

the equality standard for local government



The Equality Standard for Local Government

Foreword

The Equality Standard for local government in England was established in 2001 through a partnership between the Commission for Racial Equality, the Disability Rights Commission, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the DIALOG unit of the Employers' Organisation for local government, with advice from the Audit Commission.

Revised in 2006 following a major review, the Standard has been extended to address six equality strands: age, disability, gender, race, religion/belief and sexual orientation. Since the original Standard was developed, new public sector duties have been introduced for race, disability and gender. The Standard works alongside these public sector duties to promote excellence in the management of equality outcomes.

The revised Standard has again been based on extensive consultation, both with local authorities and other stakeholders. The review has led to some simplification and clarification but the general framework has been affirmed and remains unaltered. The primary aim of the original Standard was always to improve outcomes in employment and service delivery through implementing sound performance management practices. This aim has been given greater emphasis within the revised version whilst the process has been strengthened through a requirement for external assessment.

We would like to thank all those who have given their time to this project and those who have contributed, both in writing and in person, to the development of the new Equality Standard.

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Executive Summary

The Equality Standard – mainstreaming equality

The Equality Standard is a tool to combat the institutional processes that lead to discrimination as part of the culture, administration and governance that can be found in many public organisations. Prevailing assumptions and practices can set up barriers that prevent fair access to services and equal employment opportunities, which in turn can discriminate against people on the grounds of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Working with the Equality Standard will enable local authorities to mainstream equality, which will ensure that discriminatory barriers are identified and removed. The revised Standard has been developed to provide a common approach for dealing with all equality strands and this integrated approach is important because it supports the principle that there is no ‘hierarchy’ of discrimination. This approach will also develop understanding of the inter-relationship between equality issues – individuals do not fit into one neat box, but instead may be affected by more than one aspect of discrimination. Taking a generic approach should not, however, lead to the view that all the equality strands can be dealt with as a single issue – the specific barriers will vary and each strand requires separate consideration. The Standard is intended to be consistent with the changing legislative framework for equality and should help local authorities comply with the equality duties, although they do not take an incremental approach.

What is the Equality Standard?

The Equality Standard provides a way of working in local authorities that makes the mainstreaming of equality into service delivery and employment an issue for all aspects of a local authority’s work. By working through the Standard, local authorities will be able to identify disadvantage associated with race, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age (*the six equality strands*) and set targets to eliminate the barriers that create that disadvantage.

Over five levels of development, local authorities will introduce a comprehensive and systematic approach to dealing with equalities which will enable them to **set targets and achieve outcomes appropriate to local need**. These levels cover all aspects of policy-making, service delivery and employment. It will take time, resources and commitment to get these systems in place and local authorities will move at different rates. For this reason, it is important that progress through the levels is monitored and audited in a way that measures the achievement of each level. When an authority reaches Level 5, it will have developed the capacity to engage continuously in the management and improvement of equality and will be able to demonstrate significant outcomes for equality improvement across the authority.

Peer Challenge and the Equality Mark

When an authority reaches Level 3 or Level 5 an external assessment is required to provide consistency and quality assurance for the different approaches to self-assessment that councils will have used. There are two vehicles for this process, Peer Challenge or the Equality Mark Award.

Successful substantiation through these schemes is valid for three years.

The Standard and the public sector duties

The Equality Standard is a management and policy framework that is designed to support the implementation of equality law and effective policy outcomes. It is not a substitute for the law and authorities should at all times comply with their legal obligations.

Implementing the Equality Standard

The Standard builds on the principles of quality, leadership and community engagement. These are seen as central features of modern local government. Successful implementation of the Standard will depend on a partnership between the council and the community and should involve:

- Councillors –
who will – provide leadership and support
– ensure resources are available
– engage with the local community
– provide a scrutiny role
- Managers/Unions
/ Staff – who will – work towards speedy implementation
– organise and participate in training
– challenge existing cultures and traditions
– engage with the community
- Community/
Stakeholders –
who will – work with the equality planning process
– participate in scrutiny
– extend knowledge of the Equality Standard within the
community

Working with the community requires more than consultation after significant decisions have been taken. Participation in service design and delivery is crucial if services are to meet the needs of all parts of the community, and authorities should devise a participation strategy that describes how it will involve others in its activities.

The Standard is a framework that can direct change and break down discriminatory barriers, but this can only be achieved through the active engagement; by *all* stakeholders and; in *all* the processes it sets out or their equivalent, depending on local structures.

The Equality Standard framework document describes the context within which the Standard works as follows:

- Local government and equality
- Working with the Equality Standard
- Assessment and validation
- The Equality Standard framework

Extending equalities – beyond gender, disability and race

The Standard was designed to accommodate an extension of its scope beyond gender, disability and race to include anti-discrimination policies for age, sexuality and religion or belief. The revised Standard now makes it a requirement for Local Authorities to incorporate these additional equality strands. Councils can readily adapt the principles to these other categories of equality by extending their equality objectives, targets and monitoring systems. These additional equality objectives, which should be consistent with published guidelines and regulations, can be driven through the self-assessment procedure and will effectively become part of the Performance Management process. A timetable for the integration of the additional equality strands is included in this framework document.

Part I: Introduction

The Equality Standard for Local Government was introduced in 2001 as a tool for mainstreaming the principle of equality in service provision and employment and to combat discrimination associated with race, gender and disability. The main purpose of this revised Equality Standard is to extend its scope to include anti-discrimination and equal treatment for sexual orientation, religion or belief and age. In drawing up a revised Standard we have taken the opportunity to review its performance, operation and practice in order to make modifications and improvements and to set the Standard within the changing context of equality and local governance.

The need for a proactive and systemic approach towards anti-discrimination was underlined by the findings of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (Macpherson, 1999), which highlighted the way that institutional discrimination can influence how organisations operate and the way services are provided. The report provides the following definition of institutional racism:

“The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture and ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people”
(Macpherson, 1999, para 6.34)

This definition powerfully describes organisational practices that can lead to institutional discrimination across the six equality strands.

The Standard is a means for addressing patterns of institutional discrimination that are embedded in the culture of local administration and governance and applies the principles of fairness and equality in employment and service provision.

The Macpherson report was followed by developments in legislation and integration of equality requirements into the CPA process. The harmonisation and extension of anti-discrimination legislation together with the development of new structures for implementation through the Equality and Human Rights Commission further emphasise the importance of equality and diversity within local governance.

Legislation alone will not bring about the changes needed to eliminate discrimination. We must make equality practice an integral part of human resource processes, service planning, service delivery and other areas of local democratic activity. In other words, equality must become central to improving outcomes for the community and the quality of local government.

