

# Single Equality Scheme

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Confidentiality: **Open**

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## 1. Issue

1.1.1 This paper covers the final version of the Single Equality Scheme.

## 2. Recommendation

2.1.1 The Board is asked to note and endorse the Single Equality Scheme.

## 3. Consideration

3.1.1 The Board considered a draft of the Single Equality Scheme at its meeting in January 2010. It agreed that the Scheme should be approved and signed off by the Chief Executive and Chair, taking account of Board comments, in order to meet the legal deadline for the Scheme's approval. However, the Board asked for the final scheme to be brought back for their formal endorsement in recognition of the Board's commitment to equality.

3.1.2 The Single Equality Scheme, which is attached at **Appendix A**, was finalised and approved by the Chair and Chief Executive by the legal deadline of 4 March 2010.

3.1.3 The Board will wish to note that, following consultation on the draft scheme, we received four external responses. These were from the Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors, the Association of Independent Members of Standards Committees, Beamans Consultants (who have been working with us on our job evaluation) and the First Tier Tribunal. In addition, we received eight internal responses (including from our Staff Council and the PCS Trade union).

- 3.1.4 Whilst the Scheme was praised for its quality and its clear and concise style, various technical comments were made. These were easily embedded. In addition, there were a number of suggestions regarding the content of the Scheme, some of which added value and so merited inclusion. Some helpful comments were made by ACSeS on the Action Plan about dealing with sensitive equality issues in an investigation; how our guidance should deal with equality issues under the Code of Conduct; and how equality issues affect standards committees in recruitment and performing their functions. Some of these matters are already scheduled to be considered and we therefore clarified the wording of the Scheme.
- 3.1.5 The internal comments asked for clarification on the purpose of equality impact assessments; the formation of a steering group; recruitment advertising; census classifications for monitoring; and pay equality barriers. They also requested further statistics and an emphasis on evidence gathering in the Action Plan. A summary of consultation responses and our responses to those is available to view if Board members wish to do so.

## **4. Risk and financial considerations**

- 4.1.1 Failure to have met the statutory obligation to produce a Scheme or to follow statutory procedures or codes of practice could have resulted in enforcement action by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.
- 4.1.2 As we implement the Action Plan, we will review the financial implications for budget management. The present assumptions are that any required action, including training, can be met from existing budget. However, the position will become clearer as the Action Plan evolves.

## **5. Appendices and attachments**

- 5.1.1 Appendix A: Single Equality Scheme