

# Implementation of TEC/CCTE Equal Opportunities Strategies

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In her Keynote Speech to the first TEC Equal Opportunities Conference<sup>1</sup> Margaret Hodge, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Employment and Equal Opportunities, said that she believed “that the social and business case for equality are inseparable.” Similarly, in his preface to the guide to Self Assessment for Equal Opportunities in Training<sup>2</sup> the then Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality said that, “The importance of equality of opportunity to a thriving local economy cannot be over-estimated. If implemented effectively, equal opportunity policies and practices ensure that we value and utilise the talents of all our people, irrespective of their appearance, status or background.”
- 1.2 More recently, the Learning and Skills Council Prospectus<sup>3</sup> stressed that, “Many people have experienced direct and indirect barriers to learning as a result, for example, of their race, gender, disability or age. As a result they have been excluded from the benefits learning can bring to them personally. And that exclusion also damages our overall competitiveness.”
- 1.3 It was within this context that legislation requiring education and training providers not to discriminate on the grounds of sex and race was introduced in 1975. Thus, since their inception, Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs<sup>4</sup>) have been required to promote equality of opportunity in all that they do or are responsible for. They have a major contribution to make by supporting and encouraging those in our society who experience difficulties in gaining the relevant skills and knowledge to enter and compete on equal terms in the labour market; those who are under represented, under achievers or socially excluded for whatever reason. They also have a major contribution to make by raising the Equal Opportunities awareness of everyone, individual or organisation, connected with the training and labour markets.
- 1.4 TECs were initially required to produce and include an Equal Opportunities statement within their Corporate and Business Plans. From 1993, they were required to expand such statements into formal Equal Opportunities strategies. In 1995, an evaluation of TEC policy and practice<sup>5</sup> led to a strengthening of this requirement, culminating in 1997 in the introduction by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) of a National Standard for TEC Equal Opportunities Strategies<sup>6</sup> and to the implementation of specific Equal Opportunities related Performance Indicators.
- 1.5 More recently, in 1998 an evaluation<sup>7</sup> found that none of the sampled TEC strategies met the National Standard in full, typically because of a failure to fully analyse participation and performance gaps or to undertake a thorough consultation process. This resulted in a significant tightening of TECs’ strategies and a strengthening of the way in which they are monitored by Government Offices for the Regions (GOs).

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1. “**Getting Equal - TECs/CCTEs get together on Equality**”, held at the Forte Posthouse, Bloomsbury, London on the 27th October 1998.
2. “**Equality Assurance : Self Assessment for Equal Opportunities in Training**”, DfEE (QPID), March 1999.
3. “**The Learning and Skills Council Prospectus - Learning to Succeed**”, DfEE, December 1999.
4. Throughout this report the term TEC or TECs is used to represent both Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) and/or Chambers of Commerce, Training and Enterprise (CCTEs).
5. “**TEC Policy and Practice Under the National Framework for Action for Equal Opportunities and Special Needs**”, National Development Project undertaken by Community and Economic Development Associates (CEDA) for the TEC National Council and DfEE, 1995.
6. “**The TEC Equal Opportunities Strategies National Standard**”, DfEE, 1997.
7. “**Evaluation of TECs’ Equal Opportunities Strategies : introduction of the new National Standard**”, IPSOS-RSL for the DfEE, 1998.

- 1.6 Although these steps and the action they spawned have further enabled discrimination to be challenged and equality promoted, there is evidence that many people still face disadvantage and fail to fulfil their potential because of continuing barriers to equality in education, training and employment. Thus, when, by mid-1999, GOs reported that all TEC Equal Opportunities strategies met the National Standard, it was time to see how they were being implemented and begin to assess their impact.

### Aims and Objectives

- 1.7 The overall aim of the study was to investigate and appraise the ways in which TECs' were going about the implementation of their Equal Opportunities strategies and, in particular, to identify those factors which determine performance.
- 1.8 Its objectives were to:
- i) examine and comment on TECs' implementation of their Equal Opportunities strategies, in particular how they were cascading relevant messages to and actively involving providers and other partners;
  - ii) examine, appraise and comment on TECs' and providers' Equal Opportunities related activities and achievements;
  - iii) identify and assess the relative effect of those factors which affect Equal Opportunities performance;
  - iv) examine and comment on the ways in which TECs and their partners monitor, appraise and evaluate their Equal Opportunities related activities and how such information is used to review and update their Equal Opportunities Strategies;
  - v) provide a 'benchmark' against which progress (in relation to TECs' and providers' Equal Opportunities activities, achievements and performance) can be assessed; and
  - vi) inform and make recommendations for future policy, guidance and operational procedures, in particular the arrangements for mainstreaming Equal Opportunities within the new national and local Learning and Skills Councils (LSC(s)).

### Methodology

- 1.9 The report draws upon four distinct, but inter-related, activities. The first was a review of relevant literature. The second was a joint Quality and Financial Assurance Division (QFAD) and Analytical Services: Employability and Adult Learning Division (AS:EALD) led study which involved the identification and case study of a number of TECs and their partners in respect of their Equal Opportunities strategies, activities and achievements. Interviews were conducted during the period October to early December 1999 with:
- relevant TEC personnel, including the Equal Opportunities Co-ordinator, those Board member(s)/senior manager(s) with responsibility for Equal Opportunities, Contract Managers, the Operations Manager, Research and/or Database Managers;

- a range of those organisations that the TECs were working with to implement their strategies, including the Employment Service (ES), careers services, ethnic minority and other community groups; and
  - appropriate GO staff.
- 1.10 The third was the Training Standards Council's (TSC) Equal Opportunities Thematic. This ran in parallel to the aforementioned study and concentrated on the Equal Opportunities related position and perceptions of providers and trainees. As well as drawing on evidence from existing provider inspections, the Thematic sought to obtain a broad range of information through the inclusion of a limited number of supplementary questions within those inspections scheduled for providers within the selected TEC areas during November 1999 to January 2000. In addition, during the same period, some more in depth, focused discussions were conducted by the Thematic team with a small number of providers and trainees.
- 1.11 The final element involved the extraction and analysis of relevant statistical and management information in respect of TECs' (particularly those selected as case studies) Equal Opportunities related performance and the factors that may affect it. Annex 2 provides a summary.
- 1.12 Where practical, the study and thematic fieldwork sought to identify what progress was being made in relation to, and the impact achieved by, the approaches and activities employed by the TECs in pursuit of their Equal Opportunities strategies. Where appropriate these findings are reported. However, if such information was not readily available, fieldworkers were not expected to continually probe in an effort to derive relevant material or attempt to make a subjective assessment.
- 1.13 Details of the TEC/CCTE areas included in the study are provided at Annex 1.

### Format

- 1.14 The main sections of this report reflect the study's objectives with Section 4 setting out the context within which TECs and their partners are seeking to implement their Equal Opportunities related strategies. Section 5 considers the methods being employed to communicate and implement the strategies and Section 6 the Equal Opportunities related positions and perspectives of providers and trainees. Section 7 reviews the procedures being adopted to monitor, evaluate and review individual activities and strategies, with Section 8 looking at the factors which enable or inhibit Equal Opportunities related performance. Section 9 considers the position and implications of TECs as Equal Opportunities employers, whilst Section 10 takes a look into the future, in particular at the introduction of the Learning and Skills Council and its local arms. Finally, Section 11 attempts to pull all the information together and to highlight the main conclusions arising from the exercise.
- 1.15 It should be noted that the report is based on a mixture of comments, views and interpretations provided by those interviewed, together with both quantitative and qualitative evidence accessed during the study fieldwork or the data extraction and analysis exercise outlined at paragraph 1.11 above. All comments and interpretations are necessarily subjective, reflecting the opinions of the particular respondent or respondent type, and must therefore be read in that context. Nevertheless every response has been treated equally and, where appropriate (particularly where corroborative views or evidence exists), reported, although the need for careful interpretation has been highlighted where necessary.

## 2. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

### Context

2.1 TECs' derivation and implementation of their Equal Opportunities strategies has to be set in context. Considerations to be taken into account include:

- the considerable amount of national and international legislation in relation to Equal Opportunities (see paragraph 4.4);
- the role of and the support and guidance available from the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) and the newly established Disability Rights Commission (DRC) and also agencies such as the Equality Foundation, the Advisory Committee for Disabled People in Employment and Training (ACDET) and regional organisations like Equality North West (paragraph 4.5 refers);
- the extensive range of Equal Opportunities related research, some of which has significantly influenced TECs' Equal Opportunities requirements over the years (see paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7);
- the variety of population groups for which equality of opportunity is an issue and the fact that any individual may face multiple disadvantages (see paragraphs 4.8 and 4.9);
- the local economic, social and cultural environment and the availability of consistent, relevant and up-to-date information (paragraphs 4.10 and 4.11 refer);
- the overall profile of Equal Opportunities, which appears to have risen over recent years; yet many remain to be convinced of the business case for equality (paragraphs 4.12 and 4.13);
- the number of different agencies and organisations involved in Equal Opportunities related work, and TECs' need to work with such 'partners' if they are to do more than just 'scratch the surface' (see paragraphs 4.14 and 4.15);
- impending changes for the funding and management of post-16 education and training (see paragraphs 4.16 and 4.17).

### Communication and Implementation

2.2 Although there were many similarities, there was also considerable diversity in the approaches adopted by TECs for the derivation and communication of their Equal Opportunities strategies. Many had used existing working groups or similar arrangements, some had established specific local consultation or focus groups, others had relied on routine communications. Yet a substantial proportion of external partners indicated that they felt they had been given little or no opportunity to contribute to or comment on the strategy. (paragraphs 5.1 through 5.4 refer)

2.3 Communication of the agreed strategy seems an obvious pre-cursor to effective implementation. Approaches used (see paragraphs 5.5 through 5.7) include:

- distribution of the whole document and/or an executive summary;
- specific launch events;
- training events, briefings, workshops, seminars, network meetings;
- continuation of local consultation or focus groups;
- inclusion of relevant messages within routine contract and/or business development activities and relevant publications;
- providing access to key documents via the TEC's Intranet and/or Internet site.

2.4 There were, however, a number of weaknesses in TECs' communication of their strategies, including:

- circulation of strategy documents which were too detailed for 'public' consumption;
- a lack of sign-posting, leaving recipients unclear about what and how they were expected to contribute;
- limited publicity regarding the strategy and relatively low attendance at awareness events;
- difficulties in engaging employers, particularly if they felt that they were receiving inconsistent messages from key Departments or agencies;
- failure to recognise and use the potential of certain organisations as a means of cascading key messages;
- the relatively low priority given to Equal Opportunities by some contract managers and business advisers.

Although failure to communicate a strategy did not necessarily mean that it could not be successfully implemented, several TECs had recognised these weaknesses and were taking steps to address the situation. (see paragraphs 5.8 through 5.10)

2.5 The establishment of relevant structures, the development of an appropriate culture and the amount of preparatory work undertaken by all concerned also influenced TECs' implementation of their strategies. Key elements were:

- Board and/or senior management support; this was clearly important and worked best where it was visible and active, gave a clear lead across the TEC and fulfilled both a 'champion' and 'challenge' role (paragraph 5.12);
- the adoption of an integrated approach, in an effort to mainstream Equal Opportunities, supported by a comprehensive range of training activity (paragraphs 5.13 and 5.14);



- the retention or introduction of an Equal Opportunities Co-ordinator role; no longer expected to single handedly 'do' Equal Opportunities but to add value to others activities by steering, prompting, promoting and supporting action (paragraphs 5.15 and 5.16);
  - the enhanced role of research and management information teams; providing access to relevant information, undertaking research to plug information gaps and ensuring policy and/or operational teams were provided with appropriate background information. (see paragraphs 5.17 and 5.18)
- 2.6 Several TECs claimed that many of the activities being pursued were either already ongoing or would have happened anyway with or without the production of the formal strategy. Nevertheless, strategy production had enabled the justification and priority of particular activities to be reviewed, had generated a number of additional actions, and brought greater coherence to what had previously been a rather ad-hoc approach. (paragraph 5.21)
- 2.7 Implementation was being taken forward in a number of ways, including:
- through contracting and activities associated with preparation for or in response to provider inspections (paragraphs 5.23 through 5.25);
  - working in partnership with a range of organisations, often in connection with Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) or European Social Fund (ESF) projects (paragraphs 5.26 and 5.27);
  - amending starts and outcome funding regimes or by funding specific projects from discretionary funds or TEC reserves (paragraphs 5.28 through 5.30);
  - instigating new research and/or analyses in an attempt to bridge information gaps (paragraph 5.31);
  - developing business awareness and helping providers/employers adopt a strategic planning approach to the best use of local resources. Despite encouraging signs, it was clear that there was some way to go before the business case for Equal Opportunities was accepted and the issue treated as a business priority (see paragraphs 5.32 and 5.33);
  - efforts to encourage enterprise amongst minority groups, to introduce rigorous standards, to challenge and overcome gender stereotyping, to improve the quality, relevance and accessibility of guidance materials. Some TECs have sought to adopt novel, relatively informal methods in an effort to overcome the reluctance of potential clients to consider and undertake work based training. (paragraphs 5.34 through 5.39 refer)

### Providers and Trainees

- 2.8 The majority of providers have Equal Opportunities policies which meet legislative requirements and are TEC contract compliant. Inspection results indicate that less than one in eight providers have less than satisfactory Equal Opportunities arrangements. Providers could, however, be encouraged to do more to actively promote equality of opportunity and to pursue policies for removing access barriers with greater vigour. (paragraphs 6.1 through 6.4)

- 2.9 Training staff, trainees and providers' partners appeared to lack anything more than a rudimentary awareness of general Equal Opportunities issues. Yet many providers felt that the direct support available from TECs was of insufficient quality and quantity. Some TECs were responding to this situation by, for example, the introduction of training sessions for providers, their staff and partners. Similarly contract managers were being given additional responsibility for ensuring providers are aware of what the TEC expects them to contribute to the delivery of the Equal Opportunities strategy, for spreading good practice, challenging the status quo and for helping providers identify and address weaknesses. (see paragraphs 6.5 to 6.8)
- 2.10 Providers were using a variety of measures designed to improve access and selection procedures. These include multi-cultural and gender images in marketing materials, increased liaison with schools and community groups, and dissemination of promotional materials through appropriate routes. Yet too many still appear to rely on the notion that an 'open door' policy is all they need to have. (paragraphs 6.9 through 6.12 refer)
- 2.11 Training providers generally took appropriate steps to protect staff and trainees from harassment and discrimination whilst on their premises and operated adequate complaints and grievance procedures. However, there was little evidence of systematic monitoring and use of relevant information to inform and develop provision. In addition many providers failed to take adequate steps to assess, manage or instigate necessary action to deal with inappropriate Equal Opportunities practices within workplaces and sub-contracted provision. Similarly, TECs could do more to establish and ensure the effective use of added value feedback loops with/between providers. (see paragraphs 6.13 to 6.17)
- 2.12 Although no evidence was found of significant gaps in provision, some TECs were seeking to engage specialist providers or those with whom certain minority groups readily associated themselves. In most cases this approach had proven successful, but some providers were reluctant to work with the TEC because of perceived administrative burdens or had had their contracts terminated for failing to meet agreed quality, financial or audit requirements. (see paragraphs 6.18 to 6.20)
- 2.13 Most trainees felt well supported by their trainers and employers. Relevant issues were discussed during induction although this rarely went beyond briefing on, for example, expected standards or complaints procedures. There was some anecdotal evidence that a few trainees were tolerating mild discrimination, being reluctant to make a complaint or raise an issue in case it jeopardised their training or their chances of securing employment. (paragraphs 6.21 through 6.25 refer)

### Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

- 2.14 Action plans are key to the implementation of any Equal Opportunities strategy. At best they establish what is to be done, by whom and by when - thus providing a clear focus for the monitoring, evaluation and review of individual activities and the overall strategy. But some were of poorer quality, merely outlining largely unachievable ambitions or ambiguous statements of broad objectives and failing to specify task allocations, targets, milestones or measures. (see paragraphs 7.2 and 7.3)
- 2.15 A wide variety of monitoring, evaluation and review arrangements were in place within the sampled TECs. Typical features (see paragraphs 7.4 and 7.5) included:
- the use of Minimum Performance Levels (MPLs);

- additional targets in respect of year on year progress;
  - the specification of Equal Opportunities related requirements within contracts or associated bidding briefing packs;
  - quantitative and qualitative data collection, collation and analysis;
  - regular assessment and reporting of progress against targets, action plan, etc via working or performance monitoring groups to the TEC Board;
  - the cascading of relevant information through regional working groups or provider networks, supplemented by the inclusion of Equal Opportunities issues within quarterly contract reviews undertaken by contract managers and audit arrangements.
- 2.16 An encouraging development was the increasing involvement of research and management information teams and/or specialists in support of the Equal Opportunities strategy. Such resources were helping establish baselines, identify potential problem areas and, through pro-active analyses, suggest actions that had not been considered before. (paragraph 7.6)
- 2.17 Nevertheless, the study identified a number of weaknesses, including (see paragraphs 7.7 to 7.9 and 7.13):
- slippage in monitoring arrangements;
  - undue reliance on process and qualitative rather than value-added and robust quantitative measures;
  - limited and basic monitoring activity in the absence of specific targets, measures, or success criteria;
  - a lack of formal strategy review arrangements and feedback loops with providers and key partners;
  - failure to use all relevant sources of information;
  - difficulties in setting performance targets or measures for some activities;
  - failure to establish the impact of individual activities or the overall strategy.
- 2.18 TECs could, however, point to problems in obtaining relevant, consistent, up-to-date, local level data and were concerned by the difference in the bases, statistics and analyses available to and being used by their major partners. (see paragraphs 7.10 through 7.12)

### Factors Affecting Performance

- 2.19 Many of the identified factors were considered to inhibit Equal Opportunities related activity and performance. Paragraph 8.2 provides details; relevant factors included:
- culture, tradition and prevailing attitudes;
  - direct and indirect discrimination by employers;

- the number, size and complexity of local agencies and structures together with the complexity of the local economic and social environments;
- the boundary of TECs' influence;
- the level and sustainability of support and finance;
- the distorting effect that the relative size of various disadvantaged groups has on the identification of issues and/or performance monitoring statistics;
- the scale, type and quality of available provision and the unwillingness of some providers to work with the TEC because of perceived administrative burdens;
- inadequate or inaccessible local baseline data;
- the inflexibility of prescribed operational frameworks;
- uncertainty regarding the impending introduction of the new arrangements for post-16 education and training and the associated transition period.

2.20 Conversely, there were a number of factors which respondents considered enablers. Paragraph 8.3 provides details; in summary, they include:

- availability and accessibility of appropriate provision;
- the mainstreaming of Equal Opportunities - thereby ensuring it becomes part of routine business;
- clarity of vision, continuity of effort, accurate identification of needs, development of appropriate responses, or the collective involvement of all relevant agencies;
- breaking down stereotypes through the use of successful role models;
- access to good quality support and guidance from Government Offices or other relevant agencies;
- TECs support for networking, benchmarking, training, briefing, and access to relevant information for providers, partners and prospective clients;
- the development of close and effective working relationships with key partners.

2.21 Some factors could work in either direction (see paragraph 8.4), including:

- bespoke activities which could achieve significant results or prove impractical to implement;
- providing opportunities at a time, place, and/or cost that suits prospective clients - but is such flexibility always possible or desirable;
- alignment of various agencies, strategies, policies, etc - again desirable, but not always practical without diverting unreasonable levels of time and effort.

## TECs as Equal Opportunities Employers

- 2.22 Many respondents considered it vital for a TEC's Equal Opportunities efforts for the TEC to be perceived as an exemplar employer; reassuringly, evidence suggests that in general the sampled TECs were. Most had arrangements for monitoring and reviewing their staffing profile and had workforces that were generally representative of their local communities. However, in some TECs there was evidence of significant imbalances particularly at middle, senior management or Board level. In most cases steps were being taken during recruitment or restructuring exercises to address this situation. Nevertheless, several external interviewees felt there was a lack of information or openness about TECs Equal Opportunities profiles or the actions being taken to address identified issues. (see paragraphs 9.1 through 9.6)
- 2.23 The introduction of a more strategic approach to Equal Opportunities had generated a number of significant changes to TEC operations, including (paragraphs 9.7 through 9.14 refer):
- the adoption of a more integrated approach;
  - additional training facilities, an increase in related activity across the TEC and an extension of facilities to providers and other partners;
  - adoption of relevant standards and/or models, again with extension throughout provider networks;
  - improved clarity of and accessibility to relevant strategy, policy and action plan documents;
  - enhancement of procedures, (for example, complaints), involvement of relevant specialists (for example, researchers and management information analysts) and improved communication between all relevant parts of the TEC.

Despite these encouraging developments, some TECs still had a number of Equal Opportunities related issues to address, including improving wheelchair access or the implementation of family friendly working practices. (paragraph 9.15)

## Policy and Other Developments

- 2.24 Important developments (outlined at paragraphs 10.3 through 10.18) include:
- the introduction of the Learning and Skills Council, with the expectation that it will build equality of opportunity into all its policies and activities, building on the approach and good practice of TECs;
  - steps to improve educational standards and to include Equal Opportunities within the National Curriculum;
  - the development and introduction of Equal Opportunities standards within agencies such as the National Training Organisation (NTO) network, careers services, Connexions and as part of the Investors standard;
  - the DfEE's "See the Person" publicity campaign and efforts to improve its own internal Equal Opportunities stance;

- publication of guidelines for handling customer feedback and complaints about Government funded training;
- publication of research, most notably into the business benefits of race equality at work.

### Baseline Information

2.25 Relevant data illustrates (see Annex 2):

- variable performance between TECs, disadvantaged groups, programmes and over time;
- difficulties in obtaining statistically robust information at TEC or provider level and the problems faced when trying to interpret relevant information.

