

**London Borough of Hackney**

**CORPORATE EQUALITY PLAN 2006-2009**

**PART 2**

**The Race Equality Scheme**

**Updated September 2008**

## Foreword

The Council is fully committed to implementing the Race Relations Amendment Act and the duties it places upon public authorities to eliminate racial discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and promote good race relations within the community.

At its highest level, this duty will rest with the Chief Executive and Elected Members of the Council, though our aim is that through targeted training, all our employees will understand and abide by their individual duties under the Act.

Hackney's Race Equality Scheme is supported by, links into other policies and plans such as new Equality and Diversity Policy and Corporate Equality Plan, and as such will help us realise our vision, which is:

*"To achieve balanced, sustainable communities and neighbourhoods, which celebrate their diversity and share in London's growing prosperity, to enable a good quality of life for all"*

In line with the core equality and diversity values which are contained within the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy, our commitment to this Scheme goes beyond the statutory responsibilities outlined within this document and is extended by our belief that discrimination is destructive and is a waste of talent and resources.

## Introduction

The Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 places duties on public authorities. These duties are designed to remove discrimination from within the public sector and act as a statutory response to the problem of "institutionalised racism".

The general duty under this Act is to:

- Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good race relations between people of different racial groups.

Implementing this duty has helped make equality central to the work performed by public authorities, thereby improving service delivery for all members of the community.

'Mainstreaming' equalities is about ensuring that equalities and diversity good practice is integrated into every aspect of the Council's work. Public authorities must produce a Race Equality Scheme, which details their values, principles and objectives regarding the attainment of the objectives set out in this Act.

Our Race Equality work is based on the 'Guide for Public Authorities', also issued by the [Commission for Racial Equality legacy website](#).

## Your Council

There are many aspects to the Council. It is as the provider of services, which range from the education of young people to the provision of general advice and information in response to community needs. It is also an employer of a culturally and ethnically diverse workforce.

The Council also fulfils an important role as educator and enforcer of legislation within the borough. We are here to provide advice and information to businesses in Hackney and through teams like Health and Safety and Licensing; we act to ensure these businesses operate within the law.

We also have a community leadership role, which helps bring together other organisations to achieve improved outcomes on the issues most relevant to Hackney's residents and more specifically to its black and visible minority communities. The Hackney Strategic Partnership is one example of such joint working.

In fulfilling these roles, we aim to achieve on key priority areas:

- Improving services and increasing opportunities for all, raising the life chances of the most disadvantaged
- Making sure the Council is high performing and efficient
- Providing effective community leadership and involving the whole borough in what we do

We will do this through continuing to consult and work with all stakeholders: staff, contracted workers, partner agencies, residents, service users and visitors to the area. For example, Hackney's Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement were informed by extensive public consultation:

The strategy gives high priority to reducing deprivation and social exclusion. It identifies the big issues and provides proposals for tackling these

These key themes provide a framework, which will help the council, realise its vision of a fairer more inclusive society. The council will work in partnership with community, voluntary and statutory organisations, employees and contractors in order to create a borough built on hope, confidence and energy. At the heart of the council's Vision is the aim of mainstreaming equalities into every activity we perform to ensure discrimination does not have a place within our borough.

Hackney Council is a major employer of black and visible minority staff. Its residents are culturally, ethnically and socially diverse, with 146 languages spoken in the borough (2005). It is also a continuously changing borough, experiencing a constant flow of new communities and with this the associated high levels of deprivation and social exclusion experienced by many.

Hackney's diversity is one of its greatest assets. The Council values, celebrates and promotes this diversity and constantly aims to ensure its services are appropriate and accessible. It aims to meet the needs of its diverse communities and provide all citizens with equality of opportunity to realise their potential. An ethnic profile of our community is included in the [Team Hackney Borough Profile](#).

## **Our commitment**

We have developed and implemented a new Equality and Diversity Policy, which clearly articulates the Council's commitments and provides a coherent policy guide to shape the strategic direction of the Council's equalities and diversity agenda.

The Corporate Equality Plan is an overarching strategic document, which summarises how the Council will meet its legal obligations and demonstrates to all staff and service users as well as partners and the wider community, how equalities will be incorporated into the Council's working over a set period.

## **Our Aims**

Through consulting on and then implementing these policies and plans and through our related work plans for progressing against the Equality Standard, we aim to integrate equality into all aspects of service delivery and employment. We will draw on the relationships we have established within the Borough and will seek to engage new partners and create new connections to help us fulfil this aim.

