

# Equality Improvement Framework for Wales

June 2011



WLGA • CLILC



# Contact

## Welsh Local Government Association

The WLGA's primary purposes are to promote a better local government, its reputation and to support authorities in the development of policies and priorities which will improve public service and democracy.

It represents the 22 local authorities in Wales, with the 4 police authorities, 3 fire and rescue authorities and 3 national park authorities as associate members.

### Welsh Local Government Association

Local Government House  
Drake Walk  
Cardiff  
CF10 4LG

Tel: 029 2046 8600  
Fax: 029 2046 8601

[www.wlga.gov.uk](http://www.wlga.gov.uk)

Published: June 2011

Copyright: Welsh Local Government Association

ISBN: 978-1-906423-69-8



# Contents

## Part 1

An Introduction to the Equality Improvement Framework  
Pages 6 - 11

## Part 2

Working with the Equality Improvement Framework  
Pages 12 - 16

## Part 3

The Equality Improvement Framework  
Pages 17 - 42

## Part 4

Appendices  
Pages 43 - 46



# Foreword

The Equality Improvement Framework has been developed to assist local authorities and other public sector bodies to embed good equality practice as a core principle into the way they carry out their day-to-day functions delivering services. This will assist in the challenge to deliver the services that citizens need and to the best quality.

Since its initial launch in 2008, the broader policy and improvement agenda relating to local government and equality has moved on, and this revised Equality Improvement Framework has been updated to reflect these changes and the current context and drivers.

The Equality Act 2010 and the new specific duties from the National Assembly for Wales offer an opportunity for public bodies in Wales to tackle and reduce the inequality and disadvantage experienced by some groups of people. This can negatively affect their quality of life and opportunities to achieve and progress – leading to unequal outcomes and experiences.

Working towards a society that is fairer and more equal for all people is something that all progressive societies aspire to achieve. We must therefore all do our part and aim to ensure that what we do, and how we do it, does not cause disadvantage.

We must also identify what needs to change in order to achieve the goal of an 'equal Wales', and then proactively take the required action. An equal Wales, will mean a more prosperous Wales, where fairness and opportunity for all enable its full potential to become realised.



The revised Equality Improvement Framework will help local government and other bodies achieve this vision and I encourage all public bodies in Wales to make use of this Framework as we work together to create a more equal society in Wales.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Thomas'.

**Steve Thomas CBE**  
Chief Executive  
Welsh Local Government Association

# Part 1: An Introduction to the Equality Improvement Framework

## 1. Introduction and Background

To deliver ongoing service improvements for all citizens, equality improvement is a crucial requirement - to maintain the right focus in the right places. This will help enable the resources of a local authority to be used to their full potential - improving the life chances of local citizens, and generating a more prosperous, cohesive society.

The Equality Improvement Framework for Wales has been developed as a management framework to assist in the continuous improvement of performance in relation to equality. It seeks to encourage outcome-focused improvement activity to assist local government bodies in achieving the delivery of citizen-centred services. Applying the Framework will enable foundations to be put in place that support improvement over time; ensuring that equality improvement work is streamlined, proactive, well planned, and where possible, linked with other priority improvement work being planned or undertaken.

### Revised Version 2011

Equality improvement work is challenging to get right across a large public sector organisation. The WLGA is committed to assisting local authorities to achieve this goal by seeking to continually improve the tools that can assist in that process. This revised version of the Equality Improvement Framework for Wales, completed in 2011, builds upon the learning and the inherent strengths of the previous Framework (first published in 2008). The aim of the revision is to update the Framework to support the current public sector reform programme and to ensure it reflects the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, the specific public sector equality duties in Wales and the Local Government Measure (Wales) 2009. The revision also ensures the Framework provides an 'outcome-focused' practical approach to improvement - assisting local authorities to deliver improved outcomes to people's lives.

The revision has been undertaken in liaison with the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the WLGA Improvement Team, the Welsh Government, Fire and Rescue Authorities and equality practitioners from across Welsh local government.

## 1.1 What the Framework will help your local authority to achieve?

Applying the Framework will assist a local government body to:

- Achieve citizen-centred service delivery
- Improve outcomes for local citizens
- Tailor service provision - understand better how to build services around the most pressing need
- Improve efficiency - using limited resource to its best potential
- Reflect 'fairness' when setting improvement objectives under the Local Government Measure
- Meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duties and the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Mainstream equality into everyday working practices
- Achieve continuous equality improvement
- Better understand how any financial cuts might affect people or groups of people
- Identify specific organisational risk associated with equality issues
- Improve procurement practices

### The primary aim

The primary aim of applying the Equality Improvement Framework is to **embed equality** into the working practices of local government. This means that the service provision and employment practices of a local authority are able to meet people's needs, providing the best it can within the available resource.

### More than a tick-box exercise

The Equality Improvement Framework is designed to be a route-map to generating improvement - it is not a specific list of tasks to be 'ticked-off' until all boxes are completed. It presents a skeleton framework to be built upon, with the detailed specific issues and actions being considered at the local level. Therefore it does not prescribe what must be done, but proposes that if all the elements of the suggested framework are



addressed as appropriate, a local authority should be in a strong position to present good quality established equality principles and practice. This will provide considerable business benefits and confidence that citizens' needs are being properly considered, whilst also ensuring legal responsibilities are being fulfilled.

### Removing distinctiveness

It is vital that the existence of an Equality Improvement Framework does not reinforce notions that the equalities remit is a distinct, specialist, stand-alone agenda. Equality improvement should be viewed as a core element to delivering good quality, citizen-centred services and implementing the Framework will assist in achieving this aim.

### Working within current or planned improvement activity

The Equality Improvement Framework is designed to embed equality work into current or planned improvement activity. In some instances, this might mean doing some things in a new way, but in most cases it will mean amending, adding to or improving existing or planned processes and work activities - encouraging wherever possible for a 'low-cost' or 'no-cost' approach to equality improvement. This should help limit the need to administer stand-alone equality

improvement programmes or projects, and assist in 'mainstreaming' the agenda into core improvement business activities.

## 2. Defining Equality

The Equality Improvement Framework for Wales, when referring to the term 'equality,' uses the definition provided by the Equalities Review that states:

**"An equal society protects and promotes equal, real freedom and opportunity to live in the way people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish. An equal society recognises people's different needs, situations and goals, and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and be."**

This definition covers in particular the groups that are specifically listed as 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act, which include: **age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, sex and sexual orientation.**

### Wider issues of Disadvantage

The Framework recognises that issues of equality are often complex, multi-layered and not necessarily directly related to a protected characteristic, but



form part of wider, deeper issues. Local authorities are encouraged therefore in using the Framework to understand the relationship between the 'protected characteristics' and wider issues of disadvantage such as those that relate to socio-economic disadvantage. This can generate issues of inequality throughout a person's lifetime and can become compounded, though not necessarily caused in the first instance, by a protected characteristic.

