

YORKSHIRE FORWARD

GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME

2007 – 2010

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Foreword

“What stands out is the importance of all our people, in all their diversity, whose hard work, honesty, straightforwardness, inventiveness and integrity are central to our Regional Economic Strategy. It is putting these places and these values at the heart of our RES that make it unique.”

Regional Economic Strategy for Yorkshire and Humber 2006 – 2015

Diversity is a central theme through all our work and essential to the success of our region. We at Yorkshire Forward recognise the need to move Diversity from a “nice to do” to a “must do” and the Gender Equality Scheme is a step on the journey towards this.

There is a strong economic case for diversity and if we are to ensure the future of Yorkshire and Humber, then we need all of our citizens to be active in our economy, making their maximum contribution where they can. The Gender Equality Scheme sets out what we need to do to make sure that people have access to the same opportunities regardless of their gender.

Unemployment in the region is still close to a 30 year low but we cannot afford to be complacent. It is a fact that if the employment rate for women matched that of men, there would be 127,000 more people in employment in the region.

Our region has so much to offer; great business, a fantastic quality of life and people with diverse talent and skills. Yorkshire Forward is developing this extraordinary potential, to make our region a truly world class location in which to live, work and invest.

However, our ambitions for the region will only be achieved by working with our partners to achieve a real change, through capitalising on the strengths and opportunities that diversity brings.

I look forward to working with you to make this vision a reality.

Tom Riordan
Chief Executive

INTRODUCTION

1. Yorkshire Forward

Yorkshire Forward was set up by Government to promote sustainable economic development throughout the Yorkshire and Humber region. One of England's nine Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) we are a business-led organisation that aims to help improve the region's relative economic performance and reduce social and economic disparities.

A regional approach to economic development allows local businesses and communities to formulate solutions that are appropriate for the particular circumstances and strengths of this region.

Yorkshire Forward supports the expansion and development of business in our region by encouraging public and private investment, and by connecting people to economic opportunity. We also work to improve levels of education, learning and skills, and do all that we can to enhance the region's environment and infrastructure.

Our aim is to maintain and develop this success, making Yorkshire and Humber a truly world-class region in which to live, work and invest.

2. Regional Demographics

Based on estimate figures published by the Office of National Statistics mid 2003:

- The population of Yorkshire and Humber is 5,009,300.
- The regional gender split is 48.8% male to 51.2% female, with a larger number of females overall in the older age groups. (Please see Appendix one, Regional Gender Split, for more detailed information).
- 91.7% of the population declares their ethnicity as White British.
- The 25 – 44 age group is the largest, representing 28.3% of the population.
- 9.2% of men in the region work part time, compared with 46.2% of women.

This region reflects a wide diversity in terms of age, gender and ethnicity and it is important that Yorkshire Forward's employee policies and procedures reflect this diversity.

3. Employee Demographics

We value our employees and recognise the need to constantly review our equality schemes to ensure we support individual development working towards a common goal.

- There are currently 430 employees at Yorkshire Forward.
- Our workforce is predominantly female, consisting of 60% females and 40% males.
- 90% of our workforce identifies himself or herself as White British ethnicity.
- The largest age group at Yorkshire Forward is the 25 – 34 bracket, representing 37% of the workforce.

The majority of our staff works full time, and of those that do work part time 78% are female. 21% of the female employees work part time, compared with 8% of males. (Please see Appendix 2, staff in post by gender, for further information)

The Gender Equality Duty comes into force in April 2007. It has been introduced in recognition of the need for a radical new approach to equality – one that places more responsibility with service providers and employers to think strategically about gender equality, rather than leaving it to individuals to challenge poor practice.

The Gender Equality Duty is intended to address the fact that, despite 30 years of individual legal rights to sex equality in the UK, there is still widespread discrimination. As with other equalities legislation, individual legal rights have not been enough by themselves to change this.

Women

Discrimination still exists and women on average earn less than men, are less likely to be employed in senior management positions and more likely to be responsible for caring for elderly relatives and children. Women can be disadvantaged by policies and practices that do not recognise:

- Greater caring responsibilities;
- More limited access to resources;
- Greater vulnerability to domestic violence.

Men

The gender duty applies equally to men as to women, and the scheme will address the causes of gender stereotyping, and gaps in policies and procedures that affect men.

