

# DIVERSITY EQUALITY SCHEME

## **Intention**

We are committed to valuing diversity and promoting equality for everyone at the Standards Board for England and our external customers and stakeholders. We do this by ensuring that we are fair, objective, transparent and free from discrimination in all of our systems, processes, procedures, activities and decisions.

## **Organisational ownership**

This Diversity Equality Scheme has been designed to ensure that the concept of equal access is integral to the planning and performance process – flowing both ways from our higher level strategy to the individual planning process. It is a clear statement of our intent that all members of the organisation are responsible for consideration of diversity in the way that they work.

## **Inclusion and information**

We will achieve this through the inclusion and involvement of staff at all levels of the organisation. This will be done through visible and consistent leadership and by seeking representation and feedback from both staff and stakeholder representatives in the ongoing development of policies and services we deliver. In addition, we will seek external advice and input when we feel that there are gaps in the consultation process, and will monitor other organisations for best practice initiatives.

## **The structure of the Diversity Equality Scheme and its future**

This scheme provides an overarching statement that not only incorporates and builds on the existing Race Equality Scheme and the Disability Equality Scheme, but also includes the new Age Equality Scheme and Gender

Equality Scheme. It also builds a solid foundation to extend the scheme further in the future to include religious belief and sexual orientation.

The development of the scheme has been overseen by a project group, known as the Diversity Steering Group, with external expertise and advice provided by Basis consultancy. Consultation has taken place through surveys and focus groups and staff have been provided an opportunity to submit suggestions or concerns to our external facilitator in a confidential manner. The Diversity Steering Group, headed by the Performance & Quality Manager and the Human Resources Manager, will monitor progress, ensure regular reviews, and continue to champion the rights for and of all staff and stakeholders at the Standards Board for England. They will also feed their progress back to the Chief Executive regularly.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G Stacey', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Glenys Stacey  
**Chief Executive**

## **About the Standards Board for England**

The Standards Board for England was formally established in March 2001, set up by an Act of Parliament. Whilst funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), it is however completely independent of government. The Standards Board builds confidence in local democracy by promoting the ethical behaviour of members and co-opted members who serve on a range of authorities. This has involved receiving and investigating allegations that members may have breached the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007.

However, we are moving towards a new role as a strategic regulator and this will see the majority of investigations taking place at a local level. As a result, our focus is moving towards overseeing investigations and the ethical framework more generally.

The Standards Board provides support and guidance to authorities so that they in turn can support their members in ensuring ethical behaviour. We also seek out and promote good practice so that authorities may learn from their peers.

### **Legal duty**

The development of this Diversity Equality Scheme fulfils part of our obligations under the following relevant legislation:

- The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 required us to publish a Disability Equality Scheme by 4 December 2006.
- An amendment (by request) in the Race Relations Act 1976 required that we publish a Race Equality Scheme by 2 March 2007.
- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975, as amended by the Equality Act 2006, required us to publish a Gender Equality Scheme by 30 April 2007.
- We have gone further than legally required in this Diversity Equality Scheme by including an Age Equality Scheme, in advance of the legislative requirement announcement.

Further detail of the duty requirements within each piece of legislation can be found within the individual schemes.

We are only fulfilling our full legal requirement regarding each of these pieces of legislation when we actually implement the recommendations of this

scheme. Therefore, this scheme must be considered a living and dynamic document that requires constant review and updating.

## **Planning and performance framework for the scheme**

The long term success of this scheme relies on every individual considering diversity in everything that we do, so that equality and diversity are embedded within our organisational culture. At present, we are working to ensure that diversity is integral to the planning and performance processes. For example, this will require the Board and the Senior Management Team to consider diversity when setting the strategy of the organisation, through to diversity being built into the performance management framework and within individual objective setting.

## **Leadership**

One of the actions of the Disability Equality Scheme was to appoint a Diversity Champion at the appropriate level in the organisation. David Prince as Chief Executive was nominated as the organisational champion, with Sir Anthony Holland at Board level. The current Chief Executive, Glenys Stacey, has since been nominated as the organisational champion and Dr Robert Chilton OBE, the new Chairman of the Board, has since been nominated at the Board level.

