

Setting Objectives and Targets for Equality

Guidance for Service Managers

At Devon County Council we are committed to promoting and providing equality of opportunity for everyone, as expressed in our core organisational value 'Valuing Everyone' which aims to underpin everything we do.

However, good values alone will not ensure equality of opportunity in employment and service provision and therefore projects and plans need to be in place from the top to the bottom of the organisation to make sure we take action.

We do not expect every service area to have a separate 'equality action plan' or 'equality scheme', but we do expect every service area to include objectives and targets for equality within its service plan, and likewise for any relevant projects.

What is an 'objective' and a 'target'?

An **objective** is something which you plan to do or achieve. It may be part of ongoing service delivery ('business as usual') or improvements, or a one-off improvement initiative. It can be something very simple.

An objective may have a series of actions or tasks associated with it. A lead officer, who is responsible for achieving the objective, should be identified.

An objective should aim to be SMART:

- Specific - be clear and direct; not 'woolly'; follow plain English standards
- Measurable - set a measurable target
- Achievable - identify resources such as people or money to ensure it can be achieved
- Relevant - align to the overall values, aims and objectives of the organisation
- Time based - set a deadline which is achievable and aligned to corporate deadlines

A **target** is a level of performance which you aim to achieve or maintain and is usually quantitative – therefore, is numerically measurable. In some cases, it is difficult to set a quantitative target and therefore a broader desired **outcome** may be set, based upon something qualitative - for example, an improvement in perceptions.

Ideally, an **objective should have a target associated with it** and visa versa.

Some targets are set corporately; many are based upon Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) and are laid out in the Council's annual Performance Plan. When a service target is set, it should be in line with any corporate target.


Targets are set in the following way:

- establish baseline data
- benchmark (with community profiles, performance of others for example)
- set a meaningful and useful target that is achievable within the timeframe (usually one year)

Data on community profiles may be obtained from the website: www.devon.gov.uk > democracy and communities > people, or by contacting Corporate Information Services. Data may be obtained from research conducted by other organisations, please see under 'useful contacts' on the diversity web-pages: www.devon.gov.uk/diversity. Performance information may be obtained from the Council's Performance Management system SPAR.net or the annual Performance Plan: www.devon.gov.uk > democracy and community > improving services > performance management.

Please see the example of a service plan in Appendix 1.

How are objectives and targets set?

 From the top:

The Council's corporate equality programme 'Fair for All' sets out key objectives and targets over a three year period. Relevant objectives and targets are drawn from Fair for All to develop Directorate Equality Action Plans. You should then draw relevant objectives and targets from the directorate plan and incorporate them into the service plan.

It works in the same way as objectives and targets are set from the strategic plan to directorate plans to service plans. The reason why the equality programme 'Fair for All' is separate from the strategic plan is because we have legal duties to produce 'equality schemes'; the programme of work and level of detail needed is also too big to include in the strategic plan.

 From within the service:

