

**Bassetlaw District Council
in partnership with A1 Housing (Bassetlaw)
Ltd**

Gender Equality Scheme

2007 – 2010



Contents

	Page
Foreword.....	2-3
THE GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME	
1) INTRODUCTION & LEGAL CONTEXT	3-4
a. The General Legal Duty	4-5
b. Specific Legal Duties	5
2) BASSETLAW'S GENDER EQUALITY OBJECTIVES	
a. Our four Key objectives	5-7
b. Consultation	7
c. Commitment	8
3) IMPLEMENTING THE SCHEME	
a. Key activities & areas	8-10
b. Other considerations	10-11
4) EMPLOYMENT MATTERS	
a. National Gender Profile	11
b. Bassetlaw District Council (Gender Profile)	11-12
• The Gender Pay Gap	12
• Current Position Statement	12-13
• Training and Staff Development	13-14
5) GENDER & SERVICE DELIVERY	
a. Introduction	14
b. Action areas –Priorities & strategic themes	14
1. “Safe & Strong” – Personal safety & the fear of crime	14-15
2. “Safe & Strong” - Tackling domestic violence	15
3. “Jobs & Enterprise” – Fostering business enterprise	15-16
4. “Community life” - Health, Wellbeing and Leisure Facilities	16-17
5. “Council employment” - Employment & Reward.....	17
6. “Council employment” - Training & Employee Development	17
6) ACTION PLANS.....	18-21

This plan includes the commitment and actions of the Council and A1 Housing designed to meet their legal obligations under the Equality Act 2006.

As part of the consultation process A1 Housing have assessed their obligations and strategic drivers and these are reflected in the Action Plan. These actions will be monitored by the Council.

Foreword

Bassetlaw Council's approach to equality & diversity

The Council recognises and appreciates the importance of gaining a detailed understanding of who our customers are to ensure our services are delivered in ways that meet the needs and expectations of all our citizens in the local community.

The Council strives to provide excellent services that are accessible to and for all its local communities.

The Council has already adopted an overarching Equality & Diversity Policy and Statutory Equality "Schemes" (derived from legal requirements).

These cover the Race Equality Scheme (2005 – 8), the Disability Equality Scheme (2006 –9) and, therefore, this latest Scheme is the third in the series.

All these Schemes will be combined into a CORPORATE EQUALITY PLAN in the near future. This approach will simplify matters – although there are key distinctions between the three Statutory requirements, along with the need to incorporate other aspects such as religious discrimination, age and sexual orientation into the equality "mix".

Overall, the approach being followed is also linked to the Community Strategy and to regional and national objectives and priorities.

The Council is very much expected to take a lead in such important matters of public policy and will be judged at external inspections/assessments by what it achieves.

The national EQUALITY STANDARDS for local government, through which the Council aspires to achieve the 'Charter Mark' status, requires a rigorous approach to Gender equality as a key "thematic" area.

Bassetlaw's commitment to gender equality

The Gender Equality Scheme is a continuation of the Council's commitment to its Equality & Diversity Policy framework, which prioritises the need to promote equality through our policies and practices.

The Council's Strategic Plan details how we intend to develop the District which will create a better quality of life for our communities whilst recognising the differing needs of individuals.

To ensure the Council undertakes its legal duties effectively this Scheme sets out how we will prioritise and implement our own gender equality objectives (See Section

2a.) through the means of a comprehensive action plan (See section 6.) by focusing on a number of the services we provide and our role as an employer of staff.

The General legal “Duty” (See section 1a.) has been described as the biggest change in sex equality legislation in 30 years and by improving the way we listen to our customers through meaningful consultation, gathering and analysing information to identify how gender affects service delivery and feeding this into the equality impact assessment process as well as evaluating our progress on an annual basis, we will be able to make changes and practical improvements to the lives of men and women.

As councillors, elected by the District’s citizens, and officers of the council, we fully support this commitment to the promotion of gender equality and the prevention of discrimination and harassment and we will work in partnership with the community to ensure the proposed outcomes are achieved.

Gender Equality Scheme

1. INTRODUCTION & LEGAL CONTEXT

In 1975 the Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) was introduced and for the first time in UK law direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of sex, including victimisation, became illegal.

Over the last thirty years considerable progress has been made towards gender equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission has been actively involved in the many advancements and achievements that have been made in this area of diversity.

For example, men and women must be paid equally for the same or similar work, maternity leave is now available for all women in employment, part-time workers now have the same rights as men and women working full-time, and both men and women are entitled to access concessionary fares and free prescriptions at the same age.

However, there is still a lot that needs to be done before gender equality can be considered as something that has been fully “mainstreamed” into our society. This is because gender discrimination in employment is still widespread, many every day services are designed in ways that do not take the needs of each gender into account.

In the past the emphasis has been on individuals taking action to challenge acts of discrimination rather than employers and service providers taking positive action to review and evaluate what they do and pro-actively prevent discrimination from occurring in the first place.

The Gender duty fosters a pro-active approach and aims to make gender equality central to the way that the Council works in order to create:

- Better-informed decision making and policy development
- A clearer understanding of the needs of service users
- Better quality services which meet varied needs
- More effective targeting of policy and resources

- Better results and greater confidence in public services
- A more effective use of talent in the workforce.

Women are frequently disadvantaged by policies and practices that do not recognise their greater caring responsibilities, the different pattern of their working lives, their more limited access to resources and their greater vulnerability to domestic violence and sexual assault.

Men are also disadvantaged by workplace cultures that do not support their family or childcare responsibilities, by family services that assume they have little or no role in parenting, or by health or personal services which do not recognise their different needs.

Both sexes suffer from stereotyping of their roles and needs. The duty should help the public sector, and those working with it, to identify and respond to stereotyping, sex discrimination and sexism, resulting in improvements for all

The term 'sex' is used to describe biological differences between women & men. GENDER refers to wider social roles and relationships which shape and structure men's and women's lives and life chances.

Gender inequality exists in many aspects of society and refers to lasting and embedded patterns of advantage or disadvantage.

