

## **Equality and Diversity**

### **Recommendations**

1. the Board hold an open-ended discussion with regard to equality and diversity issues and consider any recommendations appropriate for further action;
2. the Board notes, individually and collectively, the joint declaration on equality proposed for signing through the Devon Strategic Partnership;
3. it is noted that:
  - a. the Equality Strategy and Support Group (ESSG) of the Devon Strategic Partnership is agreed as the reference group for the Children's Trust on equality and diversity matters;
  - b. All implementation plans for the Children and Young People's Plan will undertake an Equality Impact Needs Assessment by April 2009;
  - c. The Equality and Diversity Policies of partners of the Trust will be reviewed and reported on by the partners by April 2009;
  - d. An analysis will be undertaken of the outcomes for specific groups in Devon across the five outcomes for consideration by the Executive in February and the findings presented to the Equality Strategy and Scrutiny Group. The Strategic Intelligence Unit of Devon County Council will be asked to lead on this on our behalf.

### **Background**

Awareness of equality and diversity issues ought to be threaded throughout the work of the Children's Trust. Our business is addressing those issues which limit opportunity for children and young people. The Children and Young People's Plan had an Equality Impact Needs Assessment (EINA) but as a partnership our commitment to equality and diversity is implicit rather than explicit.

The Local Area Agreement (LAA), to which the CYPP is aligned, has equality and diversity as a cross cutting theme. Do we know how that plays out in our work? There are areas where it is visible, for example around children with additional needs. There are other areas such as reducing bullying where we know it is fundamental. Possibly, if we do not actively consider the implications, there may be areas where we inadvertently do not address issues in our planning and work.

At its October meeting the Children's Trust Executive asked that the Board undertake a themed discussion to inform and widen the common understanding of how equality and diversity aspects affect outcomes for children and young people.

To that end, members of the Board and invited guests have been asked to introduce particular aspects as the forerunner to a wider discussion on equality and diversity issues. It is anticipated that an outcome may be recommendations for further action.

### **Reference Group**

Devon Strategic Partnership is supported in its work by the Equality Strategy Support Group (ESSG) which has representatives from the main stakeholder groups. The group asked for an input on the work of the Children's Trust and asked helpful and challenging questions. The Children's Trust Executive and the ESSG have agreed that the ESSG will operate as the reference group for the Children's Trust. Whilst its membership is not entirely children and young people focused it was felt that this would create more of a joined up approach and prevent duplication of meetings. There would be a specific interest in Reducing Bullying.

### **Practice amongst partners**

The Annual Performance Assessment anticipates that there are effective strategies in place across the partnership with regard to equality and diversity issues. This is not something that we have yet tested but have rather assumed. It has been agreed that the situation should be reviewed with the possibility of a core expectations across Trust partners.

### **Intelligence**

Our needs assessment provided data on the basis on black and minority ethnic groups, males and females and other groupings. What we have not yet done is looked at that information as a whole and analysed it to inform our working for evidence based planning. This is being commissioned from the Strategic Intelligence Group of Devon County Council and will be presented to a future meeting of the ESSG.

### **Joint Declaration on Equality**

At the Devon Strategic Partnership Conference 7<sup>th</sup> November 2008 the Joint Declaration on Equality has been proposed for signing both by individuals and by the organisations they represent. Feedback on this will be provided to the Board.

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