



Gender Equality Scheme

Arabic

إذا رغبتكم الحصول على هذه النشرة بلغة أخرى غير اللغة الإنجليزية نرجو الاتصال بنا على رقم الهاتف التالي 01325 388678 مع ذكر رقم الإشارة.

Bengali

যদি আপনার ইংরেজী ছাড়া অন্য কোন ভাষায় এই প্রকাশনাটির দরকার থাকে, তাহলে নম্বরে ফোন করুন এবং সূত্র নম্বর উল্লেখ করুন। 01325 388678

Cantonese

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Punjabi

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Urdu

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Foreword

The Gender Equality Duty came into force in April 07. It is the biggest change in sex equality legislation in over thirty years. It means that there is now a clear responsibility on public bodies to take action to prevent discrimination, rather than the law relying on individuals to take action after the fact. At the Council we are keen to ensure that we translate this responsibility into practical improvements in the lives of women, men, girls and boys.

The Council recognises that there are gender differences in people's life chances. These can arise from differences in how well children do at school, what types of training and employment they go on to and what services they access during their lives. These differences can be linked to and exacerbated by other issues which may trigger discrimination and disadvantage like race, religion or belief, disability, health status, housing conditions and employment status. In short, equalities and inclusion is a complex and inter-linked picture. It is for this reason that the Gender Equality Scheme is published as an important part of our Corporate Equalities Plan, which in turn demonstrates clear links to "All Together Now: A Social Inclusion Strategy for Darlington".

In the delivery of this Scheme, we look forward to continuing and developing a dialogue between the Council and the people who live and work here. I think our Gender Equality Scheme is an important tool to help eliminate discrimination and disadvantage in Darlington.

Councillor Jenny Chapman
Cabinet Member for Communities and Engagement

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Gender Equality Duty comes into force in April 2007. It represents the biggest change in sex equality legislation in thirty years – since the introduction of the Sex Discrimination Act (SDA).
- 1.2. The Equality Act 2006 amends the SDA to place a statutory general duty on all public authorities to:
 - i Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
 - ii Promote equality of opportunity between men and women.
- 1.3. In carrying out their functions, public authorities must give “due regard” to this duty. This means that the weight which public authorities give to gender equality should be proportionate to its relevance to a particular function. That is to say that the greater the relevance of a function to gender equality, the greater the regard that should be paid to it. For example, the procurement of pencils will have low relevance to gender equality but the review of the Council’s flexible hours working scheme is likely to be much more relevant because of the potentially differing impacts on men and women.
- 1.4. To support the delivery of the general duty there are a number of specific duties. In summary, they are:
 - i To prepare and publish a gender equality scheme;
 - ii To consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap;
 - iii To consult stakeholders and take account of relevant information;
 - iv To assess the impact of its current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality;
 - v To implement the actions set out in its gender equality scheme;
 - vi To report against the scheme every year and review the scheme at least every three years.
- 1.5. As with its Race and Disability Equality Schemes and in order to demonstrate best fit with existing equalities practice, the Council’s Gender Equality Scheme will be published as part of the Corporate Equalities Review and Plan.

Why has the Gender Equality Duty been introduced?

- 1.6. The Equal Opportunities Commission are clear about the range of benefits that the duty will bring to public authorities:
 - i better-informed decision-making and policy development;
 - ii a clearer understanding of the needs of service users;
 - iii better-quality services which meet varied needs;
 - iv more effective targeting of policy and resources;
 - v better results and greater confidence in public services;
 - vi a more effective use of talent in the workforce.
- 1.7. The duty is intended to address the things that thirty years of individual legal rights to sex equality have not been enough by themselves to change. Things like the fact that women are frequently disadvantaged by policies and practices that do not recognise: their greater caring responsibilities, the different pattern of their working

lives, their more limited access to resources and their greater vulnerability to domestic violence and sexual assault. Men are also disadvantaged by workplace cultures that do not support their family or childcare responsibilities, by family services that assume they have little or no role in parenting, or by health services that do not recognise their different needs.

