



Opportunity for all

Executive Summary Single Equality Scheme (2009-12)

Hammersmith & Fulham Council

1 Executive Summary

Single Equality Scheme (2009-12)

- 1.1 Our vision is to create a borough of opportunity for all in Hammersmith and Fulham. The council is required to meet statutory equality duties. A focus on diversity is important not only for reasons of equal opportunities and fairness but because it makes good business sense to design and deliver better public services which respond to the individual needs of all groups.
- 1.2 We are committed to equal opportunities and to providing fair and accessible services to all who live and work in the borough, including our staff and those who wish to work for the authority. At the heart of our equal opportunities policy there is a commitment to treating people with dignity, respecting people's values and diversity, eliminating discrimination and promoting community cohesion and social inclusion
- 1.3 All public authorities have legal duties to give 'due regard' to race, gender and disability equality. The specific duties require the council to publish equality schemes and to review and revise the schemes every 3 years, amidst other requirements. The specific duties require the council to publish equality schemes and to review and revise the schemes every 3 years, amidst other requirements. Officers have given careful consideration to the statutory codes in relation to race, gender and disability in preparing the scheme, as well as to the duties that were expected to arise from the Equality Act 2010, which received Royal Assent in April 2010.
- 1.4 In addition to legislative requirements we expect employees to promote the spirit of our Single Equality Scheme (SES) and Action Plan and to recognise that they have a duty not to discriminate against anyone in carrying out their duties.
- 1.5 The SES and accompanying Action Plan sets out the council's objectives, targets, and the specific actions that we will take to achieve our ambitions for equality and life chances for all, and thereby fulfil our statutory duties.

Hammersmith and Fulham – our community

- 1.6 Hammersmith and Fulham is a small borough, in area, but it is one of the most densely populated. It contains much variety and diversity, making it a stimulating and rewarding place to live and work.
- 1.7 We are a borough of contrasts, some of the wealthiest households are located in the borough as well as some of the poorest. There is a general north-south divide in the borough, with the north being, on average, significantly more deprived than the south. Housing in the borough is significantly less affordable to low income households compared to elsewhere in London and in England generally.
- 1.8 We have a high proportion of single people in our adult population. Our population is of very mixed origins. Almost 25% are of Black or Asian ethnic

origin, and 5% are of Irish origin. The borough's school children speak some 98 languages. Almost 15% of our residents are disabled people.

Life chances for all

- 1.9 Equality is about treating everyone with fairness and respect and appropriately to their needs. Diversity is about recognising and valuing that individuals are unique and using these differences to the benefit of our organisation and our customers. Inequality may arise from barriers or discrimination related to a person's gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, age or religion or belief. Overarching or contributing to these forms of disadvantage is often your family background or where you were brought up.
- 1.10 We recognise that there are a number of influences on socio-economic outcomes (background and opportunities in life). This includes factors such as: childhood health; early childhood education participation, achievement and literacy in schooling; poverty especially amongst children; employment; economic growth; multiple disadvantage and intergenerational effects. Particular groups (such as BME, disabled people, lone parents, etc) have been historically identified as experiencing lower average outcomes, but not all members of these groups experience disadvantage or inequality. We also recognise that while some groups on average have poorer outcomes, there are a number of people and families in relatively better off groups that are also experiencing disadvantage and may need assistance and support.
- 1.11 Our vision is to create a borough of opportunity for all. We have focussed on putting in place key "building blocks of opportunity", which will enable all local people to have a real stake in the area and share in its growing prosperity. The council's approach to meeting its statutory duties on equality is to combine opportunity with social responsibility and social justice and to deliver opportunity to all people, particularly through raising educational standards and choice, increasing home ownership and providing better support to vulnerable residents, and regenerating deprived neighbourhoods. We will assist the vast majority of people in the borough to help themselves, while supporting the most vulnerable. In this way we intend to establish a framework that enables our area to prosper and flourish over the coming years.

