Die Stadt Birmingham (England) kann auf eine lange Tradition in der Gleichstellungspolitik verweisen. Im folgenden Beitrag werden die vier Arbeitsgruppen des Amtes Equalities Division vorgestellt, die sich mit den Themenfeldern Ethnizität (Race), Geschlecht (Gender), Behinderung sowie Information und Forschung beschäftigen.

**Equalities Division in Birmingham**

Joyce Springer

Birmingham City Council’s Equalities Division was set up in January 1997 and in its establishment it combined what were formally known as a Women’s Unit, Disability Unit and Race Relations Unit. This was a major change in the City Council’s history of Equal Opportunities work, but the change signified Birmingham’s continuing commitment to equalities in terms of providing quality services to local people and developing a work force, which is capable of responding to the needs of socially excluded and marginalised groups in the city. In addition this new focus on Social Exclusion recognises that all sections of the community can be disadvantaged and experience Social Exclusion requiring the need for a much broader and partnership based approach to tackling social problems. So the Equalities Division is built around four main teams, Race, Gender, Disability, and Information & Research.

**Disability Equality Team**

The Disability Equality Team is responsible for developing strategies and co-ordinating activities, which will empower disabled people and improve access to local services. It will also ensure the City Council implements the Disability Discrimination Act effectively and equitably.

**Gender Equality Team**

The role of the Gender Equality Team is to enable local women to access services and opportunities within the City Council. It will enable the City Council to respond positively to new legislation designed to promote cohesive families as a way of strengthening local communities.

**Race Equality Team**

The role of the Race Equality Team is to enable Black and Minority Ethnic communities to have better access to services and opportunities within the City Council by working strategically with the City Council departments on Race Equality issues. The Race Equality Team also works strategically with external agencies and partners. The Equalities Division has a corporate City Council brief, which means it is a central Division servicing all 13 City Council departments (upwards of £40,000 employees) as well as being responsible to issues, concerns and legislation, which impact on Birmingham as a city and which in turn may effect service delivery issues. For example the City Council is the largest provider of Housing Services for Birmingham and indeed for any Local Authority outside of London. It is also the largest provider of social welfare services, controls transportation, planning and architecture and is the largest employer in the city – this gives some idea of the huge challenges for a small centralised Equalities Division, with only 30 members of staff. Since it began operating, obviously the Equalities Division has acted as both a leader and a responder to key areas of research and leg-

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Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung
März 2004

Joyce Springer: Equalities Division in Birmingham.
Erschienen in: DIE Zeitschrift 1/2000
Online im Internet:
URL: http://www.diezeitschrift.de/12000/springer00_01.pdf
Dokument aus dem Internetservice Texte online des Deutschen Instituts für Erwachsenenbildung
http://www.die-bonn.de/publikationen/online-texte/index.asp
Abstract

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