



CHESHIRE

Equality Scheme Cheshire Probation Area 2009-2012

version 8 - 20/03/09

Terms and abbreviations used

ABPO	Association of Black Probation Officers	LCJB	Local Criminal Justice Board (Criminal Justice Agencies that cover the same geographical area: CPS, HMCS, Police, Probation, Youth Offending)
ACO	Assistant Chief Officer		
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic people	LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
CHAWREC	Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Racial Equality Council	LDUs	Local Delivery Units
CJS	Criminal Justice System	NOMS	National Offender Management Service
CO	Chief Officer	NPS	National Probation Service
CMESN	Cheshire Minority Staff Network	OMs	Offender Managers (Probation Officers and Probation Service Officers)
CPA	Cheshire Probation Area (the Area)	OMUs	Offender Manager Units
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service	OASys	Offender Assessment System
DES	Disability Equality Duty	PSR	Pre-sentence Reports
DRR	Drug Rehabilitation Requirement	RDG	Regional Diversity Group
EDAG	Equality and Diversity Action Group	RLN	Regional Language Network
EFQM	European Foundation for Quality Management	ROM	Regional Offender Manager (on behalf of NOMS)
ETE	Employment, Training and Education	RRAA	Race Relations (Amendment) Act
HMCS	Her Majesty's Court Services	RRAP	Regional Reducing Re-offending Action Plan
HMIP	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation	SLA	Service Level Agreement (between the ROM and the Area)
HMP	Her Majesty's Prison		
HR	Human Resources	SPO	Senior Probation Officer
GED	Gender Equality Duty	SMT	Strategic Management Team
GES	Gender Equality Scheme	TPO	Trainee Probation Officer
RED	Race Equality Duty	WME	White Minority Ethnic people
RES	Race Equality Scheme	YOI	Young Offenders' Institute
HO	Home Office	YOT	Youth Offending Team

Contents

Foreword

Summary

- Section 1 - Cheshire Probation Area - Who we are and what we do
- Section 2 - The (Single) Equality Scheme – How it was developed and what it covers
 - 2.1 Legal responsibilities
 - 2.1.1 Disability equality
 - 2.1.2 Gender equality
 - 2.1.3 Race equality
 - 2.1.4 The new equality strands
 - 2.1.5 Human Rights
- Section 3 - Training in relation to the equality duties
- Section 3 - Impact assessment, Monitoring and Consultation
- Section 4 - Cheshire Probation Area Functions
- Section 5 - Cheshire Probation Area Action Plan 2009-2012

Appendices

1. Cheshire, Halton and Warrington map of the area
2. Key Processes
3. List of Stakeholders
4. Race Equality Employment Duties
5. Equality Impact Assessment Procedures
6. Legislative Duties
7. 16 + 1 ethnic monitoring data form

Foreword

Inequalities within the Criminal Justice System have led to disproportionate outcomes for people in some groups. This is not only unfair and unlawful but has an impact on our work, on community confidence and our ability to be responsive to the needs of all local communities. Monitoring the outcome of what we do is critical to understanding how the Area is performing. This supports meeting targets, working with staff and supporting offenders to comply with the sentences imposed by the courts.

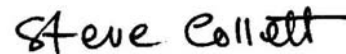
Monitoring our performance across all the diversity strands can help us to understand and begin to address barriers that may prevent offender compliance or staff from working effectively. This is a cost-effective way of providing services; of getting it right first time. This enables us to provide effective and targeted support that can lead to improvements in performance.

Writing an Equality Scheme, that is compliant with our legal duties, is not the destination but a marker along our journey to embed equality and anti-discriminatory practice into everything we do. This vision must be led and supported from the top of the organisation, with effective mechanisms, structures, processes and resources to do this work. This is the first single Equality Scheme for Cheshire Probation Area, it does however, have its foundations in existing structures and practices that the Area has put in place to promote race, disability and gender equality. This Scheme focuses on both service delivery and employment practice extending beyond the three duties of race, disability and gender to begin to consider the other diversity strands of faith, sexual orientation and age. This Scheme is about demonstrating how we are continuously improving to ensure that we can work effectively and fairly with everyone, and in this we will also begin to consider the issue of Human Rights legislation and the impact of this on our work.

We are pleased to present this new Equality Scheme that shows the work we will be doing over the next three years to build on existing good practice, to identify inequalities and take action to reduce and remove unfair and disproportionate outcomes.



LESLIE ROBINSON
BOARD CHAIR



STEVE COLLETT
CHIEF OFFICER

Summary

This Scheme is written for a wide audience and therefore a context about the work that we do is provided in the first section, with an overview of the geographical, staff and service user population. A glossary of terms and acronyms that we use is included on the inside front cover of the Scheme.

Section 2 gives some details about how since 2002 we have been working to promote race, disability and gender equality, highlighted in the three existing equality schemes that are replaced by this single Equality Scheme. This Section details the evidence that we have, and the mechanisms we have put in place to identify and address equalities, in relation to both service delivery and employment practice. It also shows the structures and processes that we have established so we can ensure that data is analysed, inequalities are identified and measures put in place to address it. Within this Section we also show how we are working to meet the specific duties under the race, disability and gender general equality duties. Where there are clear compliance gaps these are identified, reflected in the action plan, and will be addressed during the first year of this scheme.

This section also shows that we are beginning to determine how to monitor and gather evidence around performance in relation to new diversity strands -age, sexual orientation and religion/belief - being included in our equality scheme for the first time. There are existing legal requirements on the employment and goods and services law but no duty to promote equality as yet, however, this is proposed in the new Equality Bill currently before Parliament. In addition, we begin to reflect in this Section on how we can address the impact of our work in relation to Human Rights legislation.

Section 3 relates to the specific training duties which originated in the race equality legislation but relates to all the diversity strands. Section 4 highlights work that we are doing around impact assessment, monitoring and consultation in relation to the race equality duty but which reflects other equality duties to monitor the impact of an organisation's work, including in relation to service users and staff.

The Area Functions - what we do - and the relevance of those functions to the duties to promote equality, is highlighted in Section 5. This Section links to appendix 5 that shows the policies under their function headings and both their relevance to the duty, and the tool for determining this with the proposed year for reviewing them. Section 6 is the action plan that reflects the priorities the Area has agreed for 2009-2012. These are:

- to continue to improve the monitoring of performance data in relation to the diversity strands;
- to improve performance through improving access to service delivery and employment practice;
- ensuring we address gaps in meeting the legal requirements of the equality duties;
- addressing national priorities, e.g. improving services for women offenders.