### 3. The Law and Public Sector Reform

#### Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009

Implementing the Equality Improvement Framework will assist in meeting some of the requirements set out in the Local Government (Wales) Measure, which states, "*A Welsh Improvement authority must make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions*". In discharging this duty a local authority must have due regard in particular to:

- a) Strategic Effectiveness
- b) Service Quality
- c) Service Availability
- d) Fairness
- e) Sustainability
- f) Efficiency
- g) Innovation

The Framework will particularly assist local authorities in meeting the requirement that relates to 'fairness' and should also contribute towards improving 'strategic effectiveness', 'service quality' and 'service availability'.

#### The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 amalgamated previous disparate pieces of equality legislation, harmonising and strengthening equality legislation under one new Act. The Act includes a public sector equality duty that requires public sector bodies, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

### The Specific Regulations for Wales

There are also associated specific statutory equality duties for Wales (Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011) that enable a public authority in Wales to meet the general duty. The specific regulations include:

- Publishing equality objectives
- Publishing a Strategic Equality Plan
- Engagement and involvement provisions for protected characteristic groups
- Ensuring published material is accessible
- Assessing impact of relevant policies and practices
- Training and collection of employment information
- Promoting knowledge and understanding amongst employees of the Equality Act
- Addressing unfair pay differences
- Reviewing progress on the Strategic Equality Plan and associated Equality Objectives
- Procurement practice provisions

The Framework has been designed to work in support of the Equality Act and the specific regulations for Wales. It is therefore a useful implementation tool

for meeting the requirements. Whilst implementing the Framework will not necessarily enable all the requirements to be met, it should provide the foundations required to meet the essential requirements.

### The Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act provides legal protection for the basic rights of human beings, such as the right to have a private and family life, or the right to be educated (see Appendix 1). The Human Rights Act requires public sector bodies to ensure that they place Human Rights at the heart of the way public services are developed and delivered.

Implementing the Framework will contribute to ensuring the requirements of the Human Rights Act are met by a local authority, in particular through the 'Community Engagement' Building Block.

### Welsh Language

Although the Welsh Language agenda carries distinct differences to the wider equality agenda, there are points of overlap, which presents a business case for integrating aspects of improvement work on both agendas. The Framework is a flexible tool so by making links to the specific requirements of the Welsh Language Measure, local authorities

should successfully achieve improvement on both agendas at the same time.

It is important however that a degree of distinctiveness for Welsh Language issues is maintained within this process, ensuring that specific Welsh Language development work occurs outside of work associated with the Framework.

### **Corporate Relevance and Benefits**

Equality improvement achieves far more than meeting legislative requirements, it brings with it particular benefits both to local authorities and the citizens that they serve. Improved performance, greater customer satisfaction, increased efficiency and improved staff morale and motivation are some of the many benefits provided by achieving effective equality improvement (see Appendix 2 for more information).

### **Regulation and Inspection**

Equality issues are increasingly becoming embedded within inspection frameworks e.g. Wales Audit Office (WAO), Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales and Estyn. The WLGA will continue to work towards a common approach with the inspection bodies that will support and reinforce aspects of the Equality Improvement Framework for Wales.

### **Partnership Working and Community Planning**

Issues of significant inequality can often only be tackled meaningfully through a collaborative effort, particularly where disadvantage spans multiple public sector service-providers. The Equality Improvement Framework has therefore been designed as a flexible improvement tool that can be applied to different organisations and different organisational arrangements. This makes it suitable to be used in collaborative partnership arrangements (see Appendix 3 for more information).

## Part 2: Working with the Equality Improvement Framework

### 2.1 Equality Improvement Areas

At the core of the Frameworks' design are four 'Equality Improvement Areas':

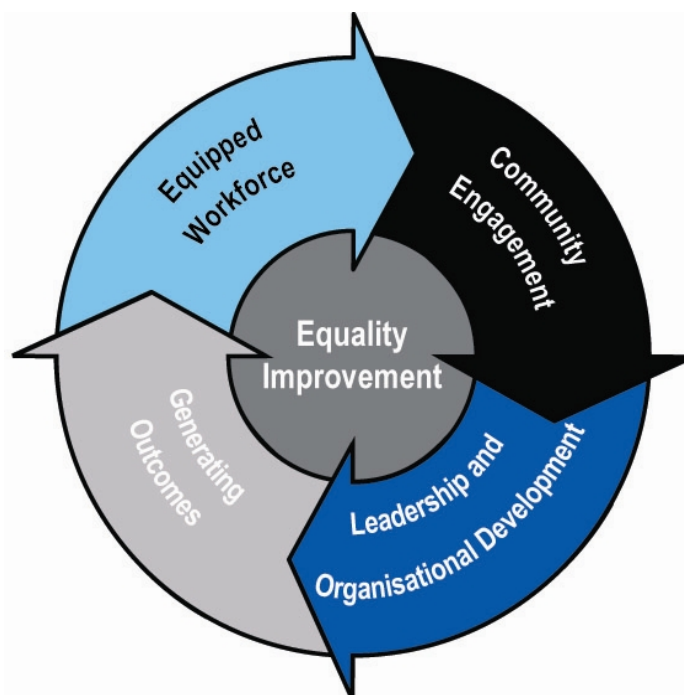
- Community Engagement
- Leadership and Organisational Commitment
- Generating Outcomes
- Equipped Workforce

These are the four main areas that a public sector authority will need to focus attention upon in order to effectively embed equality improvement into working practises. Essentially, all equality improvement activity can therefore be slotted within one of those four main areas. The improvement

areas, although expressed as distinct, are however very much interrelated and contain distinctive points of overlap between each of them.

### 2.2 Cycle of Continuous Improvement

The following cycle illustrates the four equality improvement areas as a continuous flow of improvement, with a constant return to the needs of the citizen. The cycle also represents as a logical linear flow of improvement activity, starting with the needs of the citizen and then moving through to modernising of the workforce, as shown below:



*N.B. An internal loop is shown between 'Equipped Workforce' and 'Generating Outcomes' as changes here may well operate in tandem - one process closely informing and being planned alongside the other.*

The starting point of the cycle should be Community Engagement, from which all effective equality improvement should originate. This is where the needs of the community are gathered, analysed and understood, in order to ensure that all service-planning and policy making rests upon that knowledge.

Following this, a careful consideration of the necessary leadership and organisational commitments that are required is essential to enable the necessary changes to happen.

Next, the right corporate processes and systems need to be established to enable outcomes to be generated (which the leadership has agreed will happen).