We will strive to improve access to and knowledge about our services for all members of our community and will work to eliminate any physical barriers, which may restrict access by minority and disadvantaged groups.

We will remove barriers to communication and consult with service users and residents so that all groups within Hackney are able to obtain up to date and accessible information about services, which are most relevant to their needs.

Above all we will continue to tackle discrimination, harassment and victimisation within the Borough and take firm action to eliminate it within the workplace, in our schools and out in the community.

## **Our objectives**

**Sustainable**

**Monitoring**

**Accountability**

**Responsibility**

**Transparency**

We intend to use S M A R T objectives to help us implement the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000.

### **Sustainable**

Our objective is to put in place systems further to enhance the way the Council deals with equality issues generally and more specifically with the treatment of race discrimination as required under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000. As Hackney has become more stable financially it must ensure sustained improvements in the way it promotes and

implements race equality and make sure that policies are unequivocal and systems robust and that both are an integral part of organisational development.

## **Monitor**

We will monitor and measure the impact of the systems we establish to ensure they remain efficient, effective and relevant towards our objectives of eliminating racial discrimination, promoting good race relations and promoting equality of opportunity within the Borough.

## **Accountability**

Hackney Council believes that we will only progress on equality and valuing diversity if it becomes everyone's responsibility. Structures for implementing, monitoring and reviewing policies and plans have been put into place to ensure that equality is integral to the Council's work and mainstreamed into its planning process.

Hackney Council has adopted an executive and scrutiny management structure with a directly elected Mayor who, together with the Cabinet is responsible for setting direction and policy. Scrutiny members have a role to make proposals and review decisions and to hold the executive accountable for those decisions.

Within the Cabinet, and working alongside the Mayor, the Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate Services has the lead for the Equality and Diversity agenda. In addition, a dedicated Cabinet Advisor supports the Mayor on Equality issues. The Overview and Scrutiny Board monitors progress on actions as well as identifying areas for potential development and change and have been trained on Equal to the Task best practice guidelines.

The Council has a Corporate Equalities and Diversity Group (CEDG) chaired by a Corporate Director who is also the lead Council Officer for Equalities and Diversity. The CEDG reports directly to and makes recommendations on behalf of the Corporate Management Team. Part of the remit of this group is to oversee the implementation of the Race Equality Scheme.

Each directorate has its own Equality and Diversity Implementation Group, which reports to the CEDG and to its own Directorate Management Team and is responsible for monitoring progress against set equality targets and for updating the relevant local sections of this Scheme.

Additional working groups are set up from time to time as sub groups of the CEDG to co-ordinate specific areas of work, such as the Disability Discrimination Compliance Group and The Equality and Diversity Project Group, which has played a key role in the initial review stage of this Scheme.

In addition to these internal chains of accountability, the Council will work to ensure that it meets its objectives under this Scheme, through raising awareness generally and through educating and supporting residents, employees, service users, contractors and partners in the role they must play to achieve race equality across the borough.

## **Responsibility**

The success of this Scheme depends on us all being responsible for our actions towards each other and ensuring that we individually take steps to eliminate racial discrimination and promote racial equality.

As an organisation, the statutory duty to implement the Race Relations Amendment Act rests with the Chief Executive, Mayor and Elected Members. However, through training, clear policies, effective performance management systems and active encouragement, we will ensure that all employees understand their individual responsibilities and how their actions, when dealing with colleagues and members of the public, can affect the duties under the Act.

## **Transparency**

Our final objective is to ensure transparency at all levels in this process. We will continue to be open about our successes and admit any failings.

We have now established clear lines of communication and accountability within the Council and aim continually to improve our methods of consulting interested parties and engaging the community.

We will use our Council website to publish the results of Equality Impact Assessments, consultation exercises and the monitoring information collated in accordance with our requirements under this Act.

## **Our values**

Our values under this Scheme are underpinned by and the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy and by our explicit commitment to implement the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000. The Council's Equality and Diversity Statement is clear that;

*“The complementary nature of equalities and diversity good practice and human rights is reflected in the Council’s vision of a community based on fair and equal treatment for all and respect for the dignity and value of each person. Equality of opportunity to maximise potential and the freedom not to be discriminated against on the grounds of perceived difference is the fundamental right of every person who lives in, works for or visits Hackney.*

*It is the Council’s duty as a community leader to acknowledge and protect these rights. It will do this through working to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote community cohesion in the borough”.*

In addition, the Mayor's Key Deliverable (KD3) will:

- *“ensure that all services meet the needs of our diverse population and our service users are treated with respect and dignity” (KD 3a)*
- *“eliminate prejudice and discrimination within our diverse workforce” (KD 3b)*

These KDs demonstrate how we value the diversity of our community and workforce and how we value and seek to expand the partnerships, which we have established in order to make Hackney a harassment-free environment.

