



Gender Equality Scheme
2007 – 2010



Gender Equality Scheme

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Foreword by the Secretary of State

The UK's proud tradition of equality law has given us a framework that offers individuals some of the most comprehensive protection in the world. In the past ten years this Government has extended those protections and made big changes – from the right to request flexible working, to civil partnerships – designed to give everyone the fair deal they deserve.

We continue to widen and strengthen those protections. A key part of this reform process has been the introduction of the positive duties on public bodies to promote equality and eliminate discrimination, first on race, more recently on disability, and now gender. These duties recognise that one size doesn't fit all. Sometimes in order to achieve equal outcomes, we have to treat people differently. So women and men may require different services and different approaches to meet their needs. This is what the Gender Equality Duty will achieve, and what this scheme will, I believe, deliver for Communities and Local Government. Our analysis indicates that, in this first scheme, much of our focus has to be on women, but where men face disadvantage, we will tackle this too.

The programmes delivered by Communities have an enormous impact on the lives of women and their families and for those women who are vulnerable whether because of age, disability or sexual violence. Yet historically the needs of women have not always been at the forefront of our policy making and too often we have failed to realise the potential of women to contribute to our civic and public life and to find rewarding jobs which can be balanced with family life.

We know from the Women and Work Commission that at a national level releasing the economic power of women could be worth up to £23 billion a year. I believe that what is true at a national level is equally true at a local and regional level. That is why running through this scheme is a commitment to increasing women's economic participation in our regional, cities and regeneration programmes.

I also believe that enabling more women to participate in our civic and public life is not only good in itself, but an essential part of our community cohesion programme.

All the actions set out in our scheme – to increase women's economic and civic engagement, to provide better protection for vulnerable women – operate in a context of major changes in the delivery of local services. An important challenge will be to ensure that better outcomes for women and men are part and parcel of our commitment to create devolved, joined up, local services, over which local people have a real say.

A Department which delivers for women must also be a Department which values the women we employ and maximises their potential.

An important part of this scheme is our improved policy on flexible working. I am committed to the success of this scheme which I believe will be a huge benefit to women and men in the Department.

Finally we need the 'hard wiring' to make our policies effective. As far as possible we will collect and analyse equalities data using gender disaggregation to provide a robust basis for all policies and the impact analyses that we make. In taking this Scheme forward, account will also be taken of Equalities-related Public Service Agreements that are agreed as part of the CSR07 process.

I will be working with colleagues across Government to ensure that we capture all the gains from the new Gender Equality Duty. Within Communities and Local Government, we will review progress annually, and the whole scheme in three years, with input from our stakeholders.

The new Gender Equality Duty takes us beyond eliminating individual discrimination, important as this remains, to a new culture where we think positively about how we can create a society where all women and men have the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Foreword by Peter Housden, Permanent Secretary

Equalities are at the heart of Communities and Local Government. The Gender Equality Duty is a historic opportunity to change the lives of women and men for the better.

In the 30 years or so since the implementation of the Sex Discrimination Act and Equal Pay Act, much has happened to enable women to make the most of the opportunities open to them in the workplace, in society generally and, importantly, in their communities. The Gender Equality Duty builds on all that has been achieved and takes it a step further by encouraging active promotion of opportunity rather than just preventing discrimination. For this Department it means encouraging better representation of women in regional, local and neighbourhood governance, engaging communities in decisions that impact on their everyday lives and strengthening our efforts to ensure access to quality public services at the local level. We want to build prosperous, cohesive and sustainable communities. Women have a huge part to play in this. The actions in our Gender Equality Scheme are a real chance for the Department to demonstrate how it will take this agenda forward to ensure that the Gender Equality Duty fulfils its aims – both for our own people and wider – to allow individuals to fulfil their potential within communities across the country.

Executive Summary

This is the Communities and Local Government's Gender Equality Scheme (GES) which sets out how we intend to comply with the Gender Equality Duty.¹ Our scheme takes into account the specific duties set out to support progress in delivering the general duty (Annex 1). It focuses on the priorities of both men and women as employees and citizens, and sets out our plan for delivery over the next three years, linked to our Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets, and the Department's vision.

Communities and Local Government has a vision of prosperous and cohesive communities, offering a safe, healthy and sustainable environment for all. Our aim is to build the capacity of communities to shape and protect their own future (see Chapter 2).

Our Scheme – What we're going to do

We have identified key priorities for inclusion in this Gender Equality Scheme as a result of consultation within the Department, with our key stakeholders and through assessing our evidence base. Our priorities cover both our external role and our internal working practices.

Our Gender Equality Scheme is built around three outward facing strategic objectives. These are economic engagement, civic engagement and supporting vulnerable women. We have also looked at our own internal practices and aim to resolve any gender pay gap issues, promote and support flexible working and consider how our procurement practice can help to deliver gender equality (see Chapter 3).

Economic Engagement

Economic engagement is a key driver of economic growth. It plays a vital part in ensuring that women and other groups who may otherwise miss out, such as under achieving young men have the opportunity to fulfil their potential and contribute directly to economic prosperity and productivity.

¹ "To have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and promote equality of opportunity between men and women." (Section 76A of the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act).

The Department has identified three broad areas for further action – improved economic engagement for women, equal pay for women and men and tackling occupational segregation of men and women. In addition, we are leading the Government's action in response to the recommendations of the Women and Work Commission as set out in our 'one year on' report *Towards a Fairer Future*, to tackle the gender pay and opportunities gap (see Section 3.2).

Civic Participation

In the recent white paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities*, the Department set out its ambition for effective governance which provides the representation and leadership which people have the right to expect. We want to remove the barriers which can still get in the way of effective and representative governance, and enable democratic representatives to better reflect the diversity of their local communities. Two broad areas have been identified for action, which take into account stakeholder requirements – increased representation in governance and public appointments and capacity building to support and encourage increased civic participation (see Section 3.3).

Supporting Vulnerable Women

We want to build prosperous and cohesive communities, with safe, healthy and sustainable environments for everyone. As a Department, we are committed to opening up opportunities for all and promoting social justice. But we know that for some women, the realities of their everyday lives mean that they do not experience the same levels of safety and security in their homes and communities which we want everyone to have. Compared to men, women are more likely to say that they do not feel safe in the places where they live.

Consultation feedback identified a number of areas for action in delivering support for vulnerable women. Drawing on this and the evidence base, two broad areas for action to promote safety and security for women have been identified: preventing and eliminating violence against women and ensuring better and safer places to live (see Section 3.4).

Other Departmental Initiatives

Some of the actions that we have identified in our Gender Equality Scheme fall under more than one of the above categories, or relate to other areas of work where Communities and Local Government is taking the lead on initiatives affecting a number of Government Departments.

Key actions include negotiating the first cross Government Equalities PSA which will include key targets on gender equality; setting up the Commission on Equality and Human Rights; and ensuring that the Performance Framework for Local Government promotes gender equality, including the new national improvement strategy and the operational guidance on Local Area Agreements and “place-shaping” (see Section 3.5).

Communities and Local Government as an employer

As the Government lead on equalities, it is even more important that our Department leads by example as an employer. Not just because legal duties require this, but because of our commitment to ensuring our staff are at the heart of what we do.

The actions outlined in this scheme are part of a wider programme of transformation within the Department. Development of the actions has drawn on analysis of the most recent staff survey and appraisals, the findings and recommendations of the Workforce Equalities Taskforce and consultation with women in senior and feeder grades. The Gender Equality Scheme identifies four areas for action – flexible working and work-life balance; representativeness of our workforce; supporting our staff and equal pay (see Section 3.6).

Monitoring and Review

The Department is committed to collecting and analysing equalities data including gender in order to provide a robust evidence base for both policy development and policy delivery.

To maintain progress in implementing the Action Plan, annual reviews will be considered by the Department’s Equalities Programme Executive, comprising senior officials from across the Department and headed by the Director General for Equalities (see Chapter 4).

1 Introduction

The aim of the Communities and Local Government's Gender Equality Scheme is to set out how we intend to comply with the Gender Equality Duty.² Our Gender Equality Scheme takes into account the specific duties set out to support progress in delivering the general duty. Annex 1 sets out the legislative background and requirements. This Gender Equality Scheme focuses on the priorities of both men and women as employees and citizens. It sets out our plan for delivery over the next three years, linked to our Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets³, and the Department's vision.

² The legal requirement is set out in Part 4 of the Equality Act (2006)

³ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1503442>

2 What we do

2.1 Our Vision

- 2.1.1 Communities and Local Government aims to create prosperous and cohesive communities, offering a safe, healthy and sustainable environment for all. Our role is to build the capacity of communities to shape and protect their own future. We want: to see empowered and confident communities, with higher levels of citizen engagement; to work together to offer more choice and quality in public services; to build cohesion and tackle extremism; to address the issues of climate change and anti-social behaviour; backed by strong and responsive local government drawing in all local partners to shape and deliver the Communities' vision for the future.
- 2.1.2 The Department takes a strategic lead across Government on equal opportunities and social justice; better homes and neighbourhoods; strong and accountable local government and leadership; better local services and environment; regeneration and investment in our neighbourhoods, towns, cities and regions; and safe, tolerant and inclusive communities in which people feel comfortable and proud to live. More details on what we do are in Annex 2.

2.2 How We Work

- 2.2.1 Nationally, we will drive change from within and across all government departments to deliver services that recognise the different needs of men and of women at neighbourhood, local and regional levels. We will use our policies to deliver outcomes through our partners in local and regional government (including the private sector and voluntary bodies), and will aim to ensure that their influence, policies and programmes focus on enabling local communities to become better places in which to live and work.
- 2.2.2 Our work is delivered through a range of devolved delivery systems, including four Executive Agencies and twenty non-Departmental public bodies which help us to develop and implement policy. We sponsor the nine Government Offices on behalf of government as a whole, and draw on them to co-ordinate and communicate a wide range of government policies and programmes at regional, sub-regional and local level, relying on their local knowledge and ability to address the particular needs of their areas.

3 Our scheme – what we're going to do

3.1 Identifying Priorities

3.1.1 We have identified key priorities for inclusion in the Gender Equality Scheme as a result of consultation within the Department, and more widely with our key stakeholders, and through assessing what the evidence says (Annexes 3 and 4). Our priorities cover both our external role and our internal working practices. Our Gender Equality Scheme is built around three outward facing strategic objectives. These are:

- Economic engagement.
- Civic engagement.
- Supporting vulnerable women.

We have also looked at our own internal practices, and aim to:

- Resolve any gender pay gap issues.
- Promote and support flexible working.
- Consider how our procurement practice can help to deliver gender equality.

Our activity within these objectives is set out in more detail in Annex 5.

3.2 Economic Engagement

3.2.1 Economic engagement is a key driver of economic growth. It plays a vital part in ensuring that women and other groups who may otherwise miss out, such as under achieving young men, have the opportunity to achieve their potential and contribute directly to economic prosperity and productivity. More broadly, we identified three areas for further action:

- Improved economic engagement for women.
- Equal pay for women and men.
- Tackling occupational segregation of men and women.

