

NORTHERN JOINT POLICE BOARD

15 JUNE 2007

Agenda Item	
Report No	

GENDER EQUALITY DUTY

Report by the Clerk

Summary

This Report advises Members that the Equality Act 2006 requires that from April 2007 all public bodies will have a duty to promote gender equality (similar to the duties to promote race equality under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and disability equality under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005). The Act requires the Board (and also the Chief Constable) to have published a Gender Equality Scheme by 29 June 2007. The report invites the Board to approve the draft Northern Joint Police Board Gender Equality Scheme, as appended to the report.

A copy of the Chief Constable's Scheme, currently being finalised in-Force, will be circulated to all Members in due course.

Background

1. The Equality Act 2006, building on the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, introduces a duty on the public sector to promote equality for men and women, including transgender people. The Act sets out General and Specific duties.
2. The general duties of the Equality Act 2006 are to:
 - promote equality of opportunity between men and women, including transgender people
 - eliminate unlawful discrimination (under the Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) 1975 and Equal Pay Act (EPAA) 1970)
 - eliminate harassment (under the SDA and EPAA)

The Act requires the Board to be proactive in eliminating discrimination and harassment and in promoting equality of opportunity, and not just to avoid discrimination, harassment and inequality.

4. The specific duties under the Equality Act are to:
 - prepare and publish a gender equality scheme by 29 June 2007 showing how the authority will meet its general and specific duties and setting out its gender equality objectives

- consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap
 - gather and use information on how the authority's policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services
 - consult stakeholders such as employees, service users and trade unions and take account of relevant information in order to determine the authority's gender equality objectives
 - assess the impact of current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality
 - implement the actions set out in the scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so
 - report against the scheme every year and review it every three years.
4. The Equality Act 2006 follows the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 in providing that specific duties applying to certain public bodies can be prescribed in regulations. The purpose of imposing specific duties is to assist public bodies to comply with the general duty to promote equality. The Sex Discrimination (Public Authorities) (Statutory Duties) (Scotland) Order 2007 sets out detailed requirements relating to the specific duty to publish a Gender Equality Scheme.

Gender Equality Scheme

5. A Gender Equality Scheme should set out how the authority will fulfil its duties to promote equality of opportunity in relation to men and women, including transgender people, and to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender. The Scheme should identify the overall objectives the authority has identified as necessary for it to perform its gender equality duties and should identify the authority's arrangements for:
- gathering information on the effect of its policies and practices on men and women
 - making use of the information gathered, or other information it considers relevant, particularly when reviewing the effectiveness of its actions and its arrangements for preparing subsequent schemes
 - assessing the impact of its policies and practices, or the likely impact of its proposed policies and practices, on equality between women and men
 - so far as is reasonable and practicable, having due regard to the results of its impact assessments
 - consulting staff, service users, trade unions and other stakeholders
 - achieving the fulfilment of its objectives.

The Board's Duties

6. The appended draft Gender Equality Scheme sets out the Board's intentions in relation to its gender duties. While identifying areas of responsibility resting directly with the Board, the Scheme also acknowledges the level of authority vested in or delegated to the Chief Constable and highlights the importance of the Board's scrutiny role. Part of the Board's requirements under the Gender Equality Duty will therefore be to scrutinise the

Chief Constable's implementation of his Gender Equality Scheme.

7. Members will note that the gender equality duty includes requirements in relation to consultation and information gathering. In drawing up this Scheme, reliance has been placed on the processes carried out and data gathered by the Chief Constable.

Action Plan

8. An Action Plan is appended to the Scheme. Both the Board's and the Chief Constable's Gender Equality Schemes will form living documents, which will be regularly reviewed and updated, with reports brought to future Board meetings on their development and implementation.

Recommendations

Members are asked to approve the draft Northern Joint Police Board Gender Equality Scheme, as appended to the report.