- 1.8. The duty should help the Council to identify and respond to sexism, sex discrimination and gender stereotyping.
- 1.9. By 21st December 2007, the scope of legal protection against discrimination on grounds of gender reassignment will be extended in the SDA, through the implementation of the Goods and Services Directive 2004/113. As a matter of domestic law, as a consequence, by that date (or the date of implementation if earlier), public authorities will be under a duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of gender reassignment in the provision of goods and services.
- 1.10. The Gender Equality Duty will be enforceable by judicial review. The Equal Opportunities Commission will have the power to issue compliance notices in respect of the specific duties. From late 2007 the new Commission for Equalities and Human Rights will have the power to conduct formal assessments and to issue compliance notices with regard to the general duty. Such notices will be enforceable in the courts.
- 1.11. It is relevant to note that the current Discrimination Law Review will focus on the simplification of existing discrimination law. From this will flow a Single Equality Act, which may result in an integrated public sector equality duty extending to sexual orientation, religion or belief and age as well as race, gender and disability.

Links to the corporate approach to equalities

- 1.12. The Scheme is an important part of the Council's Corporate Equalities Review and Plan. It complements the Council's existing race and disability schemes and "All Together Now: A Social Inclusion Strategy for Darlington" .

2. What is gender?

- 2.1. The gender equality debate is frequently muddled by confusion over the use of particular terms.
- 2.2. Gender and sexual orientation are different things. This scheme focuses only on the former. But it's important to remember that gender equality applies to everyone whatever their sexual orientation (for example, whether they are heterosexual, lesbian, gay or bisexual).
- 2.3. Gender equality can be better understood when we remember that "sex" and "gender" are not true synonyms. "Sex" refers to the physical and biological form of being male or female or both (intersexed or hermaphrodite) or neither (asexual). "Gender" refers to the social and cultural identification and perception of a person's masculinity or femininity as opposed to their biological sex.
- 2.4. "Gender identity" refers to a person's perception about his or her true gender. Approximately one in twelve thousand people born apparently male and one in thirty-three thousand born apparently female experience gender dysphoria or Gender Identity Disorder. This is the medical term for people whose core gender identity and physical appearance do not match up.
- 2.5. Transsexuality is an acute form of Gender Identity Disorder where a person's perception of their gender is the opposite of their biological sex. It is a condition that is quite independent of sexual orientation. Many transsexual people undergo hormone therapy and subsequent gender reassignment. This is a process which is undertaken under medical supervision for the purpose of reassigning a person's sex by changing physiological or other characteristics of sex, and includes any part of such a process.
- 2.6. Most transvestites, people who adopt the appearance, manner and behaviour of the opposite sex, are content with their gender and biological sex and do not wish to permanently alter their bodies.
- 2.7. Transgender is a generic term for transsexuality, transvestitism, hermaphroditism, intersexed people or anyone else dealing with the personal issues of gender identity. The Sex Discrimination Act already provides that people who intend to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment are protected against discrimination and harassment in the fields of employment and related areas and vocational training. From 21st December 2007, public authorities will be under a duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender reassignment in the provision of goods and services.

3. Achievements

3.1. Darlington Borough Council is proud of the progress it has made in the implementation of the broad equalities agenda. Evidence of this is set out in the Corporate Equalities Review and Plan. Some of this progress will form a platform on which to build the Gender Equality Scheme. It includes:

- i A corporate approach to equalities impact assessment in which gender equality is considered alongside other strands so that links between strands are not minimised or overlooked.
- ii Manager's guidance which advises how to build all strands of the equalities agenda into the procurement process.

3.2. There have been particular achievements in gender equality within departments:

- i In March 07, female students from secondary schools across Darlington toured Cummins Engines Factory as part of International Women's Day in an initiative designed to encourage more women to consider careers in the traditionally male-dominated fields of engineering and manufacturing.
- ii In Darlington libraries, the Council has changed the qualification requirements of the library assistant posts to encourage women, particularly those from BME communities, to apply for jobs. Within family learning, there are courses aimed at dads and grandads as they are under represented within this area of work. A new Mobius Gaming Club has been established in order to encourage more teenage boys to use the library.
- iii The fact that the majority of the Council's workforce is female is also now reflected in the fact that the majority of the Council's senior managers are female, too.
- iv A major job evaluation exercise has now delivered a new pay and grading structure in line with the National Joint Council Scheme. The Council believes that this provides a transparent and simple structure with equality as a core principle.
- v Within Housing Benefits discretionary housing payments have been specifically targeted at: young pregnant females who have rented larger properties before the birth of their child and who are disadvantaged by "single room rent"; and estranged fathers who have rented a property larger than their daily needs require in order to allow their children to visit (e.g. at weekends).
- vi The youth service is now working with Gay Advice Darlington to offer support to young people who are questioning their gender identity or sexual orientation.
- vii Sure Start now undertakes particular parenting work with dads.
- viii Darlington's Fair Share Community Development Worker now offers a programme of multi-cultural football training to both boys and girls.
- ix The Women into Enterprise project (2001-2003) provided women with support and encouragement to establish a new business or improve and expand an existing one. Fifty women were helped into self-employment.

