

Appendix 1

Extract and summary from the draft Equalities Framework for Local Government

1. The new Framework

The new Equality Framework for Local Government is constructed around five areas of change management. These reflect the four major areas of the Equality Standard for Local Government, but in addition relate more directly to the new performance framework and the new CAA.

The **five** areas of change management are:

- a) Knowing your community – equality mapping**
- b) Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment**
- c) Community engagement and satisfaction**
- d) Responsive services and customer care**
- e) A modern and diverse workforce**

a) Knowing your community - equality mapping

Understanding the profile of your communities and the life chances and opportunities of different groups will be a crucial in identifying priority outcomes that can shape strategic planning and service delivery.

Equality mapping is the term used for collecting information about communities and individuals. This information is used throughout the equality process. It is collected on the basis of not only people's race, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age, but also other relevant demographics, such as socio-economic, health and education status, the availability of transport and whether communities live in a rural or urban setting. It will identify people's needs, not just the equality strands or background. The data has to be understood and analysed not just collected. This will lead to integration with and provide an important evidence base for plans such as the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), Local Development Framework (LDF) and the LAA (local Area Agreement).

b) Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment

The new performance framework is designed to give local authorities, and their partners, greater freedom to determine local priorities and shape the future of an area.

We know that strategic leadership is key to improving equality outcomes and that it needs to be

- expressed in the local vision of place and strategic plan as well as the SCS

- central to the delivery of priorities that impact on inequality.

It is increasingly important for authorities to work in partnership with other public service providers and the voluntary sector to identify inequality and work together to achieve equality outcomes.

c) Community engagement and satisfaction

Most local authorities recognise the importance of community engagement and participation and have moved far beyond simple consultation exercises, important as they can be, to find innovative ways of involving communities. However, communities of place are not always synonymous with communities of interest, and it remains important to have structures in place that involve the latter in corporate decision making, service planning and workforce planning.

The CAA will put the experiences of citizens, people who use services and local taxpayers at the centre of the new local assessment framework, with a particular focus on the needs of those whose circumstances make them most vulnerable.

d) Responsive services and customer care

Service provision remains a central function of local authorities. The Framework will help authorities personalise services to meet the needs of people from different backgrounds. This requires:

- greater cultural understanding on the part of service providers
- using Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) to ensure that authorities understand the impact of service provision on different communities.

e) A modern and diverse workforce

The ability to deliver responsive, personalised services will depend in a large part on the skills, understanding and commitment of the workforce. The Equality Framework therefore looks at ensuring:

- fair employment practices that comply with the legislation, including equal pay legislation
- training on equality issues, including Equality Impact Assessments
- ensuring that the workforce profile reflects the diversity of the community and that measures are in place to monitor diversity and promote equality of opportunity.

2. Smarter working: the relationship with other frameworks

The new Equality Framework for Local Government is also designed to complement other frameworks. Resources are limited, so there is a premium on reducing duplication.

Legal obligations – the public duties

The obligations of local authorities are set out in the **Race** Equality Duty, the **Gender** Equality Duty and the **Disability** Equality Duty. Over time new obligations may arise.

The new framework helps local authorities to meet their obligations under the law and to minimise duplication. . To achieve **Emerging** status authorities also need to be compliant with the legal duties.

Community cohesion

As the Commission on Integration and Cohesion recognised, there is a strong relationship between equality, social justice and community cohesion. The EFLG is therefore designed to dovetail with the Community Cohesion Framework being developed by Communities and Local Government and the migration good practice guidance being developed by IDeA and CLG.

Customer service excellence

The Government wants public services accessible for all, that are efficient, effective, excellent, equitable and empowering. With this in mind it has developed ‘Customer Service Excellence’¹ as a practical tool for driving customer-focused change within organisations.

Comprehensive Area Assessments

The experience of citizens, people who use services and the need to reduce inequalities and improve accessibility will be at the centre of the new local assessment framework, the CAA.

