



Draft Gender Equality Scheme

March 2009 to
June 2011



Bromsgrove
District Council
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Bromsgrove District Council Draft Gender Equality Scheme

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Draft Gender Equality Scheme

March 2009 to June 2011

1. Introduction

The Gender Equality Duty requires Bromsgrove District Council to produce this **Draft Gender Equality Scheme**. It will be revised in June 2011 in the light of new statutory duties set out in the 2008 Equalities Bill.

It has been more than 30 years since the Sex Discrimination Act came into force and more than 35 years since the Equal Pay Act. Since then, great strides have been made in achieving equality between the sexes and tackling sex discrimination and gender based harassment. For example, more women are now in the labour market and they are helped by flexible working patterns and increased childcare provision.

Having said that, there is still a long way to go. Women still come second too often in the workplace and other spheres of life, while men face inequalities too, particularly in their increasingly clear wish to play a full role as fathers and get a better balance between work and personal life.

Nationally, women are still being paid less than men and in some instances face discrimination at work despite record numbers of tribunal cases. In the past 30 years there have been 250,000 employment tribunal cases related to sex discrimination and 67,000 linked to equal pay. Record numbers of cases have been heard in the past five years, but according to the Equal Opportunities Commission (now merged with the Equality and Human Rights Commission), gender equality problems remain "stubbornly persistent". They calculated that individuals spent £51 million taking tribunal cases in 2006, while employers paid out £68 million to defend themselves. Equal Pay claims now make up one third of all tribunal claims.

Each year around 30,000 working women are sacked, made redundant or leave their jobs due to pregnancy discrimination. In a survey by the Equal Opportunities Commission of the 441,000 women who are pregnant each year, 45% of those who worked while pregnant say that they experienced some form of discrimination because of their pregnancy.

Bromsgrove District Council recognises that we have an opportunity to make a contribution towards removing the barriers to equal opportunities for women and men. We will do this by looking at how we offer our services and how we employ people. We can influence the community at large by requiring leisure, housing and other service providers to show that they offer their services in ways that are equally accessible for women and men, or when women and men have different needs, these needs are met accordingly. The needs of women and men going through gender re-assignment will also be met.

Bromsgrove District Council is committed to fulfilling this new duty in the delivery of all our services because we know that nationally, part-time women workers earn almost 40% less per hour than full-time men, a figure which has barely changed since the 1970s. And most part-time women workers are stuck in jobs below their potential, partly because of lack of flexible working at more senior levels.

The Gender Equality Duty should also be seen in its context of fitting into the broader equality picture. Women and men, including trans-sexual people, will experience different forms of disadvantage depending on their age, ethnicity, colour, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status and whether or not they are disabled. For example, only 47% of disabled women are in employment, compared with 53% of disabled men. Of the disabled women in employment, only 52% work full-time. This compares with an employment rate of 75% for non-disabled women and 86% for non-disabled men.

Through implementing the gender equality duty at Bromsgrove District Council we will benefit in the following ways :

- better informed decision making and policy development
- clearer understanding of the needs of service users
- better quality services which meet varied needs
- more effective targeting of policy and resources
- better results and greater confidence in public services
- more effective use of talent in the workforce

Meeting the gender equality duty will help us to :

- achieve a more representative workforce at all levels and in all occupations
- improve staff morale and productivity
- improve staff management
- improve our reputation

2. The Equality Act 2006

The Equality Act 2006 amends the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 so that it now requires Bromsgrove District Council to adopt a proactive approach to mainstream gender equality into all decisions and activities. It requires us to

- eliminate unlawful discrimination based on gender
- eliminate unlawful harassment based on gender
- promote equality of opportunity between women and men
- produce a Gender Equality Scheme demonstrating how we intend to fulfill the general and specific duties
- consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap

- gather and use information on how our policies affect gender equality in the workplace and in the delivery of our services
- consult stakeholders including employees, service users, trade unions and others
- take account of relevant information when determining our gender equality objectives
- assess the impact of our current and proposed policies on gender equality
- implement the actions set out in our Scheme within 3 years
- report against our Scheme every year
- review our Scheme at least every three years

We have written a detailed action plan which shows how we intend to implement these Gender Equality Duties which you will find at the end of this section on pages 9 to 22. The glossary on page 23 explains the meaning of the abbreviations used in the action plan.

