



SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

Contents:

Page	
3	Single Equality Scheme
5	Sussex Police Authority
6	Members and Staff
8	Consultation, Engagement and Communication
10	Monitoring and Scrutiny of Sussex Police
11	Action Plan
12	Review, Reporting and Revising of the Scheme
13	Equality Action Plan for 2008-11

A Single Equality Scheme

- 1.1 This is the Authority's first Single Equality Scheme. It sets out our approach to equality and diversity. As the Authority has developed and implemented its three current equality schemes, it has become apparent that there are issues of commonality. Equally, there are areas of diversity not currently covered by the requirement to develop a scheme. The Authority has therefore made a decision to develop one equality scheme to cover all 'seven strands' of diversity.

The seven strands are;

- Race
- Disability
- Gender
- Transgender
- Sexual Orientation
- Age
- Religion or Belief

- 1.2 The Single Equality Scheme (SES) will reflect three equally important yet distinct areas of responsibility for the Authority:

Members and Staff - ensure that everyone, whether working for, affected by, or volunteering for the Authority, to be fair, equitable and non-discriminatory

Consultation, Engagement and Communication - the consultation programme for the coming year, in partnership with the Force, includes action plans that set out how we will meet our statutory duties

Scrutiny of Sussex Police - hold Sussex Police to account and apply the same principles in carrying out the Authority's scrutiny function.

- 1.3 In producing this scheme, we have tried to keep sight of what would constitute success. We consider success to be our staff, members and service users considering they have been treated fairly and equitably, improved confidence and trust of people in how Sussex is policed and an ability to demonstrate that we have provided leadership to other organisations with whom we work to enhance their appreciation of diversity issues.

- 1.4 The legal requirement for the Authority to publish equality schemes is contained within:

- The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- The Disability Discrimination Act 2005; and
- The Equality Act 2006.

These pieces of legislation contain specific equality duties, including a requirement for public authorities to publish equality schemes. All three also have a common aim – to ensure that the public sector works to promote equality and eliminate discrimination in all of its activities.

- 1.5 Sussex Police Authority will put equality at the centre of its work when forming a policy or strategy, providing a service, consulting with the public or employing people. We want to identify and remove any barriers that currently prevent anyone from being an equal citizen. We have made some progress in mainstreaming equality in what we do and identifying ways to improve the services we deliver but recognise that there is a significant amount still to do.
- 1.6 We are committed to making sure our Members and staff all fully understand how they can make a difference, through their work, to improve equality. As well as being aware of its legal responsibilities, the Authority recognises the benefits and positive developments that can be brought about by valuing diversity and providing opportunities to those who may not normally be involved in the Authority's business. Later in the document, we have set out how we intend to make changes to the way we work to achieve this.

Sussex Police Authority

- 2.1 The Authority is an independent body, comprising local people, which exist to make sure that Sussex residents have an efficient, effective and locally accountable police force.
- 2.2 There are 17 Members of Sussex Police Authority, comprising elected councillors and independent members (at least one of which must be a magistrate), appointed after responding to a public advertisement. All Members live or work in Sussex and are required to be representative of, and in sympathy with, the range of communities that make up the county of Sussex.
- 2.3 The Authority is based at East Sussex County Council in Lewes. Members are supported by a small secretariat comprising a Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Assistant Chief Executive and 5 members of staff.

Members and Staff

- 3.1 The Authority has a role in Members and Staff recruitment to ensure an open process that encourages people from all backgrounds to apply. The outcome must be an Authority that is able to represent the community it serves.
- 3.2 We are committed to providing equality of opportunity to all employees or potential employees through our recruitment processes, training and development, workplace facilities and benefits as well as treatment in relation to grievances and disciplinary action. We aim to provide an effective and motivated service and can help to achieve this by making sure our employment procedures are fair to all groups and barriers to equality of opportunity are removed.
- 3.3 The Authority already has a Staff Development Plan in place which sets out issues relating to diversity. We will make sure that all Members and staff are fully aware of their obligations under relevant equality legislation.
- 3.4 The Authority routinely sends out equality monitoring forms when advertising for all vacancies, including those for independent Members and Chief Officers. An assurance is given that the information received is confidential and will not be made available to those assessing applications. Forms ask for information on the seven strands of diversity and the results are analysed, with any differentials addressed.
- 3.5 Authority staff are currently employed on Police Staff terms and conditions with some variation to allow for the fact that they are not accountable to the Chief Constable but to the Police Authority. Police Authority policies are currently being reviewed to ensure they do not discriminate against particular groups of people, are compliant with legislation and are applied consistently across the organisation.
- 3.6 The Authority has a large number of policies and practices with a wide and varied scope and impact. These need to be examined to make sure our activities do not disproportionately disadvantage any particular group or groups of people, as well as identifying those areas where we could better promote equality of opportunity. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a means of making sure that the Authority's decisions and activities do not disproportionately disadvantage anyone and also identifying where we might better promote equality of opportunity. We examine impact and identify necessary actions against all seven strands of diversity. The assessment is not an end in itself but merely the process which is carried out to identify and act on the need to modify policies and practices. Our timetable of EIAs will be drawn up by assessing each of the Authority's policies and practices to determine its impact against

the seven strands of diversity. The Authority recognises that to assess all our existing and future policies, procedures and practices is a significant and important ongoing piece of work.

