



# ***WILTSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE***

**Wiltshire and Swindon Fire Authority**

## **Gender Equality Scheme**



***Draft 2007 - 2010***



## Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service

### Gender Equality Scheme

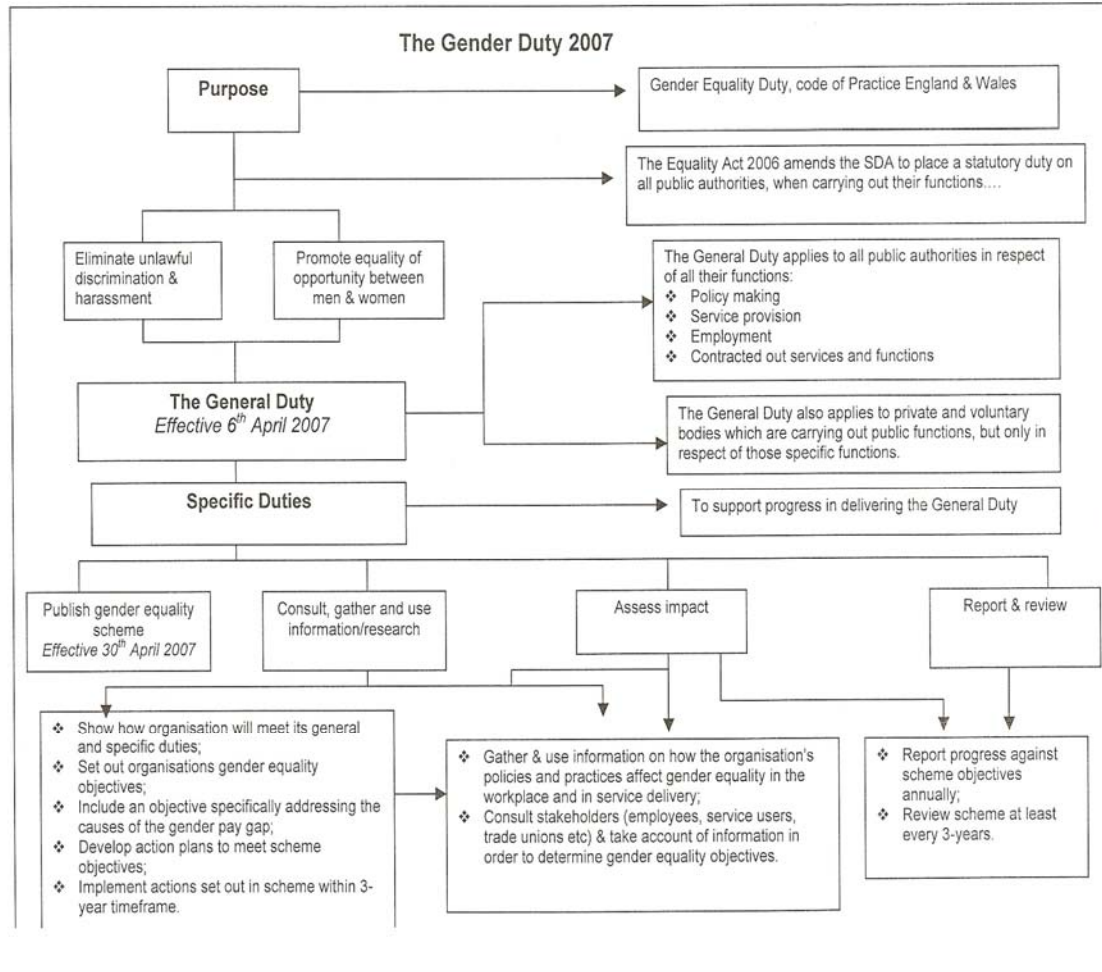
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Equality Impact Assessment  
Completed  
By Whom  
Date

# Gender Equality Duty An Overview and Summary



Source: IODA

Women and men have to fight together to change society - and both will benefit... Partnership, not dependence, is the real romance in marriage.

Muriel Fox

## **Gender Equality Scheme Summary**

Despite 30 years of the Sex Discrimination Act, there is still widespread discrimination and persistent gender inequality. This is not always intentional. Policies and practices that seem neutral can have a significantly different effect on women and on men. This often contributes to greater gender inequality and poor policy outcomes. Gender roles and relationships structure men's and women's lives. Both sexes suffer from stereotyping of their roles and needs. The gender equality duty should help us to:

- Identify and respond to stereotyping
- Tackle discrimination
- Prevent harassment
- Ensure equality of opportunity between men and women
- Build gender equality into the core business thinking and processes of the organisation.

