



# Gender Equality Scheme

(Incorporating Gender Equality Action Plan)

**2007 – 2010**

If you require information contained in this publication in an alternative format such as large print, Braille, audio or if you would like the scheme to be explained to you in your language please contact::

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



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## Foreword

It gives us great pleasure to introduce our first Gender Equality Scheme (GES) and Gender Equality Action Plan. The Scheme and Action Plan form an integral part of the Council's wider Corporate Equality Plan. As well as outlining how the Council will meet its legislative requirements, the Scheme will also demonstrate the Council's ongoing commitment to meeting the needs of both men and women, whether employees or users of our services.

Watford Borough Council is committed to providing excellent services to the diverse population who make a valuable contribution to the life of the town. This includes people who are young, old, disabled, those who identify themselves as black or from other ethnic minority communities, or those who are from the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities

With this in mind this Scheme should not be seen as a stand-alone document but part of the Council's equality framework. This framework aims to ensure that all Watford residents are able to reach their full potential. Our GES compliments our Corporate Equality Plan (which incorporates our Race Equality Scheme) and Disability Equality Scheme.

Whilst developing this Scheme, broad consultation has taken place with partners, service providers and service users .

This document is a major milestone for those who may in the past have felt that policies and services that impact on their lives were designed without their needs in mind due to gender inequality. We intend this Scheme to ensure those people take their rightful place in the decision-making process and in shaping the future of the borough.

This Scheme represents our organisational commitment to gender equality.

Dorothy Thornhill  
Elected Mayor

Fiona Skene  
Head of Human Resources

# The gender duty and Watford Borough Councils gender equality scheme (GES)

## Introduction to the duty

The Equality Act 2006 amended the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 placing a statutory general duty on public authorities to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

The duty provides a framework within which public authorities can carry out their functions more effectively and tackle discrimination and its causes proactively, by making gender equality part of their decisions and activities.

It applies to all of Watford Borough Council's functions as a service provider, policy maker and employer as well as the services and functions the Council commissions.

## General duty

The Gender Equality Duty is divided into two specific areas, the '*general*' duty and the '*specific*' duties. The general duty is an overall duty. It requires the Council to take a more proactive approach to promoting gender equality by:

- eliminating unlawful discrimination;
- eliminating harassment; and
- promoting equality of opportunity between men and women

## Specific duties

To help meet its general duty, the Council, like most other public bodies covered by the duty, has a specific duty to prepare and publish a gender equality scheme (GES), demonstrating how we intend to fulfil the general and specific duties and setting out our gender equality objectives.

The specific duties are not an objective in themselves but they are a means of meeting the general duty.

## **Why has the gender equality duty been introduced?**

The gender duty aims to make gender equality central to the way the Council works, in order to create:

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

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. Policies and practices that seem neutral can have a significant effect on women and on men, often contributing to greater gender inequality and poor policy outcomes. Individual legal rights have not been enough by themselves to change this.

The general duty is different from previous sex equality legislation in two crucial respects:

- Watford Borough Council has to be proactive in eliminating discrimination and harassment, rather than waiting for individuals to take cases against them.
- Watford Borough Council has to be proactive in promoting equality of opportunity, and not just avoiding discrimination

## Discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment

The gender equality duty covers gender reassignment/transsexual people<sup>1</sup> in relation to employment and vocational training, but not in regard to goods, facilities and services.

The scope of the legislative protection against discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment will be extended by December 2007 with the implementation of the Goods and Services Directive 2004/113. This means we will need to ensure the elimination of unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender reassignment in the provision of services.

## Watford Borough Council's gender equality scheme (GES)

There is significant evidence of continuing inequality, discrimination and disadvantage that affects women in Watford and throughout the UK<sup>2</sup>. Watford Borough Council has a role to play in using its powers and influence in challenging and changing this.