Section 1 – Who we are and what we do

Who we are

Cheshire Probation Area (the Area) is part of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and covers a wide geographical area including West Cheshire & Chester, East Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Unitary Authorities (see map at appendix 1). It is one of 42 Probation Areas mirroring the same boundaries as the Police Authorities and the Crown Prosecution Service. Its statutory aims are:

- ☑ protection of the public;
- ☑ reduction in re-offending;
- ☑ proper punishment of offenders;
- ☑ rehabilitation of offenders; and
- ☑ ensuring offenders' awareness of the effects of crime on victims of crime and the public.

The business priorities for the Service and the Area are:

Public Protection: Risk assessment quality, learning from Serious Further Offences (SFOs), Parole Reports, etc.

Service Delivery: Offender Management, Interventions, compliance and enforcement.

Managing People: Workforce planning, staff development, employee relations and reducing sickness absence.

Diversity: Ensuring compliance with equality legislation.

Business Development – Development of local commissioning, Best Value, Value for Money, Unit Costs.

These were key when reviewing and prioritising actions to meet the requirements of the Equality Duties.

What we do

Cheshire Probation Area, as a key criminal justice agency, plays an integral part in working directly with, and having an influence on, work with offenders. Other key criminal justice partners are: Police, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), HM Court Services, Youth Offending Teams (YOTS) and HM Prison Service.

The Area is a law enforcement agency delivering community orders, and supervising and working with offenders according to the terms set by the Court and Parole Board.

The headquarters of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) is based in the Ministry of Justice, from where the Director General answers directly to Ministers. The 42 Probation Areas deliver NOMS' business, aims and objectives in local areas and by doing so are directly responding and working to central government aims, specifically:

Aim 3: To ensure the effective delivery of justice;

Aim 4: To deliver custodial and community sentences to reduce re-offending and protect the public;

Aim 7: To support strong and active communities in which people from all ethnic backgrounds are valued and participate on equal terms.

Within the Area, at any one time, nearly 4,050 offenders are subject through the courts to community sentences or are on post-release licenses from prisons and supervised in the community; in addition staff prepare approximately 3,500 court reports (reports submitted to assist sentencing) for Magistrates' and Crown Courts. (Appendix 2 shows the 'Key Processes' of The Area.) The majority of offenders, approximately 90%, are men. Approximately 30% of offenders are under 25 years of age; and 6% over 50 years of age. 18% have a disability. In relation to ethnicity over 93% of offenders are White British; 3.5% from Black and Asian groups, and the remainder White offenders who are not British.

CPA aims to ensure that all services – to victims, offenders, the public and stakeholders (see Appendix 3) – are designed and delivered with a focus on individual need and the needs of the diverse communities served. Cheshire has approximately 3% BME people within the population and there is an increasing population of eastern European people in Cheshire. The largest ethnic minority is Gypsies and Travellers.

The Area works with offenders from across the whole geographical area, aiming to provide a fair and equitable service that meets individual needs. The Area has six offices where offenders report for supervision, to attend Accredited Programmes (group work) and other work related to addressing their offending behaviour. Many Unpaid Work (Community Payback) offices are at the same sites. The Area has 2 Approved Premises and staff also work out of the 3 Crown and 6 Magistrates' Courts. A number of other staff are seconded to work in the Prison Service in HMP Risley, HMP/YOI Styal and HMYOI Thorn Cross, and with the Youth Offending Teams.

The Area also has a statutory duty to work with those victims of sexual or violent offences where the offender is sentenced to 12 months imprisonment or more. The purpose of this contact is to keep each victim informed of the various key stages of the prisoner's sentence, and to seek their views, in relation to the impact upon them, of the offence. The opportunity is offered for the victim to voice concerns and contribute to proposals relating to the offender's eventual release. This may include arrangements for the victim's protection.

In addition to the work outlined above, the Area is an employer of approximately 400 staff, of whom over 70% are female, 5% have a disability, 3% are WME, 2.1% are BME with nearly 50% of staff over 45 years of age.

The Area also purchases and commissions goods, facilities and services.

Our Vision

Aims

- To comply with our legal equality duties;
- To work with partners and stakeholders, both internal and external, to progress the work identified in this scheme;
- To continue to develop our involvement and consultation panels to become critical friends;
- To improve our monitoring and develop processes to identify and address adverse impact;
- To mainstream equality into all our work;
- To be recognised as a fair employer providing equitable services and outcomes for everyone with whom we work.

Responsibility and accountability for equality and diversity work

The Chief Officer and Board are ultimately accountable for ensuring that the Area has a compliant Scheme. The Assistant Chief Officer (Interventions, Equality and Diversity) has strategic lead for Equality and Diversity, ensures that all services and processes are in place to take this work forward, and monitors and progresses actions in the scheme.

The Diversity Panel provides a strategic steer, monitors and oversees equality work within the Area and reports back to the wider Board. The Diversity Panel is chaired by the Board Member with Diversity responsibility. Its membership comprises the ACO (Equality and Diversity), a second Board Member, the HR and Staff Development Manager, the Diversity Manager, union representatives, the Director of CHAWREC and a representative from the local Disability Federation. The Diversity Panel reports quarterly to the Board on progress against the Area's equality schemes. From April 2009, this will be the (Single) Equality Scheme 2009 - 2012.

The Area Equality and Diversity Action Group (EDAG) takes its steer from the Diversity Panel and reports to it. EDAG meets quarterly to review and progress equality and diversity work including the work identified in the equality schemes and the SLA diversity grids. EDAG is chaired by the ACO (Interventions, Equality and Diversity) and has representation from all functions across the Area as well as the Diversity Manager and representation from the BME, disabled and LGB groups of staff.

Section 2 – Developing the (Single) Equality Scheme

This section is split into 2 parts. Part 2.1 lists the legal responsibilities and ends with how we developed this Scheme. Part 2.2 also relates to the legal duties to promote race, disability and gender equality and covers the general and specific duties. This shows what progress the Area is making in relation to these duties across both service delivery and employment practice. It also shows where we are now in relation to monitoring with reference to the equality duties and in relation to age, sexual orientation and religion or belief.

2.1 Legal responsibilities

As a public authority we have legal responsibilities on the grounds of race, disability and gender legislation to promote equality and to tackle discrimination. We have to consider these in everything we do. Writing and publishing an equality scheme and action plan is one of several specific duties public authorities must do to show how they will meet legal requirements under the equality duties.