### Conclusions

2.26 The advent of the National Standard, provider inspections and the more strategic approach to Equal Opportunities taken by TECs has resulted in a lot of action and, in general, changes for the better. The raised profile of Equal Opportunities has helped to ensure it is recognised as a key priority; the adoption of a more integrated approach and appropriate support facilities has helped mainstream the topic and generate a more thorough understanding of relevant issues; whilst the emphasis within the new post-16 arrangements and associated developments should ensure progress is maintained. (see paragraphs 11.1 through 11.8)

2.27 But there is still considerable room for improvement in, for example, pre and post production communication of the TECs strategies; the implementation of appropriate monitoring, evaluation and review procedures and the assessment of impact; the way in which ingrained perceptions, attitudes and procedures are challenged, particularly amongst providers and employers; the closure of performance gaps between client groups; and in achieving fully effective joined up working between all relevant agencies. (paragraphs 11.9 through 11.13 refer)

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

#### For the Department

- 3.1 That steps should be taken to further encourage cross Department/agency activity/ planning in respect of Equal Opportunities. This may include the development of a national Employment Service Equal Opportunities strategy, a strengthening of the GO/ Regional Development Agency (RDA) contribution to or co-ordination of TEC/LSC Equal Opportunities activity and/or by broaching the issue with the Social Exclusion Unit.
- 3.2 That consideration should be given to the introduction of consistent Equal Opportunities related requirements across all sectors of education, training and careers/youth support, thereby encouraging and making partnerships amongst providers working to a single government Department or across Departments/Agencies less problematical.
- 3.3 That the importance of the TEC Equal Opportunities National Standard as a key driver of TEC behaviour should be recognised and consideration given to the need for a similar approach for the LSC(s).
- 3.4 That the importance of appropriate staff training and the benefits of adopting a consistent approach to Equal Opportunities related activities throughout the LSC should be incorporated into the LSC's operational guidelines and requirements.
- 3.5 That consideration should be given to improving the type, range and availability of Equal Opportunities related information provided by or available from the Department or other central Departments or Agencies.
- 3.6 That consideration should be given to the ways in which national and local Equal Opportunities related priorities interact and affect the implementation of relevant strategies and activities.
- 3.7 That further work should be done to establish and promote the business case for Equal Opportunities, particularly in respect to different types of providers and employers.
- 3.8 That a good practice guide, drawing on the lessons from this study, the TSC thematic and any revised TSC 'Equal Opportunities assessment guidelines', should be produced and made available by mid-2000. Any examples of good practice reported within this guide should, along with further analysis of relevant statistical or other forms of management information, enable an assessment to be made of the progress made and impact achieved by specific activities and the overall implementation of TECs' Equal Opportunities strategies.

#### For the Department and TECs

- 3.9 That all relevant TEC Equal Opportunities related good practice should be captured and appropriate access facilities provided to TECs during transition and to the LSC(s) from inception.
- 3.10 That those TECs that will be merged into a single local LSC should be encouraged to start working on a joined up Equal Opportunities approach as part of the transition arrangements to the local LSC.



### **For the Department, TECs and the LSC(s)**

- 3.11 That all necessary steps should be taken to minimise or prevent any disruption to existing Equal Opportunities related activities during TEC/LSC transition.
- 3.12 That transition arrangements between TECs and LSCs together with early LSC activity should include full consultation with local community groups and other key stakeholders to identify and draw upon existing expertise relating to issues for inclusion in initial Equal Opportunities strategies and action plans.
- 3.13 That the importance of inspection and other forms of quality assurance arrangements to the successful implementation of Equal Opportunities related policies should be recognised and built upon.
- 3.14 That those factors which may signify difficulties in the derivation or implementation of Equal Opportunities related policies or activities should be identified. These factors should be brought to the attention of the LSC(s) who should, in turn, be required to take account of them in the planning and delivery of their Equal Opportunities strategy.
- 3.15 That steps should be taken during TEC/LSC transition and beyond to ensure providers and employers connected with LSC or DfEE sponsored activity do not just comply with legislative and standard requirements, but actively pursue the promotion and development of Equal Opportunities related activity.
- 3.16 That steps should be taken during TEC/LSC transition and beyond to strengthen Equal Opportunities related monitoring, evaluation and review procedures in an effort to make the processes more rigorous and consistent across geographic and organisational boundaries and through time.
- 3.17 That steps should be taken to ensure that TECs and the LSC(s) have access to appropriate expertise, whether in-house, from consultants or through Government Offices for the Regions, on the development and implementation of effective Equal Opportunities strategies.

### **For the Department and the LSC(s)**

- 3.18 That Equal Opportunities requirements should be included as part of mainstream LSC business from the outset, thereby ensuring that Equal Opportunities work does not fall down the list of relative priorities or off the post-16 learning agenda altogether.
- 3.19 That mainstream funding regimes and systems should be conducive to the promotion and delivery of equality of opportunity in terms of client access and outcomes.
- 3.20 That consideration should be given to the inclusion of Equal Opportunities as one of the factors taken into account in the selection of providers.
- 3.21 That consideration should be given to the most appropriate approach to the funding of local level Equal Opportunities projects and initiatives.
- 3.22 That consideration and, if appropriate, guidance should be given to the need for and functions of an Equal Opportunities co-ordinators within the LSC and how they will interface with similarly designated officers within the Department.



- 3.23 That the LSC(s) should build on existing TEC Equal Opportunities initiatives and good practice.
- 3.24 That the LSC(s) should be encouraged to adopt consistent local level Equal Opportunities related data collection approaches, including common core data elements and data standards.
- 3.25 That any information systems designed for LSC(s) use should deliver consistent, relevant and up-to-date local level baseline data against which Equal Opportunities related work can be derived, monitored and compared locally, regionally and nationally.
- 3.26 That a support/information/network facility should be created for LSC(s) to enable ease of access to Equal Opportunities legislative and/or policy developments and requirements; consideration should be given to building on, and taking steps to ensure the use of, the facilities currently offered to TECs by TECtranet.
- 3.27 That the lessons of this study, in respect of inter-agency working and/or co-operation, should be captured and cascaded to all relevant stakeholders (for example, between the DfEE, the LSC(s) and the TSC/Adult Learning Inspectorate) in order to further develop Equal Opportunities related capacity.
- 3.28 That a communication strategy should be employed to ensure those education and training providers with whom the Department and the LSC(s) contract know that they are expected to deliver relevant Equal Opportunities policies. Both they and all relevant external partners, including GOs, should be linked into the LSC(s) Equal Opportunities strategy, action planning and implementation processes.

## 4. CONTEXT

- 4.1 Equality of opportunity is not a new concept. Yet, despite considerable efforts over the years, true equality of opportunity remains an elusive goal for many. Individuals may therefore find their chances of self development limited or blocked whilst the economy may suffer because of a failure to realise or utilise their talents.
- 4.2 Even during the relatively short lifetime of this study, Equal Opportunities related issues continued to make the headlines. Ford's Dagenham plant was in the news because of alleged instances of racial discrimination amongst its workforce, political debate raged over 'Clause 28' and whether or not homosexuality should be promoted in schools, whilst the Home Secretary indicated that the Race Relations (Amendment) Bill would place a positive duty on public authorities to promote racial equality and avoid discrimination on racial grounds. No doubt there will be many more headlines in the future.
- 4.3 TECs therefore face a complex and ever changing world within which they must seek to determine and implement their Equal Opportunities strategies. The following paragraphs attempt to illustrate some of the key contextual considerations TECs and their partners have to take into account.

### Legislation

- 4.4 Given the nature of the topic, it is not surprising that a considerable amount of national and international legislation<sup>8</sup> exists in relation to Equal Opportunities. TECs, providers and associated employers are therefore responsible for ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination in their application procedures, within their training provision or any other services they provide for trainees. Establishing and maintaining the required understanding of the terms of legislation, as well as keeping up to date with developments, places a considerable responsibility on TECs and their partners - and is widely regarded as one of the factors affecting Equal Opportunities related activity and performance.
- 4.5 Clarification and guidance is available from the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) and the recently formed Disability Rights Commission (DRC). These Commissions, alongside their legal powers to investigate and prosecute allegations of discrimination, seek to promote good practice and work in partnership with relevant agencies to help them fulfil their Equal Opportunities related duties. In addition, there are a number of national and regional agencies, such as Equality North West, the Advisory Committee for Disabled People in Employment and Training (ACDET) and the Equality Foundation, from whom specific information, guidance, support and/or advice can be obtained.

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8. Readers are directed to Section 10 of "**Equality Assurance : Self Assessment for Equal Opportunities in Training**", DfEE (QPID), March 1999, for an excellent overview of the legal framework as it was at the time of this study.

## Research and Development

- 4.6 Equal Opportunities is a well researched topic<sup>9</sup>. A reading of relevant materials reveals a considerable amount of commonality in the findings and conclusions reached by various research projects over the last ten years or so. Some of the key findings from this study are not too dissimilar from those of the EOC's formal investigation into the publicly-funded vocational training system in England and Wales carried out between November 1991 and January 1993. Whilst things have moved on since 1993, with several of the Commission's recommendations having been implemented, this clearly indicates the long rather than short term nature of Equal Opportunities related developments and their associated impact. (This issue will be further explored in Section 8 - Factors Affecting Performance).
- 4.7 Many of the changes to TECs' Equal Opportunities requirements and their subsequent activities can be traced back to this array of research. The introduction in 1994 of a National Framework for Action by TECs was clearly influenced by the findings of the EOC's investigation of publicly-funded vocational training. The National Standard, itself influenced by the CRE, was a response to an evaluation of the National Framework. More recently, the requirement for TECs to re-submit their Equal Opportunities strategies, for GOs to take a robust line on Equal Opportunities compliance in TEC licence renewals and the production of the Equality Assured : Self Assessment for Equal Opportunities in Training guide stemmed from an evaluation of TECs' Equal Opportunities Strategies<sup>10</sup>.

## Target Groups

- 4.8 Another vitally important contextual element is the definition of which groups are included within any TEC's equality agenda. The National Standard focuses on three particular areas, namely race, gender and disability, although careful reading indicates that it covers many other areas including, for example, age or sexual orientation. However, those interviewed during the study indicated that they might also expect TECs' Equal Opportunities strategies to cover disadvantaged young and older people, marginalised or disadvantaged groups such as those who live in rural communities, habitual drug users, ex-offenders, those with basic skills needs, refugees or any other relevant group.
- 4.9 Of course, any individual may fall into more than one of the categories outlined above. It is therefore not unusual for TECs to face the need to consider and devise appropriate responses to instances of multiple disadvantage; to determine whether an 'obvious' disadvantage really is the main factor inhibiting individuals' chances of success or whether other, more subtle, factors need to be addressed; or whether they need to inform and involve other agencies in an effort to resolve observed inequalities.

## Environment and Information

- 4.10 Likewise, the population, economic, industrial, social and cultural make up of their area may have a substantial effect on a TEC's Equal Opportunities perception and focus. As a consequence there is great diversity, even in areas with similar characteristics, between TECs' Equal Opportunities strategies and their associated activities.

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9. Again, readers are directed to the "**Equality Assurance : Self Assessment ....**" guide for a list of useful recent publications - Section 13 of the guide refers.

10. "**Evaluation of TECs' Equal Opportunities Strategies : introduction of the new National Standard**", DfEE Research Report no. RR87, November 1998.

4.11 The TEC Equal Opportunities Strategies National Standard includes several components that call for information to be collected, collated, analysed and interpreted such that clear priorities, plans and targets can be determined, progress monitored and impact assessed. There are many sources of such information, some of the more important being the decennial Census of Population, the Labour Force Survey, the unemployment statistics series and training programme monitoring data. However, several of the TECs included in this study were experiencing problems in obtaining consistent, relevant, up-to-date or local level baseline data against which to either form or monitor the effect of their Equal Opportunities approach.

### Profile and Coherence

4.12 The overall profile of Equal Opportunities has undoubtedly risen over recent years. This reflects, perhaps, the interest generated by the Stephen Lawrence case, the subsequent changes recommended in the MacPherson Report<sup>11</sup> and the greater emphasis introduced by the current government. Over the same period the introduction of the National Standard and the inclusion of equality of opportunities as part of the framework for judging work-based training provider quality within the Training Standards Council's (TSC) inspection regime<sup>12</sup> have had a significant impact. As a result, most TECs (and providers) indicated that they are giving greater priority to Equal Opportunities.

4.13 Nevertheless, the study provided evidence that general programme or business targets remain TECs' and providers' highest priority. This perhaps reflects the explicit financial incentives associated with such targets whilst at the same time suggesting that there is still some way to go before Equal Opportunities is acknowledged, even by TECs, as being a primary business priority. Whilst attempts, for example within the Equality Assurance : Self Assessment guide (which itself draws on TEC National Council sponsored research<sup>13</sup>), have been made to illustrate and promote the business case for equality, it is clear that such efforts need to be maintained and, perhaps, underpinned by exemplars of direct relevance to different types and sizes of organisation.

4.14 TECs are by no means the only agencies involved in Equal Opportunities related work. Recognising this, the sixth component of the National Standard requires TECs to include details of their consultation with local community groups during the preparation of the strategy and the plans for their continued involvement in its implementation. Whilst the study was not required to assess the development and quality of the TECs' strategies, the importance of 'external' organisations involvement in both their derivation and implementation was clear. Indeed, as will be illustrated later, TECs often find that they can do little more than 'scratch the surface' of local Equal Opportunities related issues without the assistance of several other organisations at the local, regional, national or even international level.

4.15 Several respondents therefore questioned why all relevant organisations and agencies, (including schools, colleges, careers services and employers), were not expected to adopt a similarly rigorous approach or to make as significant a contribution to Equal Opportunities as that required of TECs. There appears to be significant room for

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11. "The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry - Report of an Inquiry by Sir William MacPherson of Cluny", presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, February 1999, CM 4262 -I.

12. The Training Standards Council Framework is set out in "Raising the Standard", Training Standards Council, 1998 and summarised in Chapter 8 of the "Equality Assurance : Self Assessment ..." guide.

13. "Bottom line reasons for promoting equality and diversity", TEC National Council, 1997.

improvement through, for example, closer co-operation between schools, TECs and employers in an effort to challenge attitudes at an early age, although developments such as the proposed Equal Opportunities National Standard for careers information, education and guidance partners and the introduction of Equal Opportunities within the Investors model criteria were welcomed.

### Impending Changes

4.16 Finally, at the time of the study TECs and their partners were beginning to consider the implications of the impending establishment of the new funding arrangements and structures for post-16 education and training. The Government's White Paper "**Learning to Succeed**<sup>14</sup>" and subsequent legislation laid before Parliament, provide for:

- the establishment of a Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and a network of local Learning and Skills Councils;
- the transfer of responsibility for work based learning for adults to the Employment Service;
- new arrangements for providing support to young people;
- the introduction of a new independent Inspectorate to assess the quality of provision for adults and of all work based training.

These new arrangements are expected to work in conjunction with the new Small Business Service being sponsored by the Department of Trade and Industry.

4.17 Like TECs, the new Learning and Skills Council will be required to promote equality of opportunity in all it does. Nevertheless, many of those contacted during the study had a genuine concern that the changes might have an adverse, if temporary, effect on local Equal Opportunities activity, developments and perceptions. Again, this issue will be explored in more detail later in this report (see, for example, the final bullet point at paragraph 8.2).

### Conclusion

4.18 As this section has begun to illustrate, the implementation of TECs' Equal Opportunities strategies is not as simple and straightforward as it might initially appear. Many contextual issues impact on TECs' activities; whilst some are being addressed or used to the TECs advantage, others still await an appropriate response. The remainder of this report considers how TECs and their partners are setting about the task.

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14. "**Learning to Succeed : a new framework for post-16 learning**", DfEE, June 1999.

## 5. COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

### Development and Communication of the Strategy

- 5.1 As mentioned earlier (paragraph 1.5 refers), following the 1998 evaluation of TECs' Equal Opportunities strategies there was a significant strengthening of TECs' strategies and the ways in which they were monitored by Government Offices for the Regions (GOs). A basic assumption of this study was therefore that each of the selected TECs had an Equal Opportunities strategy which met the requirements of the National Standard. Whilst no attempt was made to re-assess the quality of the strategies as part of this study, it was necessary to obtain a basic understanding of how they were derived and communicated to provide the context for the ways in which TECs were implementing them.
- 5.2 Although all TECs claimed to have consulted widely during the construction of their Equal Opportunities strategy, it was noticeable that this had been more rigorous and innovative in some areas than in others. It was also clear that whilst there were many similarities, there was also considerable diversity in the approaches adopted by individual TECs.
- 5.3 Several of the TECs had sought to develop their strategy through an existing Equal Opportunities Working Group or similar. These typically involved, and therefore provided a ready made means of exchanging views with, key local partners including, Local Authorities, provider and employer networks, community and voluntary groups. Some TECs had extended these arrangements by establishing specific local consultation and/or focus groups. Others relied on the development of their existing Equal Opportunities plans and well established, on-going contacts - seeing the development of their strategy as an evolutionary, rather than revolutionary, process. All had, at some stage, circulated a draft strategy and invited comments, although a few had left this rather late in the day and/or reported that the level of response was disappointingly low.
- 5.4 Nevertheless, the study generated limited, largely anecdotal, evidence that in some cases the consultation process had not been taken as seriously as the National Standard requires and that the level of analysis underpinning particular strategies was not as thorough as it might have been. In more than one TEC, external partners indicated that they felt they had been given little opportunity to make an input to or comment on the draft strategy. This despite the fact that they had access to valuable information, held important views or could provide a conduit for dialogue with the local community.
- 5.5 Communication of the agreed strategy seems an obvious pre-cursor to its effective implementation. Where this had happened, or was happening, it typically involved some or all of the following:
- distribution of the strategy document, usually under a covering letter from the TEC Chair, Chief Executive or Equal Opportunities Co-ordinator;
  - production and dissemination of an executive summary form of the strategy - conveying the key messages without the mass of detail contained in the full strategy document;
  - specific launch events (both internal and external);
  - training events, initially targeted at TEC personnel but being extended to TEC's partners, especially providers;

- briefing, workshops, seminars, etc, possibly as part of TEC/provider network events or Equal Opportunities related conferences - these were usually aimed at providers but there was some evidence of employers and other partners being involved to broaden awareness and/or to provide appropriate context;
- continuation of those local consultation or focus groups established to help develop the strategy;
- building relevant messages into routine contract manager/provider and business development adviser/employer liaison;
- providing access to the strategy and/or a summary via the TEC's Intranet and Internet site;
- inclusion of specific articles with relevant publications.

5.6 Many TECs had sought to ensure that their strategy was effectively communicated to all their staff before going public. This was usually achieved via presentations or meetings led by a senior manager or Board member. These were often followed by discussion at work group level focusing on the specific implications for that particular aspect of TEC activity. Support and further guidance was made available through related training opportunities. These were designed to either instil a general understanding of Equal Opportunities concepts, legislation and expectations, to consider how relevant issues could/should be identified and addressed during routine business activities or to cover, in detail, specific topics such as Disability Awareness.

5.7 In some TECs all staff were expected, as a minimum, to undertake basic awareness training. In a number of cases such activities were subsequently built into the TEC's induction training programme. It is worth noting that, in addition to such basic awareness training, several contract and business managers considered there to be a clear benefit in being trained how to identify and address Equal Opportunities related issues. Most felt this would enable them to not only communicate and explain the TEC's strategy to providers and employers, but also to help them identify weaknesses in their Equal Opportunities approach, to develop appropriate responses and to establish or refine a strategy of their own.

5.8 Nevertheless, around a third of the providers contacted during the TSC thematic said that they had little knowledge of their TEC's Equal Opportunities strategy or the steps being taken to implement it. This, together with the responses from some TECs and their partners, illustrated significant weaknesses in the communication of the strategy and of the TEC's plans and priorities for implementing it. Various explanations were offered for such situations, including:

- the strategy document being far too detailed for 'public' consumption, whilst an edited version had not (yet) been produced;
- the strategy document had not been issued or, where it had, it was not considered important enough by recipients for them to take the time required to read it;
- a lack of sign-posting within or in support of the strategy leaving recipients unclear about what and how they were expected to contribute to its successful implementation;



- that some of the awareness events arranged for local providers had been voluntary and rather poorly attended - the TEC was therefore considering whether to hold further events and, if so, whether to make them 'compulsory';
- limited publicity about, and therefore awareness of, the strategy's existence and the various means by which it could be accessed;
- difficulties in raising employers' (in particular small and medium sized enterprises) awareness of and commitment to Equal Opportunities - a situation compounded by the perceived inconsistency of approach taken by those Departments and agencies which seek to influence employers and a failure to supply or make relevant literature and baseline information readily available and easily accessible;
- failure by the TEC to recognise the potential of certain organisations, such as the local Council for Voluntary Services, as a way of promoting the messages to a widespread and diverse audience;
- similarly, failure (usually because of resource limitations) of the TEC to take advantage of all relevant events, fora, meetings, etc, as a means of disseminating their plans;
- contract managers and business advisers failing to cascade key messages to their contacts because it was not a business priority; and lacking either the knowledge or enthusiasm to do so on their own initiative;
- localised difficulties in the working relationships between a TEC and its key partners.

5.9 Although failure to communicate a strategy did not necessarily mean that it could not be successfully implemented, some of the sampled TECs had recognised the problems that may arise and were taking steps to address the situation. Indeed, the study itself generated some action. Several of the study's prospective interviewees had sought copies of the relevant strategy before their interview, whilst others, once interviewed, had suggested ways in which the strategy could be communicated more widely.

5.10 Nevertheless, given the serious communication problems encountered in one of the sampled TECs, the relevant Government Office was advised (when provided with feedback from the fieldwork in their region) to work closely with that TEC in an effort to improve matters.

### Structures, Culture and Preparation

5.11 Other precursors to the effective implementation of an Equal Opportunities strategy appeared to be the establishment of relevant structures, the development of an appropriate culture, and the amount of preparatory work undertaken by all concerned. Even those TECs traditionally acknowledged as having an effective approach to Equal Opportunities had used the advent of the National Standard to review their *modus operandi*. The following paragraphs consider some of the typical features being adopted across the country.



- 5.12 The importance of Board and/or senior management level support for Equal Opportunities was recognised by every TEC. Such involvement worked best where it was visible and active, demonstrated the priority attached to Equal Opportunities, gave a clear lead across the TEC and fulfilled both a 'champion' and 'conscience' role. The 'champion' role covered both internal and external activities, the latter including responsibility for cascading the TEC's message throughout their personal networks. The 'conscience' role enabled the Board member or senior manager to question, prompt, monitor and review the TEC's activities, thereby helping to ensure that the strategy was being actively pursued. In the words of one Board member:

"We need to be accountable for the delivery of our strategy - if we fail then my position would become untenable. I would therefore support sanctions against the TEC or those individuals who have failed to deliver what was expected of them and would have no hesitation about 'going public' if necessary!"

- 5.13 Realising that the words of the strategy and its associated action plan had to be turned into action, many TECs had reviewed their organisation and procedures. Most had or were in the process of introducing a much more integrated approach in an effort to mainstream Equal Opportunities. A typical integrated model required most, if not all, members of staff to ensure Equal Opportunities policy was reflected in their sphere of operation, gave them responsibility for the achievement of anticipated outcomes and encouraged multi-disciplinary working. The effect, it was claimed, was to minimise or eliminate the perception that Equal Opportunities was an issue for a small number of 'specialists' and not something to be addressed by the majority. This was similar to the way Health and Safety had been embedded in most TECs, although some respondents were concerned that the level of resources devoted to Health and Safety outweighed those allocated to Equal Opportunities.
- 5.14 Integration was usually supported by a comprehensive range of training activity, not only in terms of general Equal Opportunities awareness, but also in respect of the expectations and responsibilities of each business unit. Many TEC interviewees indicated that as a result they had, for the first time, considered Equal Opportunities issues from others' perspectives and that this had generated a much more positive attitude across the organisation.
- 5.15 Most TECs had either retained or introduced an Equal Opportunities co-ordinator role, although one TEC had resisted such a move on the grounds that everyone, rather than a single person, should be responsible for the co-ordination and delivery of the strategy. Where a co-ordination role was maintained there was a clear change of emphasis from the pre-strategy days. Co-ordinators were no longer required to almost single-handedly 'do' Equal Opportunities, but, with greater integration, they were expected to steer, to prompt, to promote and to support action. They took overall responsibility for the strategy, for monitoring progress, providing regular reports to internal working groups and the Board, and for reviewing and updating the strategy. Basically adding value where most appropriate.
- 5.16 Their position was therefore considerably enhanced, although supplementary line management support was provided, where appropriate, to give the function additional 'clout'.