- 3.7 It is recognised that effective policies in this area not only enable the Authority to meet its obligations under equality legislation, but will also improve its ability to recruit and retain staff and improve the effectiveness of its workforce. Wherever possible, we ensure that the way these policies are implemented results in a fair balance between accommodating employees' needs and the provision of an effective secretariat service. The Authority favourably considers requests for part-time or flexible working arrangements to accommodate employees' caring responsibilities, whilst balancing this with the overall workload of the team as a whole.
- 3.8 Our personnel policies are designed to provide fair treatment to all employees, although it is acknowledged that problems might still arise. We therefore have in place a grievance procedure that aims to settle staff grievances fairly, promptly and as near as possible to the point of origin to bring matters to a speedy and mutually acceptable conclusion wherever possible. Members are also subject to an acceptable behaviour policy in the Guidance to Member Conduct which is set out in their Members' Handbook.
- 3.9 Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) are members of the public, recruited by the Authority, to visit police stations unannounced and carry out checks on the treatment of people held in custody. ICVs are volunteer adults who come from a variety of backgrounds. We encourage as wide a range of people as possible to join the scheme. Recruitment is carried out through volunteer organisations, our website, community events and adverts in local and speciality media. As well as being representative of the community they serve, our custody visitors must be fully aware of their obligations under equality legislation. They have an important role in ensuring the fair and effective management of offenders.

Consultation, Engagement and Communication

- 4.1 Every year the Force and the Authority publish a Local Policing Plan. It is a public document which outlines the key policing priorities and performance targets for the following three years ahead and reports on our achievements over the past year. In drawing up a challenging Local Policing Plan, we must reflect not only national priorities and those of our partners, but also the priorities of local people. The plan must be informed by consultation with the communities of Sussex and our consultation mechanisms and target-setting processes must be meaningful and effective.
- 4.2 The Authority's Consultation Action Plan defines the consultation programme for the coming year in partnership with the Force which includes action plans that set out how we will meet our statutory duties. The Strategy is underpinned by the principles of accessible, inclusive, ethical and representative consultation and engagement activity.
- 4.3 Ensuring the views and opinions of a cross section of the population is heard will ensure minorities, who may have needs or views that are different from the majority, are recognised and are able to contribute to influencing the delivery of police services. Consideration, therefore, will be given to how best overcome the obstacles that may prevent people from taking part. Public events will be held at accessible venues such as shopping centres town halls or community halls. We will ensure these are widely publicised in order to reach as many people as possible.
- 4.4 The Authority routinely produces a range of documents, both statutory and non-statutory, that must be accessible to the whole community. As part of the commitments made in our earlier equality schemes, we already make provision to on request make key documents available in languages other than English or in audio format.
- 4.5 Good customer service is vital to ensure access to our information and services. This includes providing prompt replies to written correspondence or complaints and an informed telephone service. We are currently revising our systems to ensure that we are able to monitor effectively our responses to complaints particularly these relating to senior officer and direction and control issues to help ensure that we do provide a good service.
- 4.6 The Authority uses its website as a primary method of communicating information to the public. It is therefore imperative that it can be accessed by everyone. We plan to set up a Browse aloud version of the site to help people with poor vision read the text and links more clearly. (The Sussex Police website already has this function).

