

GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME ANNUAL REPORT 2007/08

In April 2007 Tendring District Council adopted its Gender Equality Scheme 2007 - 2010 and accompanying action plan. This is the first statutory annual progress report.

The Single Equality Act 2006 amended the Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) 1975 and introduced the Gender Equality Duty (GED). This meant that from 6 April 2007 public bodies such as Tendring District Council were required by law to introduce a Gender Equality Scheme.

The duty requires more than equal treatment for men and women. Public bodies must promote and take action to bring about gender equality. This involves

- looking at gender equality issues for men and women
- understanding why inequalities exist and how to overcome them
- creating effective service provision for all, so that everyone can access services that meet their needs.

The scheme and associated action plan is a public document and is accessible to anyone who wishes to see it on our website at <http://www.tendringdc.gov.uk> , along with further information on our equalities agenda.

Since its adoption in April 2007 the Council has made good progress in achieving the outcomes in its Gender Equality Scheme. At the end of the scheme's first year all but two of the actions set out in the 3 year action plan have been achieved or are ongoing. The remaining two will be achieved by this Summer. Full details of progress under the action plan are set out in the table below.

GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME - ACTION PLAN 2007 – 2010

| LEADERSHIP AND CORPORATE COMMITMENT | | |
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| ACTION | OUTCOME | STATUS/DATE COMPLETED |
| Review Gender Equalities Scheme Annually | A Scheme that reflects the aims and objectives of the Council in addressing equality across the district and ensuring services are inclusive not exclusive. | April 2008 |
| Equality Champions Group to meet on a monthly basis | Regular meetings to provide a corporate forum to deal with equality issues, feed items into Heads of Service and provide a mechanism for resolving problems and sharing learning. | From April 2006 Achieved and ongoing |

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| Equality Impact Assessments to be produced for any new policies and procedures either written or verbal | Services consider the impact of equality on all new policies and procedures and ensure that the proposals are not prejudicial to minority groups, or unreasonably restrictive to certain areas of the community. | Achieved and ongoing |
| Review and Update Equality Impact Assessments | Services remain alert to the impact of policies and procedures on the community and ensure that actions are taken if necessary to remove any discrimination or prejudice. | Achieved and ongoing |
| Ensure mechanisms for responding to harassment on the grounds of gender, gender reassignment and sexuality (including disability and race) are in place. | To allow full investigation of any harassment claims and to develop a clear picture of where they are occurring so any suspected prejudice can be investigated. | July 2007 Achieved and ongoing |
| Ensure the implications in committee reports on "equality and diversity" are realistic and thorough and address gender issues | To reflect the growing importance of equality and diversity issues in local government and ensure that services are giving serious consideration to all equality and diversity issues, including gender. | Achieved and ongoing (Reviewed November 2007) |

CONSULTATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

| ACTION | OUTCOME | STATUS/DATE COMPLETED |
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| Consult with community, staff, trade unions and stakeholder groups on policy and delivery. | To gather information to ensure actions taken by the Council reflect the needs of the community and address the issues of the minority groups. | November 2007 Achieved |
| Gather more timely data on the gender make up of the community | To be able to plan service provision to match the needs of the district. | November 2007 Achieved |
| Review procedures to respond to claims of discrimination and harassment | To have in place a recognised system that will correctly deal with any claims in a fair and equitable way. | July 2007 Achieved |

SERVICE DELIVERY AND CUSTOMER CARE

| ACTION | OUTCOME | STATUS/DATE COMPLETED |
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| All services to incorporate equality impact assessment as an action in 2007/08 Service Plans | To clearly inform all members of staff the expectation that the Council has in ensuring services are provided to the whole community and are not discriminatory. | June 2007 Achieved |
| All services to develop service-level equality objectives and targets | To mainstream Equality and Diversity throughout the authority and build it into being part of all officers' day job. | June 2007 Achieved |
| All services to incorporate actions from Equality Impact Assessment in Service Plans for 2007/08 | To ensure a joined up approach to addressing any inequalities within the Council. | April 2007 Achieved |
| Ensure that the needs of transsexual and transgender people are fully understood by staff especially those in a communal setting such as leisure centres | The needs of transsexual and transgender people will be fully integrated into the awareness of staff and prevent intentional or unintentional discrimination | Achieved and ongoing |
| Work in partnership with local groups and the Hate Crime Panel to reduce instances of Hate Crime through gender, race or disability. | Improved partnership working will assist in developing more effective services and support people who suffer hate crime. | Achieved and ongoing |

| EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING | | |
|---|---|------------------------------|
| ACTION | OUTCOME | STATUS/DATE COMPLETED |
| Ensure recruitment, employment and pay policies and practices are non-discriminatory and are free from gender bias | To be a good employer that actively works to ensure that the Council attracts people to work for it from all minority groups. | Achieved and ongoing |
| Where operationally possible encourage and promote wider use of flexible working practices throughout the authority | To be confident that nobody is disadvantaged when seeking employment with Tendring District Council. | Achieved and ongoing |
| When considering requests for flexible working take into account gender requirements and monitor such requests to ensure the process is free from discrimination. | Implementation of flexible working practices that do not discriminate on the grounds of gender and allow staff to see that the process is open and transparent. | Achieved and ongoing |
| Training in Equality awareness to be rolled out to all staff and members. | To ensure those charged with Equality and Diversity issues as service providers or in leadership roles have a clear understanding of their duty. | May 2007 Achieved |
| Update all relevant policies to include the changes set out in the Work and Families Act 2006. | Services working to policies that are up-to-date. | July 2007 Achieved |

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| Continue to increase and meet targets for BVPI 11a every year. | More women in senior roles (top 5% of the organisation). | Achieved and ongoing |
| Monitor attendance of employees on training courses by their gender to ensure that ratios reflect the general workforce gender profile. | The Council able to identify any inequalities between genders in terms of access to training and development. | December 2007 Achieved. |
| Encourage both male and female employees to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and monitor participation according to employee gender. | Participation in the LGPS reflects the gender profile of the Council. | March 2008 Achieved |
| Update the Equalities Policy to ensure that this adequately supports and values transsexual and transgender employees and their needs. | Provision of a fair and equal working environment that respects the dignity of individuals. | Target July 2008 |

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