



# Plymouth City Council

## Gender Equality Scheme

### 2007 – 2010



## Summary

### Introduction

Our first Gender Equality Scheme (GES) explains how we plan to promote equal opportunities for men and women, boys and girls and transgender people<sup>1</sup> and ensure everyone has equal access to our services. It sets out the actions we will take over the next three years to better understand the different needs and priorities of men and women, address these needs and work towards mainstreaming gender equality.

### Background and context

The Gender Equality Duty came into force on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2007. We are keen to deliver our responsibilities under the Duty, and to make sure we take positive action to promote equality between men and women and eliminate unlawful (direct and indirect) sex discrimination and harassment.

There are a number of areas where we are already promoting gender equality such as a review of pay and job grading to ensure equality between women and men, and gender specific initiatives aimed at increasing participation in sports activities including girls-only football coaching, boys and girls school leagues, and support and advice to clubs.

In drawing together our GES, we have gathered information from many sources including national and local data. We have worked jointly with Plymouth Teaching Primary Care Trust to consult with people who live, work in or visit Plymouth, as well as consulting with our staff, partners and other stakeholders. We published a questionnaire asking people how well our services currently meet the needs of men and women and how they could be improved, and held an informal consultation event in March where people were invited to give us their views. Our staff were asked for their views through our electronic Staff Room facility.

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<sup>1</sup> In this document, we will refer mainly to men and women but we also mean boys and girls and transgender people. We understand that there is a debate about the use of terms in relation to transgender people and recognise that some people prefer other descriptions. We have adopted this term at this time on the advice of stakeholders and the code of practice guidance, which advocates this as best practice.



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## **Our scheme and what we want to do**

The major findings from the engagement of public and staff are set out in the GES and along with the data we have gathered have informed our framework for achieving gender equality.

The GES identifies our eight priority areas and sets out an action plan for the next three years. The priority areas and key actions are set out below:

### **1. Employment and Equal Pay**

- 68% of our workforce are women
- Flexible working is valued
- Most staff working in social care, customer services and schools are women
- Nearly three-quarters of employees in planning, transport and environmental services are men

#### **Key Actions**

Our job evaluation scheme will enable us to ensure we take appropriate action to meet our responsibilities under the Equal Pay Act.

To review where women and men work in the organisation and plan action to reduce the barriers to men and women working in non-traditional areas.

To review our employment policies and procedures to help us to identify any potential negative impacts on men, women and transgender people, and consider how to address these.

### **2. Learning and development**

Our staff need an understanding of gender equality, so that they can carry out their duties without discrimination and in a way that promotes gender equality.

#### **Key Actions**

We started a three-year corporate equalities learning and development programme in July 2006, which is being delivered across the council by specialist equalities trainers. We will continue to monitor and review the training to make sure it is effective and relevant.

### **3. Procurement procedures**

The Gender Equality Duty applies to those functions, which are carried out on our behalf through procurement as well as those that we undertake ourselves.

#### **Key Actions**

We are committed to ensuring that organisations we contract with have robust policies in place to promote equality and eliminate discrimination. We will update our processes and documentation to ensure they adequately cover equality and diversity issues.

## 4. Service delivery

All our services should be delivered in a way to ensure there is gender equality and many already do. The following areas have been highlighted by our work to develop the GES and are a key focus of the initial action plan.

### Participation of fathers

- 90% of parents who take part in parenting groups in Plymouth are women
- Only 9% of single parents in Plymouth are men

### Participation of women and girls in sports

- Cultural and religious issues prevent many women taking part in sporting activities
- Nationally, girls aged 7 – 11 are less than half as likely to take part in physical education and sport compared to boys. By the age of 18, 40% of girls have dropped out of sport and physical recreation.

### Transport and street services

- National data shows that 80% of journeys by public transport are undertaken by women and in Plymouth 20% of women use public transport on a daily basis
- Women report feeling unsafe in car parks at night due to poor lighting and a lack of official presence
- Women report that bulky waste procedures require removal of items to the street which has a negative impact on women

## Key Actions

To explore why take up of family support services by fathers is low and agree action to increase involvement.

Work to achieve a greater gender balance in the use of leisure facilities including reviewing women only swimming session to ensure they meet the needs.

## 5. Education

### Attainment/aspirations of girls and boys

- Boys attaining high grade GCSEs is significantly lower than girls
- Almost three-quarters of pupils with special educational needs in Plymouth are boys
- 40% of teenage mothers leave school with no qualifications
- Boys and girls choose traditional options for work experience

### Key Actions

School governing bodies have specific responsibilities to develop their own GESs.

We will provide advice and support to schools on setting their gender priorities and developing their Schemes.

## 6. Equality Impact Assessments

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are a way of finding out whether an existing or proposed policy, procedure, practice or service affects some people differently, and if so, in what way. If we find adverse impact or missed opportunity to promote equality of opportunity our EIA action plans will consider what action we need to take.

## **Key Actions**

To continue our existing programme of EIAs and undertake EIAs on specific services such as the disposal of bulky waste to ensure that actions are put in place to reduce any negative impact that is identified.

### **7. Monitoring and mainstreaming gender equality and service delivery**

We already have a corporate complaints, comments and compliments system called “Have Your Say”, for monitoring customer satisfaction. Several of our services are already monitoring the profile of our service users.

## **Key Actions**

To extend our agreed corporate standard for monitoring the profile of our service users, across more of our services as part of the work plan of our Corporate Equalities Group.

To continue to gather data about men and women’s needs to help us identify barriers to gender equality and take action to address them.

### **8. Engaging with men and women in Plymouth**

We recognise that writing and publishing our GES is just one step in the process of involving, engaging and consulting with people who live, work in, or visit Plymouth.

## **Key Actions**

We are committed to following up the work already done in developing our GES by considering how we continue to involve women and men in our ongoing work on gender equality. This will include work with young people.

## **Delivering our Gender Equality Scheme**

Our Council Management Team (CMT) led by the Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that our GES is implemented effectively across the council and all our staff are responsible for taking forward gender equality as part of their daily work. A principle officer in the social inclusion unit will support the implementation of the GES.

Our GES covers the next three years. The action plan will be reviewed annually and the full GES will be revised and updated in 2010.

## **Further information**

You can get a copy of the full Gender Equality Scheme from our website at [www.plymouth.gov.uk/gender](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/gender) or you can contact our Social Inclusion Unit on 01752 304321 or by email on [inclusion@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:inclusion@plymouth.gov.uk) or by writing to us at the Civic Centre, Plymouth PL1 2AA.