## **Our Equality Performance Indicators**

During 2007/2008 Council's progress against the Equality Standard for Local Government levels forms all of Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) 2a. The second half (2b) relates to the Council's duty to promote race equality through this Race Equality Scheme. We are measured in terms of the effectiveness of the Scheme and race equality improvements across 19 key areas.

One of the clearest indicators of our progress in developing race equality and mainstreaming equalities and diversity practice is thereby contained together in this one important performance measure (BV2 a & b)

There are 14 other Best Value equality and diversity performance indicators, the majority of which include race equality elements related to our workforce and the services we provide. We reported these annually via our mainstream Corporate Performance Reporting.

Through improved methods of communication and consultation, we are now able to listen to your views and use them as indicators of our performance in achieving race equality and in eliminating discrimination and prejudice.

### **Working towards equality**

Hackney Council fully commits to achieving race equality not least because the borough is so diverse – both socially and culturally. In response to legislative and other statutory requirements and to the ever changing needs of its constantly changing communities,

Through this Scheme, the Council has been working since 2002 in accordance with two equality pledges (expressed as an equality statement) around tackling discrimination and exclusion in the borough and a promise to develop, consult on, implement and monitor equality action plans.

The Council's equality statement and key actions for integrating equality and diversity into all the Council's work update and review these original pledges and are drawn from the new Equality and Diversity Policy, which in turn informs the Corporate Equality Plan (in development) and the review of this Race Equality Scheme.

With these updates, we continue to demonstrate our commitment to tackling discrimination and removing wherever possible, disadvantage and /or negative outcomes for minority groups within the borough.

*In everything they do, public authorities should have due regard to the need to:*

- *Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination*
- *Promote equality of Opportunity*
- *Promote good race relations between people of different racial groups.*

When considering the requirements under the General Duty, we will consider what steps we can take as an employer and service provider and in our role as community leader. We take this task seriously and aim to build on and further improve existing good work as well as develop new work areas and initiatives.

### **To eliminate unlawful racial discrimination:**

- We will continue to work with the Police and other agencies to tackle incidents of racial discrimination reported to our Domestic Violence and Racial Harassment Team.
- We will continue to take an active role in our crime and disorder partnerships. We have now published our Third Hackney Crime and Disorder and Substance Misuse Audit which covers racial crime
- We will continue to develop new work with Multi-agency Racial Incidents Forum (MARIF) to develop policies aimed at tackling racist crime and to lead on initiatives such as current research into Islamophobic crime
- We will continue to remove racist slogans, poster and signs from within the Borough when brought to our attention.
- We will continue to evict Council tenants who breach their tenancy agreements with us by repeatedly committing incidents of racial discrimination against other tenants.
- We will continue with the work we have commenced under this Scheme to integrate equalities best practice into every aspect of service delivery and employment. We will do this through working with the Equality Standard for Local Government and continually assessing our performance against a nationally set standard of equalities excellence
- We will take a lead in the community and aim to influence others including partners and contractors, in order to tackle discrimination and harassment at all levels both within and between different groups.
- We will continue our assessment of functions and policies following implementation of this Scheme through a timetabled programme of Equality Impact Assessments for existing policies and functions and through ensuring all new proposed policies and major changes are equality impact assessed at an early stage. These will be reported on the Council website and contain details of actions and timetables identified as part of the EIA process
- We will continue to consult with our residents, stakeholders and employees. We have now introduced an annual residents' satisfaction survey and will consult on all key issues
- In response to the concerns of specific ethnic groups and following extensive research into the communities which make up Hackney, we have introduced a more detailed ethnicity classification system in order to better understand and meet the needs of diverse groups
- All Equality and Diversity training for staff has undergone a major review and two new programmes will commence later this year and will include a section on the race Relations Amendment Act, this Race Equality Scheme and related policies and training on the duty to monitor and report racial incidents

