



# **Bedfordshire Police Authority**

## **Single Equality and Human Rights Scheme**

**2009 – 2011**

## **Contacting Bedfordshire Police Authority**

If a member of the public believes that they have been affected by a failure of Bedfordshire Police Authority to comply with its statutory obligations in relation to equalities matters, they should complain to:

Chief Executive  
Bedfordshire Police Authority  
Bridgebury House  
Woburn Road  
Kempston  
Bedford MK43 9AX  
Telephone: 01234 842066  
Email: [info@Bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:info@Bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk)

Complaints can be made in writing, by email or by telephone, or in person by prior appointment. If you wish to discuss a possible complaint or other issue please contact the Chief Executive to the Authority.

The Authority will acknowledge complaints immediately and will contact the complainant to discuss the most appropriate way to progress and deal with the problem. The Authority aims to complete an initial investigation and respond to the complainant within 28 days (although exceptional or complex cases may take longer). This will include information about pursuing the complaint further with the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

All complaints made in respect of this Scheme will be monitored by the Chief Executive and reported to the Authority.

Where a complaint relates to the actions of an individual member of staff this will be dealt under disciplinary procedures.

Where a complaint relates to the actions of an individual member of the Authority this will be dealt with under the Authority's Code of Conduct in respect of members of the Authority.

## **Accessibility**

**If you require information contained in this document an alternative format such as large print, Braille or audio tape, or if you would like this scheme explained to you in your language contact:**

**Telephone: 01234 842066**

**Email: [info@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:info@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk)**

**Typetalk: 18001 01234 842066**

## Foreword

We are pleased to introduce Bedfordshire Police Authority's Single Equality Scheme. It brings together in one document the existing statutory duties in relation to race, disability, Transgender and gender equality, and goes beyond them to include other legislative requirements for other strands of diversity, i.e. age, religion or belief and sexual orientation. It also addresses how the Authority will meet its duties under the Police and Justice Act 2006 to promote equality and diversity within both Force and the Authority, and monitor the Force's compliance with duties imposed by the Human Rights Act 1998.

We welcome this harmonisation of our approach to diversity, equality and human rights. The Scheme is more than just a way of satisfying our legal responsibilities. It is the framework of standards and principles that will be applied by the Authority to ensure that quality policing services are delivered in a manner which is fair for all sections of the community, that people are treated with respect and that the workforce reflects the community it serves. The Authority will work closely with the Chief Constable to achieve these aims.

Whilst it is the Authority's statutory duty to maintain an effective and efficient police force for the County of Bedfordshire, the delivery of policing services rests with the Chief Constable. The Force has its own separate Single Equality Scheme and a crucial role for the Authority is to scrutinise and monitor the Chief Constable's performance in relation to equalities and diversity matters.

This Scheme builds on the work in the Authority's previous Equality Schemes (Race, Disability and Gender). However, we recognise that it is just the beginning in meeting our wider responsibilities in relation to all strands of diversity and the Scheme needs to be flexible and responsive to the needs of the people of Bedfordshire. To that end, we will involve our communities in taking the Scheme forward and welcome comments from individuals, partners, community groups and other organisations.

Peter Conniff  
Chair of the Police Authority

Stephanie McMenemy  
Chief Executive of the Police Authority

## **Introduction**

Since 2002, Bedfordshire Police Authority, like most public bodies, has had a statutory responsibility under the Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended) and supporting secondary legislation to publish a Race Equality Scheme setting out how it intends to fulfil its general duty to promote race equality. Our first Scheme covered the period 2002-2005 and was revised and republished in 2005 for the period up to May 2008. Following further legislative changes in the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006, similar additional obligations have been placed on public bodies to publish a Disability Equality Scheme and Gender Equality Scheme. The Authority published its Schemes in December 2006 and April 2007 respectively.

The Authority's decision to produce a Single Equality Scheme arises from changes in the approach to equalities issues at national level. The Equality Act 2006 established the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) with effect from October 2007 to replace the three former equalities commissions (the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Commission for Racial Equality and the Disability Rights Commission). In addition to its responsibility for enforcing anti-discrimination rules in the areas of sexual orientation, religion or belief and age, the EHRC has a general responsibility for the promotion of human rights.

The United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 which set out the fundamental rights and freedoms shared by all human beings based on core principles like dignity, equality and respect. The European Convention protects the human rights of people in countries that belong to the Council of Europe which includes the United Kingdom.

Until 1998, people in the United Kingdom had to complain to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg if they felt their rights under the European Convention had been breached. The Human Rights Act 1998 made these human rights part of our domestic law, and courts in the United Kingdom can now hear human rights cases.