The Area already had 3 equality schemes in place (RES, GES, DES) and in developing this single equality scheme. We are extending this to three new areas of equality (age, religion or belief and sexual orientation), plus the issue of human rights.

The Area already has legal duties for these diversity strands under law in relation to employment and for goods, services and facilities (except for age). However, the proposed Equality Bill is likely to address those gaps, not covered by the existing equality duties. These new strands are reflected in this (Single) Equality Scheme where relevant and will become more significant over the life of the Scheme and beyond.

The requirements of each equality duty are shown below. Each duty has been given a number which allows us to show in our action plan which actions relate to which requirements.

We must pay due regard to the following requirements of the Race Equality Duty (RED):

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination;
2. Promote equality of opportunity;
3. Promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

We must pay due regard to the following requirements of the Disability Equality Duty (DED):

4. Eliminate unlawful discrimination;
5. Eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disabilities;
6. Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and others;
7. Take steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities, even where that involves treating them more favourably than others;
8. Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
9. Encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

We must pay due regard to the following requirements of the Gender Equality Duty (GED):

10. Eliminate unlawful sex discrimination;
 11. Eliminate unlawful harassment;
 12. Promote equality of opportunity between men and women.
- The requirements to eliminate unlawful sex discrimination and harassment also include discrimination and harassment on the basis of gender reassignment.

In relation to the other strands, where relevant within the action plan, we will use the following number to show relevance to promoting equality in relation to Age (13), Faith (14) Sexual Orientation (15) and Human Rights (16).

What we did

In developing our (single) Equality Scheme we considered priorities in the existing Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes and the Areas Diversity Strategy. This work and how it has assisted the development of this Scheme is shown below. We also considered the quarterly and annual reviews of the Strategy and Schemes as well as a range of existing evidence; of good practice as well as differential outcomes for different groups. The evidence included surveys (with staff, service users and others) and audits that showed outcomes in relation to different ethnic groups, for BME offenders (case files and PSRs). Considering all of this material gave us an up to date picture of our position, providing the basis for this draft Scheme.

This Scheme was discussed at the Diversity Panel that also considered priorities for the action plan. The action plan was drawn up with the involvement and in consultation with staff at EDAG, including disabled staff. The scheme and action plan was discussed at SMT and adopted by the Board on 27 March 2009.

2.1.1 Disability Equality

The current position

Service delivery

Over the last year the Area has put together an action plan to improve levels of disability monitoring. This has resulted in an increase from 30% in April 2008 to 97% in December 2008. When writing and making proposals in court reports, staff ask offenders - using the social model of disability approach - what the barriers could be to carrying out a sentence. This helps to determine what needs to be put in place, e.g. interpreting, child-care or any other reasonable adjustment. At induction and at every 16 week progress review, staff also check for barriers to ensure there is nothing that is getting in the way of the offender completing his/her sentence.

Monitoring the disability of offenders has identified that 84% of offenders currently state they do not have a disability. Out of the 16% (507 people) who say they have a disability:

- the largest number is in relation to mental illness (32%) either on its own or combined with other disabilities;
- 14% have reduced mobility;
- 9% have reduced physical capacity;
- 6% are dyslexic; and,
- 4.3% have learning difficulties.

The Area will now focus on identifying barriers and what support and services are required.

In relation to eliminating discrimination and harassment across all strands, offenders are told at induction that this type of behaviour is unacceptable. Complaints are monitored and addressed and learning identified to improve processes and address inequalities.

Employment Practice

Monitoring levels suggest that only 5% of staff have a disability, yet recent staff surveys suggest that over 10% of staff say they have a disability: Out of this group, 11% say they feel they cannot disclose it and 16% say they have not told the Area. Work is being undertaken with the staff Access group to see what barriers there may be to staff confidence in declaring a disability and asking for reasonable adjustments to be made. In addition, research is being carried out with staff and managers to identify any barriers that might exist within the supervision and appraisal process.

A reasonable adjustment process has been in place for three years. This has recently been reviewed with disabled staff (including the Access group) and will be finalised in March 2009 and launched to staff. Training was provided to managers in April 2008 (from a social model of disabilities perspective) to give managers greater understanding and greater confidence to assist staff with disabilities to obtain appropriate support to do their job.

In addition, managers are having dyslexia awareness training from the British Dyslexia Association. Staff will also get mental health training during 2009.

The Area has a Dignity at Work procedure for staff that includes specific reference to eliminating harassment and bullying in relation to all six strands, including against trans people. All new staff are told about this at the staff induction and existing staff have had the opportunity to discuss this at team meetings. Posters advising staff about the procedures and how to get support have been publicly displayed throughout the Area.

The recruitment and selection procedure is being reviewed in

particular in relation to disability and the two ticks commitment (Positive about Disability).

Involving disabled people in developing the scheme

The original Disability Equality Scheme 2006-2009 and the actions were drawn up in consultation with the 'Access' group, the group for staff with disabilities (covering a range of impairments). In addition the chair of the staff 'Access' group is a member of EDAG and so is part of the group that monitors the progress of the actions and quality assures impact assessments.

A number of external disability groups and organisations were also consulted and involved in pulling together the original action plan. Some of these organisations are run by disabled people whilst others are run for disabled people. In addition the Area Diversity Panel has a representative of Cheshire Disability Federation (of/for disabled people) who was involved in drawing up the scheme and action plan.

Over the next 3 years we will be looking to involve more disabled people in identifying outcomes and actions.

Our priorities over the next three years in relation to disability equality are:

- Maintain the current disability monitoring level for offenders at 97% to be able to identify and address adverse impact;
- Increase confidence of disabled staff to state they have a disability and get appropriate reasonable adjustments made;
- Improve access to information for offenders;
- Develop an effective external Disability Panel for involvement and consultation;
- Provide guidance and signposts to services for staff working with offenders having mental health problems.

2.1.2 Gender Equality

The current position

Service delivery

There are key differences that need to be taken into account in working with women compared with male offenders. The national picture of women's experiences of the Criminal Justice System indicates differential treatment as follows:

- A 144% increase in sentenced female prison receptions between 1992 and 2002, compared with a 31% increase of men;
- A 196% increase of female prison receptions between those years compared with a 52% increase for men;
- 54% of women convicted of an offence in 1998 had no previous convictions and only 7% had been convicted on ten or more previous occasions compared with 37% and 18% of men.