Already, local government is working with a number of programmes to improve the quality of local services. The Equality Standard provides an opportunity to complement new initiatives with the council's own equal opportunities policy and with emerging requirements under equality law.

The Equality Standard will:

- **Provide a systematic framework for mainstreaming equality leading to the continuous improvement of outcomes**
- **Help local authorities to meet their obligations under the law**
- **Develop and integrate equality policies and objectives that can be driven through performance management**
- **Encourage engagement with stakeholders inviting challenge and involvement in all management and decision making processes associated with service improvement and accessibility**
- **Encourage the development of anti-discrimination practice and community outcomes appropriate to local circumstances**
- **Provide a basis for tackling all forms of institutionalised discrimination**
- **Provide a timetable for integrating sexual orientation, age, religion and belief**

Local Government and equality

The 1970's and 1980's were decades of tremendous progress in terms of equal opportunities as many authorities developed a strong commitment to equal opportunity and pioneered challenging initiatives, particularly in employment.

Legislation now covers six strands – race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion/belief and age – and recognises the role and responsibility of public sector organisations as being at the heart of improving life chances for people who experience disadvantage.

The legal framework is still based on *anti-discrimination* provisions but there has been a major shift towards the creation of positive duties for public bodies, which require them to *promote* good equality practice.

This places councils at the forefront of managing the outcomes that arise from statutory changes. Although the developments are long overdue, there is much evidence to show that in the absence of a structured approach to manage these changes, the outcomes required to meet specified needs often fail to materialise in any meaningful way.

The re-orientation of local government to emphasise service users and customer satisfaction has led to a greater recognition of diversity and equality in providing good quality services as well as in fair employment opportunities. This has been reinforced over the past five years by the presence of the Equality Standard and real progress is being made towards mainstreaming equality in many local authorities. However, there is still a tendency in some councils for equality to be seen primarily as an employment issue focusing on recruitment, conditions of service and training. In these cases responsibility for the equality agenda mistakenly sits within the Human Resources remit. It is important that Chief Executives, Leaders and Cabinet members have a full understanding of the purpose of the Equality Standard and recognise the importance of equality for services as well as employment through mainstreaming equality into all services.

The assessment of a council's performance now explicitly includes equality, diversity and community cohesion. As part of CPA, a local authority will need both a strategy for improvement and good management of the processes in order to show that it is capable of delivering services that meet 'need' and 'expectations' of its service users.

How can the Standard support the delivery of equality in the public sector?

There are important and distinct features of the Equality Standard. Firstly, the Standard emphasises the importance of equality practice in employment and in delivering quality services appropriate to need, and providing access to those services for the whole community. Secondly, the Standard is specifically designed for managing and improving performance in equality for the whole organisation. It provides for ambition, leadership, resource management and service delivery outcomes.

Importantly, while the Standard is concerned with putting in place processes for the management of equality, **the fundamental aim is to deliver continuous improvement that is focused on outcomes** – real changes to equality in employment and service provision, **locally determined and delivered**.

Statutory Equality Duties

Statutory Equality Duties require public authorities to produce Equality Schemes covering race, gender and disability either individually or under the umbrella of a single Equality Scheme.

The Equality Standard can support the effective implementation of the Public Sector Duties for Race, Disability and Gender but it does not automatically produce compliance with the duties at any level. In working with the Standard an authority should, at all times pay due regard to the requirements, in law, of the Duties.

Information on the General and Specific Duties and statutory Codes of Practice can be found on the website of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (www.equalityhumanrights.com).

Related legislation

Authorities will have to consider the provisions of other legislation that has anti-discrimination or equality content. Details of current legislation can be found on the IDeA website.

www.idea.gov.uk

Equality as Quality

A modern, high quality service recognises the importance of equality of access to employment opportunities and services. Councils have a duty to provide services that are appropriate to the user in both content and in the ways in which they are delivered. Rather than assuming that customers should fit with existing service provision structures, services should be built around a robust analysis and understanding of diverse needs, against the context of diverse localities.

An Equality Standard for people and places

The starting point for the Standard is the recognition that local government is legally obliged to provide a fair and equally accessible service to all citizens. This principle is central to the government's agenda to bring local government closer to communities. As well as adapting to the changes in which local services are required to integrate equality considerations, the Equality Standard also takes account of the changing local, national and international legislative and policy environment.

The Standard can be used as a basis for working with partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors; for supporting the work of community forums and promoting citizen engagement.

Working with the Equality Standard

Working with the General and Specific Duties for Race, Gender and Disability

The Standard has been designed to provide a continuing framework that should help you meet the legal duties and go beyond the minimum requirements of compliance to deliver excellence in equality and diversity, and as such should be viewed as an improvement tool. The inclusion of strands beyond race, gender and disability will prepare councils for new legislation and ensure a wider social inclusion agenda. As a result, the Equality Standard and the public sector duties for disability, gender and race complement and support each other, but do not directly relate to each other at specific levels.

Although there is no plan, as yet, to extend the requirement for equality schemes to sexual orientation, religion or belief and age, it is recommended that clear statement be introduced into the Corporate Equality Scheme to address these new strands, based on local circumstances and the requirements at each level of the Standard.

There is no automatic compliance with the law at any level, but if an authority is working positively with the Standard then they should be fully compliant at Level 5. **Demonstration of compliance with the law will be a requirement of the assessment and validation processes.**

Putting in place the processes for equality management

Following the principles adopted by the government for the modernisation of local government, the Standard seeks to encourage a local response to local circumstances. To do this, the Standard places considerable emphasis on the establishment of key processes within the local authority to make equality a corporate goal and mainstream it into all aspects of the council's work. These are set out in the Standard as five levels of achievement:

- **Level 1:** Commitment to a Comprehensive Equality Policy
- **Level 2:** Assessment and community engagement
- **Level 3:** Setting equality objectives and targets
- **Level 4:** Information systems and monitoring against targets
- **Level 5:** Achieving and reviewing outcomes

Local authorities should use the Equality Standard to ensure that they address equality issues strategically and systematically. While councils differ greatly, the framework on which the Standard has been built recognises and takes account of:

- Differences in the range of services offered according to type of council
- Different levels of activity and experience in the field of equality
- Specific local contexts.

A whole authority approach

Local authorities will be expected to provide evidence that these processes are established. It is likely that within a local authority, services will adopt processes at different rates. The overall assessment will be based on the progress of the entire authority to promote a real corporate commitment to equality. This means that the level achieved by the whole authority is based on the lowest level achieved by any service. It is important, therefore, to develop a reporting system that can identify and support services that are moving up the levels of the Standard more slowly. The [e-s@t system](#) is designed to meet this need and councils can access a free version of this software to evaluate suitability for their purposes.