This Scheme sets out Watford Borough Council's commitment to making gender equality integral to our work, and describes our strategy for meeting the statutory general duty and the specific duties from April 2007 to March 2010, including a timetabled, realistic action plan. Our GES explains:

- the actions taken, or intended, to address the causes of any gender pay gap;
- how we will collect and analyse information to see if our policies and practices affect gender equality in the workplace and in the delivery of services;
- how we will consult our employees, service users and others (including trade unions);
- how we will assess the impact of our current proposed policies and practices on gender equality;
- how we will implement the scheme through a three year action plan;

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<sup>1</sup> The law defines transsexual people as those undergoing, intending to undergo, or having already undergone gender reassignment.

<sup>2</sup> Facts about Women and Men in Great Britain 2006, Equal Opportunities Commission, 2006

- how we will publish the scheme; and
- how we will monitor and review the effectiveness of the steps set out in the action plan.

Like its forerunner the Race Equality Scheme (RES) and the Disability Equality Scheme (DES), the Gender Equality Scheme provides a framework to enable the Council to meet the requirement to promote equality.

The GES is available on our website at [www.watford.gov.uk](http://www.watford.gov.uk).



## **The Borough Council's aims and priorities**

Our Medium Term Plan sets out the priorities that will take the town, and the organisation, forward in a measured, progressive and sustainable way in order to secure real improvements in the quality of life for local people

It tells people about our priorities and targets until 2011. These priorities are set out within our overall seven objectives, which are:

- An efficient, effective, value for money Council
- A town with high quality environment
- A safe town
- A healthy town
- A good town for business and skills and learning
- A well informed community where everyone can contribute

### **How does the gender equality scheme link to our aims and priorities?**

In essence, our GES is an expression of what we have already done to promote equality for the people of Watford both in service delivery and employment practice, and what we plan to do in the future to develop this further.

Ensuring all people have access to our services clearly links into the Council's aims and priorities. The actions detailed in the action plan, which informs part of our GES, are consistent with our aims outlined above.

## The national and local context

### The national context

The picture of gender equality has changed due to legal requirements, but also because more people than ever are conscious of inequalities and the need for equality.

As at 2005 there were 30.7 million females and 29.5 million males in the UK, however more males are currently born each year than females.<sup>3</sup> Women make up 46% of the UK's working population and 78% of part-time workers are female.<sup>4</sup>

Women's economic activity has steadily increased over last 30 years but is still lower than that of men.

64% of public sector workers are women, compared to just 41% in the private sector. Women predominate in teaching, nursing and social work.

### The local context

The 2001 census has indicated that Watford has a population of 79, 726 (this number decreased slightly to give a mid-year estimate of 79,300 in 2005) living in an area of 8.3 square miles. We have the highest ethnic density in Hertfordshire.

The lives of men and women are becoming increasingly similar, but in the key areas of health, family and the labour market, there are still notable differences.<sup>5</sup>

- In the borough's population of 79,726, the gender split between females and males is 50.8% and 49.2% respectively.
- There are more females over the age of 75 (4.2%) than males (2.3%).
- 19.3% of women are part time workers (16-74 years) compared to 2.9% of men.

<sup>3</sup> Office of National Statistics 2005

<sup>4</sup> First Release: Labour Market Trends, National Statistics, May 2006

<sup>5</sup> Office of National Statistics – 2001 Census

- Women have much lower levels of self-employment (4%) than men (13%).
- More men (13%) than women (10%) occupy professional jobs.
- There are 1,481 female lone parents with dependent children compared to 120 male lone parents.
- More women claimed Disability Living Allowance (52%) as compared to men (48%) (2002-2006)
- The current life expectancy at birth is 76.70 years for males and 80.80 years for females (July 2003).

## Who is responsible for the gender equality scheme?

The gender equality scheme requires high-level commitment and support if it is going to bring the change it promises. Responsibility for the effective implementation of duties relating to this scheme lies with the borough council.

Cabinet has responsibility for approving, implementing and monitoring the gender equality scheme. The Portfolio Holder for Human Resources is the lead Member for the Scheme and has responsibility for updating Cabinet on its implementation and impact. The Head of Human Resources is responsible for the delivery and co-ordination of the scheme within the Council.

It is recognised that the gender equality scheme provide the framework for progressing the equalities agenda, but that results will only be achieved through mainstream service provision. Therefore, the responsibility for the success of the scheme rests firmly with all Councillors, managers, employees and sub-contractors. It is they who have a clear duty to ensure that the principles of gender equality are adhered to and put into practice across the borough and where necessary, robustly challenged.