The impact of imprisonment is more detrimental for women:

- An estimated 8000 children a year have their living arrangements affected because of the mother's imprisonment; only 25% of mothers said their children were being cared for by the children's father compared with 92% of fathers.
- With only five prisons for women nationally, with one in Cheshire, women prisoners are more likely to be imprisoned a long way from home.
- Psychiatric morbidity is more prevalent among women prisoners than men. Self-harming was a lot more prevalent in women prisoners (32%) than men (17%).

Being able to monitor outcomes in relation to gender enables the Area to identify and address disproportionality in both employment practice and service delivery see the SLA Diversity Grid (page 20). Very useful data is coming out that can help the Area to target resources to improve outcomes. The Area is currently working to a comprehensive action plan to improve service delivery to women offenders and will be conducting a review of the response to domestic abuse issues to determine how effectively we are working with both our perpetrators and victims.

Employment Practice

The Area has a long record of monitoring in relation to gender. The Area has over 70% female employees (compared to the service user profile of over 80% male offenders). This replicates the national picture of an under representation of male staff, and the Area will be considering what steps can be taken to address this. Nationally, the balance of male to female staff changes when moving higher of the organisation, with more male staff represented in senior positions. 52% of chief officers are women.

A number of male and female staff work part-time. Vouchers are available to all eligible staff to gain some tax relief with relevance to childcare.

The Area in accordance with circular No.4/2005 from the National Negotiating Council (NNC) for the Probation services implemented the new agreement on pay and conditions of service. The Circular set out the jointly negotiated proposals which sought to provide for improved levels of remuneration over time, as well as moving towards a harmonised and common set of pay and conditions for all employees covered by the NNC.

The salary scheme provides for a fair, transparent and consistent pay and conditions structure, based on the principles of equality. This has now been implemented in Cheshire with the completion of Job Evaluation. Where male and females do same and similar jobs they receive the same pay.

The Area does not yet have guidance in place in relation to better supporting trans service users, or trans staff in the workplace. Although some work has been done regionally this has not been adopted because national guidance was anticipated, this has not been forthcoming and the Area will address this during 2009/2011.

Developing the Scheme in relation to the gender equality duties

The Area's first Gender Equality Scheme in 2007 invited staff, including trade unions, to identify what they felt the key gender equality issues were in relation to service delivery and employment. Research was also undertaken to identify service delivery inequalities from a range of sources including staff and organisations like the Fawcett Society.

The draft of that Scheme was circulated to all staff including the staff network groups, stakeholders, partners and key agencies (see appendix 3). Comments from that consultation were included in the published Scheme.

Our priorities over the next 3 years in relation to gender equality are:

- Progressing the Action Plan to improve Services to Women Offenders;
- Identifying barriers in relation to recruitment and selection of male staff in the Area currently under 30%
- Conducting a review of the Area's response to domestic abuse.

2.1.3 Race Equality

The current position

Service delivery

The national picture of BME offenders' experiences in the Criminal Justice System indicates differential treatment as follows:

- BME groups make up 26% of the prison population compared to 9% in the general population; with similar patterns at different stages of other Criminal Justice processes;
- Black people are 7 times more likely and Asian people twice more likely to be stopped and searched;
- BME people more likely to be arrested, cautioned, prosecuted;
- BME people less likely to get bail;
- BME people much more likely to get longer sentences for similar offences;
- 44% BME people more likely to be detained under the Mental Health Act, and more likely to get drugs and Electro-Convulsive Therapy (ECT) than psychotherapy and counselling.

BME offenders make up fewer than 3.5% of our case load. This compares to 3% in the general population of Cheshire, Halton and Warrington. This suggests no significant disproportionality, although monitoring indicates that a much higher percentage of BME offenders go to custody (57%) than White offenders (21%) and WME offenders (15%). Over the last 2 years the development of the SLA (Diversity Grid page 20) and the addition, in 2008 of the monitoring of sentence proposals and sentence outcomes in PSRs is helping us to identify where there may be negative disproportionality in relation to race, gender and disability.

This will help us to remove barriers for different groups and target resources to improve performance. This is proving a useful and effective tool to identify how equality links to performance.

The Area also carries out a range of audits and surveys looking at the outcomes of its work on different groups with whom it works. The Area also reviews PSRs and case files of BME (black minority ethnic) and WME (white minority ethnic) offenders to identify good practice to emulate and negative impact to address. This has led to changes in practice and highlighting of good practice.

Employment practice

BME staff are 2.1% of the workforce, roughly in line with geographical representation. The staff network (CMESN) helps the Area identify improvements for employment practice and service delivery as well as providing support to staff. Staff surveys enable the Area to identify any disproportionality in relation to outcomes for BME staff. The Area has duties in relation to race equality to monitor the outcomes, and analysis of this data is shown below, in addition to gender and disability.

From 2009 EDAG will receive a 6 monthly report on employment monitoring outcomes (in relation to race, gender and disability) to be able to advise on actions to promote equality and address adverse impact. Figures will be published annually, available on the Area website.

A staff survey was recently carried out on data showing outcomes across ethnicity, disability, gender and sexual orientation. The analysis of this data will help us to see what work the Area needs to do to ensure staff across all groups are

monitored and feel supported to do their jobs effectively. At the moment, systems are in place to monitor most but not all the employment functions listed in the specific race, equality employment, duty by ethnicity, disability and gender. The Area will ensure that this monitoring is extended to at least the listed duties and progressively to sexual orientation, age and religion/belief. The monitoring is currently as follows:

- *The numbers of staff in post by ethnicity, see appendix 4;*
- *Applicants for jobs and the outcome of recruitment exercises.* In addition, the Area is about to revise its recruitment and selection procedure to reflect the Equality Impact Assessment and will involve and consult with staff in drawing this up. The Area will work towards continuing to improve its image as an employer that values diversity and equality and shows the Area as a good place to work.
- *involvement in grievance, capability and harassment procedures and subjects of disciplinary proceedings.* There are some gaps in monitoring capability and this will be addressed in 2009. There is no evidence of unfairness or disproportionality in relation to ethnicity for these areas of work and the action plan shows what we will do to monitor and address where there are inequalities;
- *the results of performance appraisal procedures* to ensure that they are effectively equality proofed; Research is currently being concluded within the Area in relation to this work on all staff groups including BME and disabled staff.