## **Monitoring and review**

It is envisioned that the Diversity Steering Group will be convened, chaired by the Diversity Champion, and consist of a diverse group of people from within in the organisation. This group will lead on diversity initiatives and monitor the effectiveness and implementation of this scheme. It will act as a sounding board for new policies and practices, and will oversee and conduct Diversity Impact Assessments.

## **Diversity Impact Assessments**

The Diversity Steering Group is currently developing a schedule to ensure that all of our policies and procedures undergo Diversity Impact Assessment regularly. The Group is currently working on a bespoke Diversity Impact Assessment Toolkit as well. The intention is for all existing policies, both employee related and service provisions, to be assessed in relation to the potential impacts they may have on various groups. The members of the Group will be trained to use the Toolkit and will ensure that any new members have the necessary training to carry out this process.

## **Internal staff involvement**

### **Disability Equality Scheme and Race Equality Scheme**

As part of the Disability Equality Scheme, staff were asked to participate in a staff survey and in-depth interviews about both employment practices and services in January 2007. Thereafter, all staff, but specifically those that identified themselves as Black, Minority Ethnic, Other, and/or Disabled, were encouraged to participate in an in-depth interview. The Race Equality Scheme was put together in 2005, and whilst putting together the Disability Equality Scheme in 2006, it was thought an opportune time to review the Race Equality Scheme. This information was then used to inform an updated action plan.

### **Gender Equality Scheme and Age Equality Scheme**

Three externally facilitated focus groups were set up in September 2007 to look at staff experiences of the Standards Board as an employer and service provider. Each group consisted of six members of staff. There was one all female group, one all male group and a mixed gender group. All three groups consisted of a range in age and position within the organisation, and were chosen at random once the criteria had been determined. All issues that were raised through this process have informed part of the action plan.

Due to the relocation of the Standards Board from London to Manchester in April 2007, there was a resulting turnover of staff, who may not have been consulted through the development of the Disability Equality Scheme. Therefore, in addition to the aforementioned initiatives, all staff were offered the opportunity to meet the external facilitator with any issues or concerns they had on any area of diversity or equality. We also provided staff with the external facilitator's email address so that they could make contact with the facilitator on a confidential basis.

### **Consultation**

The Staff Council reviewed the Racial Equality Scheme in May 2005 and provided feedback to the approach. As of 2008 – 2009, all Standards Board policies will be reviewed by the Staff Council and the trade union(s) before they are instituted.

## **Senior Management Team and Management Team**

Both of our management groups have reviewed and signed off the scheme in January 2008. Both groups will continue to be consulted as and when required.

## **External stakeholder involvement**

Our stakeholders are primarily:

- Locally elected members
- Monitoring officers
- Chairs and members of steering committees
- DCLG

The Strategy and Guidance team conduct a wide spectrum of research projects with our stakeholders. As part of the research for this scheme, analysis was undertaken on recent engagement with our stakeholders. It was found that whilst diversity was considered, questions have been inconsistently asked and often the sample representation of various groups was too small to be meaningful. Additionally, it is accepted that due to the nature of the industry that we are working in, there is a lack of diversity among most of our stakeholders.

The Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) has established a Commission on Local Councillors, chaired by Dr Jane Roberts DBE. The Commission is charged with finding ways to attract a more diverse range of people to stand as councillors.

## **Communication of the scheme**

In order for the scheme to be taken forward, it is vital that it is appropriately communicated to the organisation. All staff will attend a briefing session to explain the scheme and their duties and how it will be fed into their personal objectives. Similarly, coaching sessions will be provided for managers.

## **Current Activities**

### **Our commitment as an employer**

We demonstrate our full commitment to achieving equality of opportunity for disabled people in employment through our Equal Opportunities Policy. The aim of this policy is to ensure that all job applicants and employees receive fair treatment regardless of whether or not they have a disability and regardless of what that disability is.

In addition, we have a Dignity at Work Procedure for dealing with discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation.

We promote a culture that values our people and their diversity and this is clearly reflected in our policies and practices. Our Human Resources team develops and provides guidance those policies and procedures, and encourages full participation through committees and consultation.