The Police and Justice Act 2006 places a duty on a police authority to monitor the performance of the police force maintained for its area in complying with the duties imposed on that force by the Human Rights Act 1998.

This joined up approach presents the opportunity for Bedfordshire Police Authority to produce a Single Equality Scheme to meet its statutory duties across all strands of diversity.

A Single Equality Scheme will reduce bureaucracy and duplication between separate schemes, increase our focus on achieving positive outcomes, and also make what we are doing to tackle issues of diversity and equality more accessible to the public. Publishing a Single Equality Scheme also allows us to encompass other areas of equality and diversity where there are laws forbidding discrimination in certain activities but where there is no positive obligation to promote equality, e.g. religion and belief, sexual orientation and age.

In meeting its statutory duty to secure the maintenance of an effective and efficient police force for its area, and its role as the legal employer of police staff, the Police Authority recognises that it has a critical role in ensuring that the Bedfordshire Police meets its diversity and equality responsibilities.

The Government's long-awaited Equality Bill was introduced in the House of Commons on 24 April 2009 and given a Second Reading on 11 May.

The Bill is now undergoing the House of Commons Committee Stage but is unlikely to reach the House of Lords until the next session of Parliament in the autumn of 2009. It is expected to receive Royal Assent in spring 2010, and the majority of the provisions are expected to come into force in October 2010.

As is currently the case there will be a general duty requirement placed on public bodies when exercising their functions to have due regard to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality and;
- Promote good relations

Bedfordshire Police Authority will be closely monitoring the Bill's progress over the next year.

## **The Role of Bedfordshire Police Authority**

The primary statutory responsibility of Bedfordshire Police Authority under the Police Act 1996 is to secure the maintenance of an effective and efficient police force for the County of Bedfordshire.

The Authority discharges its responsibilities within what is known as “the tripartite structure” that governs the 43 policing areas in England and Wales. The three partners are the Home Secretary who has responsibility for policing at a national level; the police authorities who set the local strategic direction of policing and the chief police officers who are responsible for the delivery of local policing. In Bedfordshire the chief police officer is the Chief Constable. The Authority is a body of governance and not delivery. Delivery is broadly the function of police forces. The operational management of policing in Bedfordshire lies with the Chief Constable.

## **Organisational structure and decision-making process**

### **Membership of the Police Authority**

There are seventeen members of the Authority. They represent a cross-section of Councillors representing Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton including , Magistrates and the general public – all coming from a wide variety of personal, career and ethnic backgrounds.

- Four elected central Bedfordshire Councillors
- Three are elected Luton Borough Councillors
- Two elected Bedford Borough Councillors
- Eight are Independent members, one of whom must be a Magistrate, selected from applicants responding to public advertisements and appointed by the Home Office

### **Officers of the Police Authority**

The Police Authority is located in Bridgebury House at the Police Headquarters site in Kempston, Bedfordshire. The police authority employs eight officers with responsibilities varying from day to day management, policy, committee services and administrative support.

- Chief Executive/Treasurer
- Clerk/Monitoring Officer
- Head of Strategic and Policy development
- Policy and Projects Officer
- PA to Chief Executive/Treasurer/Chair/Vice Chair
- Administrative Officer
- Member Services Support Manager
- Member Services Support Officer

In addition the Authority retains a marketing communications and public relations consultancy (Better Times Limited) who handle communications with the various partners and stakeholders with which the Authority deals.

### **Organisational Structure and Decision Making**

The police authority's business is structured around a range of Committees which meet quarterly to monitor and scrutinise Bedfordshire Police. The committees are:

- Performance Committee – responsible for overall strategic planning, Best Value and Performance;
- Audit and Business Assurance Committee – monitors and makes recommendations covering all areas of best practice on Corporate Governance;
- Finance Committee – responsible for revenue and financial management;
- Human Resources Committee – responsible for recruitment, retention and training.
- Complaints and Professional Standards Committee – considers complaints from the public and internal discipline matters
- Community Engagement Committee – considers the involvement of the public, either as individuals or as a community, in policy and service decisions which affect them.

Each committee is managed by a Chairperson and comprises members of the Authority with relevant experience.

The full police authority meets in public five times a year. There is a fifteen-minute “Question Time” session at the beginning of each full meeting of the Authority. If members of the public have a question, the Clerk needs to be informed by post, fax or email.

The Authority has also established a Standards Committee to oversee, promote and facilitate high ethical standards by our members.