Signature

Designation Clerk

Date 23 May 2007

Author Mrs R Moir

NORTHERN JOINT POLICE BOARD

**SEX DISCRIMINATION ACT 1975
EQUALITY ACT 2006**

GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME

JUNE 2007

NORTHERN JOINT POLICE BOARD

SEX DISCRIMINATION ACT 1975/EQUALITY ACT 2006 GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME

(Draft) Foreword

I have pleasure in presenting the Northern Joint Police Board's first Gender Equality Scheme. The Board shares with the Chief Constable the aim of ensuring that Northern Constabulary makes a positive contribution to the wellbeing of the Highlands and Islands through a problem solving approach to community policing and also supports the principles, policies and actions set out in Northern Constabulary's own Gender Equality Scheme. The Board recognises the potential role of these Schemes in promoting positive community engagement and excellence in community policing and will work closely with the Chief Constable in developing a collaborative approach to meeting the needs of our communities and promoting equality.

Responsibility for the organisation, management and financing of Northern Constabulary is shared between the chief constable, the board as police authority and the First Minister of the Scottish Executive. Their relationship is referred to as the tripartite system.

Northern Constabulary covers four council areas, each council providing representatives who sit on the police authority, the Northern Joint Police Board.

A police force must have the trust and confidence of the communities it serves and the public is represented in the system by the democratically elected Members, who sit on the Northern Joint Police Board in the following proportions -

Shetland Islands Council	- two Members
Orkney Islands Council	- two Members
Comhairle nan Eilean siar (Western Isles Islands Council)	- four Members
Highland Council	- sixteen Members

The Police Board has a crucial role in agreeing the broad strategies, objectives and long-term plans of Northern Constabulary. The Police Board is not responsible for police operations, which are a matter for the Chief Constable alone. However, the Board appoints the Chief Constable and Deputy Chief Constable and at any time it can require the Chief Constable to submit a report on matters connected with the policing of an area. The Board also approves the overall budget for Northern Constabulary and monitors staffing levels and performance. In providing finances to the Chief Constable to employ staff, equip and maintain the Force, the Police Board must satisfy itself that police resources are being deployed effectively.

The Convener, Members and Officers of the Board are committed to the promotion of gender equality and will, in the Board's policy development, service delivery, monitoring and scrutiny role endeavour to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate unlawful discrimination.

The Board supports Northern Constabulary in its objectives of -

- promoting equality of opportunity and positive attitudes to diversity
- making the Highlands and Islands an area that is free from unlawful discrimination and harassment.

As part of its scrutiny role, the Board will monitor Force progress in the implementation of Northern Constabulary's Gender Equality Scheme.

This Gender Equality Scheme provides an opportunity for the Northern Joint Police Board to publicly state its commitment to working with its stakeholders and public sector partners in the Highlands and Islands in promoting equality of opportunity and combating discrimination.

Convener

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Northern Joint Police Board is committed to making gender equality a reality and in writing this scheme acknowledges the recommendations of the Equal Opportunities Commission's Code of Practice on the Gender Equality Duty. The Board will work to reduce disadvantages and discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and positive attitudes and participation for men and women in terms of the people we serve, our workforce, the partners we work with and the service we deliver.
- 1.2 This scheme sets out our commitment to gender equality and builds upon work which has already taken place.
- 1.3 The new Equality Act 2006 gives the Board what are known as 'general' and 'specific' duties to promote gender equality.
- 1.4 Producing a Gender Equality Scheme is one of the 'specific duties' of the new Equality Act 2006.
- 1.5 The general duties of the Equality Act 2006 are to:
- promote equality of opportunity between men and women, including transgender people;
 - eliminate unlawful discrimination (under the Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) 1975 and Equal Pay Act (EPAA) 1970);
 - eliminate harassment (under the SDA and EPAA);.

The Act requires the Board to be proactive in eliminating discrimination and harassment and in promoting equality of opportunity, and not just to avoid discrimination, harassment and inequality.

- 1.6 The specific duties of the Equality Act 2006 are to:
- prepare and publish a gender equality scheme by 29 June 2007 showing how the authority will meet its general and specific duties and setting out its gender equality objectives
 - consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap
 - gather and use information on how the authority's policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services
 - consult stakeholders such as employees, service users and trade unions and take account of relevant information in order to determine the authority's gender equality objectives
 - assess the impact of current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality
 - implement the actions set out in the scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so
 - report against the scheme every year and review it every three years.