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate to treat men and women differently, if – for example – that action will help overcome previous disadvantage or discrimination.

Total population (2005)¹

	Bassetlaw (numbers)	East Midlands (numbers)	Great Britain (numbers)
All People	110,700	4,306,300	58,485,000
Males	55,000	2,124,200	28,634,900
Females	55,700	2,182,100	29,850,200

Working age population (2005)²

	Bassetlaw (numbers)	Bassetlaw (%)	East Midlands (%)	Great Britain (%)
All People	67,600	61.1	61.8	62.1
Males	35,800	65.2	65.5	65.8
Females	31,800	57.0	58.2	58.5

¹ Statistics from NOMIS – Official Labour Market Statistics (see: <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>)

² Statistics from NOMIS – Official Labour Market Statistics (see: <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>)

Economically active (Jul 2005-Jun 2006)³

	Bassetlaw (numbers)	Bassetlaw (%)	East Midlands (%)	Great Britain
All People				
Economically active*	50,600	75.6	80.3	78.4
In employment*	48,100	71.6	76.2	74.2
Employees*	43,700	65.7	66.6	64.6
Self employed*	4,400	6.0	9.3	9.2
Model-based unemployed [^]	2,700	5.4	4.9	5.2
Males				
Economically active*	26,900	79.6	84.8	83.2
In employment*	25,200	74.5	80.1	78.4
Employees*	21,700	64.7	66.5	64.8
Self employed*	3,500	9.8	13.4	13.2
Unemployed [^]	#	#	5.6	5.7
Females				
Economically active*	23,700	71.4	75.5	73.3
In employment*	22,900	68.6	72.1	69.7
Employees*	22,000	66.7	66.7	64.3
Self employed*	#	!	5.0	5.0
Unemployed [^]	#	#	4.2	4.7
Source: ONS annual population survey # Sample size too small for reliable estimate ! Estimate is not available since sample size is disclosive • numbers are for those aged 16 and over, % are for those of working age (16-59/64) ^ numbers and % are for those aged 16 and over, % is a proportion of economically active				

a) The General Legal Duty

With effect from the 6 April 2007, the Equality Act (2006) will amend the SDA by introducing a statutory Gender equality “duty” on public bodies, such as Bassetlaw District Council.

This means that when carrying out its functions the Council must have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; and**
- **Promote equality of opportunity between men and women.**

“Unlawful discrimination” in relation to gender is defined as:

- Direct and indirect discrimination on grounds of sex
- Discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity leave
- Discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment
- Direct and indirect discrimination against married persons and civil partners
- Victimisation
- Harassment and sexual harassment.

³ Statistics from NOMIS – Official Labour Market Statistics (see: <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>)

The General Duty applies to the Council's policy-making function, its role as an employer and provider of local services and also its responsibility to enforce or make any statutory discretion and decision-making. Furthermore, the duty extends to public services and functions that are undertaken by contractors.

The General Duty will be enforced by judicial review and the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) will have the power to issue compliance notices if there is a breach of the duty.

As well as considering issues of gender equality when making decisions about the future, the Council must also take action to tackle the consequences of decisions in the past which failed to give due regard to gender equality. This will entail identifying and addressing any significant inequalities resulting from policies and practices currently in place.

Whilst there is a tendency to focus on equality for women when looking at gender issues, this Scheme equally applies to men as well as the particular needs of transsexual and transgender people.

In 1999 the SDA was amended by the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations to make it clear that transsexual men and women are expressly included in the SDA where they suffer discrimination because they have undergone, or are about to undergo gender reassignment.

b) Specific Legal Duties

The General Duty, set out above, is the first positive step towards ensuring that men and women receive services and are offered employment and development opportunities that meet their needs, abilities and aspirations more closely.

To support progress in delivering the general duty, there are also a number of **specific duties** that the Council must comply with and these are to:

- Prepare and publish a gender equality scheme to show how the Council intends to meet its general and specific duties as well as set out its gender equality objectives
- Gather and use information on how the Council's policies and practices affect gender equality in the workplace and in the delivery of services
- Consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap
- Consult appropriate stakeholders such as employees, trade unions, service users and other community organisations and take account of relevant information when determining the Council's gender equality objectives
- Assess the impact of our current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality
- Implement the actions set out in this scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so
- Produce a report on the progress of the scheme every year and review the scheme at least every three years.

This Scheme sets out how the Council will address the General and Specific Duties required by law and how these requirements will be integrated with other Council processes.

2. BASSETLAW'S GENDER EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

a) Our four key objectives

Based on the evidence provided in the current position statement and the proportional impact that gender has on the specific services we provide and our role as an employer, the Council's gender equality objectives demonstrate its commitment to the implementation of this Scheme and are driven by the focus on positive outcomes that are aligned with our key strategic priorities.

Some of the specific 'Themes' therein relate directly to the Action Plans to be found at the end of this document (pages 18-20).

Objective 1

We will promote gender equality for employees and customers by:

- Ensuring that our core policies and processes are designed with due regard to the needs of each gender
- Continuing to improve our annual best value targets to encourage more women to apply for management and other senior positions within the Council
- Encouraging the development of ways of working that take into consideration the flexibility needs of each gender
- Removing any unlawful barriers experienced by either gender when accessing the information and services we provide.

Objective 2

We will tackle discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender by:

- Encouraging positive attitudes about the equal capabilities of both genders
- Challenging discriminatory attitudes and behaviour about gender and taking formal action where necessary
- Ensuring that our policies for dealing with discrimination and harassment mirror best practice examples
- Continuing to educate and train our staff to have respect for people as individuals.
- Developing an effective approach to equality in pay/reward processes and promoting flexible working and the life/work balance agenda within the Council's workforce.

Objective 3

We will gain an improved understanding of our employee and customer needs in relation to their gender by:

- Assessing how employee and customer data already held by the Council can be more effectively utilised when developing strategies for improved service delivery
- Identifying any gaps in the data we have and devising appropriate methods to obtain this information where it would be of benefit to the service and/or employee
- Implementing gender-related actions identified during the equality impact assessment process

- Evaluating and measuring employee and customer satisfaction in terms of their experience of the Council as an employer and service provider.

