

Dudley MBC

DIRECTORATE OF ADULT COMMUNITY AND HOUSING SERVICES

ANNUAL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2006/2007

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Plan sets out the main actions that the new Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services (DACHS) intends to undertake to implement the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy and develop fairer and more equitable services during 2006/2007. The plan is informed by and in accordance with national, corporate and Directorate priorities.

1.2 The action plan is structured in 4 parts:

- Corporate Equality Targets
- Directorate Priorities
- Service Delivery issues
- Employment issues

1.3 This Directorate fully supports the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy and this is demonstrated in the aims of the Directorate Strategic Plan and Divisional Business Plans. The Directorate recognises the key role that equality and diversity plays in reducing social exclusion and ensuring fair access to services, where equality of opportunity is a reality for everyone. The work of the Directorate of Adult Community and Housing Services (DACHS) is rooted in the values of inclusivity, social inclusion and empowerment.

The Directorate operates a Diversity Group, chaired by an Assistant Director with representatives from all divisions. This group has responsibility for producing this Action Plan and for overseeing its implementation.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 At its meeting in June 2005, Cabinet resolved, inter alia, to establish a new Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services as part of its overall approach to the remodelling of Council Services. This meant an assimilation of Housing and Adult Care Social Services into a new Directorate.

2.2 Further enhancements are now planned including the consolidation within the Strategy and Private Sector Housing Division of hitherto separate responsibilities to develop the equality and diversity agenda, which existed in the former Housing and Social Services Directorates, hence the production of this one action plan to cover the equality and diversity work of the new Directorate.

2.3 As remodelling continues, the Adult Learning and Library and Archive Service division currently within DELL will transfer to DACHS at which point responsibility for the achievement of its equality and diversity action plan will transfer to DACHS.

3.0 RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PLANS

3.1 This plan is a Level 3 Plan within the Council's hierarchy of plans. The contents of this plan reflect the:

- Council Plan
- Directorate Strategic Improvement Plan
- Directorate Improvement and Modernisation Plan.

3.2 The longer term policy framework is provided by the Council's equality and diversity policy, progress with which is reported in the Annual Review of equality and diversity.

The approach to promoting race equality is set out in the Council's Race Equality Scheme which is produced as a separate document in response to statutory requirements, with a revised scheme having been produced in May 2005.

A combined Equality Scheme, covering further equality strands, is to be published by 4th December 2006.

3.3 This Action Plan will form part of the overall DACHS strategic plan for 2006/07.

4.0 VISION AND VALUES

4.1 The Directorate is responsible for the assessment and provision of services to a wide range of service users and carers. As at 31st December 2005 it employed 1033 employees within housing and 1938 within Adult Social Care a total of 2971 employees combined across six divisions as below;

- Strategic and Private Sector Housing
- Housing Management
- Building Services
- Mental Health and Learning Disability
- Older People and Adults with Physical Disability
- Business Services

The Directorate's aim is

'to help people to lead fulfilled and independent lives in homes of their choice, in safe and active communities'.

4.2 In pursuit of this aim the Directorate will: -

- Give people a say in how services are delivered
- Value the work and contribution of staff and carers
- Work in partnership with other agencies and community groups
- Treat people fairly

It is expected that equality and diversity activity will be integrated fully into the mainstream business planning of the Directorate. Specific responsibility for promoting equality and diversity in employment and services within the Directorate rests with senior managers including divisional heads. The resources of the Directorate, across each division are available to support the promotion of equality and diversity in all the Directorate activities. In addition, a principal officer is responsible for the overall co-ordination of equality and diversity work within the directorate.

The work of the Directorate's Diversity Group will be reviewed following the formation of the new Directorate.

4.3 The Directorate's continued ambitions are that:

- Services should be culturally appropriate for the communities it serves
- Services should be culturally competent in terms of design
- Services should be delivered by culturally competent workers
- The make up of its workforce should reflect as closely as possible the make up of the Dudley Borough community. (As at 31st December 2005 6.2% of the adult social care staff and 3.2% of the housing staff were B.M.E. This compares with 6.8% of Dudley Borough residents who were B.M.E. as at 2001 Census)

The Directorate recognises the key role that equality and diversity initiatives play in promoting social inclusion and ensuring fair access to services.

The Directorate is also supporting the further development of appropriate forums for BME adult social care workers within the umbrella of the Corporate BME Employees' Group.