2 Consultation

- 2.1 There is a well-established history of successful partnership working in the Highlands. In recent years this has evolved into the Highland Wellbeing Alliance, the Community Partnership covering the area. This partnership of public, private and voluntary

organisations increasingly works closely together to deliver services and improve the quality of life in Highland communities. The partnership is an important mechanism for working towards a future where all people in our communities are able to participate fully and benefit significantly from the area's growing economic, social and cultural progress.

- 2.2 The Highland Wellbeing Alliance (HWBA) partners took a decision early on to work together, and key personnel from each of the HWBA agencies and other strategic partners came together under the title 'Highland Wellbeing Alliance Equality and Diversity Strategy Group'. A full list of partners can be made available on request.
- 2.3 This partnership collaborative approach is of particular benefit to the Highlands as one of the key features of the duty is the requirement for agencies to consult stakeholders on the preparation of their scheme and thereafter to advise on the ongoing development and shaping of policies and practices. By taking an agency by agency approach the same groups and individuals would be asked similar questions. Many of the multi-agency solutions to barriers would not present themselves and the efficiencies gained by collaborating would not be realised.
- 2.4 Service users have been consulted through the Highlands and Islands Equality Forum. In addition, the Board is aware that the Chief Constable has gathered relevant and significant information through the various national policing bodies, including the ACPOS Gender Issues Reference Group and the National Gender Agenda and, at local level, through the medium of focus groups.
- 2.5 The Board is also aware that the Chief Constable, in carrying out internal staff consultation, set up a Gender Equality Advisory Group early in the development of his Scheme, in addition to more general ongoing survey arrangements. This group consisted of internal gender advisors who had responded to an advert posted in the Force's internal information bulletin. They were all volunteers from across the Force area. The resultant group thus comprised a cross-section of staff at various levels of the organisation and represented a gender balance. The group also included representation from the Force's Gay Police Association Coordinator.

3 The Gender Equality Scheme

- 3.1 The Gender Equality Scheme is the Board's plan stating how it intends to meet its duties to promote equality.
- 3.2 In its Gender Equality Scheme, the Board is required to identify the overall objectives it has identified as necessary for it to perform its gender equality duties. The Scheme must go on to identify the Board's arrangements for:
 - gathering information on the effect of its policies and practices on men and women
 - making use of the information gathered, or other information it considers relevant, particularly when reviewing the effectiveness of its actions and its arrangements for preparing subsequent schemes
 - assessing the impact of its policies and practices, or the likely impact of its proposed policies and practices, on equality between women and men
 - so far as is reasonable and practicable, having due regard to the results of its impact assessments
 - consulting staff, service users, trade unions and other stakeholders
 - achieving the fulfilment of its objectives.

3.3 The assessment of functions and policies requires to be reviewed every three years. This will lead on to a review of the Scheme. As a matter of good practice, the Board also intends to review implementation of the Scheme annually.

4 The Board's Functions

4.1 The Board's functions all derive from statute and fall under five main headings. This is not an exhaustive list, but it does identify the key areas in which the Board is likely to operate during the period of this Scheme:

(i) Allocation of resources

The Board sets a budget for the force annually, provides the Chief Constable with the resources required for policing within the force area and is responsible (along with the Chief Constable) for securing best value in the use of those resources.

(ii) Appointment and conduct of senior officers

The Board, in conjunction with the Scottish Ministers, is responsible for the appointment of senior officers (Chief Constable, Deputy Chief Constable and any Assistant Chief Constables) and their conduct and removal.

(iii) Employment of support staff

The Board is the employer of support staff, but is required to delegate responsibility for their operational management to the Chief Constable.

(iv) Scrutiny

The Board is required to keep itself informed as to the manner in which the Chief Constable deals with complaints against officers of the force, and receives (and in certain circumstances may require) reports from the Chief Constable on policing matters.

