



Equalities Impact Assessment

Local Assemblies Programme

Local Assemblies Team

April 2009

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1. INTRODUCTION

This assessment was undertaken using the methodology and approach set out in Lewisham's Equalities Impact Assessment toolkit.

1.1 Local Assemblies Programme

The Local Assemblies Programme is part of Lewisham's Communities and Neighbourhoods Service, which also includes the Community Sector Unit, Neighbourhood Management and Events. The Local Assemblies Programme is responsible for facilitating local assemblies in all 18 wards across the borough. Assemblies are chaired by ward members, open to all who live work and learn in the ward and meet up to 4 times a year. They are a way to: find out what is happening in the locality; work with councillors and others to help shape neighbourhoods; influence decision making; empower all communities to have a greater say. Local assemblies are encouraged to include and work with a range of partners from the public, private and voluntary sectors. The service was launched in January 2008.

2. POLICY AND STRATEGY CONTEXT

2.1 National equalities legislation context

Relevant national and regional level strategies:

- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Equality Act 2006
- Age Regulations (2006)
- Discrimination Law Review
- The Equalities Review
- Race Relations Act 2000
- Human Rights Act
- Gender Recognition Act 2004
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975

2.2 The Lewisham context

2.1.1 The Lewisham Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) 2008-2020

The 6 priority outcomes from the SCS are:

- Ambitious and achieving
- Safer
- Empowered and responsible
- Clean, green and liveable
- Healthy, active and enjoyable
- Dynamic and prosperous

Outcomes under empowered and responsible:

- Empower citizens to be involved in their local area and responsive to the needs of those who live there
- Promote volunteering and the activity of voluntary and community organisations.
- Champion diversity and the contribution everyone makes to the borough's quality of life

2.1.2 Lewisham Comprehensive Equality Scheme (CES) & Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)

LBL anticipate the national reviews listed above by developing the CES, which takes account of the 'direction of travel.' This will contribute to the Comprehensive Area Assessment from active from spring 2009. The assemblies programme has a key role in helping demonstrating how well local priorities express community needs and aspirations and the following:

- *Knowing our communities explicitly*
- *Use of consultation and engagement*
- *Joined up evidence base and research*

Evidencing partnership working will be an important part of the CAA process.

2.3 Local Assemblies Programme aims and objectives

Aim 1: Ensure local people have an effective voice for change in their area

This aim covers a range of objectives to facilitate the voice of Lewisham's many communities. This is about being heard and concerns acted upon. These include: reaching out to Lewisham's many diverse communities using a range of methods such as engagement and outreach into the community, working with partners to reach seldom heard communities and working with partner services within the council and externally statutory and non-statutory partners.

Aim 2: Deliver local assembly meetings where people feel included and able to make change

This aim relates to the work of the local assemblies coordinating group who help to plan and structure assembly meetings. The Local Assembly team work with the assembly to encourage composition of the coordinating groups that are representative of the community. Membership of the coordinating group is voluntary. A comprehensive learning and development programme for both coordinating group volunteers and elected members has been provided to give guidance and support in the following areas: Facilitation of meetings; Effective engagement; Building cohesion; and Community development. Coordinating groups are encouraged to take responsibility for the development and delivery of assembly agenda items to build a genuine sense of ownership of the assembly process.

Aim 3: Encourage increased levels of participation and ensure effective delivery of assembly priorities for change

Assembly attendees are encouraged to complete evaluation sheets at the end of each meeting. These incorporate monitoring of area of attendance and the following equalities information: age; gender; ethnicity; disability information; and employment. This information assists the performance management process enabling targeted engagement of groups against the ward demographic data. A performance management framework is in place.

Assemblies are required to select 5 priorities for change, which are refreshed annually. Assemblies are encouraged to complete targeted engagement with different communities on the priorities e.g. in schools, with a specific ethnic grouping or with different communities of interests.

