

Equality Action Plan

March 2018

Accessibility statement

Any request for the document in another format or language will be considered.

Please contact equality.unit@eani.org.uk

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1.0 Introduction

This document sets out the Education Authority's (EA) response to our Audit of Inequalities. The Equality Action Plan is aligned to the EA Strategic Plan 2017-2027. We will produce two plans. This plan will cover a four year period (2018-2022) followed by a new plan, covering a further five year period (2022-2027). Progress will be measured annually with opportunities to amend the plan should this be necessary during each monitoring cycle. In its development, consideration was given to a review of existing priorities and consideration of new priorities.

This plan is a 'live' document and as such will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

The actions in this plan are reflective of actions and commitments included in the Education Authority's Strategic Plan. A number of the actions relate specifically to the transformation of services and will be reviewed as part of the on-going programme of change.

2.0 Equality scheme commitments

The Equality Action Plan outlines actions relating to our functions and takes account of our equality scheme commitments relating to Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Our equality scheme is available on our website:

www.eani.org.uk

The law requires us when we carry out our work to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity across nine equality categories; age, gender, disability, marital status, political opinion, caring responsibilities, sexual orientation, religion and ethnicity. It also requires us to consider good relations in relation to political opinion, religion and ethnicity.

In our equality scheme we gave a commitment to monitoring progress and updating the plan as necessary. We also said we would engage and consult with stakeholders when reviewing this action plan.

3.0 What we do

The Education Authority (EA) was established on 1 April 2015 under the Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2014. It replaced the five Education and Library Boards (ELBs) and their Staff Commission as a regional authority with responsibility for the delivery of education services in Northern Ireland.

EA is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department of Education and the Department for the Economy, responsible under legislation for ensuring that efficient and effective primary and secondary education and educational services are available to meet the needs of children and young people and for ensuring the provision of efficient and effective youth services.

We work in partnership with the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS); Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG); the Transferor Representatives' Council (TRC); the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE); the Governing Bodies Association NI (GBA) and the Controlled Schools' Support Council (CSSC).

EA's duties and responsibilities include:

- providing a wide range of functions for the funding and delivery of local education and youth services;
- ensuring there are sufficient schools providing primary and post-primary education to meet the needs of all the people in Northern Ireland;
- providing all the finance for controlled schools (i.e. grant-aided schools under the direct control and management of EA);
- equipping, maintaining and meeting other running costs of maintained schools (i.e. grant-aided schools which are not under the direct control and management of EA);
- providing milk and meals, free books, and free transport for eligible pupils;
- enforcing school attendance;
- securing the provision of youth service facilities;
- managing the third level student grant function for the Department of the Economy.

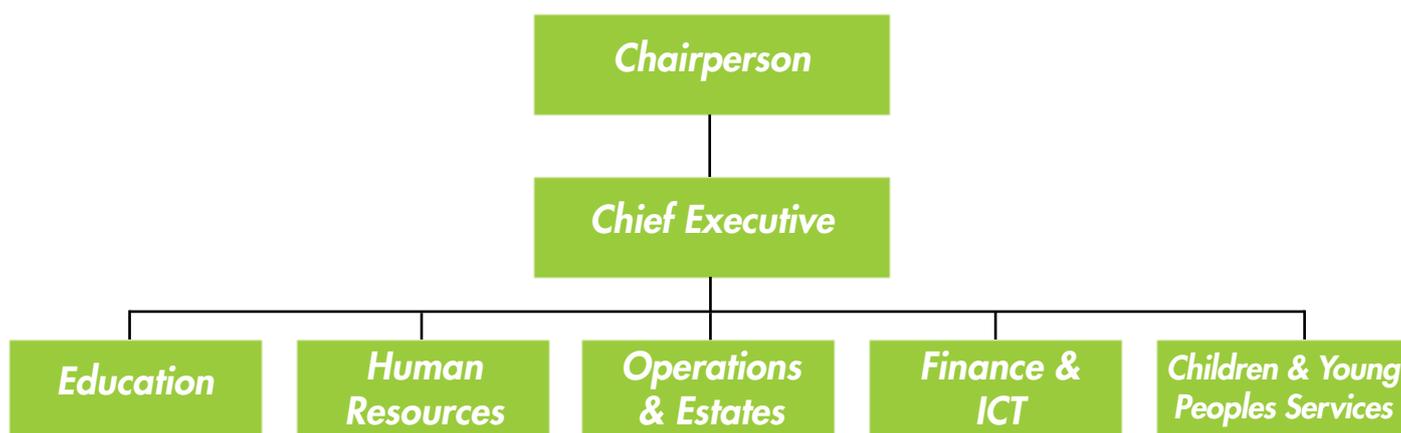
EA has a budget of approximately £1.6 billion annually which includes revenue and capital. It is Northern Ireland's largest employer with over 39,000 staff including teachers, school-based support staff, office based and other non-school-based staff.