- x Between 2001 and 2006 the percentage of new business start-ups by women has increased from 35% to 51%.
- xi Targeted at lone parent dads, a “Dads and Lads” event for Fathers’ Day at the Railway Museum last year was jointly organised with Sure Start to facilitate better access to leisure activities for male family members.
- xii Preparations for the establishment of a new Connecting with Communities Unit have ensured that the equalities agenda will be pursued through the Council’s engagement with the public.

Gender data on service users

3.3. The development of this scheme has been informed by snapshots of the gender profile of service users from across the authority:

Service Area	Males	Females	Info. not given	Total
Community Partnerships volunteers in 2006	184 (42%)	245 (55%)	14 (3%)	443
Zone Active project participants (2005-07)	518 (58%)	371 (42%)	0 (0%)	889
Live Darlington card holders 2007 (Leisure and Arts)	2,009 (55%)	1,619 (45%)	0 (0%)	3,628
Housing tenants	3,775 (58%)	2,732 (42%)	0 (0%)	6,507
Clients aged over 18 who received a Social Services assessment in 2006-7	477 (39%)	747 (61%)	2 (>1%)	1,226
Registered carers	770 (68%)	295 (26%)	66 (6%)	1,131

4. Gender Equality and Human Resources

Men and women in the workforce

- 4.1. The table below shows the Council's workforce profile in terms of gender as at the end of the 2005/6 financial year. (This is the most up-to-date information, as the Council is currently in the process of gathering this data as at the end of the 2006/7 financial year.)
- 4.2. The figures include schools staff and are separated out in terms of permanent and temporary (P&T) and casual and supply employees (C&S). They exclude Council Members and Youth Trainees.

Category	Male	Female	Total
P&T	1306	3023	4329
C&S	192	453	645
Total	1498	3476	4974

- 4.3. This shows that the majority of the Council's workforce is female (70%), with males representing 30% of the total workforce. This reflects a national trend.
- 4.4. This position is also reflected in the gender profile for recruitment and selection activity as at the end of the 2005/6 financial year, which is shown in the table below.

Gender	Applications Received %	Shortlisted %	Appointed %
Male	40.19	34.62	33.77
Female	59.81	65.38	66.23

- 4.5. The fact that females are more likely to be appointed than males needs to continue to be monitored. It is also reflected (roughly) proportionately in terms of the gender of leavers, with females representing 72% of leavers and males 28%.
- 4.6. The table below shows salary levels across the Council in terms of gender as at the end of the 2005/6 financial year (the most up-to-date figure). The figures include school employees and show full time equivalent salaries (any part-time salaries have been rounded up to the full time equivalent figure). They include permanent and temporary employees but exclude casual and supply employees, Council Members and Youth Trainees.

Salary Range (£)	Male & Female Totals & %		Total & %
	M	F	
10 – 14,999	565 43%	1403 47%	1968 46%
15 – 19,999	199 16%	674 22%	873 20%
20 – 29,999	279 21%	454 15%	733 17%
30+	263 20%	492 16%	755 17%
	1306	3023	4329

4.7. This shows that, whilst a higher percentage of female employees are earning up to £20,000 per annum than males, this position is reversed for salaries above £20,000 per annum.

4.8. However, there is a Corporate Health Performance Indicator (BVPI 11a) that measures the Percentage of the Top 5% of earners that are women. The position as at the end of the 2005/6 financial year is shown in the table below.

Year End 2004/05	Target 2005/06	Year End 2005/06
53.33%	56.85%	59.51%

4.9. Audit Commission figures showing the performance of all English Local Authorities against this indicator for the 2005/6 financial year are shown in the table below.