Improved Economic Engagement for Women

- 3.2.2 We are actively supporting an increase in employment opportunities through our policies and programmes and collaboration with our strategic partners including other Government Departments and the European Commission. The Department will continue to influence the work undertaken by Regional Development Agencies and the Core Cities to ensure that they play a major role in addressing gender inequalities particularly in terms of promoting employment opportunities.
- 3.2.3 Locally, our neighbourhood programmes are aimed directly at helping people back into work, eg New Deal for Communities. These “place-based” interventions benefit not only individuals in terms of increasing confidence and increasing income but the whole family in terms of improved life chances.
- 3.2.4 More women are working than ever before – women’s employment rate has risen from 59% in 1977 to 67% in 1997 to 70% today.
- 3.2.5 The Women and Work Commission ‘one year on’ report (*Towards a Fairer Future*) sets out a comprehensive programme of action being taken forward by Government to tackle the gender pay and opportunities gap and to help people balance work and family life. These include improvements to parental leave and pay, flexible working, childcare and skills and training.
- 3.2.6 The Department is supporting policies across Government to increase employment opportunities for women from black and minority ethnic groups. There are employment initiatives which are being led by other government Departments, in particular the Department for Work and Pensions, that support black and minority ethnic people into work. Communities and Local Government is working with Muslim women on capacity building, leadership development and engagement/outreach.
- 3.2.7 Skills are another important component of economic success. We support the cross-government drive⁴, in particular those actions being taken forward by DfES, to improve and enhance the skills of those already in work and those who are currently unemployed or economically inactive. The work of the Regional Development Agencies, Core Cities and the DWP Employment Consortia all play an important role in delivering on skills, and ensuring that the workforce, in particular women, have access to training and employment opportunities that develop their skills and meet their needs.

⁴ Final Report of the Leitch Review Of Skills, Prosperity for All in The Global Economy - World Class Skills, December 2006

- 3.2.8 Developing women's enterprise is a key element promoting women's economic engagement. Women form the largest under-represented group in terms of participation in enterprise and offer a wealth of untapped talent and economic opportunity.
- 3.2.9 There are encouraging signs that many more new entrepreneurs are women: 37% of the newly self-employed⁵ are women compared to just 28% of those currently self-employed. More women are considering starting a business. 10% of the female adult population (around one million women) are known to think about starting up a business compared to 8% in 2003.⁶ The number of self-employed women has increased by 17% since 2002, and is now over one million for the first time.⁷
- 3.2.10 The Department supports women's enterprise through a number of direct interventions including the LEGI (Local Enterprise Growth Initiative) programme, our work with Regional Development Agencies and through the Ministers for Women's Activities in supporting the aims of the Task Force on Women's Enterprise such as improving the environment for women-owned businesses, whether it is through better access to business support and finance, or better data and information.
- 3.2.11 We will continue to support the work of Regional Development Agencies in relation to women's enterprise. Current examples include: pilots to test innovative new ways of supporting women entrepreneurs are running in five Regional Development Agency regions (North East, North West, Yorkshire and Humber, East Midlands and West Midlands) and a network of women entrepreneur ambassadors is being established to inspire other women in starting their own businesses. This work is being coordinated and managed by Enterprise Insight, working in partnership with the Regional Development Agencies.
- 3.2.12 Our influential role will result in greater choice for women who choose to work for themselves enabling them to balance work and family life while at the same time contributing to economic growth and productivity.

Improved Economic Engagement for Young Black Men

- 3.2.13 There are instances where men as well as women miss out on the opportunity to achieve their potential and contribute directly to economic prosperity and productivity. We want to do everything we can to improve the aspirations and achievement of black boys and young

⁵ Labour Force Survey (2006, Qtr 4)

⁶ Small Business Service Household Survey of Entrepreneurship, 2005

⁷ Labour Force Survey (2006, Qtr 4)

black men who are currently underperforming in education and in the labour market and are over-represented in the criminal justice system. The REACH project is a key vehicle for taking this issue forward. The project group will make recommendations to ministers on how best to address this issue.

Key Actions:

- Support policies and programmes aimed at increasing employment rates, particularly for lone parents and black and minority ethnic (BME) women.
- Improve the aspirations and achievement of black boys and young black men.
- Influence policy across government to improve the economic performance of every region and to support Regional Development Agencies, and Core Cities and others to ensure that they continue to play a major role in addressing gender inequalities particularly in terms of economic participation.
- Continue to promote women's enterprise through existing government programmes and our support for Regional Development Agencies.
- Include gender and equality dimensions in the guidance for any future rounds of the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI).

Equal Pay for Women and Men

3.2.14 The Department is fully committed to equality for all in the workplace, including the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. Equal pay legislation arrived in 1970 and came into force in 1975, meaning that this is not a new issue for the Department or local government; although we recognise that it can be a costly one involving tough decisions.

3.2.15 As the employers, it is up to local authorities to tackle equal pay proactively, and in an affordable manner. Local government agreed a process with the unions for introducing equal pay which was not imposed by central government and allowed them to take account of affordability constraints. The Local Government Employers are currently collecting information on how many authorities have met the single status agreement timetable, and on how the remaining authorities are expecting to meet their equal pay obligations. By last summer 86% of authorities had implemented pay reviews or were in the process of carrying them out.

- 3.2.16 The LGA, trade unions and others have made legal and financial proposals, and we are currently considering a range of options which will increase authorities' flexibility to manage their equal pay pressures themselves. We have amended the capital finance regulations and capitalisation process to support this.
- 3.2.17 Significant progress has been made on the gender pay gap since the legislation came into effect. It has continued to close over the last thirty years as a result of a range of successful policy interventions and legislation. The gap between average (mean) hourly earnings of men and women in full time work – has fallen steadily over the past thirty years, from 37% in 1970 to 17.1% in October 2006. The median hourly pay gap has, at 12.6%, narrowed to its lowest value since records began.
- 3.2.18 Communities and Local Government is leading a comprehensive programme of action across government to implement the Women and Work Commission recommendations.⁸ We are taking forward a number of specific initiatives including the Exemplar Employer Initiative, the £500,000 Quality Part-Time Work Fund and the Gender Equality Check Tool for employers.
- 3.2.19 Through our role as a sponsoring Department, we will ensure that organisations such as the Academy of Sustainable Communities continue to promote equitable working practices.

Key Actions:

- Ensure that the terms and conditions and working practices for organisations that we currently sponsor reflect best practice on flexible working and gender equality.
- Drive forward the recommendations of the Women and Work Commission as set out in our 'one year on' report *Towards a Fairer Future*, to tackle the gender pay and opportunities gap and disseminate lessons learnt from initiatives including: the Exemplar Employer Initiative, the £500,000 Quality Part-Time Work Fund and the Gender Equality Check Tool for employers.

Tackling Occupational Segregation of Men and Women

- 3.2.20 Young women are often put off from entering technical and manual occupations that are traditionally dominated by men. Older women with more confidence and life skills can find entering these occupations less challenging.

⁸ Women and Work Commission (2007) *Towards A Fairer Future –Implementing the Women and Work Commission Recommendations* http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/women_work_commission/index.htm

- 3.2.21 For example, in construction men make up almost 90% of the industry's workforce⁹, whereas childcare is almost exclusively a female occupation. Where we have influence, we will prioritise enabling men and women to get jobs traditionally dominated by the other gender.
- 3.2.22 Thames Gateway and the preparations for, and legacy of, the Olympics/ Paralympics represent major opportunities for reducing occupational segregation as well as increasing economic participation more generally. The Department will also ensure that the role of home inspectors and domestic energy assessors is promoted as a career option for women as part of the implementation of the Home Information Pack Programme.
- 3.2.23 The Department is working with the Fire and Rescue Service, employers and other stakeholders to improve recruitment, retention and career progression for women firefighters. Our aims are to ensure that the selection process is entirely fair and transparent, the workplace is inclusive for all employees and barriers to transfer from the retained duty system to wholetime are removed.

Key Actions:

- Actively promote the recruitment and retention of women firefighters.
- Encourage more women into male dominated occupations such as the Fire Services, building and construction through the successful implementation of our own programmes and initiatives.
- Maximise the potential of major new regeneration projects such as the Olympics/Paralympics and Thames Gateway to promote opportunities for both men and women to move into non-traditional occupations and into the workplace more generally.

3.3 Civic Participation

- 3.3.1 In the recent white paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities*, the Department set out its ambition for effective governance which provides the representation and leadership which people have the right to expect. We want to remove the barriers which can still get in the way of effective and representative governance, to enable democratic representatives to better reflect the diversity of their local communities.

⁹ Construction Industry Training Board (2003)

3.3.2 Following consultation, and analysis of the evidence base, the Department has identified two broad areas for further action:

- Increased representation in governance and public appointments.
- Capacity building to support and encourage increased civic participation.

Increased representation in governance and public appointments

3.3.3 It is one hundred years since women received the same rights as men to stand for election to local councils.¹⁰ Women are more than half the population; but they remain under-represented in the council chamber. Women councillors are less likely to be leaders or deputy leaders; only one of twelve directly elected mayors is a woman (Dorothy Thornhill in Watford). We have set up an independent Commission on Local Councillors to investigate the barriers to more representative council membership – Dame Jane Roberts is chairing this commission, which is expected to report in November this year.

Women and representation – key statistics¹¹

- Only 29% of councillors in England are women.
- Women councillors in England are less likely than men councillors to be leaders or deputy leaders – 2.8% compared to 5.2%.
- Women from black and minority ethnic groups are under-represented, accounting for just 5% of women councillors.
- In 2006, only 32% of appointees on our public boards were women.

3.3.4 Women, and particularly black and minority ethnic women, remain under-represented in public appointments, including to this Department's Non-Departmental Public Bodies and other agencies. Although the proportion of women has increased over time, more can be done to improve women's representation at this level. It is an important indicator of the place of women in our society. This Department will renew its efforts to improve women's representation in the appointments it makes.

¹⁰ 1907 Qualification of Women Act

¹¹ Sources: 2006 Census of Councillors; Communities and Local Government Public Appointments Plan 2006

3.3.5 Overall, our actions in this area are designed to ensure that women's voices are heard.

Key actions:

- The independent Commission on Local Councillors will report on barriers and incentives to council membership, including those which impact on women particularly.
- Encourage better representation, including by women, at neighbourhood, local, and regional levels.
- We will renew our efforts to ensure that women are proportionately represented on public bodies sponsored by the Department.

Capacity building to support and encourage increased civic participation

3.3.6 Too many people still feel that they have little or no influence over the public bodies which influence their lives, and that many people lack the confidence to become involved.¹² In the white paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities*, we said that we wanted to empower citizens and communities, and encourage community engagement, and outlined a number of ways in which the Department would enact this particular agenda. The Department has a range of work and programmes relevant to community engagement and empowerment, and an internal review is currently looking at how this activity can be better streamlined.

3.3.7 Any guidance for local authorities which the Department develops on encouraging engagement at local and community level will take into account gender equality dimensions. As well as encouraging engagement at local and community level, the Department will also renew its efforts to ensure that we engage with stakeholders in our own policy processes. To achieve this, we will be looking at specifically including gender groups in the Departmental stakeholder strategy, so we can ensure that gender issues are properly taken into account at an early stage of policymaking.

3.3.8 The *Take Part* network is the national framework for active learning for active citizenship. It is part of the government's campaign to enable more people to work with public bodies and be involved in decisions on public

¹² 2005 Citizenship Survey: active communities report, DCLG 2006; 2006 Perceptions of Local Government in England: key findings from qualitative research, DCLG: 2007

services. *Take Part* complements the commitment, made in the White Paper *Strong and Prosperous Communities*, to revise the Best Value duty on local government in order to secure the participation of citizens and communities in the delivery of local public services. The Department is now planning a specific programme of work within the Take Part network to encourage civic participation by women, and to explore the reasons behind black and minority ethnic women's under-representation.