3. Our ongoing actions in relation to gender equality

3.1 For employees

- Maternity leave – we provide up to 52 weeks maternity leave, paid maternity leave is based on length of service. As well as Statutory Maternity Pay, we also provide additional maternity benefits
- Paternity leave – we provide two weeks of paid paternity leave
- Parental leave – provide the statutory number of weeks of parental leave on request for each child and for each parent
- Flexible working hours help full and part time staff with childcare or other care responsibilities
- There is a job sharing policy which is available to all
- The Council operates a salary sacrifice childcare voucher scheme administered by Busy Bees.
- The Council participates in a scheme to support employees who are victims of domestic violence.
- Council Departments have identified areas of occupational segregation based on gender and are working with the Human Resources department to bring about change over a period of time
- For outdoor maintenance jobs suitable clothing is provided for men and women and the department concerned provides shower facilities for all employees

For service users

- The Customer Service Centre in Bromsgrove has a play area for children
- Sports development activities are set up to encourage girls to continue to play sports when they reach adolescence
- Sports activities are provided to encourage girls and boys to participate in sports which are not traditional for their sex

- Arts and drama activities are offered to school children to help to develop confidence and team building skills
- With our partner, Bromsgrove District Housing Trust we support the Sanctuary Scheme for female and male victims of domestic violence and provide financial support for women's refuges
- We work in partnership with the Youth Service to address school bullying with the aim of increasing awareness through education and reducing the risk of domestic violence in later life
- The implementation of an access survey of polling stations will assist parents with children when attending to vote
- The new toilet block in Bromsgrove Town Centre will include a baby changing room and a personal care suite available to parents and carers of both sexes
- The design of the new leisure centre for Bromsgrove will provide family friendly changing facilities which are equally accessible by women and men
- We support women only consultation events organised by the County Council in North Worcestershire
- We run a day long event in March every year to mark International Women's Day

4. Contact us

If you have any questions or comments or would like to get involved in the various equality groups and activities run by the Council contact us as follows :-

Mrs Claire Felton	Head of Legal and Democratic Services	01527 881429
Miss Fiona Scott	Equality Officer	01527 881719
Mr Kevin Dicks	Chief Executive	01527 881487

You can write to any of us at:

The Council House, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove, B60 1AA or email us on equalities@bromsgrove.gov.uk

Gender Equality Scheme

Action Plan

The General Duty

5.1 The Council has a duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination based on gender. We will do this by :

Action	Who?	When by?	How will we know we have achieved it?
<p>Monitoring the gender of service users by collecting information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at point of delivery • from customer surveys • from focus groups • from analysis of complaints • from feedback from the Equality and Diversity Forum, the Disabled Users Group and the Gender Equality Working Group • from information from suppliers 	<p>Service departments</p> <p>Chief Executive's Office</p> <p>The Equality Officer BDC</p> <p>The Equality Champions Working Group BDC</p> <p>The Equality and Diversity Working Group BDHT</p>	<p>Monitoring is a continuous process and reports</p> <p>The Equality and Diversity Forum meets every alternate month and will receive reports of the results of monitoring information</p> <p>Customer satisfaction surveys and focus groups are carried out on a regular basis by BDC and BDHT and the results of these will be reported to the Forum</p>	<p>Service users will see that services are more accessible and better tailored to their needs</p> <p>Service outcomes by gender begin to improve</p> <p>Women and men are making greater use of services that their sex had previously under-used</p>
<p>Changing an individual's gender record when requested on the production of a Gender Recognition certificate or other appropriate evidence</p> <p>Issuing a confirmation to the individual</p>	<p>HR</p> <p>The Customer Service Centre</p>	<p>On request from an individual or on joining the organisation</p>	<p>Trans people will have their needs recognised and will feel supported</p>

The General Duty ctd.

5.1 ctd. The Council has a duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination based on gender. We will do this by :

Action	Who?	When by?	How will we know we have achieved it?
Assessing the Equality Impact of services to ensure that they are designed to take account of the needs of users with caring responsibilities	Service departments Equality Officer – BDC Equality Champions Working Group - BDC Equality and Diversity Working Group - BDHT	Equality Impact Assessments are planned and carried out in a continuous 3 year rolling programme	Service users with caring responsibilities are receiving appropriate support
Assessing new and existing policies for Equality Impact on gender equality including trans-gender Equality impact assessments are informed by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● collection of gender information on service delivery ● from surveys ● focus groups ● analysis of complaints ● feedback from the Equality and Diversity Forum, Disabled Users Group, Gender Equality Working Group ● information from suppliers 	As above	Equality Impact Assessments including are planned and carried out in a continuous 3 year rolling programme The Equality and Diversity Forum has an Equality Impact Assessment Working Group which meets twice a year to scrutinise completed assessments and when appropriate is involved in the actual assessment process The annual business planning cycle includes equality objectives and identifies resources needed to provide services or make changes to existing services	Gender equality issues and their budgetary implications are considered at the beginning of policy making

The General Duty ctd.