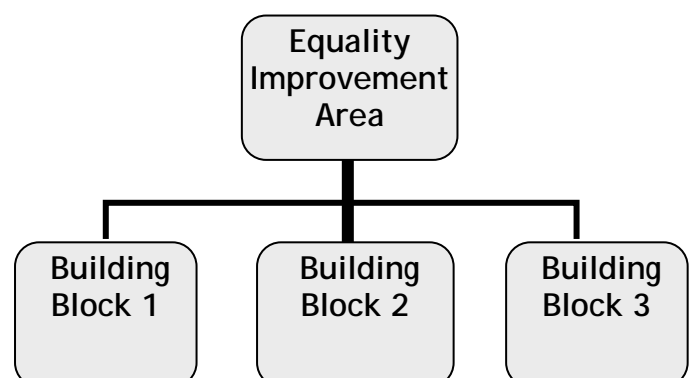
Finally, the necessary development of the workforce is required to ensure that staff are well-equipped to deliver the right changes required, in the right places.

In practice however it is likely that an organisation will not follow this logical sequence rigidly, choosing to commence

at different points in the cycle; working on more than one area at a time; and in many instances, opting to work on different aspects of all of the improvement areas at different times. For example, as the internal loop illustrates between 'Equipped Workforce' and 'Generating Outcomes' - changes here may well operate in parallel. All activity should however aim to originate, and be shaped, around the needs of the citizen.

## 2.3 Building Blocks

Underneath each improvement area are a number of **Building Blocks**. These are the essential elements required to enable an improvement area to function effectively. In essence, these are the engine parts to each improvement area, enabling it to run smoothly and effectively. The building blocks pinpoint therefore, what is required to achieve progress on a particular improvement area, as shown below:



By achieving all the building blocks of a particular improvement area, a local authority will have achieved one of the four improvement areas identified in the Framework.

Each building block starts with a statement of the 'aim' of the building block; this is the target or destination to be reached. A local authority may however wish to refine these into more concrete outcome-focussed objectives.

Below the building block aims are a number of suggested actions or goals that would enable the building block to be achieved. This list is not exclusive or exhaustive. A local authority may choose to select all actions from the list at any one time, or only a selection - depending upon what is logical and relevant to its circumstances at the time.

Alternatively, a local authority might achieve the building block in a completely different way, using none of the suggested actions but unique ones that suit the individual needs and circumstances of the organisation at that particular time. This allows the Framework to be used flexibly to suit the context of a particular local authority and the specific needs of its local community.

## 2.4 How to practically apply the Equality Improvement Framework

As mentioned, the flexible design of the Framework allows it to fit different types of corporate arrangements. It is useful however, to provide some suggested basic practical steps to implementing the Framework, which are identified on the next page:





**Step 1:** Establish / task a corporate working group to take forward the work of the Framework, with strong leadership, a robust corporate representation and project management arrangements.

**Step 2:** Complete an internal assessment of the authority's current performance in terms of each improvement area (including work currently underway).

**Step 3:** Prioritise which building blocks of the framework the authority aims to focus upon over the next 2-3 years (ensuring that this is well- integrated with other equality strategy/plans and generic corporate priorities and plans).

**Step 4:** Amend / mould the chosen Building Block Aims into refined objectives.

**Step 5:** Set actions against each objective and schedule these over a 3 year timescale including the responsible personnel and enter this into Ffynnon (or equivalent performance management) system.

**Step 6:** Work up a more detailed project plan for the next 12 months.

**Step 7:** Manage the project plan with robust project management arrangements, including clear lines of accountability.

**Step 8:** Identify outcomes generated for local citizens after 12 months.

**Step 9:** Repeat steps 6-8, for years 2 and 3.

**Step 10:** After 3 years, conduct a robust peer review assessment\* of achievement of the Framework and begin at Step 1 again.

**\* NB. Peer review assessment should be ongoing as well as the suggested robust 3 year review.**

These are only suggested steps to applying the Framework. In practice there are likely to be many more steps and also significant variation on timescales and the order.



## 2.5 Integrating the Framework with other key equality and improvement work

As mentioned, the Framework is designed to assist and compliment rather than add extra work to local authorities and should therefore be integrated within other priorities and improvement work. It has also been designed to work in alignment with the Equality Act and the specific regulations for Wales. For example, the Equality Improvement Framework might be integrated with the work to plan and develop the Corporate Improvement Plan (or equivalent) for the authority, rather than it being something considered after the Plan has been finalised.

## 2.6 Assessing performance—the ‘Equality Improvement Peer Challenge’

One of the ways in which a local authority can assess its performance of the Framework is through a peer assessment process. An ‘Equality Peer Challenge’ can provide an external assessment for local authorities to assess their performance against the Equality Improvement Framework for Wales. Peer assessments can provide an opportunity to evaluate progress and consider the next steps to making further

progress. Involving wider public sector partners in this assessment process can provide effective external challenge that should generate better outcomes for communities, and help to create a fairer, more prosperous society for all.



## Part 3: The Equality Improvement Framework

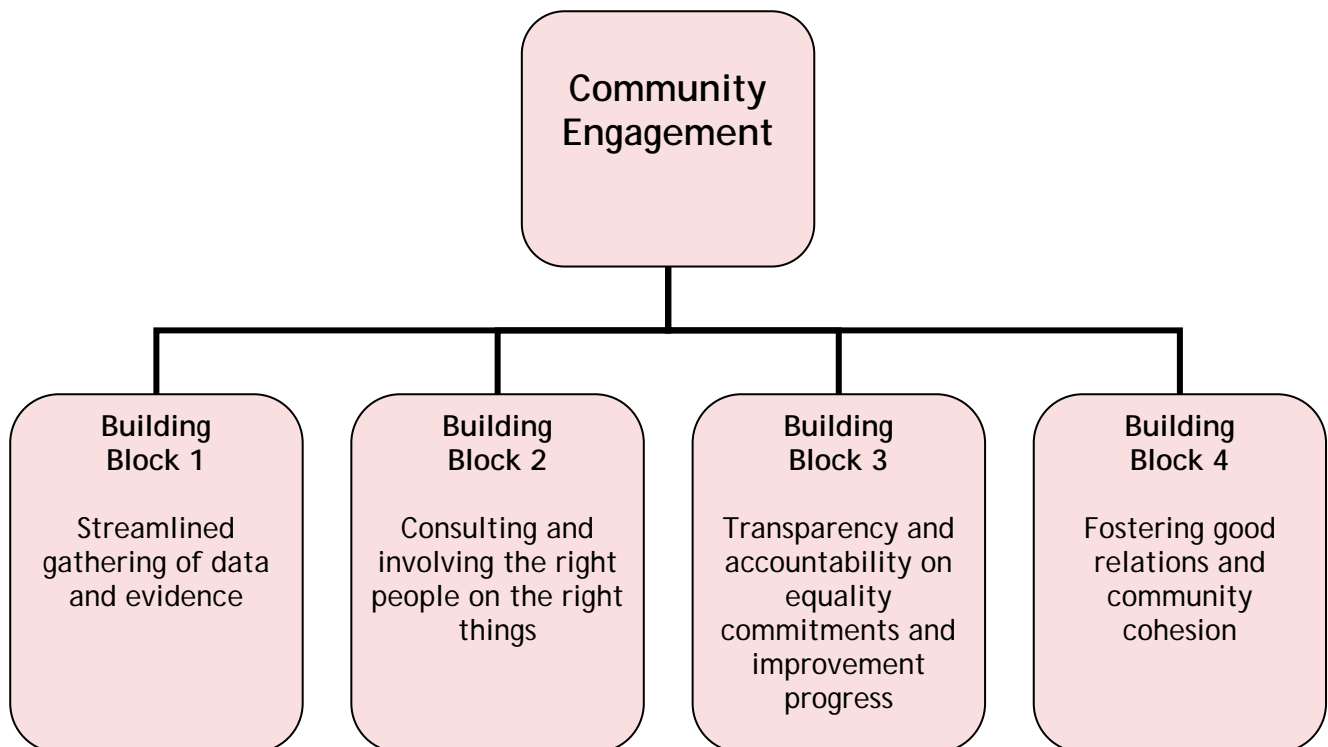
The following section sets out:

