

THE GENDER EQUALITY DUTY (legally actionable)

Equal Pay Act 1970
Sex Discrimination Act 1975
Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination Regulations 2005)

The Equality Act 2006
Statutory duty on all public authorities:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- To promote equality of opportunity between men and women

Forthcoming:
Single Equality Act
which will harmonise and unify equality legislation

THE GENDER EQUALITY DUTY

All public bodies to pro-actively improve gender equality in services and the workforce from 6th April 2007

LOCAL AUTHORITY SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME
Gender Race Disability

Each service, and also each agency within that service, should produce:

1. **A gender impact assessment** which assesses the various needs of men and women in the community (not just existing service users)
 2. **A gender equality scheme** which details the action needed; how, by whom, and when it will be achieved, and the outcomes sought
- To be reviewed and updated regularly*

This must then inform:

- all policies
- area and centre work plans
- recruitment
- working practices and training
- administration and record-keeping
- publicity
- the design of environments
- the timing and content of sessions
- behaviour towards service users
- referrals
- the design of new services where gaps occur

Some areas of concern:

Fathers and their extended families are 50% of a child's potential support, and it is nationally evidenced that boys and girls benefit from contact with positive fathers and males, but:

Services are historically mother-focussed and the content and timing of services are often feminised

The workforce is predominately female. Good practice has shown that father-aware teams and male workers can be very effective. Children need positive contact with males and adults often find single gender work forces off-putting.

Physical environments, publicity and communication styles are often not gender neutral or positively welcoming to fathers.

The capabilities of mothers tend to be over-estimated and those of fathers under-estimated

With a few individual exceptions, fathers (and particularly non-resident and young fathers), are often ignored, rarely being included in record-keeping or included in referrals

Men are not often engaged in local approaches to domestic violence, either as perpetrators or victims, reflecting the general national picture

Policies and targets do not give fathers (including non-resident fathers), and the paternal extended family their due weight as potential resources for children