5.1 ctd The Council has a duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination based on gender. We will do this by :

Action	Who?	When by?	How will we know we have achieved it?
<p>Consulting women and men from all sections of the community on new policies and any proposed changes to policies through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Equality and Diversity Forum, the Disabled Users Group and the Gender Equality Working Group • surveys and focus groups • work with partners in the District and in the County • work with suppliers 	<p>All service departments</p> <p>Chief Executive's Office</p> <p>The Equality Officer – BDC</p> <p>The Equality Champions Working Group - BDC</p> <p>The Equality and Diversity Working Group - BDHT</p>	<p>The Equality and Diversity Forum meets in every alternate month and is consulted on new policies, services and initiatives</p>	<p>Women and men from all sections of the community feel effectively engaged in decision and policy-making around issues that have a direct effect on them</p> <p>Women and men from all groups can see that changes have been made in service delivery as a direct result of their involvement in the consultation process</p>
<p>Designing services and facilities to take account of men with childcare responsibilities</p> <p>Advertising childcare services and facilities in ways that ensure men are made aware of them</p> <p>Designing childcare services and policies to take account of all types of working patterns including job sharing and shift-work where this is possible</p>	<p>All service departments</p>	<p>The customer service centre in Bromsgrove has a children's play area</p> <p>The town centre toilets will be refurbished with a parent and baby changing unit accessible to both men and women</p> <p>Leisure facilities provide family friendly changing rooms which are accessible to both men and women</p>	<p>Fathers receive greater support for their childcare responsibilities from public services</p>

The General Duty ctd.

5.1 ctd The Council has a duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination based on gender. We will do this by :

Action	Who?	When by?	How will we know we have achieved it?
Raising awareness of the needs of individuals in the transitioning stage of gender re-assignment by working with managers, front line staff, service users and organisations with expertise in trans issues	Street Scene and Community The Equality Officer, BDC	To start in 2009 and then on an ongoing basis as and when needs are identified	Trans people will be able to access services and facilities which are provided for all
Appropriate training and information will be provided to managers, front line staff and service users to explain these needs	Street Scene and Community The Equality Officer, BDC	As above	As above

The General Duty ctd.

5.1 ctd The Council has a duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination based on gender. We will do this by :

Action	Who?	When by?	How will we know we have achieved it?
<p>Encouraging girls and boys to participate in non traditional sports for their gender</p> <p>Encouraging girls to continue to participate actively in sports during their adolescent and teenage years and in so doing, recognise that communal changing rooms can be a barrier to continued participation</p> <p>Providing arts and drama activities that encourage the participation of girls and boys which improve levels of confidence, self esteem and team working and leadership skills</p>	<p>Street Scene and Community</p>	<p>Sports development programmes are an ongoing activity of the Council</p> <p>The new leisure centre under development will be designed to accommodate these needs</p>	<p>Girls and boys have higher aspirations for their future careers</p>

The General Duty ctd.

5.2 The Council has a duty to eliminate harassment based on gender. We will do this by :

Action	Who?	When by?	How will we know we have achieved it?
Ensuring that the Hate Incident procedure through the Bromsgrove Hate Incident Partnership is available to all residents of, and visitors to the Bromsgrove District	The Customer Service Centre	The procedure was launched in July 2007 and is now fully functional accepting and resolving reports of hate incidents	Harassment and sexual harassment of staff, service users and others are dealt with promptly and systematically according to agreed procedures
	Community Safety Officer		
	Community Safety Partnership	The full range of Reporting Centres are fully functioning	Tolerance of harassment drops within the District
	Bromsgrove District Multi-Agency Panel and the Hate Incident Reporting Centres in Bromsgrove District		

The General Duty ctd.

5.2 ctd The Council has a duty to eliminate harassment based on gender. We will do this by :

Action	Who?	When by?	How will we know we have achieved it?
Supporting domestic violence initiatives and making information available about services for those women and men who may be experiencing domestic violence	<p>The Customer Service Centre</p> <p>Community Safety Officer</p> <p>Community Safety Partnership</p> <p>Bromsgrove District Multi-Agency Panel including BDHT, West Mercia Police, CAB, Age Concern, Victim Support and others agencies</p> <p>Hate Incident Reporting Centres in Bromsgrove District</p>	Current initiatives include support of the Sanctuary Scheme and the funding of women's refuges in partnership with BDHT and other agencies	<p>Harassment and sexual harassment of staff, service users and others is dealt with promptly and systematically according to agreed procedures</p> <p>Tolerance of harassment drops in the District of Bromsgrove</p>

The General Duty ctd.