The gender equality duty takes legal effect from 30 April 2007.

### **Why have a gender equality Scheme?**

The Gender Equality Scheme is a written statement of how Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service will meet its legal duty. It outlines how we promote gender equality in our day to day activities.

At the heart of the Gender Equality Scheme is a three year improvement plan. Every year we will review progress against this plan, and we will publish our findings. Every three years we will produce a new Gender Equality Scheme and improvement plan.

## **Gender Equality in our services to the Public**

The Gender Equality Duty gives us an opportunity to make sure that our services are meeting the needs of both women and men. It means that we will have to think more closely about the policies we develop and the services we deliver with the different needs of men and women in mind. We need to look at people who have used our services, and at prospective service users and ask some key questions.

- Are there any different issues and priorities for the men and women who use our services?
- Do they have different requirements and needs to be met by our service?
- Could women or men be put off using some of our services?

## **Gender Equality in Employment**

The Gender Equality Duty also gives us an opportunity to look at some of the gender issues in our employment practices. We need to ask the following questions:

- Is there a pay gap between men and women?
- How does flexible working help staff and does it benefit both men and women?
- How can we address the gender imbalance in some of our job roles?
- Do our practices and procedures support the dignity and privacy of transsexual people?

## Equal Pay for Men and Women

A "gender pay gap" is determined by calculating women's overall average pay as a percentage of men's. Factors, which are likely to contribute to a pay gap are:

- The impact of women's traditionally disproportionate share of caring responsibilities (which often restricts career continuity and progression)
- The concentration of women in particular jobs
- Occupational Segregation

Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service in 2006/07

Average pay for men = £28579

Average pay for women = £22455

"Gender pay gap" = £6124

In other words, the average salary for a woman in Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service is currently 79% of the average salary for a man.

We will be undertaking an equal pay review in order to explore the reasons for this gender pay gap.

We will determine whether any of our employment policies and practices may be contributing to the causes of the pay gap

I've yet to be on a campus, where, most women weren't worrying about some aspect of combining marriage, children, and a career. I've yet to find one, where, many men were worrying about the same thing.

**Gloria Steinem**

*US feminist (1934 - )*

## **Family and Caring Responsibilities**

Gender roles and relationships structure men's and women's lives. Women may be disadvantaged by policies and practices that do not recognise their greater caring responsibilities and the different pattern of their working lives. Women are significantly more likely than men to work part time.

This leads to lower pay, and may also restrict career development opportunities.

Men may be disadvantaged if they work in a culture which they feel does not support their family or childcare responsibilities or their desire to work more flexible working patterns.

In our next Staff Survey we will gather evidence on the impact of caring responsibilities on our workforce. This will help us identify any significant issues that need to be addressed.

We will look at ways in which we can open up jobs at all levels to part-time working, job sharing, and flexible working.

## **Job Roles**

Only a small percentage of our current operational (firefighting) staff are women. This is a similar situation to fire and rescue services across the UK. This is because of job roles. Traditionally, the majority of firefighter recruits have been men. In recent years we have worked hard to change this situation.

Most of our "support staff" roles are filled by women. The majority of these roles are those that attract lower pay scales than those of operational staff.

Over the three-year lifespan of this Gender Equality Scheme we will continue to look at new ways of recruiting and retaining women as firefighters. Much of this work will be around changing public perceptions of the fire and rescue service and making our jobs a more attractive career option for women.

We also need to increase the number of women recruited or promoted

into senior management roles.

We will analyse the concentration of women and men in particular areas of work. We will work to tackle horizontal and vertical segregation within the workplace, and examine the types of jobs that men and women do within the organization.

### **Sex Change**

Transgenderism or transsexualism is a recognised medical condition where an individual believes and feels that he or she was born in the body of the wrong sex.

Gender reassignment is a process, undertaken under medical supervision, of changing a person's sex.

There is a real life test before this change takes place. This is where a person must live and work in the new sex before making the final commitment.

A person has rights not to be discriminated against because they are intending to go, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment. We will develop further guidance for managers and staff.

This is to make sure that we fully respect the rights of transgender or transsexual people, and support their dignity and privacy.