A continuous cycle of equality improvement

In practical terms the Standard will integrate a cycle of management activity using a comprehensive equality policy to establish equality objectives for each service. On the basis of these objectives, service areas will establish equality targets.

Achievement against these targets will be monitored. Progress on the achievement of objectives will be measured and evaluated. Ultimately, the authority should be able to show identifiable outcomes.

Circumstances change and the aim of the Standard is to ensure that councils have an equality system that can respond. Local circumstances should be taken into account at all stages and councils should be able to demonstrate the reasons for their action at all levels. This is to ensure that outcomes are based on real and not perceived need, and will be an important element of the assessment process.

Corporate Equality Schemes

There is strong correspondence between the Standard and the requirements of the General and Specific Duties. Although there is no direct correlation between the public duties and the levels of the Standard, at Level 2 of the Standard authorities should ensure that the Corporate Equality Scheme (formerly described as the Corporate Equality Plan) contains clear and differentiated schemes for race, disability and gender. These schemes will recognise the differences that give rise to inequalities in service delivery and employment for each group and will set out an approach for tackling them. Also, authorities should ensure that they meet the requirements for monitoring and impact assessment under the Specific Duties.

The Corporate Equality Scheme should contain a timetable for carrying out impact assessment within the authority. This timetable should be based on a screening of all of the authority's activity and should cover all functions, policies and procedures. An assessment of risk of non-compliance with legislation should form the basis for the timetable and should recognise the different risk characteristics of each equality strand. Where there is a high risk associated with an area covered by the Public Sector Duties the impact assessment should be given a high priority.

Organising and conducting impact assessment

The Equality Standard has created a **common template** for conducting impact assessment across the equality strands ([The Equality Standard for local government, guidance 3, pages 8-25](#)). Within this framework each equality strand must be given separate consideration and appropriate methods used to explore the equality implications of a service, policy or procedure.

Terminology used in the Public Sector Duties and the Equality Standard in relation to impact assessment can lead to confusion about what is required. The equality impact assessment process can be used as a *predictive* tool, to evaluate the *potential* future impact of a new policy or a change in policy or procedure, before it is implemented.

It can also be used as a *retrospective* assessment, looking at how closely the needs and requirements of the community are being met by an authority's policies and practices. It is an ongoing activity informed by monitoring data, and is used to review equality objectives as part of the organisation's performance management process. Authorities should be using both of these approaches depending on the scope of the impact assessment.

The Corporate Equality Scheme should therefore include arrangements to conduct both predictive and retrospective impact assessments.

Working through self-assessment

The integration of equality objectives within performance management systems will help to drive equality improvement but is not enough by itself to deliver the culture change that is necessary to mainstream equality practice throughout the authority – in all its functions, policies and procedures. It is important to develop an equality self-assessment system to drive the continuous improvement of equality across the local authority. This system should be accountable through a Corporate Equalities Group (or similar). The Group would be responsible for developing a corporate self-assessment, which is the foundation for external assessment and validation.

Through self-assessment, an equality steering group should be able to make judgments across the authority regarding progress on corporate equality objectives and from these make recommendations about change.

[The Equality Standard for local government, guidance 1, page 9](#)

Working with the Standard – developing positive outcomes

While the Equality Standard is designed to embed *systems* for equality improvement, the ultimate objective is to deliver positive *outcomes*: real, measurable improvements in the delivery of services and employment that must be determined locally, according to need and context.

The new positive duties require that schemes are developed to identify the improvements that councils will make towards eliminating discriminatory barriers. The processes put in place by the Standard will enable councils to evidence their progress and mainstream equality through robust performance management.

At Level 3, targets will have been set against which improvement can be measured and at Level 5 an authority should be able to demonstrate significant improvement in outcomes across the authority as required by the positive duties.

Working corporately in the management of equalities

A corporate approach to the implementation of equal opportunity issues is essential to ensure that the Comprehensive Equalities Policy for the authority and the processes involved in the Equality Standard are systematically applied. This approach will promote a shared understanding of equality within the authority, promote the sharing of 'best' practice and provide a set of comparable systems for performance management and self-assessment.

Working on equality with all stakeholders

The Standard builds on the principles of leadership, community engagement and local partnership.

Successful implementation of the Standard will depend on a partnership between the council and the community and should involve:

Councillors	to provide leadership and support to ensure resources are available to engage with the local community to provide a scrutiny role
Managers/Staff/ Trades Unions	to work towards speedy implementation to organise and participate in training to challenge existing cultures and traditions to engage with the community
Community/ Voluntary Sector	to provide external accountability to work with and inform the equality planning process to participate in service design, delivery and scrutiny

Working with community groups in the design and delivery of services will require much more than a consultation exercise; there should be positive engagement. The Standard therefore now requires authorities to develop a participation strategy, which;

- describes the ways in which it will invite local groups to work with the authority
- defines the criteria for selecting those groups
- describes the resources that will be allocated to capacity building within the groups
- produces a set of objectives and terms of reference for the group.
- describes the mechanisms for reporting the group's activities and contribution to council policy and practice
- describes the feedback that the group will receive from the authority

The Standard represents a tool that can bring about change, break down discriminatory barriers and achieve real improvement in outcomes. This can only be achieved through an active engagement in the processes it sets out.

Working in partnership – community leadership in equality

Local authorities work in delivering Local Area Agreements (LAA) and services through partnership arrangements as defined by Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) and their procurement function. Through its community leadership role local authorities can promote the framework of the Equality Standard as a basis for partnership and should encourage partners to develop shared objectives in partnership programmes. Monitoring partnership involvement should be undertaken as part of the local authority's work with the Standard. Where partnerships are involved in the contracting out of services and functions, councils should ensure that contracts meet equal opportunity criteria and are effectively monitored.

Working through procurement and contract

The Equality Standard aims to deliver equal employment and service outcomes in public services whether they are delivered directly or through contracts. Procurement practices should fully embrace the principles of the Standard and contracts should be subject to equality impact assessment, equality objective setting and monitoring. Importantly, contractors should understand the aims of the Equality Standard and should agree to work within those terms. Contract monitoring and management should be designed to secure the delivery of equality objectives.

[Common standard for equalities in public procurement](#)

[OGC Guidance](#)

Working with the Audit Commission: CPA and Performance Indicators

The Audit Commission measures local authority progress against the Equality Standard through BVPI2a. **The current Indicator applies specifically to race, gender and disability, so reporting of the level of achievement for 2006/7 is only against these strands.**

The CPA process now includes equality and diversity and the Audit Commission has produced a series of toolkits collectively titled 'Knowing your Community' for assessing authority achievement in equality and diversity. These toolkits provide a measure of what an excellent local authority should be achieving. They do not provide an alternative to the Equality Standard but have been developed by the Audit Commission to work alongside the Standard by providing a broad vision of what might be achieved.

