

New Equality Framework

West North West Homes in partnership with Leeds City Council had adopted the Equality Standard for Local Government

This standard provided us with guidance to ensure that we considered equality within our work.

The Equality Standard had been developed by the Employers' Organisation for Local Government, Equal Opportunities Commission, the Commission for Racial Equality and the Disability Rights Commission, and:

- Recognised the importance of fair and equal treatment;
- Was a tool to mainstream equality, and
- Provided a comprehensive and systematic approach.

There were Levels 1 to 5 of this standard and West North West Homes had achieved Levels 1 to 4.

However there have been changes to this Equality Standard and a New Equality Framework has been developed.

Why a new Equality Framework for Local Government?

- **Simplification:** less process, fewer indicators, emphasis on self assessment and peer challenge
- **Relevance:** relates to new performance framework for local government and Comprehensive Area Assessment & Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE's)
- **Aspiration:** highlights role of local authorities, ALMO's and partners in challenging inequality in their communities

New Features

The framework contains new features including:

- Wider definition of equality based on equal life chances
- New section on knowing your communities and equality mapping
- Focus on equality outcomes for all sections of the community, mapping and narrowing the gaps
- Central role for self assessment and peer challenge.

Includes a Broader definition of Equality

Drawn from the Equalities Review;

- An equal society protects and promotes equal, real freedom and substantive opportunity to live in the ways people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish.
- An equal society recognises people's different needs, situations and goals, and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and can be.
- This definition recognises that:
 - equality is an issue for all
 - we don't all start from the same position
 - to create a fair society we must recognise different needs

New Levels and Areas

Consists of three levels;

- ✓ **Developing** ✓ **Achieving** ✓ **Excellent**

There are five areas for authorities & ALMO's to measure their performance against

1. Knowing your Community – Equality Mapping

- Equality mapping is crucial in identifying priority outcomes that can shape strategic planning and service delivery.
- Includes race, gender, disability, religion and/or belief, sexual orientation and age, and also other relevant demographics, e.g. 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.

2. Place Shaping, Leadership, Partnership

- Strategic leadership is key to improving equality outcomes and it needs to be:
 - Expressed in the local vision of place and strategic plans, and
 - Central to the delivery of priorities that impact on inequality.
- Local councillors have a central role to play in determining priorities to meet local challenges and ensuring equality outcomes.
- Partnerships with other public service providers and the voluntary sector are essential to identifying and working together to achieve equality outcomes

3. Community Engagement and Satisfaction

- Real community engagement and participation is vital
- Need to involving communities of interest and place in corporate decision making, service planning and workforce planning

4. Responsive Services and Customer Care

- 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
- Reflecting differing needs in commissioning and procurement
- Improvements in satisfaction and outcomes for all communities

5. A Modern, Diverse Workforce

- Fair employment practices that comply with the legislation, including equal pay legislation
- Training on equality issues, including impact assessments
- That the workforce profile reflects the diversity of the community and that measures are in place to monitor diversity and promote equality of opportunity.

The Framework – in Practice

- The Framework describes the characteristics of an authority or ALMO at each level – **Developing, Achieving** and **Excellent**
- Against these characteristics it lists indicators against each of the five areas
- Includes storyboards and considerations including:
 - How was this done?
 - What do stakeholders and community members think about indicator being met?
 - What difference will this make?

Migration from Equality Standard

- Authorities & ALMO's who have reached Levels 1 and 2 of the Equality Standard will be treated as **Developing**
- those that have achieved Level 3 will be treated as **Achieving**
- authorities at Level 4 will be treated as **Moving towards excellence**
- those at level 5 as **Excellent**

West North West Homes are “Moving Towards Excellence”

Next Steps

West North West Homes are doing the following:

- Part of an Equality Framework working group, to work out how to implement the new Framework within our ALMO
- Mapping framework against our Cohesion & Diversity Scheme and our priorities
- Start to progress the new Framework within our work