

# **West Lothian Licensing Board**

## **Gender Equality Scheme**

**2007 – 2010**



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## **FOREWORD**

This document presents West Lothian Licensing Board's Gender Equality Scheme for 2007-2010 and reflects our commitment to fulfilling our statutory duties under legislation. The need for such a scheme reflects the sad reality that historically gender has driven substantial and harmful discrimination and lack of equal opportunity both in West Lothian and in Scotland more broadly. This Scheme is West Lothian Licensing Board's road map for breaking down these barriers and improving outcomes for women, men and transgender people.

Equality is relevant to us all. This Scheme, along with our Race Equality Scheme 2005-2008 and our Disability Equality Scheme 2006-2009, makes addressing discrimination and promoting equality everyone's core business. We want a West Lothian in which all people and communities have a say in their future and an equal opportunity for health, safety, education, fulfilling work, and a high quality of life.

Our challenge is to make this happen. Delivering on equality requires that we listen carefully, plan well, monitor effectively, evaluate intelligently and work together with community members. In developing this Scheme a number of West Lothian Council employees, community members and young people have provided significant and substantive input. The support from organisations and individuals from the community who took the time to consider the Scheme and action plan has been vital to the development of this Scheme.

## **ABOUT WEST LOTHIAN**

West Lothian is a developing area and has seen significant growth in population size. The population has doubled since the 1950s, and between 1991 and 2001 the area achieved the highest population growth of any area in Scotland. Estimates demonstrate that there were 161, 020 people living in the region in 2003, compared to 158, 714 in 2001. Over the next decade the population is expected to rise by 10.6%.

West Lothian is a diverse geographical area, with a mixture of communities, rural villages and urban towns, older burghs such as Bathgate and Linlithgow, as well as the new town of Livingston. We are a medium-sized authority covering 165 square miles, two-thirds of which is agricultural and one-tenth urban development.

West Lothian Licensing Board is central to the provision of services that affect people's everyday lives. How effectively we approach gender equality will determine our success at removing barriers faced by people accessing our services and at delivering services that promote equal opportunity for women and men. We therefore recognise that all the services provided by the board need to reflect consideration of the impact that they may have for gender equality. We aim to provide improved services that meet the needs and priorities of local communities.

### **Our Values**

West Lothian Council's mission statement and values were introduced and adopted in 1996 when West Lothian Council was formed. These values underpin both the work of the council and that of the licensing board and embody the way we carry out our business. Those values are:

- Focusing on customer need;
- Being honest, open and accountable;
- Providing equality of opportunities;
- Developing employees;
- Making best use of our resources; and
- Working in partnership.
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We are committed to fulfilling our obligations in the Act and will commit the necessary resources to ensure that this Gender Equality Scheme is delivered. The board will ensure that effective internal arrangements support compliance with the general and specific duties and monitor and review progress. West Licensing Board also recognises that this commitment extends to partnership working where that work is relevant to gender equality.

### **Equality of Opportunity**

West Lothian Licensing Board recognises that equality is a central feature of a modern quality service for a service provider and community partner. West Lothian Licensing Board is committed to working with the people and

communities of West Lothian to enhance the quality of life by providing, both directly and in partnership with others, a comprehensive range of quality and valued services that meet peoples needs and aspirations and which are delivered on the basis of fairness and equity.

### **Cultural Well-being**

We aim to create a culturally diverse and socially inclusive environment that promotes good relations between people from all backgrounds. We will create a place for all people to take up opportunities and to enjoy living and working locally.

### **Sharing the Vision**

The board recognises that local people share a desire to live in an area that provides employment, safety, health, good education and prosperity. The board also recognises that it must take active steps to ensure that all people can benefit from living in West Lothian and that no one is excluded locally.

This Gender Equality Scheme 2007-2010 plan will guide the work of staff and board members, supporting analysis and action on local issues and identifying the way in which our work impacts differently upon men, women and transgender people.

### **A Safer Community**

Improving the quality of life is a fundamental aim of West Lothian Licensing Board. By talking to our partner organisations, victims of gender-based crime can gain the necessary support and confidence to report incidents directly to the police. Alternatively the agencies will, with consent, report incidents on behalf of victims, anonymously if necessary. Agencies also provide confidential information and support to help people cope with the effects of crime and deal with their experiences.