- 4.7 Everyone who wants to have an active involvement in public or community life should feel able to do so. Our consultation has shown that not everyone who wants to be more involved feels able or knows how to. There are many ways to participate in the Authority's work and we will try and ensure a representative balance of people are taking part in our activities.
- 4.8 The full Authority holds five meetings a year. These provide an opportunity for Sussex residents to make sure that Members understand, respond to and reflect public needs in decision-making, service delivery and ultimately police actions. All Authority meetings are open to the public and there is an opportunity to ask questions of Members on relevant issues. The full Authority meetings are webcast live on the internet for those who are unable to attend in person.
- 4.9 The Authority seeks to ensure that all members of the public can attend its meetings if they so wish and are made to feel welcome. Meetings are publicised on our website and are advertised locally. We hold meetings in accessible venues and will make all reasonable efforts to accommodate particular needs given sufficient warning. We want to encourage the public to attend our meetings and are always looking for ways to promote attendance. This is an area on which we intend to develop in the future.
- 4.10 The Authority's offices are based at County Hall Lewes. This is the venue for most of the Sussex Police Authority meetings. Whenever we use other venues, we always take account of accessibility issues both to the building itself and in terms of ease of access by both car and public transport. The building is accessible to disabled people and to those who rely on public transport. We recognise also that accessibility is not just about getting in and out of our buildings, but also how easy it is for people to make use of facilities and how easy situations are to participate in. We will continue to examine our current arrangements in terms of the venues and facilities, materials provided and times and dates and make adjustments as necessary.
- 4.11 The aim of Sussex's Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) is to work closely with the police to build confidence and trust within communities. They provide advice and guidance, particularly when dealing with potentially sensitive issues and act as independent advocates where there may be mistrust or misunderstanding of police actions or procedures.

Monitoring and Scrutiny of Sussex Police

- 5.1 The overarching aim of Sussex Police Authority is to ensure that Sussex has an efficient and effective police force. It is recognised that, to be a successful organisation, the Force must reflect the diversity of the community in its staffing and respond professionally and appropriately to the special and different needs of the communities it serves.
- 5.2 It is the role of the Authority to oversee diversity and equality issues, ensuring that the Force takes regard of these in relation both to employment and service delivery. Under the Police and Justice Act, we must also ensure the Force and Authority actively promote equality and diversity.
- 5.3 Members analyse performance issues and a range of diversity monitoring information and bring to the attention of the Authority any areas of achievement or concern. The Authority is made aware of trends and patterns within the Force's adverse impact on particular groups of people and must take steps to redress any problems. This section sets out the Authority's arrangements for overseeing the effect of the Force's policies and practices and promoting equality and diversity.
- 5.4 There are a number of staff associations and networks within Sussex Police that have been established to help personnel who may have specific issues related to their employment. These include the Gay Police Association, Sussex, Sussex Black Police Association, East Sussex Disability Association, Evolve, Sussex Police Federation, and Sussex Police Staff Branch of Unison.
- 5.5 The Authority has a remit to monitor the Force's consultation with its staff and overall staff satisfaction. To assist with this, a report on the results of a staff survey, carried out by the Force were recently considered by the Authority's Planning and Performance Steering Group. This gives information on indicators such as promotion and career development, quality of working life, leadership and views on Sussex Police as an employer. The Force intends to repeat this survey in the future. It will enable the Authority to keep track of the main issues arising and monitor any actions taken forward as a result.
- 5.6 Sussex Police Authority will ensure that all procurement policies and procedures take account of the legislative requirements in terms of equality. Sussex Police, who undertake procurement on behalf of the Authority, have in place systems for selecting providers of goods and services who support our equality and diversity requirements.

Action Plan

- 6.1 This section sets out the Authority's action plan for 2008-11. It is designed to show how, in practical ways, the Authority will fulfil its equality duties. In drawing up the plan, we have taken into account the need to produce a meaningful and worthwhile series of actions whilst ensuring they are also achievable and proportionate. We have also looked for and adapted what appeared to us to be good practice in terms of schemes produced by other police authorities.
- 6.2 The action plan is structured around a number of key areas of the Authority's work that have emerged through this discussion and others.
- 6.3 Our Community Engagement Steering Group has lead responsibility for ensuring the Authority carries out all its business with due regard to diversity and equality of opportunity. The Group will oversee the implementation, review and progress made against this action plan. Any areas of concern will be reported to the full Authority.
- 6.4 The full Authority will receive an Annual Report on progress. This will also be published on the Authority's website.

Review, Reporting and Revising of the Scheme

- 7.1 This is the first single Equality Scheme for Sussex Police Authority and covers the period 2008-2011. On an annual basis, the Authority will publish a report summarising the actions taken to implement the scheme objectives. This information will be reported to the full Authority.
- 7.2 The scheme will be revised every three years. This will involve a review of progress to date and consideration of the appropriateness of the previous set of equality objectives, with a view to continuous improvement.