Aim 4: Informed and active participation in assemblies from all stakeholders

The local assemblies team provide a range of information resources to local assemblies in a range of accessible formats e.g. Webpage information; paper based reports at meetings; verbal and visual presentations. A number of Market Place events are provided for coordinating groups throughout the year to provide information about council and partner services and give access to key officers in order to develop project ideas. Assemblies are developing / have developed action plans to deliver their priorities. £35K per year has been made available in 2008/09

and 2009/10 to further delivery of assembly priorities. Assemblies are also encouraged and assisted to develop their own community-led actions to deliver change in their area.

Aim 5: Fit for purpose local assembly programme

The Local Assembly Programme is reviewed annually. In the first year, a comprehensive 'Root and branch' service review will inform the future delivery of this new service. The service planning process provides further opportunities to create a 'fit for purpose' assembly programme. The performance of each assembly is under continual review by the reflection and planning process facilitated at Local Assembly team and coordinating group level.

3. THE REVIEW TEAM

This is the first equalities impact assessment to be undertaken on the Local Assemblies Programme. With this in mind, the whole of the 10-strong assemblies team have been involved in its development. A workshop has provided the impacts of the service on equalities categories of: gender; age; ethnicity; disability; sexual orientation; and faith. The review team comprises a core team of 5:

Paul Jackson – Local Assemblies Programme Manager
Petra Smith – Local Assemblies Operational Manager
Cynthia Gaynor Bailey – Local Assemblies Support Officer
Sarah Cooper – Local Assembly Coordinator
Paul Gale - Local Assembly Coordinator

Assisted by:

Katie Weeks – Strategy and Policy team
Sadie King - Strategy and Policy team

4. RELEVANCE TO EQUALITIES LEGISLATION

The work of the Local Assemblies Programme is relevant to the following equality legislation:

Legislation	Relevance
Disability Discrimination Act 2005	High
Equality Act 2006	High
Age Regulations (2006)	High
The Equalities Review	High
Race Relations Act 2000	High
Human Rights Act	Low
Gender Recognition Act 2004	High
Sex Discrimination Act 1975	High

The assessment of the relevance of equality legislation to the Local Assemblies programme concluded that all six equality strands - ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation and faith – have a high potential impact, and as such this EIA will review all of these strands.

5. SCOPE AND FOCUS OF THE EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The key questions this Equality Impact Assessment has to address are:

- Could the service affect some groups in the community differently?
- Will the service promote equality of opportunity?

- What are the potential equality issues and factors that will impact upon the service?
- Is the service indirectly discriminating any equalities categories?

It is important to note that the Local Assemblies programme has been running for just over one year, and as such is a new and evolving service. This means that work undertaken to involve and communicate with equality groups is evolving as the programme beds in, and the team is becoming established in the various localities. In addition, the data upon which equalities monitoring is undertaken is based on one year's assembly data (taken from evaluation forms filled out at every assembly) and while this provides useful baseline data on the programme's performance, better analysis will be possible over the coming years as the programme beds in and more comprehensive data becomes available.

6. DESIRED OUTCOMES OF THE EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- Increase the levels of active participation from under-represented communities in the Local Assemblies Programme
- Address how partners can assist in increasing participation from under represented communities
- Address whether current assembly provision is accessible and meeting the needs of those attending and those not attending
- Address whether the decisions made by assemblies (actions and spending funds) meet the needs of the wider community

7. ASSESSMENT OF RELEVANT DATA AND RESEARCH

National, Lewisham borough and Local Assembly level data was used to undertake the assessment. The following were employed:

- ONS data on ward and borough demographics
- Lewisham equality profiles
- 2001 census data
- Lewisham annual residents survey
- Lewisham gender consultation event
- Estimating Future Need/Demand for Supports for Adults with Learning Disabilities in England, Institute for Health Research, Lancaster University, 2004

- Adults with learning disabilities report 2003/4, DOH
- Information and qualitative data from Local Assembly team members, including specific consultation exercise
- Demographic statistics of assembly attendees, gathered from evaluation forms used at every assembly meeting
- Qualitative feedback from assembly attendees, gathered from evaluation forms used at every assembly meeting
- Qualitative feedback from assembly attendees, coordinating group members and Cllrs

8. CONSULTATION

Because of the extensive feedback gathered at every assembly meeting through evaluation forms, and additional qualitative data, it was not considered necessary to undertake additional consultation to complete this EIA.

9. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT AND OUTCOMES AND REDUCING ADVERSE IMPACT

9.1 Overall assessment

The overall assessment is that the Local Assemblies programme does not unlawfully discriminate.

The Local Assemblies programme has a strong emphasis on promoting equality and community cohesion, and tackling issues that will have a positive impact on local communities. However, there are opportunities to improve service delivery to ensure people's ability to be involved in the programme is equally available and accessed by all equality groups.

The following sections focus on the identified equalities groups individually, however, it is recognised that in reality individuals are members of a number of 'equality groups' and any differential impacts may be reduced or increased as a result.

9.2 Assessment of gender

Overall the assembly process has been successful in attracting reasonably representative numbers of men and women to assembly meetings, compared to the proportion of men and women living in the borough (Male 43% and Female 57%, compared to Lewisham population of Male 50% and Female 50%). The slightly lower attendance by men reflects the traditional pattern of women being more engaged in consultation.

Demographic - gender	Assembly %	Lewisham %
Male	42.92%	49.7%
Female	57.08%	50.3%

There is generally lower attendance amongst younger men and men with a BME background at assembly meetings. To accurately monitor gender by age and BME, monitoring data should be analysed at sub cohort level, to compare any difference in the levels of attendance between the men and women. There is a need for more targeted engagement work with these sub groups, and methods need to be considered further.

The Assembly programme might consider the time of day that assembly meetings are held in the winter, or transport options to meetings. Evening meetings after dark could have a negative impact on the attendance of women based on the findings of the Lewisham Annual Resident's survey, which stated that 49% of women compared to 29% of men felt unsafe in their local area after dark. The overall assembly attendance data does not support this, however in the future the assembly team could compare attendance data by gender, at set times of the year, to monitor any potential impact of evening meetings, at different times of the year.

Anecdotal evidence from the team review felt that the time of evening meetings could have a negative impact on the attendance of men, as more men work full time. A greater proportion of men than women living in Lewisham are in work full time (men 88.46% worked 31-49 hours + / women 70.75% worked 31-49 hours +, ONS, 2001). Therefore 7.30pm start meetings might be more effective than 7pm meetings in attracting men who work full time.

Anecdotal evidence from the Local Assembly team review also highlighted that evening meetings could have a negative impact on the attendance of women who are single parents. This view can be supported by 2001 Census data, as there were 844 male lone parent households in Lewisham, compared to 10,398 female lone parent households. Crèche facilities are currently not offered in the evening under

guidance from the Council's children and young people professionals, but are offered for Saturday assembly meetings, and have been used by parents attending the meetings.

Having large open assembly meetings as the main method of consultation was considered by the team to possibly have a negative impact on women from different cultures and religions, particularly Muslim women. The team recommended adopting methods of separate consultations with key groups such as Muslim women where appropriate, via small group exercises at Mosques or women's groups.

The team review highlighted that that some young women and men might feel unconfident in getting their viewpoint across, or being taken seriously, which would have a negative impact on their experience of the assembly and inclusiveness; it was recommended to try and ensure that table groups at assembly meetings were well mixed, to avoid isolated men or women on tables. This approach may differ between assemblies, depending on the particular make-up of a ward.

9.3 Assessment of age

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 outlawed discrimination on the grounds of age in the areas of employment and vocational training. It protects applicants for employment, employees, independent contractors and contracted workers (including agency workers and staff on secondment) from discrimination on the grounds of age throughout their employment and even after the working relationship ends.

Both older people and younger people can face a degree of inequality not experienced by others. This is largely due to stereotypes and perceptions. Yet the contribution of older and younger people to local communities is significant, securing their participation in society, and the benefits that brings is vital. Therefore, a key task in the emerging area of age equality must be to challenge those perceptions, building a mutual respect in the process. The assemblies will play a key role in helping to bridge the inter-generational gap.