As the employing authority for teachers in controlled schools, EA is responsible for the management of the teaching appointments processes for teachers and principals and provision of learning and development opportunities for teachers.

In addition, EA has duties in relation to Shared Education and the community use of school premises. In April 2016, EA also subsumed the Youth Council for Northern Ireland (YCNI) and became the funding authority for voluntary grammar and grant-maintained integrated schools.

A long term change programme is currently being implemented to manage the transition from the previous five autonomous Education and Library Boards, which had responsibility for delivery of education services, to a single Education Authority. In time, the result will be that education policies are delivered in a consistent manner, regardless of which school you attend or where you live.

EA's structure comprises five directorates and the Chief Executive's Office.



Each Directorate is responsible for a range of services and functions.

Education

The Education Directorate is responsible for School Improvement; Professional Learning and Development; Strategic Area Planning; Community Planning; Shared Education and Community Use of Schools

Human Resources and Legal Services

The HR & LS Directorate is responsible for HR Policies and Procedures; Employee Welfare; Recruitment; Employee Records; Equality Monitoring; Equal Opportunities; Equality and Human Rights; Legal Services; Industrial and Employee Relations and HR Advisory Services for Schools.

Operations & Estates

The Operations and Estates Directorate is responsible for Capital Development; Estate Services and Maintenance; Energy Management and Efficiency; Health and Safety; Catering Service; Emergency Management and Planning; Free School Meals and Clothing; Transport Service; Schools Admissions; Corporate Planning; Student Finance and Corporate Planning and Performance.

Finance & ICT

The Finance and ICT Directorate is responsible for Budgetary Control; Management Accounting; Financial Accounts; Financial Planning; LMS; Payroll and Pensions; Accounts Payable; Accounts Receivable; Cash Management; Income Generation; Reprographics; Registry and ICT.

Children & Young Peoples Services

The Children and Young People's Services Directorate is responsible for Special Education Operations and Provision; Pupil Support Services; Pupil Welfare Services (including Child Protection); Youth Service and Early Years.

Chief Executives Office

The Chief Executive's Office is responsible for Strategic Leadership and Operational Delivery; Change Management; Financial Management and Governance; Communications and Internal Audit. The Chief Executive is EA's Accounting Officer.

4.0 How we developed this plan

During research for the Audit of Inequalities a number of factors became apparent. These were reiterated and confirmed by the engagement and input to the process from a range of stakeholders, across the community and voluntary sector and by children and young people.

Firstly, it is clear that inequalities exist across the education system that extend beyond the remit of the Education Authority alone, and therefore would require a wider approach to tackling those inequalities.

We therefore took a decision to carry out a whole system analysis of inequalities, based primarily on the comprehensive work of the Equality Commission, NI Commissioner for Children and Young People and the Department of Education and reflect this in our Action Plan.

Secondly, it became clear that there are common themes across education that relate to all or most of the section 75 groups. It was therefore prudent and more effective to develop actions under themes, in order to tackle whole system inequalities.

This is reflected in our action plan, which seeks to tackle inequalities under identified themes across education. Where EA, within our remit and functions can take action and tackle inequalities, we will commit to. Where a wider educational approach is required, either in addition to, or as a standalone approach, then we will seek to adopt that approach and engage our partners to undertake actions as part of a wider partnership.

5.0 What is in our equality action plan?

It is important to highlight that the Action Plan has been designed to be flexible, adaptable and responsive to changing circumstances and needs.