### **CORPORATE WORKING GROUP ON EQUALITY**

In June 2002 West Lothian Council established a Corporate Working Group on Equality. The group is responsible for the strategic impact of equality initiatives and legislation and provides a forum for good practice. Specifically, the Group is responsible for the corporate implementation and monitoring of the Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes and their respective action plans. The Group was instrumental in the decisions on the Council's corporate gender equality objectives. West Lothian Licensing Board has taken account of the results of that consultation.

## **GENDER EQUALITY IN WEST LoTHIAN**

West Lothian Licensing Board has a key role to play in tackling discrimination and disadvantage to ensure that all communities, individuals and groups are treated with dignity and respect.

Equality benefits us all, not just those who currently experience particular disadvantage. Promoting equality and diversity will improve public services for everyone. Our aim is to make equality a central part of the way the board works, putting equality at the heart of policymaking, service delivery, regulation and enforcement.

We recognise that ongoing leadership and good practice on equality will help to change the wider social context of discrimination and prejudice. To contribute to this change, we will actively promote equality through the implementation of policies, procedures and work practices and will ensure that processes are in place to address inequality where it is found to exist.

The board will:

- Continue to consult with elected members, community groups and service users on our gender equality progress;
- Provide appropriate resources to support the implementation of initiatives and policies following from the implementation of our gender equality scheme;
- Provide equality training for all board members, which includes aspects specific to gender equality; and
- Provide information for service users and staff about gender equality initiatives and policies.

### **West Lothian Equality Policy Statement**

The board recognises and values the diverse range of talents, skills, experience and perspectives that exist within society; those qualities and attributes should be reflected in the planning and delivery of our services.

This policy statement outlines the board's commitment to provide services that are inclusive and accessible and to take measures to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and promote good relations between different groups both within and out with the workplace.

Central to the board's policy is the prevention of discrimination, victimisation and harassment against service users and staff on any grounds, but particularly in relation to:

- Sex, gender identity, race, disability, religion or belief, marital status, civil partnership status, age, language, social origin, employment status, sexual orientation, political belief, trade union membership or activity or responsibility for dependants.

## **PURPOSE OF OUR GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME**

The purpose of our Gender Equality Scheme is to:

- Explain our obligations under the Equality Act 2006 (Statutory Duties) (Scotland) Order 2007 and how we will meet them;
- List the policies and functions (see Annex 1) that have an impact on gender equality;
- Identify our priorities for the ongoing development of gender equality within the licensing board; and
- Empower our workforce, elected members and partners where applicable to meet the challenges set out in the Scheme and promote the mainstreaming of gender equality.

The Equality Act 2006 amended the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 to place a statutory duty on all public authorities in the UK, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; and
- Promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

To have due regard in practice means that the board must identify and act upon policies or functions that are deemed to be most relevant to gender equality.

The general duty on gender equality above is supported by a series of specific duties that outline how public authorities should achieve the general duty. The Scottish specific duties are:

- To prepare and publish a gender equality scheme, showing how it will meet its general and specific duties and setting out its gender equality objectives;
- To gather and use information on how the public authority's policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services;

- To consult stakeholders (i.e., staff, service users and others, including trade unions) and take account of relevant information in the development of our gender equality objectives;
- To assess the impact of current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality, and to have due regard to the results of those impact assessments;
- To implement the actions set out in this scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so;
- To report against the scheme every year and review the scheme at least every three years;

In addition the Gender Equality Duty incorporates a statutory duty for the board to pay due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and harassment towards transsexual staff in employment or vocational training.

Further legislation due to come into force December 2007 will outlaw discrimination in relation to access to goods, facilities and services for transsexual people.

## **GENDER EQUALITY – STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE**

The following section outlines the approach West Lothian Licensing Board has taken to identifying our gender equality priorities and how we intend to ensure that the intended outcomes are delivered. This process has enabled the board to identify our gender equality objectives.

### **Assessing Relevance**

The list of policies and functions identified as relevant to the general duty for gender equality are listed at Annex 1. The relevance assessment tool used can be found at Annex 2. Our list of functions and policies is a living document that will be subject to ongoing review at least annually.

The Clerk to the Licensing Board will have overall responsibility for ensuring that all new policies or functions are assessed for relevance.

