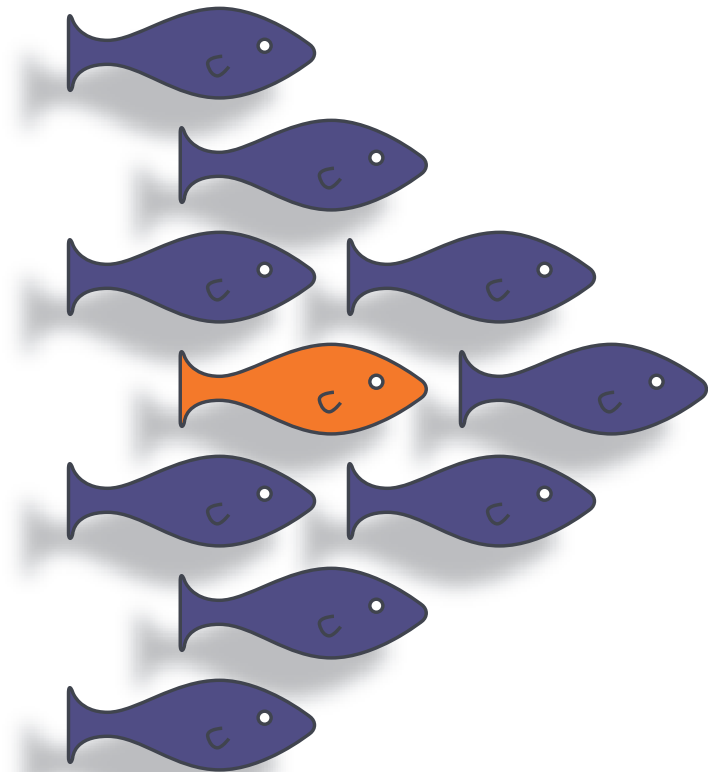
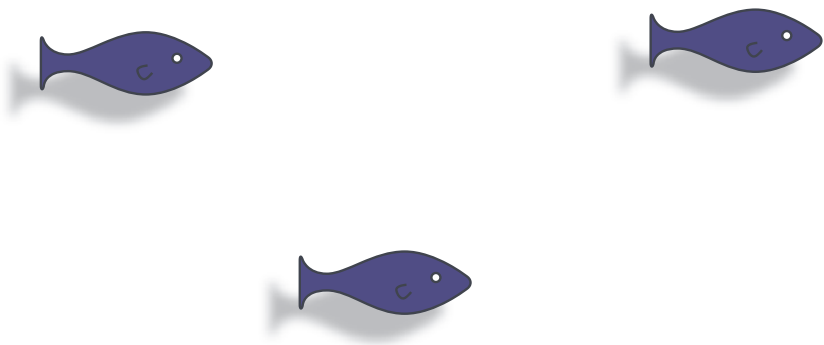


local leadership academy

equalities and councillors member workbook



1. introduction	03
2. what is equality?	04
3. equality and local government	06
understanding the issues.....	06
knowing your communities.....	07
place shaping and leadership	09
community engagement and satisfaction.....	11
responsive services and customer care	13
a modern, diverse workforce	15
4. communications and language	16
5. supporting improvement.....	17
6. scrutiny and equalities.....	19
7. community cohesion	20
8. equalities and the law	21
9. final word	23
checklist.....	25
10. appendix: useful links.....	26



1. introduction

This workbook has been designed as a learning aid for elected members. It makes no judgement about whether you have been a member for some time, or whether you have been elected more recently. If you fall into the former category the workbook should serve as a useful reminder of the key features of ethical governance in local authorities.

Most local councillors stand because they want to make a difference, and have a real commitment to fairness and opportunity. This workbook explains how most Councils are trying to deliver equality and fairness, the terms they use, the legal obligations and how an understanding of equality can help to deliver better services. The workbook will provide you with an understanding of the principles of equality and the importance of this for you and your council. Aspects of the guidance may also be of interest to members in specialist roles, such as those who sit on a standards committee or officers who have a member training responsibility.

The document should be read in conjunction with your council's own guidance on equalities and diversity, and complements the Equalities Framework, the successor to the Equality Standard for Local Government.