5.0 KEY ISSUES

5.1 The performance management of the Directorate is driven and framed within the national Performance Assessment Framework (PAF). Directorate plans identify activity that supports continued and improving performance against the prescribed performance indicators. Performance against these indicators is reported to Divisional Management Groups and the Directorate Management Team on a quarterly basis for monitoring purposes. Those relevant to the equality and diversity agenda are: -

PAF D54 (BVPI 56) KT: Percentage of items of equipment and adaptations delivered within 7 working days
2004-05 Outturn= 77% 4 Blob

PAF E47: Ethnicity of older people receiving assessment
2004-05 Outturn= 1.25 3 Blob

PAF E48: Ethnicity of older people receiving services following an assessment
2004-05 Outturn= 1.08 3 Blob

PAF C29: Adults with physical disabilities helped to live at home
2004-05 Outturn= 4.2 4 Blob

PAF C30: Adults with learning disabilities helped to live at home
2004-05 Outturn= 3.4 5 Blob

PAF C31: Adults with mental health problems helped to live at home
2004-05 Outturn= 2.4 5 Blob

(Blob refers to a national social care rating system similar to the 'star' rating system).

The current performance management framework within Dudley Housing Services has been developed around the principles of embedding a thriving performance culture and strengthening the role of performance management and managerial accountability.

Audit Commission Best Value inspections and Comprehensive Performance Assessment place a major emphasis on continuous improvement. They believe that customer satisfaction, linked to performance results drives continuous improvement. Key issues and targets for Housing Services relevant to the equality and diversity agenda are: -

- **BVPI 74:** Satisfaction of tenants with overall services provided by the landlord (three year survey last conducted in 2003/04).
 - a) all tenants - 72%
 - b) black and minority - 60%
 - c) non black and minority - 75%

- **BVPI 75:** Satisfaction of tenants with opportunities for participation in management and decision-making (three year survey last conducted in 2003/04).
 - a) all tenants - 60%
 - b) black and minority - 50%
 - c) non black and minority - 62%

- **BVPI 164:** Does the authority follow the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) Code of Practice for Rented Housing.
Dudley Housing Services continues to comply with the Code and answers 'YES' for this performance measure.
- To progress the corporate employment priorities within Housing Services and achieve 2.5% craft/manual and 6% staff BME representation by March 2006 and 6.8% overall over the next three years – targets to be reviewed annually and refined as a more targeted approach to recruitment is developed.
- Carry out an audit of Housing Services against the Diversity Key Lines of Enquiry and formulate an action plan to address gaps in provision – ongoing review.
- To monitor the reliability of data held within the Housing Management database and ensure new data input is accurate – reviewed each quarter.
- Carry out a review of translation and interpretation services and implement a development plan within agreed timescales by the Customer Communication Working Group – by March 2006.

Housing Services also contribute to a number of Corporate Health equality and diversity indicators, for example, Best Value 2a (Equality Standard for Local Government) and 2b (Duty to Promote Racial Equality) and Best Value 156 (Buildings Accessible to People with a Disability) amongst others. These have not been listed separately by service area for the purposes of this report as they are reported as a Council-wide outturn.

The Directorate Management Team recognises the need to recruit, train and maintain a diverse workforce in order to respond to the needs of diverse communities. The Directorate's Human Resource Strategy identifies measures aimed at attracting, developing and retaining a skilled and committed workforce. The role of the Workforce Planning and Development Board is critical in supporting the progression of agreed priorities including Equality & Diversity priorities.

The Directorate's service areas and priorities for 2006/07 reflect the modernisation agenda for social care and the Directorate's intention that equality and diversity considerations should be at the heart of all our modernisation activity.

6.0 CORPORATE EQUALITY TARGETS

- 6.1 In its lead scrutiny role on equality and diversity issues, Select Committee on Economic Regeneration, at its meeting on 11 January 2006, agreed the equality and diversity objectives for the Council for the forthcoming year to be:

(1) Equality Scheme

The Cabinet has agreed to the production of a combined Equality Scheme to bring together the existing Race Equality Scheme with the legal requirement to have in place a Disability Equality Scheme by 4 December 2006. Pending duties under the Equality Bill which will bring in similar requirements for other equality strands will also be taken into account. The legislation contains a range of requirements in terms of equality impact assessments relating to the impact of policies and services.

