

## **Directorate of Children's Services**

### **Annual Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2006/07**

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Directorate of Children's Services, along with all directorates of the Council, produces an annual equality and diversity action plan. This is the key planning document for the directorate in implementing the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy and in meeting its statutory equality responsibilities in relation to its service areas and employment practices.
- 1.2 Progress with implementing the action plans is reported in annual equality and diversity annual reports. The Directorate of Children's Services equality and diversity annual report for 2005/06 will be submitted to the Select Committee for Children's Services at its meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2006.
- 1.3 This action plan covers the period from April 2006 to March 2007. The plan contains:
- an explanation of its relationship with other plans
  - a summary of the directorate's equality and diversity vision and values
  - key issues and targets for the plan
  - the action plan summary

#### **2. Relationship with other plans**

- 2.1 This action plan responds to the corporate equality and diversity objectives agreed by the Select Committee on Economic Regeneration on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2006, to be reflected in the Council Plan for 2006/07. 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 linked to the equality and diversity policy, but is produced as a separate document in response to statutory requirements. A combined Equality Scheme is to be published by 4<sup>th</sup> December 2006.
- 2.2 This action plan will form part of the overall strategic plan for the Directorate of Children's Services for 2005/08.

#### **3. Vision and Values**

- 3.1 The vision of the Directorate of Children's Services is for a borough where the safety and well-being of children and young people is promoted for all, through:

- all children and young people are safe from harm and neglect
- all children and young people are healthy
- all children and young people enjoy and achieve in learning
- all children and young people make a positive contribution to their lives and those of others
- all young people are supported to achieve economic well-being and achievement when they leave school

The Directorate's approach to equality and diversity is set out in its Equality and Diversity policy which responds to the Council's overall policy. The directorate maintains its commitment to implementing the Council's policy in relation to its services and employment practices through, for example, the action planning and reporting process, designating responsibility for actions to particular staff, its consultation processes, continuing training and development, and performance review and development interviews for all staff.

- 3.2 The Directorate has an equality and diversity working group, led by the Assistant Director: for Partnership and Children's Trusts with representatives from each Division and including the race equality officer who is directorate officer with overall responsibility for equality and diversity matters. The working group is responsible for supporting equality and diversity centrally and ensuring that all divisions are kept informed of developments that affect their equality and diversity responsibilities. The group also undertakes a performance management rôle for the Action Plan.
- 3.3 Within the Directorate, all employees have a responsibility to comply with the requirements of the Council's and the Directorate's equality and diversity policy in all dealings with Members, other employees, job applicants, residents, service users and other members of the public, and with other organisations. All employees in the directorate have at least an annual performance review and development discussion with their line manager where training and development needs are identified.
- 3.4 Specific responsibility for promoting equality and diversity in employment and services within the directorate rests with all divisional heads. However, the race equality officer is responsible for overall equality and diversity policy development work on behalf of the Directorate, for reviewing and updating the Directorate's policy and for preparing, monitoring and reviewing the Directorate's annual equality and diversity action plan. The Education Personnel Section, reporting to the Head of Education Personnel, is responsible for equality and diversity in employment development work and will make a key contribution to the development of the Directorate's policy and action plan. The Training and Development Officer reporting to the Assistant Director for Policy, Performance and Information is responsible for arranging or advising on appropriate training provision relating to equality and diversity within the Directorate.

#### **4. Key Issues and Targets**

- 4.1 The Council's equality and diversity priorities for 2006/07 are set out below. In addition to consideration by the Select Committee for Economic Regeneration, the Council's Community Representatives Panel was consulted on the priorities and gave them its support.
- 4.2 The background to the corporate equality and diversity objectives is set out below. Specific targets related to the priorities with the directorate's contribution towards them are included in Table 1:

##### **(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<sup>th</sup> 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.

##### **(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<sup>st</sup> March 2007 would be a challenging but realistic one.

##### **(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.

##### **(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<sup>th</sup> 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.

- 4.3 The directorate's targets related to these priorities are set out in table 1.

4.4 The directorate's overall priorities for the year are set out in its strategic plan, which is updated annually. Included within this are key initiatives which are reflected in this action plan related to issues highlighted in the self review prepared for the 2006 Joint Area Review of Children's Services.

