



GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME

Annual Report 2009

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29 June 2009

INTRODUCTION

Orkney Islands Council published its Gender Equality Scheme on 29 June 2007, in response to new legislation which required public bodies to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, and promote equality of opportunity between men and women, boys and girls, and transgender individuals. A specific duty under the Equality Act 2006 was for public bodies to publish annual reports on their Gender Equality Schemes. This is Orkney Islands Council's second annual report.

Good progress has continued in some areas. Employee statistics continue to demonstrate a steady move in the right direction on pay differentials between men and women. Equality impact assessment has now been mainstreamed into the council's committee report writing procedures and is mandatory for reports addressing all new or revised plans, policies and procedures. The past year has seen the adoption of the balanced scorecard by all services as part of the Council's Performance Management System, and gender equality performance indicators have been embedded into both the Council's corporate scorecard and individual service scorecards.

Orkney Community Planning Partnership's Equalities Forum was reconvened in early 2009. It has brought together the numerous agencies dedicated to making Orkney a fairer place for everyone. It is early days, but already there are indications that the Forum is making progress. The recent appointment of a Policy Officer (Equalities) will support both the Council and the Forum, and should ensure more consistent progress relating to the equalities agenda in the future.

We hope you will find this report of interest. Comments and suggestions on any aspect of equality would be welcomed and may be addressed to Arthur Jones, Policy Officer (Equalities) Chief Executive's Department, Orkney Islands Council, Kirkwall KW15 1NY; email: arthur.jones@orkney.gov.uk; telephone 01856 873535 ext 4052.

COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY

The Council Plan for 2008-13 highlights the importance of equalities by adopting the values from Orkney's community plan, including:

Promoting equality to encourage services to provide equal opportunities for everyone

Orkney Community Planning Partnership's Single Outcome Agreement for 2009-11 was submitted to Scottish Government ministers on 15 May 2009. The Single Outcome Agreement is a joint document shared between all members of Orkney Community Planning Partnership, which will help to promote best practice in equalities more widely. As noted in the document: "*Local statutory services are committed to meeting their equalities duties...Equalities issues in rural areas have been recognised to present distinctive challenges which the Orkney Equalities Forum will continue to explore to inform a partnership strategy with support from the Highlands and Islands Equalities Forum and the Equalities and Human Rights Commission.*"

The Single Outcome Agreement explains how Orkney Islands Council as part of the community planning partnership will contribute to achieving the Government's national outcomes, including no. 7:

We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society

This national outcome cross-cuts all eight of Orkney's local outcomes, which are taken directly from Orkney's community plan, *Orkney 2020—Our Vision*. The performance indicator selected for inclusion in the Single Outcome Agreement to demonstrate progress on gender equality was "*percentage of highest paid 5% of earners among council employees that are women*", a Statutory Performance Indicator which is also included in this report (see page 5).

There are a number of other national outcomes which contribute to gender equality:

- National outcome 5 – "*Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed*" includes indicators on "*parents accessing Positive Parenting Programme courses*", "*Number of children completing (Women's Aid) Respect Programme*" and "*number of registered childminders*".
- National Outcome 6 – "*We live longer, healthier lives*" includes indicators on inequalities in relation to life expectancy, smoking, alcohol and cardiovascular health checks.
- National Outcome 9 – "*We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger*" also includes the indicator "*women, children and young people receiving Women's Aid Orkney outreach and refuge services*".

Further information can be found in the Single Outcome Agreement which is available online at <http://tinyurl.com/OrkneySOA> or from Customer Services, tel. 873535.

LEGISLATION

Single Status Agreement

In 1999, an agreement was reached nationally on a framework of working conditions and pay points which would apply to every council in Scotland and every employee previously covered by Manual Worker Conditions or APT&C Staff Conditions. Implementation of the Single Status Agreement has involved an extensive job evaluation exercise and detailed discussions with trades unions. The negotiation and preparation of individual contracts under the new system has dominated the work of the Council's Personnel Services section over the past 18 months.