In addition to the formal committee structure the police authority has a number of advisory panels and working groups to ensure the smooth execution of all areas of the authority’s responsibilities. These include the Youth Issues Group and the Race, Diversity and Equality Advisory Panel. The panel/groups meet at least on a quarterly basis.

### **Role of the Equality and Diversity Panel**

The role of the panel is to: -

- Embed, within the Authority and Bedfordshire Police, the values of fairness and respect, through raising awareness of equality, diversity and human rights issues both internally and externally.
- Ensure effective community engagement with all diverse communities in Bedfordshire and Luton.
- Undertake a scrutiny role, on behalf of the Authority, on equality, diversity and human rights issues.
- Represent the Authority on Bedfordshire Police Equality and Diversity Programme Board at Force and Basic Command Unit level and external bodies.
- Monitor the implementation of the Authority’s Single Equality Scheme.

The Advisory Panel ensures that:

- We have complied with our equality duties (Race, Disability and Gender);

- Equality of opportunity is promoted during the life of the schemes
- Improvements are achieved in areas identified as priorities for action
- Lack of progress is identified and acted on
- Consultation and involvement is undertaken to monitor public perception and satisfaction

The Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel will oversee and monitor the implementation of the Single Equality Scheme and will present a report on the progress made against the action plans contained within the Scheme on an annual basis to the full Police Authority.

## **Vision**

### **Our vision:**

To be an organisation that inspires trust and confidence, that listens, responds and meets the needs of individuals and communities

This vision will be delivered through six strategic priorities:

To ensure people experience an accessible policing presence in their neighbourhoods and are able to influence the local policing service.

To ensure that our services are viewed from an individual's perspective, and that our staff respond to our different communities' expectations, when dealing with crime and incidents.

To ensure we have in place the right processes that identify the most serious threats to the public and the capacity and capability to respond appropriately to deal with the risks.

To ensure we have in place the right workforce make-up and the right combination of skills, technology, equipment and people and flexibility to tackle our responsibilities as a Police Service.

To ensure people see us working with partners both within Bedfordshire and Luton and with other police forces, making the best use of public money and improving the services together.

To ensure people see us using people, budgets and all other resources wisely to deliver a value for money service.

### **Policing Pledge**

In common with all other Police Authorities we are committed to providing a national standard on what local people can expect from a local Police service. This is underpinned by a set of local priorities agreed by people in each neighbourhood.

The Policing Pledge reinforces our intention of putting the people of Bedfordshire at the very heart of everything we do, as together we strive to make our area an even better place to live

The Policing Pledge also aims to deepen the relationship between the public and Bedfordshire Police, giving communities a stronger voice in setting local police priorities

### **Partnerships**

The Authority works in partnership with various other public bodies and agencies to discharge its functions. They include councils, Community Safety Partnerships, Local Strategic Partnerships, staff organisations, the Bedfordshire Criminal Justice Board and other police authorities and forces. Where partnerships are with organisations which are not subject to the duties, the Authority will ensure that partners understand the obligations created by the duties.

### **Custody Visitors Scheme**

The Authority has a statutory duty to operate and maintain an effective Independent Custody Visiting Scheme. The Authority is committed to ensuring that members of these groups, and others it may establish, are aware of the statutory equalities' duties and that, so far as possible, membership reflects the diverse makeup of Bedfordshire's communities.

### **Procurement**

The Authority recognises the importance of ensuring that contractors who undertake work for the Authority and public partner organisations are aware of the statutory duties to promote race, disability and gender equality. The Authority has delegated most of its procurement functions to the Chief Constable. To assist suppliers in understanding their duties under equalities legislation, the Force provides all suppliers with a leaflet explaining the 'Conditions of Supply'.

It is recognised that where contractors are engaged to provide functions, it remains the responsibility of the Authority/Police to ensure that the functions comply with the general equality duties. Contracted out functions will be assessed for their potential to impact upon race, disability and gender equality and other strands of diversity and, where necessary, appropriate control measures will be put in place. Similarly, functions which have already been contracted will be assessed for their impact upon the general equalities duties and control measures introduced as appropriate if adverse input is identified.

## **Social Model of Disability**

Bedfordshire Police Authority will use the 'social' model of disability. In the past much of our understanding of disability used a 'medical' model. Issues and solutions tended to focus around the idea of curing the individual or making them 'better'. The social model approaches disability from the viewpoint that what 'disables' the individual is social structures, barriers and attitudes not the person's impairment or medical condition. This means we will no longer use the traditional approach based on what a disabled person cannot do and instead will focus on what they can do. Following the social model should result in a better environment for all service users and the entire community and better access for disabled and service users generally.