## What has the Council achieved to date?

In order to develop a meaningful and robust gender equality scheme it is important to learn how the Council has so far performed against the performance measures already in place for the advancement of gender equality across the organisation.

### Best Value Performance Indicators: Gender Equality

The following performance indicators are used to gather evidence on the effects of the Council's policies and practices on promoting equality and eliminating gender discrimination.

**BV 11a – Percentage of top 5% of earners of the council's staff that are women.** This indicator measures the number of women that work at the Council who fall into the top 5% of earners. For 2006/07 the Council set a target of 48.0%. The latest figure shows that 58.6% of the top 5% of earners at the Council are women.

The target for the next two years is to maintain it at 50%.

**BV 225 (introduced in 2005) sets out a basket of 11 actions for local authorities on domestic violence.**

This indicator sets out 11 actions that the Council should meet. The Council has responded yes to 7 of the 11 measures. Its target for 2009/10 is to achieve 10 of the 11 measures.

### The Equality Standard for Local Government

In order to deliver our overall commitments on equality and diversity, the Council has adopted the Equality Standard for Local Government. The Equality Standard includes the six equality areas covered by law: race, disability, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age.

The Equality Standard has five levels of achievement:

- Level 1 Commitment to the Comprehensive Equality Policy
- Level 2 Assessment and Consultation
- Level 3 Setting equality objectives and targets
- Level 4 Information systems and monitoring against equality targets
- Level 5 Achieving and reviewing outcomes

Watford Borough Council has set equality objectives and targets through the use of Equality Impact Assessments and this has helped the Council to achieve Level 3 of the Equality Standard. The aim is not simply to work through the levels, but also to demonstrate how this process has improved our services and opportunities for employment.

Our arrangements for meeting the specific duties of the GES will provide a mechanism for continued assessment, consultation, publication and communication.

## Equality Impact Assessments

The Council developed its Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit in 2004. We began looking at policies and services in a systematic way. The purpose of an impact assessment is to:

- Ensure that neither sex is disadvantaged by the Council's decisions and activities
- Identify where Watford Borough Council can promote equality between men and women

Where the assessment identifies a negative impact or missed opportunity to achieve a more positive impact - the Council will look at what it can do to remedy this and to take appropriate action.

The Council's policies have been assessed with regard to race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion and any other reason where a negative impact may exist. The Council has been able to use this information to develop equality action plans to make adjustments to its service provision.

The Council has completed 35 equality impact assessments to-date and these can be found on the Council's website [www.watford.gov.uk](http://www.watford.gov.uk)

## **Training employees on equality and diversity**

In 2003 Watford Borough Council introduced a rolling programme of equality and diversity training. The training provides managers and employees with the skills and knowledge they need to ensure that equality becomes integral to our day-to-day activities. It has helped create a culture where diversity is truly valued and supports the Council in delivering its equality objectives.

## Meeting the general duty

Watford Borough Council recognises that in order to meet the gender equality duty, we need to make sure there is no discrimination or harassment in the way we work or provide services. We also need to promote gender equality within our workforce.

Our gender equality scheme will concentrate on the employment and service delivery areas as we consider these to be the essential elements. Within these areas we have set actions/objectives against timescales and shown how we will use the outcomes of our work to inform policy development in the Council (see Gender Equality Action Plan - Appendix 1)

As identified in the EOC's Code of Practice on the gender equality duty, these are the areas in which we will focus:

- recruitment and selection;
- the issue of whether women and men may be concentrated in particular areas of work or pay bands ('occupational segregation');
- support for high-level part-time work and part-time workers;
- management of leave for parents and carers;
- management of pregnancy – and return from maternity leave;
- elimination of harassment – including sexual harassment – of any member of staff (or potential member of staff);
- elimination of any discrimination against members of staff (or potential members of staff) who may be transsexual;
- grievance and disciplinary procedures;
- equal pay; and
- access to training and development opportunities.



## Employment

Watford Borough Council strives to attract a diverse and effective workforce with a range of abilities, experiences and skills, and to support staff by helping them to develop their potential.

