

**LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW**

**RACE EQUALITY SCHEME 2002-2005**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – YEAR 1  
PROGRESS REPORT**

**1 JUNE 2002 - 31 MAY 2003**

## **Summary Progress Report for Service Delivery**

### **Year 1 - Assessment, Priorities and Forward Plans for Service Delivery**

#### **Introduction:**

All the Departments of Harrow Council have undertaken an exercise, as required under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, to assess, prioritise and develop forward plans for action and development. The areas covered for Year 1 have been set out within the published Race Equality Scheme document.

The attached standard reporting formats have been used across all Departments. HCRE were consulted upon the use of this methodology and it was agreed that this would be the preliminary process for this first year.

The Heads of Service Group has led on this work. The issues identified have been researched, discussed and assessed by each of the Heads of Service involving as many others as possible. All of the proformas have, in addition, been discussed within that senior group to challenge and to progress the work identified within each Department.

#### **Year 1 Priorities**

The Year 1 priorities for each Department were identified in the scheme as:

##### **◆ Chief Executive's Department:**

Equal Opportunities Policy

Establishment of Local Strategic Partnership

Crime Reduction Strategy

##### **◆ Education:**

Schools Race Equality policies

Education Development Plan, and in particular, the following aspects:  
Advisory Team in School Development Services (SDS),  
Ethnic Minority Achievement and Traveller Service,  
Access & Development Service (also both in SDS)

##### **◆ Environmental Services**

Burial Service

CCTV

##### **◆ Housing:**

Homelessness

Housing allocations

Housing Management - Racial Harassment Policy

◆ **Social Services:**

Services for Older People

Children's Strategic Planning & Children in Need Services

A summary of progress for each of these areas is attached. Each area identified has been related to a specific aspect of the general and specific duty to promote race equality.

**Progress to Date**

The work in establishing priorities to concentrate on in Year 1 has already led to an increased awareness of the need for consultation and for proactive change to improve Harrow's service delivery to the black and ethnic minority communities.

There has been a large-scale consultation exercise in relation to the development and production of the Equal Opportunity Policy. Some areas which needed urgent development such as the appropriateness of the meals service for older people have been addressed as a matter of urgency.

There has already been some work on carrying out impact assessments in various services both in relation to the policy governing those services but also in relation to the actual service delivery. Some progress has already been made this year. However, this has not been a full year for implementation. There was a slower start than expected and it was some months before there was real clarity about the RES requirements. Given this slippage, the expectation is that these proformas will continue to be updated over the next few months and some areas of activity will continue into year 2 along with the new areas set out in the RES.

HCRE and other relevant partner organisations will be consulted on the full report. The involvement of partner organisations and comments from the first year exercise will help to inform the process for year 2. This will assist us greatly in achieving as much as possible and in further refining what work is required to maximise improvements to service delivery for the black and ethnic minority communities. It is clear that the RES is enabling the Council to adopt a more focused and concentrated approach to assuring racial equality.

**Amy Weir**  
**Lead Service Head**  
**For Race Equality Scheme**  
**March 2003**

## Year 1 - Summary Progress Report for Employment

### Introduction

The monitoring requirements under the employment specific duty of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 are detailed in Harrow's RES and the Employment Action Plan (appendix 3 of RES).

The Council has robust systems in place to monitor staff in post by race, gender and disability by paybands. The Council continues to monitor in its existing monitoring areas. In addition, some adjustments will need to be made to monitoring systems and processes to meet year 1 priorities for employment.

