

Select Committee on Children's Services – 26 March 2007

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Children's Services Directorate's Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2007/08

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the annual equality and diversity action plan for 2007/08 for the Directorate of Children's Services.

Background

2. The Council's Equality and Diversity Policy requires all Directorates to produce an equality and diversity action plan annually.
3. The directorate action plan will be presented for scrutiny in two parts. The first part - the action plan itself - is required to be presented to Select Committee before 31 March and covers:
 - relationship with other plans
 - vision and values
 - key issues and targets
 - action plan summary
4. The second part is the annual report which will be presented to the first meeting of the Select Committee in the new municipal year. The annual report will cover achievements against the previous year's action plan targets.
5. Overview and scrutiny of corporate equality and diversity issues is included in the terms of reference of the Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education. Select Committee chairmen have agreed that scrutiny of individual directorate's action plans be split up amongst the five committees.
6. This draft action plan has been considered by the Directorate Policy Team. Following consideration by this Select Committee it will be approved by the appropriate Cabinet Member before publication.

Finance

7. Any costs associated with implementing the action plan will be met from within existing budgets.

Law

8. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 replaces Section 71 of the Race Relations Act 1976 with a general duty on public authorities to work towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups.
9. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 makes it unlawful to discriminate against disabled people in connection with employment, the provision of goods, facilities and services and the disposal or management of premises. The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 has extended this Act with a duty on public authorities to promote disability equality.
10. The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 renders unlawful certain kinds of sex discrimination. In particular, Section 29 makes it unlawful for the Council, in providing facilities or services (such as those arising pursuant to the statutory functions of the Council), to discriminate against any person seeking to obtain or use those facilities or services on the ground of gender. A new duty on public authorities to promote gender equality under the Equality Act 2006 comes into force on 6 April 2007.
11. Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council is empowered to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive to, or incidental to the discharge of its functions.

Equality Impact

12. The plan sets out proposed actions for promoting equality and diversity led by the Directorate of Children's Services during 2007/08. Performance indicators or outcomes are identified against targets so that progress in achieving the action plan can be monitored and reviewed.

Recommendation

13. That the Select Committee considers and comments on the Directorate of Children's Services equality and diversity action plan for 2007/08.



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Director of Children's Services

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List of Background Papers

Guidance for the preparation of directorates' equality and diversity action plans and annual reports (December 2006)