4.5 Members of the Council's Community Representatives Panel have been consulted during the preparation of the action plan. The main issues raised, which have been incorporated in the plan, were:

- the value of the engagement of disabled people, through the local group, Access in Dudley, in the design of the Dudley Council Plus centre and the role they could play in future centres
- the need to improve signage to the centre and to consider the needs of disabled people as they enter the building
- the importance of continuing to review recruitment and selection practices to ensure that they were fair to all sections of the community

## **5. The Action Plan**

5.1 The action plan is set out in the following tables. Table 1 sets out the directorate's proposed contribution to the identified Council equality and diversity priority areas. Table 2 sets out the other key areas of equality and diversity work for the coming year for the directorate.

**Table 1. Directorate of Children’s Services – Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2006/07 - Corporate Priorities**

<b>Corporate Objective</b>	<b>Council Plan theme</b>	<b>Directorate action/target (and lead officer)</b>	<b>Target Status</b>	<b>Target Date/ milestones</b>	<b>Planned outcome/performance indicator</b>
CP1. Equality Scheme  (a) Complete the impact assessments listed in the revised Race Equality Scheme by 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2006	Quality service matters	(a) Complete assessments of: - BME achievement in schools. (EH) - drug policy (DK) - EDP priority 4 (TC) - library policy framework (KM) - looked after children (RT) - new arrivals, work with (EH) - RE agreed syllabus (DH) - SEN policy and procedures (JM) - supplementary schools (EH/MI) - Children & Young People’s Plan (CP)	Cont’d.	(a) Complete by 31/05/06	(a) Assessments completed by deadline Impacts/outcomes assessed Improvements/actions identified
(b) Assess the implications of the Equality Bill		(b) Amend this plan to incorporate the requirements for gender, religion or belief, and sexual orientation as outlined in the corporate equality scheme to be published in November 2006. (DS)	New	(b) Complete by December 2006	(b) Plan amended by deadline.
(c) Develop a programme of equality impact assessments		(c) When guidance is finalised develop Equality Impact Assessment	New	(c) Programme completed by	(c) Programme agreed.

<p>to feed into the Scheme's action plan.</p> <p>(d) Maintain or increase the score against BVPI 2b) on race equality.</p>		<p>programme for directorate. (DS)</p> <p>(d) Include performance monitoring of BVPI2b on Performance Plus. (LT)</p> <p>(e) Collect data against baselines established for 2005/06. (LT)</p>	<p>New</p>	<p>December 2006</p> <p>(d) During 2006/07</p> <p>(e) During 2007/07</p>	<p>(d) Score at least maintained</p> <p>(e) Data published</p>
<p>CP2. Equality Standard for Local Government</p> <p>Implement the action plan to achieve level 3 of the Standard by March 2007</p>	<p>Quality service matters</p>	<p>(a) Provide training for staff involved in recruitment on the Equality Standard, setting service objectives, action planning and monitoring, consistent with the training arrangements set out in the RES (LT)</p> <p>(b) Review progress with Race Equality Scheme review reports for the directorate in relation to information collection/equality monitoring (DS)</p> <p>(c) Publish directorate action plans and annual reports on website (DS)</p>	<p>New</p> <p>New</p> <p>Cont'd</p>	<p>(a) By March 2007</p> <p>(b) By September 2006</p> <p>(c) Complete by June 2006</p>	<p>(a) Training plan in place Number of employees completing package</p> <p>(b) Improved equality impact data being produced that includes information relating to impact on different ethnic groups.</p> <p>(c) Wider availability of plans and performance information.</p>

		(d) Pursue further involvement of the community. (CP /DS/ MI)	Cont'd	(d) June 2006	(d) Improved scrutiny of action plan increasing number of replies to consultations.
CP3. People management strategy (LMD)	Quality service matters				
(a) Implement the equality and diversity elements of the strategy.		(a) Include workforce targets (DS)	New	(a) Target dates as set out in strategy	(a) Proposals to implement strategy published.
(b) Implementation of the age and employment policy and procedure. (Policy due for publication spring 2006)		(b) Ascertain implications for DCS and plan implementation across directorate. (EDWG)	New	(b) Plans completed by mid-2006	(b) Launch policy with training and awareness by autumn 2006.
(c) Establish a full framework of flexible working policies by mid 2006.		(c) Implement flexible working policies listed in the strategy within DCS. (LMD)	New	(c) By autumn 2006	(c) No. of employees taking up options.
(d) Achieve an increase in the number of disabled employees working for the Council.		(d) Establish revised baseline through completion of employee audit. Review audit findings and determine actions to follow up findings in DCS. (LMD)	Cont'd	(d) Accurate baseline established, by end of 2006	(d) Increase in numbers of employees identifying a disability.