[Knowing your communities toolkit](#)

Working with Inspection processes

The Standard has been designed to bring equality into the mainstream of policy making within local government and can accommodate those equality performance measures and statutory duties that are mandatory and binding on all local authorities. Nationally driven performance indicators in Education, Social Services and throughout local government should be brought inside the Standard. This will mean that they are equality impact assessed and equality managed.

Working with performance and quality management systems

The Standard has been designed around the principles of quality management and can easily be adapted to work with an existing system. Local authorities will have developed their own systems to conform to the requirements of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) for local government, within which it is important to include the equality objectives and actions.

Extending equalities – beyond gender, disability and race

The Standard was designed around processes that can be extended to implement anti-discrimination policies for age, sexual orientation and religion/ belief. Local authorities can readily adapt the principles to these other strands by extending their equality objectives, targets and monitoring systems. These additional equality objectives, which should be consistent with published guidelines on age and sexual orientation, can be driven through self-assessment and will effectively become part of the Equality Standard according to the timetable set out in this revised framework.

The aim is for a phased integration of the new equality strands, which allows local authorities to maintain their progress through the Standard. The broad timetable will require claims at Levels 1 and 2 to include sexual orientation, age, and religion/belief in the BVPI2a return for the year 2007/8. Claims at Level 3 and above should incorporate sexual orientation, age, religion/belief for the BVPI return relating to 2008/9, to allow time for the complexities associated with engagement and data collection for these new strands to be integrated.

Working with inclusion and cohesion

Policies to support social inclusion and community cohesion should complement equality and diversity objectives. The objectives of these policies usually coincide but action on social inclusion and community cohesion should be subject to equality impact assessment and should be continuously monitored for impact once implemented. *Guidance 3* provides a comprehensive toolkit for impact assessment, objective setting and monitoring and local authorities.

[The Equality Standard for local government, guidance 3, pages 4-5](#)

Working with the Equality Standard – resource implications

In order to bring about change, the local authority will need to consider how it will provide the resources needed to implement the Standard. Planning, consultation, training, data-collection and monitoring and importantly, action to redress potential or actual adverse impact will all require resources. The level of resource will be an important factor in determining the rate of progress for implementing the Standard. It is important, therefore, to consider resource levels as part of the equality planning process.

Assessment and Validation

Improvement in an authority's performance on service equity relies on robust performance management, which can produce evidence that outcomes for disadvantaged groups have become more equitable.

Because the Standard supports local determination in setting objectives for different services within a community, it is important that the authority undertakes rigorous self-assessment of its progress that is open to external challenge. And as authorities report their levels of achievement nationally, it is also important that there is a level of consistency in the system for that external assessment.

Peer Challenge

The Agency is developing a Peer Challenge model, initially for authorities at level 3. This will be an examination of the authority's self-assessment process, and meets the criteria for external assessment required by the Standard.

For up-to-date information on this process see the [External Assessment information page](#)

In the meantime, authorities will be able to contract a DIALOG consultant to undertake a 'critical friend' role for external assessment at any level.

Equality Mark for local government

The Equality Mark Award is based on a model that has been piloted over the past two years.

Accredited assessors conduct a thorough audit of the council's equality performance over a number of days (depending on the size of the authority), and present a report to the authority.

For further details on the Equality Mark see the [Equality Mark information page](#)

Part II: The Equality Standard Framework

Level 1

Commitment to a Comprehensive Equality Policy

To achieve Level 1 of the Standard an authority must have adopted a Comprehensive Equality Policy that commits it to achieving equality in race, gender, disability, age, religion or belief and sexual orientation through:

- Compliance with all relevant legislation
- Improving equality practice at both corporate and departmental level
- Demonstrating a shared understanding of the Comprehensive Equality Policy to underpin commitment
- Earmarking specific resources for improving equality practice
- Equality action planning and equality target setting within all departments and service areas
- Systematic involvement of stakeholders
- A fair employment and equal pay policy
- Carrying out impact assessments
- Progress monitoring
- Audit and scrutiny

These general commitments translate into action in the four substantive areas of the Standard:

Leadership and Corporate Commitment

- 1.1.1 Formulate and adopt a comprehensive equality policy for the authority covering race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age and religion/belief
- 1.1.2 Provide for the review of written policies to bring them in line with current legislation, Employment Regulations and the supporting Codes of Practice
- 1.1.3 Make a commitment to developing a Corporate Equality Scheme indicating how equality policy will be implemented. The Scheme should incorporate or be consistent with the authority's statutory equality schemes
- 1.1.4 Make a corporate commitment to carrying out equality impact assessments
- 1.1.5 Make a commitment to extend equality impact assessments to sexual orientation, age, religion and belief by March 2008
- 1.1.6 Make a corporate commitment to a fair employment and equal pay policy
- 1.1.7 Make a corporate commitment to earmark specific resources for improving equality practice

Community Engagement and Accountability

- 1.2.1 Make a corporate commitment to develop a corporate participation strategy in relation to appropriate aspects of equality policy during development and review phases
- 1.2.2 Each department and service area to make a commitment to consultation and scrutiny in line with the Corporate Equality Scheme
- 1.2.3 Make a corporate commitment to develop equality self-assessment and scrutiny as the basis for continuous improvement
- 1.2.4 Each department and service area to commit to engage with designated community, staff and stakeholder groups on its service delivery
- 1.2.5 Make a corporate commitment to consult departments and service areas on equality objectives
- 1.2.6 Each department and service area to commit to processes of equality self-assessment, scrutiny and audit on its service delivery
- 1.2.7 Incorporate equality policy as a key theme within local strategies drawn up by the local authority and its partners

Service Delivery and Customer Care

- 1.3.1 Departmental and service area commitment to apply the Comprehensive Equality Policy to its service delivery
- 1.3.2 Department and service area commitment to implementing equality impact assessment for service delivery
- 1.3.3 Commitment to equality action planning in all departments and service areas
- 1.3.4 Department and service area commitment to incorporate equality objectives and targets arising from statutory equality schemes in their business plans
- 1.3.5 Department and service area commitment to allocate specific resources for improving equality practice

Employment and Training

- 1.4.1 Adopt recruitment procedures which use non-discriminatory practices for race gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age
- 1.4.2 Commitment to an employment equality assessment of the local labour market, workforce profiling and equal pay review
- 1.4.3 Commitment to establish a fair employment and equal pay policy
- 1.4.4 Commitment to set employment objectives and targets incorporating the employment related issues from statutory equality schemes
- 1.4.5 Commitment to adopt procedures to ensure that publicity for vacancies does not unfairly restrict the range of applicants
- 1.4.6 Commitment to produce a standard range of application forms and job descriptions that are clear and explicit
- 1.4.7 Commitment to review personnel information system for monitoring suitability, including underpinning the council's statutory monitoring duties
- 1.4.8 Commitment to make procedures consistent with employment Codes of Practice
- 1.4.9 Commitment to develop a programme of staff training in equality issues

Explanatory notes:

A comprehensive equality policy involves a commitment to review and change local authority practice. This is considerably more than the production of a policy statement. **Commitment involves assessing the existing situation and then planning and initiating of a series of processes** across the local authority and in partnerships with other groups and organisations.