Watford Borough Council prohibits all forms of unlawful discrimination or unfair discrimination, including harassment, on any grounds including gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion and belief or marital status.

Watford Borough Council is committed to the principle of equality of opportunity in employment when attracting job applicants, and in access to training, development and promotion at all levels within the organisation.

Watford Borough Council aims to operate fair and consistent procedures in recruiting and selecting staff; offering flexible working arrangements; pay, benefits and rewards; staff appraisals; grievances and disciplinary matters; transfers and redundancies.

We will achieve this by monitoring our Gender Equality Action Plan (Appendix 2) to make sure it works in practice. We will collect and review staff data on race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion and belief.

## Workforce profile

Watford Borough Council had 683 members of staff<sup>6</sup>, who work either at the Town Hall, or at various locations around the town.

The staff represented in the data below include those on permanent and fixed term contracts.

## Gender and grade

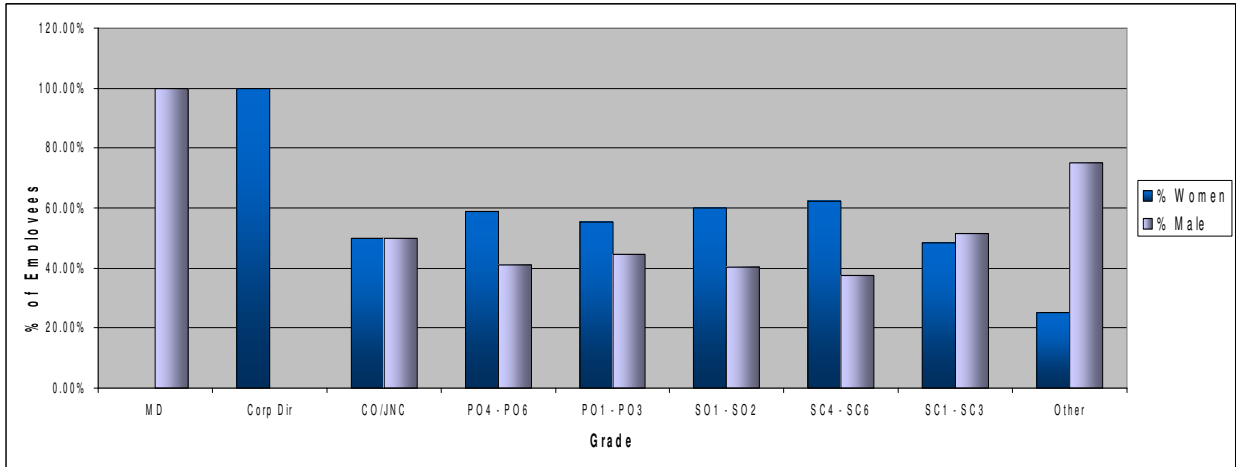
There are more women than men at the Council: 390 (57%), compared with 293 (43%). Women are well represented at the top grades: all of the corporate directors and five out of ten Heads of Service are women.

Men and women are fairly evenly represented across the grades. However, women are over represented at Scale 6 and Scale 1.

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<sup>6</sup> Council employees as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007

