



NATIONAL PROBATION SERVICE
for England and Wales

Gloucestershire

GLOUCESTERSHIRE PROBATION AREA

THE SCHEME TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY

Version 1 2007-2010

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1. Foreword

In order to meet its obligations under the Equality Act 2006 which provides that a gender equality duty comes into force on 6 April 2007 the Gloucestershire Probation Board (the Board) approved this Gender Equality Scheme for the Gloucestershire Probation Area at its meeting on 16 May 2007. In developing the Scheme and its associated Action Plan the Board aims to identify and redress barriers to equal opportunity for both those employed by Gloucestershire Probation Board and offenders supervised by Gloucestershire Probation Area.

The Board is committed to the elimination of discrimination and harassment and to the promotion of equality.

The Board supports the national stance taken by the National Offender Management Service in relation to Diversity issues and recognises its own responsibilities to provide an environment in which all staff are able to flourish and where work with offenders is delivered without discrimination.

The Board is fully committed to ensuring that gender equality permeates throughout Gloucestershire Probation Area and will ensure that in all its activities Gloucestershire Probation Area promotes gender equality and inclusiveness. This Gender Equality Scheme is a statement of that commitment. The Scheme sets out how the Board intends to meet its duties under the Equality Act 2006 and in developing it the Board has taken into account guidance for public authorities issued by The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) and guidance issued by the National Offender Management Service.

This Gender Equality Scheme will support the creation of an organisation which fully supports gender equality between people both in its role as an employer and as a provider of criminal justice services.

Tony Fitzsimmons
Chairman

Yvette Ball
Chief Officer

2 Gloucestershire Probation Area.

The Gloucestershire Probation Area sits within the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and is one of 42 areas managed by a local Probation Board. The National Probation Service is a law enforcement agency delivering community punishments, supervising and working with offenders according to the terms set by the Courts, Parole Board and Public Protection Unit, and providing information to victims of serious offences. The Probation Service supports Home Office aims as follows:

- 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 of all races and backgrounds are valued and participate on equal terms.

The National Offender Management Service states its purpose as below:

NOMS protects the public and assists the courts, holding securely and managing humanely the people sent to us. In delivering punishments imposed by the courts, we help offenders turn away from crime, make reparation to their victims and contribute to their communities.

The NOMS goals, reflecting the priorities in the Criminal Justice System Review and the “Five Year Strategy for Protecting the Public and Reducing Re-offending”, both published in 2006, are:

- Protecting the public by running safe and secure prisons and reducing the risk of harm by offenders managed in the community
- Supporting the courts in imposing suitable sentences for appropriate offences and implementing those sentences

- Firm and fair punishment, increasing compliance with community sentences and treating all offenders decently
- Helping to cut crime through seamless offender management to reduce re-offending, working with a range of partners at local, regional and national level
- Contributing to communities and society by increasing visible payback to the community and by supporting the victims of serious offences, and engaging local communities in the management and resettlement of offenders

In common with other public services, NOMS has, as an additional goal, a requirement to achieve value for money. Its work in organising and supporting delivery contributes to ensuring the cost-effectiveness of the services it commissions and provides.

The specific aims of the National Probation Service are:

- Protecting the public
- Reducing re-offending
- The proper punishment of offenders in the Community
- Ensuring offenders' awareness of the effects of crime on the victims of crime and the public
- Rehabilitation of offenders.

The Gloucestershire Probation Board is a statutory body and therefore required under the Equality Act 2006 to publish a Gender Equality Scheme. The Gloucestershire Probation Board's Scheme applies to all members and staff within the Area irrespective of whether they are involved in policy development, service delivery or in a support role. Duties in respect of the Scheme also apply equally to

agency staff and those seconded to the Gloucestershire Probation Area and partnership staff working under contracts funded by the Gloucestershire Probation Area. The Scheme applies to both the service delivery of the Gloucestershire Probation Area and to its role and functions as an employer and contractor of services.

Gloucestershire Probation Area has in place a number of structures, which provide support to ensure that it complies with legislation, both with regards to service delivery and employment. In particular, the following arrangements are already in place:

- Public notices in each building demonstrating a commitment to diversity and anti-discrimination
- Directing Diversity Group (DDG). This is a diverse group of Board members, senior management and staff chaired by the Chief Officer. The purpose of the Group is to direct and advise Gloucestershire Probation Area on:
 - Compliance with relevant legislation
 - Diversity issues in respect of staff and service delivery
 - The achievement of Government, National Probation Directorate, NOMS and regional targets with regard to diversity.

The objective of the DDG is to promote, educate, monitor, advise and innovate in respect of diversity issues in Gloucestershire Probation Area and through its role in the wider community.

