

East of England Regional Development Agency Single Equality Scheme 2009-12

This draft and the accompanying Single Equality Scheme Action Plan, are intended as “living documents”. We welcome any comments you may have, which should be sent to: equality@eeda.org.uk

If you require this document in another format or language, we will do our best to assist you. Please contact:

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East of England Regional Development Agency Single Equality Scheme 2009-12

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Introduction

EEDA's vision for equality

EEDA believes that the diversity of our region is a great source of strength. From our different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives comes strength. Different communities make a vital contribution to the economic, social and cultural success of the region.

Promoting equality, tackling barriers and promoting good relations ensures that we harness the potential of the region's diverse and talented population. Ensuring social and economic inclusion is central to economic regeneration and therefore an important priority for us.

Equality is not a minority concern. It should matter to everyone who wants to see a prosperous and successful region. During a period of particular economic challenge, it is vital that businesses in the region adopt imaginative ways of attracting and retaining the best talents in their workforce and investing in their future for example, by adopting flexible working practices, providing mentoring opportunities for less experienced people, and creating an agile organisation which can respond to changing needs. In other words, a diverse talent pool of people who can help businesses through the downturn, and respond swiftly and appropriately when the economy starts to recover. We are working with local partners to create an environment that allows all individuals and communities to fulfil their potential.

We strongly believe that we should strive to lead by example, and are proud to have achieved the Committed2Equality gold standard for our procurement and HR policies and practices, and the Workwise UK Mark of Excellence for flexible and smarter working practices. However, we know we cannot be complacent if we are to maintain and continually improve our standards in these areas.

EEDA's legal responsibilities

There are equality-related areas that have specific anti-discrimination legislation associated with them (age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation and transgender/ gender re-assignment). However, as a public authority we also have additional specific legal responsibilities to tackle discrimination and promote equality on the grounds of disability, gender and race.

This Single Equality Scheme ensures that EEDA meets its legislative responsibilities to promote equality in everything that we do. Equality is not simply about avoiding discrimination. As an agency we want to focus on what we do and how we can

actively promote equality. We believe this is to the benefit of our core role of promoting sustainable economic well-being and growth in the East of England. These legal duties were met in our previous race, disability and gender schemes.

The disability, gender and race equality duties are duties on public authorities to promote equality in all their relevant functions, policies and activities. They were introduced at different times and vary in their implications and EEDA's approach takes account of this. Their purpose is to ensure that public authorities address systemic discrimination and disadvantage against particular groups of people and that public bodies actively promote equality through their work.

All organisations that carry out functions of a public nature must meet the requirements of the duties and all key public authorities that are listed in the relevant codes of practice and regulations must produce and implement equality schemes and action plans. These documents must not simply detail what the authority is doing to comply with its rights towards individuals. The purpose of the documents and of the duties themselves, is to provide a robust, measurable framework to generate systemic changes that result in a more equal society.

As the evidence base to this Scheme shows, there are stark inequalities in every aspect of life that affect people according to their disability or health status, their gender and their ethnic group. The duties are designed to change this and to overcome historic and continuing exclusion, systemic discrimination, negative attitudes and low expectations and aspirations.

The equality duties require that any single equality scheme sets out in clear detail how the general duties relating to race, disability and gender will be met. We have therefore listed the requirements of each of the three equality duties and in our action plan we set out the actions we intend to take in order to meet these obligations.

Disability equality

We have ensured that this Scheme pays due regard to the following requirements of the disability equality duty:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination.
- To eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disabilities.
- To promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and others.
- To take steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities, even where that involves treating them more favourably than others.
- To promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.
- To encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

Gender equality

We have ensured that this scheme pays due regard to the following requirements of the gender equality duty:

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

Race equality

We have ensured that this scheme pays due regard to the following requirements of the race equality duty:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination
- To promote equality of opportunity
- To promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

Other areas of equality

There are currently legal duties on us to produce equality schemes in the area of disability, gender and race and we have set ourselves challenging goals in these areas.

It is likely that in future we will also have duties to promote equality for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities, people of different religions or belief, and people of all ages. During the next three years we will be preparing the organisation to meet these new duties when the time comes, building on the experience of developing and delivering our first single equality scheme.

Our equality impact assessment process includes consideration of all strands of equality. This will provide us with helpful experience and a useful evidence base for setting out how we comply with any new equality duty. During the next three years, we will begin formalising our collation of data on the broader strands of equality and consider national and regional evidence in relation to all areas of equality.

Depending upon developments in legislation, we anticipate producing a pan-equality scheme covering the broader equality strands from 2012. This pan-equality scheme will build on our learning from the current equality scheme and our experience in tackling discrimination across all six strands.

By becoming more confident in responding to all equality strands, we will also be better placed to understand the relationships between these strands and wider issues, including experiences of migration and the impact of socio-economic status. For example, EEDA's migrant worker activity since 2004 has shown how the organisation can get involved on issues for one particular group facing disadvantage, who make a significant economic contribution to the region. However, research shows that many are engaged in jobs which under-utilises their ability and that the region could benefit even more from their presence were we to harness the skills they offer more effectively. EEDA needs to learn lessons from this

work to ensure that other groups facing disadvantage are supported to maximise their potential to contribute to the economy.

About EEDA

The East of England Development Agency (EEDA) is one of nine regional development agencies and exists to lead the sustainable economic growth of the East of England.

EEDA is tasked with improving the economic performance of the East of England, a region bordering London comprising the counties of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. The region is home to over 430,000 businesses and has a fast growing population, currently 5.6 million people.

The East of England is economically dynamic, contributing £109.9 billion per annum towards the UK's gross added value, representing almost 10 per cent of the UK total. Eighty-two per cent of its population is economically active, one of the highest proportions of any area of the UK.

Within the region, EEDA is the principal agency tasked with driving improvement in economic performance. In doing so, it acts as strategic navigator - leading partners in delivering shared economic objectives; strategic influencer and expert, mobilising partners with greater resources, and contributing expertise and discretionary funding to address particular economic market failures; and commissioner, using scarce resources strategically to commission projects or programmes at the right spatial level – increasingly in close partnership with local authorities.

Reducing resources, the changing role of RDAs, the fluid national agenda, the economic climate as well as the findings of a recent evaluation exercise, have necessitated a re-engineering of EEDA's business model to shift focus towards a more efficient and responsive business-focussed operation, to enable a swift response to economic shocks and accelerate the transition to a planned, phased and evidenced integrated investment planning framework in localities. This will enable EEDA to become a more flexible responder to changing economic circumstances, deliver on national and regional priorities and manage its investments in places in a more strategic and cohesive manner.