### Staff by Gender and Grade as at 31 March 2007

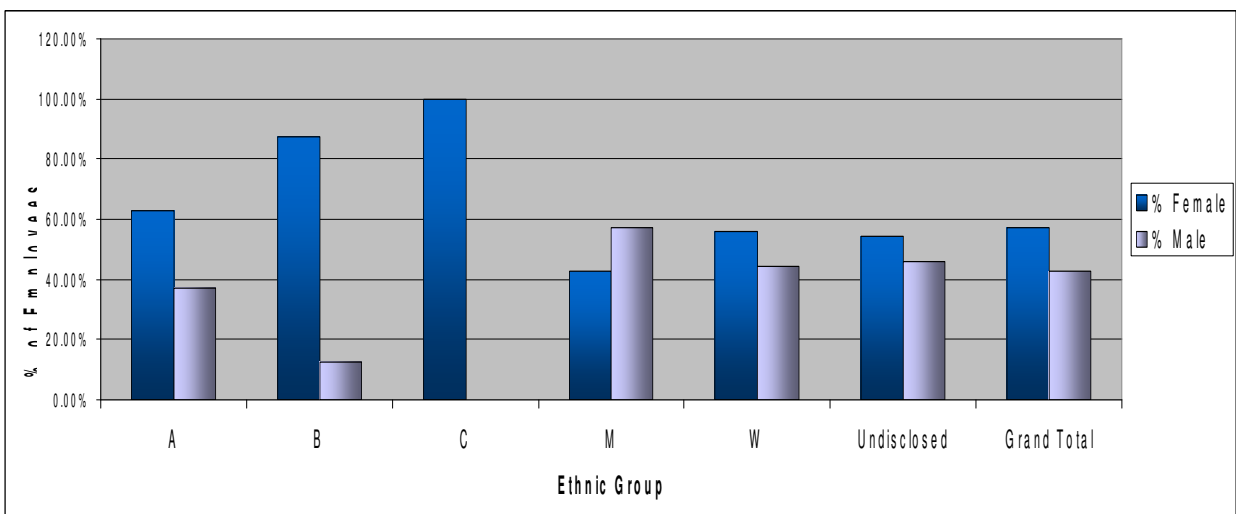


### Gender and ethnicity

The Council monitors ethnicity using the expanded 2001 census categories for England and Wales. For simplicity, and because some disaggregated categories have such small numbers, we have aggregated the figures into the six basic categories of White, Black, Asian, Mixed background, Chinese and unknown/no response.

Women outnumber men at every ethnic group. The largest discrepancy is in the white group, where there are 264 men, compared to 331 women.

### Staff by Gender and Ethnicity as at 31 March 2007



## **Support and advice to carers**

The Council has a number of policies in place to support carers which include:

- A flexible working hours scheme
- Special leave for carers of sick relatives
- Busy Bees Childcare Voucher Scheme

A staff handbook will shortly be published in 2007/08 providing advice on staff benefits.

## **Equal pay review**

The Council recognises the importance of a fair and equal pay reward system for all our employees. Results from the recent equal pay review will enable us to identify and address any potential inequalities.

## **Tackling harassment and discrimination**

The Council is committed to tackling all forms of harassment including sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is not tolerated by the Council and we have specific procedures to deal with any allegations. The harassment and bullying procedures will be reviewed as needed to ensure that it continues to reflect best practice and that all employees are aware of the support and advice available if they experience harassment.

We also have a 'whistle blowing' procedure, which extends the protection for employees who want to report bad practice without fear of being victimised as a result.

## **Gaps in the data collection**

The information we have collected shows that there are gaps in the data available on the position of men and women in the workforce in a number of areas such as:

- the type of jobs men and women do at the Council;
- the number of men and women using flexible working practices;
- the number of men who take paternity leave; and
- the number of carers in the Council.

The Gender Equality Action Plan outlines what we will do to fill these gaps, and how we will use the data we collect to inform policy development in the Council.

## Gender equality in service delivery

Watford Borough Council is committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination and harassment and promoting equality of opportunity in service delivery.

We will work to ensure that information about council services is available to all sections of the community and services are accessible by everyone. In order to do this we will need to check the available information on who is using our services. We will then consider the following issues:

- Is the information disaggregated by sex?
- Do women and men use the service in different ways?
- Do women and men have different needs from the service?
- Are there particular groups of women or men (for example, disabled women or men from particular ethnic groups) who do not use or under-use a service or who are less satisfied with it?
- Are there some services which are more effectively delivered as women-only or men-only?
- Are there big discrepancies in the service outcomes by sex?

The actions Watford Borough Council will take in relation to providing more accessible and inclusive services are contained in the Gender Equality Action Plan. These actions will result in the following:

- The development of services that take into account individual needs and differences. Improved monitoring information about customers. An approach which is inclusive and takes account of needs and differences associated with age, gender, race, religion, culture, disability, sexuality etc of service users.
- The targeting of resources to those in greatest need through high quality cost-effective services.
- A partnership approach which involves the expertise and contributions of all relevant agencies and others involved.
- The provision of accessible information that explains who can access a service and where, when and how it will be delivered.
- Monitoring information is collected from customers and disaggregated by gender to ensure there is no disadvantage for the customer based on their gender or gender identity.
- Customer feedback is requested and whenever possible acted upon to improve services.