- Core training is provided to all staff in respect of equal opportunities. All staff members are appraised on an annual basis against a range of requirements including a specific requirement to promote equality for all individuals, in particular anti-discriminatory practice. This emphasises the importance of non discrimination in all its aspects including gender
- Equalities issues are addressed with staff in the appraisal process.

3 Gloucestershire Probation Area Diversity Statement

Gloucestershire Probation Area Diversity Statement sets out the position of the Board in relation to Diversity and how the organisation will address issues of diversity through a number of appropriate policies and groups in the organisations. The organisation is committed to include any relevant groups in the strategic Directing Diversity Group.

Diversity is a concept and to manage diversity it is assumed and accepted that the workforce, customers and stakeholders consists of a diverse population of people. The diversity consists of visible and non-visible differences which will include factors such as sex, age, background, race, disability and religious persuasion. Gloucestershire Probation Area's approach is founded on the premise that harnessing these differences will create a productive environment in which everybody feels valued and their talents are fully utilised in order to better meet organisational goals. The Board, as part of its corporate responsibility, adopts a positive commitment to embracing diversity. This is based on four values:

Equality

We commit ourselves in delivering services and employing people to do so on the basis of everyone's right to fair and equivalent treatment. We recognise that in a diverse population people have different starting points and needs and that treating people equitably is not the same as treating people the same. Where a system treats people unfairly because of their difference, discrimination can be seen to be operating at both an institutional level and a personal level. It is necessary for the organisation to have mechanisms in place to ensure equality of access to the rights and expectations of employment and to the delivery services offered.

Levering Difference

In delivering equality, we need to consider whether it is in relation to equal access, to an abstract 'norm', or to a vision of an organisation as a community which seeks to use the breadth and diversity of experience it contains to develop and lever maximum business benefit. Difference should be valued as a strength that will assist us to meet the needs of a diverse community and to adapt to changes in that

community. A positive endorsement of the value of diversity also makes it clear that we welcome people to the organisation valuing their difference, and committing ourselves to occasional related costs as an investment to achieve this.

Social Cohesion

One of the roles of the probation service is to promote social cohesion and to deal with the effects of social exclusion. It is imperative that this organisation establishes itself as a model of social cohesion and does not let itself become associated with the support of one, or a limited number of groups, over others.

Human Rights

The Probation Service, often working with the more disadvantaged in society, should and does value diversity, but there are also general reasons to do so concerned with people's human rights. Whatever the benefits to us as an organisation, and they are profound, people have a right to fair and equal treatment, and for that to be meaningful, not simply a token.

4 Specific Duties of the Probation Service in Gloucestershire

The Gloucestershire Probation Area supports Home Office and National Probation Service aims by undertaking a range of duties linked to offender assessment, offender management and supervision and the provision of information to victims. These duties can be summarised as follows:

- The assessment of offenders pre-sentence including bail assessment, provision of Fast Delivery and Standard Pre-Sentence Reports (PSRs) to courts
- The offender management and supervision of offenders subject to community sentences i.e. Community Rehabilitation Order, Community Punishment Order, Community Punishment and Rehabilitation Order, Drug Treatment and Testing Order and to Community Orders and requirements under the Criminal Justice Act 2003. Requirements in these orders can include the delivery of programmes to offenders aimed at reducing re-offending, provision of counselling to assist offenders address offending behaviour, support to address drug and alcohol misuse, treatment for mental disorder, the provision of educational, training and employment services to improve the basic skills of offenders and provision of accommodation advice and assistance. The supervision of Community Punishment Orders, Community Punishment and Rehabilitation Orders and Unpaid Work Requirements under the CJ Act 2003 also includes the provision of work placements so that offenders carry out unpaid work to the benefit of the community. These Orders are either supervised directly by probation staff or by representatives of the beneficiaries concerned.
- Work with offenders in custodial establishments
- Supervision of offenders on post-release licence following the serving of a custodial sentence
- Provision of residential accommodation for offenders who are the subject of bail conditions or statutory supervision within Ryecroft Approved Premises

- The continuous assessment and supervision of offenders who are at risk of causing serious harm and / or have a high likelihood of re-offending, including working with the Multi-agency Public Protection Panel
- The provision of information to victims of serious, violent or sex offences where the offender is serving a prison sentence of twelve months or more.

The above duties are supported by a range of policies, each of which are approved by the Board and have a supporting procedure. These include a complaints policy so that users can express discontent with the services provided

In addition, Gloucestershire Probation Area holds a number of partnership agreements and contracts for the provision of services to offenders including specialist drugs and alcohol services, accommodation advice and provision, and work with perpetrators and victims of domestic violence.