Objective 4

We will continue to consult and work in partnership with organisations and communities to achieve gender equality by:

- Obtaining ongoing feedback from our employees and communities on how the actions in this Scheme should be prioritised and implemented
- Identifying how local networks can be strengthened as well as ensuring that a more collaborative and efficient approach to service delivery is taken
- Enabling and encouraging greater representation and participation in democratic and internal cultural change processes that will help shape the future of the Council.

b) Consultation

The Council is committed to delivering services that are based on a clear understanding of the needs of our customers as well as providing a workplace culture that respects the individuality of our workforce and promotes equality.

Generally our progress on gender equality has included; the increasing amount of public consultation and community engagement that the Council undertakes every year, the introduction of equality impact assessments for all of our key policies and practices, encouraging women to apply for senior positions within the Council and the implementation of a number of flexible working, family-friendly measures along with protection from discrimination, bullying and harassment at work policies

To ensure the contents of this Scheme meet the Council's Gender Equality objectives, a wide-ranging internal and external consultation process was undertaken before publication.

Within the Council the following stakeholders were consulted:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Equality Steering Group | • Service Representatives |
| • Elected Members | • UNISON/GMB |
| • Senior Management Team | • A1 Housing |

The following organisations and partners were also approached for their views on the approach the Council has decided to take:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| • Parish / Town Councils | • Women's Refuge |
| • Nottinghamshire County Council | • Gay Switchboard |
| • Primary Care Trust | • Terence Higgins Trust |
| • Nottinghamshire Police Service | • Domestic Violence Forum |
| • Nottinghamshire Probation Service | • Victim Support |
| • Bassetlaw Community Partnership | • Nottinghamshire Federation of Women's Institutes |
| • Nottingham County Fire and Rescue Service | • Council for Voluntary Services |
| • Sport England | • Arts Forum |

The feedback from this consultation process will be considered and improvements to the Scheme made where appropriate.

The Scheme has also been made available widely through a variety of means, including the Council's website.

Consultation in the future will continue to be a key feature of our equality strategy.

Commitment

A “champion” – Cllr M Quigley has been appointed to lead on the issue and he will liaise with external bodies (Partners) to share best practice and develop a coordinated District-wide approach.

Resources may be identified to meet specific needs though Service departments will usually need to redirect resources to meet identified shortfall and/or address particular aspects of the equality agenda.

3. IMPLEMENTATING THE GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME

A) Key activities and areas

The focus of the Council's Gender Equality Scheme is the result of a number of core areas that form the action planning framework and these will enable us to prioritise and build gender equality standards that can be applied across Council services. These areas are:

- 1. Information, Consultation and Communication** – creating awareness of the gender equality duty, consulting people on what the Council intends to do and how these actions fit into the overarching diversity policy framework, and communicating the effects of improvements to our understanding of the needs of our employees and customers.

We will continue to consult on proposed new & revised policies from a wide range of men & women (backgrounds/ages etc)

The Council are very committed to consulting with and involving the Trade Unions in the equality programme.

NB This area is covered in ACTION AREA 1 of the attached Action Plan

- 2. Collecting and using relevant data** – recognising that a baseline should be created to establish the current position in respect of take up/usage etc.

Some service areas collect data at present though other will need to adopt a more pro-active approach to collecting and analysing this data.

The Council will further refine its equality monitoring approach and eventually link this analysis to other elements eg racial group/age or type of disability so as to provide a more informed picture.

The aim is to analyse actions and success using statistical data (quantitative) and surveys/feedback (qualitative) to aid evaluation/review of progress.

This information will inform priorities and objectives and result in remedial and/or positive action or change.

- 3. Policies and Processes** – through the equality impact assessment process
The impact on gender equality of the Council's existing and proposed/new policies is assessed through the established "Equality Impact Assessment" process. Actions arising from completed impact assessments are incorporated into departmental service plans and progressed as 'core business'. This enables us to produce policies and strategies that promote gender equality.

NB This area is covered in ACTION AREA 2 of the attached Action Plan

- 4. Service Delivery** – to begin with this Scheme will address potential gender equality issues in terms of personal safety and the fear of crime, domestic violence, business enterprise, and health, wellbeing and leisure services.

We have also prioritised Employment & reward (pay/benefits) as well as Training & employee development - as areas to address initially.

There is also the potential to consider data relating to regeneration, environmental services, social deprivation, community services and procurement at a later stage.

NB This area is covered in ACTION AREA 3 of the attached Action Plan

Service planning will bring together service improvement targets & objectives related to equality and the results of equality impact assessments (linked as they are to data collection & consultation).

- 5. Employment and Reward** – gender equality is more evident and tangible from an employment perspective and the action plan for this Scheme will address issues to do with recruitment and retention, occupational segregation, flexible working and organisational support and promoting individual dignity, health and safety at work.

NB This area is covered in ACTION AREA 4 of the attached Action Plan

- 6. Training and Employee Development** – the Council is committed to ensuring equal career development opportunities as well as general training for employees in the awareness of gender-specific issues and the application of the equality impact assessment process.

NB This area is covered in ACTION AREA 5 of the attached Action Plan

- 7. Procurement & Partnerships** – The gender equality duty applies to all services that are procured by the Council and we will ensure that gender equality considerations are addressed through the procurement process and in our contract liaison/monitoring processes.

In terms of 'Partnerships', the Council is involved in many across the District. Eg the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership, the Local Strategic Partnership.

Council representatives will ensure gender equality is addressed and promoted in relevant projects/initiatives.

- 8. Reporting and Reviewing** - The progress and development of this Scheme will be regularly reviewed and quality assessed.

We will ensure managers are clear about the overall objectives and about their specific responsibilities and targets.

The progress of the Scheme will be reported to Senior Management and Cabinet. The Scrutiny system may also review specific issues/policy areas.

