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Barclays, Shell and KPMG become founding members of new Face Equality at Work membership scheme.

School of Oriental and African Studies, Government Office for London and Charles Russell, so far, will also become founding members of the new Face Equality at Work membership scheme set up by *Changing Faces*, the UK's leading charity that supports people with disfigurements.

The Face Equality at Work campaign was launched in July 2008 by Barclays CEO, John Varley to address the discrimination and prejudice that people with disfigurements may experience both as employees and customers and to promote fair treatment and equal opportunities. They were followed soon after by London Underground, Marks and Spencer, British Airways and Shell, KPMG amongst others.

Shell UK, said: "All our Shell UK staff had the opportunity to gain insight and learn the way to behave and show respect for people with facial disfigurements. We could not have undertaken this initiative without the highly professional and quality support provided by *Changing Faces*."

Henrietta Spalding, Head of Professional Development at *Changing Faces* said: "We are delighted that so many organisations are supporting Face Equality at Work since the launch last year. The new membership scheme will enable us to work in close partnership with employers, to sharpen their delivery towards people with disfigurements to create an environment where employees are valued for their skills and talents and not judged on their appearance."

The new scheme will mean members will be able to develop good practice and receive a range of benefits in the form of information, consultancy, training and advice. The employment team at *Changing Faces* will work with the members to tailor the benefits package to fit the needs and culture of the organisation.

The membership scheme will launch at the anniversary celebration of the launch of the campaign and will be hosted at *Changing Faces* headquarters in Central London on 14th July 2009, with key speaker, James Smith, chairman of Shell UK. The event will bring together all the employers who have signed the charter in the last year.

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Notes to Editors:

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- Organisations who have signed up to the Face Equality at Work charter: Barclays, British Airways, Council for Health Care Regulatory Excellence, DDB London, Government Office for London, KPMG, London Underground, Lovells LLP, Marks & Spencer, National Policing Improvement Agency, Olympic Delivery Authority, School of Oriental and African Studies, Shell, Southend NHS Trust and Working Herts.
- In January 2008, a public attitude survey of 1000 people showed 9 out of 10 people have unconscious negative attitudes towards people who have disfigurements. The research also showed that people with facial disfigurements are likely to be marginalized because little is expected of them, both socially and professionally. The Face Equality Campaign was launched in May 2008. The aim of the campaign is to make sure that everyone, irrespective of their facial appearance, is treated equally and fairly. The charity is asking the public to show their support for the campaign by uploading their faces to a giant campaign collage on its website: <http://www.changingfaces.org.uk/lendyourface/>.
- *Changing Faces* is a UK Registered Charity, No. 1011222, launched in 1992 by James Partridge OBE, DSc (Hon), who sustained severe burn injuries following a car accident at the age of 18. The charity supports and represents people with disfigurements of the face or body from any cause.
- *Changing Faces* employs a team of specialists who offer counselling and a range of practical strategies to children, young people, their families and adults with disfigurements, to enable them to manage public reactions and succeed in every part of their life. It offers a consultancy and training service to health professionals, teachers and employers on best practice in teaching, recruiting or providing customer service for people with disfigurements.
- Over 1 million people in the UK have a disfigurement to the face or body. Over 500,000 people have disfigurements to the face - 1 in every 111. Disfigurement can affect anyone, at any time or at any age. A disfigurement may be present at birth as a result of a birthmark or a craniofacial condition. Scarring, irregular features, paralysis and other disfigurements can also be acquired following an accident, violence, an eye or skin condition, a surgical mistake, or cancer surgery. For more information, please visit <http://www.changingfaces.org.uk>