## **The Strands of Diversity**

As a Police Authority, we have a legal requirement to promote equal opportunities involving race, disability and gender and to eliminate unlawful discrimination. Our responsibilities are set out in the:

- Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA)
- Police & Justice Act 2006 (PJA)
- Equality Act 2006 (EqA)
- Equal Pay Act 1970 (EqPA)
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (RR(A)A)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975. (SDA)

We must also meet our employment duties for age, sexual orientation, and religion or belief as set out in the following legislation:

- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 (AR)
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 (SOR)
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 (RBR)
- Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999 (SD(GR)R)
- Gender Recognition Act 2004. (GRA)

We aim to apply the highest standards from each of the duties to all six equalities groups.

The core legal requirements are similar for disability, gender and race:

- to promote equality of opportunity and
- to eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination

However, there are important areas where there are different legislative requirements between the general duties which set a higher standard:

- to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people under the DDA 2005
- to promote good relations between people of different racial groups under the RR(A)A 2000
- to encourage participation by disabled people in public life under the DDA 2005
- to take positive steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people under the DDA 2005. This means we have to take steps which go beyond treating disabled people and non-disabled people alike.

We also have specific duties which provide a framework to guide us in meeting our general duties in the most appropriate way. Many of the specific duties are similar for disability, gender and race:

- to publish an equality scheme demonstrating how we intend to fulfil our general and specific duties
- to ensure the equality scheme includes a statement of our arrangements for:
  - assessing and consulting on the likely impact of our proposed policies on the promotion of equality
  - gathering information in relation to employment and the delivery of our functions to monitor for any adverse impact on the promotion of equality
  - putting this information to use, in particular in reviewing the effectiveness of the action plan and in preparing later equality schemes
  - identifying the steps we will take towards fulfilling the general duty (the action plan)
  - publishing the results of our assessments and consultation annually and reviewing the scheme at least every three years.

There are some areas where the different legislation is more specific or sets a higher standard:

- to involve disabled people in the development of the Disability Equality Scheme under the DDA 2005

- to ensure the Disability Equality Scheme includes a statement of the way in which disabled people have been involved in its development under the DDA 2005
- to consult stakeholders (in other words employees, service users and others including trade unions) and take account of relevant information in order to determine its gender equality objectives under the EA 2006
- to set out our gender equality objectives including objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gaps under the EA 2006
- to ensure public access to information and services which we provide under the RR(A)A 2000
- to train our staff in connection with the general and specific duties under the RR(A)A 2000
- to fulfil our employment duties under the RR(A)A 2000 and specifically:
  - monitor, by reference to the racial groups to which they belong, the numbers of staff in post and applicants for employment, training and promotion
  - monitor the numbers of staff from each racial group who receive training, benefit or suffer detriment as a result of our performance assessment procedures, who are involved in grievance procedures, or who are the subject of disciplinary procedures, and who leave the employment of the Force
  - publish annually the results of our employment monitoring set out above

Each of our statutory responsibilities and supporting functions is relevant to the general duties of the DDA 2005, EA 2006, and RR (A) A 2000.

### **Police and Justice Act 2006**

Regulations made under the Police and Justice Act 2006 (PJA) created a new positive duty for police authorities with effect from 14 March 2008:

***“A police authority shall promote equality and diversity within the police force maintained for its area and within the authority.”***

The PJA also places a duty on police authorities to monitor the performance of the police force maintained for its area in complying with the duties imposed by the Human Rights Act 1998.

Currently, as detailed in previous sections of this Scheme, police authorities and forces have general statutory duties in respect of race, disability and gender, and specific duties which require them to have equality schemes in place saying how those general duties will be met.

The new PJA duty extends the existing equality duties by stating that a police authority should also consider how it promotes equality and diversity within both this force and the authority.

### *Guidance*

The Home Office agreed that the new duty for police authorities could be supported by non-statutory guidance. Guidance has been developed by the Association of Police Authorities (APA).

The following areas are identified for consideration by authorities in meeting the PJA duty:

- consider whether the authority should have greater involvement in the force's internal staffing issues, in particular on recruitment, promotion and retention and staff/cultural surveys;
- develop authority relationships with staff support groups where they do not already exist, e.g. Black Police Association (BPA), Gay Police Association (GPA) British Association for Women in Policing (BAWP), Association of Muslim Police (AMP) and Disabled Police Association(DPA);
- monitor the force's use of their confidential reporting facility;
- encourage their chief officer to undertake an equal pay audit and to deliver on its outcomes and recommendations.