The workbook offers some basic principles for ward members as it is recognised that each individual must decide how best to approach their role as representative of many communities of interest and geography. This will be influenced by the type of ward you represent, any specialist roles you have taken on and the nature of the governance arrangements in your council. There is no presumption about 'typical wards' or 'typical members' and the workbook should serve more as a direction marker rather than a road map. This affects every ward, in every council, in different ways, whether you are from a rural or urban council, a district or a unitary authority. Our society is increasingly diverse, and everyone experiences life in different ways, for many different reasons. Prosperity and cohesion of all communities are affected by differences in identity. Social mobility, migration and other socio-economic factors affect all councils. This workbook will help you think about how those issues relate to your work as a local councillor, representing everyone in your ward.

In practical terms, the document will take between three to four hours to work through. You do not need to complete it all in one session and may prefer to work through the material at your own pace. The key requirement is to think about the issues presented and how the material relates to your local situation, the people you serve and the council you represent.

In working through the material contained in this workbook you will encounter a number of features designed to help you think about the nature of ethical governance. These features are represented by the symbols shown below:



guidance – this is used to indicate guidance, research, quotations, explanations and definitions that you may find helpful.



challenges – these are questions or queries raised in the text which ask you to reflect on your role or approach – in essence, they are designed to be thought-provokers.



case studies – these are 'pen pictures' of approaches used by councils elsewhere.



hints and tips – these represent a selection of good practices which you may find useful.



useful links – these are signposts to sources of further information, outside of the workbook, which may help with principles, processes, methods and approaches. A full list of useful additional information is also set out in Appendix A of the workbook.



2. what is equality?

Equality is about ensuring that all people are treated equally. This does not mean treating everyone the same, but means recognising the differences in life situation in experience and ensuring that there is equality of opportunity for all people, taking their needs into account.

This definition recognises that:

- equality is an issue for all
- we don't all start from the same position and to create a fair society we must recognise different needs.

It also encompasses some of the most vulnerable groups in society (e.g. looked after children and ex-offenders). Other groups, such as people with learning disabilities and Gypsies and Travellers, are already protected by our equality legislation, but some authorities still fail to see these groups as part of the equality picture.

This generic definition of equality aims to encourage authorities to consider the full range of equality issues, for example, addressing educational attainment of white working class boys as well as poorly performing boys from African-Caribbean communities.

The prosperity and cohesion of communities are affected by the impact of different needs and identities: age, gender, disability and sexual orientation all affect individuals' experiences in life. Socio-economic status, poverty and migration all affect people's experiences of life. Addressing inequality will help to support all people in our communities.

Local government also has legal obligations with regards to both employment and providing goods, facilities and services. This will be explored in more detail later.



“An equal society protects and promotes equal, real freedom and substantive opportunity to live in the ways people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish.

An equal society recognises people's different needs, situations and goals, and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and can be.”

From The Equalities Review, published 2007



exercise 1 - is this about equalities?

A wheelchair user having difficulty getting up the steps into the council's reception

A middle-aged man wanting to negotiate the time he leaves the office to pick up his children.

Street lighting in one particular are of town.

A bus stop moving temporarily.

Parks being poorly maintained with broken glass and damaged lighting.

Letters from the council informing residents of refuse and recycling collection dates.

Equality issues need to be taken into account in all of these cases. The first two examples are probably fairly obvious. What about the others? Poor street lighting increases a fear of crime, particularly among older or deaf people, and makes them less likely to go out and play an active part in society. Locations of bus stops have a major impact on everyone who uses them, mostly women and older people. Parks are used by a variety of people, but children particularly use them and will be reluctant to play there if they are poorly maintained. Letters from the council go to everyone, and therefore different methods of communication may need to be thought about – large print, different languages, audio, etc.

3. equality and local government

Local government, through the services it provides, and the people it employs, has specific responsibilities. The Equality Framework for Local Government (2009) is a performance management tool designed specifically for local government. Working through it will help local authorities to provide responsive accessible services. It also helps authorities meet the wider needs of authorities – such as Community Area Assessment (including individual authority inspections), Local Area Agreement targets and addressing the *Every Child Matters* agenda. It replaces the Equality Standard for Local Government.

There are different areas to focus on in the Equality Framework:

- Knowing your communities
- Leadership and place shaping
- Community engagement and satisfaction
- Responsive services and customer care
- A modern and diverse workforce.

There are also legal obligations – through the public sector equality duties and employment responsibilities.

Some of the roles of councillors have a big impact on the equality of opportunity that residents experience. These include communicating with residents, meeting their needs, and the scrutiny of council decisions and services.

understanding the issues

Equality is not about pandering to extreme or unrealistic expectations or demands of minority groups. It's much wider than that. It's about ensuring that everything we do in local government is accessible to everyone, no matter what their life experience or situation is.