A Comprehensive Equality Policy will include:

- Explicit recognition of all current statutory duties and a commitment to meet them
- Commitment to improve equality practice at both corporate and departmental level
- Earmarking of specific resources for improving equality practice
- Commitment to providing services fairly to all sections of the community
- Identification of groups within the community whose needs are not met by council services to an appropriate standard
- Commitment to community and workforce profiling; monitoring of service usage; equality action planning and equality target setting within all departments and service areas
- Clear lines of responsibility for undertaking the action set out in the policy
- Commitment to systematic consultation and community engagement
- Commitment to a fair employment and equal pay policy
- Progress monitoring
- Audit and scrutiny using national and locally developed performance indicators

The Comprehensive Equality Policy should form a basis for the development of corporate objectives and it is essential that there is a *shared* understanding of the policy across the organisation. This shared understanding across senior officers and service managers is an essential foundation for the development of self-assessment at Level 2.

The development of a corporate group to oversee the implementation of the Equality Standard and the Corporate Equality Scheme should be undertaken. There will be a need to share information and learning across the organisation to ensure a corporate approach and to enable joint activities (internal and external) to take place.

The Corporate Equality Scheme can encompass the three public duties, but each strand must be separately identifiable within the overall scheme. The scheme will set out how the Standard will be implemented across the local authority, including a time-scale and details of allocated resources.

The Corporate Equality Scheme should contain elements for:

- Equal access to services, for involvement and consultation with staff, councillors and the local community, scrutiny, self-assessment and audit and for equality in employment and pay.

Provision must be made for the new strands (sexual orientation, religion/belief and age) to be included in the Scheme.

Examples of evidence

- Corporate, departmental and service-level policy documents detailing commitment to specific equality objectives and rationale for each commitment
- Documentation showing adoption of both corporate and departmental strategies for implementation of the Standard with time-scales
- Corporate and service objectives built into Best Value Performance Plans and individual service plans
- Corporate and service level arrangements for monitoring action plans
- Training and assessment of managers in mainstreaming the Comprehensive Equality Policy

Level 2

Assessment and Community Engagement

To achieve Level 2 of the Standard an authority will need to demonstrate:

- **That it has developed systems for self-assessment, scrutiny and audit as the basis for continuous improvement**
- **That it has engaged in equality impact assessment**
- **That it has undertaken self-assessment across the authority**
- **That it has involved designated community, staff and stakeholder groups in service planning**
- **That it has engaged in the development of information and monitoring systems**
- **That it has engaged in an equality action planning process for employment, pay and service delivery**

These general activities and developments translate into action in the four substantive areas of the Standard:

Leadership and Corporate Commitment

- 2.1.1 Publish draft Corporate Equality Scheme to deliver the authority's Comprehensive Equality Policy and statutory equality schemes
- 2.1.2 Produce a risk assessment of local authority services, activities and procedures and develop a prioritised programme of equality impact assessment
- 2.1.3 Publish an action plan for the extension of equality impact assessment to sexual orientation, religion or belief and age by March 2008
- 2.1.4 Demonstrate corporate engagement in the equality impact assessment process
- 2.1.5 Develop a corporate mechanism for assessing the development of service level equality objectives and targets
- 2.1.6 Create a corporate structure for overseeing development of information and monitoring systems
- 2.1.7 Develop a corporate framework for equality consultation and guidance on consultation methods to be adopted within the authority

Community Engagement and Accountability

- 2.2.1 Ensure that draft Corporate Equality Scheme has been circulated to designated community, staff and stakeholder groups with consultation timetable and is published in an appropriate range of languages and formats
- 2.2.2 Review equality content of all community strategies (LAAs etc)
- 2.2.3 Involve designated community, staff and stakeholder groups and the wider community on corporate policy
- 2.2.4 Involve members, employee representatives, department and service managers on impact assessments and all aspects of the Corporate Equality Scheme
- 2.2.5 Each department and service area to involve designated community, staff and stakeholder groups on its equality impact assessments and its service delivery
- 2.2.6 Each department and service area to engage community stakeholders through scrutiny of service delivery
- 2.2.7 Seek to ensure that the corporate equality policy and objectives are incorporated in partnership and contractual arrangements engaged in by the authority

Service Delivery and Customer Care

- 2.3.1 Complete prioritised department and service area impact assessments as a basis for the development of equality objectives and targets
- 2.3.2 Begin development of department and service area equality objectives and targets
- 2.3.3 Review of services should include the procurement function and all contracted services and partnership arrangements
- 2.3.4 Each department and service area to establish planning groups for monitoring and information systems
- 2.3.5 Each department and service area to engage with equality self-assessment and scrutiny on its service delivery

Employment and Training

- 2.4.1 Develop and adopt fair employment and equal pay policy
- 2.4.2 Engage in employment equality assessment of the local labour market
- 2.4.3 Engage in an equal pay review
- 2.4.4 Adopt a Local Government Workforce Strategy
- 2.4.5 Adopt procedures to ensure that publicity for vacancies does not unfairly restrict the range of applicants
- 2.4.6 Produce a standard range of application forms and job descriptions that are clear and explicit
- 2.4.7 Review personnel information system for monitoring suitability including supporting the council's statutory monitoring duties
- 2.4.8 Develop a programme of equality training to support the Corporate Equality Scheme and departmental service objectives
- 2.4.9 Ensure that the training programme is consistent with the training arrangements in the council's statutory equality schemes
- 2.4.10 Make all employment procedures consistent with current legislation and employment Codes of Practice

Explanatory notes:

In order to develop a clear set of equality objectives it will be important to undertake equality impact assessments of policies, service delivery and employment. Baseline population and employee profiles will need to be researched, against which to provide regularly updated sets of data with regard to gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion/ belief and age. Managers will need to be trained and a corporate equality impact assessment plan developed.