All staff have been issued with new single status contracts and are now working to and being paid to Single Status conditions. The scheme has been operational since 1 April, 2008 and backdated to 1 April, 2007.

The new terms and conditions have addressed the gender inequalities which were inherent in the old pay structures. There is no doubt that Single Status will prove the biggest single contributor to the achievement of gender equality in local government in the future.

Single Equalities Bill

Equalities legislation is a matter reserved to the UK Government. Under its manifesto the Government is committed to introducing a Single Equality Bill during the current Parliament. The Government introduced a Single Equalities Bill in late April 2009.

The Single Equalities Bill seeks to:

- Introduce a new Equality Duty on the public sector: a new streamlined duty to replace the race, disability and gender duties also covering gender reassignment, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief
- End age discrimination: making it unlawful to discriminate against someone because of their age when providing goods, facilities and services or carrying out public functions
- Require transparency: making public bodies more transparent and encouraging private sector contractors to contribute to equality targets; launching a series of inquiries into inequality in the financial and professional services and construction sectors; a new “kite-mark” for transparent employers.
- Extend the scope of positive action: extend positive action so that employers can take under-representation into account when selecting between two equally qualified candidates; extend the use of women-only shortlists among MPs to 2030
- Strengthen enforcement: allowing employment tribunals to make wider recommendations in discrimination cases; discrimination cases can be brought on combined multiple grounds
- Introduce a “pay audit” across the public sector ensuring transparency in terms of pay and conditions of work.

Orkney Islands Council welcomes the progress made and looks forward to the enactment of the Single Equalities Bill, which will enable it to streamline its equalities duties more effectively. Compared with existing legislation which seeks to identify specific minorities, the principles of the new Bill appear much better aligned with our local vision of an equal society which treats everybody with respect as an individual. It is anticipated that the bill will become law sometime in 2010.

GATHERING INFORMATION

Performance

Figures for 2007-08 are now available to update the Council's two Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) relating to gender pay equality. SPIs are statistics collected by all Scottish councils every year to permit comparisons between different councils' performance, and longitudinal assessments of individual councils' performance over time. SPIs are externally audited and published annually by the Accounts Commission for Scotland.

The two equal opportunity indicators measure the proportion of women amongst each Council's top 2% of earners, and top 5% of earners. Comparative results for Orkney and benchmark comparators are given in the tables below.

Percentage of employees in the highest 2% of earners that are female

Council	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	Rank in 2007-08
Stirling	51.4%	42.1%	47.1%	49.3%	1st
Orkney	12.5%	13.9%	20.8%	35.7%	15th
Shetland	13.6%	10.4%	11.5%	12.3%	32nd
Scotland	29.6%	31.7%	33.9%	35.9%	Average (mean)

Percentage of employees in the highest 5% of earners that are female

Council	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	Rank in 2006-07
Stirling	43.2%	46.8%	50.5%	52.3%	2 nd
Orkney	18.3%	28.7%	29.6%	33.8%	28th
Shetland	21.0%	10.8%	14.0%	20.9%	32 nd
Scotland	36.6%	38.0%	40.4%	44.0%	Average (mean)

Source: Audit Scotland www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/

As can be seen, Orkney Islands Council's indicators are moving in the right direction but there is still considerable room for improvement.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

During 2008-09 several high profile events were organised locally which focused on gender equalities. These were attended by a wide cross section of OIC and partner agency staff, and young people from across Orkney took part.

The annual **Orkney Young Scot Chamber Debate** took place in the Council Chamber on 19th November, 2009, chaired by the Council Convener. As part of the event Carol Granere, Orkney Young Scot Development worker, led a discussion with young people from across Orkney, on diversity, focusing on gender issues. The discussion was intelligent and thought provoking and highlighted the fact that Orkney young people are aware of gender issues locally and have strong views, particularly in relation to homophobia and equality. The event was well received both by those present and the local press.

“Speak out” event – 117 people from a wide spectrum across Orkney attended this one day event on 11 March 2009 organised by Advocacy Orkney and the Orkney Young Scot team. The event covered a wide variety of issues in a workshop format, including an enlightening presentation on gender diversity by the LGBT Youth team from Edinburgh.

