



Gender Equality Scheme 2007-10

Foreword

Despite 30 years of individual legal rights to sex equality, there is still widespread discrimination within many parts of society. However, this is changing. Over recent years we have seen a shift towards greater gender equality within our employment structures but still have a way to go. We have been looking at our services to see what some of the potential barriers are for both men and women who want to use them for example opening hours and where services can be accessed from.

We are committed to the ongoing process of gaining greater equality for both men and women throughout all the activity of the Borough Council. This Scheme outlines our plans and commitment to see great equality between men and women throughout our employment practices and the services we provide.

This is an ongoing challenge and we welcome feedback and support from all the organisations and individuals across Charnwood and further a field to work together to see gender equality become a reality.



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Further Information

If you would like further information about this Gender Equality Scheme please contact the Change Management Directorate using the contact details below, alternatively visit the Council's equality and diversity web pages www.charnwood.gov.uk/community/equalityanddiversity.html

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Introduction

Gender roles and relationships structure men and women's lives. Women are frequently disadvantaged by policies and practices that do not recognise their greater caring responsibilities, the different pattern of their working lives, their more limited access to resources and their greater vulnerability to domestic violence and sexual assault. Men are also disadvantaged by workplace cultures that do not support their family or childcare responsibilities, by family services that assume they have little or no role in parenting, or by health services which do not recognise their different needs. Both sexes suffer from stereotyping of their roles and needs.

The Equal Opportunities Commission's 'Facts about Women and Men in Great Britain 2006' report outlines some of the analyses of statistics related to men and women. Examples include:

- The income gap for all adults is 44%, and is widest in retirement, where women receive 47% lower weekly income than men. This is in a large part due to the effect on their pension of time out of the workforce raising children or working part-time.
- The gender pay gap is widest at 41% in banking, insurance and pension provision.
- The private sector has a full-time gender pay gap of 22.5%, compared with 13.3% in the public sector.
- In broad terms the differences between women's and men's jobs have declined dramatically since the 1970s, for example in professional jobs the percentage of women has increased from one in ten to 42%. However certain occupations are still mainly held by women or men, particularly in skill shortage areas. For example, fewer than 1% of people in plumbing occupations are women and only 2% of childcare workers are men.
- White women and ethnic minority women and men are particularly likely to be concentrated in low-paid jobs. Many Chinese and Bangladeshi men work as cooks or waiters, and care assistant is one of the most common jobs for white, Pakistani, black Caribbean and black African women.

In April 2007, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 was amended by the Equality Act 2006. This imposes a new duty on all public authorities to have due regard to the need:

- To eliminate discrimination and harassment that is unlawful under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA) and discrimination that is unlawful under the Equal Pay Act 1970 (EqPA)
- To promote equality of opportunity between men and women

The duty is intended to address the fact that, despite 30 years of individual legal rights to sex equality, there is still widespread discrimination – sometimes intentional, sometimes

unintentional – and persistent gender inequality. This applies to policy making, service provision, employment matters, enforcement and decision making. The gender equality duty also requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment against transsexual people in the fields of employment and vocational training. This includes people who intend to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment.

The general duty is supported by a specific legal duty to prepare a Gender Equality Scheme which sets out:

- In formulating its overall objectives, to consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap.
- To gather and use information on how the public authority's policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services
- To consult stakeholders (i.e. employees, service users and others, including trade unions) and take account of relevant information in order to determine its gender equality objectives.
- To assess the impact of its current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality
- To implement the actions set out in its Scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so.
- To report against the scheme every year and review the Scheme at least every three years.

Gender Equality Scheme Objectives

The purpose of this Gender Equality Scheme is to reduce the inequalities that still exist between men and women. Charnwood Borough Council is a large employer and provider of services locally. Therefore we must take a lead in tackling these inequalities.

The objectives of this Scheme are to:

- Increase the **accessibility of our services** to ensure that both men and women are able to access them easily in a way that is convenient for them.
- Raise awareness of **services that are targeted** at specific genders.
- **Reduce the gender pay gap** and increasing **flexible working** in our own workforce.
- **Work with other organisations** to improve gender equality across the Borough.

Access to Services

We have recently relaunched our Customer Service Strategy – Access to Services to address the varied needs of our customers when accessing our services. This Scheme sets out our commitment to improve the services we currently provide and ensuring that the people that need those services are able to access them easily.

Customer Service Strategy Access to Services

This Customer Service Strategy defines our approach to being **Customer Focused**; putting the customer at the heart of everything we do and being dedicated to serving the needs of our customers.