- 3.3.9 Women's roles in communities can often be overlooked, especially when government departments engage with community leaders. It is all too easy to unquestioningly accept the absence of women from these kinds of discussions. The Department will make greater efforts to ensure that the leadership which women, and particularly black and minority ethnic/minority religious women, bring to community cohesion is recognised and their participation actively supported. Our partnership work with communities to improve capacity to prevent extremism will also actively include women.

Key actions:

- Gender equality dimensions to be included in any guidance developed for local authorities on community and local engagement.
- Encourage more women, and specifically women from black and minority ethnic/minority religious groups, to take an active part in their communities through the Take Part Network.
- The April 2007 Action Plan *Preventing Violent Extremism – Winning Hearts and Minds* includes specific actions aimed at strengthening the role that Muslim women can play in their communities.
- Involving and engaging women, especially from communities who may in the past not have been heard, in policy development and programmes designed to promote community cohesion.

3.4 Supporting Vulnerable Women

- 3.4.1 We want to build prosperous and cohesive communities, with safe, healthy and sustainable environments for everyone. As a Department, we are committed to opening up opportunities for all and promoting social justice.

- 3.4.2 But we know that for some women, the realities of their everyday lives mean that they do not experience the same levels of safety and security in their homes and communities which we want everyone to have. Compared to men, women are more likely to say that they do not feel safe in the places where they live.¹³
- 3.4.3 The consultation feedback from our stakeholders identified a number of areas for action in delivering support for vulnerable women. Drawing on this and the evidence base, two broad areas for action to promote safety and security for women have been identified:
- Preventing and eliminating violence against women.
 - Better and safer places to live.

Preventing and eliminating violence against women

- 3.4.4 Some violence and hate crimes are specifically committed against women. The category 'violence against women' includes offences such as domestic violence, rape, child abuse, "honour" crimes, forced marriages, prostitution, human trafficking of women and children and female genital mutilation. The costs of violence against women – economic, human and emotional – are significant.¹⁴ One in four women and one in six men will experience domestic violence in their lifetime with women at greater risk of repeat victimisation and serious injury.¹⁵ There is a lot this Department can do to support women who experience violence.
- 3.4.5 We will increase our efforts to provide strategic leadership and cross government co-ordination. We will use our influence to ensure that government action on violence against women is joined up. This also involves ensuring that where action is taken at a local level, it is based on an approach which addresses gender equality.
- 3.4.6 The Department will continue, and build on, its long-term commitment to ensure that women who have experienced violence, and their families, can access the safe and secure accommodation they need, including refuge accommodation and sanctuary. In order to deliver on this commitment, the Department will actively monitor the impact of the changes in how local government is funded on locally delivered support for women leaving violent partnerships, including the provision of refuges.

¹³ National Statistics 2006 Regional Trends Chapter 9 Crime and Justice

¹⁴ Walby, S. 2004 The Cost of Domestic Violence, WEU: London.

¹⁵ Women and Equality Unit 2004 Domestic Violence: key facts

Key actions:

- Provide leadership and strategic co-ordination to reduce absolute levels of crimes affecting equality strands, including hate crime, sexual offences and elder abuse.
- Support for women sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough.
- Support for those wanting to leave prostitution.
- Providing better accommodation, advice and information for victims of domestic violence.
- Monitoring the impact of local government funding on the provision of support for women leaving violent partnerships.

Better and Safer Places to Live

- 3.4.7 Delivering better and safer places to live benefits everyone. The places and communities where women live can have a large impact on their perceptions of safety and their ability to participate in the community.
- 3.4.8 Women are more likely than men to say that they do not feel safe outside, especially at night, while young men are the most likely group to be at risk of violent crime.¹⁶ Older women are more at risk from social isolation because they are more likely to live alone and this could be intensified by the fear of crime. Prostitution tends to involve the most vulnerable and socially excluded women in our communities; prostitution and the associated criminal activities which tend to occur alongside, impact negatively on the quality of life in an area. The experience of crime varies by place; people living in deprived areas are more likely to be victims of crime compared to others.
- 3.4.9 Our consultation with stakeholders identified a need to improve safety for women in the design and planning of public spaces and local areas. It also identified training for professionals to integrate gender equality to support this aim. Making the places where we live safer will benefit everyone. This work clearly links with the respect agenda.
- 3.4.10 Communities England, the new national housing and regeneration agency, will ensure gender issues are taken into account in exercising functions delivering local strategies for regeneration, housing growth and affordable housing. This ensures that major housing investment and regeneration programmes will be gender responsive and meet the needs of both men and women.

¹⁶ National Statistics 2006 *Regional Trends* 39, Chapter 9 Crime and Justice.

Key actions:

- Develop principles for inclusive and safe design, to deliver better and safer communities.
- Communities England will ensure gender issues are taken into account in exercising functions delivering local strategies for regeneration, housing growth and affordable housing.
- Ensure fair access to safe and secure housing for women, including better advice and information.
- Make sure that the Respect Standard for Regeneration promotes gender equality.

3.5 Other Departmental Initiatives

- 3.5.1 A key role for Communities and Local Government is to build the capacity of communities to shape and protect their own future. This involves working with other government departments, and local and regional partners to promote innovation, spread best practice, build capacity and skills and tackle poor performance. The Department works to secure better value for money, simplification of delivery chains and high-quality partnerships.
- 3.5.2 In taking this scheme forward, account will also be taken of Equalities-related PSAs that are agreed as part of the CSR07 settlement. The Department is also setting up the new Commission on Equality and Human Rights, which will bring together the six equality strands, including gender. We will also link with other Government Departments through our work with the Office of Disability Issues on ways to improve employment opportunities for disabled women.
- 3.5.3 But many of the activities which the Department undertakes to fulfil this role may not at first inspection appear to have any relevance for the gender duty. Nevertheless, there are a number of actions (for example, see box below) which have been developed which will ensure that the Department meets the equality duty in the fullest sense. This includes, for example, policy development on the new Performance Framework for Local Government. The Department does not take the view that as local authorities are the delivery agents, and are themselves subject to the duty, there is no need for any action at central government level.

- 3.5.4 Instead, the Department has set out a number of actions to ensure that the new Performance Framework for Local Government promotes gender equality, including building gender equality into the Tasking Framework for Government Offices. For example, as part of this work, we will make sure that the new national improvement strategy, which will bring together the different capacity-building programmes for local government, supports the achievement of local equality outcomes including adequate resources for improvement support in this area. In priority places, where addressing gender equality is a particular issue impacting on the successful delivery of the Government's strategic objectives, we expect Government Offices to challenge and support local authorities and their partners to ensure the duty is met.
- 3.5.5 We will encourage and promote good practice locally in meeting the gender duty through putting this forward for consideration as a future Beacon Council theme. We will also encourage local authorities to address and build diversity and equality considerations into procurement processes and contracts as part of the National Procurement Strategy. We will mirror this within our Department by building gender considerations into our own procurement processes, and those over which we have influence.
- 3.5.6 This approach is challenging, but it ensures that equality of opportunity for women and men is built in to the whole system – from central through regional to local level. This is because setting the framework for local government delivery in this way clearly impacts on the everyday lives of men and women. For example, as the main providers of care within families, women are generally the main users of local services both in their own right and as parents and carers.
- 3.5.7 There is an inherent tension in ensuring that the Department meets its gender duty developing the new Performance Framework, while ensuring that the devolutionary principles which the White Paper set out are reflected in the Framework, but we are determined to work through this. A supporting action, analysing satisfaction surveys with disaggregation including by gender, will support this approach, and facilitate a forward looking approach.¹⁷

¹⁷ Currently, local authorities are asked to undertake best value user satisfaction surveys every three years, with the last round in 2006/07. The survey is being revised in the light of changes to the Local Government Performance Framework.

Key actions:

- Taking into account Equalities-related PSAs that are agreed as part of the CSR07 settlement.
- Setting up the Commission on Equality and Human Rights.
- Ensuring that the Performance Framework for Local Government promotes gender equality – including the new national improvement strategy, and the operational guidance on LAAs and place-shaping.
- The gender duty requirements and obligations (and those on race and disability) will be built into the GO's Tasking Framework ensuring that it impacts on how they carrying out their strategic objectives.
- Making sure that our business planning has regard to the inclusion of actions set out in the race, disability and gender schemes.
- Collecting and analysing equalities data including gender in order to provide a robust evidence base for both policy development and policy delivery.

3.6 Communities and local Government as an employer

3.6.1 As the government lead on equalities, it is even more important that Communities and Local Government leads by example as an employer, and as ultimately responsible for staff in Government Offices, the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), the Queen Elizabeth Conference Centre, and the Fire Service College. Not just because our legal duties require this, but because of the commitment to ensuring our staff are at the heart of what we do.

3.6.2 The actions outlined in this scheme are part of a wider programme of transformation within the Department. Development of the actions has drawn on analysis of the most recent staff survey and appraisals, the findings and recommendations of the Workforce Equalities Taskforce and consultation with women staff in senior and feeder grades. The Gender Equality Scheme identifies four areas for action:

- Flexible working and work-life balance.
- Representativeness of our workforce.
- Supporting our staff.

- Equal Pay (see Section 3.2 on Economic Engagement).

Flexible working and work-life balance

3.6.3 Our commitment to supporting flexible work patterns and promoting work-life balance for the Department's staff was confirmed by the Secretary of State in October 2006, when the transformation programme was launched. Overall, female employees are more likely than male employees to request a flexible work pattern¹⁸, but flexible working can bring benefits for all staff and the Department.

3.6.4 We now plan to build on the commitment to flexible working and promoting work-life balance by introducing clear guidance and improved systems, enabling managers to support all staff in working to a flexible pattern (subject to business needs) and to promote a healthy work-life balance. This goes beyond the legal requirement which provides a right to request a flexible work pattern for parents of children aged under six and parents of disabled children under 18 and, from April this year, carers.

Key actions:

- Making all posts open to flexible work patterns unless there is a business case to the contrary.
- Maintaining a job share register, enabling part-time staff and their managers to identify suitable job share partners where needed.
- Developing proposals to provide support for staff, including technical support, who work from home as part of their work pattern.
- Reimbursing additional care costs when staff have to come in on additional days.

Representative workforce

3.6.5 Communities and Local Government is fully signed up to the programme of change detailed in *Delivering a Diverse Civil Service: a ten point plan* (10PP). The Department has set itself stretching targets, over and above those agreed for the ten point plan (see below), which it is on track to be achieved by 2008.

¹⁸ DTI 2007 *Third Work-Life Balance Employee Survey*

Senior Civil Service stretching targets and 10 point plan 2008 targets (percentages)

	Communities, December 2006	Stretching targets	10 point plan targets	Status
Proportion of women in the SCS	40.9	42-46	37	Green
Proportion of women at SCS payband 2 and above	28.9	30-33	30	Amber/ Green
Proportion of BME staff in SCS	3.1	5-8	4	Red
Proportion of disabled staff in SCS	3.1	3.2-4.5	3.2	Amber/ Green

- 3.6.6 The Department also proposes to set and publish targets for the two paybands immediately below the Senior Civil Service, and which act as 'feeder grades' for entry to the SCS. This and allied actions, such as the 'Pairing for Performance' mentoring scheme, will ensure that the Department encourages and supports under-represented groups, including women, to move into the SCS.
- 3.6.7 However, real diversity is about more than simply slotting different types of people into top management posts. It is about valuing and celebrating the different backgrounds of our staff, and supporting all our staff to reach their potential.
- 3.6.8 Nearly half of the staff in the central Department are women. But they are differentially represented across the pay bands and grades within the Department. Women employees also face different barriers and challenges compared to their male peers in the Department. This was an important finding to emerge from the Department's predecessor's (ODPM) consultation with women in the SCS and feeder grades.