- 5.17 Internal structures had also been changed to reflect the topic's enhanced profile. In several TECs, Equal Opportunities was now firmly established as a regular item on the Board's agenda. Progress reports were typically channelled through a senior management working group and drew on views coming forward from individual business units. There was also an enhanced role for research and management information teams - with the type and range of information collected or collated being extended and more frequent liaison between relevant information and business managers encouraged.
- 5.18 Within most TECs, access to all forms of Equal Opportunities information had been improved by its inclusion within their Intranet service. The strategy, action plan, relevant programme related information, research, monitoring reports, even training facilities were now readily available. It was disappointing, however, to find little evidence of the facility for requesting and accessing good practice information within TECtranet being used.
- 5.19 Every TEC strategy had an associated action plan. There was undoubted value in a well drafted plan, containing a limited number of challenging yet deliverable objectives, with clearly allocated task responsibilities, milestones and measures. Indeed, one of the sampled TECs had just completed a thorough rewrite of its action plan in response to the view, expressed by both internal and external sources, that the original version was not written with the end user in mind. The revised version was considered, by, for example, several of the TECs contract managers, to be so well written - in terms of clarity of actions, allocations, targets, progress milestones and measures - that no-one could fail to see the links between Equal Opportunities and their routine activities. Indeed, several respondents indicated that, as a result, they were now more willing than ever before to take ownership of relevant parts of the Equal Opportunities agenda.
- 5.20 A note of caution, though. In some TECs, the linkage between the market analysis elements of the strategy, the subsequently identified priorities and the specific actions which resulted were not always obvious. The approach taken by a couple of the sampled TECs, where the action plan was set out in columnar format (with headings such as 'justification', 'strategic priority', 'actions/tasks' and 'expected outcomes') allowed such linkages to be clearly illustrated and might, therefore, be worthy of adoption by more TECs.

### Implementation

- 5.21 Before turning to more specific aspects of strategy implementation, it is worth noting that several of the TECs claimed that many of the activities being pursued were either already ongoing or would have happened anyway with or without the production of the formal Equal Opportunities strategy. Nevertheless, it is clear that the production of the strategies both encouraged and enabled the justification for and priority of individual activities to be reviewed, had generated a number of additional activities, and had, in many cases, brought greater coherence to what had previously been a rather ad-hoc approach.
- 5.22 Implementation of the Equal Opportunities strategies was being taken forward in a host of different ways. There was a mixture of the tried and trusted alongside the innovative; of mainstream and issue specific activity; of working in partnership or in isolation. Whatever method or methods were being embraced, the general consensus was that the amount and focus of Equal Opportunities related activity had increased since the inception of the National Standard. The following paragraphs outline some of the ways in which various TECs were seeking to implement their strategies.

### Contracting

- 5.23 Several factors have resulted in greater attention being paid to Equal Opportunities within TEC contracting procedures. These factors include the introduction of a more strategic approach, the advent of the Training Standards Council's (TSC) inspection regime based on the principles outlined in "Raising the Standard", the mainstreaming of Equal Opportunities and the increased involvement and awareness of contract managers/business advisers. Thus the study found several examples of specific Equal Opportunities related clauses being incorporated into contract documents, performance indicators or minimum performance levels being set for individual providers and more direct support for providers being available from and provided by contract managers.
- 5.24 Laudable as such developments were, the study's fieldwork and the TSC's thematic demonstrated that much remained to be done. The majority of providers still seem to do little more than comply with legislative and/or contract requirements and are not yet being sufficiently 'encouraged' by contract managers to review their stance. To paraphrase one view:

"Providers need to be made to realise that an 'open door' policy does not equate to a good Equal Opportunities policy, especially if a large proportion of the potential client group do not even know where to find the door!"

- 5.25 Similarly, TECs need to ensure that they give providers sufficient information and support to allow them to achieve what is being asked of them. In one of the sampled TEC areas, although the standard provider contract had been amended to include a clause requiring them to implement the strategy and to help drive it forward, providers were not routinely issued with a copy of the strategy or related materials!

### Partnerships

- 5.26 Although there is little evidence of any major new strategic alliances being formed, TECs were continuing to work with a range of organisations. Specific examples include the Team Wearside project involving a partnership between the TEC, careers service, education and industry which seeks to develop links with two special schools in an effort to help students move into youth programmes. Another example is the Women into Engineering and Science (WISE) project in the West Midlands where Walsall TEC, for example, is, together with the Education Business Partnership and local schools/employers, trying to encourage more girls to take science and engineering options by funding a combination of joint projects and mentors.
- 5.27 In addition, TECs are often a key partner in Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) or European Social Fund (ESF) projects, many of which embrace an Equal Opportunities related dimension. Similarly, several TECs were working with or through a number of organisations, including Business Links, the Employment Service, careers services, local authorities or local community groups in an effort to raise the general awareness of Equal Opportunities related issues and approaches.

## Funding

- 5.28 Several examples were identified where TECs had amended starts and outcome funding regimes by giving greater weight to payment for starts thereby enabling providers to make the extra effort required to overcome any unwillingness of young people from disadvantaged groups to take up the work based training option.
- 5.29 Staffordshire TEC, for example, was also funding the employment of an Ethnic Minority Development Officer by one of its providers - the Officer's role being to work with the local ethnic minority community in an effort to raise their awareness and take up of the work based training route and to work with providers across the TEC's area to raise their awareness of the steps that might be taken to attract potential ethnic minority clients.
- 5.30 Most TECs were, in addition to their mainstream activities, providing resources, funding or co-funding for specific Equal Opportunities related projects. Sunderland City TEC's support for the Spirit of Enterprise initiative, designed to recognise achievements by disabled people in business, provides a good example. Here the TEC's Managing Director was a member of the Board and the TEC both contributes funding and allocates units in its Business and Innovation Centre for disabled entrepreneurs.

## Research

- 5.31 New research and analysis was being instigated by several TECs in an attempt to bridge the information and knowledge gaps identified during the creation of their Equal Opportunities strategies. For instance, a couple of the TECs were undertaking studies designed to identify the reasons why certain 'disadvantaged' clients drop out of local Modern Apprenticeship provision so that measures might be designed and adopted to minimise early leaving and to attract those who have left back into the programme in order to complete their training.

## Business Awareness

- 5.32 This was one of the key developmental areas identified by most TECs in their Equal Opportunities strategies. Efforts were being made by many to not only raise business awareness of Equal Opportunities issues but also to help them develop a strategic planning approach in order to make the best use of local resources. Examples include:
- the Leadership Challenge initiative in Sandwell TEC has resulted in the creation of an Equality Award for Sandwell Businesses. The concept is to promote and celebrate diversity and Equal Opportunities actions in terms of private sector companies. An Awards Ceremony has been profiled for Autumn 2000;
  - Staffordshire TEC's (successful) efforts to get providers to adopt the rigorous Equal Opportunities Quality Foundation (EOQF) approach<sup>15</sup> to planning and to extend its disability awareness training to employers and providers.

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15. A description of the Equal Opportunities Quality Foundation (EOQF) approach is provided within the "Equality Assurance : Self Assessment ... " guide (see pages 9 and 10 thereof).

- 5.33 There were encouraging signs (such as the number of providers volunteering to try the EOQF approach in Staffordshire) that these efforts were beginning to have an impact. However, many providers felt that their TEC's support for Equal Opportunities was rather weak, whilst there was clear evidence that general programme and/or business targets remain the highest priority indicating that, as mentioned earlier, there is still some way to go before the business case for Equal Opportunities is accepted and it is treated as a key business priority.

### Encouraging Enterprise

- 5.34 Sunderland City TEC has published an annual Development Prospectus for a number of years. With an annual budget of around £80,000, its purpose is to stimulate a range of proposals from groups and organisations with the aim of addressing specific Equal Opportunities and Special Needs issues. Examples of projects that have attracted funding include:
- an attempt with the Local Community Association to assist Bangladeshi women to develop small businesses - however, this had achieved only limited success because, in the view of the TEC, a number of men within the community had continued to raise barriers even though efforts had been made to work with Community leaders to take account of religious and cultural issues;
  - support for a project involving Mental Health Community Groups which helped six people with mental health problems plan, set up and run a small cafe.

### Quality Standards

- 5.35 The five TECs in the Northern region have worked together to develop Regional Quality Standards which provide for self assessment by providers against standards developed from the TSC's 'Raising the Standard' guidelines. The Standards include a section on Equal Opportunities which covers Policy and Legislation, Promotion and Management, Selection and Assessment, Protection against Discrimination and Complaints Procedures. The model was introduced from May 1999 and standardises monitoring across providers. It is now a pre-requisite of TEC audits that providers complete the self-assessment, with all of them expected to have complied by December 1999. Although not a major change in the overall scope of audit activity, the formalised system, with its cross boundary implementation, is believed to aid consistency and help maintain a high profile for Equal Opportunities in the region.

### Overcoming Gender Stereotyping

- 5.36 There were many examples of this type of activity, including the use of successful ex-trainees as role models or mentors willing to give presentations regarding their experiences or to provide direct one-to-one support to schoolchildren. TECs and providers also indicated that they now take greater care than before to ensure that information and promotional materials avoid the use or perpetuation of gender stereotypes.

## Client Guidance and Access Initiatives

5.37 Numerous projects have been initiated to help improve the quality, relevance and accessibility of guidance materials, including the production of leaflets, etc in various languages. Other examples of access initiatives include:

- LAWTEC's funding of a special bus service for prospective trainees from the Fylde coast who are unable to access available training provision because of its location (in Blackpool) and the perceived inadequacies of the local public transport system;
- the use and promotion of Open College facilities in an effort to reach out into rural communities.

## Innovation

5.38 Some TECs have sought to adopt novel, less formal methods in an effort, for example, to encourage disaffected young people to overcome their reluctance to try learning experiences. Northumberland TEC, for instance, is one of the main financial backers of the CHOYSEZ project which aims to encourage and increase progression into mainstream activity.

5.39 However, some of the TECs claimed that more innovative approaches, although typically welcomed by the local community, sometimes failed to attract a favourable reaction or support from the Government Office. This possibly reflected a lack of clarity and understanding about the proposed methods and/or anticipated outputs or concerns whether the approach was within the TEC's remit and/or programme rules.

## Conclusion

5.40 Most TECs and their partners indicated that they had developed a much more positive attitude towards Equal Opportunities over the last couple of years. Similarly, the amount of Equal Opportunities related activity appears to have increased. Whilst it would be impractical to attempt to include every example of Equal Opportunities related activity identified during the fieldwork in this report, Annex 4 does provide many more examples of the ways in which the sampled TECs are attempting to implement their Equal Opportunities strategies.

5.41 The key to these developments appears to lie in the raised profile of Equal Opportunities over recent years and the undoubted influence of the National Standard.

5.42 Overall the messages are encouraging. However, there are still some TECs who appear to regard Equal Opportunities as a low priority issue and/or who continue to operate an ad-hoc, reactive rather than strategic approach. Similarly, there is room for improvement by all, even those with a good Equal Opportunities related 'track record', in order to ensure that complacency does not set in. TECs need to continue to encourage providers to do more than comply with contract requirements, whilst TECs, providers and appropriate partners need both the tools and the willingness to press home the business case for Equal Opportunities.



## 6. PROVIDERS AND TRAINEES

### Providers - General

- 6.1 The TSC thematic found that a majority of training providers have Equal Opportunities policies which meet the requirements of legislation and are TEC contract compliant. Indeed, the results of provider inspections in those TEC areas covered by the study indicate that less than one in eight providers were considered to have less than satisfactory Equal Opportunities arrangements. This was in line with the national average. Table 7 at Annex 2 provides further details.
- 6.2 The study and thematic also provided evidence to suggest that the level and quality of support from TECs to providers was increasing, for example in respect of Equal Opportunities related training, more relevant input from contract managers and help in identifying and achieving post-inspection improvements. However, as in other areas, more could be done to ensure the TECs' Equal Opportunities strategies, policies and actions are implemented throughout the training system. The following sections therefore consider providers' Equal Opportunities arrangements and the steps that TECs are already or might take to help them build on strengths and address weaknesses.

### Context

- 6.3 All of the providers interviewed claimed to support the concept of Equal Opportunities, could point to a number of steps taken to promote equality and could demonstrate their commitment to protect staff and trainees from discrimination. Around two thirds of the providers interviewed said they were aware of their TEC's Equal Opportunities strategy and the steps being taken to implement it. Many had contributed, for example, through seminars, focus groups, network meetings or in writing, to the development of the strategy.
- 6.4 However, in many cases, providers' focus was clearly on contract and legislative compliance rather than actively promoting equality of opportunity in all aspects of their provision and energetically pursuing policies designed to remove access barriers. Although two thirds said they were aware of a particular TEC's strategy this left a third who were unaware and, when the issue was probed further, it was clear that even in the former, only a few members of staff had more than a rudimentary awareness.
- 6.5 Similarly, the majority of training staff, trainees and providers' partners (including many employers) appeared to lack anything more than a rudimentary awareness of general Equal Opportunities issues, with their understanding often limited to a broad appreciation of gender and ethnicity related factors. Many of them assume Equal Opportunities to be a major consideration only in areas of high ethnic minority population, a view that will remain largely unchallenged in the absence of any formal arrangements for training in respect of the breadth of Equal Opportunities issues and related client groups.
- 6.6 Despite the past efforts of most TECs, typically through their Equal Opportunities co-ordinators, to raise awareness of Equal Opportunities issues and the ways in which they might be addressed, the direct support available from TECs was considered by

many providers to be of insufficient quality and quantity. Recognising this, some TECs, as already mentioned, have begun to act. Several have introduced appropriate measures, including the use of relevant literature, workshops, seminars and other forms of training for providers, their staff and partners - the efforts to raise awareness of the implications of Part III of the Disability Discrimination Act being a prime example.

- 6.7 Many TECs have sought to mainstream Equal Opportunities and now expect contract managers to give the subject as much attention as any other aspect of their relationship with providers. There have also been attempts to minimise variations in the requirements placed on providers through the adoption, for example, of standard contact clauses, common approaches to target setting and consistent performance related payment arrangements.
- 6.8 Whilst these developments are to be welcomed there is scope for greater and more sustained effort from both TECs and providers in respect of setting and explaining the context for Equal Opportunities and related actions. For example, TECs should ensure that their strategies are effectively communicated and that every provider is aware of the contribution expected of them; providers must ensure that appropriate messages are cascaded throughout their workforce and passed on to their clients and partners. Similarly, TECs and providers should, through a mixture of training, the development of provider infrastructure and capacity, contract management, the spread of good practice and other forms of direct support, continue to challenge the status quo and pursue continuous improvement in respect of equality of opportunity.

### Access and Selection

- 6.9 Training providers were using a variety of ways and undertaking a number of initiatives to redress the under-representation of certain groups within their provision. These include the display of multi-cultural and mixed gender images in marketing materials as well as the production and distribution of such materials in appropriate languages, formats, media and premises, for example, community centres. In addition, many had instigated appropriate forms of liaison with school and local community groups in an effort to eliminate perceived barriers to their provision in particular and to work-based training in general.
- 6.10 Selection procedures for both staff and trainees were typically well documented and promoted equality of opportunity. Induction arrangements usually covered the provider's Equal Opportunities policy and explained, for example, expected standards of behaviour and the complaints and grievance procedures available to those who need to use them.
- 6.11 At the same time, there were many instances of providers failing to do anything more than the minimum necessary to meet contractual and legislative requirements. Many rely on a notional 'open door' policy yet fail to take adequate steps (such as those outlined at paragraph 6.9 above) to identify and offset under-representation of certain client groups within their provision.
- 6.12 Again, TECs have a key role to play in challenging providers to ensure that agreed standards are implemented, helping them to identify any shortcomings in their procedures and supporting whatever appropriate action is needed to address them.



### Support, Monitoring and Procedural Development

- 6.13 In general, training providers were considered to take appropriate steps, including the establishment and operation of adequate complaints and grievance procedures, to protect staff and trainees against harassment and discrimination whilst on their premises. However, in many cases the identification of breaches of such Equal Opportunities policy was dependent upon trainees' knowledge and use of such complaints and grievance facilities rather than any systematic monitoring arrangements being applied by the provider.
- 6.14 Of greater concern was the finding that many training providers failed to adequately assess, manage or instigate action to improve the Equal Opportunities situation within workplaces and sub-contracted provision. Evidence from the thematic indicated that there was a lack of effective strategies for dealing with inappropriate practices and in some cases a reluctance to act for fear of jeopardising the limited supply of work placements. TECs need to ensure that they are made aware of such circumstances and that contract managers or specialist Equal Opportunities staff work with the provider or other relevant agencies to eradicate any instances of discrimination.
- 6.15 Arrangements for implementing and monitoring Equal Opportunities were often found to be poorly documented, superficial and treated as a low priority. Rarely did they exhibit the same degree of rigor applied to the identification and maintenance of Health and Safety related issues, for example. The collection and use of customer satisfaction and performance data was typically limited to meeting the minimum requirements of TEC contracts and the National Standard. Although there is no standard requirement for them to do so, few training providers were adopting what would seem to be good business practice by extending or systematically using this information to inform and develop their provision and/or Equal Opportunities policies.
- 6.16 TECs should highlight the business benefits of such activities and consider requiring a more rigorous and systematic approach to the review and updating of policies and procedures. They could support this by establishing added value feedback loops to providers, (via contract managers), which draw on their own analysis of relevant provider/ programme information and cascade relevant messages in respect of, for example, legislative changes.
- 6.17 An example of this type of approach had been adopted by many TECs in relation to the effects of Part III of the Disability Discrimination Act, and was beginning to focus providers attention on the limitations of their premises, including for example, first-floor training rooms which were inaccessible to people in wheelchairs, a lack of disabled toilet facilities and inappropriately positioned switches or handles.

### Overall Provision

- 6.18 One of the implicit requirements of the National Standard is for TECs to assess the quality and relevance of their contracted provision in respect of participation, success rates and performance gaps. Some TECs have therefore sought to engage specialist providers and through them target people with specific disadvantages or who might be more willing to take advantage of such provision rather than existing 'mainstream' offerings. In a number of cases this approach had proven successful, as illustrated by Manchester TEC's development of a Work Based Learning for Adults programme in Longsight with the Greater Manchester Bangladeshi Association.

- 6.19 However, there was also evidence that some of these potential providers were reluctant to contract with the TEC because of perceived administrative burdens or where their contracts had had to be terminated because they failed to meet agreed financial or audit requirements. It is worth noting that similar findings are emerging from another of QPID's studies, this time into Learning Gateways.
- 6.20 The thematic also indicated that the quality of opportunity for training and employment of people marginalised by mild behavioural problems and a lack of social skills did not appear to be adequately addressed in many areas. The greater emphasis on basic and life skills provision should help alleviate this situation, but it is yet another factor for TECs and the LSC(s) to bear in mind.

### Trainees

- 6.21 Like providers, all of the trainees contacted during the thematic claimed to support the principle of equality of opportunity. In general, they indicated satisfaction with the levels of equality of opportunity in training or at work, with few expressing the view that they were treated unfairly or suffered deliberate discrimination. Many felt well supported by trainers and employers, considered themselves protected against unfair treatment and felt that action would be taken in the event of any infringements.
- 6.22 Most of the trainees recalled that relevant issues were discussed as part of their induction and many indicated that they were happy with the amount, quality and accessibility of information and guidelines relating to Equal Opportunities.
- 6.23 Conversely, many trainees lacked an awareness of wider Equal Opportunities issues, with a significant number considering that they relate only to gender (sexual harassment or stereotyping) and race (discrimination, unfair treatment and racism). Similarly, many felt that any Equal Opportunities related information and/or policies given to them were unhelpful because they were disinterested and failed to read them, found the documents 'unfriendly' and confusing, or that staff had failed to emphasise their importance.
- 6.24 Trainees were generally unaware of (and, probably, had little inclination or need to find out about) the statutory or contractual requirements placed on providers and employers. Some also lacked an understanding of their terms of employment or their rights and responsibilities as trainees or employees.
- 6.25 The thematic team reported that there was little understanding of indirect discrimination and that many trainees would be unaware that it was taking place. Anecdotal evidence suggested that in a few cases trainees had tolerated mild discrimination, for example, sexist or racist comments, and suggested that it was typical 'par for the course' type behaviour. Although most recalled complaints procedures being outlined during their induction, many were vague about the procedures to be followed whilst, in some instances, trainees were reluctant to raise issues, especially about terms and conditions of employment, in case it jeopardised their position as a trainee or their chances of securing a job.

### Conclusion

- 6.26 Although the commitment of providers to the concept of Equal Opportunities appears undoubted, there is clearly much room for improvement. TECs need to continue to work with their providers, and through them employers and trainees alike, in an effort to encourage the identification and application of best practice procedures and, perhaps more importantly, the eradication of unacceptable practices. There has to be a move away from the contract compliance, 'path of least resistance', approach of the past if the desired Equal Opportunities results are to be obtained.
- 6.27 TECs have a key role to play in helping providers identify shortcomings in their Equal Opportunities policies and procedures and to support appropriate action to address them. In most of the sampled TECs this had been the traditional preserve of the Equal Opportunities co-ordinator, but there was encouraging evidence that contract and business managers were beginning to take on this responsibility.
- 6.28 However, the evidence suggests that TECs could do even more and need to keep the pressure on in order to develop the provider infrastructure and/or provider capacity. TECs appear to be taking the right steps, but, as several respondents indicated, *"only time will show whether such efforts are successful"*.

## 7. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

- 7.1 *“Actions speak louder than words”*, said one of those interviewed, a sentiment echoed by many other respondents. TECs therefore need to have effective monitoring and evaluation procedures in order to measure the delivery and impact of their Equal Opportunities related actions. Yet, previous research suggests that this has traditionally been a significant area of weakness. The following paragraphs therefore consider what steps TECs have taken to establish, modify or apply relevant systems and procedures.

### The Action Plan

- 7.2 Action Plans are a crucial element of any Equal Opportunities strategy. At best they establish what is going to be done, by whom, and by when. In addition, by specifying the expected outcomes they provide a clear focus for the monitoring, evaluation and review of both individual activities and the overall strategy. At worst, they outline largely unachievable ambitions, provide ambiguous or unclear statements of broad objectives or individual activities, fail to specify task allocations and/or lack any indication of targets and milestones.
- 7.3 Reassuringly, most of the TECs covered by this study had Action Plans which tended towards the former of these two descriptions. Indeed, as already mentioned (see paragraph 5.19), in one TEC several contract managers had been actively involved in the redrafting of the Action Plan and considered the resulting document to be so well written that:

“Our objectives, tasks, milestones and measures are now so clear there’s no longer any excuse for us failing to deliver!”