Understanding the issues means accepting that different people experience the same situation differently. For example, your Area Forum meeting may be attended by thirty people, but because there is no sign language interpreter, you never hear the views of deaf people in your area.



What equality isn't (or shouldn't be):

- Treating everybody the same
- An extra burden on service delivery
- Promoting Black or Disabled people because they are Black or Disabled
- Giving minority communities more rights than other people

What equality is (or should be):

- Treating people with dignity and respect
- Accepting people as individuals and addressing the needs of individuals or groups
- Knowing who uses (or should use) different services and designing them round what is needed
- Enabling all people to apply for, and get, jobs based on merit

Knowing your communities

As a ward councillor, you represent a number of different communities. As well as the geographic boundaries of your ward, the individual citizens you represent have diverse identities.

These include:

- Men
- Women
- Children & young people
- Older people
- Transgender people
- Disabled people
- Gay men or lesbians
- People from different faith or religious organisations,
- People with different political or social outlooks

There are likely to be many more besides. These groups of people are sometimes known as “communities of interest”. Their boundaries are likely to be different from your ward boundaries (e.g. parish boundaries or social care boundaries cutting across the whole council or wider) but you still represent them. In addition, most people fall into more than one of these categories, such as Black disabled women, or young gay men.

In order for you to represent the diverse people in your ward, you need to know who they are. The Equality Framework refers to “equality mapping”, literally mapping the diverse identities, experiences, life situations and other demographic information of the people in your area.



“Do [you] realise that, in many areas of the country, disabled people make up 20 per cent of their potential voters? Projects that have involved members listening to and working with local disabled people have demonstrated improved satisfaction levels with council services.”

Beyond Good Intentions A resource for local authorities implementing the Disability Duty, Disability Rights Commission, 2006

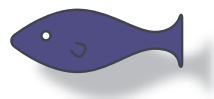


exercise 2 – knowing your communities

Who do you represent?

What might be some of their diverse life experiences? For example, being deaf, high unemployment, large Sikh population, a number of university students.

How do you find out what they need from the council?

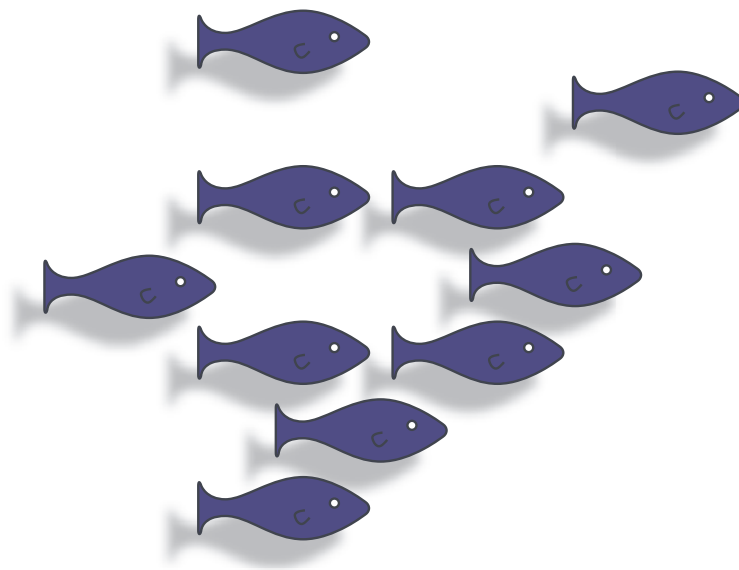


place shaping and leadership

Councils are often the largest employer locally, and by their nature are well-known and challenged by the general public. The council can lead the way by demonstrating good practice and helping other organisations to get things right. This could be by showing how well it listens to local people, and acts on their suggestions.

All councils work in partnership nowadays. This might be the local strategic partnership with voluntary & community organisations as well as the public sector, crime and disorder partnerships with the police, or conducting the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment with the PCT. The *Story of Place* for the recent LAA and the Sustainable Community Strategy are also partnership documents, but focus on improving the area for the people who live, work and play in it.

As you can see, this links really well with equality work – knowing who has an interest, gathering evidence, working together, and recognising different people might need different ways of working. Councillors expressing and demonstrating their commitment to equality will send out strong messages to people living in the area, as well as setting an example to partner and other organisations.





exercise 3 - place shaping and leadership

Who are your local partners?

Does your local strategic partnership represent the interests of the people who live in your local area?