The results of this research will help to inform future work around appraisal procedures and actions identified will be highlighted in the Review in 2010;

- *dismissals and other reasons for leaving.* The Area undertakes exit interviews however these are not mandatory and many choose not to complete it. The Area will consider what it can do to increase take up of this monitoring. In terms of sexual orientation and religion/belief, we recognise there is a need to begin discussions about monitoring these strands with staff. This is a sensitive issue and will need discussion before attempting to carry out this monitoring. This will be considered in EDAG during the life of the Scheme.
- *access to training and take-up of training courses,* including those undertaken as identified as part of their performance appraisal. A new training database has been commissioned but is not yet in place. There has been an increase in mandatory training to which all staff attended who were eligible by job role. There is no accurate data to identify disproportionality, but there is no evidence to suggest inequalities at this stage. This monitoring gap will be addressed in 2009/10.

Developing the scheme in relation to the race equality duties

In developing the 2008-2011 three year Race Equality Scheme the Area undertook a number of consultation exercises to identify actions. In addition, quarterly and annual reviews of the 2005-2008 Scheme with EDAG and the Diversity Panel identified progress and barriers and these helped to inform the development of actions for the new 2008-2011 three year Race Equality Scheme

The CHAWREC BME consultation panel was involved in determining actions through reviewing what the Area had already achieved since the last Scheme was written. The BME Panel provided written feedback and suggested a number of new actions, all of which were subsequently included in the final version of the scheme and action plan.

Our priorities in relation to race equality over the next three years are:

- To continue to monitor employment practices (as per race equality duty) and analyse to identify and address any disproportionality;
- To further develop the SLA (Diversity Grid) as an effective process to promote equality whilst improving performance;
- To put the RMO interventions in place for staff to have an effective and consistent tool to challenge offenders who are racially motivated;
- To provide effective training for staff to do this work;
- To review on a quarterly basis the employment statistics in relation to race equality;
- To find out whether any staff carrying out impact assessments need training to do this;
- To continue to provide the mandatory challenging discrimination training to all staff to increase the confidence of staff.

2.1.4 The new equality strands

The following three diversity strands age, religion and belief and sexual orientation, are new aspects of work that we are including for the first time in the equality scheme

Age Equality

Where we are now

Service delivery

The Area works only with offenders aged 18 and over (and some 17 year olds by negotiation with local youth offending services). We collect information on the ages of offenders.

We currently monitor our work in relation to age, through the SLA (Diversity Grid) in two distinct groups, over 26 years of age and under 25 years of age. We will consider during the life of this scheme the need to extend this further.

We recognise our responsibilities under the legislation on child welfare including the Children Act 1989 and the particular duty under the Children Act 2004 to ensure, together with other relevant agencies, that our functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Employment Practice

The Area maintains records of the age of employees but we do not produce regular breakdowns of employment outcomes. During the three years of this scheme we will begin to consider further the impact of age on employment practice and recruitment in particular. In relation to age the Area will over the life of this Scheme add this data to identify and address disproportionality. The Area's Dignity at Work procedures applies across all strands, including age.

Sexual orientation equality

Where we are now

Service delivery

We do not ask offenders to disclose their sexual orientation; however, this information may be sought from offenders at any stage on a voluntary basis.

In connection with our developing work around homophobic hate crime we are aware that under reporting is a key issue. The Area is working with Criminal Justice partners and the Cheshire Domestic Abuse Partnership to increase the confidence of victims from all minority groups (including people who are disabled, men LGB&T and BME people) to feel that services are fair for them. The Area is conducting a review of its response to domestic abuse, which will include gathering information in relation to 'same sex' domestic abuse.

Employment practice

We do not currently hold information about employees' sexual orientation. In 2008 for the first time the Area included questions about this in the staff survey. This question was included in consultation with the staff LGBT group that both supports staff and helps to improve service delivery and employment practice in relation to LGBT people. The survey reported that 70% of respondents said they were heterosexual. Out of the other 30%, 4% said they were lesbian, gay, and bi-sexual, 28% preferred not to say or refused to say. In addition, the staff survey asked staff if they were LGB, whether they were 'out' at work, 57% said no and 14% preferred not to say. The Area will be working closely with the LGBT staff group to increase confidence of those staff to feel they can be 'out' at work. Again, the Area's Dignity at Work procedures applies to this strand.

Religion or belief equality

Where are we now

Service delivery

The Area monitors the faith of an offender at court report stage. This information allows offender managers to ensure that offenders' practical, spiritual and moral needs are considered (if required and where proportionate and relevant) whilst undertaking their community order. This is particularly relevant in relation to arranging appointments to Unpaid Work and for offenders in approved premises. However, this data is not used currently to produce statistical reports.

We recognise that members from faith communities may be victims of crimes because of their faith and this may include religiously aggravated incidents. We recognise the particular issues for Muslim offenders and will collate data in relation to faith and identify whether there are any disproportionality to address. We have a large number of Unpaid Work beneficiaries from all the faith communities. The Area has just put a revised racist incident procedure in place and this appears to be very effective with a number of racist incidents identified and addressed effectively at the point of occurring. This data is monitored and analysed to ensure learning can be identified.

Employment Practices

The Area does not currently keep information on the religion or belief of employees or applicants for employment. We recognise that faith or belief may give rise to unfairness or discrimination in the recruitment and selection process.

We will consider during the life of this scheme whether and if so how we should monitor faith of staff. Again, the Area's Dignity at Work procedure applies to this strand.

2.1.5 Human Rights

Much of the Human Rights conventions has direct applicability to the work of probation. For public authorities, such as Cheshire Probation Area, the Human Rights Act makes it a legal duty for its practices and procedures to be compatible with convention rights. The Area will consider during the life of the scheme whether any work needs to be done in relation to this.

Section 3 Training staff in connection with the general and specific duties (race, gender and disability)

Most staff that need it have been trained to carry out impact assessments. This will be reviewed in 2009. In addition, the Diversity Manager provides support to staff to do this work.

All managers who interview for jobs are given training in anti-discriminatory practice for recruitment and selection. This includes understanding of diversity, discrimination and race equality duties. Staff are also currently having "challenging discrimination training", beginning with managers, SMT and Board members.

HR staff receive information about their responsibilities to monitor outcomes in relation to the equality duties and receive regular updates and training as part of their continuing professional development as HR Officers.

All new staff have a session with the Area Diversity Manager who ensures they are provided with clear guidance about behaviours, rights and responsibilities. All staff are asked to think about and state how they will promote equality in their role. Staff are also provided with summary leaflets about the equality schemes and the anti-bullying and harassment procedures. Board members on a Regional basis get training on equality and diversity, and in Cheshire have also received challenging discrimination training.