### **Assessing Impact**

West Lothian Licensing Board propose to adopt an equality impact assessment process similar to that adopted by west Lothian Council. This process covers all six strands of equality. All functions and policies identified as relevant to gender equality will be subject to this process within a three year timescale; how this will be taken forward is identified within our Action Plan. Our impact assessments, focussing on gender, will include the following where necessary and appropriate:

- Agreement of key outcomes of the function or policy;
- Examination of relevant data and research in relation to gender within the function or policy;
- Assessment of the likely and intended impact of the function or policy;
- Identification of any adverse impact on gender equality;
- Consideration of alternatives to the current or proposed approach to the policy or function;
- Consultation with key stakeholders;
- Monitoring and review arrangements put in place; and
- Publication of our results.

### **Consulting on Impact**

West Lothian Licensing Board will continue to consult staff and services users on our Gender Equality Scheme, action plan and priorities and in particular will utilise West Lothian Council's existing links with men's, women's and transgender groups based in West Lothian.

### **Monitoring Impact**

It is anticipated that monitoring data will be available to the board following the implementation of actions related to gender equality impact assessments. Over time this will help to ensure that evidence-based decisions are taken in relation to gender equality priority areas for action. The data will be analysed and used to inform future progress reports and reviews of this scheme and to identify areas of priority that may require consideration separate from those issues identified within our action plan. Key data will be published as part of our annual report on gender equality.

### **Publishing Impact**

West Lothian Licensing Board is committed to governance undertaken with integrity and in the public interest. Our decision-making processes are therefore open, honest and accountable, involving and extending awareness of our activities. This is achieved through public performance reporting; we publish what we do and how well we do it. Developing, publishing and implementing the Gender Equality Scheme is one of these methods, ensuring we are accountable and inclusive.

The board will use existing methods of disseminating information on assessments, consultation and monitoring. Full reports of individual assessments or consultations will be available on request. Summaries of results will be published within three months of the completion of the full assessment and annually as part of our progress report on the Scheme. Results will be published through a number of methods and will be available to both staff and the public through our Intranet and Internet sites.

## **Training for Outcome**

Over the life of the scheme the board will deliver a mandatory programme of training on the Act and its responsibilities laid out in our Gender Equality Scheme. Different methods of training will be also be considered to meet the differing needs of elected members and staff in delivering on this work. This will draw together existing policies and good practice to increase skills and confidence.

Staff working within the licensing team have been issued with West Lothian Council's Fair Treatment at Work code of practice. This clearly sets out a range of unacceptable and acceptable standards of behaviour and responsibilities.

## **Organisational Leadership**

The Clerk to the Licensing Board is responsible for managing the operational implementation of gender equality actions and impact assessments relevant to the licensing service.

An annual report on progress will be produced and submitted to the Licensing board and will be published externally.

## **OUR GENDER EQUALITY OBJECTIVES**

Our objectives were identified through the assessment of relevance of our policies and functions to gender. West Lothian Licensing Board understands the importance of delivering outcomes in relation to our key objectives on gender equality. Below provides an outline of our objectives, however each has been broken down within our action plan with intended outcomes stated for each action. Our annual report on progress will include an overall assessment of progress on outcomes.

## **Impact Assessment**

The board understands the importance of identifying and eradicating whiting and unwitting discrimination from the services we provide and the policies and functions under which we operate.

All policies and functions identified with high priority to gender equality across all ten of our services will be impact assessed within the first year of the scheme. The results of our impact assessments will be published on our Intranet and Internet sites. A summary of all impact assessments completed annually will be published as part of our annual review of progress.

## **COMMENTS ON OUR GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME**

If you have any comments on the contents of our Gender Equality Scheme, or suggestions in relation to improvement, please contact the Clerk to the Licensing Board:

Geraldine McCann  
West Lothian Licensing Board  
West Lothian House  
Almondvale Boulevard  
Livingston  
EH54 6QG  
Tel: 01506 777221  
Email: [geraldine.mccann@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:geraldine.mccann@westlothian.gov.uk)

West Lothian Licensing Board wants members of the public to be able to make complaints and comments about our services so we can improve our services as a result of any feedback. However, if someone is not satisfied with the solution offered by the board, we will advise them of their right to make a complaint to the Equal Opportunities Commission, and after October 2007 the Commission for Equality and Human Rights in Scotland.