### Employment Action Plan – Year 1 Priorities

Year 1 Priority	Progress
Applicants for jobs distinguish between external and internal candidates	<p>The Council's recruitment application form has been revised to include a question, which will distinguish between internal and external candidates. The revised form will be operational from 01 April 2003.</p> <p>Amendments to applicant monitoring systems and processes will be required in order to capture data for internal and external candidates. Revised systems and processes for monitoring will be operational from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003.</p>
Types of grievance  Types of harassment complaints  Length of time it takes to hear complaints  Severity of sanctions	<p>Changes are required to be made to existing systems of recording and monitoring grievances, disciplinary investigations and hearings and complaints of harassment. Monitoring to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ethnicity of complainant, person allegation against, and panel</li> <li>- Date complaint lodged</li> <li>- length of time of investigation</li> <li>- length of time to hear complaint</li> <li>- Types of harassment complaint</li> <li>- Types of grievances</li> <li>- Outcome of grievance, disciplinary, harassment complaints</li> <li>- Severity of sanction</li> </ul> <p>Revised recording systems will be in place with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003.</p>
All leavers and reasons for leaving	<p>The current report showing all leavers with reasons for leaving will be amended to show ethnicity, gender and disability and will be broken down by departments. Amendments to existing reporting systems will be made as from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003.</p> <p>A revised exit interview process is currently under review. It is anticipated that a revised system will be in place in June 2003.</p>

## **Chief Executive's Department**

### **Personnel - Equal Opportunity Policy**

A review of existing policies was undertaken which included consultation with community groups and organisations and identified the need to develop a new equal opportunity policy to meet changes in legislative requirements e.g. Disability Discrimination Act, Race Relations Amendment Act etc and to incorporate service delivery and employment matters.

The Council's revised equal opportunity policy was approved by Cabinet in June 2002 following extensive consultation with Harrow's partners. The policy has been distributed to all staff, Council Members and partner organisations. Hard copies are available from Personnel sections and the policy is included in the Harrow Scheme for Pay and Conditions of Service and is available on the intranet. Translated versions and different formats of the policy are available on request.

Annual monitoring of the EOP will be reported to the Employees' Consultative Committee and will be published and made widely available. From the consultation undertaken, no adverse impact on ethnic minority groups was identified. Any adverse impact will be identified through monitoring and consultation.

### **Strategic Partnership Unit - Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy 2002/05**

The Harrow Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy and crime audit have been widely published and disseminated in hard copy and on the internet and intranet.

A series of consultation exercises on the strategy were undertaken by consultants (Crime Concern) with the local population including conferences and focus groups with organisations representing the interests of ethnic groups in the Borough. Consultation with the Community Consultation Forum, Strengthening Communities Strategy and at the Safer Harrow Conference was also undertaken.

The external consultants were managed by a planning and implementation group comprising members of the Council and police. This group ensured that no adverse impact arose from the process and that the views of ethnic groups were fully considered in developing the audit conclusions.

Regular reports on the progress of the strategy and objectives are made to the Safer Harrow Management Group. This Group will also undertake regular monitoring of the strategy.

### **Strategic Partnership Unit – Development of the Harrow Strategic Partnership (HSP)**

Consultation on the development of the HSP has been undertaken through the existing Partnership Steering Group of the Harrow Partnership. This includes representation from the Harrow Council for Racial Equality and the Harrow Association of Voluntary Service. The Strengthening Communities Scrutiny Sub Committee has also been kept updated on membership of the HSP. The HSP was launched in May 2003.

The Harrow Strategic Partnership Board and Executive Group will continually monitor its membership to ensure it is representative of the communities of Harrow and the involvement of black and ethnic minority groups in the HSP. The first annual report on the work of the HSP will be available in March 2004. If at any time the HSP Board has under representation from the BME communities, then the Board will address this issue for any possible negative impact according to the general duties.

## **Education Department**

### **Education Development Plan (EDP)**

Education services all aim to raise educational attainment in all Harrow schools, as set out in the Council's Education Development Plan. The functions considered are:

- the Advisory Team in School Development Services (SDS),
- the Ethnic Minority Achievement and Traveller Service
- the Access & Development Service (also both in SDS)..
- Schools' own Race Equality Policies - as they have the same objective as the EDP and schools are the direct providers of the service, which SDS supports.

The Education Service consulted widely on the content of the Education Development Plan, including open meetings, a student focus group and circulation of draft proposals to key partners.