- The four Improvement Areas
- The associated Building Blocks for each Improvement Area
- The associated list of suggested Actions or Goals for each Building Block

# 1. Community Engagement

Understanding the complexity of the differing needs of the citizen enables an organisation to shape service provision in the best way. Not all needs can be met, but a good understanding means an organisation is better placed to divert valuable resource into the right places, at the right times, and in the right ways. In doing so, this will also contribute to building a more prosperous, cohesive local community and generate more accessible employment opportunities for local people.

The following building blocks are proposed to establish effective Community Engagement:



The authority is in a position to identify and understand robust data and evidence on issues of localised inequality.

### Suggested actions/goals:

- There is robust data and evidence available (e.g. from customer surveys, EqlA's, community forums etc) on the needs of local communities that can be broken down by the protected characteristics
- The available localised data and evidence (quantitative and qualitative) has been collated and analysed (identifying themes, trends and patterns) and shared with corporate management, Elected Members, across services and with human resources)
- Localised data and evidence is supplemented by the identification of relevant national research, data and evidence
- Data and evidence from partners and the voluntary sector has been utilised to support the national and in-house data collection
- Gaps in data have been identified, and where possible, attempts have been made to fill them (e.g. targeted surveys, focus groups etc)
- Equality Impact Assessment data and evidence from across services has been collated and analysed to present corporate trends (including any cumulative effects across the authorities services)
- The organisation has pinpointed from this analysis (and generated an understanding) of the issues of particular acute disadvantage for members of local communities

## 1.2 Consulting and involving the right people on the right things

The authority consults and involves relevant communities of interest and individuals on equality objectives, equality impact assessments, significant policy and service delivery plans.

### Suggested actions/goals:

- The necessary mechanisms/processes have been established to enable external equality stakeholders to communicate issues of localised inequality (e.g. accessible online feedback forms)
- Community groups/individuals across all of the protected characteristics are involved in the setting of corporate and service level equality objectives and undertaking Equality Impact Assessments
- The authority has made contact with community groups and individuals across all of the protected characteristics and obtained agreement on the most appropriate consultation process (when, on what, and in the way people want to be involved or consulted)
- Reasonable attempts have been made to contact groups and individuals who have not engaged with the organisation in the past
- An agreed methodology for meaningful consultation on significant policy or service plans is in place (i.e. this avoids the sending of long policy documents or poorly administered public meetings)
- Involvement of community groups/individuals across all of the protected characteristics happens as part of the business planning process - identifying improvement required at the corporate and service levels
- Progress on service and corporate commitments is opened up to regular direct external challenge and scrutiny from the community
- Specific issues of disadvantage raised during consultation and involvement are responded to directly by the appropriate senior management personnel

### 1.3 Transparency and accountability on equality commitments and improvement progress

The authority keeps the local community well informed and provides opportunities for challenge against equality commitments and progress.

#### Suggested actions/goals:

- There is an annual reporting update of equality improvement progress published by the authority in an accessible format
- Regular informal feedback on progress against corporate commitments is provided through established points of contact with the local community
- Equality stakeholders from the community are invited to 'sit' on appropriate corporate management team meetings and relevant corporate working groups to provide external challenge
- Service business plans are converted into an easily understood and appropriate format for the local community to understand and scrutinise
- Service business plans are made available in accessible formats (including other languages where significant populations exist in the locality) to local interest groups and individuals for scrutiny and challenge
- Equality stakeholders are invited to take part in the corporate peer review process on the Equality Improvement Framework
- The necessary mechanisms exist to provide equality stakeholders with accessible opportunities to communicate service/employment provision issues

## 1.4 Fostering good relations, community cohesion and sustainability

The organisation is assisting in relationship building and improving community cohesion within and between local communities.

### Suggested actions/goals:

- In partnership with the voluntary sector, opportunities to hold public events that celebrate diversity are being developed and supported
- A community cohesion forum has been established with representation from all major partners and across the protected characteristics
- Community cohesion forums are utilised to connect with the local community on diversity issues
- Community leaders who are covered by, working with or representative of people with protected characteristics are brought together to engage on solutions to tackle localised disadvantage
- Relevant positive messages on equality are regularly promoted through corporate communication channels
- Equality Improvement work is well integrated with work being planned or conducted on sustainability



## 2. Leadership and Organisational Commitment

Engaged leadership enables real change to be driven forward. Equality improvement is reliant upon leadership making firm commitments about what to improve and when, and 'backing this up' with ongoing support, challenge and direction - an organisation that is really committed will make the change happen. Aspirations set at the top need to be carried through into senior management who are able to reflect this commitment to front-line staff delivering services. Getting this right will enable equality improvement to really happen, contributing to high quality service provision and a motivated creative workforce.

The following building blocks are proposed to establish effective Leadership and Organisational Commitment:



## 2.1 Leadership vision and principles

The leadership of the organisation (Chief Executive, Directors, Cabinet/ Board Members) have publicly stated what the organisation wants to achieve and key priorities in relation to equality.

### Suggested actions/goals:

- The leadership of the organisation has considered the needs of the local population (using equality data, local citizen views etc.) and has communicated its vision for what the local authority will tackle in relation to equality in forthcoming years
- The leadership of the organisation has expressed clearly what principles it stands by on equality - what is expected from employees in the workplace and when delivering services to local people
- The vision and principles have been consulted upon to ensure they reflects community aspiration, are achievable, and can be easily understood by employees and members of the local community
- The vision has been incorporated into a generic organisational vision or strategy e.g. Corporate Improvement Plan
- The vision meaningfully impacts on the core business of the organisation on an ongoing basis - being a central aspect of generic improvement of the local authority (e.g. shaping and driving actions/objectives in the Corporate Improvement Plan)
- Leadership has established a robust ongoing process that enables the equality vision and principles to be understood by all employees. (e.g. corporate induction, promoting the agenda in staff newsletter, annual peer review challenge etc)

The leadership of the organisation provide ongoing support, commitment and challenge to generate the necessary organisational buy-in for the agenda.