5.3 The Council has a duty to promote equality of opportunity between men and women. We will do this by :

Action	Who?	When by?	How will we know we have achieved it?
Collecting equality monitoring data from job applicants and working towards the ability to analyse this data to identify potential gender bias whether intentional or otherwise	HR	Ongoing	Women and men are represented at all levels of the workforce and in all areas of work within the Council
Investigating the setting up of a system to Monitoring employees by gender and by grade for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● training ● development ● promotion ● exits to look for potential gender bias whether intentional or otherwise	HR	Ongoing	Women and men are represented at all levels of the workforce and in all areas of work within the Council
Monitoring the level of grievances and their outcomes from pregnant employees and employees returning from maternity and parental leave to evaluate the levels of discrimination and harassment they may have experienced	HR	Ongoing	The level of awareness of discrimination that may be experience by pregnant staff and staff returning from maternity leave is raised.

The General Duty ctd.

5.3 ctd The Council has a duty to promote equality of opportunity between men and women. We will do this by :

Action	Who?	When by?	How will we know we have achieved it?
Undertaking Positive Action initiatives to address demonstrable under-representation either in the organisation as a whole, certain occupations or at certain levels	HR	Ongoing	Women and men are represented at all levels of the workforce and in all areas of work within the Council
Encouraging any employee or potential employee considering gender re-assignment to approach their line manager for support during the period of re-assignment	HR	Will be provided when a need is identified	Barriers to the recruitment and retention of transgender people will have been identified and removed
Changing the gender of an individual's personnel record on the production of a Gender Recognition Certificate or other appropriate evidence	HR	On request from an individual or on joining the organisation	Transgender people feel supported and valued as employees and potential employees
Issuing a confirmation to the individual			
Providing appropriate training on an identified needs basis to managers, colleagues, mentors and partners	HR OD	Will be provided when a need is identified	Managers will feel enabled and supported when they are required to deal with this situation
Providing support for trans-people through the Occupational Health Counselling Service	HR	Our Occupational Health Services are trans-aware	The culture of the workplace will have been changed to one that is welcoming and accepting of transgender people

The General Duty ctd.

5.3 ctd **The Council has a duty to promote equality of opportunity between men and women. We will do this by :**

Action	Who?	When by?	How will we know we have achieved it?
Conducting Annual Staff Surveys to establish the level of satisfaction or otherwise with working arrangements for employees with caring responsibilities including those who work part time or job share	HR OD	The staff attitude survey is carried out in annually year and the results and are presented to the Executive Cabinet, the Performance Monitoring Board and the Corporate Management Team	The analysis of the Annual Staff Surveys shows that employees with caring responsibilities feel they are receiving greater support from the Council including flexible and part time/ job sharing opportunities at all levels where this is feasible
Conducting Stress Surveys to established whether levels of stress are greater for employees with caring responsibilities	Health and Safety Adviser	The Stress Survey is carried out bi-annually and will take place in 2009	As above
Participating in the Job Evaluation Exercise to achieve Single Status and remove inequality of pay between women and men for work of equal value	HR	The Job Evaluation Exercise has been completed and will be implemented in 2009	The gap between women and men's pay narrows and is eventually eliminated
Monitoring the pay structure every two years to ensure the application of the Corporate Framework across all departments	HR	ongoing	As above

The General Duty ctd.

5.3 The Council has a duty to promote equality of opportunity between men and women. We will do this by :

Action	Who?	When by?	How will we know we have achieved it?
Initiating an awareness campaign and a training programme in 2009 to promote understanding and support for the Gender Equality Scheme and its aims and objectives	HR OD The Equality Officer Heads of Services Elected Members District Partners	By end of December 2009	Employees, partners and elected Members are aware of the Gender Equality Duty, understand how it affects their work and have the skills to implement the duty in their work
Including the Gender Equality Scheme in the induction process and in equality and diversity training for all staff and elected Members	The Equality Officer and the Learning and Development Manager	Ongoing	As above
Marking the International Women's Day every year with an event for the community in Bromsgrove	The Equality Officer/ Spadesbourne Suite Operations	March every year	Members of the community will be more aware of Gender Equality and the services and facilities available

The Specific Duties

5.4 The Council has a duty to prepare and publish a Gender Equality Scheme showing how we intend to fulfil the general and specific duties and setting out our gender equality objectives. We will do this by :

