



LONDON FIRE & EMERGENCY PLANNING AUTHORITY

MEETING

**Human Resources, Equalities and  
Health and Safety Panel**

AGENDA ITEM

**Authority**

MEETING DATE

6 & 21 June 2007

DOCUMENT NUMBER

**HRE 000/FEP 000**

SUBJECT

**Gender Equality Scheme**

REPORT

(24.5.07) by the Head of Equalities

**Summary**

This report sets out the latest position regarding the publication of a Gender Equality Scheme which will supplement the existing Combined Equality Scheme.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the report be received.

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**BACKGROUND**

1. The Equality Act 2006 amends the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 to require the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) in carrying out its functions to have due regard for the need to:-
  - eliminate discrimination and harassment; and
  - promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

This is known as the gender equality duty. As part of the duty LFEPA is required to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment in employment and vocational training for people who intend to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment.

2. The Equality Act intends that public authorities adopt a proactive approach to meet the duty. To meet this duty, the Authority will continue to take a proactive approach to gender equality in the following areas:-
  - corporate policy development;
  - service delivery policy and practice;
  - employment policy and practice;
  - equal pay considerations; and
  - eliminating harassment.

3. In order to demonstrate to the public that LFEPA is discharging its gender equality duty, the Equality Act 2006 requires the publication and implementation of a Gender Equality Scheme. The purpose of the scheme is to set out a framework which will show how the LFEPA will meet its general and specific duties, will set out LFEPA's gender equality objectives and enable the Authority to plan, deliver, evaluate and report on action intended to address gender equality.
4. The Gender Equality Scheme outlined below is part of and should be read in conjunction with our Combined Equality Scheme ([FEP 945](#)). The Combined Equality Scheme covers age, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion and sexual orientation.

### **LFEPA's Gender Equality Scheme**

5. The Authority is required to include in its gender equality scheme how:-
  - we consult employees, service users, trade unions and other stakeholders on issues of gender equality;
  - we gather information on the effect of our policies and practices on men and women and in particular the extent to which they promote equality between male and female staff, and the extent to which the services we provide and the functions we perform take account of the needs of men and women;
  - we make use of such information and any other information we consider to be relevant to assist in the performance of our general and specific duties and in particular our regular review of the effectiveness of the actions identified as being necessary to achieve the fulfilment of the overall objectives under the scheme and our arrangements for the preparation of subsequent schemes;
  - we assess the impact of our policies and practices, or the likely impact of our proposed policies and practices on equality between women and men; and
  - we achieve the fulfilment of the overall objectives we have identified as being necessary to perform the gender equality duty and our specific duties.
6. The Authority must ensure that its gender equality scheme sets out the overall objectives which it has identified as being necessary for it to perform its general and specific duties. When formulating the overall objectives of the scheme, the Authority must consider the need to have objectives that address the causes of any differences between the pay of men and women that are related to their sex.

### **How we consult service users and our staff**

7. Each year we invite the public generally and specific stake holders to comment on our London Safety Plan. From the latest consultation, there are early indications that there are differences between men and women as to what they require from the services we provide. This will be subject to more detailed analysis and the outcome will be reported in the next annual review. We also sample the users of our service to determine how satisfied they are with the service we provided.
8. In addition our complaints and compliments procedures provide valuable information on our services.
9. At Borough level, we consult with community organisations, including women's organisations. This too informs our judgement.
10. The information which the consultation provides is disaggregated in terms of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion and sexual orientation. By these means we are able to assess the different impact our public services and as far as our staff are concerned, employment practices, may have on men and women and more specifically men and women of different ages, who are disabled and non-disabled, from different ethnic backgrounds, from different religions and of different sexual orientation.

11. Similarly we consult our staff individually and through staff trade unions (the Fire Brigades Union, the Fire Officers Association, GMB and UNISON) on our London Fire Safety Plan and Corporate Plan. Staff responses to consultation are gender disaggregated. We consult Trade Unions and staff support groups who send representatives to the meetings of the Authority's Human Resources, Equalities and Health and Safety Panel, which is a member-level Panel that advises the Authority on employment policy. We consult the trades unions through the established industrial relations machinery and also specifically on reports which affect their terms and conditions. We allow the trades unions to make representations direct to the Authority under Section P3 of the Staff Code, and we allow deputations by the public at Authority meetings.

