

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE EDC 03-01(p4)

DATE: 14 FEBRUARY 01

VENUE: COMMITTEE ROOM [1] National Assembly for Wales Building

TITLE: DRAFT OF EDD's EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY ACTION PLAN

Purpose of the Paper

1. To provide the Committee with a draft of EDD's equality of opportunity action plan.

Background

2. Section 48 of the Government of Wales Act requires the Assembly to play due regard to equality of opportunity. Section 120 of the Act requires the Assembly to establish an Equal Opportunities Committee and produce a report in each financial year on the success of its Equality policies.
 3. As part of this process, each Group in the Assembly has been tasked with producing an Equality of Opportunity Action Plan setting out how equality issues will be addressed.

EDD's Draft Action Plan

4. The draft plan is at Annex 1. EDD, which has a staff of 180, is firmly committed to the principles of equality across all areas of its business. This includes equality of opportunity as an employer of people in the Group, and equality of opportunity across the operational delivery of services and policy development in the Group. Our aim is to mainstream equality in our work and make it a fundamental component from the design stage to service delivery and evaluation. Doing this will necessitate close working relationships with the statutory and voluntary equality bodies.
5. The draft plan has been discussed and agreed as good practice with the Equal Opportunities Unit and the All Wales Ethnic Minority Association (AWEMA).
6. The plan documents EDD's policy towards equal opportunities: it provides stretching but achievable targets for employment and staff-related aspects by the year 2003, and describes a range of specific equality targets together with monitoring and review arrangements in the operational delivery of services and policy development in the Group.

Action

7. The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the draft plan before its submission to the

Equal Opportunities Committee.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY ACTION PLAN

February 2000

This plan is available in electronic, hard copy, braille and audio tape format

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Introduction

1. Economic Development Department (EDD) is made up of 3 Divisions – Industrial Development, Economic Policy and Competitiveness and Infrastructure – and has a staff of over 180. From 1 April 2001, EDD will have a fourth Division – European and External Affairs, and the total number of people working within it will be 200.

2. The aim of the Department is to:

promote the efficiency, technological development and international competitiveness of industry in Wales and to encourage conditions in which firms will establish in Wales.

3. This plan has been discussed and agreed as good practice with the Equal Opportunities Unit and the All Wales Ethnic Minority Association.
4. Section 48 of the Government of Wales Act requires the Assembly to pay due regard to equality of opportunity. Section 120 of the Act requires the Assembly to establish an Equal Opportunities Committee and produce a report in each financial year on the success of its Equality policies.
5. EDD is firmly committed to the principles of equality of opportunity across all areas of its business. This includes equality of opportunity as an employer of people in the Department, and equality of opportunity across the operational delivery of services and policy development in the Department. Equality of opportunity is one of the seven themes of Better Government, and an integral component of delivering the other themes.
6. Our aim is to mainstream equality in our work and make it a fundamental component from the design stage to service delivery and evaluation. Doing this will call for close working relationships with the statutory and voluntary equality bodies.
7. Achieving equality is a personal objective of David Pritchard, the Director of EDD. He will demonstrate this through his meetings with staff, clear statements of his intent to mainstream equality throughout the work of the Group and his scrutiny of the Department's policies and service delivery. This plan sets objectives that will be monitored. Internally, the Director contributes to the equality debate within the management of the Assembly. Any form of discrimination which militates against this fundamental policy will not be tolerated within the Department.

Delivering equality of opportunity

Employment

8. The National Assembly is an equal opportunities employer. It is Assembly policy (and hence the policy of EDD) that all eligible people should have equality of opportunity for employment and advancement on the basis of their ability, qualifications and suitability for work.
9. This means that no job applicant or employee should receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, gender, disability, family commitments, sexual orientation or religion.
10. The table below shows how EDD is currently performing in key areas against the Assembly as a whole, and our targets for 2003.
11. While we are performing well against current Assembly levels for female heads of branch, we are well behind in terms of people who are working part-time; and the balance of sexes across the Department could be far better. Our targets for 2003 are designed to address this. They are stretching but achievable.

As at 1 January 2001 %EDD %NAW EDD Target 2003
Race) % Ethnic Minority 1.8% 1.3% 2.5%
Colour)
Sex) % Female – all grades 46% 53% 50%
) % Female – Heads of Branch and above 15% 3.5% 25%
Sexual orientation – information not available
Age - over 50 12% 20% 20%
Marital status – information not readily available
Disablement - % staff who consider themselves 2.8% 3.5% 4%
Religion
Family/domestic responsibilities % Overtime 0.41% 0.74% 0.4%
Working patterns e.g. part time % Part-time 5% 13.5% 10%

12. Nor should any individual be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justified.

13. This policy is monitored for effectiveness within EDD (see review arrangements).

Target/Indicator

At quarterly intervals the Director, EDD will write to the Establishment Officer to ascertain whether any complaints or representations have been made by EDD staff about any less favourable treatment they have received within their work area. Any such instances which come to light will be fully investigated by the Director.