3.6.9 The Department, as part of its transformation programme, will institute a number of changes in HR policy and support systems to better enable women to progress in their career. The transformation aims to bring about a wider cultural change in the Department which will benefit all staff, through better ways of working. However, given the particular barriers faced by women in the Department, these changes have the potential to benefit them in particular.

Key actions:

- Improve the Department's monitoring data to assess progress on gender equality and employment.
- Ensure that new initiatives to develop talented staff are inclusive of women, eg the 'Pairing for Performance' mentoring scheme will include women.
- Establish a women's staff network if there is support among women staff for it.

Support to staff

3.6.10 In delivering transformation, including the commitments on flexible working and work-life balance, it is important that the Department has in place the right support systems which can make this happen.

3.6.11 A key reason for wanting to work flexibly is to combine better work with caring responsibilities. Women are more likely to work in a flexible work pattern compared to men.¹⁹ A number of actions have been identified for continuing support to staff with caring responsibilities, as well as for staff who may need additional support because they are experiencing violence at home. The Department will also raise awareness of gender identity issues to better support transgender staff and ensure that their experience of working in Communities and Local Government is a positive one.

¹⁹ DTI 2007 *Third Work-Life Balance Employee Survey*

Key actions:

- Strengthen the Department's work-life balance policies by reviewing the Department's support for childcare and revising the absence management policy.
- Review current systems and procedures to eliminate any discrimination towards transgender staff and provide training to HR staff.
- Provide counselling support for staff experiencing violence in their partnerships.

Equal Pay

3.6.12 See Section 3.2 on Economic Engagement.

4 Monitoring and Review

4.1 Assessment, Evidence and Monitoring

4.1.1 The Department is committed to collecting and analysing equalities data including gender in order to provide a robust evidence base for both policy development and policy delivery. We will:

- Ensure that relevant policy and programme research, including evaluations, collect and analyse data on gender where appropriate.
- Include information and guidance about collecting data on gender as part of the commissioning process for programme research and surveys in our internal Research Management Guidance as appropriate.
- Ensure that any reviews or updates of on-going data collection consider increasing the data collected on gender and/or the analysis of gender disaggregated data.
- Include gender as part of the criteria for assessing proposals for new analysis or data collection where appropriate.

4.1.2 Continuing to collect and analyse data by gender will ensure that the Department's policies and programmes are monitored effectively and that decisions around future interventions take full account of gender issues.

4.1.3 To maintain progress in implementing the Action Plan, annual reviews will be undertaken by the Department's Equalities Programme Executive, comprising senior officials from across the Department and headed by the Director General for Equalities. It will also receive regular progress reports on those actions with an internal employment focus.

4.1.4 We are finalising a combined methodology for our equality impact assessments, which will cover gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion/belief, age and human rights. We will ensure that this is built into the policy processes of the Department. We will also look at the impact of existing policies, programmes and functions on the gender duty, for example, the Supporting People Programme, and Thames Gateway.

5 Complaints about the Scheme

- 5.5.1 Individuals do not themselves have the right to take legal action against a public authority that has not fulfilled its specific duties. It is open to individuals, organisations and others to notify the EOC (from October 2007 the CEHR) if they are concerned that a public authority has failed to comply with its specific duties. However, the Department would wish that in the first instance, any complaints about its compliance should be raised with the Department directly.
- 5.5.2 Contact details for the public are on the Department's website at **www.communities.gov.uk**

6 References

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Annex 1 List of Specific Duties

1. The Equality Act (2006) amends the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) by placing a statutory duty on all public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, and to promote equality of opportunity between men and women. This is known as the 'general duty' and came into effect on 6 April, 2007.
2. To ensure better compliance in delivering the general duty, there are also a series of 'specific duties' that apply to Communities and Local Government. Briefly, these are:
 - To prepare and publish a Gender Equality Scheme that shows how Communities and Local Government will meet its general and specific duties and setting out its gender equality objectives.
 - To consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap.
 - To gather and use information on how the Department's policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services.
 - To consult stakeholders and take account of relevant information in order to determine its gender equality objectives.
 - To assess the impact of its current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality.
 - To implement the actions set out in its scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so.
 - To report against the scheme every year, and review the scheme at least every three years.

The first Gender Equality Scheme must be published by 30 April, 2007.

Annex 2 The Department's Main Activities

1. Communities and Local Government, as well as all other Government Departments, has undergone a Capability Review²⁰ to enable us to identify and make the changes needed to respond better to the challenges of the future. As a result, we are focussing on strategic delivery, with less direct management of programmes and service delivery, increasingly working in partnership to achieve the outcomes listed in our Public Service Agreements (PSA).²¹ For example, in January 2007 we announced our intention to set up Communities England to streamline the supply chain for delivering regeneration and housing, which will work with key partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors to get better outcomes from £4bn of government investment in places.
2. Recently, there have been several major policy reviews which impact on our areas of interest (eg the John Hills Review²², the Housing and Regeneration Review, the Equalities Review, the Lyons Review), and these help to inform the content of new policies.
3. In 2006, we set out many policy changes in the Local Government White Paper. We are encouraging more local participation, and devolving funding and responsibility for delivering better, more sustainable communities to local authorities through Local Area Agreements.

Thames Gateway and Olympics

4. The Thames Gateway is one of our growth areas, and is a national priority for regeneration and growth. The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games will provide long-term regeneration benefits to the Lower Lea Valley and surrounding areas. These include new mixed tenure residential communities, excellent accessibility, high quality design and environmental and ecological benefits. Communities and Local Government is also responsible for the diverse communities delivery plan for the Olympics and Paralympics, which sets out the benefits that the Government plans to secure through its investment in this area.

²⁰ http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/reform/capability_reviews/reports.asp

²¹ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1503442>

²² <http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/case/news.asp#SocialHousing>

Cities and Regions

5. Communities and Local Government aims to create economically strong cities and regions which drive forward national prosperity and provide opportunity and social justice for all. We are working to narrow disparities in growth rates by maximising the economic performance of all regions, creating vibrant, diverse and attractive places where people want to live and work.
6. The Department will provide the right tools and powers at the right levels, to enable our cities and regions to compete better on the international stage, and meet the challenges of globalisation over the coming decades.

Places and Communities

7. Communities and Local Government is committed to ensuring that local communities have the powers they need to respond to challenging economic, social and cultural trends, and to creating cohesive, thriving, sustainable communities capable of both fulfilling their own potential and of overcoming their own difficulties, including community cohesion, deprivation and disadvantage. Our neighbourhood level programmes have provided help to deprived neighbourhoods across the country.
8. We are leading locally (through Government Offices and Communities England) on regeneration schemes in specific locations as well as on housing market renewal and on growth points, providing the information and tools needed locally to ensure progress.

Housing

9. It is central to the Department's strategy that everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home at a price they can afford, in a place where they want to live and work. The Department aims to promote the building of well-designed homes and communities that people want, including:
 - A step on the housing ladder for future generations.
 - Quality and choice for those who rent.
 - The provision of high quality, mixed, thriving and sustainable communities.
 - To continue to tackle homelessness and other acute housing problems.

Fire and Resilience

10. Communities and Local Government works with the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) to reduce the loss of lives and livelihoods through fire. The Department has a target to reduce domestic fire-related deaths by 20% and arson by 10% by 31 March 2010.
11. The Fire and Rescue Service works to ensure that it is equipped and trained for any disaster and that local organisations are fully prepared. The Department works closely with other government Departments, notably the Cabinet Office's Civil Contingencies Secretariat, to contribute to the Government's wider resilience agenda.

Local Government

12. We are responsible for national policy on local government in England. Local government makes a difference to everyone's lives by delivering essential services and making our communities better places to live. We are working to deliver better services by devolving decision-making to the most effective level, promoting high quality customer-focused local services and ensuring adequate, stable resources are available to local authorities.
13. We are strengthening the regional framework of Regional Assemblies and Government Offices to provide the strategic guidance and local focus which will help authorities in their tasks.

Planning, building and the environment

14. Our goal is that places and communities will be planned, built, upgraded and managed in a way which respects and sustains the global, national and local environments. We are the government Department responsible for building regulations and planning in England.

Equalities

15. As a society, we need to ensure that individuals in England can take a full part in the social, economic and cultural life of our country. To help achieve this, the Department is working to reduce inequalities and build community cohesion, and taking the lead with other key Departments in promoting equality and the aim of social justice and sustainable, economically viable communities.

16. The creation of Communities and Local Government brings together responsibilities for social and community cohesion and equalities – Communities and Local Government currently sponsors the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission and will sponsor the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR), which will start operating in October 2007. CEHR will have responsibility for tackling discrimination and promoting equality across all equalities strands including gender.

Annex 3 Method used to Develop the Gender Equality Scheme

Developing the broad content

1. The Gender Equality Scheme has been developed using several parallel approaches to enable Communities and Local Government to ensure that it delivers real progress towards gender equality. A steering committee was set up to act as a sounding board for developing the Scheme.
2. The content of the scheme evolved through:
 - Screening of the Department's policies, programmes and functions.
 - Assessment of existing evidence and research.
 - Consideration of issues already known to policy leads through regular involvement with gender organisations.
 - Consultations involving gender equality experts and groups who represented a range of gender equality interests.

For internal activity,

- Consultations with the Trade Unions on pay and flexible working issues.
- Consultation with procurement colleagues on how the gender duty might be integrated.
- A further top level audit of mainstream programmes, policies and initiatives to compile strategic objectives for the scheme.

Screening

3. A questionnaire was used to enable managers to assess the impact of their policies, programmes or functions on delivering gender equality, and to identify what evidence was currently held, or needed to be gathered. Advisory sessions were offered on a one-to-one basis to assist in this process.
4. Responses to the questionnaire gave information on:
 - Broad policy, programmes and function aims.
 - Assessment of how these may impact differently on men and women.

- Availability of monitoring data on the effect of policies in terms of promotion of equality between men and women, and ensuring that services and functions take account of the different needs of men and women.
- How policy evaluation and monitoring could take account of outcomes for men and women.
- Inclusion of stakeholders representing gender interests in policy development and evaluation.
- Any further actions that might be taken.

Assessment of screening responses

5. The policy leads on gender equality assessed managers' screening responses, considered these against the priority issues identified by stakeholder groups, and developed draft actions based on these. The draft actions were discussed with managers in preparation for inclusion into the Action Plan in the Gender Equality Scheme.

Consultations with stakeholders

6. Policy leads on gender identified a range of issues to help focus discussions with stakeholders about the Department's policies and programmes. These included views on how to:
 - Raise awareness about gender issues.
 - Gain more evidence about gender impact.
 - Contribute towards the reduction of women's relative poverty.
 - Enable more full participation by women in the decision-making processes.
 - Increase the number of women recruited and retained in regeneration and built environment professions.
 - Improve safety and perceptions of safety in public places for women and young men.
 - Ensure gender is addressed in planning policy.