### Monitoring, Evaluation and Review Arrangements

- 7.4 A wide variety of arrangements were in place within the sampled TECs. Typical features included:
- the inclusion of Minimum Performance Levels (MPLs) within TEC or provider contracts. MPLs typically related to, for example, job outcomes achieved by ethnic minority trainees, number of disabled people starting a particular programme or the retention of female trainees within Modern Apprenticeships in traditionally male dominated sectors, provide one of the key elements of performance review mechanisms;
  - additional targets in respect of year on year progress, usually in terms of closing the identified gaps in the performance of various sub-groups; most TECs were seeking gradual rather than significant ‘step-change’ improvements although many hoped to achieve parity of achievement within a few years;

- the specification of Equal Opportunities related requirements within provider contracts or associated bidding briefing packs (in the latter case, providers' proposals are subsequently vetted for their Equal Opportunities content/approach before a contract is awarded);
- the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data via routine programme statistics, contract manager/provider liaison and ad-hoc surveys;
- the collation and reporting of this material by business managers, aided by research and information teams, with subsequent collation by the Equal Opportunities co-ordinator into a TEC level report including their 'independent' assessment of progress against the action plan<sup>16</sup> ;
- regular (monthly or quarterly) consideration of performance reports by an Equal Opportunities Working or Performance Monitoring Group, usually chaired by a senior manager or the Chief Executive and which acts as a conduit to the Board;
- Equal Opportunities as an item on the Board's agenda - in some TECs the subject was a standing item, with the Board actively involved in the management and review of the strategy on a quarterly basis; in others it was addressed at the mid and/or end year review points with the Board seeing its role as being to review and set the overall vision and strategy; in others the Board provided only the broadest of oversights, preferring to leave delivery and refinement of the strategy to operational managers;
- regional level Working Groups - typically organised either by the Government Office, regional TEC co-ordinators or by consultants part funded by the TECs - which not only reviewed performance but also sought to identify and spread good practice and/or cascade relevant information through training events, newsletters, etc;
- quarterly contract reviews, including contacts with a sample of trainees, undertaken by contract managers who were informed by the discussions and views of the TEC's Equal Opportunities or Programme Performance Groups; such reviews were then supplemented by audit arrangements;
- relevant monitoring information was often maintained by business or operational managers as hard copy files; some TECs had developed 'read only' access to such information via their Intranet facilities or a 'quality monitor' designed to bring together in a single source all relevant information - these were clearly beneficial steps towards the integration of Equal Opportunities as part of everyone's daily business.

7.5 Some TECs could, from the evidence available, claim to have been using such facilities for several years. However, the majority had used the development of their strategy to review existing and introduce new systems, amend the information requirements placed on providers, extend their research programme and to improve the dialogue between relevant information and business managers.

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16. Annex 3 provides an anonymised example of one of these progress monitoring reports.

- 7.6 One of the more encouraging developments identified during the course of this study was the increased involvement, within several TECs, of the research and information teams in support of the Equal Opportunities strategies. To paraphrase one research manager:

“In the past it was disappointing how little involvement we had with those planning or delivering the TEC’s Equal Opportunities activities. At last we are being used properly; helping to establish baselines and identify potential problem areas, keeping contract/business teams informed, and undertaking pro-active analyses which are beginning to suggest actions that the TEC has not considered before.”

### Weaknesses

- 7.7 At least one of the sampled TECs seemed to be facing major problems. The collection of Equal Opportunities related data appeared to be at a very basic level, with both its quality and quantity being questioned by TEC and careers service staff alike. Links between the collated information and the strategic plan were unclear, whilst several respondents expressed doubts about the robustness of the information as the basis for informed planning purposes.
- 7.8 Yet when senior staff members and the Equal Opportunities co-ordinator were interviewed they felt arrangements were ‘fit for purpose’, indicating that the strategy and action plan were both reviewed quarterly and would be updated annually. Clearly there is room for improvement here in the derivation, communication and application of the monitoring arrangements across the TEC and by its partners.
- 7.9 Although in all of the other sampled TECs the monitoring, evaluation and review systems appeared more comprehensive and robust, the study identified a number of weaknesses. These included:
- considerable slippage in the measurement of activity related milestones;
  - the use of process rather than value-added measures which provided an indication of what was being done but not the impact being achieved;
  - undue reliance (to date) on qualitative, often anecdotal, evidence;
  - despite action plans which were comprehensive in terms of the activities covered, several lacked specific targets, evaluation measures, success criteria, etc, resulting in limited and very basic monitoring activity;
  - an absence of formal review arrangements, including those with external partners, and plans for updating the strategy and action plan;
  - a lack of feedback loops between the TEC and providers, with little pressure being put on providers to utilise the available information (including that collected in response to their TEC’s contractual requirements) to assess their own Equal Opportunities stance;
  - failure to use all relevant sources of information, including customer satisfaction surveys and complaints systems;

- difficulties in setting performance targets for some activities, such as the contribution expected from an Ethnic Minority Development Officer.
- 7.10 In addition, TECs could, with some justification, point to problems in obtaining relevant, consistent, up-to-date, local level baseline data in respect of some of the key population groups such as people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and associated sub-groups. Some have reflected these limitations in their action plans by including provision for specific research projects or surveys. Similarly, there was a concern about the different bases for statistics and analyses available to, and being used by, the DfEE, the Employment Service, agencies such as the Local Authority and the TECs. This sometimes caused problems when the TEC sought to work in partnership with other agencies but could not find common ground in terms of substantive Equal Opportunities related issues.
- 7.11 One of the sampled TECs felt that the Performance Levels it was being set by the Government Office, which had agreed to implement a pan-regional approach, were not sufficiently stretching and therefore sent out all the wrong signals. Similarly, some felt that there was room for improvement in the ways in which their Equal Opportunities activities were judged, preferring to be assessed against only those factors over which they had direct control.
- 7.12 Several TECs were also mildly disappointed at the depth of analysis required or undertaken by their Government Office, whose approach appeared largely mechanistic, centred on identified key performance indicators and the presence of an action plan, with little exploration of, or support for, the underlying issues, arguments or content.

### Impact

- 7.13 At the time of the study, that is roughly six months after the signing off of most TECs' strategies by their Government Office, many of the sampled TECs indicated that they had not, yet, tried to measure the impact of their Equal Opportunities strategy and related activities. Any such impact was expected to be obtained in the long term, rather than as a 'quick fix'. Indeed, several mentioned that they may never be able to disentangle their impact from the masking effects of numerous other factors, including changing economic conditions.
- 7.14 However, some, largely anecdotal, evidence was becoming available about the reaction to and benefits arising from some activities and the Spring 2000 set of internal Equal Opportunities performance monitoring reports were expected to provide the first indications of whether specific activities were beginning to generate the anticipated results. Although no attempt has been made to obtain copies of all these monitoring reports and to use these to comment on TECs' performance, the anonymised version presented at Annex 3 illustrates the type of progress being achieved.
- 7.15 Whilst almost every one of the TECs surveyed was optimistic that their Equal Opportunities related performance would improve as a result of their efforts to identify relevant issues, to encapsulate them in a strategic response and to instigate appropriate actions, such optimism can only be fully assessed after this report is published.

### Conclusion

- 7.16 Systems have been established, modified and are beginning to be fully utilised to measure Equal Opportunities related performance at both specific activity and strategic level. Many of these systems have been introduced or reviewed in the light of the more in depth strategic approach being adopted in response to the National Standard. The systems are beginning to provide TECs with the necessary information to enable them to monitor and assess progress across the whole range of their activities and the greater involvement of research/information specialists and contract/business managers is to be applauded.
- 7.17 However, monitoring and evaluation can at best be described as 'patchy', with serious shortfalls in some areas and many lessons to be drawn from the experiences of TECs and their partners.



## 8. FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE

- 8.1 One of the primary objectives of this study was to identify and assess the relative effect of those factors which affect Equal Opportunities performance. What follows is a summary of those issues most often mentioned by respondents.

### Inhibitors

- 8.2 Many of the identified factors were considered to inhibit Equal Opportunities related activity and performance. These include:

- culture, tradition and prevailing attitudes are clearly important factors. They pervade and influence most, if not all, of TECs various Equal Opportunities activities, whether they relate to race, gender, disability, disadvantage, disaffection, sexual orientation, age, criminality or any other criteria.

They were also the most difficult to address, so ingrained it seemed were they amongst potential clients, their peers, society in general, providers, employers, support agencies, civil servants and TEC staff. Breaking down such barriers will be a long term process and, most respondents indicated, is beyond the reach of TECs alone, needing a sustained multi-Departmental, multi-agency approach.

TECs and their partners have made a start by, for example, seeking to breakdown stereotypes and influence young people's labour market related decisions through the use of ex-trainees as role models and mentors, or by working with the local community in general (and parents in particular) in an effort to demonstrate the benefits and possibilities offered by the work based training route.

Nevertheless, direct and indirect discrimination by employers remains one of the key factors affecting performance; ethnic minorities are most likely to be discriminated against but there was some evidence to suggest that gender, age and even 'post-code' discrimination is a real problem. Despite a variety of responses being taken by TECs and training providers alike, most were proving largely ineffective and often failed to deal with the difficult issues or to act where it was clear discrimination was taking place. A tougher stance might be taken by TECs and providers when, for example, placing orders for goods and services, but this is only likely to have a significant impact if it is part of a concerted approach by all relevant agencies.

- As Chapter 6 indicated, providers although generally supportive of Equal Opportunities principles, need additional support in the form of awareness training, access to good practice materials or encouragement from contract managers in order for them to go beyond mere contract and legislative compliance.
- The number, size and complexity of local agencies and structures - although offering TECs a range of potential partners and ways of influencing a particular issue, may actually prevent effective partnership activity because of the resource requirements involved in identifying and working with several key agencies and the range of differing views, priorities and plans that may exist.

- Negative attitudes held by prospective clients towards education and training; for example, amongst those living on a deprived housing estate even though it borders a local college - outreach facilities have been tried and have achieved some success, but large numbers of these prospective clients remain to be actively engaged.
- The variety of post-16 education, work based training and employment options may result in a degree of 'rivalry' between agencies such as TECs, colleges, providers and employers, all 'competing' for their share of the same client group. Close liaison and co-operation between the relevant agencies and others such as careers services, the ES and/or the development of shared agendas through Learning Partnerships may help, but, in the end, specific business targets have to be met.
- The boundary of TECs' influence - pushing at these boundaries in liaison with the DfEE or the GO may help, as might working in partnership with those who have more direct responsibility for or interest in identified issues.
- The reluctance of people to identify themselves as in need of help; for example, young people are often reluctant to consider themselves as having a disability, this in turn affects the quality of local population characteristic statistics and thus a TEC's ability to assess and address disability issues - some TECs have launched publicity campaigns designed to allay individual's reluctance, efforts which should be supplemented by the DfEE's 'See the Person' campaign.
- The level and sustainability of support from national and regional government to, for example, address public transport limitations and other travel to training costs in rural areas - TECs have attempted to address this issue by lobbying relevant agencies (especially GOs given their multi-Departmental make-up) as well as committing funds from their discretionary budget or reserves.
- The relative size of various disadvantaged groups may distort the identification of issues and/or performance statistics - providers, TECs and GOs have sought to develop a greater understanding of the baseline data and to share a willingness to look behind the raw statistics indicating significant gaps in relative performance.
- An individual's ethnicity, disability, gender or age may not, in themselves, constitute a barrier to equality of opportunity as it is often the case that some other factor(s) are at least as important - providers, TECs and referral agencies, such as careers services and the ES, are working on ways of identifying all actual and potential barriers as part of selection procedures and the derivation of an individual's training plan.
- Funding regimes which focus on a referral's potential to achieve a positive outcome create a conflict between business and Equal Opportunities priorities - some TECs have responded by varying the starts and outcomes funding regime thereby enabling providers to consider offering a place to someone they may initially feel might not achieve a payable positive outcome.

- The local context is a critical factor; some areas appear locked into a vicious circle of deprivation, social exclusion, low educational aspirations and attainment, a decline in traditional local industry/employment, low investment, low wages, high unemployment, and deprivation. In some TEC areas over a third of those leaving adult training had been in need of and received Pre-Vocational Training. Nevertheless, by working with relevant agencies through, for example, SRB or ESF sponsored regeneration projects, some success is being achieved.
- Employers, from all ethnic groups, who appear reluctant to recruit from beyond their particular community.
- An unwillingness of people from disadvantaged groups to offer their services to local voluntary organisations, community groups or associations. This places a heavy burden on those who do volunteer or are employed by such agencies and limits their ability to help those in need of their assistance.
- Access to business services is a real barrier for women and ethnic minorities - TECs work closely with relevant agencies, in particular, Business Links, in an effort to ensure appropriate services are readily accessible.
- Communication difficulties; in one of the sampled TEC areas surveys had indicated that only 54% of Asian women and 81% of Asian men could speak English - as well as extending the range of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision, the TEC had taken steps to ensure that all its printed material were made available in a number of languages and had encouraged providers to do likewise.
- TECs and providers sometimes face a dilemma when those employers willing to offer work placements do not appear to have adequate Equal Opportunities policies and/or standards. TECs have reacted by, for example, training their own and providers staff in ways of dealing with such circumstances, including working with the employer to explain the business benefits which may be derived from a diverse workforce and the steps that can be taken to ensure more acceptable working conditions. Although the ultimate reaction would be to decline the offer of or terminate existing work placements, the study found little evidence of this occurring.
- Several respondents indicated that potentially important providers, particularly those who might be most attractive to disadvantaged or disaffected clients, may be unwilling to work with the TEC often because of the perceived level of bureaucracy involved. Similarly, some may initially seem willing to work with the TEC but, after receiving initial funding, fail to adhere to agreed performance or financial monitoring arrangements leaving the TEC to take remedial action or, eventually, to terminate their contract.
- Given the scale and type of available local provision, TECs appear to have no real sanctions available to them in order to help drive up Equal Opportunities performance - pressure is increasingly being brought to bear on providers through the contracting process and 'trainer training', but a concerted effort may be needed to increase the scale and scope of local provision.

- The requirements of new industries/technologies are often beyond the reach/existing capabilities of local disadvantaged groups. Some employers would rather 'import' people with relevant skills from neighbouring areas than recruit from the local labour market. In response, TECs have sought to work with such employers in order to identify and tailor training to their needs and to draw upon, strengthen, diversify and promote the skills of the local communities in an effort to overcome local prejudices and achieve sustainable regeneration.
- Inadequate and/or inaccessible local baseline data - TECs have sought to introduce or improve their own data collection facilities or to identify, develop links with and draw upon other local sources.
- The costs and constraints associated with instigating appropriate action in certain communities requires greater flexibility within a prescribed framework than is currently available - negotiations with GOs and through them the DfEE, have resulted in some additional flexibilities being granted; in addition, TECs have used their own funds or have supported bids against or projects supported by SRB, ESF or other alternative sources of finance.
- Some of those interviewed were concerned about the effects of having to re-work and re-submit their initial Equal Opportunities strategies after the publication of the RSL report<sup>17</sup>. Nevertheless, most of the TECs in the study recognised the limitations of their initial strategies, appear to have reacted positively by producing revised strategies which meet the National Standard, and to have maintained (or in some cases extended) their enthusiasm for Equal Opportunities, indicating that they expect this to be sustained through the transition to the LSC(s).
- A lack of expertise and resource available within some GOs to support TECs' Equal Opportunities efforts - some TECs are co-funding access to the required level and type of support from agencies such as Equality North West.
- There are concerns that guidance materials are merely recycling/repackaging the same old ideas - the good practice guide being produced as a companion to this study and the TSC's thematic should address these concerns and focus on those activities which have generated positive and sustainable outcomes.
- The sharing of relevant, yet confidential, information between agencies is restricted by the lack of agreed protocols - TECs and their partners regularly discuss options but would welcome appropriate intervention and steerage from sponsoring Departments and/or agencies.
- Some TECs feel there is a lack of support from the TEC National Council - there is a need to ensure that TEC best practice is captured and actively promoted. However, facilities like those available to all TECs within TECtranet to request, share and exchange examples of good practice appeared to be underused at the time of the study.

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17. "Evaluation of TECs' Equal Opportunities Strategies : introduction of the new National Standard", IPSOS-RSL for the DfEE, 1998.

- The effect of the impending introduction of the Learning and Skills Council(s) should not be underestimated. There was a genuine concern that the introduction of the new structures might result in a backward step in local EO activity, developments and perceptions. The most often expressed 'fears' were that the changes might halt (even temporarily) project or activity funding and/or that there might be a significant change in the relative priority of Equal Opportunities within the new set up.

The result might be to seriously damage the (in some areas) still fragile perception that Equal Opportunities is being taken seriously. Whilst the contents and intentions outlined in the LSC Prospectus<sup>18</sup> should allay most of these concerns, there is a clear need to capture and build on the progress made by TECs.

### Enablers

8.3 Conversely, there were a number of factors which respondents suggested had helped them to either implement their proposed actions and/or achieve key outcomes. The following list provides a summary:

- Although it seems all too obvious, a key enabler is the availability and accessibility of appropriate provision - this needs to be underpinned by the collection, collation and careful analysis of relevant information and the subsequent development or selection of the necessary provision.
- Local prosperity may raise aspirations and help reduce barriers if, for example, employers are no longer able to discriminate if they are to attract and sustain the necessary workforce - but will the change in attitude be sustainable should the economy falter?
- Mainstreaming Equal Opportunities, according to many of those interviewed during the study, "must be the right way to go" as it helps ensure it becomes part of routine business and not an all too easily ignored add on - but, as mentioned earlier, overall programme performance targets continue to attract more attention than the achievement of excellence in Equal Opportunities.
- Clarity of vision, continuity of effort and expertise, the accurate identification of performance gaps, local needs and the development of appropriate responses, the effective application of local knowledge and/or expertise, the collective involvement of relevant agencies through partnership working, the development of local solutions for local issues. These are all powerful common sense factors, but which need constant care and attention if they are not to lapse.
- Breaking down stereotypes amongst family units by, for example, providing support for young people who express an interest in a particular work based route, rather than attempting to achieve a wholesale change in traditional attitudes - such individuals, particularly if they become successful trainees, offer potential role models.

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18. "The Learning and Skills Council Prospectus", DfEE, December 1999.

- Good quality support from Government Offices or other agencies including local Race Equality Councils - the Government Office for London was singled out for particular praise for its pro-active role in encouraging and assisting London TECs to improve their Equal Opportunities related performance, for its work in partnership with the London TEC Council and the London Development Partnership, and for the value-added by maintaining the same, knowledgeable and therefore credible, Equal Opportunities co-ordinator throughout the development and implementation of the TECs' Equal Opportunities strategies.
- The guidance available from various documents including 'Raising the Standard' and 'Equality Assured : Self Assessment for Equal Opportunities in Training' as well as the application of standards such as the North East's Regional Quality Standard or approaches such as the Equal Opportunities Quality Framework (EOQF) model - these facilities had been well received and used (although they did not attract universal praise because, for example, of a perception that they were too complex or were merely recycling old ideas).
- Regional networking, benchmarking with other TECs or organisations with a recognised record of good Equal Opportunities related practice, and/or the adoption of the EOQF model as part of a TEC's continuous improvement strategy - these are all ways in which a TEC may seek to develop its Equal Opportunities approach.
- Training, briefing and guidance; that for example provided by some TECs in respect of the implications of Part III of the Disability Discrimination Act had been particularly well received and should help providers and others avoid many of the pitfalls they might otherwise have encountered.
- The development of close working relationships with key agencies including Local Authorities, Local Education Authorities, careers services, the Employment Service, Health Authorities, the Probation Service, employer and trades union groups, Race Equality Councils, and any number of voluntary or community groups - sharing information, ideas and expertise, together with the development and adoption of coherent and consistent strategies, priorities and plans : where it works (often despite vested interests) it works well and enables "the whole to be greater than the sum of the parts".
- Finally, although no such initiative or policy currently exists, several respondents suggested that there would be clear benefits from a joint DfEE/ DTI strategy, action plan and publicity campaign to address discrimination through, for example, employer education and the awarding of Government contracts only to those organisations that can demonstrate they have an acceptable approach to Equal Opportunities.



### “Enabling Inhibitors”

8.4 Unsurprisingly, perhaps, several of the factors outlined in the preceding sections may be viewed as either or both enablers or inhibitors, depending on the particular set of circumstances involved - an Equal Opportunities version of the traditional ‘is the glass half full or half empty’ syndrome. The following provide a few more examples of this type of situation:

- The size, diversity and geographic dispersion of the ethnic minority population may require bespoke activities which may be relatively easy to determine but may be impractical to implement or deliver because of their limited nature - yet failing to respond positively to a local level issue may generate or perpetuate a negative perception of the TEC which may, in turn, quickly spread across the TEC’s area.
- Providing suitable training opportunities at a time and place that best suits potential clients needs ought to encourage greater take up of provision - but is such flexibility always possible and/or practical?
- Widespread consultation culminating in the active engagement, involvement and communication of/with external organisations can generate positive results - but if individual organisations maintain an inflexible stance scarce resources can be consumed for little return.
- In some regions Government Office staff are clearly on a similar Equal Opportunities learning curve to the TEC - whilst this can be an advantage in the sense that both organisations can go forward together, there is a possibility that frustration and disillusionment may emerge and hinder progress.
- Alignment, in terms of Equal Opportunities strategies, priorities and procedures, between Government Departments and the constituent parts thereof (for example, within the DfEE) should be a positive step - but if the various approaches are slightly or, even worse, significantly different then problems of co-ordination, coherence and credibility may arise.

### Conclusion

8.5 Chapter 4 considered the complex context within which TECs seek to implement their Equal Opportunities - this Chapter clearly underlines that complexity. However, the identification of the factors which affect performance is a crucial step towards their wider adoption or resolution. Opinions and evidence collected during this study suggests that the advent of the National Standard and the subsequently more rigorous approach to Equal Opportunities adopted by TECs has enabled some of these factors to be identified, explored and addressed for the first time - yet another positive development.

8.6 But for each inhibitor that is successfully resolved, there is typically several others or several other variants to take its place; TECs, providers, the LSC(s) and their partners should therefore not rest on their laurels. The Equal Opportunities challenge, it seems, is never over!



## 9. TECs AS EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYERS

- 9.1 Many respondents, both from within TECs and their partners, considered it vital to a TEC's Equal Opportunities efforts for it to be perceived as an exemplar employer. Again to paraphrase typical comments:

“If we are not seen as a good Equal Opportunities employer, how can we expect those we seek to influence to react positively. We must practice what we preach and ensure that our actions are both visible and accountable to the local communities we serve.”