### Suggested actions/goals:

- Senior leadership regularly communicate to senior management (Heads of Service, Senior Managers) the expected achievements at the management level to enable corporate equality objectives and vision to be delivered
- Senior leadership closely monitors progress against organisational equality commitments and objectives - challenging where updates are poor or not provided
- Ineffective Equality Impact Assessments and/or service level equality objectives are challenged by senior leadership and amendments happen as a result
- Senior leadership challenges poor progress and quality by services tasked with equality improvement objectives and actions
- Significant organisational barriers to equality improvement progress (e.g. poor senior management buy-in) have been raised with leadership and solutions identified are implemented
- Senior leadership regularly communicate through various effective internal and external channels the importance and meaning of the equality vision and principles and corporate equality objectives
- Necessary resource and officer time is released by leadership to provide support to the corporate management of equality improvement work
- Senior leadership has received appropriate training on strategic equality management and leadership (which incorporates all of the protected characteristics) to equip them to provide effective support, commitment and challenge

## 2.3 Management Accountability

Corporate vision and principles and equality objectives are becoming real through clearly evidenced commitments at the management level. (Heads of Service, Service Managers).

### Suggested actions/goals:

- Service-level equality objectives have been established, based upon corporate equality objectives, Equality Impact Assessments and community and employee feedback
- Generic service business objectives are amended where relevant to include specific equality improvement issues
- Evidence shows (for example from staff surveys and employee feedback) that senior management demonstrate the equality vision and principles through the way that they manage
- A mechanism exists for senior management to regularly report equality improvement progress (e.g. utilising attributes within Ffynnon system)

The authority has agreed with partners that the equality improvement work is to be conducted in collaboration and partnership.

### Suggested actions/goals:

- Local public sector partners and the voluntary sector have identified and agreed meaningful collaborative action on equality improvement
- Where it makes good business sense, combined equality objectives and/or actions are formally agreed with specific public sector partners through Local Service Board arrangements or an alternative mechanism
- Priority is taken to establish collaborative action and/or combined equality objectives within the Community Plan, the Children and Young Peoples Plan and the Health, Social Care and Well Being Strategy (rather than agreeing this outside of existing established processes)
- Partners demonstrate individual accountability for achieving combined equality objectives through identifying the specific actions and outcomes to which they will be held accountable (termed 'Performance Accountability under RBA methodology')
- There is an agreement to conduct consultation and involvement of the local community on equality issues in collaboration
- Community planning partners have established equality related improvement necessary to fulfil the requirements of the community plan and have agreed actions and timescales

See also the WLGA Community Planning Advice Note at:

<http://www.wlga.gov.uk/english/equalities-publications/wlga-advice-note-promoting-equality-within-community-planning/>

## 2.5 Improving participation of under-represented groups

The organisation provides opportunities and the means by which marginalised and under-represented people of the local community can participate more in public life.

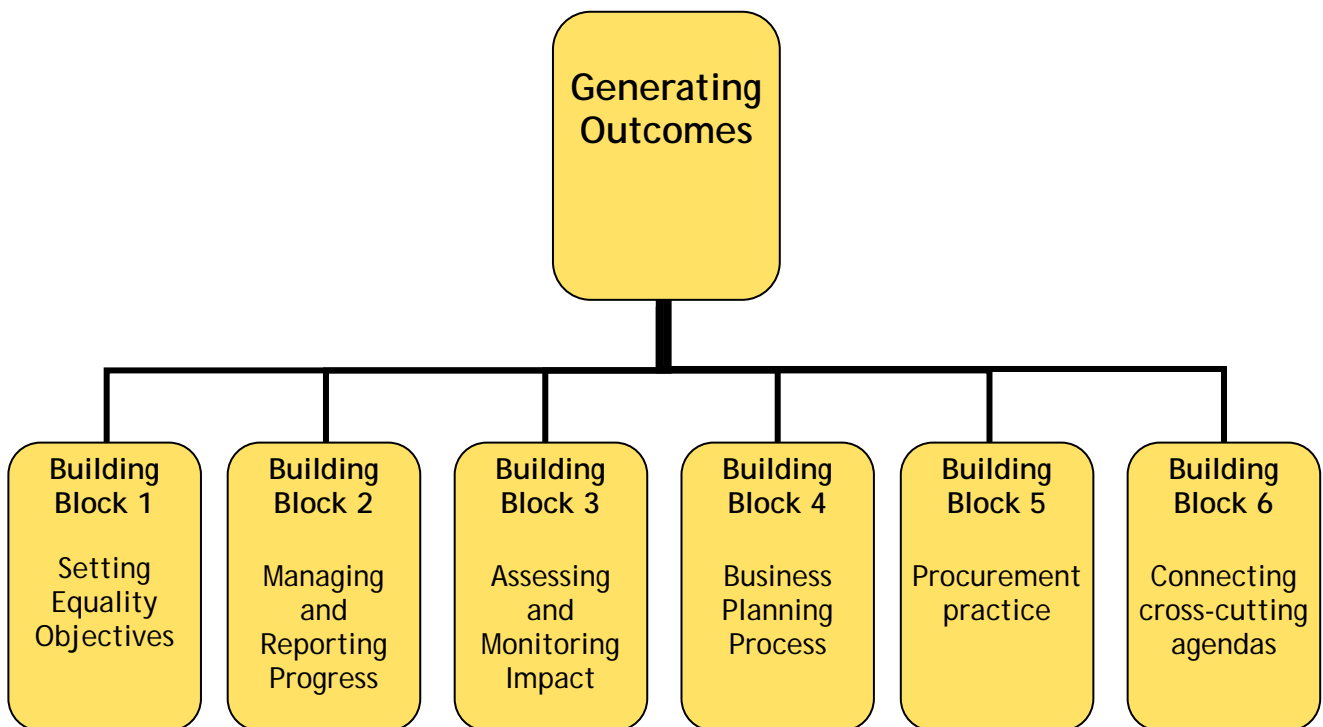
### Suggested actions/goals:

- Marginalised groups in the local population have been identified (who they are, where located, possible barriers to public life)
- Members of marginalised groups have been invited to take-part in providing equality feedback about service provision and employment opportunities to the organisation
- Marginalised groups have been consulted on ways to improve their participation in public life and relevant actions generated in response
- Opportunities for work experience, mentoring and shadowing of officers/ Members are offered and arranged for members of marginalised groups
- People from under-represented groups are encouraged to participate in established equality forums and groups in the local community
- Creative solutions are explored to increase involvement and participation e.g. generating virtual networks, online consultation and involvement etc

### 3. Generating Outcomes

The ultimate aim of equality improvement work is to generate improved outcomes for people living in the community served by the local authority. This means translating public commitments made by the organisation into noticeable changes to the lives of local people. This is achieved through a carefully managed process of putting the correct streamlined corporate mechanisms and processes in place that will deliver measurable improved outcomes over time. This happens best when the community has been consulted about what they want, the leadership has agreed what to improve and the workforce has been prepared.