### **Gathering service delivery information and how we use it**

12. We collect information about the age, disability status, ethnicity, gender, religion and sexual orientation of people who use our emergency and fire safety services. We conduct service satisfaction surveys. Once again the respondents can be disaggregated so that we can determine if there is a difference in the satisfaction rates of men and women and particularly between men and women across the other five equality strands.
13. The information is analysed by our Management Information Unit and the subsequent analysis is considered first by our specialist Equality Services personnel who then advise internal decision making bodies, such as departmental management boards, the Corporate Management Board and the Authority's Human Resources, Equalities and Health and Safety Panel and, if necessary, the full Authority.

### **Gathering employment information and how we use it**

14. We collect information about the age, disability status, ethnicity, gender, religion and sexual orientation of staff through the various stages of recruitment, employment, career development, training, promotion and retirement. We also collect data on discipline, grievances and staff complaints, including complaints of sex discrimination and harassment, sickness absence and the take up of part-time working. Again this data is disaggregated between men and women and men and women through the other five equality strands, so that we can search for under-representation of men or women and the reasons for it.
15. Again the information is analysed by our Management Information Unit and the subsequent analysis is considered first by our specialist Equality Services personnel who then advise the various decision making bodies who deal with employment policy and practice. These include departmental management boards, the Corporate Management Board and our governing bodies, particularly the Human Resources, Equalities and Health and Safety Panel and the full Authority.

### **Gender impact assessments**

16. Each department is required to prioritise and then equality impact assess all the existing policies they are responsible for. Equality Services personnel audit the process and require remedial action where necessary before the impact assessment is signed off. The same process applies to the formulation of new policies.
17. The purpose of the impact assessment is to ensure neither men nor women are disadvantaged by our policies or practices and to see where we can promote equality of opportunity for men or for women.

## **Pay discrimination**

18. LFEPA does not control the pay system for operational staff, who work under different conditions of service to non-operational staff. Fire fighters pay and many of their conditions of service are agreed nationally by the National Joint Council.
19. In 2006/07 the Authority engaged outside consultants, Hay Group, to conduct a pay and grading review for non-operational staff. The review found that where operational and non-operational staff were doing the same work or work of comparable value, the Authority should explore further the justification for pay differences, notwithstanding the different conditions of service. These differences occur where operational and non-operational staff work along side each other in specialist departments. Where, in these specialist departments, there is also a gender division, that is operational men doing the same work as non-operational women, the Authority will decide if an equal pay review is merited to determine if the pay differences can be satisfactorily explained on grounds other than sex.

## **Caring responsibilities**

20. LFEPA has policies and practices in place which address work/life balance and caring responsibilities. We shall continue to monitor the impact of these policies on men and women and report the outcome annually.

## **Occupational segregation**

21. Addressing the occupational gender segregation of the work force is one of the major employment concerns of LFEPA. Where as with non-operational staff 51% are women, on the operational side only 3% of fire fighters in London are women. This is a disproportion which the fire service shares with other manual occupational groups, such as the construction industry and engineering.
22. LFEPA is currently working, through a range of employment initiatives, to address the imbalance. The Government has set an employment target of 15% women fire fighters by 2009.

## **Setting gender equality objectives**

23. To meet the above requirements of our gender equality scheme, LFEPA has set corporate priority gender equality objectives for the next three years (Appendix A4 to report ([FEP 945](#)) lists the objectives), and for ease of reference is attached to this report.
24. The objectives were arrived at after analysis of management information, from sources listed at paragraph 13 above and after consultation with the public and our staff (see paragraphs 6 & 10 above.) The priority gender equality objectives for the next three years concern:-
  - Flexible working patterns;
  - Assessing the equal pay findings of the Hay Group report;
  - Providing support to women fire fighters;
  - Gender awareness training particularly to address harassment;
  - The recruitment of more women fire fighters;
  - Improving resting, washing and changing facilities at fire stations for men and women fire fighters;
  - Revising our transsexual staff policy;
  - Exit interviews with women and transsexual fire fighters;
  - Increasing the external contracts awarded to businesses owned by women; and