(v) Miscellaneous

These include consenting to certain officer secondments, meeting certain claims in respect of the exercise of policing functions and making appointments to police appeals tribunals. The Board has ultimate responsibility for health and safety matters within the force. It has in place a scheme for independent custody visiting. It is subject to a duty to participate in community planning.

4.2 The Board has considered which of its functions are relevant to its general duty to promote gender equality and their relative importance in this context. These functions, along with the actions the Board intends to take (in conjunction with the Chief Constable, where appropriate) to address the issues identified, are detailed in 5.3 below.

4.3 The Board intends to address the following functions:

- **Appointments:** The Board is subject to detailed Scottish Executive guidance governing the recruitment and selection of senior officers. The pool from which those senior officers can be drawn is restricted to serving police officers of the rank of superintendent and above. The Board will, however, consult the relevant professional bodies in an effort to identify any additional measures it could take with a view to

promoting equality of opportunity in its recruitment and selection practices. It would intend to do this by the end of 2007.

- **Complaints in respect of senior officers:** The Board considers its processes in relation to complaints of this kind, insofar as it has any discretion, to be fair and transparent. So far as the Board is aware, a complainer's gender has not been raised as a specific issue. However, it has no information as to whether people of a particular gender find it more difficult than other members of the community to pursue complaints in respect of senior police officers. It will consult with stakeholders and partner and representative organisations throughout the Police Board area on this matter in the course of 2007/08 and then consider what practicable steps it can take to address any issues identified. The Board would wish that by 2008 there will be no difference, by gender grouping, in the level of complaints against senior officers.
- **Other complaints:** In carrying out its scrutiny function in relation to complaints dealt with by the Chief Constable, the Board will obtain from the Chief Constable and consider information regarding the groups to which complainers belong. This information will be provided to the Board's Complaints Study Group with effect from 2008.
- **Scrutiny:** In carrying out its general scrutiny function in relation to resource allocation and policing performance, the Board will seek from the Chief Constable the appropriate information to demonstrate that equality is at the centre of the Force's approach to best value.
- **Custody visiting:** The Board operates a scheme for the visiting of police custody areas by independent volunteer members of the community. The Scheme is operated in accordance with Scottish Executive guidelines published in July 2004 and with the Board's own specific local guidelines, and with support and advice from the Independent Custody Visiting Association. The guidelines regulating this scheme are reviewed periodically in the light of operational experience and such review should include consideration of any further action that might practicably be taken to promote equality, particularly in the recruitment and selection of visitors. By 2008 the Board will seek to ensure that Custody Visitors are fully representative of the community they serve.

5 Employment Issues

- 5.1 The Board appoints the Chief Constable and the Deputy Chief Constable and may be regarded as having duties as an employer in respect of these particular officers. The Clerk, Monitoring Officer and Treasurer and their respective staffs are employees of The Highland Council and will be subject to its monitoring processes.
- 5.2 While the Board is in law the employer of all of the support staff of Northern Constabulary, their direction and control (including engagement and dismissal – effectively, all aspects of operational management) is delegated to the Chief Constable. Although the Board thus takes no direct part in the employment of support staff, it does consider appeals made by employees against actions of the Chief Constable on questions of discipline and grievance. It is important that the relevant procedures are drafted and applied with a view to avoiding unlawful discrimination of any kind and they should be reviewed with this in mind.
- 5.3 The Board is committed to the principle of equal pay for all staff and would seek to eliminate any unfair, unjust or unlawful practices that impact on pay equality. The Board

would wish to see any unlawful discrimination in the pay systems for support staff and police officers eliminated. The Board, through the Chief Constable, will endeavour to ensure that the Job Evaluation process for support staff is reviewed in light of new legislation, that the current pay model for support staff is reviewed and that an equal pay review is carried out in the context of the current Force Review. While the pay systems for support staff are a devolved matter, police officer pay systems are determined nationally. Additions to police pay and allowances and the distribution of these are areas of potential inequality. The Board will endeavour to ensure that these are addressed at a local level along with any national developments arising from the police reform agenda.