Top Quartile	Median	Bottom Quartile
40.23%	29.63%	19.63%

4.10. This indicates that Darlington Borough Council is securely in the top quartile of performance in this area.

4.11. The Council implemented a new pay and grading scheme in July 2006 as part of its Single Status Agreement. We have used the nationally agreed Job Evaluation scheme (National Joint Council for Local Government Services or the “Green Book”) to grade posts and the job evaluation score of a job determines the new grade. Each pay grade spans a number of job evaluation points. All the jobs that score in that range are deemed to be of equal worth and as such will be paid at the same grade.

4.12. The Council also has a number of HR policies and procedures in place that promote gender equality, including Maternity, Paternity, Parental and Adoption Leave and Pay Schemes that exceed legislative requirements in many areas. Schemes permitting time off for those with dependants and for urgent domestic reasons are also committed to the principles of gender equality.

4.13. In addition, the Council reviewed and changed a number of terms and conditions contained within the Green Book.

- 4.14. The Single Status Agreement's protection arrangements allow for assimilation onto the new pay and grading structure to be time limited in line with the 2005 Joint Guidance (Part 4.9 4) and guidance from the Equal Opportunity Commission. The Council believes that the new pay and grading system provides a transparent and simple pay and grading structure, with equality as a core principle and incremental progression for all.
- 4.15. The Council has also reviewed pay and terms and conditions for employees covered by the Joint Negotiating Committee for local Authority Craft and Associated Employees (known as the "Red Book") and implemented new pay arrangements which included the removal of bonus schemes.
- 4.16. The Council will look at all the figures at the end of the 2006/7 financial year to analyse the impact that the Job Evaluation exercise has had in this area.

Gender equality and workforce development

- 4.17. The Council has a training policy that provides for equal treatment for all in respect of training and development activity.
- 4.18. Corporately, all training activity is recorded on COMPEL (the Council's Personnel database) and we can access this data by gender etc. The Council ran a total of 482 courses in the 2005/6 financial year. Of these, 1,012 of the participants (56%) were female and 780 (44%) were male. Although this would appear to be out of line with the proportion of female and male employees in the workforce (70% and 30% respectively), it may be explained by the regularity and nature of courses run – e.g. the Council runs a manual handling course every two weeks, which tends to be attended by more male than female employees due to relevance to job role. This is due to the fact that the Council currently has more men than women in jobs that require significant amounts of manual handling.
- 4.19. To add to this, all Council Departments have been asked to keep appropriate training records to enable them to show how many applications for other training and development activity are met by gender category.
- 4.20. This data will help the Council to take steps to redress any imbalances in the future.

Transgender issues

- 4.21. The Council's equalities and anti-harassment and bullying policies protect the rights of people of different genders and sexual orientations. The dignity and privacy of transgender people is protected in Human Resources policies and procedures in the same way as other staff. There is also provision for the Council to accept different means of verifying identity where a transgender person may feel that their birth certificate is inappropriate. Existing procedures with regard to, for example, counselling, occupational health and special leave arrangements can be used by those in gender transition.

5. Ensuring single-sex activities comply with the law

- 5.1. In certain circumstances, the Council may wish to address gender inequality by developing policies or providing services on a single-sex basis. This might mean providing services to one sex only, providing a similar service separately to each sex or providing a service in different ways to women and men. This could be an appropriate (or necessary) way of complying with the gender equality duty if evidence shows that single-sex approaches are needed to allow both women and men an equality of outcome from their access to public services. The most common examples of this in practice are rape crisis centres or refuges for women who are victims of domestic violence. Public authorities might also wish to consider providing single-sex family support or health services, under certain circumstances.
- 5.2. The Council must satisfy itself that any approach to single-sex activities complies with the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA). The legal provisions are different for education, for goods, facilities or services, and for public functions.