The following building blocks are proposed to generate outcomes:





## 3.1 Setting Equality Objectives

Corporate equality objectives and an associated strategic equality plan have been agreed for the organisation.

### Suggested actions/goals:

- Evidence has been gathered from EqIA's, satisfaction surveys, targeted consultation, anecdotal front-line service information and national research to meaningfully identify where the areas of most pressing local inequality exist
- Senior leadership and managers have been involved in a decision-making process to identify what the corporate equality objectives should be, based upon the available evidence
- Objectives are carefully evaluated to ensure that they will deliver expressed needs communicated by the local community
- Actions, timescales and people are placed against the objectives
- Appropriate corporate equality objectives have been converted into service level objectives for relevant services
- Corporate equality objectives have been carefully aligned to the core business objectives of the organisation (in some cases translated to form part of wider corporate objectives)
- There is a record of the rationale and decision making process for finalised equality objectives, including reasoning for any protected characteristics not included
- The organisation is clear on the intended outcomes to be achieved from the equality objectives and how these will be monitored for progress over time
- The objectives, rationale and planned steps to achievement have been published in a strategic equality plan (or incorporated within the primary improvement plan or equivalent)
- Where appropriate, formal agreements (e.g. service level agreements) are made with other public bodies and/or the voluntary sector to deliver objectives in partnership

There is an equality management mechanism in place that will enable corporate vision and principles and equality objectives to happen.

### Suggested actions/goals:

- Equality objectives and associated actions have been included in the primary improvement plan for the authority
- An effective mechanism (such as a corporate working group) exists to manage and progress achievement of corporate commitments at the corporate and service level
- The mechanism has strong high-level backing and involvement from senior leadership, to enable challenging cross-service outcomes to be achieved
- The mechanism assists in driving forward progress of corporate commitments at the service level (in particular, service-level objectives and equality impact assessments)
- An efficient progress monitoring system has been established to provide ongoing progress checking at the service level to senior leadership and management (e.g. equality attributes built into the Ffynnon management system)
- There is effective senior leadership and management challenge established for poor progress and to assist in removing barriers to progress
- Progress is monitored by external equality stakeholders who provide direct challenge, scrutiny and advice

See also the WLGA Guide to 'Establishing and Maintaining Effective Corporate Working Groups' at:

<http://www.wlga.gov.uk/english/equalities-publications/delivering-equality-outcomes-establishing-and-maintaining-effective-corporate-working-groups/>

The organisation has an effective corporate process established to enable the ongoing assessment of impact across services.

**Suggested actions/goals:**

- Systems/processes are in place across the organisation to collect data, analyse and assess the quality of service provision and the associated outcomes for all sections of the community (paying particular attention to the protected characteristics)
- The organisation has agreed and put in place a streamlined methodology for assessing the impact of relevant existing activity on all sections of the local community (such as whether to take a predominantly practice or policy-based approach)
- The authority has put in place effective monitoring arrangements to measure the impact of relevant existing practices and policies on people covered by all of the protected characteristics
- The authority has assessed the equality impact of all existing relevant practices and policies using good quality data and evidence (both quantitative and qualitative)
- There is corporate monitoring of performance of assessments to ensure all relevant activities are assessed to agreed timescales and quality e.g. using the Ffynnon system
- A corporate protocol has been agreed to ensure all significant new policy developed are robustly assessed for their impact upon equality (across all of the protected characteristics)
- There is an agreed process for challenging and rectifying overlooked EqIA's and also poor progress/quality on scheduled assessments (including details such as who will challenge)
- Significant decisions are meaningfully assessed using robust data and evidence for their impact upon equality for members of the local community (across all of the protected characteristics)

For further information on building an effective assessment of impact process please go to: <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageld=8017247>

The necessary mechanisms have been established to enable equality improvement to happen through the business planning process.

### Suggested actions/goals:

- Results from the Equality Impact Assessment of services and policies are taken forward into actions within business plans
- Service business plans reflect an outcome focussed practical response to the organisations equality vision and principles for the organisation
- Corporate level equality objectives are translated into service-level business objectives for relevant services
- Meaningful engagement and involvement of people across the 'protected characteristics' happens when finalising business plan objectives
- Peer review challenge happens between services, taking into account progress against equality objectives at the service level, EqIA, and the corporate equality vision and principles
- Engagement between service areas has taken place in order to identify where objectives can be delivered in partnership

## 3.5 Procurement practice

The organisation has procedures and practices in place that will enable the procured services to meet the organisations commitments and expectations on equality.

### Suggested actions/goals:

- Relevant procurement processes include award criteria that includes considerations relevant to performance of the general duty of the Equality Act
- Relevant contracted and commissioned services include stipulated conditions that relate to performance of the general duty e.g. commissioned care homes agree to demonstrate ongoing monitoring of service user satisfaction broken down by protected characteristics
- The assessment of the impact upon equality is evaluated and included as a fundamental element of the commissioning and procurement process
- The specifics required to ensure contracted/commissioned services contribute to achieving corporate equality objectives is formally agreed at the point of commissioning
- The requirement to assess (on an ongoing basis) the impact upon equality and regularly communicate findings is formally agreed at the point of commissioning
- Equality stakeholders are involved in the Contracts and Commissioning process to provide scrutiny and challenge to ensure equality considerations are carefully considered
- The extent to which contracted/commissioned services meet formally agreed equality requirements is monitored and challenged by senior leadership where shortfalls exist

Links have been made with other cross-cutting agendas to enable a joined-up approach to generating improved outcomes for the local community.