Men can be disadvantaged by:

- Workplace cultures that do not support their family or childcare responsibilities;
- Organisational policies that assume they have little or no role in parenting.

This highlights the fact that both sexes can suffer from stereotyping of their roles and needs.

The Act (in line with other equalities legislation) aims to make gender equality central to the way that public authorities work, in order to create:

- better informed decision making and policy development;
- a clearer understanding of the needs of service users;
- better quality services which meet varied needs;
- more effective targeting of policy and resources;
- better results and greater confidence in public services;
- a more effective use of talent in the workforce.

Transsexual

Yorkshire Forward is required to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and harassment in employment and related fields and vocational training (including

further and higher education), for people who intend to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment.

Further advances in the law come into force in December 2007, affording further legal rights to those people who identify themselves as transsexual. From 21 December 2007 public authorities will be under a duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of gender reassignment in the provision of goods, facilities and services and the disposal and management of premises. Yorkshire Forward intends to ensure that this is taken into consideration from the beginning of this scheme by considering these changes in the action plan.

MEETING THE GENERAL AND SPECIFIC DUTIES

1. Policies and Procedures

Yorkshire Forward's vision for Diversity is reflected in its mission statement:

“Yorkshire Forward will respect diversity, celebrate and utilise people’s differences in order to achieve personal, corporate and regional objectives.”

Yorkshire Forward is in the process of undertaking an equality impact assessment on all of its new and existing policies. These will be prioritised in line with the Gender Equality Duty between 2007 and 2008. Particular emphasis will be placed in the action plan on reviewing employment related policies and a timetable for Equality Impact Assessment agreed.

We are committed to having in place effective and widely understood policies and procedures to ensure we develop our workplace to continue to promote fairness, dignity and respect for people from all sections of society. Our range of policies within Yorkshire Forward aim to address gender harassment and provide all employees, irrespective of gender, the opportunity to request to work flexibly and to work on a job share or part time basis. All staff are able to apply for leave as main carers and this is supported by our special leave policy. In light of our Race and Disability Equality Schemes and the introduction of the Gender Equality Scheme, all of the following policies have been reviewed, or are under review:

- Recruitment and Selection
- Grievance
- Harassment
- Retirement
- Absence
- Flexible Working

All of our current policies are available on our intranet site.

2. Workforce

As part of our ongoing commitment to equality, we continually collate and analyse equality related information on our workforce to ensure that we meet our non-discriminatory workforce strategy. We will continue to make effective use of this information and data analysis and, where applicable, will use other sources of research and intelligence.

Our employee survey allows us the opportunity to rate how committed they feel Yorkshire Forward is to Diversity. We will continue to build on this and bring equality to the forefront of these surveys.

Implementation of the Workforce Strategy will enable Yorkshire Forward to source, recruit, develop and retain a workforce that is representative of the diversity within

our region. We work with our partners to develop schemes to address diverse and demographic shortfalls.

We aim to meet the Investors in Diversity (IID) standards and will ensure diversity is considered in all aspects of our planning process thereby ensuring we can recruit and retain a workforce that is appropriate and representative.

Our current workforce ratio is 40:60 male: female. This figure is reflective of the high percentage of females in the lower pay band administrative roles. Reassuringly, the ratio in the senior management populations (including Executive Directors) is approximately 50:50. Notwithstanding, we currently have a 5% pay differential and this will be addressed by a wholesale review of remuneration, that will commence summer 2007 with outputs by the year end; which will form part of recommendations to address the situation with effect from the 2008/09 financial year.

3. Consultation

In order to continue development of the Gender Equality Scheme and ensuing action plan, we will continue to seek the views and comments from Trade Union and our employees, particularly those who identify as:

- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transsexual
- Having a disability
- Black or from a minority ethnic background
- Being a carer

We will continue to work with community groups, such as Yorkshire Mesmac who are a charity for gay and bisexual men in the north of England. Currently, we are working in conjunction with Leeds Mental Health Teaching Trust to run a series of Awareness raising days entitled 'Respect for Communities'. The programme consists of a series of training sessions around different diverse topics such as Sexual orientation, Islam and Judaism. This is the second year running we have participated in this programme, as we are continuing to promote and educate our staff on diversity.

Forward Ladies is women's networking and business support group in the North. Yorkshire Forward is a business sponsor of Forward Ladies and we will continue to work closely with them to improve women's access to support to help them move on in their professional life.