Impact assessment

To conduct impact assessments, local authorities will need to put data collection systems in place. Level 3 cannot be achieved until this basic information is accessible to all service departments. These data collection systems should form part of the process for subsequent monitoring of progress towards equality targets.

The equality impact assessment process should involve the systematic participation of community, staff and stakeholder groups, which will play an important part in identifying unmet need and adverse impact. The outcomes from the assessments should be widely publicised and included in the local authority's Corporate/Business Plans.

The authority should develop a mechanism for consulting on, and scrutinising the Corporate Equality Scheme. Work should have already been undertaken on pay review to be in compliance with the NJC agreement between local government employers and the trades unions. Using the framework established under the Corporate Equality Scheme, departments and service areas should begin preparation of equality objectives and targets.

Self-Assessment

Self-assessment is a process all authorities are now familiar with. *Guidance 1: Audit and self-assessment* gives full and systematic information about how self-assessment should be carried out and the methodologies that should be employed.

[The Equality Standard for local government, guidance 1: Audit and self-assessment](#)

Examples of evidence

- Report on equality impact assessment training
- Corporate equality impact assessment plan, including arrangements to comply with the consultation and publication of predictive equality impact assessments as required by current legislation. See the Equality and Human Rights Commission website for details (www.equalityhumanrights.com)
- Reports on all equality impact assessments
- Documentation describing objective setting and planning framework
- Corporate Equality Scheme published
- Participation and scrutiny plans developed
- Self- assessment documentation and methodology

Level 3

Setting Equality Objectives and Targets

To achieve Level 3 of the Standard an authority will have to demonstrate:

- **That it has implemented a strategy for participation of designated community, staff and stakeholder groups in setting objectives of employment and service delivery**
- **That it has set equality objectives across the authority for race, gender and disability for employment, pay and service delivery based on impact assessments and participation strategy**
- **By March 2009 it has set equality objectives across the authority for sexual orientation, age, religion or belief for employment, pay and service delivery based on impact assessment and participation strategy**
- **That equality objectives have been translated into action plans with specific targets**
- **That it is developing information and monitoring systems that allow it to assess progress in achieving targets**
- **That action on achieving targets has started**
- **Progress has been verified through self-assessment and scrutiny and has been validated externally through an accredited assessor**

These general activities and developments translate into action in the four substantive areas of the Standard:

Leadership and Corporate Commitment

- 3.1.1 Ensure consistency of Corporate Equality Scheme with statutory equality schemes
- 3.1.2 Develop a system and timetable for reporting the results of impact assessments
- 3.1.3 Ensure that all departments and service areas set targets based on equality objectives devised through completed impact assessments and participation of designated community, staff and stakeholder groups
- 3.1.4 Equality objectives and targets for sexual orientation, age, religion and belief to be set by March 2009
- 3.1.5 Establish corporate guidelines for information gathering and equality monitoring
- 3.1.6 Seek agreement on equality targets with designated community stakeholders and local partners
- 3.1.7 Establish mechanisms for ensuring that equality targets are delivered by contractors through contract management
- 3.1.8 Ensure completion of equality action plans at department and service level incorporating performance indicators
- 3.1.9 Adopt where appropriate national targets/performance indicators as prescribed by Government departments or by the Audit Commission
- 3.1.10 Implement systems for reviewing progress and revising the Corporate Equality Scheme and departmental action plans
- 3.1.11 Members and senior officers to endorse action plans as appropriate
- 3.1.12 Link action planning to performance management and Best Value processes
- 3.1.13 Ensure that action on achieving targets has started
- 3.1.14 Ensure that progress has been verified through self-assessment, scrutiny and audit and have been validated externally through an accredited assessor

Community Engagement and Accountability

- 3.2.1 Develop a strategy for all designated community, staff and stakeholder groups to participate in the development of equality objectives, service design and employment practice
- 3.2.2 Make all service level and employment objectives and targets available for consultation and scrutiny
- 3.2.3 Make provision of language services appropriate to designated consultation and scrutiny groups
- 3.2.4 Consultation is systematically built into equality impact assessment, self-assessment and the equality planning process
- 3.2.5 Involve designated community, staff and stakeholder groups with scrutiny procedures
- 3.2.6 Consultation on equality to be linked with the continuing development of community strategies
- 3.2.7 Publicise how, where and when action on targets will start

Service Delivery and Customer Care

- 3.3.1 Equality objectives and targets developed within each department/service area for race, gender and disability based on completed impact assessments
- 3.3.2 Equality objectives and targets developed within each department/service area for sexual orientation, religion and belief and age by March 2009
- 3.3.3 Service plans to specifically address the importance of barriers, accessibility and reasonable adjustment in the provision of services
- 3.3.4 Allocation of appropriate resources to achieve targets
- 3.3.5 Establish structures of responsibility at departmental and service level to progress action plans
- 3.3.6 Set timetable within action plans for creating/adapting information and monitoring systems within service areas
- 3.3.7 For agencies delivering services on behalf of the local authority, include within contracts a requirement to deliver an effective and appropriate service, fairly and without unlawful discrimination
- 3.3.8 Establish monitoring of contracts to secure equal employment and equal service delivery targets
- 3.3.9 Start action on departmental and service area targets

Employment and Training

- 3.4.1 Set employment equality targets for recruitment, staff retention, work force profiles for race, gender and disability
- 3.4.2 Set employment equality targets for work force profiles for sexual orientation, religion or belief and age according to available data
- 3.4.3 Conduct an equal pay review and plan for equal pay adjustment
- 3.4.4 Establish that policies and procedures associated with equality are part of staff handbook and are understood by staff
- 3.4.5 Establish a system of guidance and training on relevant equality issues to short-listing panels and interviewers
- 3.4.6 Ensure that staff and members are aware of action plans and the implications for services and employment
- 3.4.7 Provide training for managers on the implementation of the Standard with contractors and partners
- 3.4.8 Appraise competency/behaviours to ensure that managers and staff are capable of implementing the Equality Standard, including the new strands of sexual orientation, religion or belief and age
- 3.4.9 Provide training for all staff on the detailed implementation of the Equality Standard including action plans and updates on legal and other developments
- 3.4.10 Ensure that Local Government Workforce Strategies address equality issues
- 3.4.11 Build equality objectives and targets into management appraisal mechanisms
- 3.4.12 Provide information and appropriate training on action plans to support scrutiny process
- 3.4.13 Start action on all employment and pay targets

Explanatory notes:

The key part of the equality policy process is setting ambitious but realistic targets and planning action to implement those targets. From the corporate equality objectives each service will develop specific targets that relate directly to employment, service planning and associated performance indicators.