Are there any ways you could help to improve this? The duty to involve means looking to involve different groups of people in decision making.

How does the council demonstrate leadership in meeting the needs of diverse communities?

community engagement and satisfaction

Engaging with people in the different communities of interest is about building a relationship with them. This will help ensure that you represent their needs. There are a number of officers in your authority who might help you with this, depending on the structures in your council. These might include: equalities team, neighbourhood managers and benefits outreach workers.

There are many forms of engagement, from specific methods such as surveys and focus groups, to different ways of working, such as neighbourhood management and customer-focused services. Area Forums, Neighbourhood Management Boards, service-user advisory groups are all different ways to engage the people you represent.

It's all about communities knowing you, and you knowing them. It's a two-way relationship, about sharing information and taking feedback, learning about their needs and supporting them when they need it.



Ten steps for effective community engagement (from the DoH guidance on Joint Strategic Needs Assessments)

Involve: Identify and involve the people and organisations who have an interest in the issues which are being explored

Support: Identify and overcome any barriers to people's involvement (transport problems, timing etc)

Plan: Gather evidence of necessary and available resources and use these to plan purpose, scope and timescale of engagement and actions

Methods: Agree to and use methods of engagement that are appropriate and fit for purpose

Work together and with others: Agree to and use clear procedures to enable participants to work with each other effectively and efficiently; work effectively with others who have an interest in the engagement process

Share information: Ensure that necessary information is communicated between participants

Improve: Actively develop skills, knowledge and confidence of all participants

Feedback: Feed back results to all those involved and affected

Monitor and evaluate: Work together to monitor and evaluate whether engagement has achieved its purpose

Recognise: people are different, and processes and services should take meaningful account of those differences

Adapted from *National Standards for Community Engagement*, produced by Communities Scotland



exercise 4 - engagement and satisfaction

Does your authority have any satisfaction surveys? If so, do you know what the most recent one showed?

What other forms of engagement in your authority? This could be interest groups, area forum meetings, meet & greet sessions, as well as specific consultation exercises.

As a councillor, how do you engage with the people you represent?

Another IDeA workbook looks at community engagement more closely: *Community Engagement workbook*

responsive services and customer care

Promoting equality and eliminating discrimination in service provision is about understanding individuals' needs and addressing them. It's not just about counting how many people from a particular group use the service, but about how they experience that service, or the reasons they need the service in the first place. Sometimes it's about finding out what people's needs are before making a decision for example in planning, talking to gypsies or travellers before making planning decisions that might affect them. Or when regenerating a town centre, ensuring that you involve people who live there, addressing the different need of men and women, children and young people, and wheelchair users' access needs.

Councils are increasingly paying another organisation to deliver services, through commissioning or procurement. This does mean that councils need to build consideration of equality outcomes into contracts. For specific guidance on this, see the EHRC website with guidance on procurement. (see "more information at the end of this workbook).



Examples of gender equality issues in service delivery

- Women generally have a lower income than men, and therefore have fewer housing choices than men. Single mothers and women pensioners are particularly likely to be found in low-income groups.
- Women spend more time than men in their neighbourhood but are less likely than men to be involved in planning it
- The British Crime Survey of 2000 records that domestic violence represents two fifths of the violent incidents reported by women and a tenth of the violent incidents reported by men¹.
- Women's greatest fear of crime is of rape and sexual assault, and men's is theft of, or from, vehicles².
- Older women have a particularly high fear of crime and this is likely to restrict their daily activities, and hence their wellbeing.

Adapted from the Gender Equality Duty Guidance published by the EOC. Now available on the EHRC website

-
1. Chris Kershaw, Tracey Budd, Graham Kinshott, Joanna Mattinson, Pat Mayhew & Andy Myhill *The British Crime Survey 2000* London Home Office Statistical Bulletin 18/00
 2. *Key indicators of Women's Position in Britain* WEU 2002, p195



exercise 5

Can you think of any times when disabled people might experience council services differently from non-disabled people? For example, a Deaf person might find it difficult to phone the council's helpline if there is no Minicom (text phone) number

What about for people with different religious beliefs? For example, some Jewish people may find it hard to make appointments or come to the council on a Friday afternoon in the winter if they are observing the Sabbath.

When might older people experience services differently? For example, they may struggle with taking wheelie bins to the end of a road for emptying.

