



**Dartmoor National Park Authority**  
**Gender Equality Scheme**

**2007-2010**

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# Dartmoor National Park Authority

## Gender Equality Scheme

### Contents

Foreword.....	2
Background.....	3
Dartmoor National Park Authority’s Vision and Corporate Plan .....	5
Process for development of the Gender Equality Scheme.....	6
The Population.....	7
Barriers to using Dartmoor National Park’s services and facilities .....	8
Involvement of people .....	9
Good practice in promoting equality of opportunity within Dartmoor National Park and Dartmoor National Park Authority .....	9
Priorities for the next three years .....	10
Things to help deliver – Leadership, ownership and partnership .....	12
Monitoring and Review .....	13
Action Plan.....	14
1. Corporate Actions.....	14
2. Employment .....	15
3. Training .....	16
4. Gathering information.....	17
5. Involvement and Engagement.....	18
6. Communication .....	18
7. Access.....	19
8. Development Control and Forward Planning.....	20

## Foreword

English National Parks are exemplars of the highest quality landscapes, designated for the enjoyment and benefit of all people. Their value as living and working environments which help bring health, wealth and wellbeing to both local and national communities is increasingly recognised. The Authority's ambition is to be a model employer, which, in pursuing national park purposes engages with, and delivers opportunity for every section of society. In addressing equality issues we have much to offer and much to learn and this Gender Equality Scheme builds on achievements to date, including the learning gained from the Authority's Disability Equality Scheme (2006-2009), with a challenging agenda for the future. The Action Plan is wide ranging, and in committing the Authority to its fulfilment a new dimension will be added to the growing importance of the special place that is Dartmoor.

Nick Atkinson  
Chief Executive (NPO)

## Background

The *Equality Act 2006* amends the *Sex Discrimination Act 1975* to place a statutory duty on all public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need:

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

The Act came into force on 6 April 2007.

The gender equality duty aims to make gender equality central to the way that public authorities work, in order to create:

- better informed decision making and policy development
- a clearer understanding of the needs of service users
- better quality services which meet varied needs
- more effective targeting of policy and resources
- better results and greater confidence in public services
- a more effective use of talent in the workforce.

The duty is intended to address the fact that, despite 30 years of individual legal rights to sex equality, there is still widespread discrimination – sometimes intentional, sometimes unintentional – and persistent gender inequality. Policies and practices that seem neutral can have a significantly different effect on women and on men, often contributing to greater gender inequality and poor policy outcomes. Individual legal rights have not been enough by themselves to change this.

The Authority must take a proactive approach to considering gender roles and relationships to ensure that there are equal opportunities for men and women to benefit from all our services/functions, whether that is employment, obtaining information, taking part in an activity or otherwise understanding and

enjoying Dartmoor's special qualities. This will require working closely with staff and service users on an ongoing basis to identify the barriers that exist and put in place practical measures to overcome these. This applies not only to future plans and decisions, but also requires taking action to tackle the consequences of decisions in the past which do not adequately promote equality of opportunity.

Whilst there is a requirement to produce a Gender Equality Scheme, effectively meeting the Duty will have a positive impact on the work of Dartmoor National Park Authority through:

- improving effectiveness and efficiency by ensuring that resources invested benefit all those they are aimed at
- taking actions that will put in place real, positive changes
- increasing confidence in the Authority's ability to respond flexibly to the needs of its workforce and the national and local communities it serves
- enabling the Authority to meet audit and inspection requirements as effectively as possible.

For a small Authority the principle of proportionality and relevance is particularly important. In determining our priorities for the Scheme it will be essential to ensure we are targeting those areas that can have the greatest impact on the greatest number of people.

## **Dartmoor National Park Authority's Vision and Corporate Plan**

The purposes of National Parks were redefined in the *Environment Act 1995* and are:

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage, and
- to promote opportunities for understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Park by the public.