Target setting and action planning will be informed by impact assessments, evaluating the existing situation and making political choices about change in the context of available resources and a judgement about what is possible. Many authorities will have been doing data collection consistently. All authorities, however, will need to review their data collection methods and make sure they are consistent with the current national good practice.

Targets for service delivery

An authority will have to review delivery of services within its area. An important part of such a review will be the participation of relevant representative local groups, who should be involved in service design and evaluation. Their input will also inform the information to be gleaned from impact assessments and the most appropriate ways of addressing adverse impact.

Targets for employment

As a major employer, an authority will as a minimum need to see how its work force (and the way jobs are allocated within it) compares with the profile of the local or the local labour market area. Data collection against which to set targets and measure progress will be neither straightforward nor directly comparable across the six strands. The authority must provide the rationale it has used to set its targets where data is scant and will also have to pay attention to issues of workforce profiles, job segregation and equal pay.

The employment targets and the means of addressing them should be reflected in the People Strategy (or equivalent).

Examples of evidence

- Impact assessment reports
- Documentation linking impact assessments to objectives, targets and action plans
- Targets that specify performance indicators defining outputs/outcomes to be achieved over specified time-frame
- Description of monitoring system for each indicator with monitoring period
- Documentary evidence of engagement with relevant equality groups
- Evidence of data for setting employment targets
- Documentation showing targets built into business plans
- A regularly updated work force profile by ethnicity, gender and disability as a minimum.
- An equal pay review produced and addressed in accordance with nationally negotiated terms.

An external assessment is required to confirm a claim to have achieved Level 3

Level 4

Information systems and monitoring against targets

To achieve Level 4 of the Standard an authority will have to demonstrate that:

- **It is achieved progress across the authority against the targets that it set at Level 3 for race, gender and disability**
- **By March 2009, it has achieved progress across the authority against targets for sexual orientation, age, religion and belief**
- **It has developed information and monitoring systems that allow it to assess progress in achieving targets**
- **It is measuring progress against targets and effectively using its information and monitoring systems**
- **Monitoring reports are being produced at specified intervals and circulated to designated consultation and scrutiny groups**
- **It is using the self-assessment process to review and revise targets, monitoring and consultation systems.**
- **Self-assessment includes involvement of designated community, staff and stakeholder groups and seeks external validation through community involvement, peer review or expert opinion**
- **It has continued to carry out equality impact assessments for new policies and where gaps are identified through self-assessment**
- **It has initiated a new round of action planning and target setting**
- **Monitoring systems are providing useful information about progress towards specific targets**

These general activities and developments translate into action in the four substantive areas of the Standard:

Leadership and Corporate Commitment

- 4.1.1 Corporate assessment of adequacy of departmental information and monitoring systems
- 4.1.2 Set up system for review of service and employment monitoring reports by designated consultation and scrutiny groups
- 4.1.3 Review targets against monitoring information and produce reports for corporate management team
- 4.1.4 Prepare reports on progress against policy objectives for council executive/cabinet, scrutiny bodies and audit
- 4.1.5 Take on board responses from designated consultation and scrutiny groups for revising policy objectives and targets
- 4.1.6 Self-assess progress against the targets that it set at Level 3 for race, gender and disability
- 4.1.7 Self-assess progress against the targets that it set at Level 3 for sexual orientation, religion or belief and age by March 2009
- 4.1.8 New targets and action plans have been developed through involvement of stakeholders

Community Engagement and Accountability

- 4.2.1 Involve designated community, staff and stakeholder groups in deciding what kind of information will be collected and the reasons for it
- 4.2.2 Circulate monitoring reports to those groups
- 4.2.3 Ensure that the participation strategy demonstrably engages designated groups in review process
- 4.2.4 Review by designated groups of progress against targets
- 4.2.5 Feed back response on monitoring reports to corporate and departmental teams, to directorate, council committees, employee representatives and members and to community partners
- 4.2.6 Require contractors to supply monitoring reports on service delivery and take-up
- 4.2.7 Show that consultation and scrutiny are integral to self-assessment process
- 4.2.8 New targets and action plans have been developed through involvement with stakeholders

Service Delivery and Customer Care

- 4.3.1 All departmental and service level units are using information systems to monitor service outcomes
- 4.3.2 Service delivery monitoring reports are produced at specific and regular intervals
- 4.3.3 Service delivery monitoring reports are circulated to all designated consultation and scrutiny groups
- 4.3.4 Monitoring procedures are applied across contracts and partnerships
- 4.3.5 Service Managers are fully involved in the self-assessment process to review and revise targets, monitoring and consultation systems.
- 4.3.6 At service level there is demonstrable progress against targets set in action plans for race, gender and disability
- 4.3.7 By March 2009, there is demonstrable progress against targets set in action plans for sexual orientation, religion, belief and age
- 4.3.8 Report progress on employment targets to directorate members, council committees, members and consultation and scrutiny groups
- 4.3.9 Use monitoring to assess achievements against targets set in action plans and feed back results into policy review, targeting and revised action plans
- 4.3.10 Establish interdepartmental scrutiny process

Employment and Training

- 4.4.1 Use existing or adapted personnel information systems to provide equality data relating to human resource targets (recruitment, promotion, training, grievances, disciplinary action, appraisal, dismissal and other reasons for leaving, retention, and equal pay)
- 4.4.2 Produce monitoring reports at regular and specified intervals and circulate to designated consultation and scrutiny groups
- 4.4.3 Use equality data to monitor use of all personnel procedures
- 4.4.4 Use equality data to monitor the number of staff leaving employment and their reasons for leaving
- 4.4.5 Use monitoring reports to assess whether authority employment profiles more closely fit the profile of local labour market
- 4.4.6 Self-assessment should demonstrate progress against employment targets
- 4.4.7 Reports based on self-assessment sent to directorate members, council committees, members and consultation and scrutiny groups and seek verification
- 4.4.8 Report on implementation of pay review recommendations
- 4.4.9 Review targets for employment and pay review and agree action plans with designated stakeholders
- 4.4.10 Review training needs against service action plans and revise training plan to deliver appropriate competencies/behaviours
- 4.4.11 Incorporate targets for revised training programme in staff appraisal

Explanatory notes:

Information systems cannot simply be bolted onto the process of target setting. Equally, monitoring the effect of changes in service delivery should not be an afterthought. Target setting and action planning should have monitoring built in. Effective monitoring checks the progress made towards achieving specific targets and is not a generalised process of information collection.

The process should begin with a community and employee profile or audit, which will establish a baseline for future monitoring. A monitoring programme is set up alongside realistic target setting and workable action plans for achieving those targets. Monitoring change against the baseline data should include an analysis of the results to provide evidence that can be used in future planning.