<p>CP4. Disability Access Strategy</p> <p>(a) Implement the actions contained within the Council's Disability Access Strategy.</p>	<p>Quality service matters</p>	<p>(a) Identify targets to address gaps in action plans. Link with development of Equality Scheme. (FH-buildings) (LMD-human resources) (RW-links with scheme)</p>		<p>(a) Six-monthly progress reports Complete by December 2006</p>	<p>(a) Actions incorporated into DCS strategic and service plans score</p>
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**Table 2. Directorate of Children’s Services – Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2006/07 Additional Directorate Priorities**

<b>Objective - (lead officers)</b>	<b>Council Plan theme</b>	<b>Detailed action/target (and lead officer)</b>	<b>Target status</b>	<b>Target Date/ milestones</b>	<b>Planned outcome/ performance indicator</b>
DCS 1. Ensure that equality and diversity, objectives and outcomes are explicit in Directorate’s strategic and service plans.	Quality service matters	(a) DCS Strategic Plan 2005-08 (EDWG)  (b) (Service plans) (EDWG)	New	Ongoing through 2006/07	(a + b) Equality and Diversity objectives included in all new and revised plans.
DCS 2. Support schools and their governing bodies in the development and implementation of equality policies that reflect national and local objectives.	Quality service matters / Learning matters / Caring matters	(a) Schools are supported in organizing their response to key issues identified through OfSTED Inspections and HMI visits. (TC)	Cont’d	(a) Ongoing through 2006/07	(a) Issues identified in OfSTED and HMI reports are incorporated into relevant school action plans.
		(b) Develop initiatives to ensure governors are recruited that reflect the diversity of the Borough’s community. (PB)	Cont’d	(b) Ongoing during 2006/07	(b) Increasing number of BME governors based on annual audit data.
		(c) Establish role of Equality Governor on school governing bodies and provide training for governors on equality issues. (PB)	Cont’d	(c) March 2007	(c) Register of equality governors in place.
		(d) Implement measures to help reduce the achievement gap between under-achieving groups of pupils by raising	Cont’d	(d) March 2007	(d) Range of measures implemented resulting in improved attainment for the

Objective - (lead officers)	Council Plan theme	Detailed action/target (and lead officer)	Target status	Target Date/ milestones	Planned outcome/ performance indicator
		<p>their achievement in line with national expectations.</p> <p>(i) Foundation stage (DJ)</p> <p>(ii) Primary (TB)</p> <p>(iii) Secondary (SL)</p> <p>(iv) 14-19 (IM)</p> <p>(EH and specialist partners)</p> <p>(e) Identify areas of under-achievement specific to pupils' locality for all groups. (TC)</p> <p>(f) Raise ethnic minority pupil achievement and standards through supplementary school provision. (EH/MI)</p> <p>(g) Implement authority wide strategy to reduce permanent exclusions of pupils from vulnerable and over-represented groups. (CW)</p>	<p>New</p> <p>Cont'd</p> <p>Cont'd</p>	<p>(e) March 2007</p> <p>(f) March 2007</p> <p>(g) March 2007</p>	<p>targeted groups.</p> <p>(e) A range of measures will be developed to result in improved attainment for identified areas of under-achievement.</p> <p>(f) Improved pupil performance for pupils attending provision compared to those not attending supplementary schools.</p> <p>(g) Reduction in permanent exclusions, particularly for LAC, SEN and over-represented minority ethnic groups.</p>