Education

- 5.3. It is unlawful for schools or any other educational establishments to discriminate, either directly or indirectly, in the way they treat or admit pupils and students (subject to the exceptions listed below). This means, for example, that in mixed schools, it is unlawful to provide classes for only one sex where this would amount to less favourable treatment of the other sex. However, single-sex educational establishments are legal, and may discriminate in admissions.
- 5.4. Sex segregation is not expressly prohibited by the SDA and it is therefore potentially lawful to provide separate lessons in single-sex groups for boys and girls in a mixed school provided that there is no question of one sex receiving 'less favourable treatment'. Denying girls the same opportunities as boys, and vice versa, will usually amount to less favourable treatment. Therefore any facilities, benefits, or services provided must ordinarily be available to both sexes and provide equal opportunities. Provided that this test is met, it would be legally possible to provide segregated classes on, for example, sex education.
- 5.5. The provision of additional classes for one sex only in a mixed school is unlikely to be lawful if the opposite sex does not have access to equivalent facilities, benefits or services. This is because it can amount to less favourable treatment, even if the motive behind the idea is well-intentioned, because it denies opportunities to the opposite sex.
- 5.6. This means, for example, that remedial classes in English for under-performing boys alone would not be lawful, unless the same help or opportunity is being given to any girls who are also under-performing. Participation in remedial classes to address under-performance would have to be based on objective criteria unrelated to sex, such as the previous test results of participants. If a school wished to run two sets of classes segregated by sex, however, one for under-performing boys, and one for under-performing girls, this would be permissible provided they were of like quality, in like manner and on like terms.

- 5.7. Where curriculum choices are being offered it is unlawful to offer different options to girls or to boys, as denying either sex the choice of all options is likely to amount to discrimination (unless covered by the positive action provisions detailed below).
- 5.8. The overriding consideration in all cases must be to ensure that girls and boys are not disadvantaged because of their sex and that they are provided with equal opportunities.

Positive action in relation to training and advertisements

- 5.9. There are limited exceptions under the SDA to allow either women only or men only access to facilities for training. Under those provisions, it is permissible to restrict access to training to either women or men to prepare them for particular work, or encourage women only or men only to take advantage of opportunities for doing that work, where the numbers of women or men (respectively) doing such work in Great Britain were comparatively small at any time during the preceding twelve months. Where the numbers of women or men undertaking particular work in a local area is comparatively small, single-sex training may also be provided to people who are likely to take up that work in that area to help prepare them for that work.
- 5.10. It is lawful to provide single-sex training to women or men who have a particular need for training to fit them for employment, because they have been out of full-time employment while carrying out domestic or family responsibilities. It is also lawful to take those special training needs into account when selecting applicants for training in mixed-sex classes to prepare them for employment.
- 5.11. These are forms of positive action that can legally be used to counteract the effects of past discrimination.
- 5.12. It is important to remember that while the SDA allows employers to encourage members of one sex to apply for a job in which that sex is under-represented. Before doing that employers need to be sure exactly what the balance of the sexes is among their employees who are doing the particular kind of job to be advertised. Any publisher being asked to publish an advertisement which encourages applications from one sex should be informed of the legality of this positive discrimination under the SDA so that they know it is legal to publish.

Goods, facilities and services

- 5.13. It is unlawful for the Council as a provider of goods, facilities or services to the public to discriminate, either directly or indirectly, in the way it treats women or men (subject to the exceptions listed below) by either refusing to provide goods, facilities or services, or by providing services that are not of a similar quality, in like manner or on like terms as are normally offered by the provider in question. For example, entertainment and recreation, professional services, any Council services, facilities for transport or travel, facilities for grants, and access to, and use of, public places.
- 5.14. However, it is lawful to limit the provision of facilities or services to one sex in the following circumstances:
 - i Hospitals or establishments providing special care, supervision or attention. This would apply, for example, to nursing homes or psychiatric institutions.

Women's refuges might fall within this exception if they were providing 'special care, supervision or attention' comparable to that provided at a hospital, as would rape crisis centres if they were providing medical or psychiatric care. The provision of housing for women with specific care support needs might also fall within this exception. It is lawful to discriminate in the admission to communal accommodation¹ if the accommodation "is managed in a way which, given the exigencies of the situation, comes as near as may be to fair and equitable treatment of men and women"². In considering this, account shall be taken of whether and how far it is reasonable to expect that the accommodation should be altered or extended, or further alternative accommodation be provided, and the frequency of the demand or need for use of the accommodation by men as compared with women.