The broad themes were the Authority considers targeted actions could address key inequalities and advance equality of opportunity and good relations are:

5.1 Bullying (including cyber bullying)

The Audit of Inequalities identifies bullying as an issue that transcends many of the section 75 groups, with some pupils from particular backgrounds more susceptible to bullying. Children and young people should feel safe and welcome in their schools. There are higher instances of bullying, or likelihood of bullying for our minority ethnic pupils, lesbian, gay or bisexual pupils, pupils with SEN and or a disability and transgender young people.

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 has been introduced and EA are working to support schools comply with the provisions of the Act. We also work, and will continue to work closely with the NI Anti Bullying Forum.

As part of the engagement for the Audit, children and young people were directly consulted to ascertain what they see as the main issues impacting them. Many reported bullying as a key issue for young people.

5.2 Attainment

There is evidence that there are inequalities in achievement for specific groups of children and young people. Groups considered under this theme include - looked after children, children from minority ethnic backgrounds, including Traveller and Roma children and children with a disability. Children and young people entitled to free school meals also experience lower levels of attainment.

This theme will also seek to address what achievement means for our children and young people and how we can support and inspire young people, and continue to improve attainment levels.

5.3 Access to education

Access to Education includes many issues that impact many of our section 75 groups. The areas of focus for this theme include special educational needs, access and achievement levels for Travellers, newcomers and school aged mothers.

This theme also addresses issues of full access to EA information and services for all communities in Northern Ireland.

5.4 Data and Monitoring

Data gaps have been highlighted as a significant issue in terms of both enabling and measuring equality of opportunity. The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Commissioner for Children and Young People have both raised the issue of data gaps and the need to disaggregate data as key issues for education. The EA accepts the need for up to date and reliable data to ensure we can tackle inequalities and measure progress.

Improving data is a key priority for the Authority as we continue to transform and develop our services and systems.

5.5 Mental health and emotional wellbeing

Mental health and emotional wellbeing remains a significant issue for our children and young people, and how our schools respond to issues around anxiety, stress and depression can have a hugely positive or negative impact on the young person's recovery and / or development. This can be of particular importance to those from abusive homes or suffering domestic violence.

The issue of mental health and wellbeing transcends many of the Section 75 groups, and some issues can be related back to young people's experiences in school as a member of a particular community.

For the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People, the well-being of children and young people in schools is therefore a serious issue. It was also an issue raised by young people in engagement through the Youth Service and with schools pupil councils.

5.6 EA Workforce

EA values the need for staff to be empowered and given the right tools to do their job. One of EA's core values is equality; we are keen to ensure that through our action plan, we have a fuller picture of the makeup of our workforce. We will ensure all our staff, regardless of their background, will enjoy working for EA and be able to positively contribute to the realisation of EA's vision.

We have committed to achieving a range of outcomes, including:

- Having a workforce that is highly capable, engaged and empowered;
- Having an organisation where people want to work;
- Developing people who work across boundaries as part of a multi-disciplinary team; and
- Ensuring we have highly capable leaders and managers who develop engaged and performing teams.

Our aim is to make the Education Authority an employer of choice for all our communities in Northern Ireland. This will also be reflected in our action plan.

6.0 Reviewing our plan

As this plan is intended to be a 'living' document, it will evolve and be reviewed in line with the EA's corporate and business planning processes. This linkage to the corporate planning cycle will also ensure that equality of opportunity and promotion of good relations are incorporated and mainstreamed at a strategic level.

Table 1 outlines our actions for the next four years. We will keep this plan under regular review and report annually on progress to the Equality Commission NI. We will undertake a wider review in four years and will involve Section 75 equality groups and individuals in that review, producing a new five year plan.

This document is also available on our website: www.eani.org.uk

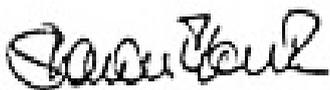
7.0 Who to contact

The person in our organisation who is responsible for making sure that the actions in this plan are taken forward is Matthew McDermott.