- Reviewing the pay of non-operational women doing the same work, or work of equal value, to the work of operational men.
25. To ensure the objectives are met, progress is monitored by Equality Services. Those charged with meeting each objective are required to report progress to the Corporate Management Board and the Human Resources, Equalities and Health and Safety Panel and to the full Authority every six months.
26. We have set no service delivery gender equality objectives as a priority for the next three years. This is because our measurement of service delivery does not indicate any significant difference between men and women, who receive or do not receive our services, nor in terms of how well our services are delivered and received.
27. This is not to say that, at borough level or indeed corporately, we do not target men or women exclusively to meet service delivery targets. For example, in the area of Home Fire Safety we target a community group comprising older women or older men, young girls or young boys. We work with women's refuges to improve fire safety or with hostels for homeless men. Similarly we might target a minority ethnic community group comprising women or men.

### Annual reports and tri-annual review

28. LFEPA will publish a report annually on the progress made and will review and revise our gender equality scheme every three years.

### Environmental Impact

29. There is no environmental impact.

<b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985</b>	
<b>List of background documents</b>	
Combined Equality Scheme 2006-07 Report (FEP 945)	
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	<b>Class:</b> Panel agendas, minutes and panel meetings
It also appears in the publication scheme under:	<b>Category:</b> Working for LFEPA
	<b>Topic:</b> Equality and Fairness
	<b>Class:</b> Equalities Policy Statement
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## Gender

Code	Service Plan Code	Objective	Task	Lead Dept	End Date	Comments on how performance will be measured/Desired outcome
G1	D18.A	Flexible working patterns	To develop proposals for a range of different working patterns	HR		We have already introduced a range of flexible working arrangements including career breaks, part-time working and variations to working patterns. We will publicise different ways of working in the organisation and monitoring the take up. We will report annually
G2	E07	Provide support to women firefighters	To continue to support Networking Women in the Fire Service (NWFS) and will collaborate with the Women's Advisory Committee (WAC) (a section of the Fire Brigades Union)	ES		We will facilitate regular meetings with the Deputy Commissioner, Director of Resources and the Head of Equalities  We will make arrangements to enable NWFS representatives to attend the Human Resources, Equalities and Health and Safety Panel and the Equalities Management Board
G3	E11	Gender Awareness Training	To continue to provide specific training that supports women's development. We will support staff at all levels in our organisation in their understanding of diversity issues	T&D		We will report annually on the activities that take place  We will facilitate attendance by women at the Annual NWFS conference  We will arrange 2 specific training events for women every year  We will run 4 one day workshops on sexual orientation issues, which will include discussion on transgender issues, by the end of March 2007
G4	E19	Recruit more women firefighters	To continue to promote firefighting as an occupation for women through working with the DCLG and GLA	HR		We will continue to hold women's open days and fitness clinics and to attend outreach events  We will target women for specific career development opportunities

						We will report on the outcome of these activities by March 2008.
G5	E34	Diversity in the workforce	To ensure compliance with the Accommodation on Fire Stations Policy	Prop		We will randomly sample at least 10 stations a year to ensure adherence on the Accommodation on Fire Stations Policy.  We will revise the Accommodation at Fire Stations Policy by 31 March 2007
G6		Diversity in the workforce	To revise the Transgender Policy	ES		We will revise the Policy by Autumn 2007
G7		Diversity in the workforce	To carry out detailed exit interviews	HR/ES		We will carry out exit interviews on all women operational staff and any staff who define themselves as transgender
G8		Supplier Diversity	To target with the LDA areas where there are a high proportion of women who run businesses	Proc		We will report annually on the number of women run businesses who have been awarded LFEPA contracts
G9		Equal Pay between men and women	To assess the equal pay findings of the Hay Group report	HR		We will address the causes of any difference between the pay of men and women that are related to their sex