In order to ensure that equalities and diversity issues are progressed within the Authority, as well as to ensure effective scrutiny of the force, the guidance recommends a number of key areas police authorities should consider, including:

- the appointment of a lead member (ideally the chair of the authority) for equalities and diversity to ensure ownership and drive for delivering from within membership of the authority;
- the appointment of a full-time police authority Equality and Diversity Officer;

- a review of governance arrangements to ensure there is an appropriate reporting mechanism for equality and diversity;
- place a standing item on all police authority committee agendas to consider equality and diversity implications of business.

## **Equality Standard for the Police Service**

The National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) is developing an 'Equality Standard for the Police Service'. This continuous improvement tool is for police use, but will also support Police Authorities in agreeing local targets and examining performance. The Standard is linked to strategic policing priorities such as the National Community Safety Plan, the Policing Pledge and the wider Citizen Focus agenda and most importantly, it contributes towards building Community Confidence in policing by supporting forces in becoming more engaged with their communities and meeting their needs. The Standard will support Police Authorities in agreeing local targets and examining performance. The Standard is due to be launched nationwide during late autumn 2009.

## ***Meeting the General and Specific Duties***

### **Delivering our duties**

The delivery of equality and diversity depends on successfully managing a broad change agenda, rethinking the way things are currently done. This requires a strategic, systematic and coherent approach linked to robust leadership and clear outcomes.

Equality and diversity is built into the way we conduct our business and is designed to encourage continual improvement in the way we deliver services and promote good employment practices.

### **Our commitment to equality**

There are specific groups within society who continue to experience discrimination and inequality and who have been protected in law. We set out below our understanding of the nature of the inequality experienced by these different groups and our commitment to addressing this.

The law regarding age, religion or belief and sexual orientation discrimination is less comprehensive than for race, gender, or disability. However, we believe it is right for us to aim to eliminate discrimination and harassment on grounds of religion or belief, sexual orientation, and age as well as to comply with the law.

We recognise that we have a duty to take positive action to ensure all equality groups benefit fairly from our work and as an employer. We aim to create barrier-free service provision and build confidence.

### **Age equality**

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 make it unlawful to discriminate on the basis of age in employment.

The Regulations set a general default retirement age of 65, to be reviewed in 2011. However, this does not apply to police officers and therefore any compulsory retirement age (CRA) for police officers needs to be objectively justified. The new CRAs for police officers are 60 for the federated ranks (Constable/Chief Inspector) and 65 for superintending/ACPO ranks

The regulations mean that:

- employers may set a mandatory retirement age of under 65 only where they can give an objectively justifiable reason for doing so
- employees may request to continue working after they are due to retire and employers have a duty to consider such requests
- there is no limit placed on the amount of compensation which could be payable to successful employment tribunal claimants
- the upper age limit for unfair dismissal and redundancy rights is removed
- harassment and victimisation are prohibited
- caution must be exercised in giving length of service benefits. Many of these benefits may be open to claims of indirect discrimination. Benefits relating to periods of service of less than five years are permitted. Benefits accruing after more than five years' service must be justified by reasons of business need, which may include encouraging loyalty, rewarding experience and motivating staff.

### **Disability equality**

Disability covers a variety of impairments such as:

- learning disabilities
- mental health conditions
- mobility impairments
- blindness and partial sight

- deafness and hearing impairment
- progressive long-term health conditions such as multiple sclerosis and HIV.

It also covers people who may not recognise themselves as having a disability, such as those with long-term conditions (for example, diabetes or cancer). Disabled people are not a homogenous group and may also be discriminated against because of other aspects of their identity such as ethnicity, age, gender, sexuality, economic status and religion or belief.

Disabled people do not always have the same opportunities or choices as non disabled people and this can be particularly acute because the majority of disabled people have impairments that are not easily visible. They can experience discrimination, lack of respect, and unreasonable barriers to participation in society. Such barriers can be attitudinal, environmental and institutional. Although these barriers may sometimes be unintentional this does not lessen the negative impact upon disabled people.

Bedfordshire Police Authority will use the social model of disability to promote disability equality and eliminate discrimination and harassment. A social model of disability identifies social structures, barriers and attitudes as the factors which 'disable' the individual rather than the person's impairment or medical condition. Using the social model will assist us to create a better environment for all service users and communities as well as better access for disabled people in particular.