EEDA provides a crucial link between the needs of business and Government policies. A major responsibility for the agency is to help create an environment in which businesses in the region can flourish through offering business support, encouraging new startups, matching skills provision to employer needs and bringing business investment into the region.

Broadly, EEDA's activities involve:

- setting and shaping the direction of economic development in the East of England
- persuading and influencing others to bring resources together to find innovative ways to solve challenging economic issues
- investing in imaginative projects that challenge the norm and have a significant impact on sustainable economic development in the East of England.

Our activities are shaped by the revised Regional Economic Strategy for the East of England 2008-2031 (RES), which was launched in September 2008 following widespread consultation which generated over 230 formal responses.

The focus of EEDA's corporate plan is on addressing the priorities in the RES over the short-term. The immediate investment priorities have been reviewed to prepare a targeted response to the economic downturn. This includes a package of support for businesses to survive the recession, and for individuals to remain in or re-enter the labour market quickly.

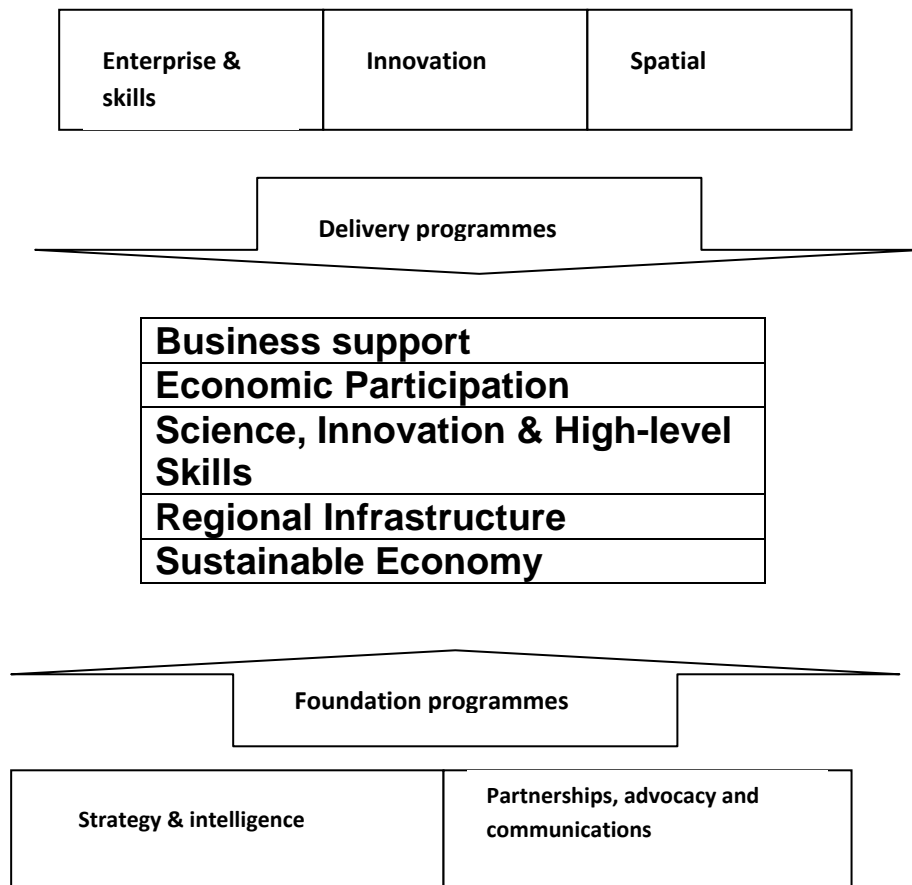
EEDA's activities are also informed by a number of government policy reviews. In particular, the sub-national review of economic development and regeneration will have a profound effect on the role and functions of EEDA, as well as on local authorities and other regional partners.

As a result of the changing environment in which we operate, the importance of partnership working is heightened, as EEDA's role becomes increasingly one of a strategic influencer - working with partners to act as a catalyst for programmes and investment.

EEDA's Corporate Plan 2009-11

EEDA's corporate plan contains five delivery and two foundation programmes, developed to address specific market failures. The principles of sustainable development and economic opportunities for all underpin the corporate programmes.

Figure 1 – relationship between market failures and corporate programmes



Investment priorities in 2009-10

In 2009-10 the following activities will be a priority for EEDA:

- 1) An accessible, integrated and responsive business support offer – focused on economic recovery**
- 2) Innovation – at the heart of industrial activism**
- 3) Spatial economy – strategic investment programmes in key sub-regions**
- 4) Sub-national Review transition in the East of England**

5) Strategic leadership at national level

6) Organisational development and impact

You can find further specific detail on the respective programmes on our website, www.eeda.org.uk

In order to help us shape regional strategy, EEDA also commissions research studies in areas of interest. All of our research reports are published on the regional intelligence centre website: Insight East website, www.insighteast.org.uk

Case studies

Much of EEDA's work already promotes equality in relation to disability, gender and race. However, we have included a number of case studies of particular projects here to give an indication of the way in which much of our work actively contributes to the promotion of equality.

Enterprising Women Website

EEDA-supports the Enterprising Women programme, run by YTKO, to help women to start up and develop their own enterprise.

Membership is free and it is open to all women from any background, location, sector, whether they are just starting out, running an established business, or looking to accelerate growth.

Enterprising Women started in June 2006 and now has more than 5000 women and 230 support organisations involved in its online community. The community offers training to new entrepreneurs, as well as women already in business, and has directly supported more than 2,000 women with their skills development and networking. As a result, around 250 new businesses have started up, creating new jobs in the region and adding to the £52 million turnover that women's businesses within the community reported as generating in 2007.

Almost half (44 per cent) of all the business women registered with the Enterprising Women community are mothers, with children of pre-school or school-age.

Healthy Steps to Employment

Healthy Steps to Employment (HSE) is an innovative project that helps people on Incapacity Benefit in Bedfordshire and Luton take the steps necessary to get back into work. With funding from EEDA, it is run by a partnership that includes Bedfordshire Primary Care Trust, Jobcentre Plus, local councils and the voluntary and community sectors.

EEDA supports HSE through its Investing in Communities funding programme. It works by increasing the capabilities and confidence of people on Incapacity Benefit and by helping them prepare for a return to work, and then to stay there for the long-term. HSE provides a team of health and wellbeing advisers to work with clients and to coordinate with key partners to provide support.