Equality Action Plan for 2008

Our Equality Scheme and Equality Impact Assessments			
Objective	Action	Who	When and Comments
To monitor the Authority's policies and procedures to ensure they do not disadvantage anyone and to identify where we might improve and promote equality of opportunity.	Complete Equality Impact Assessments in accordance with the Authority's timetable and continually review and monitor emerging actions.	ACE	Continuous
To keep Members, staff and the public informed about the progress made on delivering equality schemes.	Publish information on our website with regard to progress against this scheme and report progress to meetings of the Community Engagement Steering Group (CESG).	ACE	Continuous
To set up effective mechanisms for scrutiny of the Sussex Police Equality Scheme	The Steering Group continue to be responsible for the overview and scrutiny of the Force schemes.	ACE	December 2009
To annually review the Terms of Reference of CESG and Planning and Performance Steering Group (PPSG)	To carry out a review of the Terms of Reference to clarify responsibility in relation to equality and diversity oversight.	ACE	Continuous
Consultation Engagement and Communication			
To use consultation and engagement	Complete the EIA on the Community Safety Strategy	ACE	Continuous

mechanisms that actively encourage 'usually excluded groups' to be involved and ensure their views can be heard and taken on board	<p>of the Authority and Force. Where appropriate through surveys or questionnaires, gather information on equality to check that consultation is engaging under-represented groups.</p> <p>Improve engagement with the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender community. Improve engagement with young people.</p>		
All information relating to the work of Sussex Police Authority should be accessible to everyone, taking on board the specific needs and requirements of different groups	To review and update the Authority's website to ensure it is user-friendly. All communication will clearly set out the different ways of contacting the Authority; postal, e-mail, telephone, fax etc and in the case of public documents, the alternative formats that can be made available.	AF	Continuous
Contributing to Public Life			
Encourage greater involvement of under represented groups to increase their voice and influence in Authority business and offer more opportunities to participate in the Authority's work	Consider all aspects of accessibility to public Authority meetings and take forward any areas for action.	PAW	Continuous
	Further promote the involvement of under represented groups.	ICV Manager	Continuous
	Promote the Independent Custody Visitors Scheme and receive reports back on progress made.	AF	Continuous
	Continue to specifically target publicity to help	PAW	Continuous

	<p>address current issues of under-representation among independent member posts.</p> <p>Ensure that due consideration is given to important religious dates and festivals when arranging the timing of public meeting events.</p>		Continuous
Employment of Authority Staff and Members			
<p>To provide on efficient and effective secretariat that exercises fair employment procedures and swiftly identifies and addresses any barriers to equality of opportunity</p>	<p>Provide appropriate training for all staff and members to ensure awareness of our obligations under relevant equality legislation and also highlight the wider benefits to the work of the diversity in the workplace; potential supplier of training has been identified.</p> <p>Fully migrate onto Force procedures, including recruitment and retention and PDR.</p>	ACE	Continuous
<p>To assess the Authority's ability to recruit and retain staff and the overall effectiveness of its workforce</p>	<p>Review the local implementation of policies on flexible working and work-life balance to ensure these are fairly applied across the team.</p>		<p>Actioned</p> <p>Continuously reviewed, excellent retention record over last 3 years.</p>
<p>To develop systems for monitoring Authority performance in staffing matters</p>	<p>Routinely record, monitor and act upon diversity information from applications for all vacancies including those for independent members, staff and volunteers and offer appropriate training where necessary.</p>	PAW	Continuous

Access to Buildings			
To make sure meetings and other events are held at venues that meet the standards of accessibility set out in the Disability Discrimination Act	<p>Carry out an equality impact assessment prior to any major consultation or public event.</p> <p>Utilise microphones and hearing loops at all public full Authority meetings to ensure better accessibility for the deaf and hard of hearing.</p>		Actioned
Procurement and Working with Contractors			
To ensure the Authority complies with equality requirements in its procurement arrangements with the force	Monitor the Force's Procurement Strategy via PPSG.	ACE	Continuous
Monitoring and Scrutiny of Sussex Police			
To ensure that the Force takes regard of equality issues in relation to employment, recruitment and selection and the delivery of policing services through effective support and scrutiny	Monitor performance information relating to the promotion of diversity via CESG	Lead Member for HR	Actioned
To ensure the Force actively promotes equality and diversity	Receive regular reports from the Force Lead for Diversity on progress made against the Forces Equality Schemes through CESG		Actioned

<p>To ensure sufficient priority and resources are being allocated to dealing with hate crimes and those that tend to be 'gendered' such as domestic violence and rape</p>	<p>Ensure sufficient priority and resources are being allocated to dealing with those crimes when setting the Local Policing Plan and annual budget</p>		<p>Actioned</p> <p>Sussex Police Authority supported growth bids for Special Investigations Branch within the Criminal Investigation Department. Lead Member for Vulnerable People identified and provided full support.</p>
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ACE – Assistant Chief Executive, Sussex Police Authority

AF – Andy Freeman, Press and Public Relations

PAW – Patric Welch, Deputy Chief Executive

ICV – ICV Manager