4. Complaints

Making a Complaint

Yorkshire Forward takes complaints very seriously. We are committed to dealing with any complaints promptly and learning from them, in order to make changes to the systems and procedures, so that similar occurrences do not happen again.

What you should do

If you have a problem with any aspect of our services, you can call 0113 3949600 to check which Directorate has been dealing with your issue (generally, you should have already been told which Directorate it is).

If you are not happy with the way in which we are dealing with a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act or the Data Protection Act or the Environmental Information Regulations, then you can make a formal written complaint to The Executive Director of Finance at Yorkshire Forward, Victoria House, 2 Victoria Place, Leeds, LS11 5AE. You may also find the attached proforma helpful in doing this.

What we will do

We will take your complaint seriously.

We will deal with your complaint in the quickest and most appropriate way. Wherever possible, the people who will look at your complaint will be different people from those you have already had dealings with at Yorkshire Forward.

If your complaint needs a written reply, we will send an acknowledgement within four working days and a reply within a further ten working days.

In all cases, we will contact you within fourteen working days, if we cannot resolve your complaint sooner.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of our complaints procedure, you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner (Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF, telephone: 01625 545700, fax: 01625 524510 or email mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk Please note that email is not guaranteed as a secure way to communicate. The Information Commissioner's website can be found at: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk).

| | |
|--|--|
| DATE OF COMPLAINT: | |
| COMPLAINT AGAINST: | |
| COMPLAINT MADE BY: NAME: COMPANY: CONTACT NUMBER: | |
| NATURE OF COMPLAINT: | |

5. Arrangements for gathering information about performance of Yorkshire Forward on Gender equality

We will continue to seek feedback on our performance on Gender equality from employees, trade unions and partners. Information gathered will be used to further develop the action plan.

6. Action Plan

Appendix 3 details the 07/08 action plan for the first year of the scheme. We will continue to review all current information available to Yorkshire Forward. This will allow identification of any information gaps and development of a more detailed plan for the following year.

Policies will continue to be reviewed in relation to Gender to ensure that we comply with legislation and we are able to demonstrate non-discrimination. There is currently a Human Resources policy review timetable that we will use to plan the reviews. We will address and remove any barriers that we identify.

Future actions may be incorporated into a Single Equality Scheme.

7. Expected outcomes

Indicators of progress and what we should aspire to achieve include:

- Women and men from all groups feel effectively engaged in decision and policy making around issues that have a direct effect on them
- Women and men are represented at all levels of the workforce and in all areas of work and females have higher aspirations for their future careers.
- Harassment and sexual harassment of staff, service users and others is dealt with promptly and systematically, according to agreed procedures, and tolerance of harassment decreases within the organisation as a whole.
- The gender pay gap is narrowed and eventually eliminated.
- Employees with caring responsibilities are receiving greater support from their employer i.e. flexible and part time working opportunities at all levels.
- Transsexual people feel supported and valued as staff and potential staff.
- Employees are aware of the gender equality duty, understand how it will affect their work, and have the skills to implement the duty in their work.
- Gender (and other) equality issues, and their budgetary implications, are considered at the beginning of policy-making.
- It is easy to find a wide variety of data and information to assess effectively how certain actions will affect men and women.

8. Monitoring and Review

The GES and action plan are live documents, subject to ongoing review and amendment. Experience of implementing our action plan and the monitoring of services will inform any future schemes and action plans.

Unless a Single Equality Scheme is developed, the GES will be formally reviewed during January 2010 and any revisions submitted to the Board in April 2010.

9. Accountability

The Chief Executive has ultimate responsibility to ensure Yorkshire Forward is compliant with all equalities legislation.

Lead directors and managers are identified within the action plan are responsible for ensuring their specific actions are taken forward, in liaison with other appropriate people.

All staff have a responsibility to ensure they promote equality and eliminate discrimination on any grounds and training will be provided by Yorkshire Forward to raise awareness of their responsibilities.

10. Procurement and Services provided by private contractors

Yorkshire Forward will continue to work with suppliers and contractors to ensure the provision of all services and goods complies with all equality duties.

11. Engagement and Consultation

Our GES will be shared with local community groups, staff, unions, partners and other local stakeholders. Any feedback will be incorporated into the 'live' document, and translated into the action plan as appropriate.