National Parks have an additional duty in pursuing these purposes which is:

- to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities (within the National Park) by working closely with the agencies and local authorities responsible for these matters.

In its *Corporate Plan for 2006 – 2009* the Dartmoor National Park Authority has identified the following key priorities in pursuit of the above purposes, namely to:

- look after Dartmoor's assets;
- provide sustainable access for all;
- maintain a living, working landscape and thriving community;
- develop an effective, innovative, learning organisation.

Progress on achieving these aims is published annually and following the 2005/06 review of progress the following priority actions were set which are relevant to the delivery of the Gender Equality Duty:

- improving intellectual access to Dartmoor for as wide an audience as possible

- working with the South West Protected Landscapes Forum on an outreach research project to identify barriers to visiting Dartmoor for under-represented visitors
- developing a revised Human Resources Strategy which values staff and provides equality of opportunity
- developing a Communications Strategy to ensure effective communication with stakeholders, both internal and external
- building a new Information Centre at Haytor and improving access to Information Centres at Newbridge, Postbridge and Princetown
- maintaining and improving physical access to Dartmoor, including continuing work to make Public Rights of Way easier for all to use

## **Process for development of the Gender Equality Scheme**

The development of the Gender Equality Scheme has focused on five key activities:

- engaging people in the discussion through existing routes such as Dartmoor for All
- undertaking an initial review of current policies, procedures and functions to identify priorities either for action or for further work to understand the issues
- utilising a staff focus group to look in detail at employment related issues
- agreeing the priorities for inclusion in the first three-year action plan taking account of both the Authority's strategic priorities and the priorities identified by people consulted
- starting work on the development of measures of outcome and the methods for gathering and using information to monitor progress against these.

The results of the work so far are set out in this document.

## **The Population**

48% of economically active women in Devon work full time compared to 83% of men. Similarly 44% of women work part time compared to 9% of men.

In Dartmoor National Park Authority 48% of the workforce are women and 52% are men. However, 46% of women work part time compared to 24% of men. In addition, of the senior grades in the Authority (Grade 6 and above), 67% are men and 33% are women.

In respect to functions and services, South West Protected Landscapes Forum has commissioned research into the local, regional and national catchments for the South West Protected Landscapes including Dartmoor National Park. As well as defining the catchment populations, one of the outcomes of this research will be to identify under-represented groups and the factors that limit their use of the protected landscapes in the area. This research has just been published and will inform the ongoing development of the action plans.

Visitor surveys, feedback questionnaires and databases of information held within some sections of the Authority provide information about the numbers of people who use Dartmoor (around 10 million visitors annually). This information is not routinely brought together and does not always include gender related information. This will need to be extended in some areas to ensure that it can provide us with a picture, in future, of the range of people who use Dartmoor National Park Authority's services and facilities. The England Leisure Visits Survey 2005 did find, however, that across all the English National Parks, visitors were 51% male and 49% female.

## **Barriers to using Dartmoor National Park's services and facilities**

The Countryside Agency has done some research into the factors which limit the use of the countryside. This identifies the following as the main reasons why people do not access the countryside:

- transport and the cost of visiting
- lack of knowledge of available facilities
- lack of provision of suitable facilities; and
- feeling of vulnerability due the inherent unpredictability of the countryside.

Initial discussions locally and research undertaken by other local public authorities would support this, with the following being identified as key factors that influence the decision of people to participate in activities or take up employment opportunities:

- transport – appropriate and affordable
- lack of information in appropriate formats or lack of knowledge about what information is available
- confidence
- lack of accessible employment opportunities, as well as the processes for recruitment
- caring responsibilities.

Some of these areas are already being addressed by Dartmoor National Park Authority as set out below; others are identified as priorities within the Action Plan.

