

Consumer Focus Board

Paper 8

Title: Single Equality Scheme
Purpose: For decision
Date of meeting: 30 March 2011
Responsible officer: Philip Cullum
Prepared by: Phillip Cullum and Susannah Hughes
Attachments: Consumer Focus Single Equality Scheme 2011-2013

1 Overview

- 1.1 Consumer Focus is like all other public bodies required by law to have an equality scheme, setting out our approach to equality issues along with an action plan for what we will do in the period ahead. In our case, this scheme needs to cover both how we operate as an organisation (e.g. our HR policies) and our substantive policy work (e.g. our design of projects and our policy lines).
- 1.2 In September 2010 the Board considered a draft single equality scheme in advance of the consultation process which would develop the complete scheme and action plan, with a view to bringing the final proposed scheme to the Board for decision in March 2011.
- 1.3 In October 2010 the government announced its proposals for the Public Bodies Bill and the abolition of Consumer Focus. In November 2010 the government announced that, in line with its commitment to removing unnecessary burdens on business, it would drop from the Equality Act the socio-economic duty for public bodies. The further development of the scheme has taken account of both of these factors. Nevertheless equality is core to who we are and how we work. Essentially, the proposed scheme will make us compliant with the new legislation, but beyond that we hope it will prove to be a useful and worthwhile living document.
- 1.4 Various colleagues contributed to the development of our work in this area and Sukhvinder Kaur Stubbs provided support throughout the process. Mark Steinmeyer did much of the drafting and improved our project planning processes to reflect the scheme. Susannah Hughes conducted an extremely useful review of other organisations' schemes. The HR team have moved things forward significantly on our HR policies. Lucy Yates and Jonathan Stearn contributed very useful thinking on disadvantage, vulnerability and sustainability. The groundbreaking work by Liz Withers and colleagues in Wales on integrating equality into policy should have a long-term impact in our organisation and beyond. We engaged all staff again in the consultation on the final draft and received a handful of further comments.
- 1.5 The final proposed scheme is attached. Once agreed by the Board, the scheme will be published and implemented with effect from 6 April 2011.

2 Action for the Board

- 2.1 The Board is asked to AGREE the Single Equality Scheme 2011-13