Luton Carnival Arts Centre

The EEDA-funded Luton Carnival Arts Centre is a national centre for carnival excellence, boosting Luton's economy, cultural heritage and tourism. The centre focuses on performance and training, and on helping businesses associated with carnival. It trains young people who are not working or already in training schemes and particularly encourages African, Caribbean and other ethnic minority communities to take part.

Self employment projects

EEDA also funded a three-year project to 2006, to promote self-employment amongst the over 50s. Activities included providing information on self-employment/running your own business, holding advice/training events and publishing a report.

A European Social Fund project which was co-funded by EEDA promoted self-employment amongst under-represented groups (over 50s, disabled people and people from black and ethnic minority communities) in becoming self-employed in franchising and direct selling.

Business Link the East of England, the public sector business support agency which is under the management of EEDA, provides a number of workshops in setting up your own business. Attendance at these start-up workshops is monitored in relation to beneficiaries' ethnicity, gender, disability and age, to help inform gaps in the service.

The Regional Economic Strategy and related documents

The Regional Economic Strategy (RES) for the East of England 2008-31, 'Inventing our future. Collective action for a sustainable economy', was launched at our annual meeting on 9 September 2008.

It is essential that we work closely with partners in the public, private, voluntary and community sectors in developing the economy in a way that promotes and encourages social progress and environmental and sustainable resource management. As an RDA, EEDA, in its role as a strategic catalyst for change, is

uniquely placed to promote equality in regeneration and business and to influence the policies and practices of organisations at regional level.

Through its membership of regional partnerships such as the East of England Skills and Competitiveness Partnership and the Nations and Regions East partnership, EEDA is well-placed to ensure that there is a coordinated approach to tackling inequality and disadvantage through the work of key partners such as Jobcentre Plus, the Learning and Skills Council, Sport England. EEDA also has a significant influencing role through the organisations that it manages, such as Business Link East, East of England Tourism and East of England International.

The Joint Implementation Plan of the RES and the East of England Plan underwent an EqIA as part of the integrated sustainability appraisal. The EqIA has informed development of this Scheme.

The evidence base

This part of the scheme briefly reviews some key facts relating to age, disability, gender and ethnicity in the region.

These are mostly drawn from the equality impact assessment¹ [link to EqIA] of the Joint Implementation Plan of the Regional Economic Strategy and the East of England Plan, which in turn informs EEDA's corporate plan, and the East of England Economic Participation Study [link to http://www.eeda.org.uk/files/East_of_England_Economic_Participation_Study.pdf].²

These documents give a more comprehensive picture of the equality-related evidence base in the region.

Overview of the region

- Population of 5.6 million and the fastest growing region.
- 430,000 businesses.
- Gross value added³ (GVA) of £109.9 billion - 9.7 per cent of the UK total.

¹ Marc Adams Associates 'Equality Impact Assessment of the Draft Implementation Plan of the Regional Economic Strategy and East of England Plan', September 2008.

² Alexander McTier, Andrea Glass, Morgane Lefaucheux and Alan McGregor (2008) 'East of England Economic Participation Study'.

³ Gross value added is the difference between output and intermediate consumption for any given sector/industry. That is the difference between the value of goods and

- GVA per head of £19,599 compared to the UK average of £18,631.
- Employment rate of 77.2 per cent in the East of England, compared to the UK rate of 74.4 per cent.
- In the second quarter of 2007 the proportion of children living in workless households in the East of England was 14 per cent, compared with 16 per cent in the rest of the UK.
- The level of multiple deprivation score in the East of England is 14.86, compared to the UK score of 21.61.⁴
- The East of England has a higher proportion of people aged over 45 than the England average and this is growing. By 2021 it is predicted that 50 per cent of the population will be over 50 years.
- Of these it is estimated that 60 per cent will either be disabled, or a carer for a disabled person, before retirement age. Effectively this equates to one third of the region's population - 1.8 million people.
- The population in the East of England comprises 91.4 per cent white British and 8.6 per cent other ethnic groups. The non-white population is lower than the English average, but comparable to some other regions of England. (Paper 4, Scott Wilson, 2007)
- The black and minority ethnic (BME) population in the East of England is dispersed, but with some concentrations in particular areas, for example Luton has a BME population of 28 per cent and Thetford has a sizeable Portuguese population. There are also significant numbers of isolated groups in rural areas.

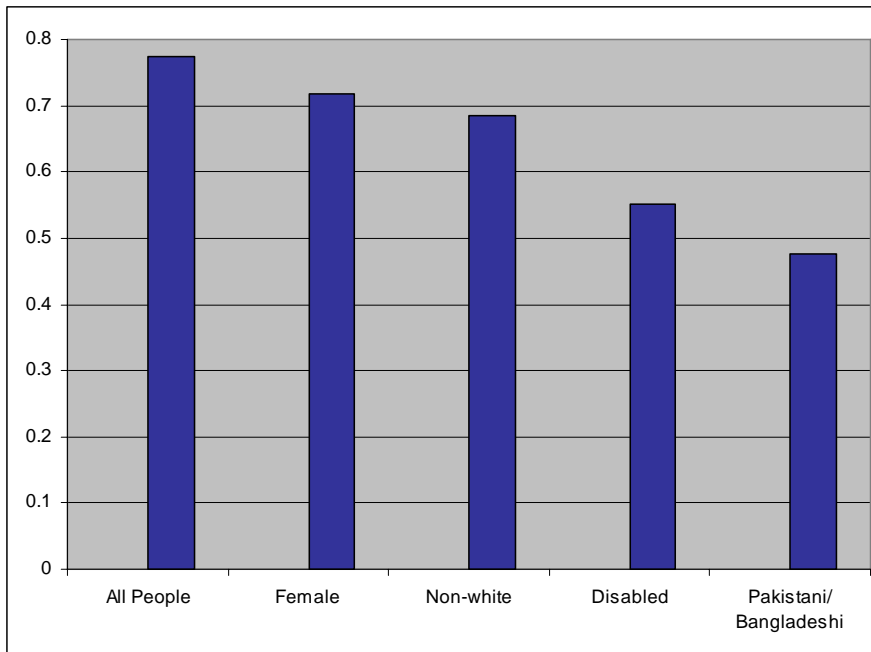
Compared to the average for the region, women, people from ethnic minorities and disabled people all experience lower employment rates. People who fall into more than one of these categories are likely to experience more acute economic disadvantage.