## Gathering and using information

The Council places great importance in listening to the views of all people in the implementation of the GES. Since 2003, the Council has developed various ways in which it consults its customers, employees and partner agencies to involve them in our decision-making processes.

The Council continues to gather and use information on how men and women are affected by its activities. Through our programme of equality impact assessments we already have some of this information, separated by gender. We will use the information we collect to understand which of our functions have the greater impact on gender equality.

This information will play a crucial role in helping the Council to determine gender equality priorities, conduct effective gender impact assessments of policies and practices and monitor implementation towards gender equality.

In order to improve the gender balance in the Council workforce, we currently monitor and analyse our recruitment processes and record data on each gender. We will gather information on the effect our policies have on women and men and quantify:

- The extent to which our policies promote equality between male and female staff
- The extent to which the services we provide and the functions we perform take account of the needs of women and men.

## Consultation on the gender equality scheme

As a Council we were required to consult on our gender equality scheme. The purpose of the consultation process was to:

- Build a better picture of the most important gender issues
- Gather evidence to use in determining priorities in our equality impact assessment process
- Develop a greater understanding of our gender equality objectives
- Improve accountability to our staff, service users and the general public.

## Monitoring and reporting progress

The gender equality scheme will become part of our Corporate Equality Plan (to be reviewed 2007/08). This is a strategic plan outlining our equality objectives and demonstrating our commitment to achieving equality and inclusion for people who live and work in Watford. This gender equality scheme will be reviewed every three years. The Gender Equality Action Plan will be reviewed every year.

The gender actions for each service area will appear in the Service Equality Action Plans. Progress will be tracked and reported on by each Head of Service through the performance management framework. Members of the public will be able to view extracts from the performance management system and will also be able to track progress of our work in gender equality.

In line with good practice, we view our scheme as an organic one that will grow and change to reflect our changing role as an employer and the needs of our service users and partners.



## Consultation arrangements

In February 2007 Watford Borough Council completed an equal pay audit and developed an action plan to deal with any recommendations. The Council will continue to monitor its pay arrangements and take constructive action where appropriate.

Between July and December 2007 the draft GES was available for all stakeholders to comment on. The consultation was widely publicised locally as well as the availability of the information in other languages and alternative formats on request.

The relevant documents and consultation information were made available via:

- The intranet (for staff)
- 'Wat's UP', the Council's newsletter for employees.
- 'About Watford', the Council's magazine which is delivered to all homes in the borough
- The Council's website – [www.watford.gov.uk](http://www.watford.gov.uk)

Copies of the GES and how to get involved in the consultation will be sent to:

- One Watford Partners
- All Watford Borough Council Members
- All members of public on request
- The Trade Unions
- Watford Women's Centre
- Any organisation on request

Members of the Human Resources and the Corporate Equality Working Group discussed the GES and Gender Equality Action Plan and encouraged people to get involved in the consultation process. The limited feedback received on the scheme was very positive.

## Customer care and complaints

The GES and Gender Equality Action Plan are available from our Watford Borough Council website [www.watford.gov.uk](http://www.watford.gov.uk)

If you are unable to access this information electronically, or require it in an alternative format or language, copies can be provided upon request. If you need further information or have any comments or questions about the scheme or related issues then please contact Tony Mills or Indu Sood:

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Customer care is about ensuring that everyone is welcomed when they approach us or access our services. It is about providing a service that puts the needs and wishes of our customers first. We are committed to customer care and high quality services and we want to make sure that our services are the best they can be. We are interested in what our customers think and we will listen to what they have to say.

Consequently, we want to hear from you if you have a complaint, we will deal with it positively and professionally.