What sort of services do men and women, or boys and girls experience differently? For example, some groups of boys are achieving lower levels of educational attainment than many groups of girls, and women and men tend to be homeless for different reasons and therefore the solutions to re-housing them will need to be different.

a modern, diverse workforce

One way to help to ensure that your local authority is meeting the needs of local citizens is to have a workforce that reflects the local population. This many mean looking at how the authority encourages people from different communities to apply for work, or about exploring flexible working practices to enable people with a variety of other needs or responsibilities to be able to work at all levels of the organisation. This is mostly your HR department's job, but it helps to recruit the best people for jobs if the workforce reflects and encourages people from all walks of life.

All local authorities need to look at the future as well as the present. There are several useful publications to help you think about workforce issues. This includes:

- local government the place to be, the place to work – delivering the 2007 workforce strategy (LGA Group)
- support for local councils on internal workforce issues Jan-March 2009 (LGA group)
- Tomorrow's People from the Audit Commission (2008).

The EHRC has advice on employment issues too.

It is important not to confuse positive action, which is legal and positive discrimination, which is not.



Positive Action vs Positive Discrimination

Positive Action

Actions taken to attract applications and interest from under-represented groups. Examples of positive action include:

- designing job adverts to reach members of under-represented groups and encourage their applications, e.g. through use of the ethnic minority press.
- using employment agencies and careers offices in areas where under-represented groups are concentrated.
- encouraging employees from under-represented groups to apply for promotion or transfer opportunities.
- providing career development training for employees of under-represented groups who lack particular expertise but show potential.

Positive Discrimination

Making decisions which actively favour an under-represented group, e.g. women, minority ethnic groups, etc. Positive discrimination is illegal as it results in people within majority groups being unfairly disadvantaged.

4. communication and language

The way you relate to people as a councillor has an important effect on their attitudes to the council, the services the authority provides and the place you represent. Your inter-personal, communication and assertiveness skills all come into play. You may have to adapt your personal style when you become aware of the effect you have on other people, but at the same time, be true to yourself. Changing your attitude and behaviour are important, not changing who you are, what you think or believe.

Some of the people you represent may have specific communication needs, for instance:

- They are deaf and need a British Sign Language interpreter to speak to you, or a Minicom number to phone you.
- They have learning difficulties and find reading jargon difficult. They may need documents in plain English or with pictures explaining the words.
- They may not read any language, and would need an interpreter in order to understand what you say at the Area Forum.

The language we use is important. It's not about political correctness; it's about ensuring that the words we use don't put up barriers, while using common sense. It is easy to use gender neutral words, such as Chair and Headteacher, and is more inclusive (and less offensive) than the gendered equivalents (Chairman, Headmaster or Headmistress).

In local government, we usually want and need to reach as many people as possible, especially as a councillor representing a diverse range of people.

Our choice and use of language to convey information, opinions, ideas etc, is a direct reflection of our knowledge and understanding of particular issues and concerns. If we choose words that do not respect the views and rights of individuals we run the risk of patronising, offending and stereotyping them.

Language is always evolving; terms and words that were once considered acceptable are now recognised as demeaning or patronising, or racist. None of us get it right all the time, but all of us need to be sensitive and considerate. Sometimes we do say the wrong thing, so we need to accept being challenged on what we say, and try not to make assumptions.



Key skills in communication

Asking the right questions – how do people want to communicate with you, and when? What do you need to know and what do they want to tell you?

Listening skills – listen to their answers and act on them. If someone needs an interpreter (e.g. British Sign Language) find a way to use one.

Feedback – pass relevant information on to the appropriate services.

Relax – and be yourself!



“Any writing habit that builds a barrier between you and half your readers must reduce the impact of your message. Even if you disagree with the view that sexist writing reinforces prejudice and discrimination, it is still wiser to use inclusive language.”

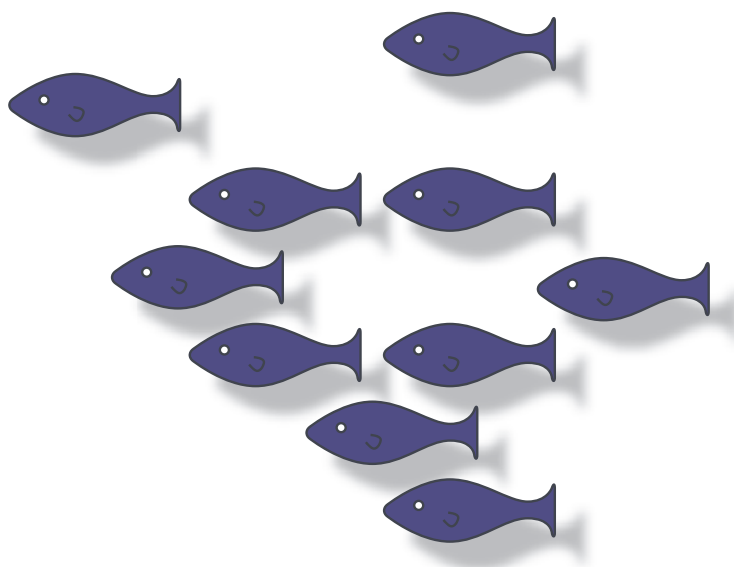
Oxford Guide to Plain English, Martin Cutts (1996, revised 2007)

