



Report to:

Northwards Board Meeting
Thursday 12th October 2006

Item No:

9c

Title:	Achieving Equality Standard Level 1		
Date:	12 th September 2006		
Author:	Olivia Stokes	Tel No:	0161 227 3029
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Confidential:	No		
For: (Please tick action required)	NOTING √	DISCUSSION	APPROVAL

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform the Board that Northwards Housing has reached Level 1 of the Equality Standard in its own right with effect from 30th August 2006.

To provide feedback from the external auditor regarding the quality of evidence provided for Level 1 of the Equality Standard.

The report was noted by HR & Equality Sub-Committee on 26th September.

RECOMMENDATION

To note the feedback on Level 1 and additional actions required in order to meet Level 2 of the Equality Standard.

IMPLICATIONS

If and when the report is implemented, what will be the implications or changes to the current status of the organisation.

Equality & Diversity:	Yes- the feedback highlights the positive work that Northwards Housing has carried out and identified further actions required in order to achieve Level 2 of the Equality Standard.
Financial:	No
Staffing:	Yes- HR and the Equality & Diversity Officer should progress actions.
Decency Target:	No
Governance:	No
Risk Assessment:	No, however actions need to be implemented to reflect Best Practice.

Equality & Diversity Implications (Please tick where relevant):

BME	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Elderly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Parents	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Young

Domestic Violence

√




Disability





Alcohol / Drug Mis-users





Consultation/Consideration:


	Yes, No or N/A:	Name:	Date:
Sub-Committee:	YES	HR & Equality	26 th Sept 06
Area Panel:			
Ward Councillors:			




Ref No	Standard	Audit Response	Assessment
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the Authority formulated and adopted a comprehensive equality policy for the authority covering race, gender and disability 	<p>CEP in place and has been formally adopted. It goes further than the required race, gender and disability, and could be strengthened further by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment policy – indirect discrimination does not refer to age or religion Employment targets relate to women, black and disabled employees – recognises the need to extend, but lack of starting point for LGB. Age? Making reference to how equality will affect procurement decisions <p>Report form - E&D implications – why not include religion and gender specific, when updated to include, disability, and LGB?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">☹️</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Meets Criteria</p>
2	<p>Has the Authority ensured that the written policies are in line with current legislation (Race Relations Act and Race Relations (Amendment) Act, Sex Discrimination Act, Equal Pay Act, Disability Discrimination Act) and Codes of Practice issued by the three equality Commissions?</p>	<p>Reliance on census information, in the absence of any other stats gives indicative information. Information would be strengthened by having specific customer knowledge – as recognised in E&D action plan</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">☹️</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Meets Criteria</p>



Ref No	Standard	Audit Response	Assessment
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a corporate commitment to developing a Corporate Equality Plan (CEP) indicating how equality policy will be implemented? The CEP should incorporate or be consistent with the Authority's statutory Race Equality Scheme. 	<p>E&D action plan in place which shows how the policy is to implemented.</p> <p>This is a detailed action plan which could be strengthened by focus on outcomes and success measures rather than outputs and milestones.</p> <p>Statement at 4 to say that MCC impact assessments have informed this action plan.</p> <p>MCC RES adopted. Further equality duties will also be incorporated.</p>	 <p>Meets Criteria</p>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a corporate commitment to carrying out a process of equality impact and needs/ requirements assessment including those assessments of organisational and individual requirements required for compliance with the DDA? 	<p>Equality sub committee responsible for progressing actions from EIA</p> <p>Complaints EIA – focus on BME, -how make sure all groups are considered eg disabled? Also toolkit would be strengthened by highlighting religion and age</p>	 <p>Meets Criteria</p>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the Authority made a corporate commitment to a fair employment and equal pay policy? 		 <p>Meets Criteria</p>

Ref No	Standard	Audit Response	Assessment
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the Authority made a corporate commitment to earmark specific resources for improving equality practice? 	<p>Staffing resources identified within action plan. Also other resources via eg equipment and adaptations, translations etc</p>	 Meets Criteria
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a corporate commitment to consult with designated community, staff and stakeholder groups on all aspects of equality policy? 	<p>Lots of evidence of ways to engage with and encourage participation including with the equality policy. Useful confidential survey to establish monitoring and access needs.</p> <p>Useful to give definitions of LGB The customer satisfaction survey is very new – need to ensure that the recommendations from this are taken forward and communicated appropriately.</p>	 Exceeds Criteria
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has each department and service area made a commitment to contribute to the consultation and scrutiny section of the CEP? 		 Meets Criteria
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the Authority made a corporate commitment to equality self-assessment, scrutiny and audit? 		 Meets Criteria




Ref No	Standard	Audit Response	Assessment
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has each department and service area committed to engage in consultation with designated community, staff and stakeholder groups on its service delivery? 	Strengthen by ensuring that representatives from all community groups are engaged with	 Meets Criteria
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a corporate commitment to consult departments and service areas on equality objectives? 		 Meets Criteria
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have departments and service areas committed to processes of equality self-assessment, scrutiny and audit on its service delivery? 		 Meets Criteria
13	Has equality policy been incorporated as a key theme within the “Community Strategy” drawn up by local authority and its partners?		 Meets Criteria