7. The Trade Union side was consulted on issues of pay and flexible working proposals for staff within the Department. Procurement colleagues were consulted on any gender equality issues.
8. We also held three consultation events, one organised by the Women's National Commission, one by Women's Resource Centre, one by the Women's Design Service. Each event was attended by representatives of 10-15 different organisations. Others were given the opportunity to make written representations. In addition, we had individual meetings with some stakeholders, e.g. with Oxfam, Men's Health Forum, and A:gender
9. The result of all these discussions were analysed to identify the specific actions which would be required within existing and future policy, and a judgement made about whether these were within the remit of this Department's responsibilities.

Identifying priorities

10. A top level audit of policies relevant to the gender duty was carried out to identify where there were strong gender equality interests. We have considered how new and emerging policies and programmes can help to promote gender equality, and reflected on how we might assess our past performance on gender. This was combined with the consultation results and compiled within headline themes. Out of this, three strategic objectives were identified, discussed and agreed by the Department's Permanent Secretary, Directors General and Directors as areas which should be treated as a priority for gender equality objectives.

Agreeing the Action Plan

11. An iterative process was used to secure agreement on specific actions that supported the strategic objectives from senior managers. Discussions took into account the proportionality and relevance of the proposed actions, as well as the timescale for delivery.

Testing the Objectives

12. We obtained informal views from the EOC about our general direction of travel for the gender equality Action Plan.

Agreeing the Gender Equality Scheme

13. We brought the outcomes of all these strands together and identified three strategic priority objectives which we will deliver through our partners and stakeholders. Agreement for the Scheme was secured from the Permanent Secretary and Departmental Board, as well as from Ministers. The final product was published on the Department's website on 30 April, 2007.

Annex 4 Issues Raised by Stakeholders

1. We are grateful for the views expressed by stakeholders and have made every effort to include these in our Scheme where the action falls within our remit.
2. Major issues included:

Economic engagement

- Improving employment opportunities locally, particularly for black and minority ethnic and disabled women.
- Reducing occupational segregation.

Civic engagement

- Encouraging more women to participate in local governance, and building local capacity to engage.
- Ensuring a vibrant women's voluntary sector.

Vulnerable women

- Providing a joined up, cross-government approach to raise awareness about gender issues.
- Providing and funding adequate accommodation for victims of domestic violence.
- Pulling together the strands of work that relate to dealing with violence against women.
- Creating safer communities and open spaces.
- Reducing the number of women living in social or non-decent housing, particularly in renewal and regeneration areas.

Collecting data

- Collecting and assessing appropriate data to assess the differential impacts of policy on men and women.
- Ensuring that gender issues are addressed in new policies and legislation.

The Department's own practice

- Promoting flexible working, including job sharing and part-time working.
- Engaging better with the voluntary sector.

Annex 5 Action Plan

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT: Improved economic engagement for women			
With DWP, LGA and East Thames Group roll out and evaluate a pilot project to help homeless families with dependent children in temporary accommodation access work and a settled home.	100 Households in private sector leased temporary accommodation in East London are having their rents set at the average social rent for the area. The difference is made up by block grant paid direct to the local authority. Pilot households also receive support to help them access training and employment.	The pilot began in September 2005 and is being evaluated on an ongoing basis. The final evaluation is expected by June 2007.	Housing Strategy and Support
Ensure that gender equality continues to be a key element of the implementation of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) totalling £2 billion over 2007-2013.	Through negotiation with the European Commission and membership of the Programming Monitoring Committee (PMC), we will continue to ensure that equalities including gender equality are embedded in the implementation of ERDF.	Ongoing	Regional, Urban and Economic Policy

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
<p>To influence policy across government to improve the economic performance of every region and to support Regional Development Agencies, (RDAs) Core Cities and others to ensure that they continue to play a major role in addressing gender inequalities particularly in terms of economic participation.</p>	<p>RDAs to identify how they can improve integration of equality and diversity into strategic and day to day business planning.</p> <p>Ensure that evidence on gender, including the needs of BME women, informs the development and content of the Regional Economic Strategies and Core City Business Cases.</p> <p>The RDAs and Core Cities will continue to work closely with other regional and sub-regional agencies to address the issue of occupational segregation.</p> <p>RDAs to share good practice for SMEs, particularly minority owned businesses, in relation to bidding for public sector contracts.</p>	<p>To be discussed at the next Communities and Local Government/ RDA Chief Executives meeting in late June 2007</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Regional, Urban and Economic Policy</p>

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
	<p>RDA's to actively support the Third Sector particularly in terms of reducing worklessness.</p> <p>Communities and Local Government will continue to promote the importance of economic participation for all groups including women, through Employment and Skills Boards and Employment Consortia.</p> <p>To consider the outcome of analysis of ONS data, and of RDA data on outcomes.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	
<p>To promote policies and initiatives aimed at increasing economic engagement by BME women that are delivered across government or by this Department.</p>	<p>Support Government funded projects aimed at increasing employment and progression opportunities for BME women.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Race, Cohesion, Faith</p>

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
	<p>Examples include: the Communities and Local Government-led Connecting Communities Plus grants programme which aims to support BME women particularly in relation to employment.</p> <p>DWP-led City Strategy and Partners' Outreach programme.</p>	<p>April 2007 onwards</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	
<p>To measure NDCs' impact on equality issues around worklessness focussing in particular on women, lone parents and BME groups.</p>	<p>Between 2007-09 the NDC National Evaluation case studies will focus on children and young people which should provide some insight into issues facing young women, including lone parents. This could include an exploration of worklessness.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Local Development and Renewal</p>

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
	<p>The annual performance management review of the NDCs also assesses their strategies for tackling diversity issues. It identifies groups within the specific areas which need to be targeted in the NDC programme.</p>		
<p>Academy for Sustainable Communities' (ASC's) work to attract and retain people into key sustainable communities professions will consider what gender issues currently exist in recruitment, retention and learning, and will reflect any differences and address disparities in the shaping and delivery of its programmes. It will also seek to ensure that partners with whom it works can demonstrate the steps they are taking to fulfil the requirements of the Duty.</p>	<p>Revising ASC's tendering process to ensure gender equality issues form part of the assessment process, by asking those seeking to work with ASC to set out specifically how they intend to deal with any gender-related issues.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Regional, Urban and Economic Policy</p>

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
	<p>Ensuring that future ASC research takes account of gender issues, such as the gender profile of those in sustainable community professions, and that this knowledge informs how future programmes may be targeted.</p> <p>Ensuring ASC learning programmes collect information on age, race, gender and disability for all course participants, to enable the monitoring of uptake of ASC programmes.</p> <p>Beginning to establish a baseline and identify scope for future joint working on this issue, by asking key partners to provide a breakdown of their membership by gender, ethnicity and disability.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
	<p>Ensuring that all future contracts stipulate that contractors must conform to the Gender Equality Duty, and asking those seeking to work with ASC to set out their policies.</p> <p>Ensuring all internal ASC policies on issues such as recruitment, staff development and equal pay comply with the Gender Equality Duty.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	
<p>Promote training for women working in regeneration professions.</p>	<p>Establish new "Women into Management" programme for experienced regeneration and middle managers in enabling departments.</p>	<p>By December 2007</p>	<p>Regional, Urban and Economic Policy</p>
<p>Encourage carers who are eligible to take up the reduction in the Council Tax band.</p>	<p>Provide clear and concise briefing notes on the scheme and advice on how to circulate to relevant groups.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Local Government Finance</p>

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
Include gender and equality dimensions in the guidance for any future rounds of the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI).	Preparatory guidance for any future LEGI scheme to ensure that proposals developed by local authorities and their partners will show how they will address gender inequalities, where such are identified as presenting barriers to enterprise in deprived areas.	Ongoing	Regional and Cross Government Delivery
Communities and Local Government will support women's enterprise.	<p>Ministers for Women's activities to support the aims of the Task Force on Women's Enterprise.</p> <p>Work with Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) includes pilots to test innovative new ways of supporting women entrepreneurs. These are running in five RDA regions and a network of women entrepreneur ambassadors is being established.</p>	Ongoing	Women and Equality Unit

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
	This work is being coordinated and managed by Enterprise Insight, working in partnership with the RDAs.		
Encourage Regional Assemblies to act within the spirit of the Equalities Act (2006).	<p>Influence the Regional Assemblies to encourage the inclusion of gender equality in scrutiny of the Regional Economic Strategies.</p> <p>Encourage learning from good practice in this area in partnership with the English Regions Network.</p>	April 2007	Local Democracy (Regional Governance)
ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT: Improved economic engagement for young black men			
To improve the aspirations and achievement of black boys and young black men who are currently underperforming in education and in the labour market, and are over-represented in the criminal justice system.	REACH project to make recommendations to Ministers.	<p>Publication of REACH report 01/06/07</p> <p>Implementation plan Autumn 07</p>	Race, Cohesion, Faith

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT: Equal pay for women and men			
Ensuring equal pay for staff in Communities and Local Government.	Undertake annual monitoring of pay to ensure equal access on the basis of gender, as well as other equalities strands. Undertake a comprehensive Equal Pay Review of the 2006 pay award.	September 2007	Human Resources
Tackling the gender pay and opportunities gaps in the UK economy.	Leading a comprehensive programme of action across government to implement the Women and Work Commission recommendations.	One year on report published April 2007	Women and Equality Unit

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
<p>Improving the range of opportunities for women in the UK economy, including increased levels of women's entrepreneurship, and supporting employers to deliver equality in the workplace.</p>	<p>Leading a comprehensive programme of action across government to implement the Women and Work Commission recommendations. Including in Communities and Local Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – exemplar employer initiative – quality part-time work fund – gender equality check tool for employers 	<p>Exemplar employers – conference in May 2007; best practice document in September 2007</p> <p>Quality part-time work initiative – winning bids announced April 2007</p> <p>Equality check tool for employers ready by September 2007</p>	<p>Women and Equalities Unit</p>

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT: Tackling occupational segregation			
<p>Framework for agreement in Growth Areas such as the Thames Gateway to identify gender targets for economic participation and to monitor who benefits from current employment programmes.</p>	<p>Work with delivery partners once the baseline is established, to increase economic participation generally and decrease the gap between men and women's participation, particularly in areas where either men or women are under-represented.</p> <p>Establish a baseline of achievement of basic skills by gender, race and locality. Then use our influence across Government and with partners to address under-achievement by specific groups.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Baseline established 2007. Influence of partners ongoing</p>	<p>Thames Gateway and Olympics</p>

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
	<p>Encourage partners to ensure that the gender make up of their courses reflects the local community and encourages men and women to take up non-traditional courses for their gender.</p> <p>To ensure that employment schemes funded by Government in the Thames Gateway achieve improvements in the economic participation by under-represented groups.</p>	<p>June 2007</p> <p>To be confirmed after CSR07</p>	

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
<p>Ensure that the UK's diverse communities are engaged with, and benefit from, changes and opportunities arising from hosting the Olympic and Paralympics Games (the Games) in 2012, in the UK.</p>	<p>Publish a diversity statement setting out the approach all organisations involved in the Games (the Olympic family) will take to ensure that the Games are inclusive and that benefits are spread equally to all the UK's diverse communities.</p> <p>Communities and Local Government is working with the Olympic Family to ensure that gender equality is considered at all levels of policy making.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Thames Gateway and Olympics</p>
<p>We will ensure that the role of home inspectors and domestic energy assessors is promoted as a career option for women as part of the implementation of the Home Information Pack Programme.</p>	<p>We will actively promote home inspectors and domestic energy assessors as careers to women. These roles will be particularly well suited to men and women who need to fit work around care commitments.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Programmes, Policy and Innovation</p>