## **Involvement of people**

Dartmoor for All was established in 1995 with the specific remit to help the National Park to identify opportunities for developing better access for people with special needs, including people with a range of disabilities as well as parents with pushchairs or with young children, and older people. It was the first access group in the country with a particular interest in the countryside. It has influenced and been active in the development of the *Easy Going Dartmoor* information packs and continue to monitor and develop the Easy Going Walks and Tours. The group has had input into the development of the scheme through discussion of the key headings and priorities as well as members commenting on the draft action plan itself.

## **Good practice in promoting equality of opportunity within Dartmoor National Park and Dartmoor National Park Authority**

Dartmoor National Park Authority is already undertaking several projects which promote the opportunity for people to access and enjoy Dartmoor and its special qualities. Some examples include:

- the establishment of the Countryside Access Group (now Dartmoor for All) – this was an innovative initiative and the group has informed and influenced a wide range of work over the past 11 years. The production of *Easy Going Dartmoor* with information about the grading of routes, available facilities, viewpoints and scenic drives was one of the first comprehensive guides of its kind in the country;
- the Oral history project and the development of Virtual Tours have provided new ways for a wide range people to gain access to and experience Dartmoor. The Virtual Tours have been used by around 10,000 people since their introduction in December 2005;
- website development now gives access to a range of information. The development of the site has taken place alongside national work on

national park websites and has been tested to ensure it complies with recognised standards;

- o HR policies which support all employees within Dartmoor National Park Authority e.g. Acceptable Behaviour policy, Childcare voucher scheme, Home working policy;
- o a comprehensive Job Evaluation review has been undertaken during 2006/07 and the outcomes will be fully implemented during 2007.

## **Priorities for the next three years**

The promotion of equality of opportunity has been a focus for a lot of work over recent years to improve access to Dartmoor. The Gender Equality Duty requires the Authority to take this a step further and to continue to develop more proactive ways of working across all of its functions and services, learning from the good practice that exists and sharing the skills and expertise that staff have developed.

This requires strong leadership and commitment, and the continued development of the public face of the National Park Authority as being an approachable and accessible organisation.

All public authorities are being required, increasingly, to promote equality of opportunity to a wide range of groups who may be discriminated against due to their gender, race, religious beliefs or age. This scheme is part of this process for Dartmoor National Park Authority.

For the first three years it is suggested that the priorities should be tackled under the following key headings:

**Employment** – although Dartmoor National Park Authority has a relatively even distribution of male and female employees overall, there is an over representation of females in part time work and an under representation in senior positions. Policies and procedures for recruitment and selection,

absence management and appraisal are priorities for review to ensure that the Authority is presenting itself as a flexible and accessible organisation. Authority Members also need to represent a diverse community and when the Secretary of State appointment process is carried out, we need to encourage under-represented people to apply.

**Training** – Diversity Awareness Training for all staff and Members is essential. There is also a need for more specific training for front-line staff eg Information Centre staff, planning officers, rangers and receptionists who will need to respond to people with a range of needs on a frequent basis.

**Gathering information** – there is some information held by specific Services/Directorates but this is not routinely amalgamated to give an Authority wide picture of the users of the services provided. Not all of the feedback mechanisms currently ask questions about gender and further consideration needs to be given to how this could be included and how it would be useful. South West Protected Landscapes Research together with the Devon Equality Steering Group questionnaires will give use some baseline information about both who our catchment population are and which groups are under-represented in using Dartmoor.

**Involvement and engagement of people** who live in, visit or work in Dartmoor National Park as well as staff employed by Dartmoor National Park Authority – a number of actions have been suggested including the development of relationships with a wider range of groups. For example, there is a lack of understanding of what it means to live as a transgender person in Devon. Devon Strategic Partnership (of which Dartmoor National Park Authority is a member) has given a commitment to research the needs of transgender people as part of its work on tackling prejudice and championing equal opportunities. The work will be completed in 2007. There is also scope to ensure best use is made of the opportunities of face to face contact with groups when they arise, for example through statutory consultation on planning matters.

**Communications** – the actions under this heading will need to link in very closely with the developing communication strategy. Key points here are the need for consistency in the production of publications in terms of format and style. Consideration also needs to be given as to where publications are accessed.