- 5.4 Although the Board takes no part in the management of police officers, who are not the Board's employees, it is the legal owner of all Board properties, including the Board's remaining stock of police housing. The Board will endeavour to ensure that the relevant allocation procedures are reviewed to ensure that procedures are drafted and applied with a view to avoiding unlawful discrimination of any kind.

6 The Board's Policies

- 6.1 The Board regulates its meetings, delegations and other aspects of its internal administration by means of standing orders relating to the conduct of meetings, a scheme of delegation, financial regulations, standing orders relating to contracts and *ad hoc* decisions. In addition, it endorses certain policies and procedures put forward by the Chief Constable. For the purposes of this scheme, all of these are considered to be the Board's policies.

- 6.2 The Board has considered which of its policies are relevant to its general duty to promote equality and their relative importance in this context. These policies, along with the actions the Board intends to take (in conjunction with the Chief Constable, where appropriate) to address the issues identified, are detailed in 6.3 below.

- 6.3 The Board has considered the following policies:

- **Appeals:** As indicated above, the Board is responsible for hearing appeals brought by support staff on questions of discipline and grievance. It is important that the relevant procedures are drafted and applied with a view to avoiding unlawful discrimination of any kind and they shall regularly be reviewed with this in mind.
- **Procurement:** The Board believes that those of its Standing Orders relating to Contracts are applied in a fair and transparent manner to all interested parties and are in no sense inherently unfair. The Standing Orders have recently been reviewed and specifically provide for the insertion of a contractual clause requiring contractors not to discriminate unlawfully in terms of the SDA 1975 and the Equality Act 2006.

- 6.4 The Board is required to have and identify arrangements for gathering information and for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of its proposed policies on the promotion of equality between men and women. The Board recognises that the steps required in respect of each policy will vary depending on the nature of the policy and the surrounding circumstances. From the introduction of this Scheme, the Board will require that all reports presented to it proposing policies that have any significant relevance to gender equality include details of:

- a statement as to how relevant information was gathered
- an assessment of the impact of the proposed policy on gender equality
- any consultation carried out in conjunction with that assessment

- any action (including monitoring, where appropriate) proposed in consequence of that assessment and consultation.

The Board will consider these matters in reaching its decision on the proposed policy.

- 6.5 The Board is required to have and identify arrangements for monitoring and assessing its policies for any adverse impact on equality. The Board has identified in this Scheme the action it intends to take to address any gender equality issues that may arise from its existing and proposed policies - the effect this is having will be subject to regular scrutiny as part of the annual review process described in Part 9 below.

7 Publicity

- 7.1 The Scheme will be published and circulated to all members and officers of the Board. Copies will be available from the Clerk, Northern Joint Police Board, Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX. The Board will publish the Scheme on its website and it will be available at public libraries across the Northern Constabulary area. This will allow for feedback and comment as part of the ongoing review of the Scheme. In addition, it will be placed on the Northern Constabulary web site and circulated to the constituent authorities for distribution as appropriate. Translations will be made available by arrangement.
- 7.2 The Board is bound by and complies with the requirements of the Local Government (Scotland) Act in respect of access to information. Anything that might reasonably be regarded as a policy will be the subject of a public report to the Board, as will the results of any monitoring of the impact of policies. As part of the annual review process described in Part 10 below, the Board will consider whether further publicity (including publicity in relation to the Scheme itself - see 7.1 above) is required.
- 7.3 The Board will seek to ensure public access to the information and services it provides. The Board does not provide services directly to the public (and has no real discretion as to the services it does provide), although it does receive and consider complaints regarding the conduct of senior officers of Northern Constabulary. At present, the Board has no information as to the level of awareness of its role among the population in the force area: the Board will consult with stakeholders and partner and representative organisations throughout the Police Board area and consider in the light of that consultation what action it requires to take to develop public awareness.
- 7.4 With regard to the information and services provided by Northern Constabulary, the Board will monitor the implementation of the arrangements put forward by the Chief Constable in his equality scheme in accordance with Part 9 below.