The sources of evidence included Key Stage and GCSE results, attendance and exclusion data and targets, which are set and analysed on an annual basis according to a range of factors, including the ethnic background of pupils.

The outcomes are published in a booklet distributed to all schools. The core information is summarised in the annual Service Review which is widely disseminated to the major partner organisations, including HCRE, for comment. The feedback from this process contributes to updates of the Education Development Plan and other key planning documents in the Education Service. These documents are available on the Harrow web-site.

Some of the further action required as set out in the Education Development Plan is as follows:

- □ Continue to develop the role of the refugee co-ordinator and advocacy worker
- □ Disseminate good practice in supporting ethnic minority pupils at risk of exclusion and their families
- □ Identify schools where Black, African and Pakistani pupils achieve higher than average and provide opportunities for staff to share their practice with other schools.
- □ Evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the revised criteria for English language acquisition in relation to the effective targeting of support within schools and across the LEA.
- □ Further develop the 'Keeping Up With the Children' project to support parents and children from refugee communities.
- □ Continue to develop work with Black Caribbean pupils and families to understand their perceptions of the experience of schooling better and to support schools with planning to raise ethnic minority achievement where this is an issue.

## **Environmental Services Department**

### **Burials**

Legislation and rules approved by the Council for Multi – Faith Burial Service aims to ensure that no faiths are discriminated. Consultation via a survey of other London Boroughs has been undertaken and generally most other burial authorities operate in a similar manner to Harrow. Like Harrow most of the authorities that responded offered a section dedicated to people who practise the Islamic faith.

There is inequality of provision of a burial service to meet the needs of many religious groups in Harrow. Partnering arrangements with other boroughs may be needed.

The only faiths that are not catered for are people who practice Judaism; because they have their own facilities and make no demand of their local authority and people who practice the Hindu faith as it is their custom to be cremated. Harrow uses the Breakspear crematorium with the London Borough of Hillingdon as a joint venture.

Action plan for future work is as follows:

- ◆ Assessment of provision of a multi-faith burial service and potential improvement areas.
- ◆ Consultations with community groups
- ◆ Review Cemetery Rules. The Cemetery Rules will need rewriting to make them easier to understand and incorporate any changes in regulation identified through consultation
- ◆ Incorporate improvements or amendments identified from assessment and consultation
- ◆ Monitor effectiveness of improvements or amendments from information of take up, usage and user comments
- ◆ Review benchmark and statistical data to ensure that the cemetery service is aware of trends, which may effect provision of service.

### **CCTV**

The Council's code of practice for CCTV aims to ensure that there is no discriminating surveillance of targeted groups of people, provide a safer environment and to help tackle crime.

Monthly internal random checks of recordings are undertaken with no evidence of "targeting" of specific ethnic groups. From May 2003 monitoring will be computerised, which will allow data to be analysed by source, crime, ethnic group etc. existing historical written data will be 'back- loaded'.

The national code of practice guidance is currently being reviewed to address ethnicity. Harrow's code of practice will be amended accordingly.

Any adverse impact on ethnic groups will be identified after the analysis of monitoring data from the new computer software system, allowing for facial recognition. The system is installed but is not yet operational as information is still awaited in respect of complying with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act. Results will be reported in the annual public report on the Councils CCTV system in October 2003.

Action plan for future work is as follows:

- ◆ Training - Race awareness training for full time and “as and when” operators.
- ◆ Random Checks - Monthly checks of recordings to ensure no “targeting” of specific ethnic groups
- ◆ Computerisation of incident logs - Set up software and training of operators for Incident Management system
- ◆ Analysis of records - Analyse data to categorise source, crime ethnic groups etc and ‘back loading’ of historical written data



## **Housing Department**

### **Homelessness strategy including applications**

The Homelessness Strategy will be completed by July 2003 and will be available on the intranet and internet, translated versions and different formats of the strategy will be made available.

The Homelessness Forum and service users have been consulted in the development of the Strategy and will continue to input into the ongoing monitoring and assessment of the strategy's impact on service provision. The results of this and monitoring reports will be published in a newsletter for service users (Applicants' Newsletter) and on the intranet and internet.