### **Domestic Violence**

Domestic violence is an issue that affects both men and women, though, statistically, women are more likely to be the recipients.

We will be developing guidance to help staff and managers understand and support those who are affected by domestic violence.

## **The Gender Equality Duty**

### **1. What is the Gender Equality Duty?**

- 1.1 The Gender Equality Duty (GED) comes into force in April 2007. It is the biggest change in sex equality legislation for 30 years, designed to help women and men including transsexual / transgender employees.
- 1.2 The GED requires Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service as a service provider, as an employer and as a policy maker, to promote gender equality and eliminate sex discrimination.
- 1.3 The duty will affect employment policies and practices including recruitment and flexible working.
- 1.4 The GED is different from previous sex equality legislation in two ways:
  - a) There is a positive requirement for Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service to take action to prevent discrimination and harassment, rather than waiting for individuals to make claims against the Service.
  - b) There is a positive requirement to act to promote gender equality, not just to avoid discrimination.
- 1.5 The Equal Opportunities Commission is clear that the GED cannot be 'hidden away' in Human Resources, but must be addressed by the organisation at a strategic level with responsibility lying with the whole top management team. It should not be seen as intimately interlinked with other requirements and guidance in relation to services for women.

## **2. Why do we need the Gender Equality Scheme?**

- 2.1 30 years after the introduction of the Sex Discrimination Act there is still discrimination. The rights of individuals do not oblige organisations to promote equality. The GED will bring about real change in the culture of organisations, as the onus will be on organisations to promote equality, rather than on individuals to highlight discrimination.

## **3. What Difference will it make?**

- 3.1 The GED will mean that women and men get services that meet their needs more closely. It will still be legal to provide single sex services, where there is a clear need to preserve decency or privacy, see Appendix 1.

## **4. Who has to Comply?**

- 4.1 The GED applies to all functions of every public authority. A public authority is 'any person who has functions of a public nature' as defined in the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. This includes councils, schools, hospitals and police authorities as well as central government departments.
- 4.2 The GED applies directly to certain private or voluntary sector bodies when they are carrying out public functions on behalf of the state. An example of this is a private company who transports prisoners. Public bodies are still covered by the GED when services are contracted out to external organisations. This could include community transport, stationery or catering services. This also includes any rooms or facilities we hire for courses and events.

## **5. How can we achieve our goals?**

- 5.1 Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service will need to think about policies it develops and the services it delivers with the different needs of women and men in mind. We need to ask ourselves “What are the different issues and priorities for women and men who use the services we provide?”
- 5.2 We will have to follow a series of steps known as 'specific duties'. This includes setting their own gender equality goals and consulting our service users, customers and employees.
- 5.3 These specific duties include the exact steps we need to take to help us meet the general duty. The specific duties are to:
  - a) Draw up a scheme identifying gender equality goals.
  - b) Develop an action plan to support the Gender Equality Scheme, using the SMART formula to develop objectives.
  - c) Consult employees, service users and other stakeholders as appropriate in drawing up our gender equality schemes.
  - d) Publish the scheme, setting out goals and planned outcomes
  - e) Monitor progress and publish annual reports on progress
  - f) Review their gender equality scheme every 3 years
  - g) Develop and publish a policy on Equal Pay between women and men – including measures to promote Equal Pay, fair promotion and development opportunities and tackle occupational segregation.
  - h) Conduct and publish Equality Impact Assessments (consulting appropriate stakeholders) of all proposed developments in services, policy and employment.
  - i) Develop and publish arrangements for identifying developments that justify conducting a formal gender impact assessment.

## **6. What are the Benefits for our organisation?**

6.1 Any successful organisation strives to satisfy customers and retain good staff. By taking gender into consideration we will:

### **6.2 For our Services:**

- a) Understand what women and men really need from our services.
- b) Improved customer satisfaction by tailoring services to actual needs and improving responsiveness and quality, reducing the possibility of complaints.

More effective targeting of resources and improved service means we will deliver a more cost effective service with a more efficient use of resources.

- c) Less time dealing with complaints gives staff more time to deal with core responsibilities and more time working on core activity means higher efficiency, see Appendix 1.