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
<p>Improve the promotion of gender equality and diversity through the planning profession.</p>	<p>Investigate whether the 'Tomorrows Planners' BME initiative template can be widened to include gender equalities.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Planning</p>
<p>Retention and improvement of prospects for women firefighters.</p>	<p>Ensuring the selection process for recruitment of firefighters is fair.</p> <p>Remove barriers for moving from retained duty system to wholetime Fire and Rescue Service.</p> <p>Ensure that the FiReControl Project promotes the need for employers (FRS' and RCCs) to comply with the gender equality duty.</p> <p>Evaluation and monitoring of the new selection process currently being piloted to ensure that it does not discriminate against any group, including women.</p>	<p>Adoption of new process September, 2007</p> <p>Report December, 2007</p> <p>RCCs begin to go live from end of 2009</p> <p>Completed by September, 2007</p>	<p>Fire and Resilience</p>

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
Greater participation by women in the Retained Duty System (RDS) service.	Research involving the primary employers of RDS staff is examining the barriers to releasing staff for retained duty system.	Research to report in September 2007	Fire and Resilience
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: Increasing women's representation			
Improve the representation of women and under represented groups at neighbourhood, local and regional levels	<p>The independent Commission on Local Councillors will examine barriers and incentives to becoming a councillor. It will deliver recommendations on improving representation of under-represented groups in councils, including women.</p> <p>Include encouragement in the guiding Principles of Designation of Voluntary Regional Assemblies asking the Regional Assemblies to act within the spirit of the Equalities Act 2006. Encourage Regional Assemblies to track their membership in terms of gender.</p>	<p>Report to be produced November 2007</p> <p>April 2007</p>	<p>Local Democracy</p> <p>Local Democracy</p>

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
Better representation of women in decision making for the Thames Gateway	To use our influence amongst partners to improve representation of women on both TGSP and the Boards of Local Regeneration delivery vehicles.	Ongoing	Thames Gateway and Olympics
Increase the number of women appointed to our public appointments.	<p>Encourage NDPB's Board members to act as mentors.</p> <p>All vacancies to be circulated to equalities nominating bodies and other diversity contacts.</p> <p>Establish process to identify if there is insufficient diversity in the short-listed candidates for consideration.</p>	April 2008.	Finance
Communities England, the new national housing and regeneration agency, will ensure that gender issues are taken into account in exercising functions delivering local strategies for regeneration, housing growth and affordable housing.	Ensure that legislation makes provision for a gender balance on the Board of Communities England.	Subject to legislative programme.	PPI Policy, Finance and Communications

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: Capacity building			
<p>To recognise the pivotal role women play in developing policy across the Race, Cohesion and Faith directorate.</p>	<p>Involvement and engagement to ensure that women (particularly those from hard to reach communities) contribute to policy development on our key programmes, such as the REACH project.</p> <p>To develop the potential of Muslim women in taking the Preventing Extremism agenda forward.</p> <p>Local cohesion planning to take account of, and encourage women's participation and their leadership role.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>March 2008</p> <p>June 2007</p>	<p>Race, Cohesion, Faith</p>

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
Greater use of community management and ownership of assets.	Following the Community Ownership and Management Review, subject to Departmental agreement to take forward recommendations, any new policies will be subject to a gender impact assessment.	The review will report in Spring 2007.	Community Empowerment
Improving the civic participation of women from under-represented groups.	A programme of cross-Departmental work, with the Take Part Network is being planned: 'Women Take Part' (working title) aims to increase the civic representation of women into positions such as schools governors and local community leaders.	To be agreed	Local Democracy and Women and Equality Unit
Implementation of the Local Government White Paper <i>Strong and Prosperous Communities</i> .	All non-statutory good practice guidance on community empowerment and engagement issued to local authorities will take into account gender equality dimensions.	Ongoing	Community Empowerment

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
SUPPORTING VULNERABLE WOMEN: Preventing and eliminating violence against women			
Providing a joined up, cross-government approach to raise awareness about gender issues.	Subject to the availability of resources, evaluate our actions to support delivery of the Cross-Government National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan.	Commission research 2007/08.	Homelessness and Housing Support
Strategic co-ordination across Government to map milestones on violence against women.	Ensuring that Ministers for Women can influence cross government agendas which impact on violence against women.	Ongoing	Women and Equality Unit
Preventing and eliminating the incidence and causes of violence against women. Changing perceptions of the risk of victimisation	Ensuring that Ministers for Women can influence cross government agendas which impact on reducing violence against women particularly through the Inter-Ministerial Groups on Domestic Violence, Human Trafficking and Sexual Offending	2008-2011	Women and Equality Unit

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
<p>Providing better accommodation advice and information for victims of domestic violence</p>	<p>Share best practice with Local Authorities and other accommodation providers to prevent domestic violence related homelessness and to protect tenants.</p> <p>Support women who sleep rough/ at risk of sleeping rough and those who want to leave prostitution.</p> <p>Improve accommodation advice and information for victims of domestic violence.</p>	<p>Publication 2008/9</p> <p>2007/08</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Housing Strategy and Support</p>
<p>Ensure that services are delivered to women leaving violent partnerships</p>	<p>Monitor the impact of changes in local government funding on locally delivered support for vulnerable women, including the provision of refuges.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Women and Equality Unit</p>

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
SUPPORTING VULNERABLE WOMEN: Better and safer places			
Seek to ensure that Communities and Local Government funded and sponsored development incorporates principles of inclusive and safe design.	CABE will improve awareness and understanding of gender issues in the built environment within the broader context of inclusive design. It will do this by exploring gender considerations through the advice the Inclusive Environment Group provides and using this to inform its own programmes.	Ongoing from April 2007	Regional, Urban and Economic Policy
	CABE will continue to make equality training available to key staff to embed best practice in the delivery of its programmes.	Ongoing	Regional Urban and Economic Policy
	To ensure the lessons learned on gender issues from the long-term research on the workings of 6 Family Intervention Projects (FIPs) are disseminated into the roll out of the 50 FIPs.	Ongoing	Respect, Community Cohesion and Diversity

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
<p>Improving the evidence base to support and inform Government actions relating to women and drug treatment.</p>	<p>Analyse gender-related diversity data obtained from the Home Office Drug Intervention Programme (DIP) Diversity Team in order to inform actions relating to women and drug treatment take-up in deprived areas.</p> <p>Working on project to assess the level of best practice among drug treatment in the BME community which is largely underrepresentative of BME men and women. A report to be published on Regional and cross-Government Delivery renewal.net as a source of information for practitioners in the field of drug misuse and treatment.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>June 2007</p>	<p>Regional and cross-Government Delivery</p>

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
Build on work with the Home Office to reduce the level of fear of crime amongst women.	Continue to work with the HO to see how the fear of crime amongst women is dealt with in the new Crime Strategy. Encourage the HO to consider preventative measures relating to the fear of crime are included in the Strategy as well as enforcement.	Ongoing	Regional and cross-Government Delivery
Improve the promotion of gender equality and diversity through the planning profession.	<p>Support and promote initiatives to improve community involvement in the planning system.</p> <p>Further develop the e-planning programme.</p> <p>Encourage the Royal Town Planning Institute to promote its gender guidelines.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	Planning

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
<p>To ensure that new buildings or those that are refitted provide equal and adequate access to toilet facilities for women and men.</p>	<p>Communities and Local Government to recommend that BSI convenes committees to look at the revision of BS 6465 Parts 1 and 2, to ensure equal and adequate access to toilet facilities for women and men, and to ensure adequate cubicle sizes, in new buildings or buildings undergoing refitting.</p>	<p>By 31/03/2009</p>	<p>Sustainable Buildings</p>
	<p>We will develop proposals to amend the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations, which specify the minimum numbers of toilet facilities for men and women, and Part G of the Building Regulations, in order to ensure adequate toilet facilities for women and men. HSE and DWP to be consulted on the proposals.</p>	<p>By 31/03/2009</p> <p>Any agreed amendments would form part of a future overall review of regulations</p>	

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
	<p>We will explore with DCMS the possibility of amending licensing regulations so as to link approval of new licenses to the provision of adequate toilet facilities for women and men.</p> <p>We will amend the Public Health Act 1936 to allow local authorities to charge for the use of urinals as well as for toilets.</p>	<p>30/06/2007</p> <p>31/12/2007</p>	
<p>Identify best practice among local planning authorities in using the planning system to help create inclusive and safe built environments which can be enjoyed by everyone.</p>	<p>Work with the Planning Advisory Service on one or more good practice case studies of authorities that have been successful in helping to create inclusive and safe environments.</p>	<p>By end of financial year 2007/08</p>	<p>Planning</p>

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
Building on the analysis of the Hills Review, to develop a programme of work to reduce worklessness in social housing.	Working with partners to review evidence about the high level of worklessness in social housing and agree possible measures.	Summer 2007	Homelessness and Housing Support
Ensure that action on Anti Social Behaviour takes account of gender issues.	Support social landlords to ensure that action to tackle ASB is non-discriminatory. A toolkit is currently being designed which will enable a landlord to measure their local performance in tackling ASB. This takes account of the characteristics of the alleged perpetrators.	Launch Summer 2007	Respect, Community Cohesion and Diversity
To develop a Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society.	Working with OGDs to develop a strategy which takes account of demographic changes and gender issues, including provision for women living alone and those acting as carers.	Publication Summer 2007	Homelessness and Housing Support

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
Augment the Fire Kills national advertising campaign to reach vulnerable groups at high risk from fire, including middle aged men, older women, single parents, disabled people and young people.	Identify through research appropriate media for targeting messages to these vulnerable groups.	Research to report in July 2007.	Fire and Resilience
Communities England, the new national housing and regeneration agency, will ensure that gender issues are taken into account in exercising functions delivering local strategies for regeneration, housing growth and affordable housing.	<p>Ensure that the forthcoming consultation document includes an assessment of the gender and equalities issues associated with the new agency.</p> <p>Communities England will ensure that major housing and regeneration investment programmes take account of gender issues and needs in decisions made at both the national and regional level</p>	<p>Publication of Consultation Document: early summer 2007.</p> <p>Ongoing from Communities England start date.</p>	PPI Policy, Finance and Communications
Providing a joined up, cross-Government approach to raise awareness about gender issues.	Ensure that the Respect Standard for Regeneration is in line with the new gender duty.	Ongoing until April 2007 publication date.	Respect, Community Cohesion and Diversity

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
<p>Ensure that Housing Market Renewal (HMR) pathfinders consider all the issues affecting sub-regional housing markets, including gender and equalities, when submitting bids for funding and developing specific proposals for refurbishment and new build housing.</p>	<p>Include gender and equalities as specific elements of the housing market assessment that pathfinders produce to underpin their ongoing work and bids for funding as per the General Duty currently incumbent on LAs.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>PPI Policy, Finance and Communications</p>
<p>English Partnerships will ensure that gender issues are taken into account in exercising functions.</p>	<p>Carry out a review of the effectiveness of English Partnerships Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) and other process changes in embedding equality and diversity issues.</p> <p>Complete framework of area-based KPIs and proposals for monitoring and reporting.</p> <p>Present proposals for extending the programme of formal evaluations of EP projects.</p>	<p>By December 2007</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>By June 2007</p>	<p>Regional, Urban and Economic Policy</p>