8 Training

- 8.1 The Board is required to have and identify arrangements for training its staff in relation to its duties to promote equality. The Board is committed to endeavouring to ensure that the support staff of Northern Constabulary receive adequate training in these areas and will require the Chief Constable to ensure that this happens in terms of his Gender Equality Scheme. The Board will monitor the implementation of the relevant arrangements in accordance with Part 9 below.
- 8.2 As indicated above, the Clerk, Monitoring Officer and Treasurer and their respective staff are employees of The Highland Council and it will be that Council's responsibility to

ensure that they receive the appropriate training. The Board will ensure appropriate training for the Chief Constable and Deputy Chief Constable.

- 8.3 The Board considers it important that its own members receive training in its obligations with regard to gender equality. It will endeavour to ensure that its members are aware of these obligations as part of the process of making the Scheme and will include appropriate training as part of the induction process for members.

9 Northern Constabulary Gender Equality Scheme

- 9.1 The Board will consider the gender equality scheme produced by the Chief Constable and will satisfy itself that it provides an adequate framework for addressing the Chief Constable's duties to promote gender equality. The Board recognises that it has a strategic role to play in supporting the implementation of the scheme and monitoring Force progress.

- 9.2 The Board will monitor the Chief Constable's implementation of his scheme by receiving and considering regular reports. These will be submitted to the Board and will identify problems and examples of good practice, with a full report (containing all of the performance information to be produced for the preceding year in accordance with the scheme) being presented to the Board annually. The format, content and frequency of reporting will be reviewed annually (as part of the overall review of both schemes) in consultation with the Chief Constable.

- 9.3 The Chief Constable and his staff will also work with the Board to ensure that the Board's statutory obligations to give due regard to the needs of both men and women are met.

10 Duration and Review

- 10.1 This Scheme is intended to cover the period from 29 June 2007 to 28 June 2010 and will be subject to review at the end of that period.

- 10.2 The Scheme will also be reviewed annually (around the anniversary of its introduction) in consultation with the Chief Constable. This review will take account of any comments received from individuals or organisations in relation to the Scheme, as well as the Board's experience of participation in the community planning process and consultation with such representative bodies as the Board considers appropriate.

11 Customer Survey

- 11.1 The Board will endeavour to ensure that opinion on the Force's/Board's services and functions is surveyed and will use this information to inform its impact assessment and action plan.

12 Impact Assessment

- 12.1 An impact assessment is a method by which organisations can examine their activities and services to ensure there is no potential for discrimination against a particular group, for example, a particular gender.

- 12.2 The aim of impact assessment is to examine policies and practice in a structured way to make sure that disproportionately adverse effects on particular groups are avoided. It is also a tool to enable organisations to assess what positive action they can take to promote equality of opportunity and to anticipate the requirements of all of their service users and staff. Positive outcomes of interventions to address inequalities should also be measured.
- 12.3 In taking forward its gender equality scheme, the Board will develop a prioritised Plan for Impact Assessment of the Board's functions, policies and procedures, to assess whether these may disadvantage different genders and how a more positive impact can be developed. Recommendations flowing from this impact assessment will be reflected in future reviews of the action plan.

13 Action Plan

- 13.1 Progress on the action plan (Appendix 1) will be reviewed and reported annually.

14 Management of the Scheme

- 14.1 The Clerk to the Board will be responsible for the overall implementation and monitoring of the scheme and will review the scheme on an annual basis. If required following from the impact assessment, the action plan will be adjusted.
- 14.2 An annual review of progress and the delivery of the action plan will be published. In line with the Equality Act, a more formal three year review will take place in June 2010, with an evaluation of the Board's work against the goals set in the action plan. Particular focus will be placed on whether the priorities are still relevant and appropriate, how successfully the interests of different genders were represented, the way information was gathered and used and the process for carrying out Impact Assessment.

