

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE	Subject: DEPARTMENTAL RACE EQUALITY ACTION PLAN	
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 15 JANUARY 2004	Ref: JD/GMcI	

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT / INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides an update for Committee on progress towards the implementation of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, in particular the publication of the Race Equality Scheme and Action Plan for North Lanarkshire Council and the preparation of a Departmental action plan for Social Work.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members will be aware that on the 31st of March 2001 the Race Relations Act 1976 (Statutory Duties) (Scotland) Order 2002 came into force. The Order gave force to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and placed both general and specific duties upon all public bodies in Scotland including Local Authorities.
- 2.2 Essentially, the aim of the general duty is to mainstream the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity and good race relations by making these an integral part of the way public services are carried out.
- 2.3 One of the specific duties placed upon the Council has been to publish a Race Equality Scheme setting out the Council's arrangements for ensuring compliance with the legislation. This was published in November 2002 along with a corporate action plan. The Council gave a commitment to review the Race Equality Scheme after its first year in 2003 and as part of that review asked Departments to bring forward their own Departmental action plans on a common template.
- 2.4 As reported previously to Committee in December 2002 the Department has established its own working group to advise on the implications of the new Act and identify any appropriate actions, which required to be taken. The Departmental Working Group, as requested by the Corporate Race Equality Working Group has prepared a Departmental Action Plan (see Appendix 1).

3 PROPOSALS / CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Department has an ongoing commitment to promote race equality and develop culturally sensitive services.
- 3.2 The Departmental working group has followed the preparation of the Council's Race Equality Scheme and in particular the action planning framework. This framework has been designed to be sufficiently flexible to allow the Department to set realistic and achievable targets and timescales reflecting Social Work's particular needs and responsibilities.
- 3.3 The production of a Departmental Race Equality Action Plan has identified a number of actions which will be addressed over the next two years. These are to:
- Ensure that priority is given to identifying policies and functions relevant to the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 within the larger policy identification exercise being undertaken by Social Work.
 - Improve the recording of ethnicity through the Social Work Information System (SWIS).
 - Ensure that relevant actions from this Action Plan are included within the next Social Work Service Improvement Plan.
 - Examine food related issues for service users including lunch club and meals on wheels provision.
 - Gather and circulate information on specialist support services able to provide ethnically sensitive approaches in relation to family breakdown and domestic violence.
 - Ensure that frontline staff can access appropriate translation and interpreting services, in particular Language Line. Also that the availability of the service is also publicised.
 - Examine our approach to major consultation exercises and implement best practice in relation to involving individuals and organisations from black and ethnic communities.
 - Ensure that the Department's Communication Strategy reflects the need to promote race equality.

4 FINANCIAL/PERSONNEL/LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 A requirement of the new legislation is that the Council as part of its Race Equality Scheme has to identify and assess functions and policies relevant to promoting race equality. The Department has an extremely wide range of functions and policies that governs its activities.
- 4.2 The Department in approaching this task recognises the significant scale of the exercise now required and is having to approach it in a very structured manner. The approach being taken and an initial list of relevant functions and policies which have been identified are detailed within the Departmental Action Plan (Appendix 1).

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Committee is asked to:
- (i) Note the progress of the Departmental Working Group in the early implementation of the Council's Race Equality Scheme.

- (ii) Endorse the actions outlined in the Department's Race Equality Action Plan.
- (iii) Request the Director of Social work to bring forward a report to a future Committee highlighting progress in the further implementation of the Race Equality Scheme and Departmental Action Plan.
- (iv) Otherwise note the contents of the report.



Jim Dickie
Director of Social Work
12 November 2002

*For further information on this report please contact George McInally, Manager Social Work Strategy
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**NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL RACE EQUALITY SCHEME
SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT ACTION PLAN**

1. How has your department approached the implementation of the Race Equality Scheme.

In your response please provide information whether your department has:

- Established any particular mechanism such as Race Equality Working Group or a short life task group to oversee the implementation of the scheme within the department.
- Prepared a report(s) to the appropriate service committee to advise on how your department is implementing the scheme.

Establishment of a departmental Race Equality Working Group

The Social Work Department put in place, in March 2002, a Race Equality Working Group whose purpose was to advise the Department on the implications of the new Act and to take any necessary steps to ensure compliance. Membership of the working group reflects staff representation at both headquarters and area team levels.

There is a direct membership link between Social Work's Race Equality Working Group and the Corporate Working Group ensuring close linkage, communication and quick action.

Reporting Mechanisms

There are four levels where the Department's work on Race Equality is reported.

- To the Scottish Executive each year through the visit of the Social Work Inspectorate.
- To elected members through the Social Work Committee.
- To the Corporate Working Group through the Departments representative.
- And to staff through reports to operational managers and section briefings.

2. "Unpacking" the Corporate Action Plan to a Departmental Level

Departments are asked to examine the 5 areas and levels within the Council's Corporate Race Equality Action Plan and address actions identified as being relevant for their implementation i.e.:

- Policy and Planning
- Service Delivery and Customer Care
- Community Development
- Employment
- Marketing and Corporate Image

Below we have identified specific issues which Departments should consider in their response to each area above. Further guidance is given under each topic/area.