## **To Promote Equality of Opportunity**

- We will use our rolling programme of Equality Impact Assessments to identify opportunities for the promotion of equality of opportunity as well as the elimination of unlawful discrimination
- We will continue to provide key information in different languages and will monitor changing language needs in order to adapt our provision as necessary.
- Will continue to utilise targeted recruitment methods such as the specialist and local press to ensure increased numbers of black and minority individuals are encouraged to apply.
- We will continue to use recruitment agencies which specialise in attracting targeted groups particularly for more senior managerial positions.
- We will use information gathered from our recent Local Labour Market Assessment research to review the employment opportunity needs of target groups within the community
- We will continue to listen to your views to help us improve equality of opportunity within the borough.
- We will continue to train our employees to understand that equality of opportunity is about aiming to achieve equal outcomes for all, in the workforce and in service delivery. Equality and Diversity training is now mandatory for all staff and Recruitment and Selection training for managers will be made mandatory this year.

### **To Promote Good Race Relations between people of different racial groups**

- We will continue to engage with and take part in appropriately constituted and fully representative local community forums
- We will continue to provide information on the history of immigration to the borough at Hackney's Museum located within our new Technology Centre.
- We will continue to provide interpretation services to those members of our community who do not speak English as their first language.
- We will continue to provide citizenship ceremonies for relevant groups and aim to maintain our current 100% satisfaction rates amongst participants

### **The Council as an employer**

- We will implement the Equality Impact Assessment action plan for our People and Organisational Development Strategy
- We will continue to implement our policies, which prohibit racial discrimination, bullying and or harassment.
- We will continue to discipline any employee found guilty of racial discrimination.
- We will continue to prohibit employees from wearing t-shirts, badges or emblems on Council premises, which display racist comments or slogans

- We will continue to monitor, analyse and report on relevant employee data relating to grievances, disciplinaries, sickness and access to training in order to ascertain whether racial (or other) discrimination may have occurred and to take appropriate remedial action if this is the case.
- We have significantly improved our employee profiling and data collection processes and now have accurate ethnicity data from over 90% of staff. This is available to all directorates and is being used to inform recruitment planning processes in order to achieve a more representative workforce at all levels
- We will continue to increase the opportunity for development amongst our black and minority ethnic and disabled employees through our positive action 'Phoenix' learning and development programme
- We will continue to encourage and support staff wishing to learn new work place skills and will monitor applications for and attendance at training by ethnicity to ensure fair and open access to learning and development opportunities.
- Investors in People (IIP) full accreditation was reconfirmed in 2007
- We will continue to utilise targeted recruitment methods such as the specialist and local press to ensure increased numbers of black and ethnic minority individuals are encouraged to apply.
- Our new (draft) Recruitment and Retention Strategy is explicit in its intention to work in a variety of creative ways to ensure equality of employment opportunities within the Council for black and minority ethnic people.
- We will ensure that the new Equality and Diversity training courses incorporate awareness raising elements around working within diverse organisations

The London Borough of Hackney currently complies with its specific duty to monitor the following by racial groups and annually publish the results, which we do on the internet:

- The make up of existing staff,
- applicants for jobs,
- internal applicants for promotion
- who receives training
- the outcomes of performance assessments when they lead to benefits/detriment
- who is involved in grievances/ disciplinary action
- those who cease employment with the Council, including dismissals.

In addition we have consulted with our recognised trades unions and are establishing a formal, member led, Hackney Diversity in Employment Forum by autumn 2008

The objectives of the HDEF are to:

- a) Act as a monitoring and consultation committee to promote compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements and reinforce the Council's commitment to equality in employment

- b) Provide transparency to the employment element of the Corporate Equality Plan, the Equality Schemes, Equality Impact Assessments of major employment projects and the Workforce Strategy and to advise the Council of suitable remedies to address possible complex employment issues
- c) Make recommendations to the Council Joint Committee or other external body on any matter directly within the terms of reference of the HDEF

## Identifying our priorities





*"Public Authorities must list, in their Race Equality Scheme, the functions and policies (including their proposed policies) that are relevant to their performance of the general duty to promote race equality. They should review this list at least every three years."*

Source: CRE Draft Consultation Code of Practice on the duty to promote race equality

The Council recognises that all the services it performs have a potential to effect negatively, the promotion of good race relations, the promotion of equal opportunities and the elimination of race discrimination. We also understand the need to assess and prioritise those that have the highest impact.