5. supporting improvement

Addressing equalities issues is part of improving the way local government delivers services and employs people. Knowing your communities means that you can tailor services to meet their needs. If you are a portfolio holder for a particular service, you can play an important part in knowing the needs of the people that use that services. If you are not, knowing what the needs of the people you represent means you can feed that information to the portfolio holders.

The drive for improved customer service in local government is supported by addressing inequalities. If you know who your “customers” are, and what they want and need, you can provide for those needs. If you know the best way to communicate and inform people about local government developments, you can improve relations between groups of people.

The Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) will look at local improvement across the whole area. It includes elements of involving service users and other citizens to improve service delivery. Your authority will have targets to work towards. Working through the Equality Framework is one way to improve your evidence of this for the Audit Commission.





exercise 6 - sector led improvement is a challenge and an opportunity

1. Has your authority used the Equality Standard to help you improve your services? Have you seen the Equality Framework that replaces it? How might this help your council address inequalities in your local area?

2. Do you actively learn from other councils around you or further afield and share your good practice with others? Is your council part of a local or regional improvement network?

3. Do you see yourself as an equality champion in your council? How could you more actively challenge performance, use the scrutiny process better or play a role in the improvement networks helping other members see the value and worth of promoting equality and eliminating discrimination?

4. What support do you need as a councillor to ensure the services provided to your local communities are the best they can be? Do you know where this support might come from?

5. How does your authority's work on equalities link with your corporate plan?

6. scrutiny and equalities

Scrutiny is probably one of the most important parts of your role as a councillor. You can make a real difference through scrutiny in all areas of your council's work. Bringing equalities into scrutiny is not about scrutinising equality and diversity policies and practices, but about bringing equalities into all scrutiny work.

All council policies, practices and functions need to promote equality and good relations between people as well as eliminate discrimination and harassment. This includes scrutinising library services, recycling and leisure facilities, as well as the equalities scheme or impact assessments. This means that councillors, as well as officers, need to understand equalities in services provision. They need to feel confident about asking the right questions, or involving the right people.

For example, violence against women (which includes stalking, harassment, abuse and rape as well as domestic violence) is not often recognised as an issue that cuts across different services. It is affected by policies and practices on street lighting, housing, transport, employment, social care to name but a few.



Equal to the Task is a guidance document on bringing equalities into Scrutiny. The Centre for Public Scrutiny published this in 2007 to help councillors improve their scrutiny arrangements.

Equal to the Task is available from the CfPS website <http://www.cfps.org.uk/publications/item.php?itemid=72>



Techniques for scrutiny committees to use

- One-off, in-depth review of major policy or plan (e.g. Equality Scheme, transport plan, workforce development strategy, or tackling violence against women)
- Ask for evidence of how equality and diversity have been taken into account when scrutinising other policies or practices such as:
 - have single fathers' needs been taken into account when providing support for single parents?
 - Were disabled people involved in developing the transport strategy?
 - are there different groups of boys and girls who perform better or worse at schools and how is this being addressed by different subjects?
 - are the health needs of different communities understood and met?
- Establish regular monitoring of equalities targets using community engagement and questioning key officers.

7. community cohesion



“A cohesive community is one where:

- there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities
- the diversity of people’s different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued
- those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities
- strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds and circumstances in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.”

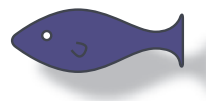
(Home Office / LGA definition of community cohesion)

As a local councillor, you have a duty to promote community cohesion. You need to represent everyone equally.



“An integrated and cohesive community is one where people from various backgrounds and circumstances live and mix in freedom and peace and thrive in every way. It is based on tolerance, trust, respect, civil rights and a celebration of diversity with equal access to local services.