### **Gender and Transgender equality**

We acknowledge that gender inequality is experienced by women and men, girls and boys and our scheme recognises the additional disadvantage faced by Transgender people. The level of disadvantage faced will differ depending on factors additional to people's gender such as age, ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, and whether or not they have a disability.

Gender roles and relationships impact powerfully on the lives of men and women. 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 openness to domestic abuse and sexual assault. Men are also disadvantaged by workplace cultures that do not support their family or childcare responsibilities. Both sexes suffer from stereotyping of their roles and needs.

The gender equality duty also requires us to work towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination and harassment against Transgender people in employment, training and the delivery of goods and services.

## **Race equality**

We continue to work hard to build a connection between successful community cohesion and integration and the effectiveness of local public service approaches to promoting equality and diversity and tackling discrimination and inequality. Bedfordshire Police Authority has an important role to play in building greater confidence amongst Black and Asian and other minority ethnic communities. We recognise that the implementation of Neighbourhood Policing across Bedfordshire can result in increased confidence and trust amongst all our communities.

A key activity for us in this scheme is to build greater confidence amongst black and minority communities and, including, gypsy and traveller communities to ensure that our policing responsibilities will be carried out in a fair and non-discriminatory way working in partnership wherever possible.

## **Religious or belief equality**

There is still widespread indifference and ignorance towards religion, which can lead to discrimination. There is often a perceived overlap between race and religion; for example:

- some black and minority ethnic communities have used religion to express their identity.
- some aspects of religious discrimination are covered by the RR (A) A 2000 as Jews and Sikhs are considered in law to be ethnic groups. Other religions are not covered.

In 2003 the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations came into force. This makes it unlawful to subject someone to direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation or harassment on the grounds of their religion, religious belief or similar philosophical belief. This protection was widened under the Equality Act 2006 to cover lack of belief as well. In addition the Human Rights Act (1998) upholds freedom of thought, conscience and religion and the manifestation of religion and belief.

## **Sexual orientation**

Discrimination and harassment on the grounds of a person's sexual orientation still exists in the UK.

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations came into force in 2003 and made it unlawful to discriminate against employees and job applicants on the grounds of their sexual orientation. In December 2005 civil partnership came into force which gives same-sex couples the right to gain legal recognition for their relationship. Civil partnership is a legal relationship which can be registered by two people of the same sex. The Equality Act

2006 also made provision for regulations to address discrimination in the provision of goods and services on the grounds of sexuality. These regulations came into force on 30 April 2007.

### **Community Engagement/Public Consultation**

We are committed to involving the public in our equality and diversity work so that we can reflect the experiences of people who use our services.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

Impact assessment is a systematic way of finding out whether a policy or proposed policy affects all groups equally. It allows the Authority to take account of the needs and experiences of those affected by our policies, and identify and respond to actual and potential inequalities for a particular group or sector of the community.

We have developed a template for use when assessing functions, policies, procedures and practices and this can be viewed by visiting our website

[www.bedfordshirepoliceauthority.co.uk](http://www.bedfordshirepoliceauthority.co.uk)

The impact assessment process is managed within the policy unit of the Police Authority. We will also ensure that the process for impact assessment, undertaken by Bedfordshire Police, is robust and the results published.

### **Consultation and Community Engagement**

The Police Authority and Police aim to provide a fair and equitable police service to everyone in Bedfordshire. It is recognised that actively engaged communities can contribute significantly to improving policing services, reducing anti-social behaviour and solving crime. To that end, we are committed to engaging with the people of Bedfordshire and listening to their views to help us to identify areas for improvement in delivering citizen-focused policing to suit the needs of local communities.

The Authority and Police are committed to publishing a joint Community Engagement Strategy and annual delivery programme during 2009.

The Police Authority's strategic aim for effective community is:

*"To provide a responsive and accountable policing service, which identifies its priorities through effective and consistent engagement with our communities and partners involving them, where appropriate, in jointly funding solutions to local problems"?*

The Authority has three overarching objectives for community engagement.

- to ensure that its statutory responsibility for engagement are fulfilled;
- to monitor and scrutinise the Police's community engagement activities, as outlined in annual community engagement programmes;
- to promote enhanced citizenship and community confidence in the activities of both the Authority and Police.

A priority will be to develop ways of communicating more effectively with all sections of Bedfordshire's diverse populations.