2.1 Policy and Planning

Areas to consider:

- **Identifying and Assessing Functions and Policies** – Representatives of each department will have attended a briefing given by the CRE on how to identify and assess functions and policies as to their relevance to the duty to promote race equality. This work should now be underway and departments are now required to provide a list (here or as an appendix) identifying these functions and policies.
- **Communication** – Explain how your department has communicated and disseminated information internally as well as externally ensuring that all staff and service users are aware of the Council's Race Equality Scheme and that black and ethnic minorities have access to services and appropriate information. Please indicate if there are any issues for your department in doing so.

Policy and Planning

Identifying and assessing functions and policies

The Department has an extremely wide range of functions and policies that govern its activities. The exercise to identify and assess functions and policies relevant to promoting race equality has been caught up in a much wider exercise to develop a comprehensive approach to re-examining policies in relation to a number of needs including:

- Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
- The Human Rights Act
- Requirements of the Care Commission

In approaching this task the Department recognises the significant scale of the exercise now required and is having to approach it in a much more structured manner. As a result the Department will only be able to provide an initial list of relevant functions and policies (see Appendix 1) by the requested date in September but does give a commitment to prioritise the needs of the Race Equality Scheme within the current extended exercise.

Communication

The Department ensured that sufficient copies of the Race Equality Scheme and Action Plan were disseminated within headquarters sections and area teams so that each unit would have access to them.

2.2 Service Delivery and Customer Care

Areas to consider:

- **Monitoring** – Ensuring that appropriate systems are in place to monitor the ethnicity of service users to ensure that there is no adverse impact of policies.
- **Adapting Service Plans** – Do service plans now take account of the Council's Race Equality Scheme and are appropriate actions identified within?
- **Reporting Racial Incidents Dealing with Complaints** – Have any of these procedures been reviewed and changed as a result of assessing functions and policies?
- **Consultation on Services** – Departments should examine the document "Mainstreaming Equalities in North Lanarkshire", which was published in February 2003 by the Council in partnership with the West of Scotland Race Equality Council. This report is in effect the first community consultation exercise carried out in preparing the Race Equality Scheme. Departments should respond to any relevant service issues identified in this document detailing any actions which they propose to take.
- **Translation and Interpreting** – What arrangements does your department have in place to facilitate requests for translation and interpreting?

Service Delivery and Customer Care

Monitoring – The Working Group has reviewed how service use in terms of ethnicity is recorded within the Social Work Information System (SWIS). It was found that ethnicity was not being recorded as it should. A retrospective exercise will be carried out to check and amend records of existing services users and carers and properly record the ethnicity of new referrals.

Adapting Service Plans – The issue has been identified within the template to be used for updating the next Service Improvement Plan. Appropriate actions will be included.

Consultation on Services – The Department has examined the Social Work section of the report "Mainstreaming Race Equality in North Lanarkshire". The report recognises the work which the Department has done and is doing in this area. However there are some specific areas which it recommended some improvement –

- Monitoring ethnicity as mentioned above
- The provision of meals on wheels does cater for people with specific dietary and cultural needs, however the take up is extremely low. The reasons for this require to be examined.
- The report raises the question of knowledge of specialist support services able to provide ethnically sensitive approaches in relation to family breakdown and domestic violence. Whereas one of the organisations listed was well known the others were less familiar. It is our intention to gather information on these other services and circulate to frontline staff.

Social Work Department

Translation and Interpreting – Along with other Departments Social Work has access to Language Line. However the Departmental Working Group carried out a survey of its six area teams only to find out that although some knew about it there are issues about access. It appears that there is an information gap that requires to be filled. Along with the lack of knowledge by staff there is no information made available to the public that this service exists.

The issue was raised with the Corporate Working Group, which has given a commitment to seek additional training resources for staff. The issue of improved publicity in the form of posters/leaflets will also require to be pursued.

Specific Post - Social Work has established a specific post of a Gypsy Traveller Liaison Officer whose role is to develop information and support services for Gypsy Travellers in North Lanarkshire and appropriate mechanisms for consultation. This post has also picked up support and liaison duties in relation to Asylum Seekers.

2.3 Community Development

Areas to consider:

- Mechanisms for consultation with black and ethnic minority staff and community groups have been established on a pan-Lanarkshire basis. However departments should consider how appropriate are their own existing mechanisms or structures for consulting on new or existing policies, e.g. the development of the new "North Lanarkshire Open Spaces Strategy" or the existing Joint Community Care Plan.
- Does your department provide support to black and ethnic minority communities or resource their ability to engage with your department as a service provider?

Community Development

Consultation

The Department carries out frequent consultation exercises in relation to the planning and delivery of services and involving service users and carers in stakeholder events and Best Value Reviews. Invitations are issued to individual service users and their carers to participate and also representative groups and in this instance black and ethnic minority community organisations. Every effort is made in these events to accommodate the requirements of all individuals attending.

The overall view is that although attempts are made to involve individuals and organisations from black and ethnic minority communities success has been limited. We could and should do better.