## **ANNEX 1 - WEST LOTHIAN LICENSING BOARD POLICIES AND FUNCTIONS RELEVANT TO GENDER EQUALITY**

The following list outlines the policies and functions identified as relevant to the general duty on gender equality within West Lothian. This list also represents the timetable for implementation of Equality Impact Assessments on policies identified as relevant.

### **High Priorities**

(Equality Impact Assessment work to be implemented by June 2008)

- Accessibility to Services
- Communication
- Training of Board Members
- Training of Staff

### **Medium Priorities**

(Equality Impact Assessment work to be implemented by June 2009)

- Site Inspections
- Implementation of Board Decisions
- Liaising with the Licensed Trade Association
- Hearings on Suspension Orders
- Hearings on Restrictions Orders

## ANNEX 2 - GENDER RELEVANCE ASSESSMENT TOOL

Discretion	Policy	Function or Policy	Which of the 2 aspects of the General Duty does it relate to?	
	Lead			
			1. Eliminating discrimination	
			2. Promoting equality of opportunity between women and men	
Is there evidence or reason to believe that men or women and transgender people could be differently affected? How much			Is there public concern about potential discriminatory practices?	Overall relevance
a) None	0		a) None	0
b) A little	1		b) a little	1
c) Some	2		c) some	2
d) A lot	3		d) a lot	3
				L = Low
				M = Medium
				H = High

### ANNEX 3 - West Lothian Licensing Board Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan 2007 – 2010

Objective	Key task	Outcome	Monitoring and Review Arrangements	Target date	Lead
1. Audit implementation of the Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan	Devise an audit procedure to ensure effective implementation of actions within the Plan	Identifiable progress will be made year-on-year against each action within the plan.	The Clerk to the Licensing Board will review action plan progress and effectiveness of the audit process on an annual basis	July 2007 and ongoing	Clerk to the Licensing Board
2. Identification of the Clerk's responsibilities regarding the implementation of the Gender Equality Scheme	The requirement to promote gender equality as part of competencies against which managers are assessed	Increase emphasis given to gender issues within all decision making of the board	Effectiveness will be assessed on an annual basis	Sept 2007 and ongoing	Clerk to the Licensing Board
3. Raise the standard of gender equality	The scheme will be reviewed every three years. Annual report on progress published each year	A relevant and robust Scheme, with identifiable progress each year	Annual Report on progress to the Licensing Board	29 June 2008, 2009 and 2010	Licensing Board

Objective	Key task	Outcome	Monitoring and Review Arrangements	Target date	Lead
4. Raise public awareness of the scheme	Scheme and progress reports available on Licensing Board's website. Available in alternative formats or hard copy on request	Increased awareness of the board's commitment to eliminate discrimination	N/A	29 June 2007 and ongoing	Clerk to the Licensing Board
5. Identify relevant policies and functions to gender equality	All new policies and functions to be assessed for relevance to gender equality	All functions and policies identified as relevant included in timetable for completion of equality impact assessments	Clerk to inform Licensing Board of relevance assessment outcomes	29 June 2007 and ongoing	Clerk to the Licensing Board
6. Consult men, women and transgender people on our gender equality priorities and actions	Identify existing consultation mechanisms and mainstream gender equality issues within them.	Men, women and transgender people are enabled to impact upon our gender equality actions and objectives	Outcomes of consultation sessions to be fed into annual progress reports	December 2007	Clerk to the Licensing Board
7. Assess the likely impact of existing and proposed policies on the promotion of gender equality	Undertake equality impact assessments as outlined within the gender equality impact assessment timetable	Impact on gender equality identified on all functions and policies and actions put in place to eradicate any potential adverse impact	Clerk to the Licensing board to update Licensing Board on progress against timetable	See Gender Equality Impact Assessment Timetable	See Gender Equality Impact Assessment Timetable

Objective	Key task	Outcome	Monitoring and Review Arrangements	Target date	Lead
8. Communicate results of monitoring, assessments and consultations	Update workforce and community based focus group members of impact assessment, monitoring and consultation results via collation and dissemination of information  Publish on Intranet and Internet	Increased accessibility of information on gender equality	Reviewed as part of annual report on progress	December 2007	Clerk to the Licensing Board
9. Monitor customer comments and complaints by gender to identify any discrimination in the delivery of board services	Develop and implement equality monitoring process	Provision of services without discrimination related to gender equality	Complaints or comments related to gender will be monitored on a bi-annual basis	December 2007, and ongoing	Clerk to the Licensing Board