Ethnic monitoring has been carried out in relation to homelessness applications / acceptances and the new Harrow Options model, to highlight whether different racial groups are accessing the various services we are providing.

Ethnic monitoring statistics for the Housing Advice service show that BME groups are able to access the service, but it is acknowledged that the present system will not be as effective as a service tailored to the needs of different groups within the community. A training programme for volunteers is being developed to engage volunteers from different racial groups in gaining CAB accreditation and then providing an outreach service to different racial groups.

In terms of homeless prevention, monitoring has highlighted a need for mediation to be targeted to young homeless females within Asian households.

The results of the consultation show that although a relatively small number of users require a translation / interpretation service, of those that do a majority are not satisfied with the service we provide, because of longer waiting times due to lack of availability of interpreters etc. Monitoring via questionnaires of reception waiting times, length of time taken for cases to be assessed, options accessed successfully etc., will be carried out on a regular basis.

Data on applications and lettings by ethnicity will also be included in the 2002/03 Needs and Supply Report, which will be reported as an information circular to the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Sub-Committee in September 2003.

Action plan for future work is as follows:

- ◆ Provide more information in reception area and in appointment letters
- ◆ Investigate translation requirements to identify new communities where interpretation needs may be higher than existing communities within the borough
- ◆ Investigate provision of corporate specialist interpretation service (through links with First Contact Best Value Review recommendations)
- ◆ Pre-translate key documents in accordance with requirements and ensure ongoing monitoring of service users to identify trends in language requirements
- ◆ Develop training programme for front line staff dealing with homelessness on equalities issues

## **Housing Department - Racial Harassment Policy**

The existing Racial Harassment Policy is being reviewed and updated in accordance with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and McPherson recommendations, to provide a clear statement of intent to demonstrate our commitment to tackling racial harassment. Consultation on the revised policy was carried out in May 2003 at an open meeting of the Multi Agency Forum (MAF); to which Tenant and Resident Associations were invited. The policy will be reported to Cabinet in autumn 2003 for approval.

Monitoring information on individual case details including assessment of any adverse impact on service provision are reported to MAF and the Racial Harassment sub-committee. Historically cases of racial harassment have been reported to Cabinet as an Information Circular. Consultation is currently in progress with Members to agree future reporting mechanisms. Results of monitoring and consultation will be published on the intranet and internet and in the tenants and residents' newsletter, Homing In.

The revised policy will be made available on the intranet and internet once it has been approved. Translated versions and different formats of the policy will be made available on request. Details of the revised policy will be included in the revised version of the Tenants' and Leaseholders' handbooks, which are provided to all new tenants and leaseholders.

## **Locata – to provide a choice based allocations approach for housing applicants, in partnership with other West London boroughs and Registered Social Landlords.**

A lengthy consultation process has been undertaken in the development of the scheme, with applicants, those on the Housing Register and staff. A recent survey of applicants highlighted that 76% felt the new scheme worked better than the old way of allocating properties through the points system.

Open days have been held to assist applicants with understanding the scheme, where information has been made available along with support and advice from officers.

Arrangements have been made to assess the impact of the new scheme on applicants after June 2003, once family sized units have been included in the scheme for a 6 month period. However, meaningful data will not be available on lettings and the success of the scheme until November 2003 (when the complete scheme has been in place for 1 year).

This assessment will highlight which particular groups may not be accessing the service. Policy and practice will then be developed to assist those groups in accessing the service. Training and support will also be offered.

Monitoring and consultation results will be published in the applicants' newsletter, along with information about areas for improvement highlighted through the impact assessment. The full results will also be included in the 2002/03 Needs and Supply Report, which will be reported as an information circular to the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Sub-Committee in September 2003. Consideration will also be given to publishing monitoring and consultation results in Harrow People, homing In and on the internet / intranet.

