



Compact for Havering

Code of Good Practice

Equality and Diversity
(previously the BME Code)

May 2010

supported by



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Introduction

This section should be read in conjunction with other Codes of Good Practice, in particular the Consultation, Information Sharing, Participation and Funding.

The purpose of this Code is to suggest ways to improve understanding and communication with people who have been excluded or marginalised in Havering. Addressing issues of exclusion has particular implications for the relationship between the public sector and the Voluntary and Community Sector that often provide services to the most vulnerable and hard to reach members of our community.

Delivering equality and fairness for everyone, regardless of their background, is a core value of our society, shared by the public sector and the third sector.

Equality is necessary for

- Individuals; so they can be treated fairly and realise their potential
- The economy; to use everyone's talents and abilities
- Society; to make it more cohesive and peaceful

Challenging economic times make this more important, not less: fairness is the best foundation for individual rights, a prosperous economy and a peaceful society. Over the last four decades, discrimination legislation and related policy has played an important role in helping to make Britain a more equal society. This has included duties on public bodies in relation to race, disability and gender equality. Much has been achieved, but there is still much to do, the new Equality Bill will bring all this legislation

This new Bill extends for instance, to age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment and pregnancy / maternity. An example would be where a public sector employer will need to make is recruitment and retention policies reflect potential pregnancy/maternity discrimination. Furthermore the Bill makes special mention for carers and breast-feeding mothers and from spring 2011 onwards public sector socio-economic (the study of the relationship between economic activity and social life.) and equality duty come into force. Greater attention to equalities will also need to be taken by public sector originations when they contract (commission) services i.e. to positively discriminate in favour of under represented communities.

It is hoped the Equality Bill will be passed by Parliament this sitting.

As part of this improvement process the new Equality and Human Rights Commission that came into force in October 2007 replaced the following organisations:

- Commission for Racial Equality (CRE)
- Disability Rights Commission (DRC)
- Equal Opportunities Commission (EDC)

The Equality and Human Rights Commission a statutory body for the first time has the responsibility to protect enforce and promote equality across the seven "protected" grounds - age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation and gender reassignment. At the heart of the Commission's mission is integration this means that it will act across all the areas it has responsibility for.

The cornerstone of its existence is the fact that there can be no fair society if age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation and transgender status remain as markers of disadvantage; and there can be no lasting or deep-rooted progress for disadvantaged groups unless we make a robust case for fairness which involves everyone.

This brings both new opportunities and new challenges to tackle. Both public and third sectors have roles to play in achieving the vision of equality and fairness for everyone. Working together on this agenda means we are stronger. The Compact provides the framework for us to do this.

The most successful services result from building partnerships between service providers, service users and statutory organisations. Although public and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations are taking steps to ensure that residents of the Borough are offered services to which they are entitled, there are some groups who are not reached or who choose not to be reached, in the usual way.

Although identified as 'hard to reach' by definition, with greater consideration these people can be contacted and included. With increased experience, improved working practices and expanded contact networks the number of hard to reach will decline. Service providers must ensure that the development of the capacity and confidence of individuals and communities is supported so that hard to reach groups can make informed choices about how their needs are met. Regular evaluation and monitoring processes should be in place, with feedback received from users used to improve the delivery of services.

The Compact for Havering (March 2004) notes that Voluntary and Community Organisations working inclusive communities empower service users through the involvement in the design and delivery of services; advocate community needs; help alleviate poverty for all communities.

Statutory bodies are being encouraged to develop a Single Equality Scheme (SES), these guidelines will embrace the ethos of the SES.

Priorities for action to involve all six strands of Equality and Diversity.

The six strands are:

- Race
- Disability
- Gender
- Age
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion or Belief

Together we will:

- prepare a list of all groups in the Borough and the services they deliver;
- work to develop the capacity and confidence of individuals and communities;
- explore opportunities for buying/using services from a wider range of community providers,
- take forward the Single Equality agenda in policy making and service delivery,
- promote events to increase greater understanding of all communities.
- review Public Sector policy and procedures to ensure that they do not discriminate against communities.
- actively involve all communities in the planning and delivery of services, assist the voluntary and community organisations to secure funding for social action initiatives;

Public Sector organisations will:

- implement and review its Single Equality Scheme.
- undertake equality impact assessments of all its policies and services.
- promote the need for consultation in the most appropriate format
- ensure that elected representatives, staff and volunteers are aware of the traditions, values and beliefs of their service users and develop those services accordingly, and
- provide training opportunities for staff to help them understand the unique nature of all communities.

