

Renfrewshire Council : Education and Leisure Services

Gender Equality Scheme 2007-2010

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Under the Equality Act 2006 every education authority must produce a gender equality scheme and action plan to respond to the general and specific duties imposed. The education authority must also publish an equal pay policy statement.
- 1.2 The principles of inclusion and equality are embedded within the sound ethos across establishments in Renfrewshire and provide the context for responding to the general and specific duties in relation to gender equality as well as the other equality strands: race; disability; religion and belief; sexual orientation; and age.
- 1.3 The equal opportunities commission provided the following definition of concepts important to the general and specific duties. They help to distinguish between sex and gender and to explain the discrimination and harassment we aim to eliminate.
 - 'sex' refers to how people are born and describes the biological and physical differences between men and women;
 - 'gender' refers to the wider social roles, attitudes, values and behaviours attributed to men and women by society which structures men's and women's lives, for example, traditionally, a gender role would suggest that women should look after children, while men continue to work;
 - 'discrimination' refers to an instance where a woman, or a man, is treated less favourably than a person of the opposite sex in comparable circumstances, is, or would be, because of her (or his) sex. This is called "direct discrimination". "Indirect sex discrimination" occurs when a condition or requirement is applied equally to both women and men but, in fact, it affects a significantly higher proportion of women than men (or vice versa) and is not justifiable on objective grounds unrelated to sex; and
 - 'harassment' is defined as either unwanted conduct on the grounds of the recipient's sex or unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. In either case the conduct must have the purpose, or the effect of violating the recipient's dignity, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the recipient.

2 Background

- 2.1 Education and leisure services' gender equality scheme has been developed within the over-arching context of Renfrewshire Council's Gender Equality Scheme 2007-2010 which was approved by the Leadership Board in June 2007. This scheme covers all of the council's staff and services including education and leisure services.
- 2.2 To ensure that gender equality is promoted through the education system Renfrewshire Council undertook that its gender equality scheme would form the basis of consultation and involvement of schools, parent councils and pupil forums.
- 2.3 The scheme recognises the responsibility placed on education and leisure services to ensure that goods and services we procure from providers in the statutory, voluntary and commercial sectors meet the requirements of the gender equality duty.

3 The Gender Equality Duty

- 3.1 The scheme has been developed as a result of the Equality Act 2006. This legislation places a general duty on all public authorities when carrying out their functions to have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; and
 - promote equality of opportunity between men and women.
- 3.2 In addition to the general duty, the authority is subject to specific duties which are laid down in the Sex Discrimination (Public Authorities) (Statutory Duties) (Scotland) Order 2007. The Regulations set out the specific steps which must be taken to assist public authorities to fulfil the General Duty. These specific duties are to:
- publish a Gender Equality Scheme;
 - consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap;
 - gather and use information on how an authority's policies and practices affect gender equality in the work force and in delivery of services;
 - consult all key stakeholders and to take account of relevant information in order to determine gender equality objectives;
 - assess the impact of current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality;
 - implement the actions set out in the scheme within three years;
 - report on progress on an annual basis and review the scheme at least every three years.

3.3 Additional specific duties for education authorities are to make arrangements for each school under their management to:

- gather information on the effect of its policies and practices in relation to the extent to which they promote equality between male and female pupils;
- assess the impact of its policies and practices on equality between male and female pupils;
- provide the authority with annual reports in respect of the above matters;
- contribute to the implementation of the authority's action plan on gender equality; and
- maintain a copy of the authority's gender equality scheme.

The definition of school follows the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 and includes pre-5 establishments.

3.4 Education and leisure services' gender equality scheme and accompanying action plan, attached as annex A, have been developed to demonstrate how we intend to fulfil the general and specific duties.

4 Strategic Context

4.1 Guidance on the duty for pre-16 Education Providers in Scotland sets out a vision for gender equality in Scottish Education.

It should help us achieve a Scotland where:

- boys and girls achieve their potential and leave our schools with skills and qualifications that prepare them for life;
- girls and boys make choices, in terms of the subjects they study and the experiences they gain, which fit with their aspirations and abilities and are not tainted by gender assumptions;
- all aspects of a child's or young person's educational experiences tackle discrimination head-on and support teachers to promote equality in the classroom;
- excellence in promoting gender equality is recognised by school inspection frameworks;
- a gender-balanced workforce at all levels and across subject areas and staffing functions in our schools and education authorities is in place; and
- national education policies explicitly recognise and address gender differences and inequalities, supporting the professionals on the ground.