Definitions differ, however the commonly held definition is that younger people are those below 18 and older people are those over 50. In relation to older age especially, fixed chronological points are no longer indicative of 'old age'. Many people in their 50s are in employment and will remain fit and active into their 70s.

Lewisham has a relatively young population; almost a fifth of its population is in the 0–15 years age group. Approximately one in seven people in the borough are aged over 60, compared to around one in five nationally.

Demographic - Age	Assembly %	Lewisham %
Under 18 years	2.22%	22.0%
18-24 years	2.70%	9.4%
25-34 years	7.47%	19.8%
35-54 years	38.14%	31.4%
55-64 years	21.61%	7.6%
65+ years	27.86%	9.7%

Local assemblies are well represented amongst older age groups (28% of attendees at assembly meetings are 65 years or over; compared to 10% of the Lewisham population). This is in line with older retired people generally having more time and interest in community meetings. It is recognised, however, that more has to be done to ensure representation amongst even older people and persons that are housebound. Suggestions from the team include better links with voluntary care groups and residential homes.

In general there is poor representation amongst young people at local assemblies, particularly of under 25 year olds (5% of assembly attendees, compared to 31% of the Lewisham population). However, it should be noted that the data above does not necessarily reflect attendance of young people at meetings, as a number of assemblies have been very successful in attracting youth groups, Young Advisors and scout groups etc. Often these young people do not fill out evaluation forms and so their demographic data is not captured.

There are several reasons for the low attendance of young people, including the challenge of making the assembly both interesting and worthwhile for a young attendee. It is therefore important that young people are included in the planning of the meetings, to help ensure that the format is relevant and not dull. Better representation amongst the young will also help to ensure that matters discussed are of relevance to them too. Using young people to promote the assembly to other young people has been suggested by the young people themselves, and should help to involve more young people in the assembly process. There are a small number of assemblies that have a young person on the coordinating group, and this is encouraged with other assemblies. It is also important to note that engagement with young people may in some circumstances be better undertaken outside of the assembly meetings, and good work is done by the team working with youth groups, school councils, the Young Mayor, Young Mayor advisors and the youth forum to gather views and opinions of young people on assembly issues.

Publicity produced for the assembly may be viewed as dull or irrelevant, failing to entice or attract young people to attend. The assembly team is working closely with youth workers to help identify areas that need to be improved, and the team will continue to explore best practice methods.

9.4 Assessment of ethnicity

Comparisons between ethnicity data for the local assemblies and the borough suggests that the assemblies are attracting a cross-representation of people. With an average representation of 67% at the Assemblies, compared to the Borough's average of 55%, people from the White British community have been shown to have a significantly higher attendance figure at the Assemblies than any other ethnic group. Overall Black Minority Ethnic (BME) attendance at assemblies is 31%, compared to the Lewisham population of 42%.

The most significant under-representation occurs in Chinese, Black/Black British African and Asian/Asian-British Pakistani; although all the BME groups are under represented to some degree.

Demographic - ethnicity	Assembly %	Lewisham %
White British	67.25%	55.5%
White Irish	1.60%	2.3%
Mixed-White & Black Caribbean	1.33%	1.7%
Mixed-White & Black African	0.53%	0.7%
Mixed-White & Asian	0.43%	0.7%
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1.33%	2.5%
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0.27%	0.8%
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	0.32%	0.8%
Black or Black British - Caribbean	10.12%	11.2%
Black or Black British - African	5.06%	9.0%
Chinese	0.27%	1.4%
Other	11.50%	13.4%

The BME communities are clearly not a homogeneous group and in analysing why certain communities are less, or not, engaged with the Assembly process consideration should be given to specific sub-sets of data for comparative interaction, e.g. religion and cultural beliefs, and gender.