- ii Facilities or services where female users are likely to suffer serious embarrassment at the presence of a man (or vice versa). This exception potentially covers services such as group counselling or advice about matters such as sexual health, sexual offences or intimate personal health or hygiene; rape crisis centres and women's refuges may fall within this exception if they involve group provision of services involving intimate personal matters. The criterion of "embarrassment" is likely to restrict coverage of the exception to situations involving intimate personal matters. Single-sex swimming or exercise sessions could potentially be covered by this section if it could be shown that users are likely to suffer serious embarrassment if users of the opposite sex are present.
- iii Places where the users are likely to be in a state of undress and might reasonably object to the presence of the opposite sex, such as facilities for separate male and female changing rooms and any group service involving intimate personal health and hygiene.
- iv This exception is likely to cover sports sessions involving a high degree of physical contact such as judo or wrestling, self-defence classes or group sessions in massage. The objection must be 'reasonable' and a low degree of physical contact is likely to be found to be unreasonable. For example, the fact that in first aid training there may be some physical contact between users is unlikely to be an argument for the provision of single-sex sessions.
- v Competitive sporting activities can be restricted to one sex, where the average woman's physical strength puts her at a disadvantage to the average man. This is intended to allow separate sporting events where the physical differences between women and men render competition unfair. Where the sports sessions are not related to participation in competitions, it is not lawful to restrict them to one sex (unless another exception applies, for example on the grounds of reasonable objection to physical contact, as detailed above).

¹ Being residential accommodation used by women only or men only (for reasons of privacy or decency) as it includes shared sleeping accommodation, or because of the nature of the sanitary facilities.

² Gender Equality Duty, Draft Code of Practice England and Wales, published by the Equal Opportunities Commission

Public functions

- 5.15. Discrimination in the exercise of public functions is lawful for:
- i the provision of a service for only one sex where only persons of that sex require the service;
 - ii the provision of separate services for each sex where a joint service would or might be less effective;
 - iii the provision of a service to one sex only where: it is also provided jointly, and if it were provided jointly only it would or might be insufficiently effective ;
 - iv the provision of a service for one sex only where: if the service were provided for both sexes jointly it would or might be less effective and the extent to which the service is required by the other sex makes it not reasonably practicable to provide separate services for that sex;
 - v the provision of separate services for each sex in different ways or to different extents where: if it were provided for both sexes jointly it would or might be less effective, and the extent to which the service is required by one sex makes it not reasonably practicable to provide the service for that sex in the same way or to the same extent as for the other sex;
 - vi action taken for the purpose of assisting one sex to overcome: a disadvantage (as compared with the other sex) or the effects of discrimination.
- 5.16. In practice, however, there will only be very limited occasions when the Council is likely to be justified in these approaches.

6. How will we know if the Scheme has made a difference?

- 6.1. The aim of this Scheme is to help the Council make visible and faster progress towards gender equality. The outcomes listed below give an indication of the sorts of things an excellent Council might achieve:
- i Service users notice that services are more accessible and better tailored to their needs, and service outcomes by gender begin to improve.
 - ii Women and men are making greater use of services that people of their sex had previously under-used.
 - iii Fathers receive greater support for their childcare responsibilities from public services and employers.
 - iv Girls have higher aspirations for their future careers.
 - v Women and men are represented at all levels of the workforce and in all areas of work.
 - vi Sexual harassment of staff, service users and others is dealt with promptly and systematically, according to agreed procedures and tolerance drops within the organisation as a whole.
 - vii The reported level of discrimination experienced by pregnant women and those returning from maternity leave reduces and is eventually eliminated.
 - viii The gap between women and men's pay narrows and is eventually eliminated.
 - ix Employees with caring responsibilities are receiving greater support from the public authority, including flexible and part-time working opportunities at all levels of work.
 - x Transgender people feel supported and valued as staff and potential staff by the Council.
 - xi Employees are aware of the gender equality duty, understand how it will affect their work, and have the skills they need to implement the duty in their work.
 - xii Gender equality issues, and their budgetary implications, are considered at the beginning of policy-making.
 - xiii There is a wide variety of data and information across the organisation that can be used to assess effectively how certain actions will affect men and women or girls and boys.
- 6.2. It is suggested that the annual review of the Scheme addresses which of these outcomes should be prioritised in Darlington and suggests ways of measuring those outcomes that are most important.