The entire Scheme will be reviewed on an annual basis and a report on progress will be produced and publicised.

Every three years the objectives and targets will be addressed and renewed with feedback from stakeholders forming a key part of this evaluation.

At this stage an evaluative approach is suggested combining a blend of internal self-evaluation, external or peer critical review and stakeholder feedback/involvement.

b) Other considerations

RISKS - Implications

There are a number of general risks that apply to all the above action areas and these include:

- Being in breach of the Statutory gender equality duties; Sex Discrimination Act, Equal Pay Act and Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations
- Not meeting performance targets associated with the Equality Standard for local government or BVPIs 11a and 225
- Excluding customers from participating in the democratic process because of their gender
- Access to services that are not inclusive and do not inspire confidence.
- Failing in our duty of care to our employees and councillors by not providing an equal opportunities environment.

RESOURCES - Implications

It is clear that positive changes to services cannot take place without some degree of investment of resources. Where it is necessary to make adjustments or changes to the way that services are delivered, any financial implications will be identified through the equality impact assessment process.

However, the term “resources” does not exclusively apply to the financial aspect of encouraging improvements and services will need to determine how they will effectively and efficiently encourage their teams to positively incorporate gender issues into their attitudes, behaviour and culture in order for this to have a beneficial impact on service delivery.

RESPONSES

The Council would welcome views on this Scheme from individuals, organisations and groups who have a view or opinion.

We are very anxious to engage with people who feel they would like to help implement our plans and/or be kept in touch about progress.

If you have any special needs eg require large print or Braille versions or a translation into another language or would like to express your views please contact:

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4. EMPLOYMENT MATTERS

a) National Gender Profile (Employment)

In order to gain an improved understanding of the employment patterns of men and women and how they may access these in distinct ways as a result of their gender, it is beneficial to analyse data that has been disaggregated by sex.

According to the latest figures generated by the Office for National Statistics, there are approximately 60.2 million people living in the UK and 49% are men and 51% are women. Of this total, approximately 29 million are of working age and 5.6% (1.71 million people) of those that are economically active are unemployed. If you look at this data from a gender perspective, an interesting picture emerges.

People of Working Age (16-59/64 years)			
	Full Time	Part Time	Total
Men	13.93m (89%)	1.72m (11%)	15.65m (54%)
Women	7.65m (57%)	5.7m (43%)	13.35m (46%)
Total	21.57m (74%)	7.42m (26%)	28.99m

This data shows that although the numbers of men and women in employment are similar, there are great differences in their patterns of working, with more women taking up part-time work than men. Research also indicates that female participation in the labour market is set to continue, which means that the number of part-time workers is also likely to increase. Such a trend is important because of the gender pay gap issue as well as the need of part-time workers for greater organisational flexibility in the way that they work.

The legal position, in respect of Equal Pay, is that an individual has a right to the same contractual pay & benefits as a person of the opposite sex in the same employment – where the man/woman are doing:

The same or broadly similar work, work which has been rated equivalent under a job evaluation scheme or work that is of equal value (or worth)
eg in terms of effort, skill or decision making.

b) Bassetlaw District Council -- (Gender Profile - employment)

- **Our local community⁴**

The percentages of men and women living in the Bassetlaw District are similar to the national picture with 50.3% women and 49.7% men. Of this figure, 61.07% are of working age and the percentage of people who are unemployed in District is 5.4% (model based unemployment – for those aged 16 and over, % is a proportion of economically active), which is 0.2% greater than the national average (model based unemployment – for those aged 16 and over, % is a proportion of economically active).

The percentage of women who are economically active is 71.4%.

- **In the Council**

The Council employs 850 employees in total with 35.4% men and 34% women on a permanent contractual basis and their patterns of working are similar to the national figures for full and part-time workers.

Of these totals, 77% of men and 50.8% of women work full-time and 23% of men and 49.2% of women work part-time.

- **In A1 Housing**

A1 Housing employs 207 employees in total with 55% men and 45% women on a permanent contractual basis and their patterns of working are similar to the national figures for full and part-time workers.

Of these totals, 49% of men and 27% of women work full-time and 6% of men and 18% of women work part-time.

- **The Gender Pay Gap**

The gender pay gap refers to the difference in average hourly earnings of men and women. Despite the introduction of the Equal Pay Act in 1970, latest figures from the Women and Work Commission indicate that the national full-time pay gap between

⁴ Statistics from NOMIS – Official Labour Market Statistics (see: <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>)

men and women stands at 12.6% and the part-time gap in April 2006 was an unacceptable 40.2%.

One requirement of the gender equality duty is that the Council must “*consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap*” and such objectives must focus on the three main causes of this gap, which are pay discrimination, caring responsibilities and occupational segregation. The last category means that, if necessary, the Council must avoid the concentration of men and women into particular occupations, which can promote traditional gender stereotypes such as women doing admin work and men undertaking more manual roles.

To ensure that women are not under-represented in the higher paid jobs within the Council (often referred to as the “glass ceiling effect”), every year the Council provides data to the Audit Commission showing the percentage of its female employees who are in the top 5% of its overall earners (known as BVPI 11a). In the latest period 2005-2006, 32.14% of the Council’s highest paid employees were women and the organisation is continuously working to ensure that this figure increases each year.

- **Current position statement (Bassetlaw D.C.)**

In implementing the actions of this Scheme, the Council does not have to begin with a blank sheet of paper and is instead able to expand upon the practices that are already in place to promote gender equality, both from an employment and service delivery perspective.

In terms of taking action to ensure that a gender pay gap does not occur within the Council’s approach to rewarding its employees, the organisation is currently introducing job evaluation. This agreement brought in a number of measures that ensure a system of equal pay is in operation and these include:

- A job evaluation scheme is used to evaluate the grade for every job in the Council. A robust job evaluation scheme purely focuses on the requirements of the role and is not an evaluation of the skills and experience that the actual job holder brings to role. The scheme can therefore be described as “gender neutral”.
- All posts are evaluated independently and objectively by the Council’s Human Resources team who have been fully trained to apply the scheme fairly and appropriately.
- The Council has a job evaluation policy that provides a procedure which employees can follow should they wish to request that their job be evaluated. This procedure also contains an independent appeals process if the employee is not satisfied with the original outcome.
- Once a post has been evaluated and allocated a particular grade, managers do not have the discretion to award their staff at a pay level higher than that allocated to the post. Therefore, neither gender can be favoured by a manager.