5 The Equality Act 2006: General and Specific Duties

Under the Equality Act 2006 Gloucestershire Probation Board has a statutory duty to promote gender equality. This duty, referred to as the “general duty”, aims to make the promotion of gender equality central to the way public authorities work by placing it at the centre of policy making, service delivery, regulation, employment and practice. It is intended that by promoting gender equality there will be improvements in the way public services are delivered for the benefit of everyone and that trust and confidence in those public services will be promoted. Under this general duty Gloucestershire Probation Board, in carrying out its functions, must have due regard to the elimination of discrimination and harassment and the promotion of equality:

In addition to placing the Gloucestershire Probation Board under this general duty to promote gender equality the Equality Act 2006 imposes specific duties which can be summarised as follows:

- Prepare and publish a Gender Equality Scheme, showing how Gloucestershire Probation Area will meet its general and specific duties and which sets out its gender equality objectives.
- In formulating its overall objectives, consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap.
- Gather and use information on how Gloucestershire Probation Area’s policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services.
- To consult employees, service users and others, including trade unions taking account of relevant information in order to determine its gender equality objectives.
- To assess the impact of its current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality.
- To implement the actions set out in its scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so.
- To report on progress annually and review the scheme at least every three

years.

The arrangements made by Gloucestershire Probation Board to meet these specific duties will help to ensure that the general duty is met. The following principles underpin the actions of Gloucestershire Probation Board in addressing its general and specific duties:

Information

Gloucestershire Probation Board recognises that it must have information which allows it to understand the impact of its work on women and on men (including transsexual women and men) and the Board therefore undertakes to collect and analyse gender disaggregated data.

Proportionality

In giving 'due regard' to its general duty Gloucestershire Probation Board undertakes to put its effort and resources where they will have most impact on gender equality.

Effectiveness

Gloucestershire Probation Board recognises that in addressing its general duty it must achieve outcomes. Without recognisable outcomes it will be difficult to establish whether due regard has been given to the general duty to promote disability equality.

Consultation

Gloucestershire Probation Board recognises that it must consult with relevant people both inside and outside the organisation including voluntary and community organisations with specialist knowledge on gender equality. Without such consultation the Board recognises that it will be unable to identify and prioritise its gender equality priorities effectively.

Transparency

Gloucestershire Probation Board recognises that public confidence is essential and in order to achieve this people need to see what has been done and why. Gloucestershire Probation Board therefore undertakes to publish its Gender Equality Scheme and its associated Action Plan, consultations; including the results of those

consultations, its monitoring results and the impact assessments of current and proposed policies and procedures.

6 Assessment of Functions and Policies

Gloucestershire Probation Area conducted an assessment of its functions for the purposes of its Race Equality and Disability Equality Schemes and has undertaken a review of those functions for the purposes of this Gender Equality Scheme. The current assessment of functions is documented in Annex 2.

A prioritised list of Gloucestershire Probation Area's policies has also been developed and reviewed and is documented at Annex 3. Impact Assessment of policies is conducted using an Impact Assessment Tool which is documented at Annex 4. The results of Impact Assessments are documented in Annex 5.

7 Employer Functions

In order to provide the range of services described in section 4, Gloucestershire Probation Board acts as an employer to approximately 230 (180 whole time equivalent) members of staff. The full range of employer functions includes:

- Recruitment
- Selection
- Employment, including payroll
- Training and staff development
- Staff appraisal and supervision
- Employee care
- Termination of employment, including exit interviews.

These employer functions are supported by a range of policies that are approved by the Gloucestershire Probation Board and are supported by clear procedures. Employment data is collated and monitored in respect of:

- Recruitment
- Retention – including exit interviews
- Promotion
- Grievance & disciplinary proceedings

This data is documented at Annex 6

8 The Gender Equality Action Plan

The Gloucestershire Probation Board in developing the Gender Equality Action Plan, documented in Annex 1 has taken into account national and local priorities. National priorities include the long term goals of the Women's Offending Reduction Programme which are to achieve:

- A reduction in the number of women offenders
- A reduction in the number of women in custody

Local priorities include the following:

- Using advice provided in National Guidance ensuring that service provision meets the particular needs of women (and men) offenders
- Ensuring that private and voluntary sector partners who deliver services commissioned by Gloucestershire Probation Area comply with the general and specific duties created by the Equality Act 2006.
- Improving equality monitoring statistics so that meaningful comparisons can be drawn regarding the quality of service delivery and the employment opportunities between women and men.
- Ensuring that policies and initiatives meet the aims of the Women's Offending Reduction Programme for example through the provision of community interventions.
- Provide compliance with the Equal Pay Act requirements to address any discrimination on rates of pay.