Ref No	Standard	Audit Response	Assessment
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Is there a commitment to establish mechanisms for responding to discrimination and harassment on the grounds of race, disability and gender?		 Meets Criteria




Service Delivery and Customer Care			
Ref No	Standard	Audit Response	Assessment
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there departmental and service area commitment to a comprehensive equality policy appropriate to its service delivery? 		 Meets Criteria
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there department and service area commitment to implementing the equality impact “needs / requirements” assessment for its service delivery including those assessments of organisational and individual requirements required for compliance with the DDA? 		 Meets Criteria
17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there departmental and service area commitment to developing the equal access service plan element of the CEP, and for each department and service area to set targets as part of their business plans? 	<p>Considerable evidence re equal access provision. Targets set and achieved re representation of board membership</p> <p>Strengthen by considering specific local performance indicators – identify need through impact assessments</p>	 Meets Criteria

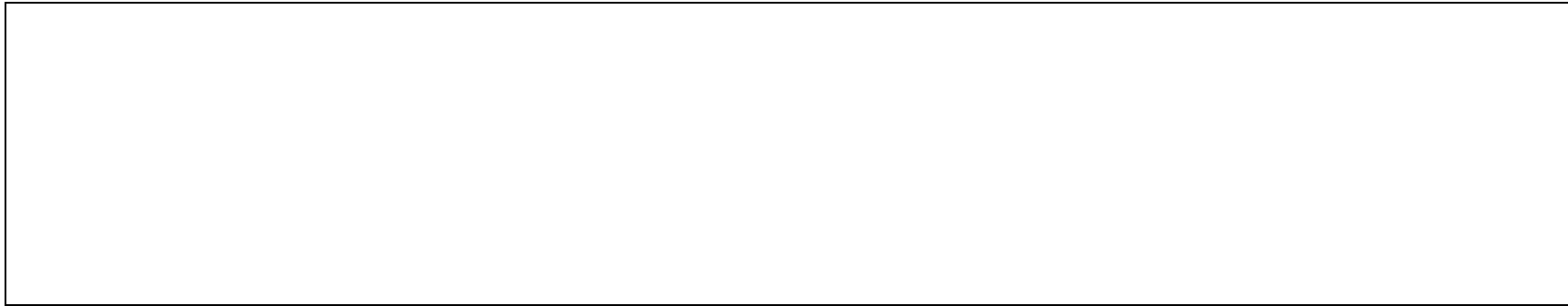
Ref No	Standard	Audit Response	Assessment
18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there department and service area commitment to equality action planning and equality target setting within all departments and service areas? 	Service improvement team improvement plan included as example. All others also include equality	 Meets Criteria
19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there department and service area commitment to allocate specific resources for improving equality practice? 	Shown through eg appointment of E&D Manager	 Meets Criteria

Employment and Training

Ref No	Standard	Audit Response	Assessment
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the Authority adopted recruitment procedures that use non-discriminatory practices? 		 Meets Criteria
21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a commitment to an employment equality assessment of the local labour market area, workforce profiling and equal pay review? 	Useful to have staff survey – would be strengthened by having this broken down by equality strand	 Meets Criteria
22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a commitment to establish a fair employment and equal pay policy? 	Ref 22 – complaints procedure – will not take complaints seriously if over 65? – last para	 Meets Criteria

Ref No	Standard	Audit Response	Assessment
23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a commitment to establish an equal employment section of the CEP incorporating the employment related issues from the Race Equality Scheme and including those assessments of organisational and individual requirements required for compliance with the DDA? 		 Meets Criteria
24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there commitments to adopt procedures to ensure that publicity for vacancies does not unfairly restrict the range of applicants? 		 Meets Criteria
25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a commitment to produce a standard range of application forms and job descriptions that are clear and explicit? 	Application form does not include LGB monitoring	 Meets Criteria

Ref No	Standard	Audit Response	Assessment
26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a commitment to review personnel information systems for monitoring suitability including underpinning the Council's statutory ethnic monitoring duties? 	Discussions taken place, and system is being developed	 Meets Criteria
27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a commitment to make procedures consistent with Employment Codes of Practice? 		 Meets Criteria
28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a commitment to develop a programme of staff training in equality issues? 	Some training has already taken place for the Board, and all staff have had a diversity workbook which the 97% have achieved a pass in	 Exceeds Criteria



I hereby certify that I represent an external independent agency who has undertaken an audit of Northwards Housing Equality & Diversity evidence against criteria for that Equality Standard Level 1

I declare that Northwards Housing has achieved Level 1 of the Equality Standard.

Comment: There is clearly good leadership and commitment to equality and diversity. There are supporting processes in place which enable the commitment to be translated into action, and this has already happened in a number of areas.

I have highlighted where areas can be strengthened and this will support the move to level 2

There are wide ranging methods of consultation in use, both with staff and with customers. In order to progress through the Standard it is also necessary to have a good understanding of the customer base (as is recognised) through monitoring systems which need to be consistent. The results of these need to be formally analysed and learning taken forward in a structured way

There is a sound base for moving forward.

Name Anne McMaster Strategic Equality Manager, Leeds City Council

Signature-----

Date 30 August 2006