4.2 Education and leisure services' gender equality scheme has been developed within the context of Renfrewshire council's scheme, which sets out four objectives which are to:

- ensure that the Council promotes gender equality in its role as an employer;
 - tackle harassment and sex discrimination on the grounds of gender for all staff and service users;
 - ensure the Council promotes gender equality through access to and provision of high quality services; and
 - work with partners to address the violence against women agenda in Renfrewshire.
- 4.3 Education and leisure services' gender equality scheme complements a range of existing policies and strategies:
- Promoting Race Equality in Education;
 - Extending Support in Renfrewshire: A Partnership Approach for Additional Support Needs;
 - Tackling Bullying in Renfrewshire;
 - Prioritisation Policy;
 - Raising Achievement in Renfrewshire;
 - Building a Learning Renfrewshire;
 - Child in Need Policy;
 - Education of Looked After Children and Young People;
 - Physical Activity, Sport and Health Strategy;
 - Sexual Health Policy;
 - Parental Involvement Strategy; and
 - Procurement Guidelines.
- 4.4 As well as the Equality Act 2006, the gender equality scheme links to other key legislation:
- Children Scotland Act 1995;
 - Human Rights Act 1998;
 - Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000;
 - Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000;
 - Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004.;
 - Disability Discrimination Act 2005; and
 - Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006.
- 4.5 Key planning processes are also relevant, these are:
- Renfrewshire's Community Plan within which social inclusion is one of three guiding principles;
 - Integrated Children's Service Plan; and
 - Education and Leisure Services Service Plan.

4.6 Key priorities for education and leisure services, based on national priorities, underpin gender equality and the related duties. These are:

- raising achievement;
- working for inclusion and equality;
- learning for life; and
- modernising and improving.

4.7 The key priorities, set in the wider context of education and leisure services' visions and values, inform service planning and school improvement planning.

4.8 In line with the education and leisure services key priorities we aim to:

- provide the best opportunities for boys and girls, not necessarily the same opportunities;
- ensure schools take opportunities to promote equality;
- challenge discrimination and stereotyping;
- involve fathers and mothers in school life;
- reduce the exclusion levels of boys;
- support boys and girls to make positive choices, not influenced by gender stereotypes;
- ensure all forms of success are celebrated in school and at authority level; and
- improve the gender balance across the school workforce.

4.9 Much good practice exists in Renfrewshire which will address the main aims of the gender equality duty to:

- focus on organisational change;
- ensure a more proactive approach to the promotion of equal outcomes; and
- demonstrate change through positive outcomes which can be clearly evidenced.

5 The Role of Establishments

5.1 Renfrewshire establishments provide a wide range of educational experiences for children and young people from birth to 18 years both in a mainstream setting and in specialist provisions.

5.2 The corporate responsibility for Renfrewshire establishments is reflected within the scope of the action plan attached as annex A and the details of the key actions and responsibilities included in the plan.

5.3 The key role of establishments is discussed in more detail in the sections which follow.

6 Involving Stakeholders

- 6.1 The importance of listening to the views of children and young people is acknowledged at national level through the role of distributed leadership in establishments, the lead role of the Children and Young People's Commissioner and the key role of advocacy on behalf of individual children and young people or particular groups of children and young people.
- 6.2 Recommendations from the research by the Renfrewshire Council educational psychology service on consulting with young people are embedded within the authority's framework for additional support needs and the recommendations continue to inform practice across Renfrewshire.
- 6.3 The current good practice in Renfrewshire establishments has been used to ensure that a range of approaches have been adopted to include the involvement of children and young people in a meaningful way.
- 6.4 Renfrewshire Schools have Pupil Councils and there is a series of Renfrewshire wide pupil forums.
- 6.5 Implementation of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 acknowledges the important role parents and carers play in their children's education and the value added as a result. A range of approaches have been developed which are relevant to involving parents and carers in relation to gender equality. These include:
- membership of the authority's working group;
 - witness sessions at authority seminars;
 - training sessions for parents, facilitated by community learning and development staff;
 - development of parent councils and parent forums; and
 - focus groups.
- 6.6 Home link staff play an important role in facilitating the involvement of parents and supporting advocacy on behalf of parents who may not otherwise be involved.
- 6.7 Community learning and development staff make an important contribution to adult learning and community capacity building which support the general duties and facilitate involvement.