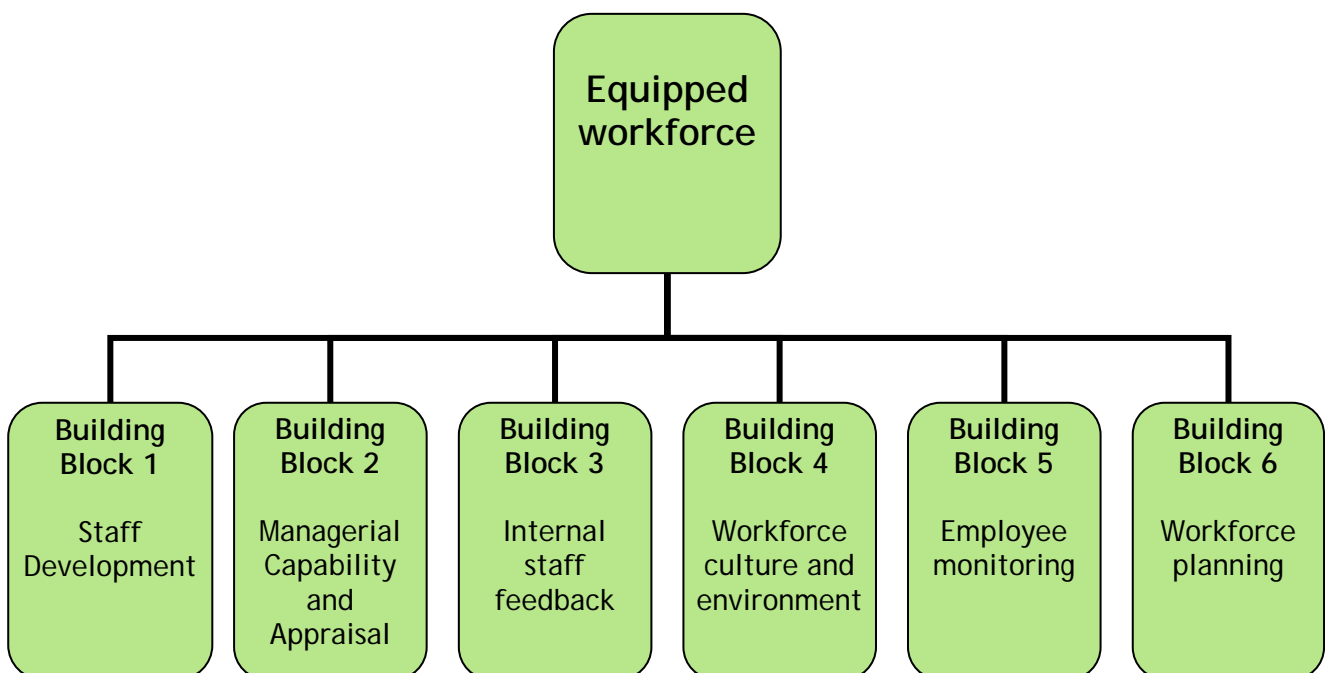
### Suggested actions/goals:

- An evaluation process has been conducted to identify common ground between equality aspirations and other planned cross-cutting work e.g. sustainability, older peoples agenda, children and young peoples partnership etc
- From the evaluation process, objectives, actions or processes that can be combined have been agreed, maximising resource and reducing any unnecessary duplication
- An agreement to combine objectives, actions or processes is formally agreed in the appropriate place e.g. Council's Board or Cabinet
- Consultation work associated with cross-cutting agendas is combined to maximise resource and reduce consultation fatigue

## 4. Equipped Workforce

Community engagement, leadership commitments and the processes necessary to generate outcomes are crucial to ensure improvement on equality is achieved; but this will only deliver change to people's lives if the workforce is ready and appropriately informed and equipped. A culture of 'valuing people' will also improve employee commitment and morale, reduce turnover and increase staff motivation - all of which ultimately generate better service provision for citizens.

The following building blocks are proposed as the key ingredients to build an equipped workforce:



A rolling programme of staff development is in place to ensure the right staff have the right skills to deliver equality improvement.

### Suggested actions/goals:

- An 'equality' training needs analysis has been conducted for the organisation that clearly takes into account the different needs of strategic decision-makers, senior management, middle management, line managers and front-line staff
- The training needs analysis includes identifying which people require what necessary specific skills at all levels of the organisation, including setting meaningful equality objectives, assessing equality impact effectively and understanding the needs of people covered by all of the protected characteristics
- An equalities training plan has been produced (as a stand-alone, or as part of generic training plan) detailing how the necessary training needs and skills will be met for the organisation, including associated timescales
- The training plan is supported by the establishment of an ongoing programme of staff-development, to assist in developing the necessary skills for effective setting of equality objectives and conducting EqIA's, e.g. action learning sets, peer review sessions etc
- An electronic resource has been created to provide easily accessible information to support effective equality improvement within services e.g. information on conducting effective EqIA's



## 4.2 Managerial capability and appraisal

There is regular appraisal of the capability of senior management to deliver equality improvement.

### Suggested actions/goals:

- The equality aspirations of the organisation (equality objectives and vision/principles) have been translated into an appraisal process for service managers and senior management
- Manager capability to deliver services that meet the organisations aspirations on equality has been evaluated and any development needs identified and addressed
- Ongoing development to achieve equality improvement has been established for managers e.g. action learning sets, targeted training, shadowing, mentoring etc
- Annual appraisal of managers includes a consideration of equality achievements against corporate equality objectives, service level objectives, EqIA's, staff feedback and service user feedback
- Performance related pay, core competencies, career progression criteria etc., are directly linked to equality improvement achievements
- Ongoing peer review of capability to deliver continuous equality improvement has been established for managers
- Managerial achievements are presented annually to senior leadership (Chief Executive, Directors, Cabinet/Board Members) for evaluation of corporate progress
- Selection criteria within the recruitment process of senior personnel and service managers incorporates a meaningful evaluation of equality improvement achievements

A mechanism exists for regular staff feedback to inform the improvement of services and employment provision.

### Suggested actions/goals:

- A staff forum(s)/network exists offering support for people who share a protected characteristic and where employees can communicate in confidence workplace equality issues which are then responded to by senior management
- Employees are provided with other mechanisms to express workplace and service provision equality issues directly to corporate management for consideration (incorporating secure confidential anonymous reporting), e.g. a confidential e-mail or intranet system
- A mechanism is in place for employees (in particular those covered by the protected characteristics) to provide constructive challenge on service business plans and equality impact assessments
- A policy/protocol exists to ensure expressed views are responded to effectively and that services are held accountable to reasonably consider and where feasible act upon feedback provided by employees
- The appropriate senior personnel are well engaged with the staff feedback process, acting upon feedback, releasing resource where necessary and feasible and challenging service managers to implement agreed changes effectively

## 4.4 Workplace culture and environment

The necessary provisions to generate a supportive workplace culture and environment are in place.

### Suggested actions/goals:

- The necessary policies and procedures are in place to meet the employment requirements of the Equality Act 2010
- Structures and policies are in place to identify and deal effectively with discrimination, harassment and victimisation within the workplace
- The equality vision and principles and improvement progress is communicated at appropriate times to staff e.g. during induction, in team meetings, at leadership briefings etc
- There is a high level of awareness and understanding by employees of the vision and principles of equality for the organisation (measured for example through staff surveys/ internal mystery shopper exercises)
- Information about equality improvement (the reasoning for its importance and how employees are expected to respond) and progress is provided electronically for staff to access
- Reasonable adjustments required within the workplace have been carefully considered and implemented where necessary (this includes reasonable adjustments for specific individuals as well as collective need)
- Reasonable adjustments are well managed, with well established procedures for managing the change of reasonable adjustments being made e.g. informing other staff of the reasons and need for a reasonable adjustment

The organisation has generated a profile of its employees, their workplace requirements and career progression.