The EFLG will provide useful evidence when preparing for the CAA, since it will enable local authorities to demonstrate that they have understood and acted on the needs of the communities they serve. As mentioned, local authorities have legal duties, both general and specific, relating to race, gender and disability and wider duties under legislation, such as the Children Act.

When the final CAA Guidance is published we will highlight those actions in the Framework that are relevant to CAA.

3. Simplification

The original Equality Standard consisted of five levels:

- Level 1** Commitment to a Comprehensive Equality Policy
- Level 2** Assessment and community engagement
- Level 3** Setting equality objectives and targets
- Level 4** Information systems and monitoring against targets
- Level 5** Achieving and reviewing outcomes

These have now been consolidated into three levels:

- Level 1 Emerging**
- Level 2 Achieving**
- Level 3 Excellent**

At each level authorities will be assessed on the five change management areas. The EFLG sets out the key achievements for each level and then provides a more detailed check list for self-assessment at each level.

4. Migrating achievements under the Equality Standard

We want to ensure that the achievements of authorities under the ESLG are recognised. Authorities who have reached levels 1 and 2 will be classified as **Emerging**. Those that have achieved level 3 will be treated as **Achieving**. Authorities at level 4 will be classified as **Moving towards excellence** and those at level 5 as **Excellent**.

Levels 1 and 2	→	Emerging
Level 3	→	Achieving
Level 4	→	Moving towards excellence
Level 5	→	Excellent

To recognise the achievements of authorities who have achieved level 4 of the ESLG, but would not qualify as **Excellent** under the new framework. The **Moving towards excellence** classification is intended to recognise achievements of level 4, but is not a level under the new framework. We hope that authorities at level 4 will strive for **Excellent** status in the new framework.

An Excellent Authority has the following characteristics:

- members and officers have a reputation for championing equality issues and ensure that the equality issues relevant to their communities are embedded in strategic plans, LAAs and local delivery plans
- the local authority works with all strategic partners and the third sector to achieve defined equality outcomes
- it has good evidence of the equalities profile of the community based on national and local data that is regularly reviewed
- it is measuring progress on equality outcomes, is able to disaggregate data on relevant performance indicators and can demonstrate real outcomes that have improved equality in services and employment
- it identifies the changing nature of its communities and their expectations and then prioritises its activities and explains its decisions
- it provides good customer care by ensuring that services are provided by knowledgeable and well-trained staff, who are equipped to cater to particular needs of clients where necessary
- it has improving satisfaction and perception indicators from all sections of the community
- it uses Equality Impact Assessments to review all major new changes in policy and regularly conducts service Equality Impact Assessments
- all relevant data on service access is monitored against the equality strands
- equality groups are integrally involved in community engagement programmes
- there are forums for all equality stakeholders to share experiences and evaluate the authority's progress
- all parts of the authority can show tangible progress towards achieving outcomes which address persistent inequalities
- members, officers, key stakeholders and community members are confident about equality issues and their relevance for the authority and their own responsibilities
- the authority has implemented action for equal pay outcomes and demonstrates progress on under representation, flexible working, access to training and development and promotes an inclusive working culture based on respect
- it reviews its equality strategy and public duty equality schemes every three years and seeks innovative, improvement challenges
- through its achievements it is an exemplar of good practice for other local authorities and agencies and works with others to share best practice

Table 1. The 10 dimensions of equality

Longevity	including avoiding premature mortality
Physical security	including freedom from violence and physical and sexual abuse
Health	including both well-being and access to high quality healthcare
Education	including both being able to be creative, to acquire skills and qualifications and having access to training and life-long learning
Standard of living	including being able to live with independence and security; and covering nutrition, clothing, housing, warmth, utilities, social services and transport
Productive and valued activities	such as access to employment, a positive experience in the workplace, work/life balance, and being able to care for others
Individual, family and social life	including self-development, having independence and equality in relationships and marriage
Participation, influence and voice	including participation in decision-making and democratic life
Identity, expression and self-respect	including freedom of belief and religion
Legal security	including equality and non-discrimination before the law and equal treatment within the criminal justice system