All staff receive regular updates about work that the Area is doing in relation to equality and diversity work and progress on the Equality Schemes. Staff get information through a variety of different ways, including in the staff newsletter, team briefs and team meetings.

Section 4 Impact Assessment, Monitoring and Consultation

This part of the Scheme also includes progress in relation to the specific race equality duties; however, the Area looks at impact assessment and monitoring on a wider basis than just race equality.

Impact assessment

Assessing arrangements for consulting on functions and policies

The Area's impact assessment procedures show the arrangements for assessing the likely impact of its functions, policies, practices and procedures in relation to promoting race, disability and gender equality. This is shown at appendix 6.

The Area functions have been divided into 7 broad categories:

1. Pre-trial and court services;
2. Offender management;
3. Interventions;
4. Support services;
5. Working in partnership;
6. Procurement of goods, facilities and services; and,
7. Strategy and policy.

The functions and Area policies and procedures were assessed for their relevance to the race equality duty in 2003, since when the Area has been carrying out impact assessments on new and existing policies on a 3 year schedule. This will continue.

There is a list of policies shown at appendix 6 shown under their function headings. In addition to the ongoing schedule of impact assessments, over the next three years the Area will be prioritising policy reviews in relation to the 'gateway' policies (where offenders and staff first encounter the Service), as these have been assessed as the most relevant to the equality duties and the most critical to the organisation getting it right.

Monitoring of policies for adverse impact

The Area has duties to monitor, gather and use information on how its policies and practices on employment practice and service delivery could impact on gender, race and disability equality. The Area recognizes that monitoring is critical to identify adverse impact and considering how to address it. Monitoring is also critical to show progress and target actions when reviewing schemes and in developing future schemes. In assessing policies and functions for their relevance to the duties to promote equality, there is recognition that with some there is a greater relevance to the one or other specific duty and that this varies. One example of this is in writing court reports where currently evidence suggests higher relevance to race equality. This may change over time as monitoring evolves and we have more evidence in relation to the impact of our work across the different groups.

Arrangements for the monitoring of Area policies for any negative or adverse impact on promoting race equality

The Area has an impact assessment procedure in place that is used for all policies and procedures across all six strands (appendix 5). Assessing the likely impact and putting monitoring in place where there is discretion, decision making and subjectivity, the critical opportunities where discrimination can

take place, is part of the process for impact assessing policies and procedures. The Area is always seeking to improve it and we know there is work still to be done.

Impact assessments are recognised as the responsibility of SMT. Impact assessments on policies and policy reviews are undertaken by policy authors who are accountable to SMT. The Area will assess during 2009 if there are training needs for staff carrying out impact assessments.

The Area is continuously seeking to improve monitoring. Monitoring outcomes for much of the work is in place for ethnicity, sex, disability and age, and can assist the Area in identifying any inequalities and in considering how to address it. Some of this work is carried out in EDAG in relation to the SLA, with a report to the Diversity Panel and Board. From 2009, the Area will review employment monitoring data quarterly at EDAG.

The Area carries out Equality Impact Assessment and often puts monitoring in place as a result of Equality Impact Assessment. There is a need however to improve processes to review the outcomes of the monitoring and what, if any, impact has been had in practice. This will be taken forward in 2009 at EDAG.

The Area produces a large range of monitoring data that can assist staff when carrying out impact assessments. In addition to having data relating to Area practice, the Area is part of a regional approach to incorporating diversity issues into the Service Level Agreement (SLA) (see below) that the Area has with the Regional Offender Manager (ROM). The continuous development of more effective systems and processes to ensure this has direct outcomes in the Area's work will be a specific focus from 2009 onwards.

Monitoring across a number of functions

The Area has an SLA with the Regional Offender Manager to deliver specific services across a number of key service delivery areas. Amongst these are:

- Proposals (proposals about sentences made by staff in court reports) and Disposals (Sentencing decisions by the courts)
- Enforcement and compliance of court orders (sentences)
- Accredited Programmes
- Work with Victims
- Drug Intervention Work
- Basic Skills and employment (Skills for Life)
- Unpaid Work completions

In 2006 the Diversity Manager was part of a small group that looked at the critical opportunities for discrimination in these aspects of work, and monitoring was set up across all five Probation Areas / Trust in the North West region - Cheshire, Cumbria, Lancashire, Merseyside and Greater Manchester to identify outcomes in relation to ethnicity, age and race. Over a two year period the data has become increasingly reliable, including for disability, which was added in 2008. Disproportionality can now be analysed from the data and actions put in place to address it.

Across the Region we added the WME* category to identify outcomes for an increasing number of service users for whom there was no relevant category identified in the 16+1** headings in the census. had been not relevant. This data is becoming available and is showing useful outcomes. Any disproportionality can be identified and is compared against outcomes for white British and BME offenders, and actions agreed aimed at addressing inequalities.

*WME - White minority ethnic people e.g. East European people ** 16+1 headings - see appendix 8

The SLA (Diversity Grid) has enabled the Areas to identify that a lower proportion of women are completing DRRs. This has led to a decision to investigate further to find out how women can be assisted to comply.

Data from this is reviewed through EDAG, which makes recommendations to SMT as to how this could be addressed, including suggestions of further work to be undertaken.

Once the diversity element of the SLA is sufficiently embedded into practice and working effectively, further monitoring measures will be developed to enable the Areas to monitor how fairly our services are delivered against other national and performance targets

A recent review of the SLA (Diversity Grid) showed that under 25 year old white males were less likely to comply with their Community Orders (sentences in the community) compared to over 26 year olds. SMT is considering putting mentors in place to support them to comply as this has been effective in increasing compliance with Accredited Programmes for this age group. This will be monitored to see if it achieves its purpose and improves compliance rates.

Consultation

There are two formal external consultation panels to which the Area can draw on. One is run by CHAWREC for BME people and the other is a disability forum via a local disability group. The Area has worked with the BME panel many times since 2005 on a number of policies and pieces of work critical and relevant to race equality e.g. 'Working with Racially Motivated it Offenders' and involved them in drawing up the race equality scheme in May 2008, that helped to inform this equality scheme.

The disability panel has not yet worked with the Area but during the first year of this scheme will become involved in reviewing and developing further actions for years two and three.

In addition, staff in all the Area staff networks (BME, disabled, LGB staff groups) are represented on EDAG and so are involved in developing and reviewing schemes and the impact assessment process. The unions and all staff are consulted on new and revised policies and procedures.