Yorkshire Forward will seek to encourage ongoing involvement from staff and partners to participate fully in the ongoing further development of our equality schemes and action plans.

12. Publication

The scheme will be placed on Yorkshire Forward's website under the About Us > All our Documents section.

All staff will be able to access the scheme on our intranet site, and this will be advertised in the Core Brief system, which is distributed via team meetings.

13. Reference

Equal Opportunities Commission – Gender Equality Duty, Code of Practice, England and Wales.

Appendix 1: Regional Gender Split

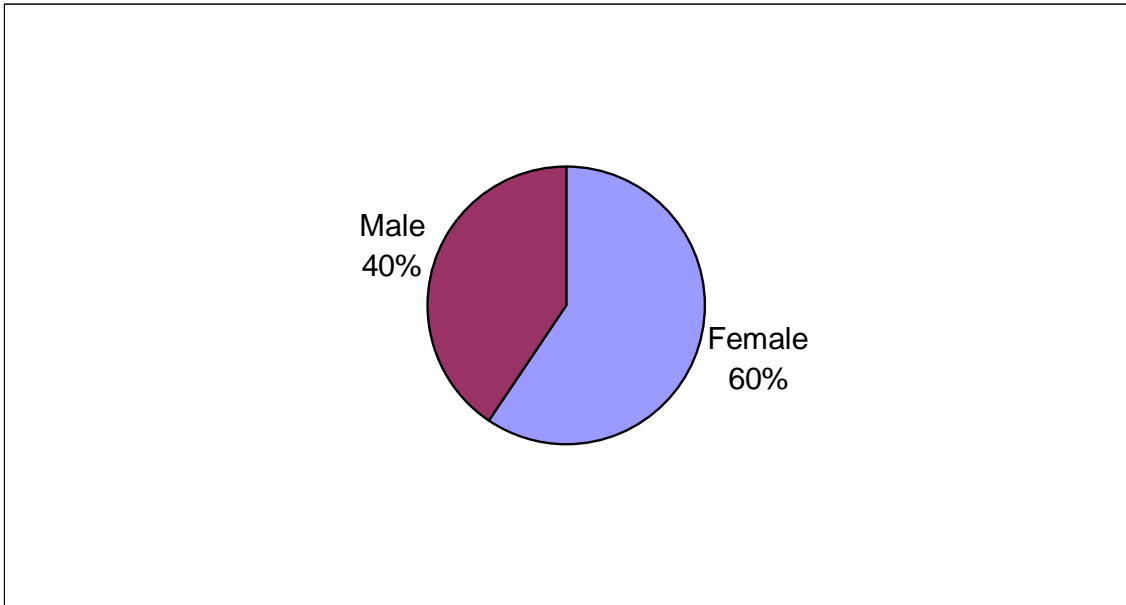
| Area | Male % | Female % |
|--------------------------|--------|----------|
| Yorkshire and Humber | 49 | 51 |
| Humber | 49 | 51 |
| North Yorkshire | 49 | 51 |
| South Yorkshire | 49 | 51 |
| West Yorkshire | 49 | 51 |
| Barnsley | 49 | 51 |
| Bradford | 49 | 51 |
| Calderdale | 49 | 51 |
| Craven | 49 | 51 |
| Doncaster | 49 | 51 |
| East Riding of Yorkshire | 49 | 51 |
| Hambleton | 49 | 51 |
| Harrogate | 49 | 51 |
| Kingston Upon Hull | 51 | 49 |
| Kirklees | 49 | 51 |
| Leeds | 49 | 51 |
| North East Lincolnshire | 49 | 51 |
| North Lincolnshire | 49 | 51 |
| Richmondshire | 51 | 39 |
| Rotherham | 49 | 51 |
| Ryedale | 49 | 51 |
| Scarborough | 48 | 52 |
| Selby | 49 | 51 |
| Sheffield | 49 | 51 |
| Wakefield | 49 | 51 |
| York | 48 | 52 |

Appendix 2: staff in post by gender (As at end March 2007)