From “Themes Messages and Challenges” a summary of key themes from the commission on cohesion and integration 2007



8. equalities and the law

There are regulations that local authorities must adhere to regarding both employment and goods and services:

	Employment	Goods, facilities & services
Gender (including transsexual people)	X	X
Disability	X	X
Race	X	X
Age	X	
Sexual Orientation	X	X
Religion or Belief	X	X

Elected members are legally responsible for the implementation of these laws so it is important that all councillors have a basic understanding of their implications.

There are currently three equalities duties that apply to the public sector – on Race, Disability and Gender equality. There are slightly different responsibilities under each, but all require an equality scheme, impact assessments, action plans and consultation or involvement. These will be replaced by a single equality duty within this Parliament, as a result of the Equality Bill currently being prepared. The single equality duty is expected to be out to public consultation during summer 2009. The law basically requires equal treatment of different groups of people. In addition, the public sector duties on race, gender and disability equality require authorities to take positive steps to both prevent discrimination and to promote equality.

Working with your equality & diversity officers within the authority, you can ensure equality issues are taken into account in all the policies, practices & functions of the authority as they are developed or changed. A useful way of checking this is to build equalities considerations into all scrutiny work, as the duties help to identify customer need, service users' needs and employees' needs. You could also ask service managers for regular briefings to ensure that the duties are built into the service planning process. This includes the procurement process for goods facilities or services.



Acts of Parliament relating to equalities

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Disability Discrimination Act 2005

Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003

Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

Equality Act 2006

Equal Pay Act 1970

Human Rights Act 1998

Race Relations Act 1976

Sex Discrimination Act 1975

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001

Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms as amended by Protocol No. 11

Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation.



exercise 7 - your council's equality scheme

Does your council have a single equality scheme or does it have separate ones?

Does the scheme (or schemes) have clear objectives with target dates and people assigned to take responsibility for actions?

How might you work with the officers, with your knowledge of your own ward, to help improve the scheme(s)?



"It is unlawful to discriminate in providing goods, facilities or services to the public on the grounds of sex, race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, and religion or belief.

Discrimination in providing services means:

- refusing to provide a service
- providing a lower standard of service or
- offering a service on different terms than you would to other people.

There is no legislation that makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of age when providing services: for example, a pub can choose to refuse service to people under 21.

As a service provider, having good equality practices will help make your services available to the widest possible range of customers. Improvements such as better lighting and clear signs benefit everyone.

Understanding this aim and the consequences of these laws will help protect you from legal action, which can be expensive and damaging to your reputation."

From Equality and Human Rights Commission website: guidance for service providers

checklist

Some local authorities found it helpful to develop a checklist of questions you need to ask to ensure that your authority is addressing inequalities and meeting its obligations. Your equality officers might already have one.

The Disability Rights Commission developed a checklist to help ensure that councils thought about the different issues to address disability inequality. The full checklist is available on the EHRC websites.

You might find it useful to help you start to think about the sorts of questions your authority needs to ask in order to address disability inequality. They could also give you ideas of the sorts of questions to ask when addressing any other inequality, such as age, gender, sexual orientation, faith etc.



Example of a checklist for a local authority, taken from the checklist in the Disability Rights Commission's booklet *Beyond Good Intentions*, intended to help public authorities implement the Disability Equality Duty

- Which of your strategic objectives could be better met by ensuring equality for disabled staff and service users, including people with long-term health conditions, mental health issues and from black and minority ethnic communities?
- Have you set targets for employment retention and career progression of your disabled staff?
- Have you set relevant targets (including promoting independent living) for improving the service delivery and outcomes of disabled service users, including those with long-term health conditions, mental health issues and BME disabled people?
- Do you monitor and set targets for appointment of disabled people on your advisory boards, committees etc.?
- Do you have a system in place for capturing improvements made as a result of disability equality impact assessments, of initiatives, policies and practices? Do your committees receive this detailed information for major policies they are considering?
- Have senior members of staff across all areas in your organisation (HR/departmental/IT etc.) received training on disability equality, particularly to ensure that when they set budgets or approve corporate plans they have due regard to promoting disability equality?



exercise 8 - checklist for your authority

Can you begin to think of the sorts of questions you need to ask in your authority to help to address inequalities? Use the questions above to help you think of the sorts of issues you might look at.

Write down the first five questions.

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

Do you know where to find this information? Which officers would need to use this information?

Look at the complete list for Disability on the EHRC website. How can you adapt this to address all inequalities?