In the period between March 2007 and September 2008, we have undertaken the following equality impact assessments, details of race and other specific actions and reporting arrangements are contained with the action plans:

-  [Access to Services](#) (131KB)
-  [Carers' Strategy](#) (129KB)
-  [Choice Base Lettings](#) (164KB)
-  [Common Assessment Framework](#) (158KB)
-  [Community Strategy](#) (79.5KB)
-  [Customer Care Strategy](#) (138KB)
-  [Hackney Advice Strategy](#) (487KB)
-  [Hackney Marshes](#) (124KB)
-  [Health and Safety Enforcement Nail Treatment Bars](#) (45KB)
-  [Local Area Agreement](#) (172KB)
-  [Local Development Framework](#) (197KB)
-  [Parks strategy](#) (149KB)
-  [People and Organisational Development Strategy](#) (149KB)
-  [Procurement Strategy](#) (281KB)
-  [Reshaping Children's Social Care](#) (162KB)

-  [Revenues and Benefits](#) (180KB)
-  [Road Casualty Inequalities Demonstration Project](#) (49KB)
-  [Supporting a Diverse Workforce](#) (83.5KB)
-  [Youth Offending Team](#) (149KB)

## Consultation

We are committed to making Hackney a Borough based on inclusion. By working in partnership with our residents, employees and external organisations, we will achieve this ambition.

To help achieve this task we will use our COMIS database, which provides our residents and employees with information on some of our partnerships and the services offered.

This database, which is available at our Council, website address: [www.hackney.gov.uk](http://www.hackney.gov.uk), is a starting point for all our consultation process and we will continue to update and expand the information presented as we increase our network of partners.

We will use various methods of consultation including:

- Printing consultation reports on our website for comments
- Staff attitude surveys
- Customer Internet surveys
- Ad hoc group meetings
- Ad hoc mail shots
- Stakeholder focus groups
- Face to face meetings with local interest groups
- Features in 'Hackney Today' with invitations to respond

This list is not exhaustive and we will constantly look for new methods of involving local people, services users and employees.

## Access to information and Services

*"Public Authorities must set out their arrangements for making sure that the public have access to information and services they provide."*

*Source: CRE Draft Consultation Code of Practice on the duty to promote race equality.*

Our aim is to make Hackney, a socially inclusive Borough. To help us reach this target we have increased public access to information on our services by installing computers and Internet access in all our libraries and at the First Stop Shop.

These computers will allow the public to view and print pages from the Hackney web site, though a nominal fee is payable for the pages printed.

By utilising these methods of communication, we will be able to ensure that information is now available at the right place and right time for a larger percentage of the public.

77.02% of Council service transactions were electronically supported as at 2003/04, which compares well to the London average. The Council is focused on implementing a Council-wide ICT Strategy and effectively exploiting new forms of technology to enhance customers' experience of service delivery and to widen customer choice and accessibility.

In order to ensure the Council's website is as accessible as possible, it is reviewed annually by SOCITM (Society of Communications and IT Managers) using customer service scenarios. The Council has also recently signed up for a service which carries out satisfaction surveys for visitors to the website.

We will also aim to continue the work we have already started in removing the physical barriers created by differences in language and cultures within our Borough. Interpreters are available on request and our web site has links to companies where the public can obtain translations of our documents free of charge.

We value the positive input we receive and use this information to assist our continual improvement.

### **Complaints procedure**

We also monitor for potential adverse impact as an employer and as a provider of services to the public through our complaints procedure. As the largest employer within the borough, we monitor internally through our staff surveys and through listening to our staff at regular 'road shows'.

We will continue to use the information sourced from surveys, workshops and road shows to monitor the effect our policies are having on our employees and to discover where individuals feel we are making positive progress or are failing to meet our targets.

As a provider of services to the public, we will use information from our complaints process and that gained from the satisfaction surveys which is available on our web site, to monitor the perceptions of our community. If this process reveals evidence of unlawful discrimination or disproportionate negative impact, we will take remedial action to mitigate the situation.

As part of our equality training, we will train our employees in adapting service delivery to meet diverse needs and in the importance of collating, returning, accurate, and timely information.

### **Contracted services**

*"When a public authority has a contract or another arrangement with a private company or voluntary organisation to carry out any of its functions and the duty to promote race equality applies to those functions, the public authority is responsible for meeting the duty concerning those functions."*

*Source: CRE Draft Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality.*

Information regarding the Council's expectations of contractors' equalities requirement is now included within the new procurement guidelines for staff.

Through co-operation with our partners, we will work towards eliminating racial discrimination from all Council functions.