



Equality and Diversity Strategy
2014-2018

'Respecting our Communities'

Foreword

Over the years we have seen our societies become more complex and diverse. The population figures have grown and we are becoming more ethnically diverse with new patterns of migration affecting our communities.

Stafford Borough has some significant challenges in that the population is ageing, life expectancy has increased for both males and females and this is projected to continue to rise over the next few years. As a Borough we are also becoming more ethnically diverse with 7% of the population classified as black/minority/ethnic and this is the second highest in Staffordshire. Working with our partners we aim to reduce the levels of inequality within our borough in order to improve outcomes for most vulnerable residents this policy is a refresh of our single equality scheme that was published in response to the requirements of the equality act 2010 and is a continuum of the work we have achieved so far.

Mike Heenan

Leader of Stafford Borough Council

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Our Commitment

Stafford Borough Council is committed to promoting diversity and equality of opportunity to everyone it comes into contact with. Inclusivity is at the heart to all our core values and is explicitly expressed in our Six-year Corporate Plan which drives forward the delivery of our four main priorities.

- Prosperity
- Clean, Green, Safe
- Health and Wellbeing
- Leading and Delivering for our Communities

We realise that this vision can only be achieved if we ensure that we promote equality for all groups of people and eliminate discrimination and harassment both in our role as an employer and as a provider of services.

Why do we need an Equality Scheme?

The Equality Act 2010 brings together all previous anti-discrimination laws into a single act to make the law easier for people to understand and comply with and to remove inconsistencies. The new duty applies to 'relevant protected characteristics' which are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex (gender)
- sexual orientation

(Appendix 1 provides a definition of each of these protected characteristics)

The general equality duty is set out in the Equality Act 2010 and local authorities are required to exercise their functions in respect of this and have regard for:

- eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

These are sometimes referred to as the three aims or arms of the general equality duty.

There are two specific duties for local authorities and they require us to:

- publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty on an annual basis
- publish Equality Objectives at least every 4 years which are specific and measurable

About Stafford Borough

Stafford Borough is located in the heart of Staffordshire it is the County Town and is the County's largest district geographically stretching across 59,187 hectares. Predominantly rural; its economic scale score of 84.71 ranks it as medium size by British Standards. Stafford's share of public sector workers lies above the British and West Midland's average. Based on the 2011 census, the population of Stafford Borough was around 130,800. Since 2001 the population has increased by 8.4% (around 10,100 people), compared to national and county increases of 7.1% and 5.2% respectively. Population projections show that population is expected to continue to rise in Stafford with a projection of 138,400 by 2021.

Age

Stafford Borough's population is ageing. Between 2001 and 2011 the number of residents above the age of 60 years old in the borough has increased by 27% (7,200 additional people) and the number of residents above the age of 85 has increased by 35% (an increase of over 850). It is projected that this trend will continue in the future with the 65 and over population rising by nearly 8,000 during 2011-2021 from 25,500 to 33,000 respectively.

However, in the Borough the number of children has also increased, with a 16% increase in the under 4 age group seen over the past 10 years.

Race

Stafford Borough is becoming more ethnically diverse and has one of the highest proportions of black and minority ethnic communities of the whole county. In 2011, around 9,700 people were from black and minority ethnic groups, 7.4% of the total population, compared to 6.4% county wide and 17.2% nationally. Between 2001 and 2011, there was an increase in the number of people from black and minority ethnic groups of around 4,360. The White Other community has seen the greatest increase in population during this time period after White British. This is a reflection of the increase in economic migrants from Eastern Europe.

Disability

According to the 2011 census, 18.2% of the population classified themselves as having a "limiting long-term illness". This equates to nearly 23,834 people in Stafford Borough of which 10,481 have day to day activities limited a lot and 13,353 have day to day activities limited a little. If we analyse this data by age groups over 20% of the 50-64 olds are living with a limiting long term illness and this rises in older ages groups, 35% in 65-74 age group, 59% in 75-84 year olds and 84% in over 85's.

Gender

There is a near equal gender split between women and men in Stafford Borough – 49.7% and 50.3% respectively. This equates to 65,042 females and 65,827 males in the latest figures released.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Data from the 2011 Census shows that 52.1% of residents aged 16+ are either married or in a registered same-sex civil partnership.

Gender reassignment

There is no local data about the number of transgendered people in Stafford Borough.

Pregnancy and Maternity

The rate of teenage conceptions has been improving in recent years, In Stafford Borough the rate is 32.4 per 1,000 15-17 year old females, lower than the county and national rate. Across Stafford Borough there are hotspots of particularly high rates in parts of Penkside and Highfields and Western Downs when compared to the national average.

Religion or belief

According to the 2011 census 69.6% of the Stafford Borough population are Christians, followed by 0.7% Muslim, with 0.6% each of Buddhist and Hindu. 21.6% of Borough residents stated they had no religion and 6.4% declined to answer the census question.