Objective - (lead officers)	Council Plan theme	Detailed action/target (and lead officer)	Target status	Target Date/ milestones	Planned outcome/ performance indicator
		(h) Support initiatives to reduce fixed-term exclusions. (CW)	Cont'd	(h) March 2007	(h) Fewer fixed-term exclusions.
DCS 3. Support community groups establishing equality and diversity policies and practice.	Quality service matters /	Community and voluntary groups have equality and diversity policies in place and are supported in their implementation. (DW)	Cont'd	March 2007	Number of groups with equality and diversity policies in place.
DCS 4. Increased involvement of minority ethnic and other under-represented communities in shaping service development and delivery in order to target appropriate provision to meet their needs.	Quality service matters / Learning matters / Caring matters	<p>(a) Improve consultation with individuals and groups representing black and minority ethnic communities, including Gypsy/Traveller communities (MI -BME) (IM – Gypsy/Traveler)</p> <p>(b) Equality monitoring of consultees to enable equality impact assessments to be carried out. (Service managers)</p> <p>(c) Audit and report on commissioning arrangements in Children and Families with a view to increasing BME provider involvement in service delivery. (RP)</p> <p>(d) Assess community worker</p>	<p>Cont'd</p> <p>New</p> <p>New</p> <p>New</p>	<p>(a) March 2007</p> <p>(b) March 2007</p> <p>(c) March 2007</p> <p>(d) March 2007</p>	<p>(a) Consultation forums strengthened, greater number of responses.</p> <p>(b) Systems for monitoring consultation responses in place.</p> <p>(c) Analysis of number of contracts awarded to BME providers.</p> <p>(d) Assessment completed.</p>

Objective - (lead officers)	Council Plan theme	Detailed action/target (and lead officer)	Target status	Target Date/ milestones	Planned outcome/ performance indicator
		<p>development to ensure that it meets the needs of Children and Families and recommend actions for improvements. (RP)</p> <p>(e) Maintain consultation with BME communities by meeting with community leaders at least twice per year. (EH/MI)</p>	Cont'd	(e) March 2007	<p>Action plan produced.</p> <p>(e) Meetings held and minutes published.</p>

DCS 5. Engage children and young people from minority ethnic and other under-represented communities in improving the Directorate of Children's Services in order to target provision to meet their needs more effectively.	Quality service matters / Learning matters / Caring matters	<p>(a) Improve consultation with children and young people from black and minority ethnic/faith communities including Gypsy/Traveller communities. (CP/Participation Sub-group)</p> <p>(b) Develop systems to enable equality monitoring of participants to enable equality impact assessments to be carried out. (CP/Participation Sub-group)</p>	Cont'd  New	(a) March 2007  (b) March 2007	<p>(a) Consultation forums broadened and strengthened resulting in a greater number of responses.</p> <p>(b) Systems for monitoring consultation responses in place.</p>
DCS 6. Ensure racist incident reporting is effective throughout DCS and in all schools.	Safety matters / Caring matters / Learning matters	<p>(a) Increase the number of schools returning annual data to the local authority. (DS)</p> <p>(b) Increase the number of returns from sections other than schools, including Early Years and the Youth Service. (DS) (DW – Youth Service) (HK – Early Years)</p>	Cont'd  New	(a) March 2007  (b) March 2007	<p>(a) Increased number of returns from schools over 3-year period.</p> <p>(b) Increased number of returns over 3-year period.</p>

## Glossary

### Lead Officers:

CP	–	Cindy Peek
CW	–	Christine Warner
DH	–	Dilwyn Hunt
DJ	–	Denise Jarrett
DK	–	David Kinnair
DS	–	David Silvera
DW	–	Dewi Williams
EH	–	Esther Holmes
FH	-	Fay Hayward
HK	–	Helen Kew
IM	–	Ian McGuff
JM	–	Jon McCabe
KM	–	Kate Millin
LMD	–	Lisa Morgan-Danks
LT	–	Lorraine Tozer
MI	–	Mohammad Iqbal
PB	–	Pat Brockman
RP	–	Roy Perrett
RT	–	Ruth Tykiff
RW	–	Ray Watson
SL	-	Steve Lockwood
TB	-	Trish Brittain
TC	–	Teresa Cutler

### Other Terms:

BME	–	Black and Minority Ethnic
BVPI	–	Best Value Performance Indicator
DCS	–	Directorate of Children's Services
CP	–	Corporate Priority
EDWG	–	Equality & Diversity Working Group
EDAG	–	Equality and Diversity Advisory Group (Corporate)
OfSTED	–	Office for Standards in Education
SDAs	–	School Development Advisers