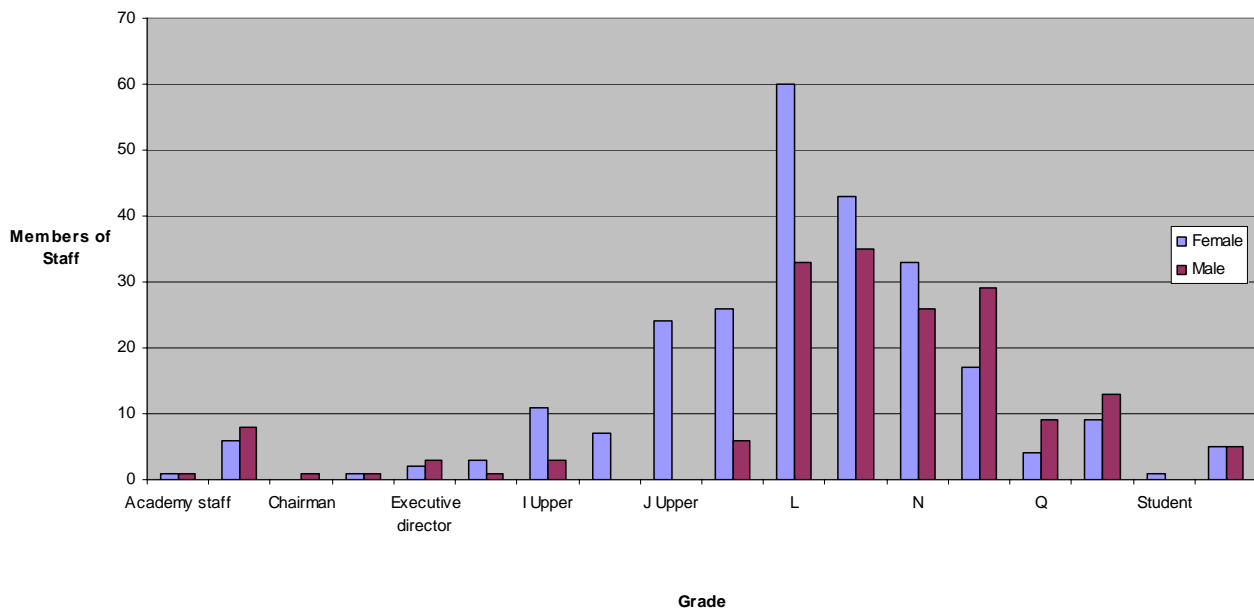
| HEADCOUNT | | | |
|------------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| | FEMALE | MALE | Total |
| Full time | 211 | 161 | 372 |
| Part time | 45 | 13 | 58 |
| Total | 256 | 174 | 430 |

Appendix three – Organisational demographic charts

Gender breakdown



Gender breakdown by pay grade



| OBJECTIVE | STEPS TO ACHIEVE | OUTCOMES REQUIRED | TIMESCALES REQUIRED | RESOURCES REQUIRED | RESPONSIBLE LEAD DIRECTOR/MANAGER |
|---|---|--|--|---------------------------|--|
| Ensure equal pay between male and female staff. | Reward and remuneration review undertaken in 2007. | Equal pay for all staff, regardless of gender | By 2010 | | |
| Provide gender equality awareness training for all staff. | Equality training designed and delivered in 2007/2008 training strategy. | All staff aware of equality issues will consider these in their dealings with colleagues, partners and public. | Ongoing from April 2007. | | |
| Review all employment policies for impact on gender equality. | Continue to review all HR policies, using screening and impact assessment tools. | All employment policies are equality proofed. | Current policies completed by March 2008 then ongoing. | | |
| Develop a policy in relation to transsexual employees. | Await guidance due Dec 2007. Proactively access guidance. | Approved policy | Commence work Oct 2007. | | |
| Review employment data collection for all areas of equal opportunities, including gender. | Employee survey and analysis of equal opportunities monitoring forms used in recruitment process. | Staff feel confident about tackling discrimination. Data published on website. | From April 2007. | | |
| To create balance | Positive action | An equal balance of | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| within the workforce and address any occupational segregation. | development schemes. Review of recruitment/promotion policies. | men/women in senior positions within Yorkshire Forward | | | |
| Evaluate where there are any gaps in demographic related information and where action needs to be taken. | Review demographic information currently available. Produce detailed action plan. | Improved quality and quantity of information in order to further develop action plans around equalities, including gender. | Action plan completed by March 2008. | | |
| All policies impact equally regardless of gender. | By screening and impact assessment, via impact assessment tools. | All policies are equality proofed. | Current policies as they become due for review, all completed by March 2008 then ongoing with any new policies. | | |