Employment rates for different groups⁵

services produced and the cost of raw materials and other inputs which are used up in production (definition from the Office of National Statistics).

⁴ All statistics dated April 2008.

⁵ *Source:* Annual Population Survey; Labour Force Survey.



EEDA staff, management and Board profile

EEDA's headcount, including staff and Board, as at 9th March 2009 was 234. Bi-annual reports are presented to EEDA's Resources Committee on our staff profile, disaggregated to indicate ethnicity, gender, disability, age and grading.

Gender and ethnicity at different levels within the EEDA workforce and EEDA Board

Staff in post at 31st March 2009 by ethnic origin, gender and grade (where there are no employees attributed to certain ethnic groups these groups have been removed for the purposes of this report). Black and Minority Ethnic staff (BME) in Fig.1 represent staff from the "non-white" BME community, Fig 2 breaks this down to ethnic minority groups using the census data categories.

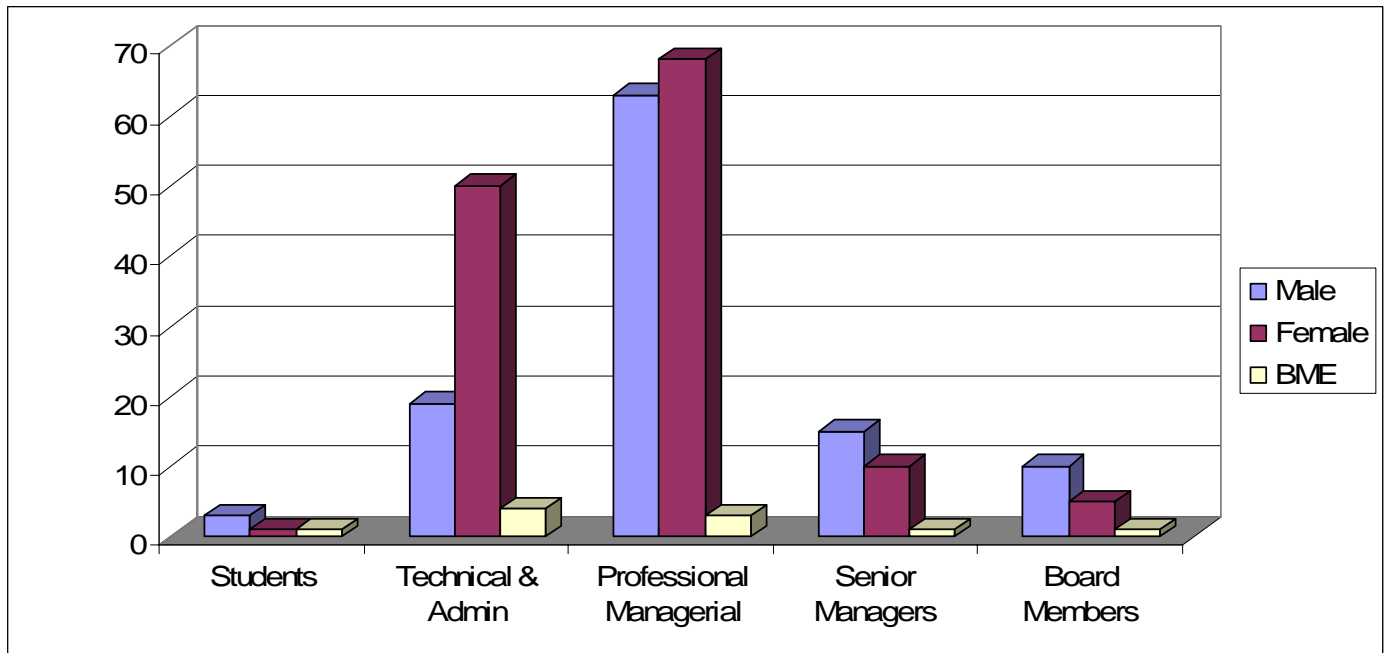


Fig.1

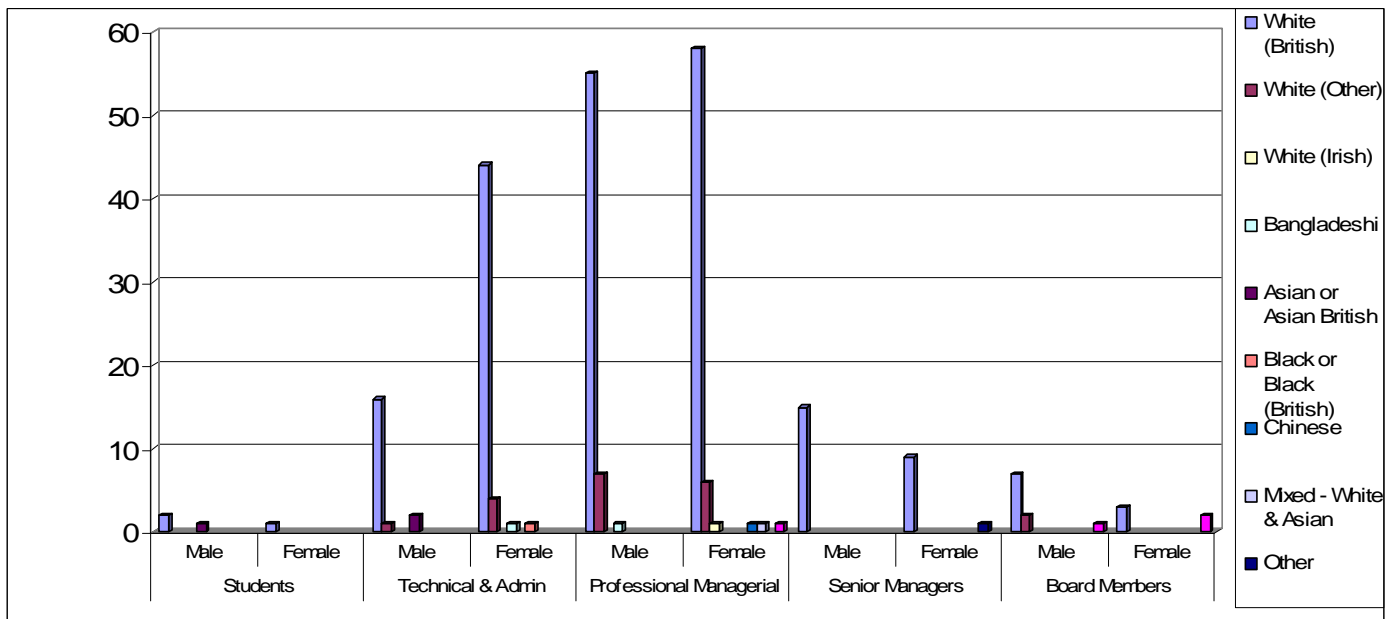


Fig.2

The number of staff who have declared they are disabled is very small and constitutes 0.9% of EEDA’s workforce, which is well below the average and unlikely to reflect the real profile of EEDA. We will therefore make a concerted effort to make EEDA a more disability “confident” organization – in other words, one where non-disabled staff are more aware of disability issues, and where disabled staff feel the culture within EEDA is sufficiently supportive to enable them to self-declare as disabled.