**Access** – as identified above there has been a great deal of proactive and innovative work to enable people with a range of needs to access Dartmoor and its facilities, as well as its towns and villages. The actions proposed build on this, reflecting the priorities of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, and ensuring that access to the National Park continues to improve.

**Planning** – a number of opportunities exist for improving the engagement of people more proactively through the consultation processes associated with the development of the Local Development Framework. Impact assessment should be built into the process for developing new planning policies to ensure that these do not have a negative impact on different genders. In relation to decision-making there are also points in the planning application process where a more proactive approach could be taken to accommodate people's needs at, for example planning committee meetings and through reference to the Gender Equality Duty in reports to committee where appropriate.

### **Things to help deliver – Leadership, ownership and partnership**

The success of the scheme is dependent on the ongoing leadership of senior management and the Heads of Service and the commitment of staff. The identification of an Authority Member to 'champion' the diversity agenda, and a senior manager with the overall lead for diversity together with the establishment of a small project team will provide a mechanism for ensuring the systems for monitoring and review are robust.

Commitment to engaging people in the process is strong, but the capacity of the Authority to deliver this in isolation, together with the demands placed upon individuals and groups by a range of public authorities, suggests that this work is best done in partnership. It is anticipated that the role of the Devon Equality Steering Group is key to this as will be the need to develop partnerships with other Local Authority and National Park colleagues to tackle particular issues.

## **Monitoring and Review**

The ability to demonstrate progress is a crucial element in the success of this Scheme. All actions identified below are allocated to an individual or team and these will also be reflected in their Service Plans for the life of the action plan. In addition, the development of measurable outcomes will continue in order to assist the Authority to demonstrate how it is making progress. The 'Gathering Information' section of the Action Plan has more detail on this.

Another part of the Scheme is the development of Impact Assessments. This is the process of assessing the impact of existing and proposed policies and practices in relation to their consequences for gender equality. The process of doing this should be main-stream and become part of the normal process for developing and reviewing policies and practices. The outcome of the process should be improvements in our performance in relation to the provision of services through identifying and removing or reducing barriers to gender equality. The Action Plan includes a timetable for agreeing the impact assessment templates, processes and implementation plans.

The Scheme will be reviewed and reported on annually within the Corporate Plan for the Authority (published in June). A full review of the Scheme and production of subsequent Schemes will take place every three years. These reviews will be made available to the public in an agreed set of accessible formats.

## Action Plan

### 1. Corporate Actions

**Outcome: There is clear leadership and co-ordination of the Gender Equality Scheme across the Authority with robust arrangements for monitoring and review of progress.**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Officer/s</b>	<b>Timescale (to be completed by)</b>
Identify a Member as 'Diversity Champion' to promote the agenda at Authority level	NPO	June 2007
Establish Diversity/ Equality Forum	Diversity lead	June 2007
Ensure GES is linked into service planning to maximise ownership	Heads of Service	April 2007
Undertake annual review of progress against the Action Plan	Diversity lead	March 2008
Full review and preparation of the next 3-year plan	Director of Corporate Services	Sept 2009 – March 2010

## 2. Employment

**Outcomes: There is an equal gender distribution of people applying for employment within Dartmoor National Park Authority and those applications are supported through positive action.**

**Existing staff are supported in maintaining and furthering their careers on an equal basis.**

Action	Lead Officer	Timescale (to be completed by)
Staff focus group is established to inform the development of policy and procedure for employment	Head of Human Resources	In place
Monitor gender distribution of employees with a particular focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• part time/full time</li> <li>• senior grades</li> <li>• occupational segregation</li> </ul>	Head of Human Resources	In place
Monitor gender of people who apply for posts through equal opportunities monitoring form	Head of Human Resources	In place
Undertake impact assessment on all relevant existing HR policies	Head of Human Resources	December 2007
Undertake staff survey and include gender related questions	Head of Human Resources	June 2007
Review recruitment and selection policies and practices and make changes to take account of any negative impact of current	Head of Human Resources	April 2007

procedures		
Implement outcome of Job Evaluation review process undertaken during February and March 2007 to ensure equal pay applies for all employees	NPO	September 2007