7. Consultation

- 7.1. After initial consultation with Corporate Management Team, the direction of the of the Gender Equality Scheme was set by the Council's Strategic Social Inclusion Group and delivered by the Inclusion Implementation Group. Wider consultation on the preparation of the Scheme was extensive.
- 7.2. It included:
- i A debate at the Health Improvement and Social Inclusion themed group of Darlington Partnership;
 - ii A challenge to all Darlington Partnership lead officers to identify persistent gender inequalities;
 - iii Intranet and internet user consultation;
 - iv Internal communications announcement in the Flyer (staff newsletter) inviting staff and members' views on persisting gender inequalities
 - v Press release publicising the Council's approach to the Scheme and inviting comment on proposals
 - vi A debate at a meeting of the Council's Corporate Management Team;
 - vii Invitation to comment mailed to key stakeholder organisations including partners from the public, private and voluntary and community sectors.
- 7.3. Further to the above debates and discussions, 57 people indicated their own views and priorities in relation to gender equality to us in writing. They ranged in age from 21 to 77 years old and comprised Council officers, members of the public and stakeholder representatives.
- 7.4. Results showed that 75.8% of these respondents felt that gender inequality still exists in Darlington. More than a quarter of respondents felt that they had been treated unfairly because of their gender in the last five years. Respondents were asked to identify what they thought were the important issues in gender equality. There was unanimous agreement that unequal pay between men and women was the top priority. 98% of respondents agreed that domestic abuse and the problems of job stereotypes were important or very important issues.
- 7.5. It is interesting to note that almost twice as many respondents thought that discrimination against transgender people (62%) was a very important issue than thought health inequalities were very important (34%).
- 7.6. The outcomes of consultation included:
- i Identification of new priority issues;
 - ii Refinement of the action plan;
 - iii Sketching of links between gender equality issues and the wider equality agenda;
 - iv Wider buy-in to the Scheme from a broad range of staff and stakeholders;
 - v Raised local profile for the Scheme;

8. Action Plan

What?	Why?	Resources	Who?	When?
Publish the Gender Equality Scheme on the Council website and intranet.	To raise awareness among staff.	Existing resources	Kathryn Plant	Dec 07
Modify the Council's equality training specification to take account of new developments in gender equality.	To ensure that staff understand the Gender Equality Scheme and their responsibilities in relation to it.	Existing resources	Carol Wyers/Maggie Swinden/David Plews	Jan 08
Run gender equality briefings with senior managers.	To cascade awareness of the new Gender Duty.	Existing resources	David Plews	Jan 08
Complete phase two of the implementation of Single Status, including a review of flexible working arrangements.	To ensure that there is a parity of pay and conditions for Council jobs of equal value.	Existing resources	Lesley Blundell	March 08
Link gender equality performance to the Council's attainment of level 4 of the Equality Standard for Local Government	To continue to join-up the performance management of equalities	Existing resources	David Plews	March 08
Produce corporate guidance for service managers on equalities monitoring service users.	To ensure consistency of equalities monitoring across the Council.	Existing resources.	Social Inclusion Implementation Group / David Plews.	June 08
Ensure that tackling bullying among young people focuses on differentiating approaches according to the gender profiles of victims and perpetrators.	To reduce bullying among young people.	Existing resources (via Anti-Bullying Strategy)	Jenni Cooke	Oct 08
Improve the satisfaction with their employer of pregnant women and new mothers returning to work.	To help eliminate discrimination against women.	Existing resources	Maggie Swinden	Oct 08
Analyse by gender those in gender-typical jobs (e.g. engineering services, teaching, cleaning, refuse	To ensure that men and women are represented at all levels of the workforce and in all	Existing resources	Maggie Swinden	March 09