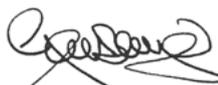
Matthew McDermott
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Signed by:



Chair



Chief Executive

April 2018



Table 1
Equality Action Plan

1. Access to Education

| | Outcome | Action | Measure | Lead and timeframe |
|------|--|--|---|--|
| 1.1. | Schools will be better equipped in addressing issues for transgender young people | <p>The Education Authority will work with the voluntary sector to develop guidance for schools on supporting their transgender pupils and wider school community</p> <p>EA will support the launch of the guidelines by hosting a conference for school leaders and Governors to disseminate the guidelines</p> <p>The Education Authority will establish Peer Professional Networks which will bring together Principals to share and learn best practice in supporting transgender young people in schools</p> | <p>Guidance developed</p> <p>Conference Report</p> <p>Peer Support Network Terms of Reference</p> | <p>Equality Unit CYPS Year 1</p> <p>Equality Unit Year 2</p> <p>Education Directorate Year 2</p> |
| 1.2. | More school aged mothers will stay in school following the birth of their child | The Education Authority through its school aged mothers programme will continue to support young mothers to engage with school and achieve a range of qualifications. | Number of young mothers maintained in school following the birth of their child | <p>Head of Education Welfare Service CYPS</p> <p>Annually</p> |

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| | | | Number of young mothers achieving qualifications at Year 12 and Year 14 | |
| 1.3. | Educational outcomes for looked after children will improve | The Education Authority will through the Early Intervention Transformation <i>Pilot</i> Programme (EITP) (Looked after Children (LAC) Education Project) raise the educational outcomes of LAC through improving support at Key Stage 2. | Number of LAC at Key Stage 2 making progress in attainment and attendance Number of School Staff (teaching and non-teaching) achieving an increased understanding of the needs of LAC. | EA LAC Champion CYPS |
| 1.4. | Young people with Special Education Needs will participate more in decisions which impact them | The Education Authority will develop guidance on child participation e.g., at annual review and for transition, to include information and support mechanism, including easy read and child friendly versions. This action aligns with a concluding observation from the last UNCRC UK examination in 2016. This will be disseminated through schools and EA channels, including website. | Guidance produced Numbers of young people participating in decision making | Senior Advisor SEND Implementation CYPS Directorate Year 1 |

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| 1.5. | Arrangements for the new rights of children over compulsory school age (Section 11 SEND Act and regulation 26 draft SEN Regs) will be in place and operational | <p>The EA will conduct engagement with key stakeholders, including schools, parents, SENCos, young people, and key advocacy groups (CLC, HRC, NICCY), regarding arrangements for the new rights of the children over compulsory school age</p> <p>EA will develop structures and processes to facilitate and support children over compulsory school age to exercise their rights.</p> <p>EA will develop guidance, including child friendly and easy read, to support schools and young people to participate in a meaningful way.</p> <p>EA will include guidance and support arrangements in EA officer, principal, SENCo, and BoG training programmes.</p> | <p>Engagement report</p> <p>Guidance Training</p> | <p>Assistant Senior Education Officer CYPS Directorate Year 1</p> <p>Assistant Senior Education Officer CYPS Directorate Year 2</p> |
| 1.6. | We will make our information easier to access and ensure staff make consistent decisions around accessible formats | EA will develop an accessible information policy and database to capture decisions | A policy will be in place and a database in use | Equality Unit Year 2 |
| 1.7. | There will be access for section 75 groups to our information and services | EA will develop and embed a 'Digitalisation by Default' programme of work to transform access to EA services and support. Embedded in this | Digitalisation by Default Work Streams | Operations and Estates Directorate Year 4 |

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| | | will be a commitment to full access for section 75 groups | | |
| 1.8. | EA services users will be engaged and informed about the work of the Authority | EA will develop a corporate framework around consultation and engagement which represents our values of Openness and Transparency | Consultation and Engagement Framework Service User feedback Complaints | Equality Unit Year 1 |
| 1.9. | EA policies and procedure will take account of the needs of rural service users | EA will develop a Policy and Procedure to support staff in assessing the rural impacts of its work | Rural Assessment Policy and Procedure in Place | Equality Unit Year 1 |
| 1.10. | EA will improve the accessibility of its website | EA will develop a new website that is accessible for all our service users. EA will self-audit the accessibility of its website. | Service user feedback Complaints about website | Communications Year 2 |
| 1.11 | EA will consider how to tackle inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage | EA will scope the feasibility and practicality of introducing a socio-economic assessment to decision making / policy formation EA will identify service areas to pilot the socio – economic assessment EA will assess the pilot outcomes to determine the feasibility of including a socio-economic duty in the revised Equality Scheme | Socio-economic assessment tools Pilot report Equality Scheme | Equality Unit Year 1 Year 2 Year 3 |