Locata is a pilot scheme and as such is being modified constantly to take account of information arising from monitoring and consultation. Measures will be put in place to mitigate any adverse impact of Locata, if there are found to be any, following the review that is due for November 2003.

## **Social Services Department**

### **Children & Families Service to Children in Need (CIN)**

The Children in Need function encompasses the Local Authority's duty under the 1989 Children Act to identify children in need of support or safeguarding. Children with disabilities are included in this duty but currently located with Adult Services. That function will be transferred to Children and Families by September 2003 and impact assessed in Year 3. The Department of Health's report Excellence not Excuses (2000) establishes clear standards for services for black and ethnic minority children and families; two further reports, Safeguarding Children (2002) and the Victoria Climbié inquiry (2003) add to this.

Arrangements are in place to monitor ethnicity of all CIN referrals. Ethnicity data is available for all Child Protection Register cases and 60% of Children in Need referrals. From 2003/04 data trends will be available for analysis and assessment of any adverse impact of policies and practices. Development of financial recording systems will allow capture of ethnicity data from which it will be possible to generate an expenditure indicator that can be assessed for potential adverse impact.

Consultation with all CIN staff/units via Excellence not Excuses Reviews began in November 2002. Consultation with the Children and Families Asian and Black communities consultation group established in October 2002 is ongoing and the group meets every 8 weeks. The Black Workers Group are also consulted at bi-monthly meetings and equality issues are always considered in joint working with Health, Education e.g. Area Child Protection Committee, Children and Young People's Mental Health Steering Group.

Initial analysis of data suggests an over-representation of referrals and placing of children on the Child Protection register are Black, African and Caribbean children, and an under-representation of Indian children which will be explored in Year 2. The overall ethnicity profile of children with disabilities indicates that this closely reflects the Harrow population; within that group there appears to be over-representation of Asian children with learning difficulties. This will also be explored in Year 3.

An annual report will be submitted to consultative working groups e.g. ACPC, Children and Young People's Mental health Steering Group.

The Children's Service Plan (Management Action Plan) is a rolling document. Key action on equalities including the implementation of the RES is already incorporated in the plan and further work needed to both establish assessment and respond to any adverse impact identified will be prioritised and added.

### **Community Care - Provide culturally appropriate meals to disabled/older people to assist them in living independently in their own home.**

Evidence has been gathered from community feedback including complaints. Most of the complaints concerned the lack of choice for non-vegetarians and/or delay in receiving the service once the individual had been assessed and qualified for the Asian meals service. This identified disproportionate waiting time for the service to older Asian people. There have also been references through the Community Consultative Forum. Delivery has been monitored through the ethnic recording and monitoring system and the number of meals delivered to Asian older people is not proportional to the total number of recipients of the service.

Consultation on the quality of alternative forms of Asian meals to establish whether the Council can deal with the discriminatory waiting list by providing more meals was undertaken. The consultation was based on the process of consumer feedback on the differing meal quality and involved Asian older people.

Consultation with Black and Asian Service users was conducted via the Community Consultation Forum, a one off Asian meals tasting session in February 2003, discussions by the Head of Community Care with individual community representatives who have expressed concerns about the delay in service delivery to Asian service users.

An initial impact assessment has demonstrated that the provision of the meals service does not fully meet the needs of Asian older people compared with other groups. This is based on available data on population, demand for and use of the service. Therefore the current arrangement has had an adverse impact as Asian older people who wait longer for a service and receive less choice than other groups.

The revised service is to be piloted, following this a decision will need to be made by Cabinet on the future provision of the service. This decision will be subject to formal consultation. Initially people receiving the revised alternative service will be written to setting out the reasons for the new service and their views on the service will be sought. Changes will also be reported to the Community Consultative Forum.

Further developments in the provision of the service have the potential to remove the discriminatory elements in access to service and reduce the adverse impact. It also has the potential to extend the choice of meals to other minority groups.

The Council is currently considering how to extend the meals service and choice of meals to other minority groups in particular the Asian Muslim Community and African and Black Caribbean communities resident in Harrow.