## Diversity Action Plan 2008 – 2009

(Last Updated: 28 July 2008)

Item:	Action:	Task:	Responsibility:	Anticipated date of completion:
1	<b>Build diversity thinking into the planning process</b>	<p>During the departmental planning process, plans undergo diversity impact assessment to ensure that they do not unfairly impact any groups of people.</p> <p>Post the Diversity Action Plan onto the intranet so that all staff can easily access it.</p>	Performance and Quality	<p style="text-align: center;">November 2008 (Departments are holding planning away days from September - October 2008.)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">July 2008</p>
2	<b>Diversity impact assessment of policies and procedures</b>	<p>Year 1 Plan for diversity impact assessments of organisational HR/IT policies. Actions for attention should be incorporated into an action plan, which should be reviewed/updated often as it will be a dynamic document.</p> <p>Perform aforementioned diversity impact assessments.</p>	Diversity Steering Group	<p style="text-align: center;">September 2008</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Regularly beginning September 2008</p>
3	<b>Diversity impact assessment of HR, IT and Finance shared service outlines</b>	<p>Plan for and perform diversity impact assessment of all shared service outlines and implement any corrective actions.</p>	Diversity Steering Group (with HR,IT and Finance Managers)	30 October 2008
4	<b>Diversity competency</b>	<p>A competency around diversity will be developed. All staff will be trained to build diversity considerations into their objectives. These endeavours will ensure that we create an internal climate where diversity is considered an important part of what we do at all levels.</p>	Human Resources	<p>Competency developed by the end of September 2008, which will then need to go out for consultation. Results of the competency will be included in the Annual Diversity Report</p>

Item:	Action:	Task:	Responsibility:	Anticipated date of completion:
5	<b>Training and development</b>	<p>Diversity training was provided to managers on 6 March 2008. Diversity training for staff has been scheduled for 09 July 2008 and 02 September 2008. The goal of these training initiatives is to ensure that staff fully understand the diversity legislation and how it factors into their work.</p> <p>Undertake a Diversity Impact Assessment on the 2008-09 Organisational Training Plan</p>	<p>Human Resources</p> <p>Diversity Steering Group</p>	<p>Schedule, attendance figures, and results will be reported in the Annual Diversity Report</p> <p>October 2008 (Results/actions taken will be reported on in the Annual Diversity Report)</p>
6	<b>Pay and reward</b>	To carry out an equal pay review and ensure that pay is fair across different groups.	Human Resources	To be undertaken and reported in the Annual Diversity Report
7	<b>Monitoring and evaluation</b>	To continue circulating employment statistics to SMT and include analysis of promotions and acting up/interim positions by underrepresented groups.	Human Resources	<p>Reports are sent to the Board on a quarterly basis. A report will also be included in the Annual Diversity Report</p>

<b>Item:</b>	<b>Action:</b>	<b>Task:</b>	<b>Responsibility:</b>	<b>Anticipated date of completion:</b>
<b>7 (Cont'd)</b>	<b>Monitoring and evaluation</b>	<p>To monitor attendance of events by different underrepresented groups and feed the analysed data back into planning processes.</p> <p>To ensure that we use existing diversity data from current research projects and consistently include it, where possible, in new research projects.</p>	<p>Communications</p> <p>Performance &amp; Quality</p>	<p>Determine what diversity data we need to collect. Determine what we do with any diversity information we obtain from events and report on it within any regulatory reports we produce. Annual diversity report reflects what has been done.</p> <p>To be reported in the Annual Diversity Report</p>
<b>8</b>	<b>Annual Report</b>	Annual report shall be created and consist of a review and possible updates to the Diversity Equality Scheme. It will also incorporate a progress report against the action plan and on staffing levels by group.	Performance & Quality (with the Diversity Steering Group)	To be reported in the Annual Diversity Report
<b>9</b>	<b>Building access</b>	To ensure that a disability action review has been conducted for all of our buildings and, if not, liaise with building managers so that it can be done.	Office Services Manager (Human Resources)	We will undertake continuous review to ensure compliance with applicable legislation and report on this in the Annual Diversity Report