In addition to the above points, the Council no longer applies any “market forces” pay supplements to those professional posts that are particularly hard to recruit to. The Council is committed to considering other forms of employee recognition and reward which more widely suit the differing needs of its workforce.

Overall, the Council has confidence in the equity of its reward systems.

81.38% receive a salary between grades spinal column point 4 and Scale 6 and the gender ratio for this category is 60% women and 40% male. In the middle management tier (grades SO.1 – PO.39) the ratio is 64% men and 36% women. Lastly, amongst the general and senior managers of the Council who are on grades PO.37-40 to Chief Executive, the ratio is 75% male and 25% female. This is a situation that BVPI 11a is specifically designed to address to ensure that women are given equal career development and progression opportunities.

Based on this data –and the continuing need to be vigilant – the Human Resources Department will regularly review the “gender pay gap” and develop remedial action as is required -given the constraints of the national scheme of pay & conditions of service.

- **Training and Staff Development**

The Council currently monitors the gender of its staff and potential applicants for a range of Human Resources and employee development practices and equality impact assessments have been carried out on all the policies relevant to our workforce to ensure that no gender discrimination currently exists. Furthermore, a number of these policies are already designed to promote flexible working, prevent discrimination and harassment and ensure equal opportunities for all regardless of their personal circumstances.

The Council has a duty to ensure that our practices in the recruitment, development, retention and management of our staff do not result in one gender benefiting over another unfairly, which is why constant monitoring is a useful activity.

However, we also recognise that whilst a majority of the needs of our male and female employees will be the same, there are areas where each gender requires additional support mechanisms to ensure that they are motivated and productive in the work that they do as well as feel valued by the Council as their employer for the contribution they make to the services we provide.

Therefore, we must ensure that we provide accessible flexible working arrangements and organisational support for employees (male or female) who require this.

We aspire to making the Council a great place to work for the people best suited and equipped to undertake the diverse range of roles that we require to deliver our services to the highest standards. In order to do this the environment and culture of the workplace must be free from discrimination, harassment and unequal opportunities as well as respectful of the dignity of each individual in the workplace.

5. GENDER AND SERVICE DELIVERY

a) Introduction

The overall aim of this Scheme is to take positive steps towards achieving a service delivery environment where gender equality issues are recognised and solutions built into the business planning process.

Whilst the gender equality duty does not make unlawful the provision of single sex services where there is a clear need to preserve decency or privacy, such as refuges for people who have been the victims of domestic violence, it does encourage councils and other public bodies to question what the different issues and priorities for men and women are.

With the full support of the Council's senior management and leadership teams, in order to implement the action plan of this Scheme and therefore ensure that the gender equality duty is mainstreamed into our core functions, Service areas will need to continue to collect and analyse appropriate data to ensure the organisation meets its obligations vis-a-vis gender equality.

The Council is responsible for delivering many important services to people who live and work in the district as well as playing an influential role when working in partnership with a number of key sub-regional organisations.

Those services (and functions) which are currently contracted out to other organisations/bodies will be reviewed from a 'gender' accessible perspective and any future contracts will specifically relate to particular needs –where these are sufficiently appropriate or relevant.

The following service or functional areas have been identified as containing gender-based issues, which have an impact on the service that is currently being delivered.

b) Action areas Priorities & strategic themes

1. Safe & Strong -- Personal Safety and Fear of Crime

The Urban Crime Rankings focuses on the recorded levels of seven types of offences committed in 2005, including murder, rape, assault, burglary, robbery, vehicle crime and gun crime.

There is also evidence to suggest that both the numbers and types of offences committed by men and women differ significantly as well as male and female experiences of victimisation and fear of crime. Less than 20% of offenders are women and men are more likely to be repeat offenders but men are also more likely to be the victims of crime.

Bassetlaw Council takes the issue of community safety very seriously and as part of our aim to be a prestigious regional centre where people feel safe and free from victimisation and anti-social behaviour, we are committed to the successful implementation of the action plan of the Crime Reduction Strategy in partnership with other local organisations.

As there is a recognition that gender is a significant factor in crimes committed or experienced, such information will also play a part in ensuring that the outcomes of the Strategy are achieved.

2. Safe & Strong – Tackling Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is essentially a pattern of behaviour characterised by the exercise of control and the misuse of power by one person over another within the context of an intimate relationship. It is manifested in various ways, which include but are not limited to, physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and the imposition of social isolation, and is most commonly a combination of them all.

Research shows that a majority of the victims of domestic violence are women and the perpetrators predominantly men. The British Crime Survey (2001) suggests that one in four women and one in six men will be a victim of domestic violence in their lifetime. Such acts of violence can also take place in lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transsexual relationships.

The Council works closely with a number of local organisations who assist the victims of domestic violence and their families and a range of useful contact information can be found on our website. Specifically, the local Domestic Violence Forum works primarily to address these issues as well as supports the delivery of the actions of the Crime Reduction Strategy. The main future aim of the Forum is to reduce the incidents of domestic violence within the District and support those involved where victims of this type of crime.

The Council, Forum and the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership have joint lead responsibility for the best value performance indicator (BVPI) 225. The purpose of this indicator is to assess the overall provision and effectiveness of local authority services designed to help victims of domestic violence and prevent further instances from occurring.

3. Jobs & Enterprise – Fostering Business Enterprise

One of the key aims of the Council's Strategic Plan is developing & retaining businesses and job creation. This will mean making sure that a number of aims and outcomes take place, including:

- Ensuring that the number of business units provided throughout the borough match the predicted demand
- Provision of a “one-stop-shop” approach to support new and existing businesses.
- Increase number, quality and average wage rate of local jobs – and increase success rate of inward investment
- Promote and retain home-grown talent.
- Enabling better co-ordination of our partners' resources to meet new and existing business needs.