There are several ways in which you can tell us about your complaint:

By phone: 01923 226400  
By Minicom: 01923 278499  
In writing: Customer Complaints Officer  
Watford Borough Council  
Town Hall  
Watford  
Hertfordshire  
WD17 3EX



# GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

## 2007- 2010



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



## WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

### GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN 2007-10

Ref	What we will do (Project and areas for action)	How we will measure our success <sup>7</sup> (including relevant performance indicators)	End date	Responsibility	Progress and commentary (to be updated each quarter)
CP1 CP6	An efficient, effective, value for money Council A well informed community where everyone can contribute				
PO1	Putting our customers at the heart of the Council				
1	Complete the consultation on the Gender Equality scheme to identify high priority service areas	High priority service areas and targets identified	December 2007	HR/ Corporate Equalities Officer	
2	Ensure gender issues are considered in the physical design and development of facilities and services	i) Guidance developed on how to consider gender issues in service redesign	April 2009	Corporate Equalities Officer	
ii) Design and access statement required for all major planning applications		April 2008	Head of Planning and Development		
Ensure that communities are involved in the planning process		April 2008 and ongoing	Planning Policy Manager		

Ref	What we will do (Project and areas for action)	How we will measure our success <sup>7</sup> (including relevant performance indicators)	End date	Responsibility	Progress and commentary (to be updated each quarter)
		as set out in the Statement of Community Involvement			
3	Ensure gender issues are considered in the day to day delivery of services	Review the Council's programme of Equality Impact Assessments to ensure it covers services that are identified as high priority in relation to the Gender Equality Scheme and that agreed targets are set within service equality action plans.	April 2008 and ongoing	Corporate Equalities Officer / Corporate Equalities Working Group (CEWG)	
4	Address any potential gender inequality in pay and employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Equal Pay Audit Action and targets agreed</li> <li>ii) Review HR system requirements to enable collection and monitoring of data in relation to equality data strands and action plan in place</li> <li>iii) Programme of policy review EIAs and action plans in place</li> <li>iv) Recruitment Guidance produced for managers in relation to recruitment processes to address potential inequalities</li> <li>v) Increased number of applications from underrepresented groups including focussing on traditional male/female occupations</li> <li>vi) Increased requests for and take</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>September 2007</li> <li>June 2008</li> <li>April 2008</li> <li>April 2008</li> <li>Ongoing</li> <li>Ongoing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Head of HR</li> <li>Deputy Head of HR</li> <li>Deputy Head of HR</li> <li>Dep. Head of HR</li> <li>Deputy Head of</li> </ul>	

Ref	What we will do (Project and areas for action)	How we will measure our success <sup>7</sup> (including relevant performance indicators)	End date	Responsibility	Progress and commentary (to be updated each quarter)
		vii) up of flexible working options Complete Gender Labour Market Profile		HR Deputy Head of HR	
5	Review and enhance content of induction training where it relates to equalities and diversity issues	i) All new staff can demonstrate that they understand their responsibilities opportunities as an employee in relation to equalities and diversity ii) Training delivered to all new staff within 6 months of starting in employment	April 2008	Corporate Equalities Officer	
6	Review and enhance content of Equalities and Diversity training for staff and members to include all six strands of the Equality scheme	i) Staff and members can demonstrate that they understand the implications and their responsibilities ii) All staff have attended refresher training every 3 years. iii) All staff made aware of their responsibilities under the 6 equality strands	April 2009	Corporate Equalities Officer	
7	Review monitoring arrangements and existing policies for compliance with the Gender Duty	Action plans to further develop appropriate monitoring arrangements in place Procurement policy and contract arrangements reviewed and amended to include appropriate	October 2008  October 2008	Heads of Service/ CEWG/ Corporate Equalities Officer/	

Ref	What we will do (Project and areas for action)	How we will measure our success <sup>7</sup> (including relevant performance indicators)	End date	Responsibility	Progress and commentary (to be updated each quarter)
		monitoring arrangements and data provision		Procurement Manager	
8	Promote the Council's commitment to gender equality with residents, staff, members. Partners and Community and voluntary groups and promote positive images	Articles in Council publications, Intranet, website. Training sessions for staff Equality Impact Assessments and action plans published. Images used in publications/website and promotional material reflect the Council's commitment to gender equality	April 2008	Communication s Manager/HR/ Corporate Equalities Officer	
9	Review our communications and consultation strategies and conduct EIAs	Action plans in place	October 2008	BPU team leader/ Communication s Manager	

**Last updated 17<sup>th</sup> January 2008**