7 Impact Assessment

- 7.1 Central to the implementation of the gender equality scheme is the need to carry out gender equality impact assessments on all new and current policies, strategies and services.

- 7.2 Equality impact assessment is designed to anticipate and identify the consequences for different groups of particular policy initiatives and service delivery to ensure that as far as possible any negative consequences for a particular group are eliminated or minimised.
- 7.3 Implementation of equality impact assessment has been included in the council's scheme. Details are attached as annex B of the scheme.
- 7.4 Implementation will build on the work undertaken by education and leisure services in relation to race equality.

8 Gathering of Information

- 8.1 The Gender Equality Duty gives clear guidance on the information education and leisure services needs to gather to fulfil the specific duties on gender equality.
- 8.2 Data is currently collected and analysed by gender to quantify:
- the number of pupils on the school roll;
 - educational attainment at key stages within the 5-14 national testing framework and Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF);
 - attendance; and
 - exclusions from primary and secondary schools.
- 8.3 This analysis will identify any differentials between male and female pupils which require action.
- 8.4 Guidance will be issued to schools to ensure that the annual data collection exercise is robust and makes a meaningful contribution to the action planning process.
- 8.5 All data collected will be reported with due regard to data protection legislation.
- 8.6 In addition to gathering quantitative data, qualitative data from a variety of sources will be considered:
- analyses of complaints or customer feedback;
 - staff, pupil and parent or carer surveys undertaken to inform self-evaluation approaches and the external inspection process;
 - research projects; and
 - information from key partners in health and social work.
- 8.7 Qualitative data will also inform priorities within the action plan and successful outcomes. It will also highlight the range of barriers which gender inequality may impose.

9 Implementation

- 9.1 The action plan attached as annex A of the scheme will be the main vehicle for implementing the gender equality scheme between 2007 and 2010.
- 9.2 Monitoring of the action plan and implementation of the gender equality scheme generally will be undertaken by the customer support manager as lead officer in conjunction with the Equalities Steering Group which will consist of representatives of education and leisure services, establishments, health, social work and parents and carers.
- 9.3 Monitoring and evaluation of the action plan will inform the annual reporting and the revision of the scheme and action plan in 2010 and, thereafter, on a three year basis. This will help to ensure that the gender equality scheme remains a live document which will inform our planning and service delivery.

10 Reporting and review

- 10.1 Progress on the action plan will be reported to the education policy board on an annual basis. The first annual report will be published in June 2008.
- 10.2 The scheme will be reviewed in 2010 and a revised scheme will be published by June 2010. Thereafter the review will be repeated every three years.

Theme 1 - eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment

Outcome	Key Action	Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Timescale
Boys and girls, women and men are not discriminated against	Gather information on how education and leisure services affect men and women, boys and girls.	Performance Manager, Heads of Establishments	Information used to inform service planning and delivery and to ensure no discrimination occurs	December 2007 - June 2010
	Undertake equality impact assessment programme on existing and new policies and services for gender impact to inform service delivery.	Customer Support Manager, Heads of Establishment	Appropriate policies assessed for impact and action plans developed	December 2007 - June 2010
	Report annually on progress with our gender equality scheme and associated action plan	Customer Support Manager	Annual report to education policy board	June 2008
	Report annually on gender data related to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of pupils on the school roll • attainment, average tariff scores • exclusion • absence • leaver destinations • workforce 	Customer Support Manager	Annual report to education policy board	June 2008
	Review plan every three years	Customer Support Manager	Review reported to education policy board	June 2010

Theme 1 - eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment

Outcome	Key Action	Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Timescale
Pupils and staff are tolerant and respectful and understand and celebrate diversity	Monitor incidents of harassment on a six monthly basis in line with guidance on dealing with harassment to inform annual reporting	Customer Support Manager	Monitoring system operational and monitoring data acted on	June 2008
Consultation process contributes to compliance with gender equality duty	Consult staff, service users, parent councils, pupil forum, trade unions and partners on our gender equality objectives	Customer Support Manager	Objectives established and communicated, acted on and progress reported annually	June 2008
Improved participation in data provision enabling more effective service redesign	Parents and pupils informed of the need to gather information to promote equality of opportunity between men and women, boys and girls, by incorporating a statement in school handbooks	Customer Support Manager	Statement appears in school handbooks	2007-08