Work will need to be undertaken with these under represented BME groups. The key points will be to find out (a) why these communities are not engaging/engaging more with the process and (b) what would enable them to become involved/more involved, with the twin aims of consulting and involving all communities. Contact should also be made with other colleagues and partner agencies with the view of sharing and building on knowledge and utilising data that is already available, including those pertaining to language/translation/interpretation, cultural and religious needs.

It is possible that those groups who are under-represented within the assembly data may have attended the assemblies, or had attended in a greater number than suggested by the data, but the data collection forms may not have been completed/not have been completed by a greater number of attendees. Conversely, it is also possible that a number of people from the better represented groups did not complete the forms either. As with all the other equality groups, further work is needed to ensure a high return rate of evaluation forms to ensure accurate data is available for analysis. This is especially pertinent with small groups such as Chinese, where missing attendance of a small number of Chinese people would indicate no attendance at all.

9.5 Assessment of disability

The definition of a disabled person by the DDA is as follows: Someone with a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities'. This includes: mobility, hearing or sight impairments, and mental health conditions, learning difficulties, cancer or diabetes, multiple sclerosis and heart conditions.

The Disability Duty was introduced by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, the council has a duty to:

- promote equal opportunity between disabled and deaf people and other people
- eliminating discrimination that is unlawful under the DDA
- eliminating harassment of disabled and deaf people that is related to the disability
- promoting positive attitudes towards disabled and deaf people in public life
- taking steps to meet disabled and deaf people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

Due to differing definitions of disability, there is no single recognised data source for comparison of the prevalence of disability. In the Lewisham Council's 2007 Residents Survey, of the 1,042 people surveyed, 14% of respondents described themselves as disabled. In the 2001

Census, 15.6% of Lewisham residents were classed as having a ‘limiting long-term illness’. In the ONS Annual Population survey data for 2007, 14.2% of people of working age were categorised as disabled. In March 2007 the London borough of Lewisham had 493 deaf people and 944 hard of hearing people registered.

Demographic - disability	Assembly %
Visual Impairment	1.02%
Speech Impairment	0.36%
Hearing Impairment	3.88%
Mobility (Wheelchair User)	0.97%
Mobility (Not a Wheelchair User)	3.93%
Learning Disability	0.72%
Mental Health	1.12%
Hidden Impairment	2.35%
Other	2.15%
TOTAL	16.5%

Of all assembly attendees, 16.5% have declared a disability. This is slightly higher than the 14-15% suggested figures for Lewisham population as a whole. The most significant types of disability represented are hearing impairment, mobility (not wheelchair user) and hidden impairment.

With regard to accessibility of venues, the local assemblies programme ensure all venues are DDA compliant with full disabled access.

However, there are ways to provide better access to meetings. Some disabled residents may be deterred from attending meetings. Supporting evidence from the Annual Resident’s Survey showed that disabled residents are significantly more likely to feel less safe outdoors in the day (72% compared to 83%) and after dark (30% compared to 43%). Transport for disabled or elderly residents is offered through taxi service or wardens bus when requested, however work could be undertaken to offer this service to more groups.

Some assemblies have taken disability access very seriously, with one ward adopting it as a ward priority.

The provision on request by residents for BSL interpreters at assembly meetings facilitates the positive participation for deaf people in assembly meetings, and this is communicated on all assembly communications. However there are other actions that the assembly team could undertake to support those attending who are hard of hearing, including advertising provision of typetalk.

The current portable PA system used at assemblies was reported to have caused difficulty for some people who are hard of hearing, in community hall settings. This is supported with feedback given on the assembly evaluation forms, citing 'poor sound'. A more powerful PA system is being ordered to provide better acoustics for attendees, as well as the use of hearing loops where possible.

About 2% of the population have a learning difficulty (Lancaster University, 2004). People with learning difficulties are generally an unheard voice. It was found that people with learning difficulties are socially excluded, only 17% adults with a learning difficulty are in full time employment compared to 67% of adult men and 53% adult women (DOH, 2003/4). People with learning difficulties are less likely to participate democratically, 31% of people with a learning difficulty voted at the 2001 general election compared to 73% of the general population (DOH, 2003/4).