2. Attainment

| | Outcome | Action | Measure | Lead and timeframe |
|------|--|--|--|--|
| 2.1. | Children and young people from section 75 groups will be supported | <p>Complete the Strategic Review of Nursery Provision in Special Schools and develop an Action Plan for implementation.</p> <p>Roll out a training programme for Principals and Board of Governors regarding the SEND Act 2016.</p> <p>Develop actions for supporting early intervention through the joint Education/Health Working Group for Early Years SEN Provision.</p> <p>Provide support to children with diabetes through an agreed health/education protocol.</p> <p>Deliver the Facilitating Life and Resilience Education (FLARE) Mental Health project in partnership with Public Health Agency.</p> | Number of children and young people from section 75 groups supported | Year 1-4 Assistant Director Education |

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| 2.2. | EA will have a better understanding of specific needs as they relate to section 75 characteristics and deliver focused action | EA will analyse emerging new data from the Audit of C2K to inform the delivery of new targeted focused interventions that may be required | Emerging Trends identified Proposed actions | Year 3 Assistant Director Education |
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3. Bullying

| | Outcome | Action | Measure | Lead and timeframe |
|------|---|--|---|---|
| 3.1. | Schools will be better prepared and equipped to address all forms of bullying | <p>EA will continue to work with our partners to provide guidance to schools on how to comply with the recording requirements of the Anti-Bullying Legislation</p> <p>EA will develop and provide supplementary guidance to our schools on the roles of senior managers and governors in addressing bullying in schools</p> <p>EA will continue to support schools to meet the needs of individual pupils or groups, through the EA Behavioural Support Service.</p> | <p>Guidance provided and disseminated to schools</p> <p>Recording of bullying incidents in schools</p> <p>Number of referrals to the EA Behavioural Support Service</p> | <p>Education Directorate Year 1</p> <p>CYPS Year 2</p> |
| 3.2. | All pupils will feel safe and welcome in their school | With the support of the Anti-Bullying Forum, EA will develop an anti-bullying campaign across our schools, including principal and Boards of Governor training, to develop a strong and visible anti-bullying culture in schools | Campaign materials Pupil survey results | Education Directorate, CYPS Directorate and Equality Unit Year 2 |

4. Data

| | Outcome | Action | Measure | Lead and timeframe |
|------|---|--|------------------------------------|---|
| 4.1. | EA will have a better picture of its staff make up based on section 75 characteristics | EA will ensure the new Human Resources system allows staff to easily and confidentially update their personal data | % increase in personal data | Human Resources Year 2 |
| 4.2. | EA will access improved benchmarking against key outcomes for all Roma, Traveller and Newcomer children and young people. | EA will access and review regular data (via C2K) for Roma, Travellers and Newcomers children and young people. EA will annually publish the Intercultural Education Service Delivery Plan | Data reports Annual Reports | Intercultural Education Service CYPS Directorate Year 3 Year 1 |
| 4.3. | EA will have a better understanding of need, where there is a current limited understanding. | Research will be carried out into the needs of young people from Rural Areas Research will be carried out into the needs of young people with additional needs Research will be carried out into the needs of young carers | Published research reports | Year 1 Year 1 Year 2 |

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| | | <p>Research will be carried out into the needs of young parents</p> <p>Research will be carried out into the needs of young travellers</p> | | <p>Year 2</p> <p>Year 3</p> <p>Assistant Director Youth Services</p> |
| 4.4. | EA will have a better understanding of the functionality of the current C2K system and its ability to monitor the section 75 characteristics of pupils | EA will audit the functionality of the current C2K system to determine its ability to monitor the section 75 characteristics of pupils and reporting | Audit report published | <p>Year 1</p> <p>Assistant Director Education</p> |
| 4.5. | The newly procured School based Information Management System will have full functionality for capturing and reporting on the section 75 characteristics of pupils in schools | EA will ensure the specification for the new Information Management System has current C2K system and its ability to monitor | Lot 8 Specification documentation | <p>Year 3</p> <p>Director of Education</p> |