In order to achieve the above outcomes the Council works closely with local partners and ensuring female – led & managed businesses receive the required level of support. Much of this work is funded by the Council through the economic development grant that they receive.

Creating viable businesses and strong retail centres sustains local employment opportunities. Women have a key role to play as both entrepreneurs and employees in this process.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is particularly keen to promote and support female entrepreneurs in line with its vision to create an environment and culture which encourages women to start and grow businesses, and where every woman with such an ambition has access to appropriate help and support. Organisations such as the Council – along with key partners - will therefore play a key role in the achievement of this aim.

Between April 2005 and March 2006 the Economic Development Unit, through Nottinghamshire Business Ventures (NBV), the provided assistance to 115 businesses/clients based in the district and of this total 63 % were male and 37 % were female⁵. In terms of gender equality, it is important that the Council continues to play its part in encouraging and monitoring the demographic profiles of the local business community.

4. Community Life -Health, Wellbeing and Leisure Facilities

There are proven links between social deprivation and access to sports and leisure facilities which result in higher levels of obesity amongst people who are on low incomes or live in the most deprived rural and urban wards.

To add to this, a person's age and gender are also important factors when assessing their level of wellbeing.

For example, as a result of physical and cultural differences there is evidence to suggest that men and women experience different health problems and in this District the average life expectancy for a man is 77 years whilst for a woman it is 82 years.

The Council's Strategic Plan also includes the key aim of "healthy living" for the people who live and work in the district and specific actions that will contribute to the achievement of this aim include:

- Co-ordinating and delivering a range of projects to promote the health and wellbeing of residents living in the borough's most deprived wards
- Completing a joint project with the Primary Care Trust and others in deprived local neighbourhoods
- Working with partners to develop policies which reduce smoking in work and public places, and help people quit smoking.

The Council has already made a significant amount of progress in terms of ensuring the health and wellbeing of local citizens which includes the improvement and promotion of high quality and value for money leisure facilities as well as the close partnership working it undertakes with diverse healthcare providers.

The Council has a role to scrutinise local health service delivery to ensure that such services meet the needs of the local population. It will therefore continue to take action when carrying out this function to guarantee that healthcare services are provided in ways that are free from any type of illegal discrimination.

⁵ Please note that the figure are based on the number of businesses referred to Nottinghamshire Business Ventures (NBV) for business advice and guidance.

Women-only sessions at our sports complexes have in the past been a very useful way of encouraging more women to use the amenities we offer and such promotional mechanisms are acceptable under the terms of the Sex Discrimination Act.

The programmes and facilities our sports centres offer are continually developing in response to changes in customer needs and expectations as well as the fast moving pace of the leisure industry in general. Usage levels across the hundreds of activities and sessions offered are monitored and changes are made as appropriate where this is possible.

5 Council Employees - Employment & Reward

In order to ensure that no employee is discriminated against, regardless of their gender, the Council is reviewing all its employment policies to reflect new legislation which has been introduced. This will include reference to the legislation covering gender, age, sexual orientation etc.

The Council is currently undertaking a job evaluation exercise across the whole of the Council where all posts are being evaluated. Following this an Equal pay plan will be developed to ensure that a fair pay structure exists.

6 Council employees - Training & Employee Development

The Council has a structured approach to training and development and undertakes annual appraisals with all employees. The appraisals take into consideration the priorities for the Council for the forthcoming year, any skills gaps that employees may have in order to meet those priorities, and any service needs regarding succession planning, career development etc.

The Council monitors attendance on training and development courses by their gender and produces an annual report to its Council members.

For further information regarding this scheme please contact:

Head of Community Engagement and Performance
Bassetlaw District Council
Queens' Buildings
Potter Street
Worksop
Nottinghamshire
S80 2AH


☎ 01909 535609

✉ policy@bassetlaw.gov.uk

If this relates to an A1 Housing, please contact:

Customer Services Manager
A1 Housing (Bassetlaw) Ltd
Carlton Forest House
Hundred Acre Lane
Carlton Forest
Worksop

Nottinghamshire
S81 0TS

 01909 534520

 customer.services@a1housing.co.uk

ACTION PLAN - Gender Equality (2007 – 2010)

Action Area 1		
Information, Consultation and Communication		
Action	Responsibility and Timescales	Outcome
a.i) Publicise information both within and outside of the Council about the gender equality duty, what it means to employees and service users, the organisation's responsibilities and how it intends to respond to these (Council)	Head of Community Engagement and Performance May 2007	General awareness of the gender equality duty amongst the workforce and wider community
a.ii) Publicise gender equality duty to Equalities Steering Group, SMT, Board, Quarterly Forum, Tenants and Leaseholders. (A1 Housing)	Customer Service Officer (Equality and Diversity) – A1 Housing January 2008	
b.i) Work with existing internal and external networks as well as explore partnership working with other organisations or community groups to establish effective consultation/ engagement methods to help improve service delivery and the Council's working environment (Council)	All HOS Review March 2008	Services and workplace policies that have due regard to the needs and requirements of both genders
b.ii) Develop protocols and framework where advice and consultation can be sought from Surestart, Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual and Transsexual groups for A1 Housing service and policy development (A1Housing)	Community Development Officer – A1 Housing March 2009	
c) Publish the results of any consultations concerning the actions of the Scheme in accessible and appropriate formats (Council)	Head of Community Engagement and Performance Review March 2008	Widespread awareness of findings and recommendations
d) Annual monitoring and reporting of the Scheme actions through agreed consultation method/s Ensure staff and customers are kept up-to-date with the progress of the action plan (Council and A1 Housing)	Head of Human Resources/ Head of Community Engagement and Performance/Director of Strategy and Change – A1 Housing May 2008	Progress of the actions and any proposed updates will be publicly reported and the Scheme will remain relevant
e) Full Scheme review every three years (Council and A1 Housing)	Management Team Director of Strategy and Change - A1 Housing March/April 2010	Production of a Scheme that addresses the current needs of its intended audience
f) Consult with existing and future tenants to ensure that we have a housing stock that meets the needs of the community (A1 Housing)	Tenant Participation Officer – A1 Housing March 2009	
g) Consult with existing and future tenants to ensure that they have access to the housing service (A1 Housing)	Tenant Participation Officer – A1 Housing March 2009	