Through this Customer Service Strategy we will deliver:

- **Quality services:** which users perceive to be good, relevant, efficient, cost effective, consistent and delivered through a highly trained workforce
- **Responsive services:** that meet defined needs and increasing expectations.
- **Accessible services:** that provide a choice about how and when to access services
- **Value for money services:** that actively seek efficiency gains and productivity improvements

Our “customers” are the community we serve; local residents, local businesses and visitors to the Borough. The community includes those to whom we provide services. It also includes those to whom we do not provide services but with whom we interact e.g. those against whom we take action. It encompasses our partners, statutory and voluntary, local and national.

One of the traditional barriers to accessing our services for people in full time employment has been opening hours. This often means that people who work full time are not able to access our services as easily as those who work part time, we can see from statistics that this is more likely to impact adversely on men than women. We are aiming to providing our services more flexibly for example: via our website, by use of email and extending the opening hours of the Customer Contact Centre.

Targeted Services

We currently provide some services that are targeted at particular groups. These include:

- **Victims of domestic**

Locally domestic violence is one of the main causes of repeat homeless. The Council has part funded the provision of a Domestic Violence Outreach worker based at Loughborough Woman's Aid. The aim of this service is to provide information and support to women living in Charnwood, who are currently experiencing, or have experienced, any kind of domestic violence or abuse. We also provide funding for refuge places for victims of domestic violence.

- **The Sanctuary Scheme**

In 2007/08 we are extending the support we provide to victims of domestic violence and other forms of violence or intimidation through our Sanctuary Scheme. This will provided increased security including fire safety checks. This can be accessed through the Woman's Aid Victim Liaison Officer, Victim Support, the Police and the Borough Council.

- **Support for teenage parents**

Housing Services has always supported in a very practical and positive way the Government's objective that all 16-17 year old lone parents, who cannot reside with their own parents or partner, and who require accommodation, should be offered appropriate housing and support. We have established the post of Housing Support Worker specifically for this client group, funded by Supporting People and based at the Bridge Independent Housing Advice Agency.

- **Increasing awareness and reporting of Hate Crime**

A hate crime is any incident where a person has been targeted because they are believed to be different, or any incident that is motivated by: age, disability, gender identity, race, religion/belief or sexual orientation. This year we have changed from a racist incident reporting procedure to a Hate Crime reporting system in partnership with Leicestershire County Council. All reported incidents will be investigated by our Anti-Social Behaviour Team.

For further information on all of these services look up the Councils web pages at <http://www.charnwood.gov.uk>

Reducing the gender pay gap and increasing flexible working

Employment is the area that has traditionally seen the most noticeable inequality between men and women specifically related to pay.

The Councils workforce gender profile has remained largely unchanged over the previous twelve months. Whilst 58% of the workforce are female, there are less than average female employees in the top 5% of earners, 20% in 2005/2006. This has slightly increased in 2006/ytd where the figure is 23.3%. However, there has been a significant increase since 2003/4 when the number of female top 5% earners was 9%. We have set ourselves targets to progress towards the national upper quartile for BVPI 11a by increasing the number of females in the top 5% of earners.

Charnwood Borough Council already supports the principle of flexible working and has a range of policies in place. Our policies cover:

- Flexible working hours
- Job share
- Home working
- Compressed/annualised/term time working
- Flexible working

Currently more women than men take up flexible working opportunities, this is often due to greater caring responsibilities. There are also disparities between some job types that men and women do. For example nationally of the only 8% of skilled trades are filled by women by comparison only 16% of men are employed in the personal services sector. Currently we have very low numbers of women in manual or craft jobs. We aim to work with the local colleges to raise awareness of the types of jobs available at the Borough Council to increase the representation of our workforce.

Working with other organisations

We work with many organisations to deliver our services and improve the quality of life for people living and working in Charnwood. The main partnership in Charnwood is the Local Strategic Partnership. This is a partnership of the public, private and voluntary organisations. We will ensure that gender equality is promoted through this partnership as part of partnership agreements and the work of the sub-groups within the Community Strategy.

Information Gathering

Evidence gathering is part of the process of achieving greater equality for both men and women and treating employees, service users and members of the community more fairly. We must gather information to identify any potential barriers to our employment practices and our services or when people are experiencing different levels in quality or satisfaction with service. The purpose of collecting this information is to ensure our services are being used by those who need them most and that there is a consistency in the quality of the

service provided. The information, therefore, needs to be regularly reviewed and responded to by managers.

Many of our services have been engaged in equality monitoring for a number of years. Our current monitoring forms include ethnicity, disability and age and in a number of services gender. This monitoring information is not only recorded for service take up but also for customer satisfaction. We are able to identify any disparities in satisfaction between different customers.

We also gather information on recruitment and selection processes through the TRENT integrated Human Resources and Payroll computer system. The system records personnel records and personal information.

Conducting Equality Impact Assessments

We have taken a generic approach to equality impact assessments (EIA) since April 2006. This involves assessing whether a policy, strategy or function is relevant to equality or diversity. If it is relevant to equality a full assessment is carried out. We will continue to assess our policies and functions to ascertain whether they have or are likely to have an adverse impact on equality for both men and women.