5. Emotional Health and Wellbeing

| | Outcome | Action | Measure | Lead and timeframe |
|------|--|--|---|---|
| 5.1. | Emotional Health and Wellbeing outcomes for Looked After Children will improve | The Education Authority through the Looked After Children Team in the Education Welfare Service, will continue to support individual LAC pupils at all key stages who are experiencing difficulties in school. | Number of referred looked after children making progress in attendance | Head of Education Welfare Service |
| 5.2. | Schools will be welcoming places for pupils and their families, where every child feels safe, where they are accepted regardless of what they believe, where they are from or what they look like, they become beacons in the community, places where cultural diversity is valued and celebrated | EA will establish a pilot scheme for the "Schools of Sanctuary" programme. | 10 schools, per year, will be Schools of Sanctuary, over the next 3 years (30 schools in total) | Intercultural Education Service CYPS Directorate Year 1 - 3 |
| 5.3. | Vulnerable children and young people will feel supported and equipped to deal with emotional issues following critical incidents in schools | EA will support vulnerable children and young people following the death of a pupil or member of the school through the Critical Incident Response Team. EA will ensure the service is easily accessible for schools and promote this to schools. | Number of schools supported | CYPS Annually CYPS Year 1 |

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| 5.4. | Schools will be supported to develop a nurturing environment for all their pupils | EA will continue to manage, support and develop the 30 Nurturing Schools in NI and develop a Nurturing Framework to support all schools to develop a Nurturing Environment, supporting the Emotional Health and Wellbeing of their pupils | Number of schools adopting the Nurturing Framework | CYPS Year 1-3 |
| 5.5. | EA will better understand and respond to the needs of schools | EA will engage with schools to determine with them their areas of concerns for pupil wellbeing and support. EA will undertake service reviews based on the feedback, and in consultation and engagement with schools | Results of Schools Survey and Engagement Session Outcomes of Service Reviews | CYPS Year 1 CYPS Year 1-4 |
| 5.6. | Young people receiving support in Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) Centre's will be more resilient and have improved personal development outcomes | EA will deliver personal development and resilience programmes to young people, in EOTAS provision, through a youth worker. | Number of young people availing of support Improved personal development scores | CYPS Year 1 |
| 5.7. | Young people in mainstream schools will be more resilient and have improved personal development outcomes | EA will develop personal development and resilience programmes for young people in schools which will be delivered by the Youth Service. This work is in addition to the work that is carried out through the curriculum in schools. | Number of pupils supported Number of pupils gaining accreditation | CYPS Assistant Di Youth Service Years 1-4 |

6. Workforce

| | Outcome | Action | Measure | Lead and timeframe |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| 6.1. | EA will have a better picture of staff satisfaction levels across the organisation | EA will develop a model for accurately measuring staff engagement | Staff survey launched | Equality Unit Year 2 and re-surveying to be agreed |
| 6.2. 6.3. 6.4. 6.5. 6.6. 6.7. | EA will have a workforce that is highly capable, engaged and empowered; we will be recognised as an employer of choice in Northern Ireland and have highly capable leaders and managers who develop engaged and performing teams. | EA will sign, along with Trade Union colleagues, the 'Joint Declaration of Protection at Work and Inclusive Working Environment' | Signed Joint Declaration Communications to staff | Equality Unit Year 1 |
| | | Working with trade unions and other partners, EA will develop and deliver a gender action plan. We will report on this annually | Action Plan and Progress Reports | Equality Unit Development in Year 1 Delivery by Year 4 |
| | | The EA will establish a Staff Support Network for LGBT colleagues. The Authority will join Diversity Champions programme and seek to become a Stonewall Top 100 employer | LGBT Staff Network and Stonewall Top 100 Employer | Equality Unit Year 3 for Network, Year 2 for Diversity Champions and Year 4 for Stonewall Top 100 |

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| | | EA will develop equality and diversity eLearning for EA staff to access | eLearning Modules | Equality Unit Year 4 |
| | | EA will develop a mentoring scheme for staff from under-represented groups across the organisation | Mentoring Scheme in place | Equality Unit Year 4 |
| | | EA will develop processes for encouraging more young people to apply and work for EA | Policy and procedures in place More young people applying to work in EA | Equality Unit Year 2 for policy and processes Year 4 for increase in applicants |