Action Area 2 Policies and Processes		
Action	Responsibility and Timescales	Outcome
a) Review any gender-related actions already identified through the equality impact assessment process and provide evidence of how these issues have been addressed (Council)	All HOS March 2008	Evidence to demonstrate how the Council is integrating gender equality into its services and practices
b) Ensure that all services are given sufficient information and/or training on how the equality impact assessment process can be used as a tool to identify the impact of policies and processes on the gender of the end user (Council)	Head of Human Resources Review March 2008	Services are equipped with the skills to undertake equality impact assessments effectively
c) Ensure that all services apply the equality impact assessment process and give due consideration to the need for consultation when developing future policies and strategies (Council)	All HOS/All A1 Housing Managers Ongoing	Provision of services that demonstrate gender equality
d) Promote further application of the Customer Relationship Management system across all services (Council)	Head of Revenues and Customer Service March 2008	A better understanding of our customers will result in improved service delivery

Action Area 3 Service Delivery		
Action	Responsibility and Timescales	Outcome
All Services		
a.i) Develop methods of collecting comprehensive and localised gender-based data that can be used to improve service delivery (Council)	All HOS Review March 2008	Service provision and workforce practices can develop within a framework that promotes gender equality
a.ii) All satisfaction surveys and general surveys to ask the gender (A1 Housing)	Customer Services Manager – A1 Housing April 07	To inform service managers of areas for service improvements to promote gender equality
i) Personal Safety and Fear of Crime		
b.i) Produce information for customers on transsexual and transgender issues to ensure a lack of awareness does not lead to hate crime on these grounds (Council)	Head of Community Engagement and Performance Review March 2008	Wider understanding of transsexual and transgender issues leading to greater tolerance within the community
b.ii) Staff to be training on transsexual/transgender issues in relation to Hate Crime (A1 Housing)	Customer Services Officer (Equality and Diversity)- A1 Housing May 07	Improve staff awareness
c) Ensure that the targets of the actions in the Crime Reduction Strategy are	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership	Proactively tackle crime and disorder and make the community

achieved and any gender implications are addressed (Council)	Review March 2008	a safer place to live and work
ii) Domestic Violence		
d.i) Work in partnership with local organisations to provide information and services and reduce the number of incidents of domestic violence in the borough (Council)	Community Safety Team Review December 2007	Improved partnership working will result in more effective services and support for women and men affected by domestic violence
d.ii) To ensure that the Domestic Violence officers within A1 continue to work with local organisations through agree protocols (A1 Housing)	Principal Housing Officer – A1 Housing (Ongoing)	Improved services for women
e.i) Invest appropriate resources into this area to ensure that the target for BVPI 225 is achieved (Council)	Head of Community Engagement and Performance Review March 2008	The status of all 11 BVPI 225 actions will be green, which means this target will be achieved
e.ii) Continue to develop through training the A1 domestic violence officers (A1 Housing)	Principal Housing Officer- A1 Housing (Ongoing)	
f) Develop guidance for managers on how to deal with team members who may themselves be victims of domestic violence (Council/A1 Housing)	Human Resources/Human Resources Advisor- A1 Housing December 2007	Employees feel supported by their managers and the organisation at a time of personal difficulty
iii) Health, Wellbeing and Leisure Facilities		
h) Develop guidance for employees and councillors on the Council's arrangements for breastfeeding /infant facilities (Council)	Head of Human Resources December 2007	Promotion of a family-friendly working environment by attending to the needs of new mothers
i) Work with local businesses to ensure that breastfeeding/infant facilities are made available in appropriate locations throughout the district (Council)	Community Health Team Review March 2008	The health and safety needs of new mothers are catered for in public places within the district.
j) Ensure all staff based in leisure and sports centres are adequately trained in the specific needs of transsexual and transgender customers, particularly in respect of communal facilities (Council)	Head of Community Prosperity Review March 2008	The needs of transsexual and transgender customers will become integrated into the general business planning process
k) Work in partnership with local healthcare service providers to ensure that people living in deprived wards have equal access to information about improving their health and wellbeing (Council)	LSP Sub Group - Health Review Dec 2007	Improve the health of local people by increasing levels of participation in sports and other physical activities

l) Scrutinise local healthcare delivery to ensure that these services are free from gender discrimination (Council)	LSP Sub Group - Health Review March 2008	Provision of healthcare services that meet the gender needs of the local population
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Action Area 4 Employment and Reward		
Action	Responsibility And Timescales	Outcome
a.i) Promote and encourage wider flexible working practices across the Council where such systems are operationally possible (Council/A1 Housing)	Head of Human Resources/Human Resource Advisor – A1 Housing Sept 2007	A flexible and motivated workforce that provides services in accordance with business needs and efficiency requirements
a.ii) Review and relaunch flexible working policies and procedures emphasising equal access (A1 Housing)	Human Resources Advisor Oct 2008	
b.i) Take into account the gender requirements of employees when considering requests for flexible working (Council)	All Services Review March 2008	Implementation of flexible working practices that do not discriminate on the grounds of gender
b.ii) Review and analyse by gender phased returned to work offers and uptake by employee, manager and Occupational Health Officer (A1 Housing)	Human Resources Advisor – A1 Housing April 2010	
c.i) Update all relevant policies to include the changes set out in the Work and Families Act 2006 (Council)	Human Resources April 2007	Services working to policies that are up-to-date in terms of legislative requirements
c.ii) Review and update all policies in accordance with the Work and Families Act 2006 (A1 Housing)	Human Resources Advisor- A1 Housing March 2008	
c.iii) Analyse and report uptake of paternity and parental leave (A1 Housing)	Human Resources Advisor- A1 Housing March 2008	
c.iv) Monitor uptake of paternity and parental leave (A1 Housing)	Human Resources Advisor- A1 Housing 2007-2010	
d.i) Monitor requests for flexible working using gender data to ensure that the process is free from discrimination (Council)	All Services Human Resources Review December 2007	Increase in employee confidence that requests for flexible working are treated consistently throughout the Council
d.ii) Annually analyse and monitor uptake of flexible working arrangements (A1 Housing)	Human Resource Advisor-A1 Housing April 2008 – ongoing	