- 9.2 Reassuringly, most respondents, from both within and beyond the TECs, indicated that they considered their TEC to be a good Equal Opportunities employer and felt that significant improvements had been achieved over the last couple of years. Indeed, several of those interviewed, having recently joined the TEC, said that they were pleased to find that the TEC both recognised the importance of and had such a positive approach and attitude towards the subject compared to their previous employer.

### Personnel

- 9.3 Most of the sampled TECs had, or claimed to have recently put in place, arrangements enabling their staffing profile to be monitored and periodically reviewed against local population characteristics. A majority of the sampled TECs had workforces that were, overall, generally representative of their local communities. However, within most of the TECs there was evidence of significant under-representation, particularly at middle, senior management or Board level, of, for example, ethnic minorities or females.
- 9.4 When and where significant imbalances were identified, efforts were made to address them during recruitment or restructuring exercises, for example. Some TECs have therefore changed their procedures in an effort to prevent discrimination during short-listing and interview processes. In addition, posts were being widely advertised within the various communities, through all relevant media and in a range of languages. Advertised vacancies usually stress the TEC's commitment as an Equal Opportunities employer and may refer to membership of various initiatives such as Opportunity 2000 (promoting equality of opportunity for women) or include relevant logos such as the 'Positive about Disability' symbol.
- 9.5 Similarly, several TECs had introduced regular reviews of Board membership with subsequent (positive) action being taken to attract suitable candidates where necessary. As a result, most of the TECs sampled had at least one Board member who was either from an Equal Opportunities sub-group or who was involved at a senior level in a related representative body such as the local Race Equality Council, a Trades Union, or a Community Council. Often this Board member took up the role of Equal Opportunities 'champion or conscience', and was prepared to challenge the TEC's position and/or achievements.

- 9.6 Nevertheless, several external interviewees indicated that there was little if any publicly available information about their TEC's Equal Opportunities profile or the actions being taken to address identified issues. Recruitment procedures were sometimes perceived as being closed and 'self-perpetuating'. Whilst the adoption of competency based approaches to recruitment and promotion was generally welcomed, many respondents felt that staffing imbalances within any organisation would take several years to correct.

### Operations

- 9.7 Perhaps the most significant changes to have affected TECs' Equal Opportunities position have been the moves to integrate it within routine business. As mentioned earlier, this had been backed by the reallocation or re-specification of tasks, along with a considerable amount of training activity. In most of the TECs everyone (Board members and staff alike) had participated in Equal Opportunities awareness sessions, with relevant individuals (for example, contract or business managers) undergoing additional training to help them acquire the capacity to help providers identify and develop appropriate responses to Equal Opportunities issues.
- 9.8 Additional training facilities had been developed within some TECs by drawing on the interests, resourcefulness and unique position of individual members of staff. In two TECs several staff had learnt how to use sign language in response to the fact that some of their colleagues were hard of hearing. In another TEC, their wheelchair based receptionist had been encouraged to develop his idea for 'disability awareness' training and to deliver it across the organisation; the event had proved so successful that it has since been incorporated as a separate module of the TEC's induction training package.
- 9.9 With such positive developments it is unsurprising that some TECs have sought to extend their Equal Opportunities competence through the adoption of relevant models or standards, often supported by input from professional advisors. In one TEC the Equal Opportunities Quality Framework (EOQF) has been embraced as part of their continuous improvement strategy. Here, 22 staff members have been trained, by the Equality Foundation Ltd, as EOQF assessors thereby ensuring that sufficient internal support is available for their colleagues and that the TEC is 'kept on its Equal Opportunities toes'. At the time of the study, the TEC was seeking to extend the EOQF approach throughout its provider network and had been pleasantly surprised by the number of volunteers coming forward.
- 9.10 Similarly, all of the TECs in the North East region had contributed to the development of the Regional Quality Standard (RQS) self assessment model, based on the Training Standards Council's 'Raising the Standards' guidelines, as a means of monitoring mainstream providers. They have all adopted the model and have provided the necessary training to enable staff and providers alike to address its Equal Opportunities elements.
- 9.11 In a similar vein, most of the TECs in the sample indicated that, although Equal Opportunities was not (at the time - see paragraph 10.12 below) part of the Investors model criteria, they had used the IIP approach to ensure they were following sound Equal Opportunities related principles throughout their activities.

- 9.12 The clarity and accessibility of a TEC's Equal Opportunities Strategy, Policy and Action Plan was seen by many of those interviewed as an important contributor to the perception of that TEC as an Equal Opportunities Employer. As mentioned earlier in this report, many TECs had made these documents available via their Intranet and Internet sites. One TEC had backed their Equal Opportunities Policy by the introduction of a series of 10 Values which set out how its staff will be treated, others had ensured that the Strategy was applied to the TEC itself and had included agreed steps within their Action Plan.
- 9.13 Complaints procedures were generally covered within induction training and were considered by the majority of those TEC staff interviewed to be clear, accessible, open, visible, fair and active - although little used - in most TECs. However, staff in at least one TEC doubted how effectively such procedures were applied and whether complaints were taken seriously.
- 9.14 Several respondents also indicated that they had witnessed and welcomed significant improvement in the communication and liaison between relevant members or parts of a TEC, for example, between Personnel or Operations Managers and the Equal Opportunities Co-ordinator. As a result a number of issues had been identified and appropriate responses instigated, illustrated by the introduction of special training arrangements for hard of hearing members of staff in at least two of the TECs covered. Similarly, aids and adaptations had been funded where necessary, including the installation of induction loops within all of a TECs meeting rooms, visual fire alarms and chair lifts.
- 9.15 Nevertheless, despite these encouraging signs, there was evidence that some TECs still have a number of Equal Opportunities related issues to address within their own set up. These include limited wheelchair access to/within their premises, implementation of family friendly or culturally aware working practices, or to paraphrase one or two respondents:

“Although all the necessary words and guidance are in place, is anything more than lip service paid to them?”

## 10. POLICY AND OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

- 10.1 All of the preceding Chapters have focused on TECs' implementation of their Equal Opportunities Strategies. The evidence suggests that significant progress has, and is continuing to be made; but the jury is still out as to whether TECs' efforts have had a significant impact and led to a closing of performance gaps between different client groups.
- 10.2 Yet, as Chapters 4 and 8 indicate, the context within which TECs are operating and Equal Opportunities issues are being addressed is less than stable. In particular, the impending introduction of the Learning and Skills Councils, and the associated transition period, is clearly both a significant issue and a potential opportunity. The following paragraphs outline some recent or forthcoming developments and attempt to consider their implications for those responsible for developing and implementing Equal Opportunities strategies.

### The Learning and Skills Council

- 10.3 The White Paper *Learning to Succeed* published in the summer of 1999 set out radical reforms to modernise and simplify arrangements for the planning, funding, delivery and quality assurance of post-16 education and training. The centrepiece of these new arrangements is the creation of a single body, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), to oversee and implement strategies focused on the needs of individuals, businesses and communities in partnership with other key bodies. The LSC is scheduled to become fully operational from April 2001, with a transfer of responsibility from TECs and other agencies during a transition period.
- 10.4 The LSC Prospectus, published in December 1999, contained the Government's proposals for the ways in which the LSC will work at national and local level. A key expectation (outlined in Chapter 4 of the prospectus and subsequently incorporated into the Learning and Skills Bill) is that the LSC will build equality of opportunity into all its policies, programmes and actions. The LSC and its local arms will be expected to work closely with key organisations including the main equality bodies, local Learning Partnerships, Regional Development Agencies, the Small Business Service, the Youth Support Service, Connexions and the Adult Learning Inspectorate.
- 10.5 Many of the actions which the LSC will be expected to take are similar, if not identical, to the requirements currently placed on TECs. A key element will, for example, be the preparation and implementation of Equal Opportunities strategies and action plans at national and local levels. The clearly stated intention is that the LSC will draw and build upon existing good practice, with steps being taken during the transition phase to ensure continuity of appropriate projects, activities and commitments.

## Improving Educational Standards

10.6 The recently published Connexions Strategy document<sup>19</sup> included references to a number of Government initiatives designed to improve standards of education in schools. One aspect of a threefold approach is a drive for inclusion. Elements of this agenda include:

- over 70 Education Action Zones aimed at tackling long standing problems of underachievement and low aspirations in deprived areas;
- tackling poor achievement rates for ethnic minority pupils through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant;
- improvements in initial teacher training to prepare trainee teachers to raise the standard of achievement of pupils from ethnic minority groups and from backgrounds of social and economic disadvantage;
- a revised National Curriculum reflecting the importance of not only knowledge and skills but also citizenship.

10.7 Focusing on the last of these, in the light of the review of the National Curriculum the DfEE has decided, amongst other things, to:

- introduce a statutory programme of study for Citizenship for all 11-16 year olds from September 2002. The programme will ensure that, for the first time, 11-14 year olds will be taught about “the diversity of national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the UK and the need for mutual respect and understanding”; 14-16 year olds will be taught about “the origins and implications of the diverse national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the UK and the need for mutual respect and understanding”;
- make clear, within the proposed national framework for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), that pupils in primary schools will be taught:
  - “to identify and respect the differences and similarities between people”;
  - “to realise the consequences of anti-social and aggressive behaviours, such as bullying and racism, on individuals and communities”;
  - “to realise the nature and consequences of racism, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours, and how to respond to them and ask for help”;
  - “to recognise and challenge stereotypes”;
  - “that differences and similarities between people arise from a number of factors, including cultural, ethnic, racial and religious diversity, gender and disability”.

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19. “Connexions: The best start in life for every young person”, DfEE, February 2000.

- ensure that, as part of this framework, pupils in secondary schools will be taught:
  - “the effects of all types of stereotyping, prejudice, bullying, racism and discrimination and how to challenge them assertively”;
  - “how to empathise with people different from themselves”.

### National Equal Opportunities Standards in Partner Organisations

- 10.8 An Equal Opportunities Code of Practice<sup>20</sup> for National Training Organisations (NTOs) was introduced in April 2000.
- 10.9 Similarly, the Department, together with partners including the Equal Opportunities Commission, has drafted a strategy to increase the effectiveness of Equal Opportunities work within careers information, education and guidance, and in particular the careers service. The strategy is being taken forward by careers companies in England and, from April 2000, they are required to take action against its key strands by building them into their business plans. Action is also being taken to ensure that it becomes an integral part of the new Connexions service.
- 10.10 Part of the strategy was to develop and introduce a National Equal Opportunities Standard. However, this work has been delayed pending the development of the Connexions service to ensure that the Standard is consistent with the way in which young people will be supported as they make the transition from school to adult life.
- 10.11 The Employment Service are piloting an Equal Opportunities framework, to mirror that for TECs/LSCs, during 2000. The pilots, which encompass all ES activities and programmes, are currently being undertaken in Coventry and Wandsworth. The plan is for the pilots to be extended into a number of other areas from the Autumn with a view to nation-wide introduction from April 2001.
- 10.12 A new version of the Investors in People Standard was launched on 13 April 2000. One of the twelve indicators in the revised model requires organisations to “demonstrate commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity in the development of its people”.

### The Human Rights Act 1998

- 10.13 The Human Rights Act comes into effect on 2 October 2000. It provides every citizen with a clear statement of rights and responsibilities and requires the public service to respect those rights. Of particular note in connection with this study are Article 2 of Protocol 1 which relates to the right to education and Article 14 which relates to the prohibition of discrimination in the exercise of any other convention right. Although the full implications have yet to be tested and case law established, it is clear that the Act has the potential to have a considerable impact on Equal Opportunities related issues.

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20. “Quality Matters - NTOs and Equal Opportunities”, DfEE, April 2000.

## Promotion of Equal Opportunities

10.14 The Government has, for example, through the DfEE's "See the Person" campaign, sought to raise the general public's awareness of Equal Opportunities related issues. In addition to these nationally advertised messages, the DfEE has sought to strengthen its internal approach to Equal Opportunities through the inclusion of appropriate objectives within all forms of corporate and individual business plans and a variety of training facilities, including a disability awareness video entitled "It's Normal to be Different".

## Other Developments

10.15 The DfEE, in collaboration with the TEC National Council, has recently published guidelines for handling customer feedback and complaints about TEC delivered, Government funded, training. These procedures should, for the first time, ensure that there is consistency between TECs in respect of the way in which Equal Opportunities related feedback and complaints are handled and resolved. The expectation is that the LSC(s) will adopt similar arrangements (see paragraph 3.39 of the White Paper *Learning to Succeed* and paragraph 5.25 of the LSC Prospectus).

10.16 As a direct result of this study and the associated TSC thematic, the Department is working on a good practice guide which will illustrate some of the more successful approaches and initiatives taken by TECs and their partners over recent years. This guide is scheduled to be ready for publication in the Autumn of 2000 and should provide the LSC(s) with an invaluable introduction to Equal Opportunities related issues.

## Research

10.17 The Department regularly undertakes and publishes research into many aspects of Equal Opportunities. A relevant example is provided by the recently published results of a study, undertaken by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, into the business benefits of race equality at work<sup>21</sup>. This indicated that the benefits, which could be substantial, included:

- improvements to staffing, including the alleviation of recruitment shortages, improvement in the quality of staff, improved morale, reduction in turnover and easier deployment of staff;
- improved management and employee relations, including reduction in disputes, enhanced management systems and increased exchange of ideas;
- improved service to customers, including improved understanding of cultural differences, ability to converse in the customers' first language;
- increased sales and improved marketing through the use of ideas and specialised knowledge of ethnic minority staff, through compliance with customer organisations which require a race equality policy and through a public image which attracts ethnic minority customers;

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21. "Business Benefits of Race Equality at Work", National Institute of Economic and Social Research, published as part of the DfEE's Research Series as Research Report 177 (RR177), March 2000.



- improved relations with public bodies, affecting, for example, the granting of planning permission and the receipt of grants;
- avoidance of tribunal costs.

These led to increased productivity, increased sales and increased profits.

10.18 The study also provided numerous examples of specific actions generating these benefits and explored the potentially positive implications of projected changes in the labour force and product markets.

10.19 Nevertheless, it concluded that good race equality practice is rare and that even amongst employers striving for race equality examples of poor practice and lack of achievement could be found. It therefore highlights some of the factors which may inhibit performance and considers some of the steps that may be taken to address them.

10.20 Many of the messages contained in the report would appear to apply to many, if not all, other Equal Opportunities priority groups. The study should therefore prove an invaluable source of information for those involved with Equal Opportunities activities, especially those engaged in the concept's promotion.

### Ideas Generated During this Study

10.21 With such a wide ranging study it is not surprising that a number of ideas were put forward during the course of the many interviews conducted. A couple of these seem worthy of further consideration:

- the possibility, both during and after the TEC to LSC transition period, of making more use of (regional) consultants to replace or top up support available from, for example, Government Offices; this would effectively build on the approach already adopted in some regions (for example, the North West), would take some of the pressure off both Government Offices and TECs during the transition period and could provide a valuable supplementary source of expertise for the new LSC structure;
- the sense of capturing (or at least attempting to capture) all relevant good practice generated or detailed information about the inhibiting factors faced by TECs - the effective transfer of this knowledge from TECs to the LSC and other agencies (for example, the Employment and/or Small Business Service) should yield many benefits, not least by preventing any potential 're-inventing of the wheel' under the new post-16 arrangements.

### Coherence and Co-operation

10.22 Finally, with the Government's increasing emphasis and commitment to Equal Opportunities, there is clearly scope for TECs and their successors to work ever more closely with relevant agencies in an effort to address some of the issues over which they have little direct influence. This study should, assuming its dissemination strategy is effective, help to ensure that this message, and others, is brought to the attention of all concerned with the expectation that this may engender a more coherent and co-operative, multi-agency approach than appears to have been possible in the past.

### Conclusion

10.23 As they come on stream, developments such as those listed above should ensure that some of the concerns expressed by TECs, about their having to adopt much more stringent Equal Opportunities requirements than other organisations within the education and training sector, are addressed. Similarly, given that it will be particularly important for individual TECs to maintain their Equal Opportunities related efforts until local LSCs are in place and able to carry them forward, many of these initiatives should make that objective much easier to pursue.

## 11. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

- 11.1 The aim of this study was to investigate and appraise the ways in which TECs' were going about the implementation of their Equal Opportunities strategies. Sections 4 through 10 of this report have therefore sought to provide a description of, and commentary on, the many activities being undertaken and the numerous factors which influence their likelihood of success. But have the steps taken led to the desired improvement in opportunity; if not, will they or what further effort is required to generate a labour and training market that offers true equality?
- 11.2 The advent of the TEC Equal Opportunities Strategies National Standard, along with developments such as the introduction of the Training Standards Council provider inspection regime, have undoubtedly resulted in a lot of action. Even those TECs who can, with some justification, claim to have treated Equal Opportunities as a priority from 'Day One' recognise the added impetus and greater coherence that these initiatives have generated.
- 11.3 The steps many TECs have taken towards the adoption of a more integrated approach to Equal Opportunities are to be welcomed. Similarly, the efforts to support this approach through the provision of appropriate training, guidance and more ready access to relevant information. Information systems themselves are being enhanced and analytical experts are beginning to be used more effectively in the derivation and assessment of priorities, plans and activities.
- 11.4 The profile of Equal Opportunities would also appear to be at or near an all time high. Many senior management teams and TEC Boards are now more directly involved in setting and monitoring the Equal Opportunities agenda than ever before. Recruitment and promotion procedures have been amended to minimise the possibility of discrimination and the importance of staffing profiles which reflect the TEC's constituency and enable the business benefits of diversity to be realised has been recognised.
- 11.5 Considerable effort has gone into the preparation of the TECs' Equal Opportunities strategies. For most TECs this involved more specific research and data analysis of the key issues, a wide ranging consultation exercise often employing quite novel approaches, and the involvement of people from across the TECs functional areas. Having produced a strategy, many TECs have sought to communicate it, or at least its main messages, throughout their organisation and to their numerous partners.
- 11.6 As well as seeking to ensure that mainstream provision reflects the TEC's Equal Opportunities priorities, most TECs have instigated or continued to support a range of specific activities designed to address particular issues and/or underpin mainstream activity. At the same time, new research or analysis has been sponsored into issues identified during the creation of the strategy or which have come to light as it is being implemented. As a result a more thorough understanding and appreciation of the factors contributing to or inhibiting Equal Opportunities policy is being developed.
- 11.7 There is also evidence that external support facilities are being utilised to a greater extent than in the past, with, for example, business development models being adopted by TECs and providers alike and materials such as the 'Equality Assurance: Self Assessment for Equal Opportunities in Training' guide providing invaluable help to those seeking to develop, enhance and/or implement an Equal Opportunities policy.

- 11.8 Finally, the emphasis on Equal Opportunities within the new post-16 arrangements appears as strong and integral as it has been for TECs over the last few years.
- 11.9 But not everything is as positive. The study found too many examples of limited pre and post production communication of the TEC strategies. Similarly, although steps were being taken to enhance contract and business managers responsibilities (and capabilities) for ensuring equality of opportunity at provider and employer level, the thematic found that too many providers still only meet minimum contract or legislative requirements and are not getting the type of support they might expect from the TEC.
- 11.10 Although there is a lot of activity going on, in most TECs the appropriate monitoring, evaluation and review procedures have still to be fully implemented. As a result, their results have yet to be effectively used to influence the future activity of all relevant organisations. Similarly, little is known of the overall impact of the TECs' implementation of their strategies - whilst it has to be accepted that many effects will be evident in the medium to long rather than the short term, this is no justification for the level of slippage encountered in many TECs' monitoring systems.
- 11.11 Not every performance gap is being closed, whilst for some the rate of closure is insufficient for the objective of 'parity within a few years' to be achieved. New gaps are appearing and need to be addressed. Instances of discrimination remain and, it appears, are not always being questioned or eradicated. Similarly not enough is being done to challenge stereotypes, ingrained perceptions and/or traditional attitudes, and therefore to open up new opportunities for potential clients.
- 11.12 Equal Opportunities still seems to be regarded as a lower priority issue than headline business objectives and targets; a view partially maintained by the existing funding and performance monitoring structures. Many organisations and individuals remain to be convinced of the business case for Equal Opportunities.
- 11.13 Finally, despite all the encouragement and efforts to achieve effective liaison, coherence and consistency between all relevant organisations, a fully effective joined-up approach remains an elusive goal in many areas.
- 11.14 Thus, even though a more strategic approach has been adopted and despite all the activities that have been implemented, inequality still exists. The steps taken by TECs in recent years may well have been evolutionary rather than revolutionary, but they appear to be heading in the right direction. Their experience and the measures they have introduced should provide a sound launching pad for the LSC(s) to continue that evolutionary process.
- 11.15 This report aims to re-inforce that process.

## FIELDWORK AREAS

A1.1 After a small scale pilot exercise in the Lincolnshire TEC area, the main fieldwork phase for the QFAD/AS:EALD study was undertaken in the following TEC areas:

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| North East:      | Northumberland, Sunderland City   |
| North West:      | Lancashire Area West (LAWTEC), Manchester, North and Mid (NORMIDTEC) Cheshire |
| West Midlands:   | Sandwell, Staffordshire, Walsall  |
| East of England: | Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Waveney  |
| London:          | AZTEC, London East, North West London   |

A1.2 In each of these areas, interviews were conducted with:

- relevant TEC personnel, including the Equal Opportunities Co-ordinator, those Board member(s)/senior manager(s) with responsibility for Equal Opportunities, Contract Managers, the Operations Manager, Research and/or Database Managers;
- a range of those organisations that the TECs were working with to implement their strategies, including the Employment Service, careers services, ethnic minority and other community groups;
- appropriate staff from the respective Government Office for the Region.

A1.3 The Training Standards Council Equal Opportunities Thematic covered most of the TEC areas listed above as well as Dorset and Wiltshire TECs in the South West. The Thematic team interviewed a number of providers and trainees to obtain their understanding, perception, involvement and reaction to the TECs' Equal Opportunities strategies and related activities. In addition, they drew on findings from all published TSC inspection reports from April to November 1999, all published inspection reports for providers in the 13 TEC areas included in the study fieldwork, together with analysis and evaluation of questionnaires completed by lead/associate inspectors for inspections conducted from September 1999 to January 2000.

A1.4 The co-operation of all those involved from whatever agency, together with those who supplied background information or who helped arrange interviews, is gratefully acknowledged.

## BASELINE INFORMATION

A2.1 The following tables provide a range of information relevant to the Equal Opportunities position (as at the time of the study) within the sampled TEC areas. This information supplements the Equal Opportunities related performance indicators published annually by the Department for Education and Employment<sup>22</sup>, the latest of which relate to the operational year 1998-99. It is consistent with data supplied by the Department and published within the monthly Labour Market Trends<sup>23</sup> magazine and that are made available by the Training Standards Council through their website<sup>24</sup>.