Comparison between EEDA workforce, regional and national workforce as a whole

The ethnic origin of the total workforce across the region and nationally as detailed in the Census for April 2001 (latest accurate information available). Set out beside these figures are EEDA's workforce figures as described in the table above.

Description	Ethnic origin of workforce (including board members) compared to national and regional statistics		
	National %	Regional %	EEDA Workforce 31 Mar 09
White (British)	87	91.4	86.1%
White (Irish)	1.3	1.1	0.4%
White (Other)	2.7	2.5	8.2%
Mixed – White & Black Caribbean	0.5	0.4	
Mixed – White & Black African	0.2	0.1	
Mixed – White & Asian	0.4	0.3	0.4%
Mixed – Other	0.3	0.3	
Asian or Asian British: Indian	2.1	0.9	
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	1.4	0.7	
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	0.6	0.3	0.9%
Asian or Asian British: Other	0.5	0.2	1.2%
Black or Black British: Caribbean	1.1	0.5	0
Black or Black British: African	1.0	0.3	0
Black or Black British: Other	0.2	0.1	0.4%
Chinese	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Other	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%
Unknown	-	-	1.6%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Table 2 suggests that EEDA's workforce aligns closely with the ethnic mix of both the regional and national workforce.

Age Profile (including board members)

Age Range	No of Employees	%
20 or under	0	0
21 to 30	28	11.6
31 to 40	83	34.4
41 to 50	62	25.7
51 to 60	56	23.3
Over 60	12	5.0
Total	241	100

We are able to analyse a range of data on who is applying for jobs, those appointed, promoted and leaving. Amongst the working age population (16-65yrs), the estimated total number of disabled people, as defined under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, is around 15% nationally. This percentage increases to 44% in the 50-65 year age group. It is likely therefore, that the actual number of disabled staff at EEDA is higher than that disclosed.

We have identified a range of actions to boost rates of disclosure of disability. These actions are contained within our new action plan. We will consider how we can apply this to disclosure of other personal characteristics, such as sexual orientation and religion or belief, to inform our work in these areas.

We regularly consider any trends or issues in relation to equality and our monitoring data, such as in take-up of training and appraisal outcomes.

Among the Board, five of its 14 members are female, one is from an ethnic minority group and none have declared a disability.

EEDA carries out a staff survey from time to time. Our next survey will include equality and diversity questions, but we will also take into account the more specific equality-related information we are able to obtain through the Committed2Equality assessment (see under "EEDA as Employer").

Filling the evidence gaps

We are aware that both the national and regional evidence on equality is far from comprehensive. We anticipate that electronic systems will be in place during the period 2009-2010, to enable us to more easily obtain disaggregated equality data analysis of beneficiaries of EEDA-funded activities. This will strengthen the evidence base available to us, which should enable us to improve our strategy and planning for the region and monitor our performance, and where appropriate make any adjustments in relation to the promotion of equality.

In the lifetime of this scheme and action plan, we want to see improvements in the the following areas:

- comprehensive information about our staff and Board profile: - recruitment, shortlisting, appointments made, promotion, grading, training and personal development opportunities, performance and disciplinary management broken down by equality group
- qualitative information about the experiences and views of staff, managers and Board members
- information about beneficiaries of our services and funded projects, such as any specialist business support, broken down by equality group

- baseline data such as on employment where possible, broken down by equality group and spatial areas.

We have used the evidence base available to develop a range of new actions for this Scheme, contained within our Action Plan 2009-12 which is appended.

We will keep this Scheme and Action Plan under review, using any additional intelligence gained to help inform objectives for specific programmes of work, to influence our partners and to improve our own performance.

Themes and priorities

Four main themes have emerged from our analysis of the evidence base and our involvement of stakeholders (see below):

1. The economic downturn is the major threat to economic and social participation and cohesion in the region.
2. EEDA will prioritise promoting opportunities for economic participation and social inclusion for groups disadvantaged in those areas of work which fall within the agency's remit, such as including skills development, employment, business support, culture, tourism and sport.
3. The economic position of disabled people, women and people from particular ethnic groups within the region needs to improve; EEDA has an important role in ensuring that its activities as an employer, an influencer, an investor and a procurer proactively address equality and contribute to closing the economic equality gaps for disabled people, men, women and people from different ethnic groups.⁶
4. EEDA needs to ensure that equality is better mainstreamed into our corporate processes, particularly in terms of setting strategy, project planning and monitoring performance and effectiveness of outcomes.

How we will use our data

As mentioned above, EEDA recognises the need to use its evidence base effectively in measuring its performance in promoting equality. It also understands the importance of disaggregated data in understanding its ability to promote equality of opportunity among people with a wide range of impairments, men and women and people from different ethnic backgrounds (not just between white people and all other ethnic groups).

⁶ While much of our evidence demonstrates that women are at a disadvantage compared to men in the region, our gender duty extends to tackling discrimination against men and promoting equality between men and women. There are some areas of life where men are at a disadvantage relative to women and EEDA is concerned to tackle this.

We will use the evidence gathered to:

1. Measure EEDA's performance in implementing our equality action plan
2. Measure EEDA's impact in promoting equality across the region
3. Focus resources and activity to promote the engagement of relevant stakeholders in EEDA's work to promote equality
4. Identify areas for positive action where this is appropriate.

What have we done? Developing the scheme and action plan

Introduction

This is EEDA's first single equality scheme, covering work on disability, gender and race equality. We have previously prepared and delivered separate schemes for each of these areas.

The scheme covers the work that we do, as identified through the objectives of our corporate plan 2008-2011. It builds on our existing schemes on disability, gender and race. It reflects EEDA's legal duties and responsibilities for the specific duties of disability, gender and race.