e.i) Ensure that cases of sexual harassment in the workplace will not be tolerated by the Council and that the disciplinary and grievance procedures will be applied and gender data monitored where necessary (Council)	All Services Human Resources Review Quarterly	Provision of a workplace that is free from discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender or gender reassignment
e.ii) Review harassment and bullying policies (A1 Housing)	Human Resources Advisor – A1 Housing December 2007	
e.iii) Report to employees on successful cases taken under the harassment and bullying policies at revised policies relaunch (A1 Housing)	December 2007 – ongoing on quarterly	
f.i) Ensure equal access to all employment opportunities for both genders and work to reduce any occupational segregation (Council)	All Services Human Resources Review March 2008	Develop positive action approaches
f.ii) Report on equal access to employment (A1 Housing)	Human Resources Advisor –A1 Housing April 2008	
f.iii) Analyse location of where we advertise vacancies and to use the information for positive action when advertising future vacancies. (A1 Housing)	Human Resources Advisor –A1 Housing April 2008	
f.iv) Analyse occupational segregation by department (A1 Housing)	Human Resources Advisor –A1 Housing April 2008	
g.i) Continue to increase and meet targets for BVPI 11a every year (Council)	Human Resources Review March 2008	More women in senior roles (top 5% of the organisation)
g.ii) Review staff survey to include questions on job selection, employee choices on career choices and working hours (A1 Housing)	Human Resources Advisor – A1 Housing March 2008	
g.iii) Analyse gender against pay scales (A1 Housing)	Human Resources Advisor – A1 Housing March 2008	
g.iv) Carry out an equal pay review (A1 Housing)	Human Resources Advisor – A1 Housing March 2008	
g.v) Analyse barriers to recruitment (A1 Housing)	Human Resources Advisor – A1 Housing March 2008	
h.i) Provide managers with comprehensive guidance on the Council's job evaluation scheme and the relevance to gender equality in terms of pay (Council/A1 Housing)	Human Resources/Human Resources Advisor – A1 Housing September 2007	Greater awareness of the job evaluation process and a reduction in the risk of equal pay claims

i.i) Encourage both male and female employees to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and monitor participation according to employee gender (Council)	Human Resources Review March 2008	Participation in the LGPS reflects the gender profile of the Council
i.ii) Analyse and report uptake on LGPS membership (A1 Housing)	Human Resources Advisor – A1 Housing Review March 2008	
j.i) Review and promote risk assessments for expectant/returning mothers and ensure that these are fit for purpose (Council)	Health and Safety March 2008	Provision of a safe working environment for expectant mothers and those returning from maternity leave
j.ii) Review maternity policies (A1 Housing)	Health and Safety Manager and Human Resource Advisor – A1 Housing March 2008	
j.iii) Carry out a risk assessment on expectant mother and employees returning following parental leave (A1 Housing)	Health and Safety Manager and Human Resource Advisor – A1 Housing March 2008	
k.i) Promote employee benefits that take into account gender-based needs (Council)	Human Resources Review March 2008	A working environment that motivates employees to deliver customer excellence
k.ii) Promote gender based employee benefits (A1 Housing)	Human Resources Advisor – A1 Housing October 2008	
l) Update the Equal Opportunities policy to ensure that this adequately supports and values transsexual and transgender employees and their needs Look at policy and monitoring arrangements	Human Resources March 2008	Provision of a fair and equal working environment that respects the dignity of individuals and the lifestyles they lead
m) Ensure that all barriers to the employment of transsexual and transgender employees have been removed and that it is clear to customers that the Council values diversity Look at policy	All Services Human Resources Review March 2008	The Council is seen as an employer of choice, setting good examples for other organisations in the borough to follow

Action Area 5 Training and Employee Development		
Action	Responsibility and Timescales	Outcome
a) Introduce a structured approach to	Head of Human	Identifying and encouraging

succession planning that promotes equal access for male and female employees to career development opportunities within the Council (Council)	Resources Dec 2008	“home grown” talent to apply for positions within the Council regardless of gender
b.i) Encourage more employees to develop their skills in ways that will support and improve service delivery and the professionalism of our workforce (Council)	Head of Human Resources Review March 2008	Enhancing the skills of our workforce will contribute to the implementation of both the Council’s HRT & Customer Excellence Strategies as well as address key skills shortages
b.ii) Role out competency framework to all employees (A1 Housing)	Human Resources Advisor – A1 Housing 2010	
b.iii) Gather and analyse information regarding under-represented genders in specific career paths (A1 Housing)	Human Resources Advisor – A1 Housing 2010	
b.iv) Obtain funding and a run taster sessions for under-represented groups at our Training Academy. (A1 Housing)	Human Resources Advisor – A1 Housing 2010	
c.i) Provide training for employees and councillors on the impact of the gender equality duty and how this affects service provision as well as the management of the workforce (Council)	Head of Human Resources Review March 2008	Consideration of gender needs will become a natural part of the business planning process
c.ii) Raise awareness of our gender equality duty through training for employees, board member and partner organisations (A1Housing)	Human Resources Advisor – A1 Housing March 2008	
d.i) Monitor attendance of employees on internal training courses by their gender to ensure that the ratios reflect the general workforce gender profile (Council)	All HOS March 2008	The Council would be able to identify if there are any inequalities between genders in terms of access to training and development opportunities
d.ii) Annually report analysis of training by gender group (A1 Housing)	Human Resources Advisor April 2008	