### Summary

A2.3 The data presented within these tables demonstrate:

- variable performance despite the introduction and implementation of TECs' Equal Opportunities strategies; relative performance appears to have deteriorated or not to have improved as much for disadvantaged groups as for mainstream groups within some programmes (for example, Modern Apprenticeships - see Table 2) whilst there is tentative evidence to suggest a closing of relative performance gaps in other programmes (for example, Other Training - Table 3 or Work Based Learning for Adults - Table 5);
- the difficulties in obtaining statistically robust data at TEC, let alone provider level (see, for example, the suppression of non-white population estimates for four of the sampled TECs, and of disabled estimates for all of the sampled TECs, because totals are below the minimum reliability threshold - Table 1);
- similarly the difficulties of interpreting the data that are available (with relative performance, for example, being extremely difficult to determine where small numbers are involved or where there have been significant changes in the characteristics of certain client groups) therefore highlighting the need for a careful combination of objective and subjective assessment;
- that in some programmes or on some measures, Equal Opportunities groups appear to do better than mainstream trainees (see, for example, Work Based Learning for Adults - Table 5);
- variations in performance between different ethnic groups (see, for example, the Work Based Learning for Adults data presented in Table 6).

22. See "**TEC/CCTE Performance Indicators 1998-99**", Department for Education and Employment, October 1999.

23. "**Labour Market Trends**" a monthly magazine produced by the Office for National Statistics and published by The Stationary Office.

24. The Training Standards Council website can be accessed at [www.tsc.gov.uk](http://www.tsc.gov.uk).

**Table 1 : Population Estimates**

| <b>Country/Region/TEC</b> | <b>No. females aged 16yrs+</b> | <b>% of all aged 16yrs+</b> | <b>No. non-whites aged 16yrs+</b> | <b>% of all aged 16yrs+</b> | <b>No. of people with disabilities aged 16yrs+</b> | <b>% of all aged 16yrs+</b> |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| <b>England</b>            | <b>19,778,000</b>              | <b>51.1</b>                 | <b>2,436,000</b>                  | <b>6.3</b>                  | <b>813,000</b>                                     | <b>2.7</b>                  |
| East of England           | 2,168,000                      | 50.7                        | 127,000                           | 3.0                         | 73,000   | 2.8                         |
| London                    | 2,831,000                      | 51.4                        | 1,196,000                         | 21.7                        | 96,000   | 2.1                         |
| North East                | 1,062,000                      | 51.9                        | 25,000                            | 1.2                         | 49,000   | 3.1                         |
| North West                | 2,124,000                      | 50.7                        | 156,000                           | 3.7                         | 108,000  | 2.6                         |
| West Midlands             | 2,116,000                      | 50.9                        | 346,000                           | 8.3                         | 81,000   | 2.5                         |
| AZTEC                     | 245,000                        | 50.8                        | 66,000                            | 13.6                        | #  | #                           |
| Hertfordshire             | 396,000                        | 50.3                        | 36,000                            | 4.6                         | #  | #                           |
| LAWTEC                    | 375,000                        | 52.0                        | 16,000                            | 2.2                         | #  | #                           |
| London East               | 493,000                        | 51.2                        | 256,000                           | 26.5                        | #  | #                           |
| Manchester                | 430,000                        | 51.2                        | 58,000                            | 6.9                         | #  | #                           |
| Norfolk & Waveney         | 374,000                        | 51.6                        | #                                 | #                           | #  | #                           |
| NORMIDTEC                 | 175,000                        | 52.3                        | #                                 | #                           | #  | #                           |
| North West London         | 189,000                        | 52.4                        | 163,000                           | 45.2                        | #  | #                           |
| Northumberland            | 131,000                        | 52.1                        | #                                 | #                           | #  | #                           |
| Sandwell                  | 120,000                        | 52.8                        | 40,000                            | 17.7                        | #  | #                           |
| Staffordshire             | 411,000                        | 51.3                        | 12,000                            | 1.5                         | #  | #                           |
| Sunderland City           | 124,000                        | 52.9                        | #                                 | #                           | #  | #                           |
| Walsall                   | 106,000                        | 51.0                        | 17,000                            | 8.2                         | #  | #                           |

Estimated numbers of females and ethnic minorities based on the Labour Force Survey, September-November 1999. Estimated numbers of disabled people based on the Labour Force Survey, March-May 1998

#. Indicates estimate suppressed because it totals less than 10,000

Source: National Online Manpower Information System (NOMIS)



### Main Points to Note from Table 1

1. The proportion of females aged 16 plus is relatively consistent across the country. However, variable economic activity rates may affect the size of potential TEC programme client groups.
2. Substantial variation in the size and proportion of the ethnic minority population across the country. Local analyses indicate ethnic minority populations are sometimes highly clustered in a few locations within individual TECs.
3. The lack of disabled population estimates at TEC level.
4. The difficulties faced when trying to interpret this information, which is compounded when further disaggregation (eg. gender by ethnicity by age group) is attempted. Alternative sources, including information from careers services, are available but their coverage is often incomplete or the information they hold may be collected on a slightly different basis and thus require careful interpretation.

**Table 2: Modern Apprenticeships Starts, Retention and Performance by Equal Opportunities Group and Region, 1998-99**

| DISABLED        | ACTIVITY           |                | RETENTION                 |                |                       |                | PERFORMANCE                         |                                  |
|-----------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|                 | % Disabled starts  | % Change 97-98 | % Non-disabled completers | % Change 97-98 | % Disabled completers | % Change 97-98 | % Non-disabled gaining NVQ level 3+ | % Disabled gaining NVQ level 3+  |
| <b>England</b>  | <b>2</b>           | <b>-1</b>      | <b>54</b>                 | <b>9</b>       | <b>49</b>             | <b>8</b>       | <b>32</b>                           | <b>24</b>                        |
| East of England | 1                  | 0              | 55                        | 12             | N/A                   | N/A            | 32                                  | N/A                              |
| North East      | 2                  | -1             | 55                        | 6              | 59                    | 9              | 36                                  | N/A                              |
| North West      | 3                  | 0              | 54                        | 8              | 36                    | -3             | 35                                  | N/A                              |
| West Midlands   | 2                  | -1             | 53                        | 10             | N/A                   | N/A            | 29                                  | N/A                              |
| London          | 2                  | -1             | 53                        | 9              | N/A                   | N/A            | 29                                  | N/A                              |
| GENDER          | % Female starts    | % Change 97-98 | % Male completers         | % Change 97-98 | % Female completers   | % Change 97-98 | % Male gained NVQ level 3+          | % Female gained NVQ level 3+     |
| <b>England</b>  | <b>47</b>          | <b>0</b>       | <b>56</b>                 | <b>10</b>      | <b>53</b>             | <b>8</b>       | <b>35</b>                           | <b>29</b>                        |
| East of England | 44                 | 0              | 58                        | 7              | 53                    | 13             | 37                                  | 28                               |
| North East      | 50                 | 2              | 54                        | 3              | 57                    | 9              | 36                                  | 36                               |
| North West      | 46                 | 0              | 58                        | 9              | 50                    | 7              | 40                                  | 30                               |
| West Midlands   | 52                 | 4              | 51                        | 11             | 54                    | 9              | 29                                  | 30                               |
| London          | 49                 | 0              | 55                        | 15             | 52                    | 6              | 32                                  | 25                               |
| ETHNICITY       | % Non-white starts | % Change 97-98 | % Completed white         | % Change 97-98 | % Completed non-white | % Change 97-98 | % White gaining NVQ level 3+        | % Non-white gaining NVQ level 3+ |
| <b>England</b>  | <b>5</b>           | <b>0</b>       | <b>54</b>                 | <b>9</b>       | <b>42</b>             | <b>-3</b>      | <b>32</b>                           | <b>20</b>                        |
| East of England | 3                  | 0              | 56                        | 12             | N/A                   | N/A            | 32                                  | N/A                              |
| North East      | 1                  | 0              | 56                        | 7              | N/A                   | N/A            | 36                                  | N/A                              |
| North West      | 3                  | 1              | 54                        | 9              | N/A                   | N/A            | 35                                  | N/A                              |
| West Midlands   | 6                  | -1             | 53                        | 10             | N/A                   | N/A            | 30                                  | N/A                              |
| London          | 19                 | -1             | 55                        | 10             | 44                    | 2              | 29                                  | N/A                              |

Activity data derived from Programme Starts Certificates; Retention and Outcomes data derived from the trainee Follow-Up Survey (NB. There were slight differences in the number of trainees who answered gender, disability and ethnicity questions within the Follow-Up Survey) The data within the Retention column is based on the percentage of trainees completing their agreed 'contract' of training

N/A. Percentage unavailable because base would be fewer than 50 trainees

Source : Analytical Services : Employability and Adult Learning Division

### Main Points to Note from Table 2

1. The paucity of the available data regarding disabled trainees. The data that is available indicates substantial variability in retention rates and changes therein between 1997-98 and 1998-99.
2. Substantially increased female retention rates between 1997-98 and 1998-99.
3. An overall decline in ethnic minority retention rate between 1997-98 and 1998-99, although London 'bucked the trend' with a small increase.
4. Despite the paucity of data below national level, the statistics indicate that 'mainstream' trainees have higher retention rates and that more of them achieve NVQ level 3 or above than the main Equal Opportunities groups.

**Table 3: Other Training Starts, Retention and Performance  
by Equal Opportunities Groups and Region, 1998-99**

| DISABLED        | ACTIVITY           |                | RETENTION                 |                |                       |                | PERFORMANCE                         |                                  |
|-----------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|                 | % Disabled starts  | % Change 97-98 | % Non-disabled completers | % Change 97-98 | % Disabled completers | % Change 97-98 | % Non-disabled gaining NVQ level 2+ | % Disabled gaining NVQ level 2+  |
| <b>England</b>  | <b>7</b>           | <b>0</b>       | <b>54</b>                 | <b>0</b>       | <b>49</b>             | <b>2</b>       | <b>39</b>                           | <b>30</b>                        |
| East of England | 6                  | 1              | 63                        | 1              | 59                    | 10             | 46                                  | 34                               |
| North East      | 5                  | -1             | 47                        | 2              | 48                    | 6              | 37                                  | 31                               |
| North West      | 8                  | 2              | 53                        | -2             | 49                    | 2              | 36                                  | 24                               |
| West Midlands   | 6                  | 0              | 56                        | 1              | 52                    | 8              | 40                                  | 35                               |
| London          | 6                  | -3             | 55                        | 0              | 53                    | 7              | 36                                  | 28                               |
| GENDER          | % Female starts    | % Change 97-98 | % Male completers         | % Change 97-98 | % Female completers   | % Change 97-98 | % Male gained NVQ level 2+          | % Female gained NVQ level 2+     |
| <b>England</b>  | <b>46</b>          | <b>-3</b>      | <b>53</b>                 | <b>-1</b>      | <b>55</b>             | <b>1</b>       | <b>36</b>                           | <b>41</b>                        |
| East of England | 48                 | -1             | 64                        | 1              | 62                    | 2              | 43                                  | 47                               |
| North East      | 43                 | -3             | 49                        | 5              | 45                    | -1             | 36                                  | 38                               |
| North West      | 44                 | -3             | 50                        | -5             | 55                    | 1              | 32                                  | 38                               |
| West Midlands   | 45                 | -5             | 55                        | 0              | 56                    | 3              | 39                                  | 41                               |
| London          | 45                 | -4             | 55                        | 0              | 55                    | 1              | 33                                  | 37                               |
| ETHNICITY       | % Non-white starts | % Change 97-98 | % Completed white         | % Change 97-98 | % Completed non-white | % Change 97-98 | % White gaining NVQ level 2+        | % Non-white gaining NVQ level 2+ |
| <b>England</b>  | <b>9</b>           | <b>1</b>       | <b>54</b>                 | <b>0</b>       | <b>51</b>             | <b>1</b>       | <b>39</b>                           | <b>29</b>                        |
| East of England | 4                  | 0              | 63                        | 2              | 59                    | 1              | 46                                  | 39                               |
| North East      | 1                  | 0              | 47                        | 3              | 38                    | 0              | 37                                  | 36                               |
| North West      | 7                  | 1              | 53                        | -1             | 50                    | 0              | 36                                  | 28                               |
| West Midlands   | 14                 | 3              | 56                        | 2              | 52                    | 1              | 41                                  | 33                               |
| London          | 42                 | 8              | 56                        | 0              | 52                    | 1              | 39                                  | 29                               |

Activity data derived from Programme Starts Certificates; Retention and Outcomes data derived from the trainee Follow-Up Survey (NB. There were slight differences in the number of trainees who answered gender, disability and ethnicity questions within the Follow-Up Survey) The data within the Retention column is based on the percentage of trainees completing their agreed 'contract' of training

N/A. Percentage unavailable because base would be fewer than 50 trainees

Source: Analytical Services : Employability and Adult Learning Division

### Main Points to Note from Table 3

1. The participation rates of disabled and ethnic minority trainees are substantially above what might be expected given their overall population distribution.
2. Increased retention rates amongst disabled trainees between 1997-98 and 1998-99. These increases are in excess of that achieved for non-disabled trainees at both national level and for all of the five regions included in the study. Yet the performance levels achieved by disabled trainees was below those achieved by non-disabled trainees.
3. Female retention rates are, in general, better than for males, but the picture is 'patchy'. Female achievement rates are above those of their male counterparts; a reverse of the position within Modern Apprenticeships as evidenced by Table 2.
4. The ethnic minority performance rate is generally below that for white trainees, although parity was almost achieved in the North East.

**Table 4: National Traineeship Starts by Equal Opportunities Group and Region, 1998-99**

|                        | <b>% Disabled starts</b> | <b>% Female starts</b> | <b>% Non-white starts</b> |
|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>England</b>         | <b>4</b>                 | <b>56</b>              | <b>6</b>                  |
| <b>East of England</b> | 2                        | 57                     | 3                         |
| <b>North East</b>      | 3                        | 57                     | N/A                       |
| <b>North West</b>      | 5                        | 63                     | 4                         |
| <b>West Midlands</b>   | 3                        | 54                     | 7                         |
| <b>London</b>          | 2                        | 54                     | 24                        |

Data derived from Programme Starts Certificates

N/A - Percentage unavailable because base would be fewer than 50 trainees

Source : Analytical Services : Employability and Adult Learning Division

### Main Points to Note from Table 4

1. On the basis of these statistics, National Traineeships appear to be the most representative of all TEC programmes. However, female participation is slightly above overall population share, with substantially more women starting the programme in the North West than might have been expected.

**Table 5: Work Based Learning for Adults Starts, Retention and Performance by Equal Opportunities Group and Region, 1998-99**

| DISABLED        | Activity           |                | Retention                 |                |                        |                | Performance             |                       |                      |                    |                                   |                                |
|-----------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------------------|----------------|------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
|                 | Disabled starts    | % Change 97-98 | % Non-disabled completers | % Change 97-98 | Disabled completers    | % Change 97-98 | % Non-Disabled in a job | % Non-disabled unemp. | % Disabled in a job  | % Disabled unemp.  | % Non-disabled gained full qual.# | % Disabled gained full qual.#  |
| <b>England</b>  | <b>21</b>          | <b>2</b>       | <b>72</b>                 | <b>0</b>       | <b>67</b>              | <b>-2</b>      | <b>40</b>               | <b>49</b>             | <b>42</b>            | <b>43</b>          | <b>38</b>                         | <b>39</b>                      |
| East of England | 23                 | 4              | 73                        | 1              | 68                     | -2             | 44                      | 44                    | 41                   | 44                 | 49                                | 41                             |
| North East      | 21                 | 3              | 67                        | -1             | 67                     | 0              | 34                      | 56                    | 36                   | 46                 | 39                                | 43                             |
| North West      | 24                 | 5              | 73                        | -1             | 68                     | -4             | 39                      | 51                    | 44                   | 42                 | 38                                | 43                             |
| West Midlands   | 25                 | 3              | 71                        | 2              | 68                     | 1              | 36                      | 52                    | 43                   | 41                 | 37                                | 38                             |
| London          | 12                 | -2             | 77                        | 1              | 71                     | -2             | 42                      | 47                    | 42                   | 43                 | 36                                | 38                             |
| GENDER          | Female starts      | % change 97-98 | % Male completers         | % change 97-98 | % Female completers    | % change 97-98 | % Males in a job        | % Males unemp.        | % Females in a job   | % Females unemp.   | % Males gained full qual.#        | % Females gained full qual.#   |
| <b>England</b>  | <b>32</b>          | <b>0</b>       | <b>71</b>                 | <b>0</b>       | <b>71</b>              | <b>0</b>       | <b>36</b>               | <b>52</b>             | <b>48</b>            | <b>38</b>          | <b>38</b>                         | <b>39</b>                      |
| East of England | 38                 | 2              | 71                        | -1             | 74                     | 1              | 40                      | 49                    | 48                   | 36                 | 46                                | 48                             |
| North East      | 27                 | 0              | 69                        | 0              | 61                     | -3             | 31                      | 58                    | 45                   | 41                 | 40                                | 39                             |
| North West      | 27                 | -2             | 73                        | -1             | 69                     | -5             | 36                      | 53                    | 50                   | 37                 | 40                                | 38                             |
| West Midlands   | 30                 | -1             | 72                        | 3              | 67                     | -1             | 34                      | 54                    | 47                   | 38                 | 37                                | 36                             |
| London          | 39                 | 1              | 76                        | 0              | 77                     | 2              | 38                      | 51                    | 47                   | 41                 | 37                                | 35                             |
| ETHNICITY       | % Non-white starts | % Change 97-98 | % White completers        | % Change 97-98 | % Non-white completers | % Change 97-98 | % White in a job        | % White unemp.        | % Non-white in a job | % Non-white unemp. | % White gained full qual.#        | % Non-white gained full qual.# |
| <b>England</b>  | <b>18</b>          | <b>3</b>       | <b>70</b>                 | <b>-1</b>      | <b>74</b>              | <b>1</b>       | <b>41</b>               | <b>47</b>             | <b>37</b>            | <b>49</b>          | <b>39</b>                         | <b>31</b>                      |
| East of England | 8                  | 1              | 72                        | 0              | 69                     | -3             | 43                      | 44                    | 43                   | 48                 | 48                                | N/A                            |
| North East      | 2                  | 0              | 67                        | -1             | 66                     | -7             | 35                      | 53                    | 29                   | 55                 | 40                                | N/A                            |
| North West      | 10                 | 1              | 72                        | -2             | 69                     | -4             | 41                      | 48                    | 35                   | 52                 | 40                                | 29                             |
| West Midlands   | 17                 | -1             | 69                        | 0              | 77                     | 10             | 38                      | 49                    | 37                   | 48                 | 38                                | 32                             |
| London          | 50                 | 3              | 77                        | 0              | 76                     | 1              | 45                      | 44                    | 38                   | 49                 | 39                                | 31                             |

Activity data derived from Programme Starts Certificates; Retention and Outcomes data derived from the trainee Follow-Up Survey (NB. There were slight differences in the number of trainees who answered gender, disability and ethnicity questions within the Follow-Up Survey). The data within the Retention column is based on the percentage of trainees completing their agreed 'contract' of training.

#. Trainees who gained an NVQ Level 1+, a Literacy/Numeracy qualification or any other qualification.

N/A. Percentage unavailable because base would be fewer than 50 trainees.

Source : Analytical Services : Employability and Adult Learning Division

### Main Points to Note from Table 5

1. The proportion of disabled and ethnic minority starts are substantially above what might be expected given overall population distributions. Conversely, females starts are well below overall population share.
2. Disabled trainees appear to have out-performed non-disabled trainees in general.
3. Female trainees achieved substantially better employment results than their male counterparts.
4. The ethnic minority retention rate at national level was above that for white trainees, although there were substantial variations across the five regions included in the study. There was a notable increase in the retention rate in the West Midlands, contrasted by substantial declines in the East of England, North East and North West.
5. The retention rates of and positive outcomes achieved by the main Equal Opportunities groups from Work based Learning for Adults were generally above those of the youth programmes.

**Table 6: Performance of Ethnic Minority Groups within Work Based Learning for Adults 1998-99**

|                 | England                  |                        |                               | London                   |                        |                               |
|-----------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                 | %<br>Leavers<br>in a job | %<br>Leavers<br>unemp. | %<br>Leavers<br>gained qual.# | %<br>Leavers<br>in a job | %<br>Leavers<br>unemp. | %<br>Leavers<br>gained qual.# |
| White           | 41                       | 47                     | 39                            | 45                       | 44                     | 39                            |
| Black African   | 33                       | 50                     | 34                            | 34                       | 50                     | 34                            |
| Black Caribbean | 36                       | 51                     | 31                            | 40                       | 50                     | 31                            |
| Black other     | 37                       | 48                     | 29                            | 43                       | 50                     | 28                            |
| Indian          | 46                       | 44                     | 29                            | 46                       | 44                     | 31                            |
| Pakistani       | 35                       | 54                     | 22                            | N/A                      | 59                     | N/A                           |
| Bangladeshi     | 38                       | 51                     | 23                            | N/A                      | 56                     | N/A                           |
| Chinese         | 41                       | 46                     | 8                             | N/A                      | N/A                    | N/A                           |
| None of these   | 36                       | 50                     | 34                            | 36                       | 50                     | N/A                           |

Data derived from the trainee Follow-Up Survey

#. Trainees who gained an NVQ Level 1+, a Literacy/Numeracy qualification or any other qualification

N/A. Percentage unavailable because base would be fewer than 50 trainees

Source : Analytical Services : Employability and Adult Learning Division

### Main Points to Note from Table 6

1. Overall, more black trainees appear to obtain a qualification than other ethnic minority trainees, but their post participation employment rates are lower than other ethnic minorities.
2. Indian trainees appear to the best post participation employment rate of all groups, including white trainees.
3. The proportion of Chinese trainees achieving a qualification is particularly low.
4. Overall, there is considerable variation between the performance of the various ethnic minority sub-groups. However, thorough investigation is made more difficult by the relative paucity of ethnic minority sub-group data as evidenced by the lack of a complete set of statistics for even the largest of regions, namely London.