Action	Who?	When by?	How will we know we have achieved it?
Prepare and publish a revised Gender Equality Scheme	The Equality Officer	6 th March 2009	The Revised Draft Gender Equality Scheme will be circulated to all key partners and published on the Council's website
Providing the Scheme in a range of alternative formats and any languages when requested	The Equality Officer	As and when required	A record of requests will show that they have been met and within a reasonable timescale
Including objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap	HR OD	Included under the section of the action plan to implement the General Duties	The Gender Equality Scheme includes achievable objectives to reduce and eliminate any gender pay gap
Including objectives to ensure that once any gender pay gap is eliminated that equality of pay is maintained	HR OD	As above	As above
Gathering and using information on how our policies and practices affect gender equality in the workplace and in the delivery of services	HR OD The Equality Officer All Service Departments	Equality Impact Assessments are carried out on a 3 year rolling programme	It is easy to find a wide variety of data and information to assess effectively how certain actions will affect women and men

The Specific Duties ctd.

5.4 The Council has a duty to prepare and publish a Gender Equality Scheme showing how we intend to fulfil the general and specific duties and setting out our gender equality objectives. We will do this by :

Action	Who?	When by?	How will we know we have achieved it?
Consulting stakeholders – employees, service users and others with a view to sharing best practice and joining partners in their initiatives	The Chief Executive Heads of Service/ all Service Departments HR OD The Equality Officer BDHT	The Gender Equality Working Group has been involved in the design and the rewriting of the Scheme from early 2007 to Autumn 2008 and will be involved in monitoring the progress of the current scheme and preparing to review and revise it in time for the publication of the next Inclusive Equalities Scheme in June 2011	The Gender Equality Scheme clearly reflects the views of employees, service users and key partners
Disseminating relevant information to service departments and partners in the District	Heads of Service/ All Service Departments BDHT	Equality Impact Assessments are carried out on a 3 year rolling programme	It is easy to find a wide variety of data and information to assess effectively how certain actions will affect women and men
Assessing the impact of our current and proposed policies and practices	Heads of Service/ All Service Departments	Equality Impact Assessments are carried out on a 3 year rolling programme	It is easy to find a wide variety of data and information to assess effectively how certain actions will affect women and men
Implementing the actions set out in this Scheme within 3 years	Heads of Service/ all Service Departments HR OD The Equality Officer	Ongoing	Reports of gender based discrimination and harassment and staff turnover will be reduced and staff surveys and staff feedback in PDRs will show increasing levels of satisfaction

The Specific Duties ctd.

5.4 The Council has a duty to prepare and publish a Gender Equality Scheme showing how we intend to fulfil the general and specific duties and setting out our gender equality objectives. We will do this by :

Action	Who?	When by?	How will we know we have achieved it?
Reporting progress against the aims and objectives of the Scheme every year	The Assistant Chief Executive The Equality Officer The Gender Equality Working Group	In "Council Results" every June In Together Bromsgrove On the Council Website To the Equality and Diversity Forum which meets every eight weeks	Employees, service users and key partners will be informed of the progress we are making to achieve Gender Equality
Reviewing the Scheme every three years including any changes in legal requirements	Heads of Service HR The Equality Officer	6 th March 2009	The Revised Draft Gender Equality Scheme will be launched at the International Women's day event on 6 th March 2009

Acknowledgements

This revised Draft Gender Equality Scheme has been produced with the support and in depth involvement of the community led Gender Equality Working Group. If you would like more information about the Group, please contact Fiona Scott, Equality Officer on 01527 881719 or email equalities@bromsgrove.gov.uk

For their ideas and contributions and for their continuing support for the producing and implementing of this scheme Bromsgrove District Council would like to thank

The Equality and Diversity Forum, Bromsgrove District Council

The Equality and Diversity Working Group – Bromsgrove District Housing Trust

The Gender Equality Working Group which has met regularly over the last 18 months who are:-

Joan King
John Tempest
Ann Sowton
Councillor Mrs Caroline Spencer
Jo Wright
Elaine Mortimore

The Gender Trust
Worcestershire Mental Partnership
Bromsgrove and Redditch Network
Bromsgrove District Council
Bromsgrove Resident
Bromsgrove Youth Homelessness
Forum
Bromsgrove Resident

Sarah Kelsey

Glossary

BDC	Bromsgrove District Council
BDHT	Bromsgrove District Housing Trust
CAB	Citizens Advice Bureau
HR OD	Human Resources and Organisation Development
PDR	Performance and Development Review





**This document can be
provided in large print, braille, CD,
audio tape and computer disc.**



Bromsgrove
District Council
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Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services

Bromsgrove District Council, The Council House, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B60 1AA.
Telephone: (01527) 881288, Fax: (01527) 881414, DX: 17279 Bromsgrove
e-mail: equalities@bromsgrove.gov.uk