The assembly team review suggested that the assembly meeting format, usually involving large amounts of paperwork, may have a negative impact on the participation of people with learning difficulties. Assembly paperwork to be used by the general public are not currently reviewed for their suitability for use by people with learning difficulties, prior to meetings.

The assembly team review offered a variety of suggestions to enable positive participation by people with learning difficulties, this included utilising professionals within community services directorate in providing advice on learning barriers, proof reading assembly material, or advising on developing a programme where people can contribute outside of assembly meetings. Other suggestions included working with Lewisham Speaking Up, an organisation for people with learning disabilities, as well as the team using and being trained in plain English.

9.6 Assessment of religion / faith

There are over 200 different religions in Lewisham. However, the ONS Census recorded only the major religions that are represented in the Borough with the majority of residents (61.2%), stating that they are Christians, with the next largest religious group being Muslim (4.6%). It is also recorded that 20.4% of Lewisham's resident population stated that they have no religious affiliation.

Religion and faith are currently not monitored by the Local Assemblies Team, therefore there is no data available as to the faith groups that were represented at the meetings. Data will be collected as part of the evaluation form over the coming months, with guidance from corporate policy who are rolling out this equality monitoring information.

Anecdotal evidence suggest that the assembly programme is good at attracting Christian faiths to be involved and attend meetings, including representation on coordinating groups. This is primarily through links with parish faith leaders and the use of Church halls for assembly meetings. However, it has been noted that Christian representation tends to be Church of England and that other Christian faiths such as Evangelist and Pentecostal are perhaps not as well represented.

In addition, ongoing engagement work has been undertaken with the borough's Muslim community, through the local mosque, and also the Jewish population through the local synagogue. Other minority religious groups do not necessarily have a place of worship within the borough so thought must be given to liaising with centres of worship outwith the borough boundaries, whose attendees are Lewisham residents.

Anecdotal evidence gleaned from other equality strands and team discussions suggests that some religious groups could be discouraged from attending the assemblies because of the mix of genders, if meetings are held at inappropriate buildings, if they clash with important religious events, or if inappropriate food is served. The team will need to develop closer links with the various faith communities with the aims of consulting and involving them. In addition better liaison with the Council's faith officer will help to build links with various faith communities.

9.7 Assessment of sexual orientation

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual (LGBT) people are represented across every community in Lewisham, and they make a significant cultural, social and economic contribution to the borough.

The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services, in education and in the exercise of public functions, which covers almost any activity in which the Council is engaged.

In Britain there is relatively little national research on the lives of LGBT people. The National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyle (NSSAL) in 2000 found that approximately 5 per cent of men and women in Britain stated that they had ever had same-sex partners. This figure rose to over 10 per cent for men and almost 7 per cent for women who lived in London. The Census in 2001 published more localised data, including the number of same-sex couples that were living together in each local authority. This reported that Lewisham has the 12th largest number of same-sex couples sharing a home, with 1,070 people describing themselves as living with a same-sex partner.

Although it is unlikely that a new question on sexual orientation will be added to the 2011 Census, questions on sexual orientation will be added to the Citizenship Survey and the British Crime Survey, both of which will help to provide a clearer national picture of the gay, lesbian and bisexual population in the near future.

In the meantime, there are various other estimates of the extent of the gay and lesbian population in Lewisham. Using central government's guideline of 6 per cent of the total population, the gay and lesbian population in Lewisham would be more than 15,000. This estimate does not include bisexual adults, or people who come to Lewisham to work or socialise, so the true extent of the LGBT communities may well be greater than this. In 2007 a question on sexual orientation was added to the Council's Annual Residents Survey for the first time. Over 1,000 residents were randomly selected from across the borough to participate in these face-to-face interviews, of which 2 per cent identified themselves as being gay, lesbian or bisexual.