**Table 7: Training Standards Council Provider Inspections - Equal Opportunities Grade Profiles**

| TEC                     | Grade 1        | Grade 2        | Grade 3        | Grade 4        | Grade 5        | Number of Inspections | Total Providers in TEC |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| AZTEC                   | 0              | 1              | 2              | 0              | 0              | 3                     | 19                     |
| Hertfordshire           | 0              | 2              | 4              | 2              | 0              | 8                     | 18                     |
| LAWTEC                  | 0              | 4              | 6              | 2              | 0              | 12                    | 24                     |
| London East             | 1              | 5              | 5              | 0              | 0              | 11                    | 30                     |
| Manchester              | 2              | 3              | 14             | 2              | 0              | 21                    | 43                     |
| Norfolk and Waveney     | 0              | 0              | 3              | 2              | 0              | 5                     | 13                     |
| North and Mid Cheshire  | 0              | 3              | 3              | 1              | 0              | 7                     | 14                     |
| North West London       | 0              | 2              | 4              | 0              | 0              | 6                     | 14                     |
| Northumberland          | 0              | 1              | 6              | 1              | 0              | 8                     | 15                     |
| Sandwell                | 0              | 1              | 2              | 0              | 0              | 3                     | 10                     |
| Staffordshire           | 0              | 3              | 12             | 2              | 0              | 17                    | 33                     |
| Sunderland City         | 0              | 3              | 3              | 3              | 0              | 9                     | 18                     |
| Walsall                 | 0              | 2              | 2              | 0              | 0              | 4                     | 8                      |
| <b>TEC Sample Total</b> | <b>3</b>       | <b>30</b>      | <b>66</b>      | <b>15</b>      | <b>0</b>       | <b>114</b>            | <b>259</b>             |
| <b>England Total</b>    | <b>27</b>      | <b>179</b>     | <b>348</b>     | <b>83</b>      | <b>3</b>       | <b>640</b>            | <b>1,511</b>           |
|                         | <b>Grade 1</b> | <b>Grade 2</b> | <b>Grade 3</b> | <b>Grade 4</b> | <b>Grade 5</b> |                       |                        |
| AZTEC                   |                | 0%             | 33%            | 67%            | 0%             | 0%                    |                        |
| Hertfordshire           |                | 0%             | 25%            | 50%            | 25%            | 0%                    |                        |
| LAWTEC                  |                | 0%             | 33%            | 50%            | 17%            | 0%                    |                        |
| London East             |                | 9%             | 45%            | 45%            | 0%             | 0%                    |                        |
| Manchester              |                | 10%            | 14%            | 67%            | 10%            | 0%                    |                        |
| Norfolk and Waveney     |                | 0%             | 0%             | 60%            | 40%            | 0%                    |                        |
| North and Mid Cheshire  |                | 0%             | 43%            | 43%            | 14%            | 0%                    |                        |
| North West London       |                | 0%             | 33%            | 67%            | 0%             | 0%                    |                        |
| Northumberland          |                | 0%             | 13%            | 75%            | 13%            | 0%                    |                        |
| Sandwell                |                | 0%             | 33%            | 67%            | 0%             | 0%                    |                        |
| Staffordshire           |                | 0%             | 18%            | 71%            | 12%            | 0%                    |                        |
| Sunderland City         |                | 0%             | 33%            | 33%            | 33%            | 0%                    |                        |
| Walsall                 |                | 0%             | 50%            | 50%            | 0%             | 0%                    |                        |
| <b>TEC Sample Total</b> |                | <b>2.6%</b>    | <b>26.3%</b>   | <b>57.9%</b>   | <b>13.2%</b>   | <b>0%</b>             |                        |
| <b>England Total</b>    |                | <b>4.2%</b>    | <b>28.0%</b>   | <b>54.4%</b>   | <b>13.0%</b>   | <b>0.5%</b>           |                        |

The information shown above is derived from those Inspection Reports published up to 10 March 2000.

Providers are counted against their co-ordinating TEC. Thus, for example, LAWTEC's data includes the results of the Inspection of the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) which also contracts with most of the other TECs.

Grade 1 : Outstanding provision, which has many strengths and few weaknesses

Grade 2 : Good provision, in which the strengths clearly outweigh the weaknesses

Grade 3 : Satisfactory provision, with a mixture of strengths and weaknesses

Grade 4 : Less than satisfactory provision, in which the weaknesses clearly outweigh the strengths

Grade 5 : Poor provision, which has few strengths and many weaknesses

Source : Training Standards Council

### Main Points to Note from Table 7

1. The information presented in the Table is based on a relatively small number of inspections and thus requires careful interpretation, particularly in terms of any comparisons between TEC areas.
2. Nevertheless, overall the results at both national level and for the 13 TECs included in the study indicate that around 87 per cent of all the providers inspected had achieved a satisfactory grading or better.

## ILLUSTRATIVE TEC EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES ACTION PLAN - QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

|          | IMPLEMENTATION ACTION  | COMMENTS   |
|----------|--|--|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Facilitating and sharing best practice amongst employers:</b>   |  |
| 1a       | Employer Equality Network Group. Sharing and communicating best practice through network meetings, seminars and conferences. Target of 5 meetings to attract 30 new companies to join group in 1999/2000.  | 20 new companies have attended the Employer Equality Network at some time during the year. Average attendance 30 companies. An evaluation of the network services has indicated that it continues to meet the members needs.   |
| 1b       | Provide a focus on Employment Relations Act at annual 'Equal Opportunities' event organised by the TEC. Target Number of delegates 140.  | 136 delegates attended the event. Follow up event organised in January 2000, when a further 27 delegates attended. Evaluation of events provided positive feedback.  |
| 1c       | Survey IIP companies to ascertain in numbers those companies that have an EO Policy and offer support to those who do not have one. Obtain commitment from companies with EO Policy to share them as best practice through TEC Best Practice Library. Additionally survey Employer Equality Network companies regarding their EO Policies/EO standard. | <p>A copy of the draft (no 14) Investors in People revised Standard has now been received, which includes a specific indicator covering Equal Opportunities. Currently it reads:-</p> <p>'Everyone in the organisation has an equal opportunity to learn and develop'</p> <p>Investors in People UK have piloted the new Standard through the network. The TEC participated in this pilot activity along with one other in the region. One of the Assessors on the team tested the new Standard alongside the current version. Although the company was aware of the nature of this activity they will only receive a report in the current format. The Assessors findings have been fed into Investors in People UK. The new Standard will be launched on the 13 April 2000 with a complete new branding. The TEC have not seen a copy of this yet.</p> |

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|    |  | <p>In anticipation of this enhancement to the National Standard the Business Development Advisors will undertake a one-day Equal Opportunities training session in February. This event has already proved very beneficial to the Contract Unit. This will allow a common level of understanding to be achieved across the Business Development Unit.</p> <p>The training will be brought into use following the research on Equal Opportunities Policies, conducted amongst companies throughout the TEC's area. For an overview of this survey refer to separate report.</p> |
| 1d | Survey companies accessing Management Development Programmes to ascertain those who have EO policies and support those who do not. | Information is being collected at Management Development events and this will be collated and a report produced in March 2000.   |
| 1e | Include EO issues in a seminar as part of the series of BEM seminars.  | Seminar for Women Directors arranged for February 2000.  |
| 1f | Agree further consultation activity and communication of progress towards the EO Strategy.   | <p>Discussed at EO Steering Group meeting on 23 November: agreed to develop the Focus group work and provide a summary document outlining achievements and to request feedback in the form of a questionnaire.</p> <p>The TEC Marketing Department has agreed to provide the following means to communicate the TEC's EO Strategy.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The TEC's Website</li> <li>2. Activate membership</li> <li>3. The TEC's Equal Opportunities Magazine</li> </ol>   |
| 1g | Equal Opportunities Magazine. Two issues 1999/2000 – to be produced and evaluated.   | Magazine evaluated by external organisation. Following consultation with TEC Marketing team it has been agreed that the magazine should continue with a separate target audience to TEC Direct with which it was previously mailed. Target audience to include IIP companies for whom EO is a new requirement. Overall, magazine is well received.   |
| 1h | Provision of EO/Diversity stand. TEC EO page on corporate website.   | Diversity stand produced and has been extensively used at events.  |

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| 1i       | Promote EO standard amongst suppliers and companies working with the TEC.  | This is being achieved via many routes with the Equal Opportunities co-ordinator facilitating activity through for example the Contract Unit and Business Development Unit. EO co-ordinator to provide further information at the meeting.  |
| <b>2</b> | <b><i>Developing the skills of the diverse population:</i></b>   |   |
| 2a       | Continue to develop the female mentoring group within the science/technology sector. Mentors to go into schools and colleges. Group size of 20 to be maintained with a mix of private/public companies, industrial sectors and geographic areas.                                     | This activity is co-ordinated by the TEC-wide Partnership. The project is part funded via ESF, which finishes this year. The TEC are proposing to develop a local version of this initiative as a Business Plan activity for 2000/01. Currently the project is achieving the planned targets.   |
| 2b       | Details of local population in education by gender, ethnicity and disability data to be collected and analysed. Targets to be set subsequently within the following areas of activity:<br><br>i) Learning Partnership (1999-2002)<br>ii) Key Stage 4 Project<br>iii) Education Zone. | i) Learning Partnership currently evolving.<br><br>ii) Key Stage 4 project – monitoring methodology has been discussed with the project lead (LEA) and measurement will be built into the internal evaluation and then built into the project for 2000/01.<br><br>iii) Education Zone – The feasibility of measuring has been discussed with the Zone Director. Activity has not yet started and therefore an evaluation strategy has yet to be decided. The Zone Director has given assurances that as activity comes on stream appropriate measures will be included. |
| 2c       | TEC-wide Partnership EO Strategy to be agreed and regularly monitored.   | Meeting to be arranged with Partnership to review their EO Policy and Strategy once the new staffing structure is in place.   |
| 2d       | Analysis of data to enhance key information relating to the local population, identifying issues across key industrial and occupational sectors.   | Work in progress by the TEC's research team. Initial reports produced and are currently being analysed by EO co-ordinator. Comparisons to be made against the TEC training provision for Youths and Adults.   |
| 2e       | Collect and analyse data on individuals within companies accessing Management Development Programmes (ethnicity, gender, and disability).  | Client characteristic data is now collected at each event. A report will be produced when sufficient data is held to ensure a meaningful outcome, this should be available by the end of March 2000.  |

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| 2f       | Facilitate focus groups amongst disadvantaged clients to communicate strategy and identify needs.  | Initial Focus Groups held and facilitated by EO consultant. Report produced and discussed at the EO Steering Group on the 23 November 1999. A new proposal received to carry out second round of focus groups to be discussed at EOSG agenda item 5.  |
| <b>3</b> | <b><i>Improving the practical skills and awareness of TEC staff regarding Equal Opportunities:</i></b>   |   |
| 3a       | Promotion of TEC EO Policy and Strategy to all new recruits as part of their induction process.  | All new TEC staff receive an input from the EO Co-ordinator as part of their induction package.   |
| 3b       | EO Awareness training to new staff and existing staff.   | Two days of EO training held on 9 <sup>th</sup> and 17 <sup>th</sup> December 1999 with 22 members of staff receiving training. This followed 2 days training in June 1999 covering 9 staff.  |
| 3c       | Disability Awareness training for TEC staff.   | Disability Awareness training is now provided as part of general EO training day.   |
| 3d       | Provide EO training to TEC Contract Managers involved in Youth/Adult training provision.   | EO training provided to TEC Contract Managers September 1999.   |
| 3e       | Provide cribsheet to Business Development Unit members on business case of EO/Diversity and to provide details of EO standards/products currently available. | EO Business Case leaflet has been produced in draft form by Marketing Department and is currently being viewed by the Business Development Unit for whom it has been prepared.  |
| 3f       | Provide Equal Opportunities Quality Framework (EOQF) assessor training to TEC staff. Carry out second self-assessment within the TEC using EOQF model.       | EOQF Assessor training completed in September 1999 with 14 new TEC staff now trained to support and work with the existing 8 assessors to produce self assessments and associated action plan activity. As reported at the last EO Steering Group, the EOQF model is now being fully integrated into the TEC Business Excellence Model (BEM) activity and EOQF Assessors have been assigned to work within BEM criterion groups and ensure a combined Action Plan for BEM and EOQF. |
| 3g       | Training in recruitment techniques i.e. sifting and interview process for TEC Managers.  | This is currently being considered by the TEC Training Manager.   |

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| 3h       | Abridged induction to be introduced for TEC staff returning from long term sickness or maternity leave   | This is being considered by the TEC EO Co-ordinator and Training Manager.   |
| 3i       | Employment Relations Act – implications of the Act to be considered as individual sections come into effect.   | Employment Relations Act - The TEC is currently writing, where appropriate, updated policies to take into account the requirements that came into effect on 15 December 1999. These will be completed shortly and incorporated into a revision of the existing staff handbook.<br><br>The revised handbook will subsequently be made available on the TEC's intranet. Replacement inserts for the paper copy handbook held by employees will also be distributed. This is due for completion by the end of February 2000. |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Improving Supplier Performance:</b>   |   |
| 4a       | <p>i) Business Start-up Programme.</p> <p>Ethnic minority business starts (10) 4.35%.</p> <p>Ethnic Minority clients receiving business training (30) 7.5%.</p> <p>ii) Monitor and evaluate needs/barriers of women starting business.</p> <p>iii) Monitor and evaluate needs/barriers faced by disabled people starting up in business.</p> | <p>Ethnic Minority Starts Target 10 (4.35%) Actual 7 (4.5%) Ethnic Minority Training Target 30 (7.5%) Actual 19 (6.08%) There is some concern regarding the achievement of the year-end target due to displacement issues relating to SRB activity.</p> <p>Women into Business<br/>Total number of women 80 (47.6% of total starts). No issues to report.</p> <p>Evaluation report available at May 2000 meeting.</p>   |
| 4b       | Carry out Equal Opportunities Quality Framework (EOQF) Pilot amongst the Training Suppliers Network (approx 12 suppliers).   | Training of Supplier staff undertaken in December 1999. Ongoing help provided to suppliers via external consultancy. Awaiting progress report from consultancy on usage of help-line and follow-up activity.  |
| 4c       | Disability Awareness Training for suppliers e.g. awareness of ASSIST and implications of the changes to the Disability Discrimination Act.   | Sensory impairment training provided by ASSIST for training suppliers in July 1999. DDA workshops in 3 venues provided for employers in January 2000. Approximately 85 employers attended. DDA awareness session also provided for training suppliers.  |



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| 4d | <p>Appointment of an Ethnic Minority Development Officer to consult and provide awareness raising to increase the knowledge and empower the ethnic minority communities. To assist, train and advise TEC approved suppliers to effectively recruit, train and achieve parity of access and outcome for ethnic minority clients.</p>   | <p>The TEC have funded a full time post with a provider for 1999/00 financial year and intend to continue to fund this post for 2000/01. The post holder's remit is to support the TEC network of approved suppliers in attracting ethnic minority clients to the Work Based Training initiatives. Over the last 9 months information and advice has been provided to training suppliers in respect of positive action training, cultural awareness training and assistance with marketing materials. The Officer also acts as a sign-posting service directing people from ethnic minorities into Work Based Training.</p> <p>A first progress report was made available to the EO Steering Group in November 1999. Currently awaiting the latest progress report and an evaluation report will be produced in March 2000. There has been positive feedback from suppliers regarding the Officer's involvement to date.</p>   |
| 4e | <p>EO Co-ordinator to work with training suppliers who have received poor grades for EO in TSC Inspection.</p>  | <p>This is ongoing work in support of the relevant Contract Managers.</p>  |
| 4f | <p>Youth and Adult Training Supplier Minimum Performance Levels (MPLs);</p> <p>Youth: NVQs in MA by People from Ethnic Minorities (PEMs) = 8 (period 6=2)</p> <p>Adult: Jobs by PEMs = 32 (period 6=8) (Both of these MPLs are based on 80% of the target)</p> <p>In addition there are a raft of additional targets set covering gender, disability and ethnicity for starts and outcomes on Youth and Adult provision as agreed and set out on the planning tables with the GO.</p> | <p>Supplementary reports show management information for Youth and Adult provision at period 9 ending 26 December 1999.</p> <p><b>Youth Issues:</b></p> <p>One of the Minimum Performance Levels (MPL) for Work Based Training for Young People is to achieve 8 NVQs by Ethnic Minorities within MA. To date 12 have been achieved which is 150% of the year-end target.</p> <p>The programme which highlights the greatest area of concern is VT (Vocational Training) where the ethnic minority NVQs per 100 leavers and the NVQs achieved by people with disabilities are both below the overall average. Consideration is currently being given to these as targets for the new contract year.</p> <p>In addition we fund 3 organisations, through Block 1, to deliver specific work with disadvantaged young people. These are:</p> <p><b>Organisation 1</b> who work with disabled young people. They have had 20 trainees to date and have achieved 13 outcomes – referrals to post 16 options (e.g. FE/WBT/Work Experience).</p> |

**Organisation 2** who have had 31 trainees to date, 14 of whom have been referred to a mixture of college, Princes Trust, WBT and work experience.

**Organisation 3** who have had 97 starts to date, 16 have entered training, 18 into FE, 15 have gained a job, and a further 2 have achieved a qualification e.g. first aid certificate.

**Adult Issues:**

Minimum Performance Level (MPL) – ‘Jobs to be achieved by People from Ethnic Minorities (PEM)’ – Target: P6 = 8 Achieved 13; Target P12 = 32. Currently achieved 19 at period 9 (59%).

We are currently achieving 35.19 jobs per 100 PEM leavers compared to 41.86 for the programme in total. There is also a job gap for PWD clients with 34.54 jobs per 100 leavers compared to 41.86 overall. The starts targets are being achieved however.

Our main concern relates to the lower achievement of jobs. This is mainly attributable to the specialist provision delivered i.e. ESOL courses and PWD provision such as SCOPE and EDIT. These provide excellent provision but the outcomes are geared to the clients needs of qualifications and progression into further education or training. This is reflected in part in the achievement of NVQs per 100 leavers.

The Employment Service are currently checking client records to establish PEM and PWD client needs. It is interesting to note that 14 of the 19 (74%) of the PEM jobs have been secured via Jobtrain.

Support for PWD clients on both Youth and Adult provision shows individuals supported total 9 young people and 21 adults, support can include; communicators, tutors, residential training, IT hardware and software, furniture and taxi fares.

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|    |   | <p>TEC have contracts with specialist providers who give advice and guidance to ethnic communities these include the local Race Equality Council, Community Careerline (SRB) and Ourpatch Support (SRB). Each of these organisations run a Jobs Fair once a year to encourage people from ethnic communities to apply for job vacancies. Where possible these are linked to Work Based Training.</p> <p>The TEC has been a major contributor to developing the New Deal Ethnic Minority Strategy and has a representative on the New Deal Ethnic Minority Sub Group. One of the objectives in the strategy is train Employment Service staff on Cultural Awareness in particular the Business Managers. The TEC is currently analysing data to produce performance indicators for PEM and PWD clients on New Deal 18-24.</p> |
| 4g | To aid the achievement of the above targets suppliers will be set aspirational targets based on historical trends and local demographics. | Aspirational targets have been piloted with several suppliers on the Adult provision. The TEC intends to introduce this approach for all suppliers as appropriate for contracts awarded from April 2000.   |
| 4h | Sharing of good practice between training suppliers via Performance Improvement Network (PIN) meetings.                                   | Two combined Youth and Adult PIN meetings for training suppliers have been organised by the TEC. At the first event the EO Co-ordinator delivered an EO awareness session. In addition a presentation by a Training Standards Council Inspector highlighted EO issues. At the second event the Chief Executive of the Equality Foundation presented the EO Quality Framework model and a further presentation by a Training Standards Council Inspector again highlighted EO issues. EO performance and items of good practice are debated at the bi-monthly PIN meetings.   |

## GOOD PRACTICE POINTERS

- A4.1 The following provides a selection of the ‘good practice’ pointers identified during the study. Readers are reminded that the definition of ‘good practice’ is subjective and no attempt has been made to verify the legality of and/or impact made by any of the examples cited. Although the following examples indicate within which TEC area the particular practice was identified, it was clear from the study that several other TECs may also be involved with or operate similar activities and/or procedures.
- A4.2 An additional ‘Implementing Equal Opportunities Strategies Good Practice Guide’ is being prepared within the Quality and Performance Improvement Dissemination series as a companion to this study report. It will draw on the evidence collected during the study and the TSC’s Equal Opportunities thematic and will provide much greater detail about the mechanics, outcomes and impact generated by specific activities than can be provided within this report.

### Key

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>NORT</b> - Northumberland TEC           | <b>SUN</b> - Sunderland City TEC         |
| <b>LAW</b> - Lancashire Area West TEC      | <b>MAN</b> - Manchester TEC              |
| <b>NORMID</b> - North and Mid Cheshire TEC | <b>SAN</b> - Sandwell TEC                |
| <b>STAFFS</b> - Staffordshire TEC          | <b>WAL</b> - Walsall TEC                 |
| <b>HERTS</b> - Hertfordshire TEC           | <b>N&amp;W</b> - Norfolk and Waveney TEC |
| <b>AZTEC</b> - (South West London)         | <b>LE</b> - London East TEC              |
| <b>NWL</b> - North West London TEC         |  |

### Context and Operations

- A4.3 Conventional training/education is not attractive to many young people and requires more community based activity to draw them in. (**NORT**)
- A4.4 Contract Executives should be responsible for agreeing and measuring what providers are doing; Training Advisors’ role should be to look at how providers deliver their contract and provide the necessary challenges and support to ensure Equal Opportunities are adequately addressed. (**NORT**)
- A4.5 Publication of the National Standard, and the requirement for the TEC’s Equal Opportunities Strategy to be approved as part of the re-contracting process, pushed Equal Opportunities issues from among the TEC’s top ten priorities to one of the top five. As a result Equal Opportunities feature as a major item on the Board’s agenda once a year and the Equal Opportunities manager has easy access to the Board through the member with the specific Equal Opportunities brief. (**HERTS**)
- A4.6 There is a strong commitment from the Board itself to maximising the potential of the area’s ethnic diversity; it is one of the five major strands in the TEC’s Corporate Plan and is a standing item on all Board agenda. (**NWL**)
- A4.7 An ethnic-minority member of staff has taken on the Equal Opportunities Co-ordination role in addition to other duties. The post-holder acknowledges that this gives them more credibility with colleagues than might be the case if they were to work full-time on Equal Opportunities issues. (**NWL**)

- A4.8 An important objective for the TEC is the achievement of greater flexibility in provision by developing, with voluntary groups, complementarity between TEC and provision funded by others as part of a “pathways” approach. For employers, the challenge is “to move beyond awareness raising to implementation and to establish the value of the business case for Equal Opportunities in the local area.” **(LE)**
- A4.9 DfEE and its contract with the TEC, the Equal Opportunities Strategies National Standard and the activity of Government Office are powerful forces and the direction of the TEC’s Equal Opportunities strategy has been stimulated and closely determined by their requirements. The National Strategy made the TEC look at its performance in more detail and at a wider range of issues. It also prompted the TEC to consult more widely. **(MAN)**
- A4.10 The commitment to Equal Opportunities is encapsulated within one of the TEC ‘Strategic Objective: Opportunities for All’. Each of the TEC’s Strategic Objectives has an Executive Director responsible and leading while delivery is the responsibility of all. Social Inclusion is therefore integral to all the TEC’s activities, but the specific responsibility of one Director. The TEC sees this arrangement as a real strength. **(MAN)**
- A4.11 The TEC’s action plan also identifies a series of activities which will not only act in support of its improvement aims but attempt to address some wider issues of disadvantage within the three main priority groups. These include activities to:
- strengthen internal TEC awareness of Equal Opportunities issues both among TEC staff and wider across the Enterprise Partnership;
  - strengthen Equal Opportunities commitment in suppliers, among partners and in other business relationships through advice, support partnership agreements and contracts;
  - review funding arrangements and programme design;
  - extend Equal Opportunities thinking into other parts of the Enterprise Partnership. **(N&W)**
- A4.12 TEC senior managers are currently helping to develop a Walsall wide equality strategy through the Learning Partnership that is served by a range of focused sub-groups. Currently partners are mapping the range of organisations, strategies and resources active on this agenda, to try and develop a coherent strategy within which each organisation can deliver the over-arching agenda as well as its own agenda. Partner agencies include the Council for Voluntary Service (CVS), the Strategic Race Equality Partnership (SREP), Walsall College of Arts and Technology (WALCAT) and Walsall MBC. Walsall MBC has also agreed that its head of policy, research and urban regeneration should work closely with the TEC. **(WAL)**

### Communication of Equal Opportunities Strategies and/or Issues

- A4.13 The TEC undertook an extensive consultation/communication exercise during the drafting of its strategy. The document lists nearly 60 voluntary organisations that were contacted in addition to local authorities, colleges, and universities, employment and careers services and many local employers. It also contains a wide selection of quotes from the responses received. The organisations visited during the survey remembered this exercise and most felt that they had been adequately involved. **(LE)**

- A4.14 Following the adoption of the strategy, the TEC had published a leaflet, *Equality Matters*, which summarised the policy document. Consideration is being given to extending the TEC's *Directory of Services*, probably the most widely available of its publications, to include references to all its Equal Opportunities related initiatives. **(LE)**
- A4.15 There are several ways in which the TEC seeks to air Equal Opportunities problems and share good practice with its partners. The Ethnic Minority Focus Group (which reports to the Senior Management Team) is chaired by the Board Champion and attended by supplier representatives as well as those internal staff most involved with ethnic minority issues. Another new body is the Supplier Management Board on which those providers who have performed particularly well in helping the disadvantaged are brought together so that their expertise may be built upon. **(LE)**
- A4.16 The TEC held a consultation workshop which was attended by about 30 community based organisations. The workshop made proposals about improving Equal Opportunities arrangements, for example, about better 'in-programme support', and they are now being taken forward by the TEC. The event received favourable comment from voluntary organisations. Also on the agenda for later in the year is a conference which will be associated with the Annual General Meeting of Progress Trust, one of the TEC's strategic partners. More generally the TEC is linked into a number of community based trusts and initiatives at grass roots level, for example through directorships, and TEC staff are integral to regeneration partnerships. **(MAN)**
- A4.17 One of the valuable contributions which an Equal Opportunities co-ordinator can make is to signpost organisations who have faced and solved similar problems. This involves research, reading, attending specialist conferences and workshops, not all of which is profitable in the short term. **(MAN)**
- A4.18 The TEC has consulted widely in formulation of its strategy and continues to monitor reactions from representatives of the community at large. In 1997 it set up an *EO Consultative Group* comprising six ethnic minority forums, the race relations advisory service, commission for racial equality, Prospect Careers Service (careers), the PACT team from employment service, TEC Board directors and the EO Manager. The TEC is, however, considering whether to disband this group as the agenda is moving towards the Sandwell Civic Partnership's Community Action Plan where many of the organisations within the Equal Opportunities Consultative Group are present. **(SAN)**
- A4.19 Sandwell TEC has developed a comprehensive communication strategy and *community marketing plan* to ensure that its Equal Opportunities strategy, plans and priorities have been communicated to the wider community. The plan documents strategic aims, includes:
- *Communicate with suppliers to increase their capacity to address Equal Opportunities issues in the workplace. Encourage and support self-assessment and good practice workshops, including good practice in marketing and promotion to all community groups* - the TEC has worked closely with suppliers and provided a range of support whilst suppliers and TEC contract team members have worked together to develop Equal Opportunities approaches and to identify further issues.