### **6.3 For our Current and Future Employees:**

- a) Improvements in recruitment, as considering gender can help us fill any skills gaps.
- b) Flexible working and improving the work – life balance means happier more motivated staff and higher staff retention.
- c) Equal pay for work of equal value will prevent costly tribunal cases and increase employee satisfaction.
- d) Action on maternity leave will increase retention, and reduce spend on recruitment.
- e) More efficient use of talent in the workforce, see appendix 2.

## **How will the scheme be enforced**

- 7.1 The GED is enforced by judicial review and the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) will have the power to issue compliance notices in connection with a breach of the general duty, see appendix 3.

## Specific Steps and Actions

### Actions

#### 1 Consultation

(a) To invite comment and discussion of this scheme from Members, MT, union representatives, and all employees

E&D  
manager

Commencing

April 2007

(b) To circulate the scheme to other stakeholders and invite their comments

E&D  
manager

April 2007

#### 2 Monitoring

To ensure we have adequate gender monitoring in recruitment, selection, performance management, promotion, training, grievance, discipline, bullying & harassment and those leaving WFRS

Personnel  
Manager  
HR Team

April 2007

#### 3 Gender pay gap

(a) To set up an Equal Pay Review in line with any national guidelines. Consider any actions in light of this.

Director  
People  
E&D  
manager

September  
2007

#### 4 Accessible WFRS

Research and Evaluate the use of our services by women and men and their satisfaction with the outcomes.

Corporate  
Services  
E&D  
Manager

TBA in 2007

#### 5 Impact Assessments

(a) List relevant HR policies for impact assessment and prepare action plan for delivery

Personnel  
Manager  
HR Policy  
Writer  
HR Staff  
CRR  
Fire Safety  
IT

Ongoing

(b) Our services/Documents aimed at our service users will be impact assessed

Finance  
Operations  
Corporate  
Services

Ongoing

## **6 Staff awareness training and development**

- |   |                |         |
|---|----------------|---------|
| (a) Deliver awareness training to all WFRS staff  | E&D<br>Manager | Ongoing |
| (b) To ensure new staff are aware of the gender duty and offer ongoing diversity awareness training to all new recruits | E&D<br>Manager | Ongoing |
| (c) Provide all managers with guidance on how policies and practices can impact on gender                               | E&D<br>manager | Ongoing |

## **7 Single Scheme**

- |   |                                      |              |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| (a) Consider Developing a single equality scheme in line with national guidance and the formation of the CEHR | Director<br>People<br>E&D<br>Manager | January 2008 |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------|



# **Gender Equality Scheme**

## **Appendices**

## Appendix 1

### Actions to ensure the duty is implemented as a service provider

- **Processes and systems:** Systems need to be set up for ensuring that the right data is available to determine gender equality priorities and monitor progress towards gender equality goals. Data systems should also include information on service user needs, satisfaction and outcomes by gender. In most cases this should involve disaggregating existing data, but in some cases new data may be needed.
- **Meeting the duty in policy development:** To meet the duty effectively, we need to ensure that our policies are not discriminating against either women or men, or maintaining or leading to gender inequality. To do this, we will need to:
  - Collect evidence on the impact of core policies on women and men
  - When major new policies are being developed, assess their likely consequences for women and men
  - Alter or amend proposed policies so that they promote gender equality and eliminate discrimination
  - Resource those changes appropriately
- **Meeting the duty in service design and delivery:** To meet the gender duty in service design and delivery we will need to check the available information on who is using your services.
  - Is the information disaggregated by sex?
  - Do men and women use the service in different ways?
  - Do women and men have different needs from the service?
  - Are there particular groups of women or men who do not use or under-use a service, or who are less satisfied with it?
  - Is there evidence that a one-size-fits-all service is not appropriate?
  - Are there big discrepancies in the service outcomes by sex?
- **Making decisions on changing design or delivery of services:** Because the duty requires us to take active steps to promote equality between women and men, it requires more than an acceptance of the status quo. We need to consider existing research and examples of good practice to assist us in analysing the reasons for any gender inequality, and take steps to address it.
- **Ensuring single-sex services comply with the law:** We will need to satisfy ourselves that any approach to single sex services complies with the Sex Discrimination Act. Sex discrimination is unlawful in education, in goods, facilities, and services and (since the Equality Act of 2006) in the performance of public functions.

## Appendix 2

### Actions to ensure the duty is implemented as an employer

To meet the Gender Equality Duty as an employer we will need to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practices and actively promote gender equality within our workforce. In practice this will involve a cyclical process of: data collection, analysis of data, developing an action plan, implementing the plan and monitoring the outcomes to inform further action.