Our single equality scheme is our framework for mainstreaming equality through all of our projects, programmes, policies, processes and procedures, as well as our values and behaviours as an organisation.

The scheme also supports EEDA's work with partners regionally and sub-regionally to mainstream equality in the region.

The involvement of stakeholders

The development of a single equality scheme has provided the agency with an opportunity to learn from previous equality schemes. This has been complemented by extensive internal and external consultation activity.

Staff and wider stakeholder engagement and consultation in the design of the Scheme has included:

- a specific meeting of our external equality advisory group held on 4 March 2009
- a staff focus group held on 16 March 2009
- an ad hoc focus group of representatives from equality organisations in the region held on 16 March 2009.

Key priorities emerging from involvement of our stakeholders

- The economic recession is likely to be the dominant factor in the period 2009-12, threatening to further isolate, marginalise and disadvantage the groups of people this scheme is designed to support.
- Increased inequality will have wider negative impacts on the economic and social health of the region.
- The rurality of the region and problems with transport are a major issue for the East of England. People with mental health problems, for example, can face social isolation and economic exclusion because of poor transport. People from ethnic minorities living in rural areas can be particularly isolated from support networks.
- There are also areas of deprivation in urban areas, particularly affecting the region's ethnic minority communities.
- The government's welfare reform programmes were launched during a period of economic growth and may be less realistic now. Third sector agencies will also suffer during the recession.
- The voluntary and community sector is likely to suffer as a result of fewer funding opportunities and increased demand, with a knock-on impact on economic and social inclusion and equality.
- EEDA should aim for a clear set of actions and measures on equality.
- EEDA's procurement processes provide opportunities to promote equality. EEDA should only fund projects that demonstrate through EqIA that they are taking equality seriously.
- 2012 provides a huge opportunity for the region to promote social and economic inclusion and women, people from ethnic minorities and disabled people must benefit equally with others.
- EEDA should use any leverage it has with banks in the region to ensure that disabled people, women and BME-led businesses are supported.
- EEDA should lead on developing and promoting an influential equality business case.

EEDA's equality impact assessment process (EqIA)

About EqIA at EEDA

EEDA understands the importance of equality impact assessments (EqIAs) and is committed to ensuring that the organisation benefits from their outcomes. EEDA sees the value of EqIAs being:

1. To consider the equality-related needs of EEDA's employees, partners, and stakeholders in all activity.
2. To assess the impact of EEDA's activity on disadvantaged groups.

3. To address differential treatment and maximise equality.
4. To add value to the EEDA's way of working.
5. To comply with the law.
6. To assist EEDA in its aim of becoming an exemplar organisation in equality in all its activities.

EEDA has incorporated equality impact assessment into its project, policy and strategy planning and development. We have found that EqlAs are a useful way to embed equality into our business. They help us to identify barriers to particular groups' participation in our activities and to actively promote equality.

For example, in the Nations and Regions East's (NRE) draft regional business plan for the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics 'Rising to the Challenge', the EqlA identified the need for baseline data and the opportunity provided by the NRE partnership to enable measurement of the objective to increase participation in sport by under-represented groups.

We have a simple but straightforward process for undertaking EqlAs which can be summarised as follows:

1. Identify the aims of the project/initiative/strategy/programme.
2. Screen the proposed initiative for likely impact.
3. Gather more detailed data where the screening process has identified the need.
4. (Re-)assess the likely impact.
5. Consider alternative measures where appropriate/ a likely negative impact is identified.
6. Consult on the initiative if not already previously done, or if wider consultation required.
7. Make a decision on the initiative.
8. Monitor the initiative.
9. Publish a summary of results.

Screening criteria

EEDA is moving to a position where all relevant policies, projects and programmes are screened for equality impact. The criteria used to determine the need for a full equality impact assessment is a positive answer to the following two questions:

- Is the policy, project or programme significant in terms of the number of people it affects or its impact on service delivery or approach?
- Is the policy project or programme minor but has, or is likely to have, a differential impact on different groups of people?

During 2008, EEDA conducted EqlAs on all its HR policies and its new programmes of work, including the business plans of the region's local area agreements.

We have also taken the lead in undertaking EqlA's on regional partnership programmes such as the draft European Regional Development Fund (including European Social Fund), and the draft regional Olympics and Paralympics draft business plans.

We have found that EqlAs are a useful way to “mainstream equality” into our business. They help us to identify barriers to participation in our activities and ways to actively promote equality. EqlA screening is included at project concept stage, which precedes the development of a project, to enable any equality issues to be raised at an early stage.

We provide training on EqlA for staff involved in strategy, policy and project management development and appraisal. We have trained approximately 80 per cent of relevant staff from a range of grades. This process will continue to take into account staff changes and also include refresher opportunities.

Our project planning mechanism includes EqlA at an early stage of the project development. Whilst a significant section of the outstanding “back catalogue” of policies (e.g. HR policies) have now been assessed, we have identified the next set of current policies for assessment.

Prioritisation of EqlAs

Over the next three years, we plan to complete work on our back catalogue on a prioritised basis.

The following criteria are used to prioritise existing policies for EqlA:

High Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is existing evidence of potential discrimination or equality-related unequal outcome. • Policy being assessed is likely to result in a major change in the way activity/services are delivered. • The policy is directly related to EEDA’s ability to govern, deliver services and/or meet targets.
Medium Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed evidence of discrimination or equality-related unequal outcome. • The policy does not recommend any major changes. • The policy is not directly related to the EEDA’s ability to govern, deliver services and/or meet targets.
Low Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence suggests little in the way of unequal treatment. • There little in the way of impact on employment/service delivery.

The EEDA Equality Impact Assessment framework and toolkit can be found at: <http://www.eeda.org.uk/213.asp>

Reviewing and identifying EEDA's relevant functions and policies

We have reviewed EEDA's relevant functions and activities and set them out below, linking them to the relevant set of actions in our plan.