collection) with a view to taking positive action to improve the gender balance.	areas of work.			
Review and standardise leave arrangements in a new Leave Policy.	To ensure fairness in leave arrangements for all staff.	Existing resources	Lesley Blundell	March 09
Work with young people in schools and informal settings to challenge the gender stereotypes which may influence career choice.	To remove barriers to improved life chances.	Existing resources	Janet Walke/ Mervyn Bell	Sept 09
Ensure that gender equality remains a core part of the Council's multi-strand equalities impact assessment process	To ensure that gender equality issues are considered at the beginning of policy-making.	Existing resources	David Plews	ongoing
Monitor the essential criteria in the person specifications of advertised posts.	To avoid unwitting discrimination against, for e.g., part time workers, those who have gained qualifications in other countries.	Existing resources	Lesley Blundell	ongoing
Appropriately support and value transgender staff and customers.	To eliminate discrimination against transgender people.	Existing resources	Carol Wyers/ Lynda Bosanko	ongoing
Analyse bullying and harassment records to ensure that instances of sexual harassment are being treated with due seriousness. Take remedial action if necessary.	To help eliminate sexual harassment.	Existing resources	Maggie Swinden	ongoing

Gender Equality Scheme

How can we improve gender equality in Darlington?

The Gender Equality Duty is part of a new law that comes into force in April 2007. It will help public bodies to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment;
- promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

Your responses to this short survey will help us to do this more effectively in Darlington.

1. Do you feel that gender inequality still exists in Darlington today?	
<i>Please tick</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes - widespread	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes - in some ways	<input type="checkbox"/>
No - not really	<input type="checkbox"/>
No - not at all	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Within the last five years do you think you have ever been treated unfairly in Darlington because of your gender?	
<i>Please tick</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes - often	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes - occasionally	<input type="checkbox"/>
No - not really	<input type="checkbox"/>
No - never	<input type="checkbox"/>

2a. If this involved a local organisation, please give details. This will help us to prioritise our work with local organisations in the future.

3. Please indicate how important you feel the following issues are for gender equality. Please tick:

Issue	Very important	Important	No view	Un-important	Not important at all
a) Job Stereotypes: Young people should be able to make career choices without worrying about traditional stereotypes of what is “men’s work” and what is “women’s work” (98% of apprentices in construction, the motor industry and plumbing are men, 98% of childcare workers are women.)					
b) Domestic abuse: In Britain, one incident of domestic violence is reported to the police every minute. 89% of those suffering four or more incidents of domestic violence are women.					
c) Domestic abuse of men: Men may find it hard to seek help when they are the victims of domestic abuse.					
d) Transgender discrimination: Women who choose to live as men and men who choose to live as women are at high risk of discrimination and disadvantage.					
e) Unequal pay: Women are more likely to be in low paid jobs than white men.					
f) Unequal life expectancy: In Darlington men can expect to live to age 75, women to 79.					

<p>g) Service access inequalities: Men are less likely to seek medical help from their GP when they have a health problem.</p>					
<p>h) Health inequalities: Darlington men are more likely to die from circulatory disease and cancer than women.</p>					
<p>i) Education inequalities: 38% more boys than girls leave Darlington schools with no A*-G passes.</p>					

Statistics from: Equal Opportunities Commission publication "Facts about Men and Women in Great Britain 2006"; Darlington PCT publication: "Director of Public Health Annual Report 03-04", Darlington Borough Council's education statistics.

4. Are there any other persisting gender inequalities that you think Darlington Borough Council's Gender Equality Scheme should address? Please describe them.

Equality Monitoring Information

The information you provide is voluntary and confidential. If you complete this section you will be agreeing that Darlington Borough Council holds this information but it will only be used for monitoring purposes and general analysis. If you give us this information it will help us to complete a more detailed analysis.

What is your gender?

Female

Male

What was your age on your last birthday?

Please tick one box from the list below which best describes your ethnic group:

White	
<input type="checkbox"/>	British
<input type="checkbox"/>	Irish
<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other white background, please specify:

Mixed	
<input type="checkbox"/>	White and Black Caribbean
<input type="checkbox"/>	White and Black African
<input type="checkbox"/>	White and Asian
<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other Mixed background, please specify:

Asian or Asian British	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Indian
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pakistani
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bangladeshi
<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other Asian background, please specify:

Black or Black British	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black Caribbean
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black African
<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other black background, please specify:

Chinese or other ethnic group	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese
<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other ethnic background, please specify:

Please send your completed questionnaire to Kathryn Plant, Policy Assistant, Chief Executive's Office, Town Hall, Darlington, DL1 5QT or kathryn.plant@darlington.gov.uk by 18th May 2007.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire ■