

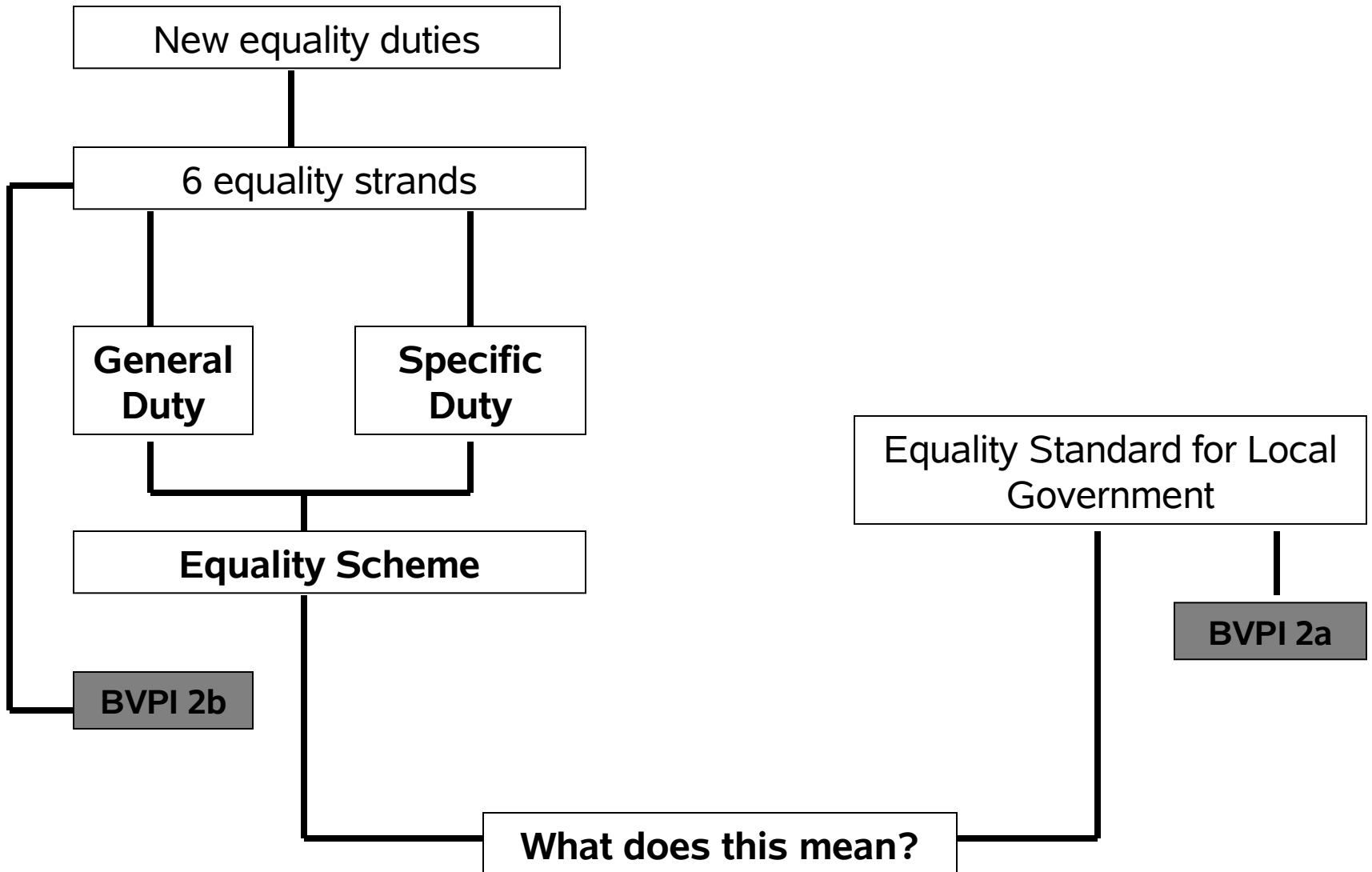
South East Fire & Rescue Services

Regional Management Board

Equalities Review Update

10th October 2007

A note by way of revision!



The project will...

- deliver an agreed individual equality improvement plan for each of the nine Fire and Rescue Services in the partnership.
- provide a detailed diagnostic report for consolidating progress as against the Equality Standard for Local Government.
- set out the steps each Fire and Rescue Service needs to take to achieve level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government.
- start in June 2007 and be completed by March 2008.

What's involved?

- Individual scoping for each F&RS
- Desk top review of corporate & equality documents
- On site interviews with senior officers, middle managers, front line staff, members, stakeholders / community group, staff groups / representatives.
- Diagnostic report as against requirements of the Equality Standard
- On site reporting back – Senior Officers (Members?)
- On site action planning – Achieving Level 3

Progress to date:



- **PHASE 1** - Scoping meetings completed for all 9 F&RS
- **PHASE 2** - Desk top review & on site assessments completed for Hampshire & Kent – September
- Reports / on site reporting scheduled – Nov / Dec
- **PHASE 3** - 5 desk top reviews scheduled for October
- 5 on site assessments scheduled for November
- 5 Reports / on site reporting scheduled – Dec 2007/ Jan 2008
- **PHASE 4** - 2 desk top reviews scheduled for Dec 2007 / Jan 2008
- 2 on site assessments scheduled for Jan 2008
- 2 Reports / on site reporting scheduled – Feb / Mar 2008

Preliminary observations

- Engagement / co-operation with project very positive.
- All F&RSs able to demonstrate some level of commitment & understanding of the E & D agenda, albeit level variable.
- All F&RS have Officer (or Officers) with designated responsibility for progressing E & D work – Grade of Officer varies.
- Responsibility for E & D - Focus appears to be with HR despite E&D duties extending to service delivery and customer care.

Cont...

- Some F&RSs deem E&D as a corporate priority, some regard E&D as a value or ‘cross cutting theme’.
- F&RSs located within a County structure – appears to be disparity in relationship between the F&RS & the County on E&D matters.
- External assessment at level 3 will include both the County & the F&RS where they are part of the same county structure.

Cont...

- There appear to be variable levels of understanding about this project and its objectives – Officers at all levels need to be better briefed and given a basic understanding about the Equality Standard; CPA Key lines of enquiry, etc. as well as the issues which will be considered during the on-site assessment visit.
- Self assessment as against progress in E&D work – not all F&RSs are able to provide a clear current statement of what progress, if any, they have made in respect of progressing their statutory duty in respect of the 6 equality strands.

Points you may wish to consider

- Is E&D given the right profile in your organisation?
- Is responsibility located with those who have the authority and ability to make the progress?
- Is your E&D work managed through your PM system – do you know where your organisations strengths / weaknesses are?
- How will you share best practice – regionally / nationally?
- Is there opportunity to develop capacity, e.g. Impact Assessments, Performance Management