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
OTHER DEPARTMENTAL INITIATIVES			
<p>Collect and analyse equalities data including on gender in order to provide a robust evidence base for both policy development and policy delivery.</p>	<p>Ensure that relevant policy and programme research, including evaluations, collect and analyse data on gender where appropriate.</p> <p>Include information and guidance about collecting data on gender as part of the commissioning process for programme research and surveys in our internal Research Management Guidance as appropriate.</p> <p>Ensure that any reviews or updates of on-going data collection consider increasing the data collected on gender and/or the analysis of gender disaggregated data.</p> <p>Include gender as part of the criteria for assessing proposals for new analysis or data collection where appropriate.</p>	Ongoing	Analytical Services

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
Understand citizen satisfaction with local authorities.	Analysis of the user/citizen satisfaction surveys, at national and local authority level, disaggregated by gender.	Work on most recent set of surveys to commence in November 2007.	Local Strategic Partnerships and Performance
Through the national performance indicator set, provide a framework to help support local authorities in measuring their performance in carrying out their statutory equalities duties including gender equality.	Subject to decisions about the priority outcomes identified in PSAs and CSR07, ensure that the indicator set helps local authorities to measure progress on equalities, including gender equality.	New indicator set will be in use from 2008/09.	Local Strategic Partnerships and Performance
Provide a framework through the Local Area Agreement arrangements to help local authorities to deliver their statutory duties in respect of equalities, including gender equality.	Issue operational LAA guidance and place shaper guidance which includes advice to local authorities about how equalities, including gender equality, can be taken into account in working with partners and considering priorities for the local area.	Operational LAA guidance is expected to be published in Summer 2007, and place shaper guidance is expected to be published ahead of the 2008/09 financial year.	Local Strategic Partnerships and Performance

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
Ensure the Government Office (GO) Tasking Framework reflects gender duty requirements and obligations.	GO Tasking Framework to reflect the GOs' responsibility to take account of the gender duty (plus those on race and disability) in carrying out their strategic objectives.	Reviewed annually	Regional and Cross-Government Delivery
Secure the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) on a sustainable and affordable basis.	A new LGPS statutory framework will be made by secondary legislation. The NFPS statutory framework is in place.	April 2007	Local Government Finance
That local authorities address and build diversity and equality considerations into procurement processes and contracts where relevant to the contract. This objective is consistent with a milestone set out in the National Procurement Strategy for Local Government (ODPM and LGA, 2003).	To encourage stakeholders to promote guidance and best practice to local authorities to enable them to meet their duty on equalities for efficiency and procurement related matters.	April 2007	Local Government Transformation and Efficiency Division

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
Promote good practice in meeting the gender equality duty.	Put forward for consideration a future Beacon Council theme to incorporate good practice on meeting the gender duty.	2009	Local Government Capacity Building and Beacon Councils
Provide the framework through which equality issues, including gender equality, are built in to the independent assessments of risk to be carried out by the Audit Commission as part of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA).	Encourage the Audit Commission to include the risks relating to excluded groups, and the importance of equalities, including gender equality, in developing their methodology for the annual risk judgement for the CAA.	Comprehensive Area Assessments will be carried out from 2009/10.	Local Strategic Partnerships and Performance
Support local partnerships in the delivery of equality outcomes.	Ensure the national improvement strategy properly reflects the priority attached to the achievement of local equality outcomes, and that adequate resources are allocated to improvement support.	Draft national improvement strategy to be agreed by May 2007.	Local Strategic Partnerships and Performance

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
Establish the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR).	Areas of responsibility will include economic participation, civic participation, support to vulnerable people and it will cover gender as one of six equality strands.	By October 2007	Women and Equality Unit
Ensure that Equality Impact Assessments cover gender equality.	<p>Ensure the Department's Single Equality Impact Assessment methodology adequately reflects gender.</p> <p>Ensure Equality Impact Assessments are conducted at a stage that enables the outcomes (including any cost implications) to inform policy development.</p>	<p>December 2007</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Women and Equality Unit</p> <p>All Deputy Directors</p>
Ensure that all parties involved in the Regulatory Procurement Framework give due regard to the consideration of gender equality issues at the outset of procurements.	Train clients and practitioners to recognise the opportunities to address gender equality.	April 2008	Corporate Procurement

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
To ensure that gender is considered during the marketing process during user insight, publicity planning, and campaign execution.	Review existing practice to establish current performance in this area; produce and promote guidance for staff and contractors as necessary.	Review by September 2007	Governance and Communications
COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AS AN EMPLOYER: Central Department			
Provide greater opportunity for flexible working for staff.	<p>All posts will be available on a Flexible Working basis (unless a business case for full-time working has been agreed with HR) and all staff will be able to apply for a Flexible Working pattern.</p> <p>Publish a Flexible Working guide.</p> <p>Update existing job advertising system to ensure it supports new flexible working arrangements and gender equality.</p>	End April 2007	Human Resources

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
<p>Embed gender equality in policies and practices across the workforce to help underpin the delivery of our 10 Point Plan diversity targets and reduce occupational segregation with senior management leading in promoting the importance of workforce equalities.</p>	<p>Publish Departmental Equality and Diversity Strategy.</p> <p>Include in this Strategy an outline of the types of measures in place to help identify and reduce occupational segregation. Specifically focusing on development as a tool to improve the representation of women (as well as BME and disabled staff) at senior grades.</p>	<p>Strategy published in April 2007.</p> <p>10 Point Plan targets are for April 2008.</p>	<p>Human Resources</p>
<p>Improved monitoring data to assess progress on gender equality and employment.</p>	<p>Enhance HR data management systems, including more detailed monitoring of Performance Management process and box markings, training, absence, and recruitment and retention. Staff survey results to analyse progression and development of staff working part time and using flexible working patterns.</p>	<p>Upgrades to HR IS (PIMS) achieved by March 2008.</p>	<p>Human Resources</p>

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
Review and re-engineer HR policies and procedures to improve gender equality.	<p>Revise key HR policies and processes to improve equality of opportunity, focusing on the following priorities;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a new online system for recruitment and promotion. • Update the 'Keeping in Touch Scheme' and produce guidance for staff on returning to work. • Review existing arrangements and guidance for childcare support to staff returning to work. • Revise the Absence Management policy to align it with flexible working and family friendly policies. • Improve systems for administering and monitoring Retention/Exits. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>December 2007</p>	Human Resources

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
Provide support to vulnerable staff.	Publicise the counselling and support services available to staff in relation to domestic violence.	April 2007	Human Resources
Awareness of gender identity issues promoted within HR and within the Department.	<p>Review current HR systems and procedures to ensure they fulfill legal duties in relation to ensuring there is no discrimination to transgender staff. Train HR staff and advisors on handling transgender cases and update guidance available to staff.</p> <p>Assess the feasibility of including transgender equality into mandatory equalities training for all staff by Autumn 2007.</p> <p>Host an event that explores gender issues and gender identity and invite our agencies to attend.</p>	Autumn 2007	Human Resources

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
Promote gender equality through Learning and Development (including Training).	<p>Publish a Learning and Development Strategy setting out new initiatives to help develop talented women. e.g. "Pairing for Performance". This is a mentoring programme which will pair staff, including women, below EO grade with a member of the Board.</p> <p>Encourage women to apply for the development scheme.</p>	April 2007	Human Resources
Promote Staff Networks as a forum for exploring, identifying, and awareness raising in relation to gender issues, specifically in relation to women's issues.	<p>HR to canvas support from staff for a dedicated Women's Staff Network group. If there is, HR will assist in establishing, resourcing, and promoting the network to staff.</p> <p>To continue to engage existing staff networks on workforce issues that impact on or affect gender equality issues.</p>	<p>2007</p> <p>2007, 2008, 2009</p>	Human Resources

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AS AN EMPLOYER: GO Network			
<p>Improve monitoring of gender issues relating to employment policies.</p>	<p>Compile a timetable for completing impact assessments for new and revised HR policies and functions.</p> <p>Publish a central Learning and Development strategy as a framework for each regional office to develop local training plans and to help strengthen monitoring arrangements, specifically in relation to recruitment and selection, grievances, retention, promotion and training.</p>	<p>Impact assess all policies and service delivery by 31/ 03/10.</p> <p>Data monitoring report 31/08/07, 31/08/08, 31/08/09, 31/08/10.</p> <p>Publish strategy 31/07/07, 31/07/08, 31/07/09, 31/07/10.</p>	<p>GO Human Resources</p>
<p>GOs aim is to be representative of the cities in which they are based and the communities they represent.</p>	<p>Monitor reductions to workforce to prevent occupational segregation and maintain gender equality in workforce of GO Network.</p>	<p>31/08/07, 31/08/08, 31/08/09, 31/08/10.</p>	<p>GO Human Resources</p>

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
A new Performance and Development System will be introduced across the Network; this system has been equality proofed against all equality strands including gender.	Continue to annually review the Performance Management policy to ensure it is fair and there is no evidence of any adverse impact by gender.	New system from 31/04/07 Annual review published 31/10/07, 31/10/08, 31/10/09, 31/10/10.	GO Human Resources
Promote the benefits of completing exit questionnaires to staff who leave the GO Network.	Updates to the HR database to capture data on completion of voluntary exit questionnaires.	31/12/07, 31/12/08, 31/12/09, 31/12/10.	GO Human Resources
Revise the Harassment and Bullying policy guidance to advise an equal gender balance in the appointment of Harassment Contact Officers.	Harassment and Bullying policy guidance to be published and refresher training provided to existing and new Harassment Contact Officers.	Guidance published by 31/06/07.	GO Human Resources
To promote economic gender equality through pay policy.	Undertake comprehensive Equal Pay Review of reward policies and practices every 3 years and take steps to address any inequalities identified.	Equal Pay review 31/09/07.	GO Human Resources

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AS AN EMPLOYER: The Planning Inspectorate (PINS)			
<p>Improve data monitoring of staff appeals, and their outcome, by gender. Continue monitoring data in relation to recruitment and selection, grievances, retention, promotion and training to identify and tackle gender equality.</p>	<p>Ensure an 'equalities' form is incorporated in the appeals system to enable monitoring and undertake annual reviews of staff data.</p>	<p>31/04/07, 31/04/08, 31/04/09, 31/04/10.</p>	<p>PINS</p>
<p>Review new and existing HR policies and practices to ensure equality of opportunity, specifically to promote gender equality.</p>	<p>Revise key HR policies and processes focusing on the following priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • impact assess new HR policies and publish reports. • revise mandatory equalities training by December 2007. • Carry out consultation with existing staff to determine barriers to gender equality. 	<p>31/03/07, 31/03/08, 31/03/09, 31/03/10.</p>	<p>PINS</p>

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
Promote economic gender equality through pay policy.	Conduct annual analysis of performance appraisal and carry out an independent assessment of pay, reviewing barriers to gender equality in relation to economic inclusion.	31/10/2007	PINS
COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AS AN EMPLOYER: Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre			
Improved employment data monitoring.	Carry out a data capturing exercise to update gender equality information through a diversity survey. To include recruitment and selection, grievances, retention, promotion, staff appeals and training.	31/04/07, 31/04/08, 31/04/09, 31/04/10.	QE2CC
To promote economic gender equality through pay policy and strengthened employment systems that underpin gender equality.	Carry out an Equal Pay Audit and conduct annual analysis of performance appraisals.	Pay review completed by 31/05/07 and annual appraisals reviewed 28/02/07, 28/02/08, 28/02/09, 28/02/10.	QE2CC

Objective	Action	Timescale	Ownership
COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AS AN EMPLOYER: Fire Service College (FSC)			
Review and re-engineer HR policies and procedures to improve gender equality.	Revise key HR policies and processes to improve equality of opportunity, focusing on the following priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment and selection. • Flexible working. • Part time and job share arrangements. • Leave and Special leave policies. 	31/01/08	FSC
Promote economic gender equality through pay policy.	Undertake a comprehensive Equal Pay Review of the 2006 pay award in addition to annual monitoring.	31/12/07	FSC
Review training courses for customers to ensure and promote gender equality.	Review content, marketing and delivery of courses provided to individuals and organisations.	31/01/09	FSC
Mainstream gender equality into the workplace.	Assess the impact by gender of our site facilities and buildings as part of our Estates Audit.	31/07/07	FSC

Annex 6 Glossary and list of acronyms

Glossary

Academy for Sustainable Communities

National centre for delivering the skills needed to make sustainable communities.