Sexual Orientation is not currently measured by Local Assemblies, therefore making it difficult to determine whether there is any inequality in access. However, the programme will shortly begin to collect this information as part of its demographic monitoring information collected through evaluation forms at each meeting, following corporate guidance on collection. In addition, areas for improvement have been identified, including liaison with borough LGBT groups such as Stonewall and the team receiving diversity training in this area.

9.8 Local assemblies staffing

The Local Assemblies service has 10 staff. Of these 50% are female, 50% are male. 40% are from a BME background, and 10% have a disability. All staff fall within the 25-34 or 35-54 age range. No data is held on staff sexual orientation or religion.

The Local Assemblies service feels that its staff is reasonably representative of the wider Lewisham community, although it recognises that there is scope for the staff team to be more culturally diverse. It will consider ways to encourage people from different backgrounds to apply for vacancies.

There is a strong commitment to equalities within the team and several members of the team have undertaken equalities training and training relating to the needs of specific groups.

10. ACTION PLAN

The following actions have been identified from the assessment of the service to help improve the way in which the service operates.

Issue	Equalities group(s) affected	Action	Owner	Timescale	Measure of success
Little understanding of assembly participation across equality groups, e.g. data on young BME men.	All	Undertake statistical analysis on data available for 2008/09 attendance to determine trends across equality groups	Petra Smith	October 2009	Better understanding of assembly participation, to help inform engagement tools and target audiences
Evaluation forms – declining number filling out forms at assembly meetings	All	Continue to collect forms, and investigate alternative ways of ensuring high return rate, e.g. electronic voting system	Petra Smith	November 2010	Higher return rate of evaluation forms provides more accurate data on demographics of who is attending, allowing better analysis and targeted engagement.
Some equality groups less likely to attend assembly meetings and participate in traditional manner.	All	Build on work done outside of assembly meetings for those that cannot attend / do not wish to attend meetings – so people can still contribute, e.g. young people’s consultation on assembly priorities. Link this work outside of assembly back into assembly better.	Petra Smith	March 2010	Wider representation of views within assembly process, not just those that attend meetings; and also larger numbers of people engaged in assembly process.
Coordinating Groups do not always reflect the diversity of the ward	All	Undertake analysis of coordinating group volunteers and their demographics, to better understand representation.	Paul Jackson	March 2010	More representative coordinating groups, with knock-on effect of better represented assemblies.

		Explore ways of selecting coordinating group members which would ensure they are representative with Cllr Chairs and existing coordinating groups			
Inadequate PA system currently used at assembly meetings	Disability Age	Buy new PA system	Paul Jackson	May 2009	Better feedback from assembly attendees on quality of sound
Currently do not use hearing loops at assembly meetings	Disability Age	Portable hearing loops available to borrow from libraries	Paul Jackson	July 2009	Better feedback from attendees; and also greater participation by hard of hearing people
Access to information about assemblies for those contacting the Local Assemblies team, who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired.	Disability	Offer type talk service on publicity, available through Pearl Linguistics, under guidance of Customer Services.	Petra Smith	July 2010	Wider range of contact options for members of the public.
Format of meetings, including feedback and large amounts of paperwork etc not always suitable for people with learning difficulties and other disabilities.	Disability	Work with adult learning team on best practice examples and training needs. Work more closely with partners, including: - (CILL) Campaign for better living in Lewisham - Lewisham Speaking Up - Lewisham Deaf Community Group - Lewisham Disability Coalition	Paul Jackson	March 2010	Better involvement of disabled people at meetings and with assembly process.
Low attendance at assemblies by older people (75+), and housebound	Age Disability	Link in with Voluntary Care Groups and residential homes	Paul Jackson	March 2010	Better understanding of older people's issues to feed into assembly priorities
Format of meeting often unattractive to young people, creating low attendance of	Age	Better and more relevant publicity. Give young people more choice in how assembly money is spent.	Petra Smith	March 2010	Assembly meeting formats which encourage young people to attend,

