

## Consumer Focus Board

Paper 11.1

**Title:** Building a Diversity Scheme  
**Purpose:** For information  
**Date of meeting:** 8 June 2010  
**Responsible officer:** Philip Cullum  
**Prepared by:** Chris Rawlins  
**Attachments:** None

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### 1 Overview

- 1.1 The Equality Act 2010 received Royal Assent on 8 April 2010.
- 1.2 This short paper sets out how we plan to ensure compliance with the relevant parts of the Equality Act within the required timescales.

### 2 Action for the Board

- 2.1 To **note** developments since the last Board meeting.
- 2.2 To **note** the revised timetable as outlined below.

### 3 The key issues

- 3.1 The Equality Bill received Royal Assent in the wash-up period following dissolution of the last Parliament to become the Equalities Act 2010 (EQA 2010). The main provisions of the Bill as outlined in the March Board Paper are maintained in the Act.
- 3.2 The main parts of the Act on which we need to focus are:
  - 3.2.1 **Part 1:** The introduction of a public sector duty to consider socio-economic disadvantage in our policy work – effective 1 April 2011;
  - 3.2.2 **Part 5: Work:** The provisions with which all employers must be compliant across the breadth of their practices and policies – effective 1 October 2010;
  - 3.2.3 **Part 11:** A re-drawn public sector duty to promote the interests of people in the 6 defined groups – effective 1 April 2011.
- 3.3 **Part 1:** Given our specific duties to consider the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable consumers as set out in CEARA 2007, compliance with Part 1 is a relatively straightforward task for Consumer Focus. Chris is working with Jonathan Stearn to ensure that our definitions and outcomes are clear, and with Mark Steinmeyer to find the most effective means to build the requirements of Part 1 into our criteria for work

planning as we start to focus on the content of our Corporate Plan 2011-14 and our draft Annual Plan 2011-12.

- 3.4 **Part 5:** Compliance with Part 5 falls to HR. Clare Roach is leading on this aspect. When reviewing our policies and procedures, ACAS have been applying the criteria of EQA 2010 as if Part 5 were already in force.
- 3.5 **Part 11:** As Board members are already aware, we do not currently have a Scheme which covers the three existing strands of race, disability and gender. We will now build a Scheme which covers all 6 strands of EQA 2010.
- 3.6 At March Board we said that we would be engaging a consultant to help us build a Diversity Scheme. Given that Chris is unexpectedly back with us until the middle of June we have agreed to reverse this and Chris is leading on producing the Scheme.
- 3.7 Since last Board meeting we have continued to deliver compulsory Diversity Training across the whole of Consumer Focus, including Board members. HR have introduced Diversity and Equality Impact Assessments, covering all 6 strands, against which all of our HR policies and procedures are now assessed. Consumer Focus Wales has commissioned work to embed equality in policy work. Once complete in July, this will enable us to pull together a model for policy work across the whole of Consumer Focus. We have looked at the published Single Equalities Schemes of other organisations in order to derive a suitable format and draft content of our own Single Equalities Scheme. In addition, we have formed a Diversity Steering Group to provide content and to be a critical friend to the Scheme.
- 3.8 Chris is also in contact with the EHRC and we intend to draw heavily on their guidance as we produce the final Scheme.

#### **4 Proposal**

- 4.1 Things have become much clearer since EQA 2010 received Royal Assent. This, in turn, enables us to be much clearer on the timetable for our own work going forward. We thus propose the following revised timetable:
- 4.2 **For Board on 16 September:** A draft Scheme which sets out clearly our commitment and approach to diversity, together with a framework for presenting our work on the 6 strands, populated with as much detail as possible.
- 4.3 The draft Scheme will make clear the distinction between our role as an employer and our role as a policy body, and the different work we do under both headings. It will be clear about the new provisions that affect all employers from 1 October 2010 and how we will comply with these.
- 4.4 The draft Scheme will also be clear about the distance we have travelled and the journey on which we are on to lead us to the publication of our final Scheme. The draft Scheme will be published on 1 October 2010.
- 4.5 **For Board March 2011:** A final Scheme in which the framework of the draft Scheme is populated on the detail of how we will promote the interests of the 6 strands in the year 2011-12. The final Scheme will ensure set out our work under both the socio-economic disadvantage duty (Part 1) and the public sector duty (Part 11) and thus ensure full compliance with EQA 2010 as per the required timetable. The final Scheme will be published 1 April 2011.

## **5 Resources**

- 5.1 All of the above work is accommodated within existing resources.
- 5.2 We are grateful to Sukhvinder Kaur-Stubbs for continuing to work with/advise the executive on the development of the draft and final Schemes.

## **6 Next steps**

- 6.1 As above. A discussion of integrating our work on disadvantage into our priorities for 2011-12 will feature on the agenda for the All Boards' Meeting on 7 July 2010.