Back-to-back with the previous event, an **Equality and Diversity Conference** was organised by Orkney Community Planning Partnership on 12th March, 2009, with support from the Equality and Human Rights Commission. The conference was well attended by professionals from a wide spectrum across Orkney. There were three workshops running throughout the day:

- Engaging to develop communities.
- Collaborative working.
- Transgender Awareness

The transgender awareness workshop led by the LGBT Youth team proved to be a challenging and thought provoking experience for those present.

It is envisaged that further events raising the profile of gender equalities will be held in the future and it is hoped that an LGBT support network can be established through the auspices of the Orkney Equalities Forum enabling more effective consultation and engagement on gender issues.

MONITORING, REVIEW AND REPORTING

Single Outcome Agreement

Progress towards the outcomes contained in the Single Outcome Agreement (described on pages 2-3 of this report) will be reported annually in September, in accordance with the schedule laid down by the Scottish Executive. These reports will include updates on indicators relevant to gender equality.

Service Plans

Actions on individual departments arising from the Scheme have been incorporated into service plans and are monitored by services through the Council's Performance Management System. Progress is reported regularly to service committees.

Balanced Scorecard

Another element of the Council's Performance Management System is the balanced scorecard, a balanced basket of performance indicators designed to ensure that services take account of their performance from four different perspectives:

- Best Value and improvement
- Governance
- Processes
- Stakeholders

The Council maintains a corporate scorecard, and individual service scorecards. These contain a number of "generic" performance indicators which are aggregated in the corporate scorecard. The following indicator has recently been included in respect of gender equality:

- The proportion of women and men employed within each of the twelve grades specified within the Council's Single Status Agreement; and each of the seven 'chief officer' scales (excluding the Chief Executive's scale)

This indicator will be monitored regularly and the results included in progress reports to service committees, as well as future Gender Equality Scheme annual reports.

Equality Impact Assessment

A recent revision of the Council's committee reporting procedures offered an opportunity to embed equality impact assessment into the process. All committee reports on new or revised plans, policies or procedures must now contain a statement on "Equalities Impacts", which summarises the results of any equality impact assessments carried out in the course of preparing the new plan or policy. Draft reports which require a statement on equalities impacts are not accepted for submission to committee unless this section has been completed.

Progress Reports on the Gender Equality Scheme

In accordance with the provisions of the Act, annual reports on progress against the Gender Equality Scheme are published on the Council's website.

ORKNEY ISLANDS COUNCIL GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME

OUTLINE IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN—UPDATE AT 1 JUNE 2009

This plan captures the main priorities arising from the information gathering and consultation which has been conducted to date, including how much of this work remains to be done. It notes the main actions to be undertaken, who will do them, and when. Further detail of improvement actions are provided in the individual departmental service plans which take the actions forward.

Improvements for employees

➤ **Key priorities: equal pay; research; family friendly policies; training**

	Action	Owner	Timing	Monitoring/scrutiny	Progress at 1 June 2009
1	Publish Equal Pay Policy Statement	Director of Corporate Services	Sep 2007	Policy and Resources Committee	Published 28 September 2007 (noted by Policy and Resources Committee on 27 September 2007).
2	Implement the Single Status Agreement	Director of Corporate Services	Nov 2007	Policy and Resources Committee	Implemented 1 April 2008. Backdated to 1 April, 2007
3	Gather more detailed information on gender disaggregation of staff to inform gender equality work	Director of Corporate Services	2007-08	Policy and Resources Committee	Gender balance across Chief Officer and single status grades was reported to the June 2009 cycle of meetings. A set of PIs is being developed to capture more detailed information on gender and wider equalities issues.
4	Devise and adopt improved family friendly policies, including flexible working arrangements	Director of Corporate Services	2007-09	Policy and Resources Committee	In progress. Flexible working policies have been written. Implementation process is still to be finalised.