Our EIA process follows the best practice from the Commission for Race Equality by having a separate screening and full impact assessment process.

The aim of the equality impact assessment process is to:

- Identify and highlight the potential effects that proposed policies will have on different groups,
- Take action to reduce or eliminate any identified adverse impact that cannot be justified before the policy is implemented, and
- Identify issues in the context of other relevant policies.

This process is managed through the Equality Project Team and progress is reported quarterly to the Project Board. The impact assessment process is reviewed annually and the full list of policies and functions reviewed after two years in 2008.

Results of the Equality Impact Assessments will be published on our website www.charnwood.gov.uk/community/equalityanddiversity.

Links to the Equality Standard for Local Government

The Equality Standard for Local Government provides a framework to help deliver equality throughout the Council's activity. It does this by ensuring that race equality, disability equality and gender equality are considered together without losing focus on the specific issues.

The Equality Standard has five levels

- Level 1 - Commitment to a comprehensive equality policy
- Level 2 - Self-assessment and consultation
- Level 3 - Setting equality objectives and targets
- Level 4 - Establishing Information systems and monitoring equality targets
- Level 5 - Achieving and reviewing outcomes

For each level the Council must consider four key areas:

- Leadership and commitment
- Consultation and community development and scrutiny
- Service delivery and customer care
- Employment and training

Many of the actions to fulfil elements Gender Duty are already captured in the Council Equality and Diversity Plan which can be found at <http://www.charnwood.gov.uk/community/plansandpolicies.html>, however, distinct gender equality actions will be highlighted in the Action Plan accompanying this Scheme.

Review of the Gender Equality Scheme

We will conduct annual reviews of progress in implementing this Scheme, and will publish annual reports. At the end of the three year period we will produce a revised version to cover the following three years. This review will involve input from customers, residents and employees.

Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan 07-10

	Task	Start	Finish	Responsibility	Performance Measure
Service Delivery					
	Increase awareness of the variety of the Councils access channels including opening hours	Apr 07	Mar 09	Director of PACS	Increased use alternative access channels including online and telephone payments.
	Improve the support provided to victims of domestic violence through the Sanctuary Scheme	Jan 08	Jan 09	Housing Services	Take up of Sanctuary Scheme opportunities
	Extend Racist Incidents to capture other h Hate Incidents	Mar 07	Sept 07	Head of Community Safety	
	Inclusion of gender as one of the 6 strands of the equality impact assessments	Apr 06	Ongoing	Performance Improvement Officer (Equalities)	Identify improvement actions related to gender equality
	Include gender equality in all Council contracts	Mar 07	Jun 07	Head of Procurement	Included within the new Procurement Toolkit
Employment					
	Sexual Orientation Policy	Jan 07	Jun 07	Human Resources Development Manger	Policy drafted and publicised
	Increase awareness of the Councils flexible working arrangements at the pre application stage of recruitment	Jun 07	Jan 08	Head of Human Resources	
	Increase take-up of Flexible Working options	Apr 06	Ongoing	Head of Human Resources	Measure increase in uptake
	Implement an Equal Pay Audit	Sept 07	Dec 07	Head of Human Resources	Audit completed and implemented
	Encourage more women into senior management positions	Ongoing		Head of Human Recourses	Support of the LRIP Senior Woman's Network Performance against BVPI 11a

Glossary of Terms

Civil partnerships

The Civil Partnership Act 2004 came into operation on 5 December 2005 and enables a same-sex couple to register as civil partners of each other.

Discrimination

Unfair treatment as a result of prejudice. It can be intentional or unintentional, regardless, it is less favourable treatment.

Direct Discrimination - Under sex and race legislation direct discrimination means treating a person less favourably than another, purely on the grounds of sex, race, gender reassignment or disability. For example not offering a person a job because she is a woman, refusing to promote a person because he is black, a landlord advertising a rented flat with a clause that disabled people can not apply.

Indirect Discrimination - This can happen when an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put persons from a particular group at a disadvantage compared with other persons, unless that provision, criterion or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary. An example of this is inflexible working hours that would limit parents with child care responsibilities being able to apply for a particular job

Gender reassignment

People who decide to adopt the opposite gender to the one assigned to them at birth are known as 'transsexual people'. Gender reassignment is the medical treatment to enable transsexual people to alter their bodies to match their gender identity.

Gender

Refers to wider social roles and relationships which structure men and women's lives.

Sex

Biological differences between women and men.

Victimisation

When a person has been treated less favourably than another person because:

- 1) They have made allegations of race, sex or disability discrimination or unequal pay. It does not matter if the allegations are not true, providing they were made in good faith.
- 2) It is known that he or she intends to bring a case under equality legislation.
- 3) He or she has given evidence in such a case.