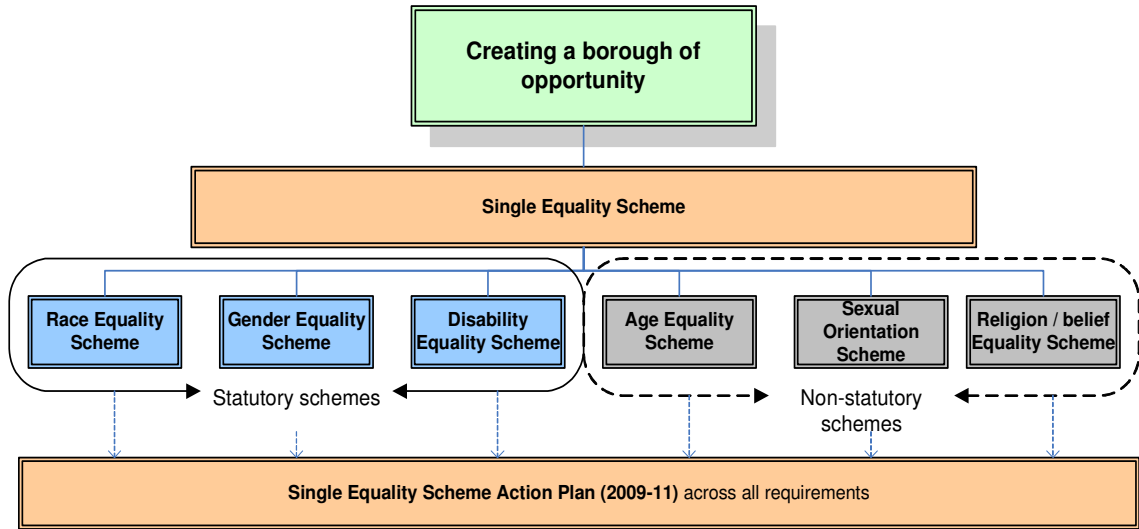
Creating a Borough of Opportunity

CREATING OPPORTUNITY



Equality Schemes

1.12 The SES provides one document that contains our statutory and non-statutory equality schemes and simplifies how we meet our requirements for all, including groups protected by discrimination law.



- **Race equality scheme** – sets out our key objectives to ensure our services are equally accessible to people from different racial groups, to promote equality in employment, and to promote good race relations through community cohesion initiatives. We will do this by working with partner agencies, training staff to provide appropriate services, preventing and eliminating race discrimination, harassment and victimisation and acting

decisively on any complaints, carrying out workforce monitoring, and having an inclusive workforce.

- **Disability equality scheme** – the Disability Equality Scheme (2009-12) was updated and published in April 2009 and is being directly incorporated into the SES. The actions will be incorporated into the SES Action Plan following the first annual report of the current scheme to the Better Government Panel in June 2010 to ensure clarity for staff and residents.
- **Gender equality scheme** – sets out our key objectives to providing fair and accessible services and to promote equality in employment. We will do this by working with partner agencies, training staff to provide appropriate services, working to reducing crime including domestic violence, preventing and eliminating gender discrimination, harassment and victimisation and acting decisively on any complaints, carrying out workforce monitoring, providing a fair and equitable pay structure, and having an inclusive workforce.
- **Age equality scheme** – sets out our key objectives to ensure our services are equally accessible to people of all ages, to promote equality of opportunity in employment for all ages, and to prevent and eliminate age discrimination, harassment and victimisation and act decisively on any complaints.
- **Sexual orientation equality scheme** – sets out our key objectives to ensure our services are equally accessible to all, to promote equality of opportunity in employment for all, provide confidentiality where sexual orientation is disclosed, and to prevent and eliminate sexual orientation discrimination, harassment and victimisation and act decisively on any complaints.
- **Religion and belief equality scheme** – sets out our key objectives to ensure our services are equally accessible to all, to promote equality of opportunity in employment for all, to prevent and eliminate religion or belief discrimination, harassment and victimisation and act decisively on any complaints, and to consider how religious beliefs and observances can be accommodated.