Publishing the results of impact assessment and consultations

The Area publishes a community newsletter and an overview of the results of assessments and consultations are a regular feature. This newsletter is sent to all voluntary organisations including BME organisations, disability and other minority groups, the local Race Equality Council, other criminal justice and other partner agencies. The Area is considering extending this list to include public libraries after this suggestion was made by the CHAWREC BME panel.

A Notification of the publication of this (single) Equality Scheme and of the impact assessments on the web-site will be made via community and staff newsletters.

The Area has published the recently updated impact assessment process and template on the website and copies of impact assessments will also be published on the website from April 2009. All staff can view on the staff intranet the impact assessment of each policy and procedure, along with the monitoring systems that the Area will use to identify, and use as the basis, to address any negative impact.

Ensuring public access to this information and services provided

The newsletter and all Area publications state that copies will be made available in different languages and formats on request. The Area website is fully accessible for users of assistive technology.

Summaries of this Scheme will be published, and copies available to all staff and included in the staff induction pack. Copies will also be sent out to all stakeholders, with an article included about this in the Area's staff newsletter and the community newsletter.

The Area provides translation and interpreting provision where required to service users and is currently improving how this service is provided by adding telephone interpreting, which will particularly assist Unpaid Work and work within Approved Premises.

In addition, the Area is currently reviewing communication with service users to ensure it is clear and unambiguous. This will also improve access to information when documents are translated.

The Area uses a variety of ways to ensure that surveys are accessible. One example is of using pictorial images in asking offenders about their experiences of being supervised.

Section 5 Cheshire Probation Area Functions

This part gives you a brief summary of our functions (what we do). The action plan shows what we will aim to achieve over the next 3 years for each of our functions in relation to meeting the equality duties. We have defined 7 broad functions that cover the work that we do.

1. Pre-trial and court services

This is where offenders first encounter the Probation Service. So this is a critical part of the Service in relation to equality issues as decisions here could have a profound impact on offenders.

Offender Managers prepare court reports (pre-sentence reports PSRs). These reports can be either an oral report on the day, a fast delivery report completed between one and five days or a full report taking up to 15 days to complete. The type of report is determined by the offence and the level of risk of the offender.

Offender managers make proposals in PSRs to assist magistrates and judges when sentencing. To do this they assess the offenders' risk of re-conviction and risk of serious harm to the public via an assessment screening tool OASys. At the same time offender managers also check what other needs offenders may have that could prevent them successfully completing the sentence of the court. These could include childcare, religious or cultural needs, disability, language issues Etc.

Proposals made by Offender Managers and the sentence of the court is monitored through the SLA (Diversity Grid) as there is national research on disproportional outcomes for BME offenders. Monitoring has so far identified further work to determine how to address the adverse impact identified.

Offender Management

Local Delivery Units

All offenders are allocated an offender manager to supervise them through their community or custodial sentence. Offender managers are responsible for assessing and managing the risk posed, identifying and ensuring the provision of interventions and enforcing any non-compliance.

Compliance and Enforcement is partly covered by the SLA and key decisions such as the issue of whether absences are acceptable or not is monitored to identify whether there is any disproportionality in outcomes across ethnicity, gender, disability and age. The issue of Breach is also within the SLA. There is no evidence of disproportionality however Compliance and Enforcement will continue to be monitored and data analysed to ensure adverse impact can be identified and addressed.

Taken from recent offender Survey - Best bit of Supervision

- To stop re-offending
- Not having to reintegrate into society by myself
- Doing Basic Skills because I didn't do GCSEs in school and want to get some
- Getting help with a job and helping me sort my life out
- Thinking about how to deal with problems instead of

Worst bits of supervision

- Not being allowed total freedom to make my own decisions
- Time consuming
- Emotional
- Getting up Sunday Morning
- Appointments weren't long enough

3. Interventions**Accredited Programmes**

Offenders may be required to attend an accredited group work programme as part of a Community Order. These programmes have been developed to address and work with offenders to change their entrenched offending behaviour.

The Accredited Programme team aim to support people through the programmes and focus is on what they can do and address barriers preventing them (Social Model). e.g. use mentors sensitively to address literacy needs and put reasonable adjustments in place where appropriate.

A female on Think First was unable to attend one module because of genuine childcare problems. This was accepted as an acceptable absence and the missing module was covered on an individual basis.

Unpaid Work (Community Payback)

Offenders may be sentenced to carry out between 40-300 hours

offending

This includes the full range of faith groups in Cheshire, as well as BME and disability groups.

The Area carries out beneficiary surveys to identify the level of satisfaction. This work is also monitored through the SLA to identify and address any disproportionality.

An example of good UPW race equality practice in the 6-monthly race equality audit was identified. An Unpaid Work BME service user was asked whether or not he felt he could work in a group where he was the only BME person. He was told that racist behaviour is not tolerated and would be addressed if UPW were told about it or if they observed it. The offender manager checked at different points during the order and at end of order. The man said he'd felt supported and everything had been fine.

Last year a white British offender given an unpaid work sentence refused, in a racially abusive manner to work at a local mosque and the UPW supervisor made it clear that racist abuse was unacceptable as was his refusal to work at the Mosque. The Supervisor talked to him about this but the offender continued to refuse and was sent off site for this non-compliance issue to be addressed via the Offender Manager. The supervisor then talked this through with the rest of the UPW work group explaining that the Area would

of Unpaid Work in the community. Charities, Voluntary and Community organisations may be the beneficiaries of this work.

Mentors

The Area has a well-established large pool of volunteers recruited from the local area, of whom 7% are BME people. These volunteer staff provide an invaluable service to offenders and Offender Managers by providing an extra level of support where vulnerability has been identified, e.g. literacy levels for

offenders on Accredited Programmes. They are also key to assisting in offenders to comply with some of the demands of their Sentence and will be delivering part of a new Specified Activity aimed at offenders who are in breach of their Requirements.

Employment, Training and Education (ETE)

This aims to get offenders into sustainable employment. This is the beginning of what can be quite a long journey for offenders. Staff focus generally on getting offenders into mainstream education provision or where they will attend local colleges and local training providers. Training and education gives them the skills to become more employable, e.g. social skills such as turning up on time, dressing appropriately, through to specialised training courses to get/boost opportunities for jobs. Skills for Life fits into this, e.g. provision of basic literacy and numeracy skills. The Area is currently negotiating customer service qualifications for offenders.