### 3. Training

**Outcome: All staff and Members have increased awareness of the diverse needs of people and are better equipped to respond to and meet their needs.**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Timescale (to be completed by)</b>
Ensure all staff and Members undertake diversity awareness training	Head of Human Resources	December 2007
Ensure diversity awareness updates are included in regular mandatory training programmes for all staff and Members	Head of Human Resources	March 2008
Front line staff (eg Information Centres, Rangers and Planning, Reception and Administration Officer) have had specific training in a range of diversity issues	Head of Human Resources	September 2007

#### 4. Gathering information

**Outcome: Better and more complete information is available on the use of services and the barriers people identify**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Timescale (to be completed by)</b>
Analyse outcomes from South West Protected Landscapes Research to inform further development of the action plan	Head of Recreation, Tourism & Ranger Service	September 2007
Development of current feedback/monitoring mechanisms to include information on gender and continue to develop understanding of the barriers to equal opportunity. (This should include analysis of complaints information).	Heads of Service	March 2008
Develop existing mechanisms to gather information on current use of services such as Easy Going Tours and Guided Walks	Head of Recreation, Tourism & Ranger Service/ Principal Learning & Outreach Officer	March 2008
Develop an Equality Impact Assessment Template and process, and agree priorities for its implementation across all services	Diversity Lead	June 2007

## 5. Involvement and Engagement

**Outcome: People from all genders are fully engaged in the monitoring and development of the Gender Equality Scheme**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Timescale (to be completed by)</b>
Utilise joint working partnerships as set up for Disability Equality Scheme	Various as in DES	Ongoing

## 6. Communication

**Outcome: Dartmoor National Park Authority has a range of methods for communicating with the public and its staff that are appropriate and accessible.**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Timescale (to be completed by)</b>
Consumer testing on website and intranet	Head of ICT	June 2007
Link GES requirements into the developing Communications Strategy	Head of Education, Information & Communication Service	December 2007
Explore opportunities for expanding the range of places where information is accessible by people from under represented groups	Head of Education, Information & Communication Service	June 2009

## 7. Access

**Outcome: Dartmoor National Park Authority continues to improve access to its services, buildings and activities for all people**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Timescale (to be completed by)</b>
Continue implementation of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (see below)	Head of Recreation, Tourism & Ranger Service	Ongoing
DNPA will seek to increase the length and range of routes for which specific access information is provided (gates/surface type etc) to increase the opportunities for use by all people e.g. with push chairs	Head of Recreation, Tourism & Ranger Service	June 2009
Provide better distribution systems for current publications using the outcome of this work and current research to guide the development of these systems	Diversity Lead	June 2009
Ensure volunteers leading guided walks represent a diverse background, including gender	Head of Education, Communication & Information Service	June 2008
Ensure toilet strategy incorporates gender equality issues e.g. baby changing in male toilets as well as female	Head of Recreation, Tourism & Ranger Service	December 2008

## 8. Development Control and Forward Planning

**Outcome: The Development Control process and policies involved are gender neutral and do not have an undue negative impact on different genders**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Timescale (to be completed by)</b>
Enable diversity awareness training for those determining planning applications	Head of Development Control	Ongoing
Revise letters notifying people of their planning application going to Planning Committee to ask them to identify any special arrangements that we need to make to give them a fair hearing. For example, timing of agenda item or time allowed to present cases.	Head of Development Control	January 2007
Develop more proactive approaches to consultation with groups representing people from diverse backgrounds on Forward Planning issues	Head of Forward Planning & Community	December 2008
Ensure the development of planning policies as part of LDF process includes an assessment of the impact on gender	Head of Forward Planning & Community	December 2008