, with direct support being given to them by the Head of Organisational Development. Membership is also open to staff from any area of the ICO but should reflect a broad cross-section of experience, knowledge and interests, preferably drawn from all ICO Directorates. Both recognised Trades Unions may also nominate a member.

2.2. The Committee will comprise a maximum of 15 full members whose nomination must be approved by their managers. Other interested staff will be able to participate in the work of the Committee through membership of local departmental networks.

2.3. Members of the Committee will normally be expected to serve for a two year period with one-third standing down each year. Any members standing down may be re-nominated by their manager.

3. Role of Members

3.1. Members of the Committee will be expected to:

- Represent their Directorate (individually or jointly) on the E&D Committee
- Attend Committee meetings and contribute to the Agenda as necessary
- Participate in E&D Working Groups as required
- Promote the E&D Committee within their Directorate
- Liaise with members of the E&D Network to raise awareness of E&D issues within their Directorate and Departments

4. Authority

4.1. The Committee's authority comes from the Executive Team. The Chairs will report on the work of the Committee to both the Executive Team and the Leadership Group on a quarterly basis.

5. Budget

5.1. The Committee has a budget for consulting support. Any expenditure made from this budget must be authorised by either of the Joint Chairs or by the Head of Organisational Development.

6. Work Plan

6.1 The Committee will agree an Annual Plan which will be submitted to Leadership Group for discussion and which will be formally approved by the Executive Team.

6.2 The Committee will monitor progress against the Plan at each meeting and will report on a quarterly basis to Leadership Group and to the Executive Team

7. Meetings

7.1. The Committee will meet at least quarterly.

7.2. The Chairs will approve the agenda of all meetings and it will be circulated to members at least five days before the meeting together with any supporting papers.

7.3. The agenda will contain, but is not limited to, the following standing items:

- Review of actions from previous meetings
- Approval of minutes of previous meetings
- Progress against Annual Plan
- Review of equality objectives
- Relevant updates from Information Rights Committee and Leadership Group
- Approval of the Committee's quarterly reports to the Executive Team or Leadership Group

7.2. The draft Minutes of the meetings will be recorded, circulated within five days of each meeting and formally agreed at the next meeting.

7.3. The Chairs may call additional meetings at their initiative or at the request of two members.

8. Quorum

8.1. The Committee is quorate with one co-Chair (or nominated deputy) and three other members present.

9. Urgency procedures

9.1. In the event it is not practical to hold a meeting such as due to the urgency of the matter in question, the Chairs may arrange for an item to be circulated to members for their views and decision. Such decisions must be ratified at the next meeting of the Committee.

9.2. In exceptional circumstances, the co-Chairs may make decisions where the importance and urgency of a matter precludes consulting all Committee members. Such decisions must be reported to the Committee in writing without delay and included on the agenda of the next Committee meeting.

10. Secretariat

10.0. A pool of three members will resource the Secretariat.

11. Review

11.1 The Committee will review its output, working methods and terms of reference annually and report to both the Leadership Group and the Executive Team. Changes to the Terms of Reference must be agreed by the Executive Team.

11.2 The Committee will also review its handling of any significant project it manages within three months of the end of the project and report back to Leadership Group and the Executive Team.

Equality & Diversity Committee
November 2014