- Complete the impact assessments and RES reviews listed in the revised Race Equality Scheme by 31 May 2006
- Assess the implications of the Equality Bill
- Launch equality impact assessment guidance and develop a programme of assessments across all directorates to feed into the Scheme's action plan
- Maintain or increase the score against BVPI 2b) on race equality
- Publish the combined Equality Scheme by 4 December 2006

(2) Equality Standard for Local Government

The Equality and Diversity Officers Advisory Group has undertaken a scoping exercise to assess the requirements of level 3 of the Equality Standard, the national framework for assessing and progressing equality work in local authorities. This has been developed into an action plan with the aim of moving on from level 2 to level 3 of the standard. A target of 31 March 2007 would be a challenging but realistic one.

- Implement the action plan to achieve level 3 of the Standard by March 2007.

(3) People Management Strategy 2006-08

A people management strategy for 2006-08 is being developed to ensure that the Council has the right employees with the right skills and abilities, doing the right things to deliver its vision and priorities over the next three years. Promoting equality and diversity is a key component of the strategy and the objectives highlight issues from the strategy previously raised by the select committee as priorities.

- Implement the equality and diversity elements of the strategy.
- Produce and implement an age and employment policy and procedure to comply with the new legislation by mid 2006.
- Establish a full framework of flexible working policies by mid 2006.
- Achieve an increase in the number of disabled employees working for the Council.

(4) Disability Access Strategy

The select committee has considered a number of reports on the Council's Disability Access Strategy. The duty to promote disability equality within the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 will come into force on 4 December and the strategy will therefore form an important part of the Council's Equality Scheme. The strategy and the Act cover much more than purely physical access to buildings but the best value performance indicator on access to buildings provides one important measure of progress.

- Implement the actions contained within the Council's Disability Access Strategy.
- Achieve an improvement in the score against BVPI 156 on access to buildings.

6.2 The Directorate's contribution to these corporate objectives and the relevant action required, is set out at Appendix A.

7.0 DIRECTORATE PRIORITIES

7.1 Last autumn, the Housing Services Directorate, as was, produced a Diversity Strategy Statement: 2005-07, to support its equality and diversity policy. It aimed to put diversity issues into context and set clear objectives for the future through the implementation of an associated action plan.

7.2 These seven objectives are:

- To gain a clearer understanding of our customer base.
- To extend the range of diversity monitoring data held for Private Sector housing to ensure equal access to the services offered.
- To provide appropriate and relevant services and to understand the diverse needs of all who use our services.
- To ensure high customer satisfaction rates across services for all groups.
- To seek to ensure that the employee composition of Housing Services reflects the diversity of the communities it seeks to serve and to promote Housing Services as an employer of choice.
- To ensure that all staff receive appropriate and timely training and development opportunities.
- To meet and respond to legislative requirements including the Commission for Racial Equality's (CRE) existing and draft Code of Guidance and the Audit Commission's Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE's).

7.3 Some of these objectives encompass actions already set out in previous years Action Plans. The remainder are set out here, in this Action Plan.

7.4 Directorate priorities for Adult Social Care are as below

Culturally Sensitive Service Provision

- To provide culturally sensitive services
- To improve the availability of culturally appropriate care at home services for people with the full range of communities represented within the borough

Translation and Interpretation

- To develop the business of the service taking full account of the council's Access to Services initiative

Consultation

- To maintain dialogue with Community Reps. Panel
- To maintain consultation with BME communities
- To consult with users and carers on issues affecting disabled people

8.0 SERVICE DELIVERY ISSUES

Carers

- To increase the number of carers receiving an assessment and carer specific services

Services for People with Dual Sensory Impairments

- Ensure services are available to meet specific needs of this client group

Enhancement of Learning Disability Service

- To improve access of LD services to BME communities.
- To secure greater presence of BME issues on the agenda of Learning Disability Partnership Board in particular addressing unmet need
- To further develop leadership skills in Learning Disabilities and BME issues and services (Leadership Support Programme)
- To prioritise service of Apna Group, Ehsas Carers and Dudley Advocacy's BME project
- To maximise resources for BME Learning Disabled people and Carers

Out of Hours Services

- Improve access to interpretation services
- Development of culturally competent day care. Improve social inclusion, quality standards and recording systems through monitoring and support of provider organisations
- Increase appropriate recording of ethnicity of service users
- Ensure Human Rights adherence
- Increase take up of sheltered housing by BME elders

9.0 EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

Workforce

- To ensure that the training provided supports the objectives of the Equality and Diversity plan. To enhance skill mix and further promote multi-skilling and cultural awareness
- Implement findings from 'Race Equality through Leadership' audit
- Policy in place for reporting of racist incidents between employees

10.0 ACTION PLAN

- 10.1 All of the proposed actions arising for the forthcoming year are summarised at Appendix A.