Measuring Progress

Targets, action planning and monitoring, all have to take place within a well-defined time frame. Time limits need to be made explicit in target setting and action planning documentation.

If it is clear during this process that targets are unrealistic or unachievable for whatever reason, then the target setting stage (level 3) should be revisited to revise targets.

Examples of evidence

- Documentation giving details of monitoring for specific performance indicators
- Monitoring reports on each specified performance indicator
- Report to community and employee representatives on progress against targets
- Documentary evidence of time-series monitoring reports on indicators
- Review of series of monitoring reports and consideration of progress
- Quantitative and qualitative consumer feedback

Level 5

Achieving and reviewing outcomes

To achieve Level 5 of the Standard an authority will have to demonstrate that it has made considerable progress in achieving equal employment and service provision with regard to race, gender and disability. From March 2009, achievement against targets will include those for sexual orientation, religion or belief and age.

The authority will need to show that:

- **It has complied with Public Sector Duties for Race, Disability and Gender**
- **It has achieved progress towards the targets that it set at Level 3**
- **It can demonstrate real outcomes that have improved equality in services and employment**
- **Outcomes have been verified through self-assessment and scrutiny and have been validated externally through an accredited assessor**
- **It has reviewed and revised targets, monitoring and consultation systems with designated community, staff and stakeholder groups**
- **It has initiated a new round of action planning and target setting**
- **Through its achievements it can be seen as an example of good practice for other local authorities and agencies.**

This general assessment and review process translates into action in the four substantive areas of the Standard:

Leadership and Corporate Commitment

- 5.1.1 Demonstrate success in meeting a range of targets across the authority and reviewing those targets for future action planning
- 5.1.2 Demonstrate real outcomes that have improved equality in services and employment
- 5.1.3 Benchmark the authority's achievements against comparable others and share its experience in developing good practice
- 5.1.4 Produce corporate self-assessment report to verify performance on targets and outcomes
- 5.1.5 Seek verification of performance and outcomes through scrutiny and audit and have been verified externally through an accredited assessor
- 5.1.6 Review the Corporate Equality Plan

Community Engagement and Accountability

- 5.2.1 There is involvement of community and scrutiny bodies in all equality processes
- 5.2.2 There is increased satisfaction amongst the community and scrutiny bodies with services and progress in meeting targets
- 5.2.3 Demonstrate that there is trust and confidence among all stakeholders in the authority's consultation and scrutiny mechanisms
- 5.2.4 Assess participation strategy through community, staff and stakeholders
- 5.2.5 Review the consultation, assessment and scrutiny elements of the Corporate Equality Scheme
- 5.2.6 The authority's consultation and scrutiny practice is seen as a model for others

Service Delivery and Customer Care

- 5.3.1 Complete department/service level reviews of target achievement
- 5.3.2 Demonstrate significant equality improvements and outcomes for race, gender and disability
- 5.3.3 Show significant equality improvements and outcomes for sexual orientation, religion/belief and age by March 2009
- 5.3.4 Accurate service user profiles are being used to inform service changes and improvements
- 5.3.5 Show that an interdepartmental scrutiny process is working effectively
- 5.3.6 Managers have been appraised against service equality objectives and targets
- 5.3.7 Effective systems are in place for managing equality across contracts and partnerships
- 5.3.8 Service Managers are involved in self-assessment and in preparation for external assessment and validation
- 5.3.9 Benchmarking of full range of equality achievements against other authorities in a similar position
- 5.3.10 Review equal access service objectives and targets

Employment and Training

- 5.4.1 Demonstrate movement towards greater equality in the workforce profile and other employment targets
- 5.4.2 The authority can show that it is paying its staff equally for work of equal value
- 5.4.3 Assess results of equal employment and equal pay target achievement
- 5.4.4 Assess continuing relevance of objectives and targets
- 5.4.5 Demonstrate that staff are fully trained in systems for delivering fair employment and equal pay objectives
- 5.4.6 Managers at all levels can demonstrate that fair employment and equal pay objectives are mainstreamed as part of their professional practice
- 5.4.7 Managers have been appraised against employment equality targets and against a competency/behaviours framework
- 5.4.8 Benchmarking of full range of equality achievements against other authorities

Explanatory notes:

At level 3 clear targets should have been set. Performance indicators will have been adopted or developed. Criteria will have been set that make it clear (with a reasonable degree of flexibility) what changes would be necessary to meet a particular target. The authority should be able to demonstrate that it is actually delivering its services on a more equitable basis and that the staff profile has changed to meet employment equality targets.

The review process should work with these criteria to assess how successful the authority has been. At this stage a fundamental/critical review of all aspects of the process should take place. This review should include members, officer and consultative groups and may result in changes to basic equality objectives.

Examples of evidence

- Compliance with Public Sector Duties for Race, Disability and Gender
- Systematic and critical report on action and target achievement (or not)
- Qualitative and quantitative feedback from consumers and consultative groups
- Analytical report of complete cycle of target setting, action planning and monitoring
- Demonstration of improved outcomes for both employment and service delivery

An external assessment is required to confirm a claim to have achieved Level 5

Glossary

Audit	A process used by people external to an organisation or department to scrutinise processes and outcomes against pre-set criteria.
Beacon Councils	The scheme that awards Beacon status to those authorities that can demonstrate excellence in an area of activity.
Best Value	Refers to the process outlined in the Local Government Act 1999 that requires local authorities to secure continuous improvement in the delivery of services.
BVPI	Best Value Performance Indicators provide a snapshot of a council's overall performance and progress on achieving continuous improvement in the service delivery performance.
CEP	Corporate Equality Plan
CPA	Comprehensive Performance Assessment
Disability	The Disability Discrimination Act definition of disability: <i>'A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'</i>
Impact assessments	A process whereby councils test the impact of policies on one group within the community.
Local labour market area	The geographical area from which candidates for particular jobs may be drawn. This area will vary according to requirements of the post.
Mainstreaming	The phrase used to describe the integration of equalities into policy development, implementation, evaluation and review.
Modernising agenda	A shorthand term for the Local Government act 1999 and the Government's plans for the reform of public services.
Peer Challenge	An external assessment of an authority's self-assessment process in relation to a given level of the Equality Standard.

Self-assessment	A process by which organisations measure their own performance against a set of criteria.
Social/Medical Models of the definition of disability	<p>Social Model: acknowledges the restrictions imposed on disabled people by society. Distinguishes between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability- barriers created by society. • Impairment- medical condition or loss of function. <p>Medical Model- attributes the restriction to disabled people, to their medical condition/impairment and also describes the person in terms of their impairment.</p>
TQM	Total Quality Management- a set of principles or guidelines to follow in order to achieve quality as a whole throughout an organisation.