# 'Woke week' in government departments attacked by the usual suspects



Civil servants across various UK government departments are being encouraged to recognise a diverse range of observances in their workplace calendars dubbed "woke weeks" by the Daily Mail. These diversity and inclusion calendars include awareness events that extend beyond traditional recognitions, featuring dates from Pansexual Visibility Day to Stress Awareness Month, alongside pagan festivals such as Samhain and Yule.

NHS England’s recent calendar reportedly acknowledges more than 350 awareness events, with notable inclusions such as gender-fluid visibility week and transgender parent day. The awareness initiatives often involve support groups within government agencies that conduct talks or set up displays to honour these occasions. However, government representatives stress that participation in these observances is not mandatory for staff members.

Earlier in the year, the Mail got itself into a froth over the Foreign Office’s decision to fly the flag for Bisexuality Awareness Week outside its headquarters. Elliot Keck, head of campaigns at the TaxPayers' Alliance, the organisation dubbed a Conservative "front" by Labour MP Jon Cruddas, has expressed concerns regarding the extensive incorporation of these observances in official calendars. In his remarks, he commented, “The extent to which the diversity demagogues have taken over Whitehall is truly alarming,” suggesting a preference for calendars to focus on more traditional dates associated with religious or national significance, rather than those perceived as less established.

Caroline Ffiske from Conservatives for Women similarly critiqued the inclusion of Pansexual Visibility Day, labelling it - bizarrely! - “offensive” and indicative of a “lack of judgement and courage.” She added, “Whoever put Pansexual Visibility Day in this calendar should be invited to write up the history of this day and would be shown to struggle to cover half of the back of a small envelope.”

The Forestry Commission has proactively released a Diversity and Inclusion Calendar for 2024, stating that it aids in enhancing communications both internally and externally. The calendar reportedly includes observances not only for notable religious holidays but also for events such as Latinx Heritage Month—an English-language adaptation primarily used in the U.S.—and the birthday of Rastafarian leader Haile Selassie.

A representative from the Forestry Commission noted, “The dates are not automatically added to staff calendars – they are available to access as an e-resource as part of our commitment to fostering an inclusive culture in our workplaces and understanding the people we serve.” This approach has resulted in a packed schedule for November, which encompasses Men’s Health Awareness Month, Islamophobia Awareness Month, and Disability History Month, while June recognises both Pride Month and Gypsy, Roma, and Travellers History Month.

The Ministry of Justice also provides a structured list of “core awareness” dates, including significant events such as Stress Awareness Month and Intergenerational Week in April. They confirmed that recognising these awareness events is essential in the fight against discrimination while striving to create a workforce that reflects diverse communities.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.gov.uk/flexible-working> - While not directly related to the specific topic of 'woke weeks' and diversity calendars, this link provides context on flexible working policies in the UK, which can be relevant to workplace inclusivity and diversity initiatives.
* <https://www.england.nhs.uk/campaign-partnerships/> - This link details NHS England's campaigns and partnerships, which include various awareness initiatives and diversity-focused programs, aligning with the theme of recognizing diverse observances.
* <https://www.england.nhs.uk/events/> - This link mentions NHS events and conferences, which can include discussions on diversity and inclusion, though it does not directly address the specific calendars mentioned.
* <https://www.twobirds.com/en/trending-topics/in-your-corner/the-woke-workforce-dealing-with-employee-activists> - This article discusses employee activism and workplace policies, which can be relevant to the broader context of diversity and inclusion initiatives in the workplace.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - Although the specific article is not available, this link is the source mentioned for the information about 'woke weeks' and diversity calendars in UK government departments.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/forestry-commission> - This link provides information about the Forestry Commission, which is mentioned as releasing a Diversity and Inclusion Calendar, though it does not directly link to the calendar itself.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice> - This link is to the Ministry of Justice, which is mentioned as providing a structured list of 'core awareness' dates, though it does not directly link to the specific list.
* <https://www.crowncommercial.gov.uk/> - This link is to the Crown Commercial Service, which is mentioned as listing various events as part of its inclusion and diversity calendars, though it does not directly link to the specific calendars.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-office-celebrates-bisexuality-awareness-week> - This link would provide information on the Foreign Office's decision to fly the flag for Bisexuality Awareness Week, though the exact link is not available here.