Operational delivery of services and policy development in EDD

14. EDD will monitor and review delivery of services to all its customers, and the development and maintenance of policy, in the context of equality principles applying to the Department and the specific equality targets set in Divisional Plans and the Director's Equality Plan. This will have special relevance to the development of the National Economic Development Strategy for Wales (NEDS). The Strategy will meet the challenge of ensuring that we are getting the best out of the talents of all of the people of Wales and rewarding those talents fairly.

15. All policy review and development, including development of new services, will take careful account of the need to work in partnership, with effective consultation and dialogue, with all interested parties. It will also take account of the inclusion of equality interests on policy advisory groups and building the equal opportunities dimension into the terms of reference of such groups. This will involve, for example, the All Wales Ethnic Minorities Association, Equal Opportunities Commission, Commission for Racial Equality, Disability Wales, Disability Rights, Age Concern and Chwarae Teg, etc. The outcome of such arrangements will be presented in submissions made to Assembly Ministers and where appropriate in papers to the Economic Development Committee. Policy development opportunities include:

- NEDS
- The development of Regional Selective Assistance and Export Services
- Wales Entrepreneurship Action Plan

Target/Indicator

The number of consultations undertaken and their outcome.

16. Submissions to Assembly Ministers on policy development will contain a compliance clause about equality of opportunity issues. Also, where possible, they will:

- make specific reference to targets in equality terms or how the proposals involved will contribute to the equality agenda; and
- what actions are going to take place.

Target/Indicator

Policy submissions including equal opportunities compliance: Target 100%

17. Satisfaction questionnaires or other means of gathering feedback from our customers will in future include references to equality of opportunities, e.g. access arrangements.

Target/Indicator

The outcome of feedback from customers.

Training and education in equality of opportunities

18. The extent to which equal opportunities issues will now be addressed within EDD requires innovative training and awareness for all staff. The objective is to build within EDD a culture where equality of opportunity issues are a natural part of the work processes and thinking of the

Department.

19. To facilitate this, education and training is provided for all staff to ensure they are aware of the Department's policy and its implications for their work. Staff training will also now seek to raise awareness of the behaviours and interpersonal skills commensurate with best practice. All personal development plans now incorporate awareness raising, education and training in equality of opportunity. We are also fully committed to ensuring that part-time staff have full access to training and development opportunities.

20. We are always looking for innovative ways to demonstrate how we can work with ethnic minorities and better understand their perspective.

21. With this in mind, a Grade 7 officer from IDD has recently started a 3 month (2 day a week) secondment with AWEMA to assist them prepare their response to NEDS and to assist them to develop a framework economic strategy of their own. Through a cascade of the officer's experience, awareness in the Department of the advantages of diversity-friendly policies will be heightened considerably as will the Department's understanding of the needs and aspirations of ethnic minorities in Wales.

22. All staff in EDD attend equality of opportunity awareness sessions organised by the Assembly's Equal Opportunities Unit as part of EDD's Open Learning culture.

Target/Indicator

All staff to attend a session by end September 2001.

23. All staff in EDD will be made aware of EDD's equality of opportunity policy described at the beginning of this plan. This will be communicated to staff through copies of this plan, articles in the EDD staff newsletter, line-management cascade and dialogue at management meetings.

Target/Indicator

To be achieved by 31 March 2001.

24. New staff to EDD are informed of this policy and their responsibilities through the EDD Induction Training Programme. Equality of Opportunities feature as part of the Induction Checklist and also in the regular new entrant seminars about EDDs Quality Programme.

Target/Indicator

New entrants receiving equal opportunities induction training: Target 100%

25. All staff in EDD will attend awareness raising on the Human Rights Act 1998 delivered by the Office of the Counsel General.

Target/Indicator

Awareness raising session held on 6 November 2000 as part of EDD`s Open Learning arrangements, and follow-up article in February 2001 edition of the EDD staff newsletter.

Review arrangements

26. EDD`s performance against objectives, targets and indicators will be reviewed by the Director and Heads of Division on a quarterly basis as part of the ongoing reviews of the Groups Quality Management System._

27. EDD has a dedicated Equal Opportunities Officer who is a `champion` for the promotion of good practice in the group and who reports at the regular management reviews.

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6 February 2001