Theme 1 - eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment

Outcome	Key Action	Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Timescale
All staff will have enhanced professional knowledge, skills, expertise and understanding and feel more confident in carrying out their duties in relation to gender equality	Support and develop skills of our staff	Heads of Establishments, Heads of Service, Staff Development Manager	Data from professional review and training opportunities undertaken	2007-10
Have the right people with the right skills in the right job at the right time	Participate in corporate workforce planning and equality group	Customer Support Manager, Staff Development Manager	Data on gender in relation to staff grades, appointments, promotion, discipline and grievance	2007-10
Boys and girls, men and women are not harassed or bullied on grounds of gender	Review policy on tackling bullying in Renfrewshire to ensure it incorporates gender equality, homophobic bullying and sexual harassment	Customer Support Manager	Policy reviewed and circulated	2008-09

Theme 2 - promote equality of opportunity between men and women, boys and girls

Outcome	Key Action	Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Timescale
Excellence in promoting gender equality is recognised by school quality assurance frameworks	Identify gender equality objectives and keep these under review	Customer Support Manager, Heads of Establishments	Review of gender equality objectives and progress in achieving them reported annually	December 2007- June 2010
	Provide information to schools on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> existing areas of gender inequality the principles of and processes associated with the gender equality duty education authority action schools action desired outcomes the HGIOS3 based self evaluation toolkit key issues 	Customer Support Manager	Presentation delivered at head teachers meetings	2007-08
	Tackle the gender gap in pupil attainment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> whole school approach involving parents, pupils and staff re-assess learning, teaching and assessment methods for gender bias 	Heads of Establishments	Evidence of discussion and action by parent councils, pupil councils, staff Evidence of assessment and follow up action plans	December 2007-June 2010

Theme 2 - promote equality of opportunity between men and women, boys and girls

Outcome	Key Action	Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Timescale
Curriculum promotes and supports gender equality	Ensure choice, breadth and balance of the curriculum to foster the promotion of equality, ensuring all developments associated with A Curriculum for Excellence consider the gender dimension	Head of Children's Services	Evidence of consideration of the gender dimension in all developments associated with A Curriculum for Excellence	December 2007 - June 2010
Girls and boys make choices in terms of subjects they study and the experience they gain which fit with their aspirations and abilities and are not tainted by gender assumptions	Challenge gender stereotyping in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subject choice • work experience placements 	Senior Adviser (School Improvement)	Data on subject choice by gender to establish baseline and future targets Data on work placement/experience by gender to establish baseline and future targets	December 2007 - June 2010

Theme 2 - promote equality of opportunity between men and women, boys and girls

Outcome	Key Action	Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Timescale
<p>Gender equality will be promoted at establishment level, this will be recognised through self evaluation and external inspection</p>	<p>Schools will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include gender impact assessment in the school improvement planning process • gather data on the effects of policy and practice • contribute to achieving the Renfrewshire Council gender equality scheme • report annually on activities • maintain a copy of the authority's scheme 	<p>Heads of Establishments</p>	<p>Impact assessment carried out</p> <p>Data reported to the education authority</p> <p>Progresss on implementing the scheme reported annually to the education authority</p> <p>Annual report available to education authority</p> <p>Authority's scheme available in each establishment</p>	<p>December 2007 - June 2010</p>

Theme 2 - promote equality of opportunity between men and women, boys and girls

Outcome	Key Action	Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Timescale
Awareness will be raised and practice across all schools will improve	Analyse schools' audit of current practice to promote gender equality, identify gaps and share results with schools	Customer Support Manager	Excellence in promoting gender equality is recognised by school quality assurance	2007-10
Physical activity, sport and health strategy contributes to healthier lifestyles and improved mental health for young people	Encourage more girls to participate in sport and PE at secondary level	Leisure and Cultural Services Manager	Number of girls at secondary level participating in PE and sport	2007-2010
	Promote well-being and confidence through increased opportunities for physical activity	Leisure and Cultural Services Manager Heads of Secondary Schools	Increased opportunities for physical activity Increased number of young people participating	2007-2010
	Promote social inclusion and equal opportunity within sexual health and relationship education	Leisure and Cultural Services Manager	Revised policy developed	2007-08