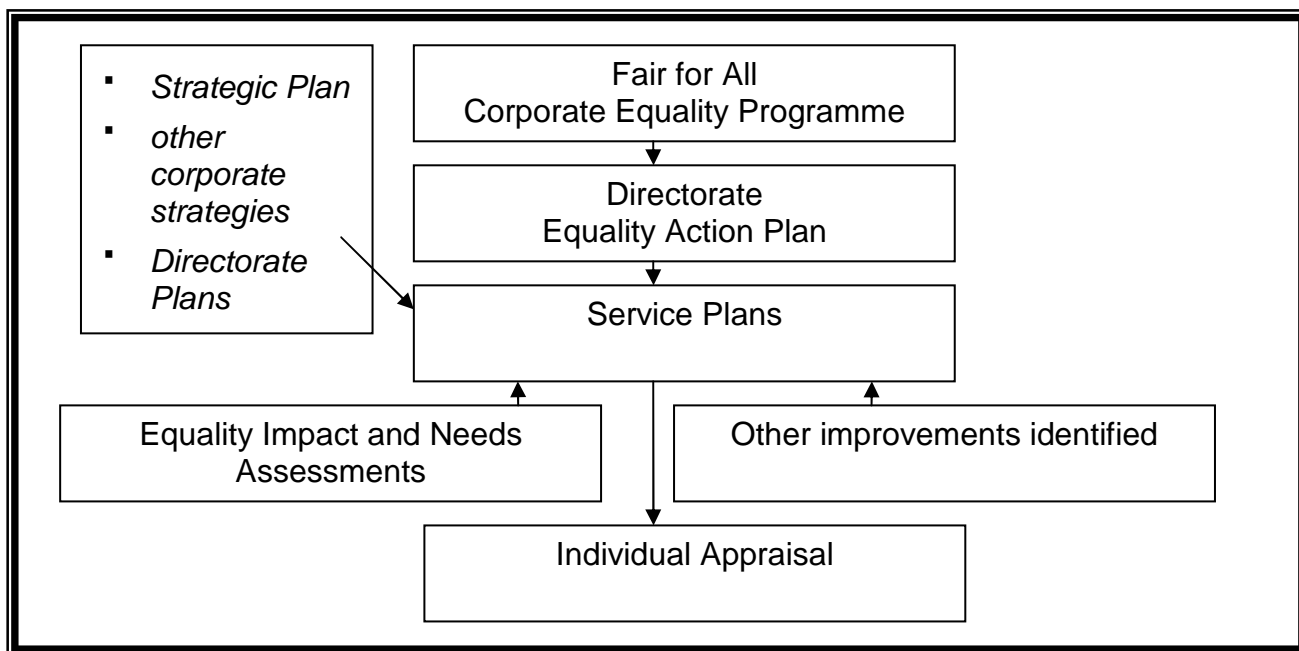
Equality Impact and Needs Assessments must be carried out on relevant policies and services. There is a three year rolling programme in place in addition to the requirement to carry out assessments on all new policies and proposals. If potential or actual negative impacts are identified, action must be taken to reduce or remove them. For example, through the assessment you may identify that your service is not reaching out to ethnic minority communities. As a result, you will set an objective to improve communication and

information for ethnic minority communities. In some cases you may be able to take immediate action, in other cases you may need to set a longer term objective, for example, to monitor the impact of a policy or to completely redesign the delivery of the service or location of the service. Longer term objectives should form part of the service plan. Areas for improvement may be identified in other ways, for example as a result of a complaint or a suggestion.

Information on Equality Impact and Needs Assessment guidance - www.devon.gov.uk/equality_impact_and_needs_assessment

Appraisal

Every year, individual objectives are set through the appraisal process. Critical equality objectives should be set on an individual basis; this may be a work activity or a development activity. We would like everyone to have at least one equality objective. Example of work based objectives: “Complete equality impact and needs assessment on service and policies by March 2007”, “Ensure all correspondence complies with customer service standards (plain English and appropriate font)”. Example of development based objectives: “Race, disability and sexual orientation awareness training during 2007”, “Attend conference/training on Human Rights and social care.”



Further information and advice

For further advice please contact your Directorate Equality Co-ordinator. If you do not know who this is please ask your line manager or email equality@devon.gov.uk or telephone 01392 382260.

Appendix 1 – Example Service Plan

Objective	Target/outcome	Deadline	Actions	Resources	Lead officer
Complete all service equality impact and needs assessments	Year 2 assessments 100% complete	April 2007	Identify staff to carry out assessments. Train staff. Carry out assessments. Build longer term objectives into business plan.	Within existing staff time.	J Smith
Improve diversity of staff	1.2% staff from ethnic minority communities. 9% staff with a disability.	April 2007	All appointing officers receive recruitment training and equality training on disability, sexual orientation, religion, gender, age and race. Ensure all job descriptions and person specifications follow best practice. Work with partners to provide work placement opportunities for people with disabilities and from ethnic minority communities.	Within existing staff time.	P Jones
Consult with 'hard to reach' communities on overall service	Hard to reach communities are involved in consultation processes and able to influence service delivery and policy.	Jan 2007	Work with equality co-ordinator, corporate consultation team and voluntary sector on planning consultation activities. Hold focus groups. Feed results into equality impact and needs assessments.	£1,000	M Green