Functions	Activities	Action Plan objective numbers
EEDA as employer and corporate governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment and selection. • Learning and organisational development. • Performance management. • Equal opportunities. • Overarching HR policies. • Internal communications strategy. 	[To be completed]
EEDA as influencer: developing the regional economic strategy with stakeholders and influencing regional plans through our role as statutory consultee or membership of regional partnerships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing an evidence base. • Developing strategy. • Regional leadership. • Policy-making. • Consultation and involvement. • Events management. • External communications • Lobbying and advocating. 	
EEDA as an investor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building partnerships. • Project appraisal. • Project monitoring and evaluation. • Project and programme management. • Investment plans • Enterprise, Skills and economic participation • Strategy and planning 	
EEDA as a procurer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement of goods and services. • Supplier diversity 	

It is clear that our functions and activities provide opportunities for us to address the different aspects of the equality duties. For example:

- our plans on recruitment, retention and career development give us the opportunity to tackle discrimination and harassment and to promote equality
- our internal and external communication strategies give us the opportunity to promote equal opportunity between different groups and to promote good relations between people of different ethnic groups and positive attitudes towards disabled people
- the work that we are doing with the Department for Business, Innovation and Science and the Government Office for the East of England on our own Board recruitment and our role as an influencer of others in the region enables us to promote the participation of underrepresented groups in public life.

EEDA's functions

EEDA as an employer

EEDA employs around 240 staff.

EEDA is committed to recruit and retain the best talents for our workforce, whatever their background. Our role as an employer gives us a major opportunity to tackle discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity between different groups, to promote positive attitudes and to take steps to take account of people's disabilities and health conditions, including treating them more favorably where it is appropriate to do so. Our management training includes "Managing disability confidence in the workplace" which complements our Manager's Guide to promote disability confidence.

In 2008, EEDA achieved the C2E (Committed to Equality) gold standard accreditation, which audits and assesses our HR and procurement policies and practices. We wanted as far as possible, for the C2E assessment to take into account as broad a view of our staff as possible, across the full range of EEDA's functions. Staff interviews by the C2E assessor were therefore extended from the usual 5-10% to 20-25% of staff in post. The C2E programme is a useful means of helping us to benchmark where we are in our development, and to identify areas for improvement. We maintained gold standard accreditation 2009 and intend to build on our achievements to continually improve our performance year on year.

Complementing our C2E accreditation, EEDA was also been awarded the Investors in People accreditation and the Workwise UK Mark of Excellence in 2008. The Workwise UK quality mark assessed how EEDA deploys and is developing smarter working practices which include techniques such as flexible working, remote working, hot desking and many other ideas which help us as an organisation improve the quality of our services whilst providing more flexibility for staff to manage their own work routines.

In relation to Board recruitment, we have the opportunity to promote participation in public life for underrepresented groups. The Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) is responsible for the recruitment and appointment of RDA Board members but we are working closely with colleagues at BERR and the Government Office in the region to help broaden the pool of potential Board applicants.

EEDA has a zero tolerance to any form of bullying and harassment. The agency has a detailed policy in this area that has recently been reviewed and equality impact assessed. The policy makes clear that bullying and harassment on grounds of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation is also totally unacceptable. As part of its data review, EEDA is exploring further how it can assess performance and perception in eliminating bullying and harassment or this kind and achieving dignity at work for all. This will include a review of the content and format of the staff survey and is an integral part of the equality impact assessment process.

EEDA as an influencer

We recognise our responsibility to ensure that any work undertaken within a partnership framework contributes to our obligations in relation to our equality duties. We expect the same standards from partnership projects that we expect of our own projects. To achieve this, we will consider each partnership project specification to ensure that mechanisms are included to achieve this.

Our role as an influencer provides opportunities across all the different aspects of the three equality duties. This includes promoting equality through our own communications, adhering to good practice standards in terms of accessibility, representation and community cohesion; to tackle equal pay issues; and to improve outcomes for people in employment, skills, housing, transport and other areas of life.

Our plans for this are set out in our equality action plan.

EEDA as an investor

Similarly, in terms of our role as an investor, there are opportunities across all areas of the duties, in particular to promote equality, positive attitudes and participation in public life.

We will do this, for example, by providing a summary of data analysis of beneficiaries across the equality strands, embedding equality and diversity as part of the investor development plan and business planning in our project development, and through our equality advisory group.

EEDA as a procurer

A huge amount of what EEDA does involves selecting contractors to supply services or to deliver projects that promote economic participation in the region. According to the various codes of practice on the equality duties, we need to build relevant equality considerations into the procurement process, to ensure that we are meeting our equality duties in relation to this function.

As a result, EEDA has prioritised ensuring that its procurement opportunities are inclusive and accessible to all businesses.

EEDA is the first UK regional development agency to join Supplier Diversity Europe. EEDA's eTendering system has recently been enhanced to include vendor and contract management systems, the former allowing EEDA to collect data about the size and ethnicity of potential suppliers during the eTendering process.

This provides EEDA with a valuable tool to monitor what types of companies are bidding for and winning contracts. EEDA is just starting to use that functionality and sees it as a vital, long-term tool to ensure 'equal opportunities' in their supply chain.

EEDA uses an eTendering system obtained through an Office of Government Commerce framework agreement, which gives potential suppliers ready access to all EEDA's current opportunities. It also provides potential suppliers with a link to view opportunities of other users of the eTendering system, such as government departments, various NHS trusts and councils.

EEDA's eTendering process has been highlighted as an example of good practice by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.⁷

We have introduced a voluntary equality monitoring questionnaire with all invitations to tender and have begun to analyse the information.

During the lifetime of this scheme, we will explore how we can move to encouraging more people to complete the questionnaire, which will also help test whether organisations tendering are promoting equality.

We will do this by:

- revising standard terms and conditions for contacting services to include information about anti-discrimination and equality legislation
- including a requirement in every contract that the contractor must comply with anti-discrimination provisions

⁷ 'Making practice happen Practitioners' views on the most effective specific equality duties' p.43: <http://www.edf.org.uk/blog/wp-content/uploads/2009/02/final-report-making-practice-happen.pdf>

- where relevant, specifying what evidence the contractor may need to gather for EEDA to demonstrate its compliance with the general or specific duties
- ensuring that equality is appropriately reflected and given due weight in the specification, selection and award criteria and the contract conditions, in a way that is consistent with European Community and UK procurement rules
- ensuring that contractors fully understand any equality requirements of the contract
- monitoring performance on equality where relevant to the contract
- training procurement staff in equality and procurement.

Our plans for this are set out in our equality action plan, objectives x-y.

What are we planning to do?

Key targets

Setting targets is not a legal requirement but the relevant codes of practice say that setting specific targets can play a useful role in ensuring that due regard is paid to equality in key employment or service delivery areas.

We acknowledge that we need a more comprehensive evidence base before we can set accurate and stretching targets across the range of our functions and activities and throughout our corporate project plans. This is particularly in relation to take-up and satisfaction with the projects we run, support and fund.