### **Monitoring the Police's Equality and Diversity Performance**

The Authority has long-standing arrangements in place for monitoring the Police's performance in relation to progress against its Race Equality Scheme. More recently, the arrangements have been extended to include the Disability and Gender Equality Schemes. In relation to the Police's internal staffing issues, the Authority is involved in developing the annual Human Resources Plan and Training and Development Plan. The Plans include key objectives for recruitment, promotion, retention and training, including action and progress against the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP).

Performance is monitored by the Authority's Human Resources Committee. The Community Engagement Committee monitors Stop Search data

The Audit Committee also monitors complaints in relation to diversity and the Police's confidential reporting facilities.

As required under the PJA, the Authority will monitor the Police's compliance with the duties imposed by the Human Rights Act 1998.

### **Training**

The Authority will ensure that staff, members and volunteers receive appropriate equalities and diversity training.

In line with advice in the APA guidance document "APA Race and Diversity Training Guidance: A Quality Assurance Standard for Police Authority Members, Staff and

Volunteers”, the Authority has agreed that all members and staff will be trained against the National Occupational Standard (NOS) for the criminal justice sector AA1 (Promote Equality and Value Diversity).

Guidance recommends that chairs and vice chairs of police authorities and senior managers should be trained to NOS AA2 (Develop a Culture and Systems that Promote Equality and Values Diversity). This will be taken forward as an action for consideration.

The Authority is responsible for the Independent Custody Visitors (ICV) and will consider the most appropriate level of equalities and diversity training for this group.

The Authority has also decided that training in conducting equality impact assessment is appropriate for some members and staff and a course is under consideration.

The Authority will keep under review the need for ongoing equalities and diversity training for members, officers and volunteers arising from the specific strands of diversity.

### **Public Access to Information and Services**

The Authority is committed to ensuring that information about the Authority and our services are accessible to the whole community.

### **Information**

The Police Authority provides information to the public in a variety of ways.

The Authority’s website [www.Bedfordshirepoliceauthority.org.uk](http://www.Bedfordshirepoliceauthority.org.uk) includes information about the Authority, its policies and procedures and gives access to published documents, committee reports and minutes. Current issues and news items are also posted. In order to meet its legal obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, the Authority has made improvements to the accessibility of information on its website.

The Website Accessibility Initiative (WAI) has developed guidelines which are widely regarded as the international standard for web accessibility. There are three levels of compliance: ‘A’, double ‘A’ and triple ‘A’. The Authority’s website currently meets the double ‘A’ standard. While the site also passes all of the automatic tests for triple ‘A’ compliance, the manual checks for triple ‘A’ are extensive and it is difficult for anything other than a text only site to achieve that standard. “Browse Aloud” is available to download on the Authority’s

website. This software makes websites speech enabled and assists people who have reading difficulties and visual impairments.

Developments for improving accessibility to the Authority's website will be kept under review in conjunction with the Police's website co-ordinator.

In order to facilitate good communications, the Authority is willing to consider the provision of a summary of any document that it publishes in other languages or formats on request.

Information about policing in Bedfordshire is also provided to all householders through the publication of local policing summaries, a statutory requirement for police authorities. The summaries include a statement of the Authority's priorities for the forthcoming year and an assessment of the Police's performance against priorities set for the previous year.

There are times when it is not possible for the Authority to release information to the public. Such occasions include where:

- information relates to National Security and disclosure is not in the public interest; information is of relevance to a current police investigation (Article 10(2) European Convention on Human Rights – Prevention and Detection of Crime);
- disclosure breaches Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (e.g. disclosing personal information to third parties);
- information originates from third parties and is held in confidence;
- information discloses police tactics and methodologies used to prevent or detect crime. (Article 10(2) European Convention on Human Rights);
- information is covered by the Data Protection Act 1998 and an exemption allowing disclosure does not apply;
- information is covered by an exemption from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000;
- where information is currently sub judice.

## **Publishing the Scheme and Annual Report**

The Authority is committed to ensuring that information relating to its services is accessible to the whole community. The Authority will seek to ensure that any barriers to effective communication and consultation are removed.

This Single Equality Scheme is published on the Authority's website at [www.Bedfordshirepoliceauthority.org.uk](http://www.Bedfordshirepoliceauthority.org.uk). The Scheme is also available in libraries, Citizens Advice Bureaux, Colleges of Further Education and other public offices. The document has also been made available to the various interest groups covering all strands of diversity in Bedfordshire, partners and others consulted on the Scheme.

An annual report summarising the progress made through our action plan and any other up to date relevant information about the Scheme will be published on the Authority's website during September 2010 and each year thereafter.

## **Our Action Plan**

An Action Plan setting out how the Authority will meet its statutory equalities and diversity duties is attached.