Consultation with staff, residents and community organisations

- 1.13 A key aspect of developing a single equality scheme is engaging and consulting with a range of people from diverse backgrounds and groups, including race, gender and disability as required by law, along with a range of wider equality groups.
- 1.14 Public consultation was undertaken from 9 September to 11 December 2009. Feedback and responses have been used to help inform the development of the SES. A separate Consultation Report has been produced which sets out the consultation feedback we received along with the council's review, responses and actions from the feedback. Key changes to the SES include: linking each scheme to the relevant actions in the Action Plan, and including practical case studies in each scheme to help explain how it is relevant for staff and residents.
- 1.15 Contributions that were received from all departments were key to: 1) the development of the SES, and 2) to making the scheme relevant to the every day work that departments are undertaking to deliver the vision for opportunity for all.

Single Equality Scheme Action Plan (2009-12)

1.16 All actions in the SES are themed under the five key performance areas in the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG):

1. **Knowing our communities and equality mapping** – this is about quality evidence being regularly updated and used on the equalities profile of our communities and their changing needs. The council regularly gathers evidence on the profile of our communities through neighbourhood statistics, surveys, service user data, panels, meetings and events. Key actions in the SES include: 1) delivering a local information system that brings together a wide range of data to create a single portal to share information, and 2) the maintenance of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) with the NHSF to identify the health, wellbeing and social care needs of borough residents to develop joint commissioning. As part of this, we are undertaking key actions to map the profile of our community and their changing needs, and to share information with partners. This collection of evidence will include that of the inequality and disadvantage within our communities to identify priorities to inform our policies, strategies and plans. This will also help us to discharge our socio-economic duty under the Equality Act 2010.
2. **Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment** – this is about strategic leadership; meeting a range of equality objectives working with partners in the public, community and voluntary sectors; and overall organisational commitment. Updating our SES is one of our key methods of developing and consulting on our equality priorities to ensure this is owned and understood by our stakeholders and partners. We have a wide array of strategic and operational partnerships in H&F working to create a borough of opportunity. Key actions in the SES work to: enhance organisational commitment to improving equality outcomes, enhance ownership by stakeholders, embed equality and diversity requirements in procurement and commissioning frameworks, and improve relations across diverse communities.
3. **Community engagement and satisfaction** – this is about engaging with all communities including groups who may experience disadvantage and inequality. Across the council, departments use a wide range of methods to inform and engage with the community including through: H&F News, LBHF website, consultation portal (CitizenSpace), public notices, postal and email mail outs, meetings and events, focus groups, surveys, etc. Feedback is considered by officers and the results of formal consultations are reported to Cabinet. Key actions in the SES set out how individual departments intend to engage effectively with residents including disadvantages groups. In addition, at a strategic level, an Engagement and Communications Working Group will be established. This will work to ensure there is a council wide customer centred approach to communication and engagement to ensure a high level of customer participation and knowledge.
4. **Responsive services and customer care** – this is about personalising services to meet the needs of people with different backgrounds and ensuring fair access. Delivering responsive services and customer care that meets diverse needs of people and ensures fair access is central to the provision of quality public services and continuing to improve our resident satisfaction. Key actions in the SES include: apprenticeship opportunities and work placement

schemes for disadvantaged groups to improve life chances for residents; increase the supply of affordable housing, improve housing opportunities and prevent homelessness; provide support to vulnerable residents who have reported anti-social behaviour and address domestic violence; improve access to open spaces, sporting facilities and library services; improve the educational attainment and inclusion of vulnerable and underperforming groups; support young people in transition; and develop personalisation agenda through Supporting Your Choice to ensure all communities are able to benefit.

5. **A modern and diverse workforce** – this is about working to achieve equality outcomes for the workforce across employment and learning and development. People are the greatest asset in driving business performance. Attracting job applicants from the widest pool of talent – and keeping and nurturing that talent within the council – means having a more effective workforce. Key actions in the SES include: work to support equality in recruitment, retention and promotion of staff; update employment policies and procedures; enhance learning and development opportunities for staff to meet statutory requirements; and undertake workforce monitoring and actions.

Monitoring and review

- 1.17 The SES will be monitored and reviewed annually with an annual report on progress in implementing the actions, published on the council website and presented to relevant external groups. Workforce monitoring will continue to take place annually. A three yearly review and update of the SES will take place in 2012, in consultation with employees and relevant stakeholders. As required, a review of the assessment of relevance (Appendix 3) will take place by the end of May 2011. Equality impact assessments will continue to be monitored and published on an ongoing basis.