

Dear

Ref: Race Equality implications of Departmental Relocation Proposals

The Commission for Racial Equality welcomes your continued support to progress the race equality agenda across your department.

From recent discussions with the Office of Government Commerce, the Commission understands that your department is in the process of progressing departmental relocation proposals.

As you will be aware, the proposals may have significant implications for race equality with reference to staff and service delivery. To assist departments to ensure adequate attention is given to the proposals, the Commission has produced the attached technical note, 'Factoring Race Equality into Relocation', to support work in this policy area within the context of the Race Relations Act 1976. The technical note can be accessed at: www.cre.gov.uk/duty/lyonsrelocation.html

Departments should be mindful to progress relocation proposals to ensure that they seek to:

- Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination in employment and service delivery;
- Avoid any adverse impact in employment and service delivery;
- Reduce any adverse impact on the current and relocating workforce, where proposals are necessary to meet a legitimate aim, and causing some adverse impact is unavoidable;
- Work towards a representative workforce; and
- Promote racial equality through the choice of relocation site.

The technical note has been produced taking into account the wide range of proposals being developed by departments. We believe that it is necessary to assess the impact of such proposals. However, it is important for departments to determine which parts of the note are relevant to their own circumstances. Departments should not overlook the need to include additional themes where necessary and appropriate.

The department may find it helpful to use this guidance with regard to any existing race equality impact assessment procedures and practices it has developed; as well as the online tool, which was developed in partnership with the Home Office. This is available on the Commission website at: www.cre.gov.uk/duty/reia/index.html.

Unfortunately, it is not possible for the Commission to meet with each department individually to follow-up and give further advice on an individual basis. In part this is due to our enforcement powers which could be compromised were we to offer detailed help

to those bodies who we might need to investigate at some stage. Also, we simply do not have the resources to offer this kind of support. In the meantime, if the department has any specific questions regarding race equality issues in this area, we will try to respond to these on a case-by-case basis through the existing enquiry service.

To take this work forward, we are exploring ways of supporting colleagues within the Cabinet Office and the Office of Government Commerce. For example, the Commission has agreed to attend the next HR Directors Group monthly meeting on the 15th December 2005. I suggest that officers within your department may want to use their existing contacts within the above agencies for further information regarding future activities/events.

If the Commission can be of any further assistance to you in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me at the above address.

Yours sincerely

Nick Johnson
Director of Policy and Public Sector