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Part A: The Research

Overall Aims

The research should:

1. Provide baseline information on current practice in local authorities in relation to equality and diversity;
2. Identify good practice and develop a body of knowledge which will assist local authorities in meeting the future requirements of the Equality Standard and the new EU directives
3. Identify good practice in terms of leadership styles, organisational structure and culture and, methods of service delivery which facilitate the realization of equality and diversity.

Key Objectives

1. Identify best practice in delivering equality and diversity for all across the three themes (although it is recognised that different authorities may excel in some areas and not in others);
2. Provide an overview of the impact of pursuing an equalities agenda and responding to a diverse population across the range of activities and roles of local authorities;
3. Investigate the difficulties, internal and external, of implementing best practice in delivery of equality and diversity.
4. Identify the extent to which local authorities utilise research, monitoring and consultation in developing and delivering equality and diversity.
5. Establish perceptions of what 'success' means in terms of local authorities' activities for employees, stakeholders, citizens etc.

A. Representation, Participation and Leadership

1. Is actual representation essential or desirable for delivering substantive representation?
2. Do perceptions about resistance to participation reduce the pool of potential councillors; do they also encourage political participation to be channelled through community and pressure groups, for example?

B. Structures, committee organization and staff

3. Examine the effectiveness of local authorities in promoting and developing equality and diversity across a range of groups.

C. Service procurement, delivery and impact

4. More needs to be known about the levels of importance attached to issues of equality, fairness, cultural diversity, cultural sensitivity and non-discriminatory practices in terms of service delivery than surveys of user satisfaction can deliver. More also needs to be known about how these issues are

incorporated into the procurement of goods and services. This should cut across a range of groups and include people from the majority population. It should also include the views of those who are responsible for procurement and delivery.

Methods

The structure and methodologies proposed should facilitate the identification of key moments and themes for local authorities included in the research and exemplify what is happening from the point of view of a range of actors. It is envisaged that the research will provide in-depth, case study data which will produce detailed information on perceptions and understandings of local authorities' role in delivering equality and diversity across the range of their functions and from a variety of angles.

Reporting and Dissemination

There will be a number of key outputs from the project:

- Output 1: a detailed workplan, setting out the scope and parameters of the work, the choice of local authorities as case studies and review of the methodologies to be used and their advantages/disadvantages. This should be delivered within *one month* of the project's start
- Output 2: an interim report detailing progress in the case study research, problems encountered in recruiting subjects, strategies considered and used to overcome recruitment problems and reach subjects.
- Output 3: a brief report on each of the case studies outlining the main features and findings relevant to the research.
- Output 4: presentation of main findings and recommendations for best practice to the steering group.
- Output 5: a final report bring together findings from the case studies and detailing best practice in delivery of equality and diversity by local authorities. A short, stand-alone summary of findings should also be delivered at this point.
- Output 6: a leaflet detailing best practice in the delivery of equality and diversity across the range of local authority roles and activities using illustrative data from the case studies.