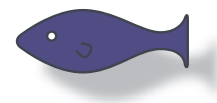
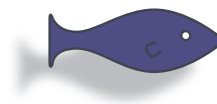


What does a council performing well on equality look like?

- The council has and promotes a culture where everyone who comes into contact with the council in any way is treated with dignity and respect. This includes people who use different goods and services as well as those who are employed by the council.
- Bullying and harassment are addressed in an appropriate and timely manner, including harassment of transgender people, disabled people, gay men, lesbians, older people, younger people and people with different faiths
- Services meet the needs of all citizens appropriately e.g. public transport strategies addressing the differing needs of men and women and disabled people; sport and leisure facilities attracting men and women, people from different cultures and disabled people including people with learning difficulties and mental health needs
- In employment: there is no gender pay gap, disabled people are represented at all levels of the organisation, and the workforce represents the diversity of the local area at all levels of the organisation. Barriers to equality have been identified and actions are being taken to overcome them.
- Resources are targeted effectively to ensure that they are allocated to address all people's needs.
- The local authority engages effectively with others in the private, voluntary and public sectors, making the most effective use of others' expertise of equality issues and service delivery.
- Organisations that are contracted to do work on behalf of the council have equality obligations built into contracts. Their policies and procedures promote equality and eliminate discrimination.

Top tips on equality for elected members

1. Remember that it is your legal responsibility to ensure the implementation of the public sector equalities duties. You should have a revised Race Equality Scheme, a Disability Equality Scheme and a Gender Equality Scheme (or one single equalities scheme covering all these aspects).
2. Ask your Chief Executive what she or he is doing with regards to the equality duties.
3. Look at who is involved in partnerships and joint working. Having diverse people involved is more likely to help you to ensure a diverse range of views can help you make decisions.
4. Remind service managers that it is their responsibility, as well as in their interests, to conduct impact assessments, develop an action plan and have a robust equality scheme, which is then monitored.
5. Ask to see the equality impact assessment of any new or existing policy or practice.
6. Ensure that progress on the equality scheme(s) is included in the Annual Report.
7. Make sure that there is someone, or a small team, who has responsibility within the council for equalities issues.
8. Ask for support when you need it. Your equality or diversity team should be able to provide you with more information, or know where you can get it.
9. When you work with other organisations, or represent the council on partnership bodies, ask what they are doing about the equalities duties. Build it into whatever you are doing.
10. Look at your working practices and the make up of your council. Is the way you work preventing some groups of people standing for council?



10. appendix - further help and information

Equality Framework for Local Government: IDeA website:
<http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=8488097>

Equality mapping: IDeA <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=8579514>

Government Equalities Office (includes information about the forthcoming Equality Bill)
www.equalities.gov.uk.

Equalities and Human Rights Commission: The main organisation promoting equality and addressing inequality, along with monitoring legal compliance. Information about the current responsibilities for public authorities are on this website, along with guidance for implementation.
<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/Pages/default.aspx>

Scrutiny: Centre for Public Scrutiny: Includes the publication "Equal to the Task" published jointly with the former equality commission.
<http://www.cfps.org.uk/>

Language and Communication:
Oxford Guide to Plain English, Martin Cutts (1996, revised 2007)

The Equalities Review (archived content)
<http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/equalitiesreview/>

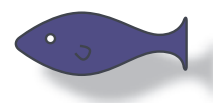
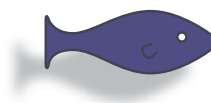
Equality Measurement Framework: The Equality and Human Rights has developed this framework which defines inequality, and sets criteria by which it can be measured. This includes three types of equality: outcome, autonomy and process. More information is available from the EHRC on their website

Workforce Planning – on the IDeA website:
<http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=5676708>

Tomorrow's People, (2008) Audit Commission

Support for Councils on internal workforce issues, (2008) LGA Group

Local government, the place to be, the place to work (2007), LGA, IDeA & Local Government Employers



IDeA

Layden House
76-86 Turnmill Street
London EC1M 5LG
telephone 020 7296 6600
facsimile 020 7296 6666
email info@idea.gov.uk

www.idea.gov.uk



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

©IDeA – February 2009
L09-127

For a copy in Braille, Welsh, larger print or audio,
contact iHelp on 020 7296 6880.
We consider any requests on an individual basis.



Local Government Association

The Local Government Association is the national voice for more than 450 local authorities in England and Wales. The LGA group comprises the LGA and five partner organisations which work together to support, promote and improve local government.