Beacon Council Scheme

Aims to identify the best performing local authorities which can act as centres of excellence from which other authorities can learn.

Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment

Commission advising Government on architecture, urban design and public spaces.

Commission for Equality and Human Rights

The Commission for Equality and Human Rights will bring together the expertise and resources to promote equality and tackle discrimination in relation to gender, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, race and promote human rights from October 2007.

Communities England

A new executive agency which will bring together the functions of English Partnerships, the Housing Corporation, and a range of work carried out by Communities and Local Government, including delivery in the areas of decent homes, housing market renewal, housing Private Finance Initiatives, housing growth and urban regeneration.

Community Ownership and Management Review

Review announced by Ruth Kelly in September 2006 to consider and to make recommendations on the powers, policies and barriers that affect the transfer of public assets to local communities.

Comprehensive Area Assessment

New regime for assessing the performance of local authorities, to replace the existing Comprehensive Performance Assessment regime from 2009. Assessments will be carried out by the Audit Commission.

Comprehensive Spending Review

Review of government expenditure, usually over a three year period. The next review (CSR07) will take place in 2007.

Core Cities

A group of eight major English city councils set up in 1995 to work in partnership with Government and other key stakeholders to promote the role of the cities as the drivers of regional and national economic growth and create internationally competitive regions. The cities are Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham and Sheffield.

English Partnerships

England's national regeneration agency. It will become part of Communities England (see above).

Equalities Programme Executive

Group of senior Communities and Local Government officials who manage the development of strategy on, and the delivery of, the Department's priorities on equalities.

Equality Impact assessment

A procedure that looks at the impact that a body's projects, policies or procedures might have on certain groups, e.g men or women, disabled or older people, and whether or not they will be unfairly affected by the policy or procedure.

Executive Agencies

Public institution that delivers government services for the United Kingdom government, Scottish Executive, Welsh Assembly or Northern Ireland Executive. An agency does not set the policy required to carry out its functions – these are determined by the department that oversees the agency. The agencies overseen by Communities and Local Government are the Planning Inspectorate, the Fire Service College and the Queen Elizabeth 2 Conference Centre.

Exemplar Employer Initiative

Initiative that involves the Government working with a wide range of employers to develop programmes such as helping women returning to work access quality part-time work, flexible working for women and setting up job share registers.

Family Intervention Projects

Projects designed to stop the anti-social behaviour of a small number of highly problematic families and restore safety to their homes and to the wider community.

Fire Service College

College in Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire, for the training of UK (and also overseas) fire and rescue officers.

FiReControl project

The FiReControl project is working to move from the existing system of 46 fire control rooms in England, based at local fire and rescue services, to a network of nine new amalgamated regional control centres. The control centres are expected to start going live from 2009.

Flexible Working

Working patterns adapted to suit individual needs, e.g part-time, flexi-time, compressed hours, job sharing or home working.

Gender Equality Check Tool

Method of helping employers to identify where there may be an issue which causes or results in a gender pay gap.

Gender Equality Duty

This came into force on 6 April 2007 and requires public authorities (e.g central government departments and local authorities) to promote gender equality and eliminate sex discrimination. See Annex 1 for more details.

Government Office

Government Offices provide a regional perspective and are important to the delivery of a wide range of Government policies and programmes in the nine English regions.

Hills Review

Government-commissioned review on the role of social housing in the 21st century, by Professor John Hills of the London School of Economics. The review was published in February 2007.

Home Information Pack

A Home Information Pack contains important information that buyers and sellers of a property need to know. From 1 June 2007, anyone marketing a property, or their representative, will be legally required to have a Home Information Pack and make it available to potential buyers of the property.

Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders

The housing market renewal programme was established in 2002 to help rebuild stable communities in parts of the North and Midlands where demand for housing was weak. Its objective is to revive housing markets and reconnect them with successful neighbouring areas through a combination of new and refurbished housing, allied to broader economic development strategies. By March 2008 the Government will have invested £1.2bn in the programme.

Local Area Agreement

A Local Area Agreement lasts for 3 years, and is based on local Sustainable Community Strategies, that set out the priorities for a local area. The Agreement is made between Central Government, represented by the Government Office (GO), and a local area, represented by the lead local authority and other key partners through the Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs).

Local Enterprise Growth Initiative

Local Enterprise Growth Initiative is a Government initiative that aims to boost local incomes and employment opportunities for people living in the most deprived local areas through increasing entrepreneurial activity, supporting the sustainable growth of locally-owned businesses, and attracting inward investment and franchising while making use of local labour resources.

Local Government White Paper

The Communities and Local Government White Paper: *'Strong and Prosperous Communities'* was issued in October 2006. Its aim is to provide local government with a greater focus on citizen and community engagement. It sets out the Government's desire to see stronger community leadership from local authorities; to strengthen partnership working; and to reduce top-down direction from government with streamlined targets and indicators. It also includes ambitious efficiency targets.

National Improvement Strategy

Strategy proposed by the 2006 Local Government White Paper for improving local authority performance.

National Procurement Strategy

The National Procurement Strategy sets out how councils can improve the delivery and cost effectiveness of high quality services through more effective, prudent and innovative procurement practices. The Strategy illustrates the scope for potential cost savings, through more efficient procurement practices and partnership working, to release resources to the frontline.

New Deal for Communities

A key programme in the Government's strategy to help some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. It aims to bridge the gap between some of the poorest members of society and the rest of Britain, by focusing resources on small deprived areas, and working with initiatives operating in the area. Key issues include unemployment, health, crime, educational achievement, and housing. It is delivered through partnerships formed between local people, community and voluntary organisations, public agencies, local authorities and business.

Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs)

A body which has a role in the processes of national government, but is not a government department, or part of one, and which accordingly operates to a greater or lesser extent at arm's length from ministers. Ministers are however ultimately responsible to Parliament for an NDPB's independence, its effectiveness and efficiency, and are responsible for appointing members to its Board.

Pairing for Performance

A mentoring programme where junior staff are paired with a Board member.

Performance Framework for Local Government

A radical simplification of the existing performance framework. Instead of the many hundreds of indicators currently required by central government from local government, there will be a single set of about 200 outcome based indicators covering all important national priorities like climate change, social exclusion and anti-social behaviour. Priorities will be tailored to local needs through the Local Area Agreement.

Planning Inspectorate

Executive agency that deals with the processing of planning and enforcement appeals and holding inquiries into local development plans. It also deals with a wide variety of other planning related casework including listed building consent appeals, advertisement appeals, and reporting on planning applications.

Procurement

The process by which a public authority enters into a contract with an external supplier to carry out works or provide goods and services.

Public Service Agreement

Agreements that set out the Department's aims and objectives and describe how the Department's targets will be achieved and how performance against the targets will be measured.

Quality Part-Time Work Fund

A scheme aimed at tackling the gender pay gap and ensuring that more senior part-time positions are created across a range of companies and organisations. A total of £500,000 will be used to help support the development of part-time positions at managerial levels over the next few years in an attempt to encourage more women to return to work after having a child.

REACH Project

The REACH project delivers educational opportunities to homeless people in a low key and flexible way. It works with individuals and groups, who are often hesitant about taking part in formal 'classroom' sessions.

Regional Assemblies

Regional bodies comprising up to 70% local authority members, and at least 30% drawn from regional stakeholders. All Assemblies perform the same four core activities – regional planning, regional housing, representing the voices of their regions to Whitehall and European institutions, and scrutinising the work of Regional Development Agencies. They may also engage in other work according to regional circumstances and priorities.

Regional Development Agencies

Regional agencies set up in 1998 to further economic development and regeneration, promote business efficiency, investment and competitiveness, promote employment, enhance development, and contribute to sustainable development.

Respect Agenda

Cross-Government strategy tackling anti-social behaviour.

Retained Duty System

Firefighters on the retained duty system are on call in their homes or workplaces rather than at a fire station.

Senior Civil Service

Created in 1996, it contains all senior civil servants, and aims to provide high-level support to government ministers, assist in the development and implementation of government policy, and ensure the effective management of services.

Supporting People

Supporting People is a Government programme which enables the provision of housing-related support services to help vulnerable people to maintain or improve their ability to live independently. Through the programme, more than 1 million vulnerable people each year receive the support they need to live independently.

Take Part Network

The national learning framework for active learning for active citizenship.

Ten Point Plan

A plan setting out commitments on 10 key areas that are intended to achieve broad and deep cultural change across the Civil Service, and to deliver a truly diverse Civil Service.

Thames Gateway

Development area stretching for 40 miles along the Thames Estuary from the London Docklands to Southend in Essex and Sittingbourne in Kent. The Government's targets for the Gateway by 2016 include 160,000 new homes, high quality transport infrastructure, 180,000 new jobs, improved education facilities, and high quality healthcare.

Wholetime Service

A firefighter on wholetime service is based at a fire station during his or her work hours.

White Paper

Statement of Government policy.

Women and Work Commission

Commission set up in 2004 to examine the problem of the gender pay gap, and other issues affecting women's employment.

Workforce Equalities Taskforce

Communities and local Government Taskforce set up to develop an agenda for sustained change in the equality and diversity of the Department's workforce and management practices, and to achieve the diversity targets set out in the Ten Point Plan by 2008.

List of acronyms

10PP	Ten Point Plan
ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour
ASC	Academy for Sustainable Communities
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
BS	British Standard
BSI	British Standards Institute
CABE	Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
CEHR	Commission for Equality and Human Rights
CSR07	Comprehensive Spending Review 2007
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DfES	Department for Education and Science
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions

EDU	Equality and Diversity Unit
EO	Executive Officer
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission
EP	English Partnerships
FRS	Fire and Rescue Service
GO	Government Office
HMT	Her Majesty's Treasury
HO	Home Office
HR	Human Resources
HR IS	Human Resources Information System
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LA	Local Authority
LAA	Local Area Agreement
LGA	Local Government Association
NDPB	Non-Departmental Public Body
NFPS	New Firefighters' Pension Scheme
ODI	Office of Disability Issues
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
OGDs	Other Government Departments
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PIMS	People Information Management System
PINS	Planning Inspectorate
PSA	Public Service Agreement
RCC	Regional Control Centre
SCS	Senior Civil Service
SME	Small to medium-sized enterprises
TGSP	Thames Gateway Strategic Partnership
WEU	Women and Equality Unit