Approved Premises (Hostels)

Cheshire has two approved premises providing accommodation for 22 male residents - in total - aged 18 years and over.

not tolerate racist behaviour and that the Area would deal with this seriously.

A deaf offender in the approved premises had British Sign Language (BSL) interpreting provided to ensure he was able to understand and could also be understood

residence as part of a Community Order or Licence following release from prison.

Comments taken from Approved Premises Survey

- I've stopped re-offending myself (because of the courses)
- If I have problems I can talk to the staff
- I feel I am treated with contempt
- Every member of staff has been great with me
- It's a long time since I've been given a compliment and your staff have done so

There are no approved premises in Cheshire for women and this can have a disproportionate impact for women placed far away from their families. The Area has just completed a project looking at specific support for women offenders and some of this work will be taken forward during 2009.

Working with Victims

The Area has with a statutory obligation to contact victims of sexual or violent offences, where the offender is sentenced to 12 months or more which is to keep victims informed of the various key stages of the prisoner's sentence and to seek their

Offenders residing at Approved Premises are either there as a condition of bail awaiting sentence, or on a condition of

The SLA monitoring of victim contact showed lower levels of ethnic monitoring data for victims. Without this information we couldn't know if there were possible communication or other barriers preventing these victims from making contact. We raised this with the Police. This led to the police reviewing their systems leading to a gradual increase in the accuracy of data to the Area.

4. Support Services (Including Administration, IT and Finance)

Support services provide the above services to nearly 400 staff across Cheshire located at a variety of locations, most of whom work directly with offenders.

Finance – for all financial reporting, budget monitoring and has responsibility for financial management and probity across the area.

Property and Supplies – Ensure that buildings are fit for purpose and that they are adequately resourced to ensure that staff can provide the best possible service.

Human Resources - have the responsibility for recruitment and selection, terms and conditions of employment, development of staffing policies and procedures and advice and support.

Staff Development and Training – have responsibility for training and developing our staff and ensuring that staff are

Cheshire Probation Area (Single) Equality Scheme 2009-2012

views concerning the impact upon them of the offence.

Information Services Unit (ISU) - are responsible for ensuring that all staff have secured access to our business services systems and software. They have specific responsibility for providing support advice and guidance to staff that use assistive technology.

and safety work very closely with Human Resources and the Diversity managers in ensuring the health and safety requirements for those with disabilities are met.

Health and Safety - carries out its duties of health and safety in line with HSG65 which is the recognised method of management of health and safety for any organisation. Health

5. Working in Partnership

As The Area is subject to the equality duties, any organisation working with it or doing work on its behalf should be demonstrating how they will comply.

Cheshire Probation has developed a statement of intent designed to enable all partners to comply with their duties to the extent that the function concerned is relevant to the duties. Even where partnerships are with community-based or voluntary organisations, which are not subject to the duties, as they will be carrying out work on the behalf of the Area who has the duty, the Area will ensure that they can take this work forward.

The only gap in relation to this is where the Area is in partnership with other statutory agencies. This work has begun

trained to the required standard to work within their particular roles. They also have responsibility for staff induction and supporting staff to gain NVQs.

Communities

The Area has a directory network of community based organisations including faith, disability and BME organisation that can assist in the reintegration of offenders and the support of victims. The Area keeps in touch with these groups via a community newsletter published three times a year to encourage an understanding of our work and to notify them about the work of the Area and jobs that we advertise. This newsletter is a useful vehicle to provide information about impact assessment and consultation work and has also assisted the Area to increase the proportion of BME and disability organisations that benefit from Unpaid Work.

6. Procurement of goods, facilities and services

In terms of equality in relation to procurement processes have put the following in place:

The Area purchases goods and services from a large number of organisations including small local ones. The Area has equality duties in relation to procurement. The Area asks all organisations with which it works to demonstrate how it will take equality issues forward in its work. The Area has built equality considerations into the process and developed documentation to evidence this including pre-tender equality questionnaires; contract monitoring; identifying how different groups needs will be met during the contract development process.

The Area will continue to identify proportionate means to ensure

Cheshire Probation Area (Single) Equality Scheme 2009-2012

and will seek to address this during the life of the scheme.

7. Strategy and policy

The Area ensures accountability for equality and diversity at a strategic level by including it specifically in the portfolio of one of its Assistant Chief Officers. The Diversity structure, outlined in this document, demonstrates the mechanisms for both determining strategic and policy decisions, and taking forward actions, monitoring and review of impact.

What happens next

This (single) Equality Scheme and 3 year Action Plan was developed over a short timescale. However, this Scheme incorporates much of the work, including consultation and involvement of people in different groups including staff, who assisted in the development, writing and annual reviewing of the previous Schemes.

Over the next year we will use this Equality Scheme as the basis to more fully involve disabled people and other groups and staff to identify gaps and together determine best ways to address them. This will then be published in our Review of the Equality Scheme in March 2010 along with our revised Action Plan for years 2 and 3.

access to a wide range of organisations as well as ensuring value for money and fair and effective outcomes across the diversity strands.

How to give us your feedback

Tel: 01244 394500
Fax: 01244 394507

We welcome feedback on our equality scheme which is a living document. The Area welcomes comments and suggestions from its partners, stakeholders and other interested parties. The Scheme and Action Plan will be reviewed annually and further information published on our website,

www.cheshire.probation.gsi.gov.uk.

To tell us what you think please write to:

Kim Thornden, Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) Interventions,
Equality and Diversity or Annemarie Theilade, Diversity Manager
at:

Beech House,
Park West,
Sealand Rd,
Chester
CH1 4RJ

Our Equality Scheme is also available on request in other languages and formats (such as Braille, audio CD or cassette, or large print). Please visit our website or contact us using the details on the back cover.

Section 6 –Cheshire Probation Area Action Plan 2009-2012

The action plan is set for over three years. The first year is quite specific with less detail in the second and third years. The Area will review and publish progress against actions against year 1 by the 31st March 2010, and publish a new action plan for years 2 and 3, which will be informed by progress and new priorities identified during the first year.

This 3 year action plan continues the work that the Area has been building on over many years. Although there are many actions that we would wish to address, we have to focus on those aspects of work that have greater relevance to the duties to promote equality and have the greatest importance in terms of service delivery and employment practice. For these reasons the Area's action plan focuses on the following key areas of work:

- Those services that are 'gateways' for both staff and service users
- Gaps in fulfilling the legal equality duties
- National priorities.