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NORTHERN JOINT POLICE BOARD

GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME ACTION PLAN

	What we will do:	When we will do it:	
		2007	2008
The Gender Equality Scheme	Review The Board intends to review the Scheme annually.		August 2008
Impact Assessment	Plan The Board will develop a prioritised Plan for Impact Assessment of its functions, policies and procedures.	By November 2007	
The Board's Functions	Appointments The Board will consult the relevant professional bodies to identify any measures it could take to promote equality of opportunity in its recruitment and selection practices.		By April 2008
	Complaints in respect of senior officers The Board considers its processes in relation to complaints of this kind, insofar as it has any discretion, to be fair and transparent. The Board will consult with stakeholders and partner and representative organisations throughout the Police Board area on this matter and consider what practicable steps it can take to address any issues identified. The Board would wish that by 2008 there will be no difference, by gender, in the level of complaints against senior officers.		By June 2008
	Other complaints In carrying out its scrutiny function in relation to complaints dealt with by the Chief Constable, the Board will obtain from the Chief Constable and consider information regarding the groups to which complainers belong. This information will be provided to the Board's Complaints Study Group with effect from 2008.		By April 2008

	What we will do:	When we will do it:	
		2007	2008
	Independent Custody Visiting The Board operates a scheme for the visiting of police custody areas by independent volunteer members of the community. The guidelines regulating this Scheme will require to be reviewed in the light of operational experience and this review should include consideration of any further action that might practicably be taken to promote equality, particularly in the recruitment, selection and training of visitors.		By January 2008
Employment Issues	Support Staff Appeals Although the Board takes no direct part in the employment of support staff, it does consider appeals made by employees against actions of the Chief Constable on questions of discipline and grievance. The relevant procedures will be reviewed to ensure that procedures are drafted and applied with a view to avoiding unlawful discrimination of any kind.	By November 2007	
	Equal Pay The Board, through the Chief Constable, will endeavour to ensure that the Job Evaluation process for support staff is reviewed in light of new legislation, that the current pay model for support staff is reviewed and that an equal pay review is carried out in the context of the current Force Review. While the pay systems for support staff are a devolved matter, police officer pay systems are determined nationally. The Board will endeavour to ensure that the issue of additions to police pay and allowances and the distribution of these, which are areas of potential inequality, is addressed at a local level, along with any national developments arising from the police reform agenda		By January 2008
	Housing Management Although the Board takes no part in the management of police officers, it is the legal owner of all Board properties, including the Board's remaining stock of police housing. The Board will ensure that the relevant allocation procedures are reviewed to ensure that procedures are drafted and applied with a view to avoiding unlawful discrimination of any kind.		By January 2008

	What we will do:	When we will do it:	
		2007	2008
The Board's Policies	<p>Policies The Board will require that all reports presented to it proposing policies that have any significant relevance to equality include details of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a statement as to how relevant information was gathered • an assessment of the impact of the proposed policy on equality • any consultation carried out in conjunction with that assessment • any action (including monitoring, where appropriate) proposed in consequence of that assessment and consultation. <p>The Board will consider such matters in reaching its decision on the proposed policy.</p>	Ongoing	
Publicity	<p>Consultation The Board will consult with stakeholders and partner and representative organisations throughout the Police Board area on its public profile and its Scheme and will consider in the light of that consultation what action it requires to take to develop public awareness.</p>		By January 2008
	<p>Distribution The Scheme will be published and circulated to all members and officers of the Board. Copies will be available from the Clerk, Northern Joint Police Board, Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX. The Board will publish the Scheme on its website and it will be available at public libraries across the Northern Constabulary area. This will allow for feedback and comment as part of the ongoing review of the Scheme. In addition, it will be placed on the Northern Constabulary web site and circulated to the constituent authorities for distribution as appropriate. Translations will be made available by arrangement.</p>	By November 2007	
Training	<p>Training The Board will ensure that its members are aware of the Board's obligations in respect of the Scheme and will include appropriate training as part of the induction process for members. Training will be arranged for the Chief Constable, the Deputy Chief Constable and the Assistant Chief Constables.</p>	By November 2007	

	What we will do:	When we will do it:	
		2007	2008
Northern Constabulary Gender Equality Scheme	Review The Board will monitor the Chief Constable's implementation of his scheme by receiving and considering regular reports. These will be submitted regularly to the Board. The format, content and frequency of reporting will be reviewed annually (as part of the overall review of both schemes) in consultation with the Chief Constable.		April 2008

June 2007