9 Key Challenges

Gloucestershire Probation Area, as one of the smallest Probation Areas has not had the resources to appoint a dedicated member of staff to address diversity issues. It will be important therefore to ensure that effective links are developed with equality and diversity networks. The Board recognises that it is through the establishment of effective links that Gloucestershire Probation Area will be able to benchmark itself against the approach and performance of other organisations. The Board also recognises that effective links will support the identification of best practice from which Gloucestershire Probation Area can learn.

The Board recognises that robust monitoring is critical if action is to be taken to ensure that the activities of Gloucestershire Probation Area do not have an adverse and differential impact. It further recognises that monitoring is underpinned by the collection and analysis of good quality data. A key challenge will therefore be to ensure that robust data collection systems are in place in respect of both its employment and service delivery functions in order that systems to check equitable service delivery can be embedded.

In developing its Gender Equality Scheme Gloucestershire Probation Area has been able to consult staff that belong to its Directing Diversity Group and it acknowledges the valuable impact that such consultation has had upon the Scheme. A key challenge for Gloucestershire Probation Area will therefore be to extend consultation so that offenders and people from the wider community can become involved. As a partner in the Local Criminal Justice Board, Gloucestershire Probation Area has actively supported and promoted the development of an Independent Advisory Group. The Board therefore recognises the value of adopting a collaborative approach to involvement and intends to seek the support of its partner agencies in the criminal justice sector to facilitate and support consultation with the wider community.

10 Consultation

Gloucestershire Probation Area is committed to consulting as widely as possible. It recognises the value of giving people opportunities to comment upon how its services and employment practices are provided and developed and will therefore endeavour to consult effectively with:

- its staff, including trade unions;
- those people who use its services, both offenders and the beneficiaries of unpaid work ; and
- voluntary and community organisations including those with specialist knowledge of gender equality.

As a partner in the Gloucestershire Compact it will ensure that consultation with people from the wider community will, whenever appropriate comply with the codes of practice developed by the Gloucestershire Compact Group.

11 Report and Review

The Gender Equality Scheme will be reported on annually, both within Gloucestershire Probation Area Annual Report and in a separate report to the National Probation Directorate as required. The Scheme and any reports upon it will be available to the public and accessible through the Gloucestershire Probation Area website <http://www.glosprobation.org.uk> In addition to the Scheme; the Action Plan outlined in Annex 1 will be reviewed and updated at meetings of the Directing Diversity Group with progress being reported to the Gloucestershire Probation Board on an annual basis. The Board recognises that it has a responsibility to conduct a statutory review of the Scheme and plans to do so in 2010.

12 Complaints

Gloucestershire Probation Area will take seriously any complaints that it may receive regarding its approach to disability equality or about the way in which it is meeting its statutory duty.

Anyone wishing to make a complaint should contact the Chief Officer at:

Gloucestershire Probation Area
Bewick House 1 Denmark Road Gloucester GL1 3HW
Tel: 01452 426250

The Chief Officer will ensure that investigations are conducted using the Area's established complaints procedures ensuring that people have an opportunity to express their views and to have their comments investigated in a fair and unbiased way. If a complaint is found to be justified appropriate action will be taken to rectify the situation.

Alternatively complaints may be made to:

The Equal Opportunities Commission who can be contacted as follows:

- Arndale House,
Arndale Centre
Manchester
M4 3EQ
Email: info@eoc.org.uk
Fax: 0161 838 8312
Tel: 0845 601 5901

- 36 Broadway
London
SW1H 0BH
Email: info@eoc.org.uk

Fax: 0207 222 2771

Tel: 0207 222 1110

- Windsor House,
Windsor Lane
Cardiff
CF10 3GE
Email: wales@eoc.org.uk
Fax: 029 2064 1079
Tel: 0845 601 5901

13 Further Information

For further information regarding the implementation of the Gender Equality Scheme in Gloucestershire, contact

Yvette Ball, Chief Officer
National Probation Service – Gloucestershire
Bewick House
1 Denmark Road
Gloucester GL1 3HW

Tel: 01452 426250

E-mail: yvette.ball@gloucestershire.probation.gsi.gov.uk

For information regarding the National Offender Management Service Scheme contact:

Omar Ralph
Equality and Diversity Manager
National Offender Management Service
Abell House
John Islip Street
London SW1P 4LH

Tel: 020 7217 5693

Fax: 020 7217 8986

E-mail: omar.ralph@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

www.noms.homeoffice.gov.uk