The following are key employment issues we should consider when deciding what our priorities for action are:

- **Recruitment**

We will need to ensure that our recruitment processes are fair and that all staff involved in recruitment receives training in interviewing and equal opportunities. It is recommended that we think about ways of opening up jobs at all levels to part time working, job-sharing and flexible working.

- **Concentration of women and men into particular areas of work**

To tackle horizontal and vertical segregation within the workforce, examination of the types of jobs that men and women do within the organisation is needed. Consider taking positive action such as providing women-only training schemes.

Look at the proportion of men and women at senior levels in our organisation. Examine if men predominate because of a lack of opportunities for part-time or flexible work at higher levels? Are there any senior female role models?

- **Managing flexible working**

Examine how we have been able to accommodate requests for flexible working and whether we respond in the same way to men and women. Are we able to go further and offer flexible working for all carers or all staff?

- **Part-time work**

To meet the duty it is important to measure the impact of your employment practices on both full and part-time workers. Can access to part-time work be widened across the organisation? What opportunities exist for enabling part-time workers to move to full-time posts when they are available and vice versa?

- **Managing leave for parents and carers**

How do we promote the right to take parental leave to your staff? Do we apply our policies equally between men and women? Is there more that can be done to encourage take-up of paternity leave and parental leave amongst fathers? Do we monitor those within the organisation who have caring responsibilities for an adult friend or family member? What can we do to raise awareness of our carers' policies?

- **Managing pregnancy and return from maternity leave**  
Introduce and maintain a culture that is positive towards pregnancy and family responsibilities at all levels, and back this up with written guidance on managing pregnancy and maternity.
- **Sexual and sexist harassment**  
Consider if it is appropriate to carry out risk assessments for groups of staff that are particularly vulnerable. Adopt complaints and investigations procedures for dealing both informally and formally with sexual harassment. Monitor the number of complaints of harassment and their outcome, and review practices and procedures to ensure they are working effectively. Provide regular and accessible training
- **Transsexual staff and potential staff**  
Discrimination on the grounds of sex includes discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment in employment and vocational training. We need to review all of our employment policies and procedures to ensure that they adequately cover transsexual employees – especially those dealing with confidentiality, harassment, access to development, occupational pensions and insurance.
- **Grievance and disciplinary procedures**  
We need to ensure that we apply both grievance and disciplinary procedures equally to men and women.
- **Redundancy**  
We need to ensure that we apply redundancy policies equally to men and women and check that the redundancy selection criteria do not impact more adversely on one sex, for example if they are based on length of service or hours worked.
- **Retirement**  
Ensure that our retirement policy is applied equally to men and women. Look at the proportion of male and female staff that are members of your pension scheme. What can we do to encourage take up amongst staff who may be under-represented within the scheme e.g. part-time workers, who are more likely to be women?
- **Equal pay**  
Implement an equal pay review to ensure that the pay system delivers equal pay. Include a comparison of the pay of men and women doing equal work. Eliminate those pay gaps that cannot satisfactorily be explained on grounds other than sex.  
(Some of these requirements link to our BVPI and Equality Standard targets)

- **Career progression**

Analyse the current career progression systems for all staff. Make recommendations for making the process applicable to all staff.

## **Appendix 3**

### **Assessment**

The CEHR requires authorities to have due regard to gender equality when making decisions about the future; and also to take action to tackle the consequences of decisions in the past which failed to give due regard to gender equality.

Our discharge of the gender duty is likely to be assessed by the EOC, the CEHR and public sector inspectorates on the following criteria:

- **Information:** availability of information to understand the impact of your work on women, men, and transsexuals.
- **Involvement:** have the relevant people inside and outside the organisation been involved?
- **Transparency:** has information about the policy making process been made widely available?
- **Proportionality:** have efforts and resources been focused on where they will have the most impact?
- **Effectiveness:** has the action delivered the required outcomes and led to greater gender equality?

## **Appendix 4**

### **Research and References**

ACAS publications and web pages

The Equal Opportunity Commission publications and web pages

The Fawcett Society publications and web pages

South West London and St Georges Mental Health Trust

Walsall Council publications and web pages

Kent Fire and Rescue Gender Equality Scheme

IODA conference and materials