- *Develop a plan to market TEC programmes and services to communities* - the community-marketing plan is an internal TEC plan, which targets parents and guardians, young people, key organisation and individuals. These groups also include people with disability, ethnic minorities and women. The plan focuses on addressing equality issues through promotion of services, products and effective personnel practices. Initiatives include TEC information and guidance at Sikh and Bangladeshi youth forums and four exchange visits between voluntary and community organisations which established new networking and working relationships between suppliers, employers and previously untapped groups.
- *Produce promotional literature in community languages, disability media and plain English* - the TEC has produced a range of literature in community languages to increase awareness and understanding of opportunities. The careers service and the college have similar initiatives.
- *Explore the use of specialised media for presenting information and generating discussion* - Impact Training, a theatrical training company have delivered performances about choosing vocational learning as an option to Afro-Caribbean and Asian young people. Although it is too soon to measure any impact the performances were well received. (**all SAN**)

A4.20 Great effort has gone into the training of both TEC staff (especially contract managers) and providers thereby raising their awareness of Equal Opportunities issues and enabling them to consider and develop appropriate solutions to specific circumstances. Similarly, the adoption of the Equal Opportunities Quality Framework (EOQF) model and the successful training of more than 20 TEC staff as EOQF assessors has enabled the TEC to assure itself that its approach is soundly based and effectively monitored and supported. The active involvement of a disabled member of staff in the development and delivery of 'disability awareness' events is also particularly noteworthy. (**STAFFS**)

A4.21 The TEC has sought to communicate the principles and business benefits of an effective Equal Opportunities approach to employers and other partners through its Investors related activities. (**STAFFS**)

A4.22 The TEC has successfully developed and introduced a quarterly magazine 'Equality' providing news, views and examples of Equal Opportunities related activities, developments and success stories. Similarly, the annual 'Opportunities for All' conference typically attracts over 100 delegates from across a broad range of organisations - the focus of the 1999 event concentrated on the new Employment Relations Act. (**STAFFS**)

### Implementation

A4.23 The Regional Quality Strategy/Standards (RQS) which provides a self-assessment model for providers against the national standards (eg. the TEC EO National Standard, TSC's 'Raising the Standard', etc). The five Equal Opportunities elements of the RQS cover Policy and Legislation, Promotion and Management, Selection and Assessment, Protection against Discrimination and Complaints Procedures. The RQS is now a pre-requisite to TEC audits and all providers must have completed their self-assessment by December 1999. The formalised system, with its cross boundary implementation, aids consistency and also helps maintain a high profile for Equal Opportunities. (**NORT and SUN**)



- A4.24 Opportunities for Women in Northumberland (OWN) - initially started by Northumberland College and designed to help raise the aspirations of women in more rural areas. The project has since attracted EU funding and includes partnerships with Ireland and France. **(NORT)**
- A4.25 Establishment of an Equal Opportunities Group, to meet bi-monthly, and including representatives from ethnic minority, disability and voluntary groups, age concern, drug awareness groups and various authorities such as the police, probation and health. The group's remit is to ensure available data reflects the 'true' position, to sponsor further research or the establishment of baseline data, and to consider how any shortfalls in provision could be addressed. **(NORT)**
- A4.26 The Team Wearside project which links with two special schools catering for young persons with behavioural problems. In the final year at school it aims to provide a seamless transition to Youth Training for 50-60 people per year, thus retaining people in the education/training system who would otherwise be lost. Initial expectations were that basic skills would be the most likely achievement, but the programme has exceeded those expectations with many participants obtaining jobs and NVQ1. The TEC runs the initiative within mainstream Youth programmes with additional funding. The effective partnership approach is demonstrated through the involvement of careers, Education and Industry; Vaux breweries had been funding staff wages until they closed in 1999, with the TEC subsequently picking up the costs directly. **(SUN)**
- A4.27 The TEC has taken many specific initiatives in the furtherance of its Equal Opportunities strategy, including:
- *Diversity Toolkit.* This is a pack designed to encourage and assist employers in the TEC area to undertake an audit of their operations and assess whether they are doing enough to exploit the potential of the ethnic diversity in Brent and Harrow. It pre-dated publication of the National Standard. The view of GO is that the *Toolkit* is a valuable piece of work, and one which could usefully be adapted for use in other areas, which has not had the impact it deserves - possibly due in part to the £150 price.
  - *Strive Programme.* This a programme - imported, with adaptations, from the USA - which attempts to tackle some of the problems of disaffected, Afro-Caribbean young men, and is being piloted in parts of Brent where this is a serious issue. It is an example of the TEC's willingness to take innovative initiatives in response to the specific problems of its area.
  - *Changing Futures.* A programme of support for ethnic minority businesses in the area, offering information and training events, consultancy services, and networking support.
  - *Changing Practices.* A SRB-funded project which will attempt to bridge the training-employment gap in the area by changing the attitudes and practices of individuals and organisations. There are four major strands to the project: the development of "intermediate labour markets", providing individuals with training and work experience while providing goods and services of value to the community; an employer-led network providing information about vacancies in the Park Royal area; working with small employers to improve, at the same time, the efficiency of their business and the skills and job satisfaction of their employees; and an employer-led construction craft employment and training scheme in the Wembley area.

- *Language training for ethnic-minority professionals.* A programme to assist qualified professionals - particularly refugees - for whom the main barrier to access to appropriate employment is their inability to use English at the same level as their professional competence. The only college in London offering such training was at the other side of the city, and the TEC has worked with that college and one in Brent to make appropriate provision available locally. **(all NWL)**

A4.28 Examples of initiatives taken to eradicate differential recruitment and success on mainstream programmes include:

- encouraging ethnic minority apprentices to go into schools to talk to year 10 and 11 students about the Modern Apprenticeship programmes;
- fostering partnerships between mainstream training providers of youth training programmes and black voluntary organisations.

There was praise from ethnic minority groups for the TEC's willingness to appreciate the need for training and other provision to be provided in ways regarded as acceptable by specific minority groups. **(NWL)**

A4.29 A new post of Equal Access Development Manager (EADM) was filled by the recruitment, from outside of the TEC, of an officer experienced in dealing with the socially excluded and is very committed to the Equal Opportunities cause. In addition, each division of the TEC has representatives who attend the cross-company Equal Opportunities Group meetings. These are chaired by a senior manager who in turn represents Equal Opportunities interests on the Senior Management Team.

The EADM has driven forward the implementation of the Equal Access Strategy in the TEC. They arrange training for providers and staff, assist programme teams during initial discussions on proposed new initiatives with an Equal Opportunities theme, scrutinise all contracts to ensure that they comply with the TEC's Equal Opportunities criteria and visit individual suppliers to advise and assist on Equal Opportunities matters. To suppliers the EDAM is "the Equal Opportunities face of the TEC". Most outside bodies visited and several internal staff commented upon the impact the EDAM has made. There is clearly value in appointing an Equal Opportunities manager with relevant experience and enthusiasm rather than thrusting the responsibility onto an existing staff member who may well have no particular interest in Equal Opportunities matters. However, it is considered essential that all staff retain equalities related functions and targets within their overall job profile. **(LE)**

A4.30 Good progress has been made in capacity building and in improving complementarity between DfEE and other funded programmes. Much of the TEC's work is now funded by ESF and SRB grants through partnerships with a range of organisations, several of whom represent specific disadvantaged groups. Investors in People has provided a useful vehicle to gain initial entry into some of these organisations. It has also provided the opportunity to persuade employers to introduce or strengthen their Equal Opportunities policies and begin to break down the discriminatory attitudes still evident in many. IIP Business Case for Equalities training is therefore being arranged. **(LE)**

- A4.31 The provision of enhanced childcare facilities is another area of particular TEC interest. Through its small business support programme it has assisted in the establishment of a network of nurseries and childcare clubs. There has been a three-fold benefit in Equal Opportunities terms. Firstly, many of these nurseries are in areas with high ethnic minority populations and many have been set up by ethnic minority representatives. Secondly, as they have become established many are now offering mainstream training places leading to NVQs in the care sector, which often prove attractive to ethnic minority trainees. Thirdly, by offering childcare vouchers to qualifying mainstream trainees, the TEC is successfully encouraging more single parents onto its adult programmes. **(LE)**
- A4.32 Working in partnership with education/business links plays an important role in delivering the TEC's strategy. A recent example has been the sponsoring of the production of curriculum-related teaching materials to enable teachers to tackle racism in the classroom. This is now being piloted at two schools and is likely to become the subject of a stage 2 ESF bid. **(LE)**
- A4.33 Employment Centres located in the communities they serve. The services offered have an accent on advice, guidance and preparation for work or mainstream training and include pre-vocational training, preparatory training and ESOL. Projects are locally managed and staffed by individuals from the community. One offers advice in five different languages and another in three. Effort is devoted to marketing reducing barriers, making people feel comfortable, making services attractive and appealing, and making advice accessible and available. Premises aim to be well located and appealing, not linked to Benefits Agency, Jobcentres or local authority benefits. Staff are credible locally and understand the local community and local issues, approaching less engaged areas through outreach activity. **(MAN)**
- A4.34 The Manchester Employment Project offers a variety of services to disabled people in order to enhance their employment skills, overcome barriers to employment and thereby assist them into paid employment or training opportunities. Taking a flexible, client centred approach, the Project provides, depending on client need: job search skills training, generic employment skills, psychometric testing and confidence building and team work through the use of drama techniques. Work placements are also offered with local employers for clients who have identified that a period of realistic work experience would be beneficial to them in ultimately securing employment. **(MAN)**
- A4.35 There has been a big investment in supplier development, £340,000 this year, to produce better performance and capacity. The implementation of the Equal Opportunities strategy has progressed alongside and taken advantage of these developments. The TEC provides support to providers with self-assessment through a development team of 6 full time equivalents. It also contracts with a TSC associate inspector as a consultant to providers. A series of provider workshops and training in Equal Opportunities was conducted earlier this year and funded by the TEC. Equal opportunities intent and priorities have been built into tendering processes, written into contracts with providers, into statements of arrangements with other partners and into evaluation arrangements. The TEC is also trialing a supplier Strategic Forum. **(N&W)**
- A4.36 Rural deprivation is illustrated by the way the provider network has been purged and pared down over the years. The location of and gaps in provision is a serious issue. The TEC has established some new providers but more are needed. The TEC is therefore taking a range of other measures including :
- subsidising transport costs above a certain threshold;

- providing scooters, on loan, to new trainees aged 18 and above;
- developing outreach facilities designed to get the trainers to the trainees;
- working with a local authority group to encourage car-sharing and infrastructure developments. **(N&W)**

A4.37 Mentoring and Coaching for Young People - a new programme to match mentors with young people identified by schools as in need of additional support, including young ethnic minority people. Recruitment of mentors and mentees began in April 1999 and the project is due to run until September 2004. **(SAN)**

A4.38 Adult Guidance Network - accessible to disadvantaged groups by developing advice and information points with key voluntary organisations; two new community information points introduced with Smethwick Pakistani Muslim Association and the Bangladeshi Youth Forum. Has proven particularly successful at reaching ethnic minority adults. **(SAN)**

A4.39 The Careers Service provided various examples of action taken to improve access and choice by minority Asian and afro-Caribbean groups across the Black Country, including:

- a careers information evening held in Wolverhampton for Asian parents and their children;
- Business in The Community and Sandwell TEC Education Business Partnership ran a conference for Year 10 students, supported by careers advisors;
- a year 8 event is planned with the TEC and school representatives to meet their pupils' needs, funded by the TEC.

Student achievement in GNVQ and BTEC units and awards is celebrated at an awards ceremony where trophies and books of achievement are presented before an invited audience, including parents and positive role models. **(all SAN)**

A4.40 Training field officers have undertaken a training workshop to identify issues and information needs, and a second workshop is planned to address how to deal with prejudice and stereotypical responses from employers and others. **(SAN)**

A4.41 Feedback is obtained from trainees about satisfaction with the training received - this is used to identify weaknesses and to develop improvements. **(WAL)**

A4.42 Women into Engineering and Science (WISE) - an initiative designed to encourage more girls to take science and engineering options. Operates via a number of joint projects and female mentors. **(WAL)**

A4.43 The Tooting Retail initiative has sought to encourage support from larger organisations (in the form of business mentors) for the concentration of small, Asian run, retail outlets in the area; the main focus has been on raising the levels of business practice and the implementation of associated staff training and development activity. **(AZTEC)**

### Monitoring, Evaluation and Review of Equal Opportunities Strategies and/or Action Plans

A4.44 Action plan is reviewed formally every quarter with a written report considered by the TEC Board under a specific Equal Opportunities agenda item. Equal Opportunities is a general theme underpinning most Board meetings, mainly in the context of how specific programmes and/or initiatives are or need to take account of relevant issues.

The Equal Opportunities Co-ordinator has a clear, direct line to the senior management team including the Managing Director. The Contracting Executive team measures numerical performance monthly and identified shortfalls in specific areas are passed to the Training Advisers for follow-up at provider level. **(all NORT)**

A4.45 Management information, generated for each four-week period, includes data on several Equal Opportunities parameters within each of the TEC's core programmes. Quarterly reports are produced by the Equal Opportunities Manager for the senior management team, the Board and various advisory groups. Additionally, the Equal Opportunities Manager picks, at random, an area for special study approximately four times a year. As a result, several normative surveys have been undertaken, and reports published, over the last year including:

- *Participation of Minority Ethnic Young People;*
- *Participation of People with Disabilities;*
- *Minority Business in Hertfordshire;*
- *Women in Business. (HERTS)*

A4.46 The TEC has an internal "Equal Opportunities Values Group"- chaired by the Chief Executive, comprising the most senior managers in the TEC and the Business Link, and attended by the Board "champion" - which meets periodically to review the strategic implications of both external developments and the TEC's own performance. The Equal Opportunities Co-ordinator considers this the most powerful internal symbol of top management's support for their efforts, alongside their access to the Board through the "champion".

Equal Opportunities related performance figures are produced for each four-week period, are pulled together quarterly, and discussed with all other outputs from the management information system at a quarterly "results meeting" attended by all senior managers in the TEC. During this meeting, reasons for variations from targets/milestones are discussed together with proposals for remedial action.

A written report is presented to every (quarterly) Board meeting, and the Board's Equal Opportunities "champion" is briefed beforehand to enable them to make informed comment on the report and to press for changes in priorities and/or additional resources, where appropriate. An annual progress report is produced for publication. Quarterly reports, comparing performance with action plan targets, are also required by GO-London. **(NWL)**

- A4.47 The difficulty of finding providers to deliver mainstream programmes who understand, and have credibility with, ethnic minority groups was cited by the TEC and by representatives of such groups as a real problem. This view was supported by GO-London. The TEC has therefore taken several initiatives to build capacity within ethnic communities as a means of overcoming the problem; but the contracting rules make it difficult to take on organisations with no track record, and many community organisations find the audit burden - which is seen to be increasing - too onerous. **(NWL)**
- A4.48 DfEE measures of success are often not appropriate to these activities where more subjective judgements - for example, gains in self-confidence, interpersonal skills, etc - are needed. The TEC is trying to improve value-added judgements on such programmes by, for example, employing consultants to carry out an evaluation. **(LE)**
- A4.49 The TEC executive directors review business performance monthly and Equal Opportunities is included on the agenda quarterly. Senior managers review progress with all Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) monthly in their business reviews which are followed by team meetings. Likewise contract managers review performance with providers monthly and work with them on targets, inspection and self assessment. Equal Opportunities KPIs receive additional and specific attention in business reviews quarterly. One consequence of the recent Equal Opportunities strategy is that KPIs for disadvantaged groups on the main programmes have been integrated with other mainstream KPIs. All senior managers welcomed this extension to the monitoring process as making a significant contribution to the way in which the TEC is managed.
- When shortfalls in performance against KPIs are identified, usually during business reviews, the first step is to find out why before deciding what can be done. This further analysis may lead to benchmarking with other TECs , but always leads to action. **(MAN)**
- A4.50 There were gaps in the available information sought during the development of the strategy and the TEC is actively seeking to improve the situation for the future. Baseline data is being assembled to enable sensible age related KPIs to be set from April 2000. The TEC's quarterly business survey now includes soft questions about company awareness of Equal Opportunity issues and their actions and the TEC trainees questionnaire now covers issues of equality of opportunity. **(MAN)**
- A4.51 Suppliers are provided with standard Equal Opportunities measures and individual targets. The TEC contract team and Equal Opportunities advisor risk band suppliers in respect of their delivery of Equal Opportunities requirements. In addition, the TEC contracts with an independent consultant to monitor supplier arrangements, including their Equal Opportunities performance. **(WAL)**
- A4.52 Equal Opportunities is covered within the contract bidding briefing packs issued to existing and prospective suppliers. Proposals subsequently received are vetted, in part, for their Equal Opportunities content and descriptions of related policies. For up and running contracts, quarterly monitoring visits will invariably cover performance against targets - including issues relating to the TEC's Equal Opportunities targets. Such visits also include interviews with a sample of trainees and, again, Equal Opportunities is raised in those discussions. **(AZTEC)**
- A4.53 AZTEC has a long standing Special Needs and Equal Opportunities Task Force which has autonomy from but reports to the Board twice a year. **(AZTEC)**



### Guidance and Support

A4.54 GO-London has taken a pro-active role in encouraging and assisting TECs to improve their Equal Opportunities performance, and the GO's Equal Opportunities Co-ordinator reports that playing this role has been helped by London TECs' ready acceptance of the importance of the issues in the London area. It has also been helpful that the Co-ordinator, themselves coming from an ethnic minority, has held the post for a number of years and has been active on Equal Opportunities issues at national level. **(NWL)**

A4.55 An Equal Opportunities TEC Network operates at business manager level and its main roles are to help develop cross TEC contacts and to share good practice. The TEC usually attends the meetings which have been helpful and have resulted in some benchmarking activity with other Eastern region TECs. **(N&W)**

A4.56 The careers service has trained contract managers at three Black Country TECs, including Sandwell, to enable them to be more confident and effective in providing Equal Opportunities support. The workshops were valued by staff who could subsequently understand the impact of inequality on vulnerable groups and the need for action, as a rationale for their work. They also became aware of equality legislation, potential sources of advice, information and support and understood key issues that might arise during their work in support of training suppliers.

In addition, the careers service worked with TEC contract managers and careers advisors to develop a self-assessment booklet for training suppliers that also suggested tools and techniques to address perceived Equal Opportunities issues. This enabled development of an individual action plan for suppliers that supported them in meeting the TSC standard. Suppliers subsequently formed a self-help group, which continues to share issues and effective practice. **(SAN)**

A4.57 The TEC has built up a library of Equal Opportunities related good practice which it looks to promote and to provide ease of access for providers and other partners. The TEC actively seeks to enhance its stock of good practice by identifying and engaging in benchmarking activities with other TECs and/or agencies. **(STAFFS)**

A4.58 Manchester TEC's Training Consultants play a key role in promoting good equal opportunities practices to businesses and training providers. The starting point is a commitment to equal opportunities from the TEC's own business perspective. An Equal Opportunities Working Group within the Business Services directorate represents the Care, Public Services, Manufacturing/ Engineering, Knowledge and Service sector areas. The main objective for this group is to challenge all staff and customers of Business Services to implement, maintain and improve equality of opportunity for all. The group performs a co-ordinating role which includes awareness raising, the dissemination of best practice and has implemented an equal opportunities training module for staff. **(MAN)**



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### A5.4 The study and subsequent report was overseen by a Steering Group including representatives of DfEE operational and policy interests, the TEC National Council, the Training Standards Council, the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Commission for Racial Equality and the Advisory Committee for Disabled People in Employment and Training.

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