### Suggested actions/goals:

- The workforce has been profiled to present an employee breakdown across all of the protected characteristics set against job, grade, pay, contract type and working pattern
- Recruitment is monitored, analysed and regularly reported upon to senior leadership, providing breakdown information on applications, short listing and successful candidates by protected characteristics
- Disciplinary procedures are monitored, analysed and regularly reported on by protected characteristics
- Movement within the authority (changed positions) and those who leave the authority is monitored, analysed and regularly reported upon by protected characteristics
- Access to training programmes is monitored, analysed and regularly reported upon by protected characteristics, including requests put forward and decisions made
- A system is in place to ensure necessary reasonable adjustments are identified and made to accommodate the needs that employees have in relation to the protected characteristics
- Information is collated centrally into one place on requests for reasonable adjustments, those that have been agreed and those that have been completed and this is reported on to senior management/Members

## 4.6 Workforce planning

The organisation has planned how to generate a workforce that reflects the make-up of the local population.

### Suggested actions/goals:

- The recruitment process has been assessed for equality impact and revised where necessary to ensure any barriers to accessing employment have been removed
- Positive action is being taken to encourage and support any under-represented groups into employment
- Supportive employment schemes have been taken-up to provide employment/ work experience for under-represented groups
- Ongoing shadowing opportunities are provided with officers and/or Members for under-represented groups from within and outside the workforce
- The right mechanisms are in place to provide an ongoing equal pay review for the organisation

## Part 4: Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### The Human Rights Act

Human rights are not just about the law and taking cases to court. They are relevant to many of the decisions people make and the situations people experience on a daily basis. The government intended the Human Rights Act to place human rights at the heart of the way public services are delivered.

All public authorities in the UK must respect the rights contained in the Human Rights Act in everything that they do. Public authorities are under a duty not to commit human rights abuses. Public authorities also have duties to take proactive steps (known as 'positive obligations') in order to ensure that human rights are respected, protected and fulfilled - for example if a public authority is aware that someone is being abused, they may have a duty under the Human Rights Act to investigate or intervene.

#### The rights contained in the Human Rights Act are as follows:

- The right to life
- The right not to be tortured or treated in an inhuman or degrading way
- The right to be free from slavery or forced labour
- The right to liberty
- The right to a fair trial
- The right to no punishment without law
- The right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence
- The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- The right to freedom of expression
- The right to freedom of assembly and association
- The right to marry and found a family
- The right not to be discriminated against in relation to any of the rights contained in the European Convention on Human Rights
- The right to education
- The right to peaceful enjoyment of possessions
- The right to free elections

## Appendix 2

### The Business Benefits

Some of the key benefits provided to an organization implementing effective equality improvement, are as follows:

#### 1. Achieving citizen-centred service delivery

In order to deliver citizen-centred services, policy and service planning needs to generate an understanding of the diverse range of service users that live within the local community.

Understanding this means that services are designed in a flexible manner to accommodate wider needs and requirements.

#### 2. Streamlining service provision

The most effective way to ensure that services delivered to local citizens are designed and planned in a streamlined way is to generate a good knowledge and understanding about those citizens.

Equality improvement work drives forward a closer connection with members of the local community that should assist in removing unnecessary waste or duplication, putting taxpayers money to best use.

#### 3. Removing hidden barriers

Without a dedicated focus to better

understand the needs of local service users, hidden barriers to accessing vital public sector services and employment are likely to exist. Equality improvement work should enable earlier identification and enable an informed response to issues of service accessibility.

#### 4. Generating prosperous, cohesive communities

Equality improvement work seeks to build relationships with and between community groups - valuing the community and working to improve community well-being. Taking forward equality improvement work that impacts the community assists to generate more cohesive, prosperous communities. This invariably reduces the workload of public sector organisations and generates a better place for people to work, visit and live.

#### 5. Service user satisfaction, staff morale and motivation

Research shows that often some of the best performing organisations undertake ongoing equality improvement work. Sending a clear message to service users and employees that it values its customers and employees can reduce the propensity for complaints, generate customer and employee loyalty, improve employee commitment and can release



creativity and potential within the workplace. It also increases the prospect for attracting better qualified personnel, enabling the building of a better equipped and efficient workforce.

### 6.Meeting legal responsibilities

There are legal reasons to progress equality improvement work, in particular, the Equality Act 2010 and the Local Government Measure both set out distinct legal responsibilities that relate to the need for local Government bodies to progress equality improvement.

It can be challenging for a local authority to work out the practical detail required to meet these legal requirements, which the Equality Improvement Framework aims to provide. The Framework has been designed to work in alignment to the Equality Act and the Local Government Measure. Although implementing the Framework will not necessarily enable all the specific requirements to be met, it should provide the essential foundations required.

## Appendix 3

### Partnership Working and Community Planning

The development of a more holistic, partnership-based approach to public

service delivery is at the centre of much of the emerging policy and legislative framework in Wales. Issues of significant inequality can also often only meaningfully be tackled through a collaborative effort - where disadvantage spans multiple public sector service-providers. The Welsh Government's guidance to local authorities also identifies equality of opportunity and social inclusion as core principles that should drive community strategy planning and in the preparation of Community Strategies.

Public bodies engaged in tackling issues of inequality can therefore significantly benefit from a careful consideration of opportunities to collaborate equality thinking and objective setting. In order to make this happen, the complexity involved needs to be carefully considered and managed and the Equality Improvement Framework should assist in that process. The Equality Improvement Framework is therefore a flexible improvement tool that can be applied to different organisations and organisational arrangements - making it suitable to use in collaborative partnership arrangements.



For more information on the need to tackle issues of entrenched inequality collaboratively, please see the WLGA's advice note on Community Planning at: <http://www.wlga.gov.uk/english/equalities-publications/wlga-advice-note-promoting-equality-within-community-planning/>

## Appendix 4

### Reference List

The Equalities Review:

<http://www.pfc.org.uk/files/EqualitiesReview-InterimReport.pdf>

WLGA Guide: 'Establishing and Maintaining Effective Corporate Working Groups':

<http://www.wlga.gov.uk/english/equalities-publications/delivering-equality-outcomes-establishing-and-maintaining-effective-corporate-working-groups/>

WLGA Guide: 'Promoting Equality within Community Planning':

<http://www.wlga.gov.uk/english/equalities-publications/wlga-advice-note-promoting-equality-within-community-planning/>

Results Based Accountability (RBA):

[www.raguide.org/](http://www.raguide.org/)

Step up Cymru Scheme:

<http://www.wlga.gov.uk/english/equalities-publications/step-up-cymru-mentoring-scheme-evaluation-report/>

Government Equalities Office:

<http://www.equalities.gov.uk/>

Welsh Government Specific Duties:

<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/consultation/100921eqact10regsen.doc>

Equality and Human Rights Commission  
- Equality Act 2010:

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/legal-and-policy/equality-act/>