The objectives detailed in our action plan will help us to continuously improve our approach to equality and diversity and we set out below the outcomes we are aiming to deliver. Achieving these outcomes will help us to meet our general and specific legal duties.

Each of the actions in our plan is linked to one or more parts of the equality duties. Against each action there is a column showing which part of the general duties, as listed below, it relates to.

### **The Race Equality Duty gives us the following responsibilities:**

- 1 eliminate unlawful discrimination
- 2 promote equality of opportunity
- 3 promote good relations between people of different racial groups

### **The Disability Equality Duty gives us the following responsibilities:**

- 4 eliminate unlawful discrimination
- 5 eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disabilities
- 6 promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and others
- 7 take steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities, even where that involves treating them more favourably than others.
- 8 promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- 9 encourage participation by disabled people in public life

### **The Gender Equality Duty gives us the following responsibilities:**

- 10 eliminate unlawful discrimination
- 11 eliminate harassment
- 12 promote equality of opportunity between men and women

The requirements to eliminate unlawful sex discrimination and harassment also include discrimination and harassment on the basis of gender reassignment.



# Single Equality Scheme

## Action Plan

## Planning, Budgets and Equality Impact Assessments

Objective	Action	Target date	Lead role	outcome	Age	Disability	Gender	Race	Religion	Sexual orientation
Ensure that equality, diversity and Human rights is actively promoted within the strategic planning process	Include performance improvement targets within the Police Authority Business plan which promote equality & diversity.	Sept 09 and ongoing	Performance and Audit Committee	Year on year improvement against targets set	√	√	√	√	√	√
Maintain a strategic focus on the promotion of equality, diversity and human rights within Police Authority priorities for 2009-10.	Relevant PA Committee work plans include diversity activities	Sept09 and ongoing	All committees	Evidence is available to demonstrate that service equality and fairness contribute towards the PA strategic objectives						
Equality Impact assessments are identified and completed	Identify priority functions, policies and procedures and complete EIAs	January 2010	All committees	Equality impact assessments (EIAs) are completed and published for priority functions, policies and practices.	√	√	√	√	√	√

## Communication, Consultation and Engagement

Objective	Action	Target date	Lead role	outcome	Age	Disability	Gender	Race	Religion	Sexual orientation
<p>Communication, consultation and engagement plans are designed to take account of the views of all communities, including minority ethnic, disabled, lesbian, younger and older people and all those of different faiths.</p>	<p>Include diversity questions within surveys and consultations and ensure that results are considered in relation to results.</p> <p>Collate details of statistically significant or qualitatively important differences in the responses and disseminate feedback to Police Authority members via committee briefings</p>	<p>Sept 09 and ongoing</p>	<p>Community Engagement committee</p>	<p>Evidence available that diverse communities' voice is listened to and acted upon.</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>√</p>

## Police Force Scrutiny & Employment

Objective	Action	Target date	Lead role	outcome	Age	Disability	Gender	Race	Religion	Sexual orientatio
Effective monitoring is in place of the Force single equality scheme and governance arrangements.	<p>Receive regular reports on progress against equality-related objectives set through the strategic planning process</p> <p>Conduct dip-sampling exercise of force Equality Impact Assessments to determine effectiveness of this process.</p>	Sept 09 and ongoing	Police Authority + all committees as appropriate	Improvement against targets through committee reports	√	√	√	√	√	√
Fair and proportionate employment procedures for Police Authority members are in place.	Inform the Human Resources Committee of the implications of the Police Authority's statutory equality employment duties	Sept 09 and ongoing	Human Resources Committee	The Human Resources Committee is aware of the equality duties and informed of the Police Authority's employment makeup when considering appointments.	√	√	√	√	√	√

## Working in partnership

Objective	Action	Target date	Lead role	outcome	Age	Disability	Gender	Race	Religion	Sexual orientati
<p>Statutory Partnerships in which the Police Authority is involved demonstrate commitment to statutory equality duties</p>	<p>Request that disaggregated data is provided through the development of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships' annual strategic assessments and Children's' Trusts 'Children and Young Peoples Plans'.</p> <p>Identify mechanisms being used by LSPs, CDRPs and Children's Trusts to engage with diverse groups to determine community priorities.</p> <p>Provide information to partners on Police Authority strategic priorities, including equality objectives</p>	<p>Sept 09 and ongoing</p>	<p>Community Engagem ent committee</p>	<p>Evidence is available to demonstrate that the promotion of equality across all diversity strands is in place.</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>√</p>