young people at assemblies		Encourage participation of young people on coordinating group to help advise on format.			and sustain their attendance
Young people under represented at assembly meetings	Age	Undertake more work and build on existing work with young people groups outside of assembly meeting to gather their views. Encourage participation of young people on coordinating group.	Petra Smith	March 2010	Young people's views are considered as part of the assembly decision making process (e.g. priorities, actions, funding)
No data on sexual orientation of assembly attendees	Sexual orientation	To include question about sexual orientation on the evaluation forms (alongside current demographic information collected), with guidance from corporate policy unit.	Petra Smith	September 2009	Statistical evidence on attendees to allow assessment of attendance
Low levels of engagement with LGBT groups	Sexual orientation	More liaison and communication with LGBT groups, such as Stonewall and Metro Centre, Greenwich to explore diversity team training initiatives	Paul Jackson	March 2010	LGBT people needs better understood, and linked into assembly priorities
No data on religion/faith of assembly attendees	Religion	To include question about religion / faith on the evaluation forms (alongside current demographic information collected), with guidance from corporate policy unit.	Petra Smith	September 2009	Statistical evidence on attendees to allow assessment of attendance
Lower attendance of non Church of England Christian faiths	Religion Ethnicity	Identify and work with other Christian faiths in each locality, e.g. Evangelists and Pentecostals. Identify and work with faith groups not based in churches, e.g. community church groups using local school and community halls	Petra Smith	March 2010	Wider representation of Christian attendees
Engage minority Religious groups.	Religion Ethnicity	Continue engagement work with Muslim and Jewish communities. Consider contacting Sikhs Woolwich	Paul Jackson	March 2010	Wider representation of minority religious groups, and also wider BME

		Temple, the main centre for many Sikhs, some of whom will reside LBL.			representation.
Better engagement/ representation required with particular BME groups.	Ethnicity	Identify under represented groups and links within the community to engage with such groups. Use alternative engagement techniques such as BME orientated pubs, hairdressers etc.	Petra Smith	March 2010	Wider BME representation at assemblies and involvement with process.
Food offered at assemblies does not always reflect cultural diversity of area	Ethnicity Religion	Identify assemblies where additional or alternative culturally appropriate food is needed, and investigate options for delivering this.	Petra Smith	October 2009	Attendees at assemblies feel better catered for, and other newcomers are encouraged to attend.
Some minority women's groups not attending, and may feel unable to attend due to cultural differences.	Gender Religion Ethnicity	Continue working with various women's groups, e.g. through Children's Centres, International Women's week events, Mosque etc. Consult separately with Muslim women, to gather their views to feed into assembly, and to investigate how to ensure assembly is accessible to them. Get further advice / support through other council officers with established contacts	Petra Smith	March 2010	Wider representation of minority women's groups, and also wider BME attendance and involvement.
No evening childcare provision at assembly meetings may prevent mothers / single mothers from attending	Gender Age	Revisit with DMT the decision to not provide evening crèche at assembly meetings	Paul Jackson	October 2010	Updated decision on use of evening crèche based on programme running for one year.
Safety of women attending assembly meetings	Gender Age	Continue to plan meetings which take into consideration safety of women attending, including: - provide more Saturday daytime meetings in the winter.	Petra Smith	March 2010	Higher numbers of women attending, including newcomers

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensure venues are on easily accessible bus routes. - provide more transport assistance for older women (warden's bus). 			
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10. MONITORING THE EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The assessment will be presented for formal agreement by Community Services management team and presented to the Corporate Equalities Board, before being implemented by Local Assemblies management with immediate effect. It is envisaged that an interim review of progress will be undertaken in October 2009 and a full assessment of progress in March 2010.

11. CONCLUSION

This EIA has provided a useful exercise in identifying areas of strength and weakness for the Local Assembly programme in regards to equality issues. The assembly programme, by its very nature, contributes to community cohesion and involving people from all equality groups in helping shape their area and make decisions about how to improve it. However, with any engagement programme, some groups are better represented than others. The local assembly programme makes every effort to engage with minority and under-represented groups, and this EIA will help to continue and focus that work, as well as ensuring that assembly meetings are accessible to everyone.