However, we give some targets here as an interim measure. By 2012, we want to see:

Internal

- We want to see an increase from 2.5 to 5 per cent for the percentage of EEDA staff including managers having the confidence to declare a disability, with more challenging targets set beyond that.
- We want all EEDA premises and venues used for events to be fully accessible according to inclusive design standards and increased take-up of places by disabled people.
- We want to see increased representation of women, disabled people and people from ethnic minorities at senior and Board levels within EEDA, to better reflect the regional demography.

External

- We want to see an increase in economic participation by all groups.
- We want to see an increase in the levels of skills attained by women, disabled people and people from ethnic minorities.

- We want to see a more comprehensive breakdown of those seeking start-up advice from Business Link East, to enable us to assess their effectiveness in providing an inclusive service.
- We want to see an increase in the number of quality and accessible tourist venues and accommodation in the region.

These will be reviewed and more precise targets set as the evidence base improves.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

EEDA recognises that its Single Equality Scheme Action Plan needs to be regularly reviewed and improved on. We have established an (external) Equality Advisory Group who will scrutinise EEDA's performance against our Action Plan, and help in the review process. In addition, we will also keep the Scheme under regular review via a number of other mechanisms:

- working with EEDA's Director of Regional Intelligence and the Regional ONS to oversee a review of the evidence base for the scheme and develop a plan for improving it as appropriate
- providing regular reports to EEDA's management team and the Board
- reviewing and revising the document, involving representatives of the EEDA's staff and the external equality advisory group
- systematising reports on progress into corporate project management processes
- monitoring complaints and compliments for evidence of equality-related issues.

Progress on the actions contained within the scheme will be reviewed and a report published each year on our website.

We will also include equality-related data in relation to staff, managers and Board members in our annual report.

Training

We have reviewed our staff and management development programme, which includes mandatory equality and diversity induction for all new staff, currently delivered by our Equality and Diversity Manager.

We will also be rolling out a programme of managing disability confidence workshops targeted at line managers, to complement EEDA's "Managing Disability Confidence in the Workplace" booklet which is available on the intranet and on EEDA's website.

We have delivered a comprehensive programme of EqlA staff training covering all six equality strands which started in mid-2006, targeting those involved with project management, development or appraisal and policy development. From 2008, we extended invitations to participate in these workshops, to our funded partners and key regional partners such as the Business link, Government Office East of England, the Regional Assembly and sub-regional partners. We intend to build on the training achieved thus far, to develop and raise our standards of EqlAs and from 2009-10, will be rolling out refresher and master-class workshops to complement the basic training.

Leadership

The relevant codes of practice make clear that leadership is an important mechanism for successful compliance with the duties. For example, the disability equality duty code states that:

“Strong, clear and consistent leadership is the key to achieving change in the public sector. Senior management and governing bodies need to take visible ownership of the disability equality duty, for example by requiring reports on its implementation and delivering clear messages to staff about its importance. People feel permitted to do the right thing when the person at the top is saying that they want them to do that. Articulating outcomes for disability equality, setting appropriate targets, running awards schemes and other incentives can practically demonstrate the importance attached by an authority to successful implementation of the duty.”

The key driver in the delivery of equality in what EEDA does and what EEDA is, will come from its leadership. Ownership of the scheme at the highest level of the organisation and management is crucial to success in achieving our objectives on equality. The foreword to this scheme signed by EEDA’s chair and chief executive is a demonstration of that commitment.

Leadership will primarily come from EEDA’s Leadership Group and the EEDA Board. EEDA also has a Board Champion and an executive director champion for equality and diversity.

The drive for implementation, monitoring and review of the Scheme will come from bi-annual consideration at management meetings and at least annual consideration progress reports to the Resources Committee. Responsibility for operational delivery of the Single Equality Scheme rests across all of EEDA’s directorates. Each Executive Director has responsibility to ensure that their staff have the appropriate skills and knowledge of equality law, policy and practice to enable them to deliver the objectives of the scheme.

Scheme publication

EEDA's Single Equality Scheme is published on its website www.eeda.org.uk . If you need this document in another format or language, you can contact us by telephone, fax, post or by submitting an email enquiry via the "Contact EEDA" link on EEDA's website homepage, and we will do our best to assist:

East of England Development Agency
Victory House
Vision Park
Chivers Way
Histon
Cambridge
CB24 9ZR
Phone: 01223 200822
Fax: 01223 713940
www.eeda.org.uk

Complaints

Members of the public who feel that they have experienced discrimination in the way that EEDA has treated them may make a complaint through the agency's Complaints Procedure. Complaints should be directed in the first instance to:

Rachel Bosworth, Communications Director at EEDA's address as above.
Email: RachelBosworth@eeda.org.uk

A copy of EEDA's Customer Service and Complaints Procedure "Getting it Right" can be accessed and downloaded from the website:
[http://www.eeda.org.uk/files/Leaflet - Getting It Right.pdf](http://www.eeda.org.uk/files/Leaflet_-_Getting_It_Right.pdf)

We have disciplinary and grievance procedures in place and a policy for dealing with complaints of harassment relating to employees. We also have a 'whistle-blowing' procedure, which extends the protection for employees who want to report bad practice without fear of being victimised as a result.

We will take all complaints seriously and will not tolerate any form of discriminatory behaviour, towards or perpetrated by our staff or those delivering on our behalf. Monitoring of complaints will be used as a method of gathering information on whether we are meeting our equality duties.

References

Regional Economic Strategy for the East of England 2008-31, 'Inventing our future. Collective action for a sustainable economy'. <http://www.eastofengland.uk.com/res/>

EEDA's Corporate Plan
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Alexander McTier, Andrea Glass, Morgane Lefaucheux and Alan McGregor (2008) 'East of England Economic Participation Study':
www.eeda.org.uk/files/East_of_England_Economic_Participation_Study.pdf⁸

EEDA's 'Equality Impact Assessment framework and toolkit':
www.eeda.org.uk/213.asp

Equality and Human Rights Commission 'Making practice happen Practitioners' views on the most effective specific equality duties': <http://www.edf.org.uk/blog/wp-content/uploads/2009/02/final-report-making-practice-happen.pdf>

Joint Implementation Plan of the Regional Economic Strategy and the East of England Plan.

Marc Adams Associates 'Equality Impact Assessment of the Draft Implementation Plan of the Regional Economic Strategy and East of England Plan'.

Labour Force Survey.

Annual Population Survey.

⁸ Alexander McTier, Andrea Glass, Morgane Lefaucheux and Alan McGregor (2008) 'East of England Economic Participation Study'.