	Action	Owner	Timing	Monitoring/scrutiny	Progress at 1 June 2009
5	Improve training opportunities for women, especially training for management and for potential senior managers	Director of Corporate Services	2007-08 and ongoing	Policy and Resources Committee	In process of attaining approval for establishment of permanent Corporate Learning and Development Manager.

Improvements for service users

➤ **Key priorities: impact assessment; consultation; implementation**

	Action	Owner	Timing	Monitoring/scrutiny	Progress at 01 June 2009
6	Produce package of gender impact assessment materials for use by service departments	Director of Corporate Services	By end of March 2008	Performance Improvement Forum	A template for equality impact assessment, applicable to all equality strands, has been made available to all services and further guidance is readily available on request from the Policy unit.
7	Conduct gender impact assessment of existing plans and policies	All directors	Include in service plans from 2008-09	Service committees	The recent appointment of a Policy Officer (Equalities) will help to progress two relevant actions from the current service plan: (i) support services to conduct EIAs of new or revised policies, plans and functions, and (ii) conduct an audit to establish the stage of completion of EIA of current OIC policies and functions, establish and maintain a record system and retain copies of all completed EIAs.

	Action	Owner	Timing	Monitoring/scrutiny	Progress at 01 June 2009
8	Conduct gender impact assessment of new plans and policies	All directors	Ongoing	Service committees	All committee reports relating to new or revised plans, policies and procedures are now routinely subject to EIA and an equalities impact statement included in the committee report.
9	Devise and implement method(s) for the consultation of service users on gender equality	All directors	2007-08	Service committees	No progress reported.
10	Identify and implement any changes required to services, plans and policies to improve gender equality for service users	All directors	Include in service plans from 2008-09	Service committees	The recent appointment of a Policy Officer (Equalities) will provide capacity to assist services to embed relevant actions from the equality schemes into their own service plans.

Improvements to gender equality in the community

➤ Key priorities: research; procurement policy; partnership working

	Action	Owner	Timing	Monitoring/scrutiny	Progress at 1 June 2009
11	Collate local statistics and indicators to assess differences from national data, and conduct or commission research to fill any gaps	Director of Corporate Services	2007-08 and ongoing	Policy and Resources Committee/ OCPP Steering Group	Research was commissioned from Voluntary Action Orkney 2007/08 into methods of consulting with minorities in Orkney, including LGBTs. Research needs following up in 2009/10. It is hoped that a current bid being prepared for submission to ERHC will provide funds and enable follow up work.
12	Conduct or commission research into why more women in Orkney do not stand for public office	Director of Corporate Services	2008-09	Policy and Resources Committee	Questions on this subject were included in a Residents' Survey commissioned by the Council and conducted in Nov-Dec 2007. Results were included in the GES annual report 2008. Further action required.
13	Include gender equality duty in forthcoming joint procurement policy with NHS Orkney and in all external contracts let	Director of Corporate Services	2008-09	Joint Working Project Board	Joint Head of Procurement in post from September 2008. Work to be undertaken to include gender equality duty in future procurement policy. Council standard terms and conditions for services and supplies now incorporate provisions relating to discrimination.

	Action	Owner	Timing	Monitoring/scrutiny	Progress at 1 June 2009
14	Convene series of meetings of Orkney Community Planning Partnership's Equalities Forum to consider which other issues to take forward from those arising in consultation	Director of Corporate Services	2007-08	Policy and Resources Committee/ OCPP Steering Group	OEF now meeting regularly.

Monitoring and reporting

	Action	Responsibility	Timing	Monitoring/scrutiny	Progress at 1 June 2009
15	Review progress against the GES and publish annual report	Director of Corporate Services	29 June 2008 and annually thereafter	Policy and Resources Committee	Second annual report published June 2009.
16	Review the GES and publish a revised Scheme	Director of Corporate Services	June 2010	Policy and Resources Committee	To be addressed in 2010 or earlier.
17	<i>New action added June 2009:</i> Incorporate performance indicators into Balanced Scorecard at corporate and service level	All directors	June 2010	All service committees	A set of equalities performance indicators is currently being developed.