It is our intention to review how we approach organisations and individuals to be involved in these events and develop a strategy or protocol for officers to follow.

Providing support to organisations

The Department through its Section 10 Grants Budget has the capacity to provide financial support to black and ethnic organisations whose aims are to promote the social welfare and social inclusion of North Lanarkshire residents. To date only one organisation, the "Asian Elderly Women's Group" operating from the Alexander Resource Centre in Coatbridge has made application and received funding.

2.4 Employment

- **Monitoring** – Ensuring that appropriate systems are in place to monitor the ethnicity of employees to ensure that there is no adverse impact of policies.
- **Training** – Has any training been provided to staff in connection with the general duty, e.g. has there been any changes to induction programmes and any in-house training programmes (please detail)? How informed and prepared are staff to access resources such as language line?

Employment

Monitoring

The Department does monitor recruitment in terms of ethnicity.

Training

Issues relating to Race Equality have been included in the most recent induction programme for new social work recruits.

The Department also on a regular basis runs Anti-Oppressive Practice training.

The Department has highlighted the need to the Corporate Working Group for more training and support material to be provided for staff in all frontline offices to be able to access Language Line.

2.5 Marketing and Corporate Image

Has your department updated any of its departmental literature or publications to reflect the new duty to promote race equality?

Marketing and Corporate Image

Key planning documents, such as the Community Care Plan are produced in different languages and readers advised that they are available. However it is acknowledged that we should be more informed in this process and involving organisations and individuals concerned about the most appropriate means of communicating such information.

The Department is undertaking an across the board audit of all its public information and literature. A working group is to be set up to consider all the issues. Among the considerations which will go into updating all of our literature will be the questions of:

- reflecting the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act
- reflecting the requirements of Race Equality legislation and policy
- assimilation of corporate livery and image as well as promoting an identity for the department/service.

All of this is taking place in the context of a Communications Strategy for the Department.

3. General Issues Comments

In this section there is an opportunity to highlight or draw to our attention any specific issues or comments which you may wish to make within your Departmental Action Plan. These may be points which have not been drawn out by the preceding sections but which you feel are relevant to the implementation of the Council's and your department's Race Equality Action Plan.

In Summary

The development of a Departmental working group has assisted the Department focus and be proactive around meeting the needs of the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000. The Department has an ongoing commitment to promote racial equality and develop culturally sensitive services.

It is our intention through the work of the Departmental Race Equality Working Group to carry out the actions proposed in this Departmental action plan. These are:

- Ensure that priority is given to identifying policies and functions relevant to the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 within the larger policy identification exercise being undertaken by Social Work.
- Improve the recording of ethnicity through the Social Work Information System by a retrospective exercise and training.
- Include actions from this action plan within the next Social Work Service Improvement Plan.
- Examine food related issues for service users including lunch club and meals on wheels provision.
- Gather and circulate information on specialist support services able to provide ethnically sensitive approaches in relation to family breakdown and domestic

violence.

- Ensure that frontline staff can access appropriate translation and interpreting services, in particular Language Line. Also that the availability of the service is also publicised.
- Examine our approach to major consultation exercises and implement best practice in relation to involving individuals and organisations from black and ethnic communities.
- Ensure that the Department's Communication Strategy reflects the need to promote race equality.

4. Action Plan Prepared By:

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**NLC SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT POLICIES AND FUNCTIONS
RELEVANT TO THE GENERAL DUTY**

1. Introduction

The Department has an extremely wide range of functions and policies that governs its activities. The exercise to identify and assess functions and policies relevant to promoting race equality has now been caught up in a much wider exercise to develop a comprehensive approach to re-examining policies in relation to a number of needs including:

- Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
- The Human Rights Act
- Requirements of the Care Commission

2. Our Approach

In approaching this task the Department recognises the significant scale of the exercise now required and is having to approach it in a much more structured manner. As a result the Department will only be able to provide an initial list of relevant functions and policies but does give a commitment to prioritise the needs of the Race Equality Scheme within the current extended exercise.

A Working Group is being established to carry out this task and is likely to work on a phased approach which assumes that all of these services have very basic elements of applicability of the RRA 2000 Act. The degree of relevance will now have to be assessed on a priority basis. It is envisaged that the full task could take up to 3 years to complete.

Our approach involves identifying key areas within our Service Plan (see below), which we see as relevant to the general duty to promote race equality. The scale and significance of the planned wider exercise means that each of these areas will be required to be “unpacked” to identify and assess the associated policies and functions to ensure compliance with the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and how they impact on the other issues mentioned above.

3. Our Initial List

Cross Cutting Issues:	Assessment and Care Management; Reception Services; Training; Public Information; Translation and Interpreting services; Quality Assurance; Complaints Procedure
Community Care:	Services to Older People; Services to other adult groups; Residential and Day Care Services;
Services to Children & Families:	Adoption & Fostering, Throughcare Services; Child Protection; Children’s Residential and Young People’s Support Units
Criminal Justice	Probation & Court Based Services, Community Services,
Social Inclusion	Services to Travelling People; Section 10 Grants; Asylum Seekers; Welfare Rights;