Voluntary and community organisations will:

- work more closely together so that small or inexperienced groups will learn from more experienced groups.
- develop a more joined up approach to service provision.
- develop and promote the use of supportive networks and forums
- participate in capacity and confidence building opportunities
- open their buildings for community use;
- learn from others and share good practice;
- take up opportunities to build partnerships, work with each other, the Public Sector and other community groups to address community needs;
- participate in community consultations.
- have in place effective organisation and management processes and structures to deliver social action projects.

Guidelines on Good Practice

Involving the Hard to Reach

- bring services to the clients, and deliver them within an atmosphere of trust and respect.
- provide services which offer equality of opportunity for all, and respect for different cultures and ways of working.
- most successful services gain the support of the wider community, involve individuals from the target groups, and are embedded in local provision.
- try to build the confidence and capacity of individuals and groups within all communities to make informed choices about their environment.
- offer clients choices in your delivery.
- proper evaluation should be a fundamental part of your provision.
- give feedback on actions taken (if any) as a result of community participation.
- give feedback on why no actions have been taken as a result of community participation

Adapted from *Advice and Guidance for Hard to Reach Groups*, Employment Support Unit

Engaging with groups with varying cultural traditions

It is advisable to consider the following points.

Planning

- Be clear about why you wish to engage with groups, what is being done, what is expected of them and what is being offered so that they can consider how it meets their understanding and interests.
- involve representatives in the planning to take into accounts the needs and sensitivities of different communities.
- Consider:
 - the differences between and within communities
 - that it can be more effective to invite more than one representative to meetings on issues that effect the sector.

The time, the day, the place

Avoid major festival times as this may exclude some faith representatives. Regular days set aside by the faiths for worship are:

- a. the Sabbath (sacred to Jews and begins at sundown on Friday until sunset on Saturday).
 - b. Juma Prayer, (midday on Friday, a special time for Muslims)
 - c. Sunday (most Christians and some other faiths worship on Sunday and some meet to worship on a Saturday)
 - d. Ramadan (Muslims fast during this month)
 - e. 2 – 20th March (Bahais fast during this period)
 - f. Remember also that some faith groups pray at regular times of the day
- If you are holding a day-long event, it is helpful to set times and a location aside for those who wish to pray or meditate taking into consideration suitable washing facilities and separate accommodation for men and women.
 - A neutral venue should be selected unless the meeting is exclusively with those of a single faith group. This is also important if those without a faith will be involved.
 - The venue should also be fully compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act (e.g. Loop system).
 - For learning disability community information prepared in the appropriate format.
 - Are interpreters required (e.g. British Sign Language).
 - Take into account that people with disabilities may need the meeting/event to start at a later time.
 - If the meeting is during the school term, Parents need to be considered in terms of the school run.
 - Finally participants with carers need to be considered so that provision is made for their carers as well.

Catering requirement

The following points should be helpful:

- vegetarian food is likely to be acceptable to people of most faiths and tastes and should enable most people to share a meal (labelling dishes is a good idea) alcohol should not be used in the preparation of any food.
- some Hindus and Jains avoid eating egg, garlic, onions and for some root vegetables. Jewish people may ask for Kosher food
- don't be surprised if people enquire who has prepared the food and where it has been prepared.
- provide fruit juice, water or herbal teas (tea and coffee as stimulants are avoided by certain traditions).
- consider whether anyone will be fasting.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Involving and Communicating with Hard to Reach Communities

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT UNIT, 2000 – Advice and Guidance for Hard to Reach Groups (Summary Report)

The Compact Commission
77 Paradise Circus Queensway
Birmingham
B1 2DT
Email:- info@thecomcompact.org
T: 0121 237 5900
<http://www.thecomcompact.org.uk/>

Contact Details

This Code of Good Practice was revised in 2010 and it is the intention of partners to constantly improve on our shared good practice and if you would like to make any comments please contact

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The Consultation Sub-Group is open to all sections of the Community to join. And the more people who are part of it, the more effective we can be.

New members are welcome in order to begin the next phase of making the Compact work.

Please contact the Sub Group Chair, Olu Smith on 01708 434343 for further details at the above address or The Community Engagement Team at LBH on 01708 434343