Sexual orientation

Whilst no specific data is available, a wide range of research suggests that lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people constitute 5-7% of the total adult population, which in Stafford Borough equates to between 6,540 and 9,160 people in the Borough. However, this size estimate is based on the finding of a number of different and disparate sources. Few datasets hold information on sexuality and with this question not being included in the 2011 census; it is likely to remain a difficult strand to analyse.

The Equality Duty 2010

The Duty does not set out a particular way for assessing the impact of policies on equality. However, the Duty does require local authorities to have due regard to the aims of the equality duty when making decision and setting policies. It is necessary for decision makers to understand the potential impact that their decisions could have on people with different characteristics. Therefore we will continue to carry out Community Impact Assessments as a tool to determine the impact policies and decisions will have on different groups of people.

What are Community Impact Assessments?

A Community Impact Assessment is a way of deciding whether an existing or proposed policy, procedure, practice or service does (or may) affect people differently, and if so, whether it affects them in an adverse way.

Assessments will be carried out on all new policies and services, as they are developed and as part of a review programme for existing policies and services. All issues will be considered alongside the protected characteristics: age (including children and young people), disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

A summary of the results of the Community Impact Assessments and action plans can be found on our website: <http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/equalities-and-diversity1> .

Procurement

The Equality Act 2010 commits the Council to ensuring that contractors and suppliers also abide by the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

We will ensure that:

- This policy is communicated to all potential contractors and service providers.
- Contractors and service providers have equality and diversity policies, procedures and practices in place.
- Those acting on our behalf will develop and deliver goods, facilities and services that are appropriate and accessible.
- We will provide opportunities for all to bid for contracts
- We will check whether contracts and service arrangements meet equality and diversity commitments.

Our commitment as an Employer

The Council aims to promote equality of opportunity for all existing and potential employees, by avoiding working and recruitment practices or arrangements that are discriminatory and engendering a working environment that develops good practice, acts to eliminate prejudice and values diversity.

Employment issues covered include appointments, training, promotion, terms and conditions of service and termination of employment.

- All decisions relating to recruitment, training, promotion or termination will be made on a purely objective basis, relating to skills, experience and ability, and recorded on the forms provided. Guidance Notes on recruitment and selection procedures will be published on the intranet.
- Qualifications or conditions applied must be justifiable in terms of the demands of the job.
- Tests must be non-discriminatory and relate purely to the demands of the job.
- Applicants with a disability are guaranteed an interview if they meet the essential job related criteria; (the Council have the two ticks accreditation)
- Special needs will be met at interview, subject to prior notification. Recruitment details will be available on-line in large print or colour contrast and compatible with Browse Aloud;
- Necessary and reasonable adjustments will be made under Section 6 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 for new employees, and for existing employees who develop disabilities.
- Managers and staff involved in recruitment will receive mandatory training and guidance including awareness of equal opportunity issues including the need to encourage people from disadvantaged groups to seek employment with the Authority.
- All staff are made aware of their duty to ensure that the policy is adhered to. This will be highlighted at induction and reinforced by training, in particular Diversity training, and guidance as appropriate.
- Robust policies have been developed, re-defined and publicised as required, e.g. Bullying and Harassment Policy, Grievance and Disciplinary procedures, to ensure that everyone is treated without bias.
- The Council has in place an objective job evaluation process.

Monitoring Workforce Diversity

Stafford Borough Council seeks to foster an environment in which a person has an equal entitlement to high quality services, employment and opportunities for personal development, regardless of ethnic or racial origin, religion or belief, disability, age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or family circumstance.

What we have achieved so far

The council has achieved the following:

- Under the new equality duty the terminology has changed to equality analysis, this is intended to focus on council's policies and practices and how they further the aims of the general equality duty. The requirement to publish the results of that analysis and the information and engagement that support it remains the same.
- The council has updated its Community Impact Assessment (CIA) form to assist officers in understand what a CIA is and the process to go through when undertaking one. Council officers will receive updates on the Equality Act 2010 and the changes to the Public Sector Equality Duty including changes to the EIA forms. Equality training is on-going and new approaches are being investigated. The current and future CIA's will continue to be published on the council's website.
- Under taken accessibility audits of council assets to ensure DDA compliance
- Removed care funds in respect of recruitment and retention in line with equality act 2010

Developing Equality Objectives

The Council has refreshed the Single Equality Scheme and action plan taking into account the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The overall objectives of the action plan are to promote equality, tackle harassment and discrimination and foster good relations whilst being transparent and accountable.

The information below has assisted the council in identifying a set of objectives:

- Workforce Analysis 2012-13
- Departmental Service Plans
- CRM Satisfaction Data 2012-13
- Freedom of Information requests
- Stafford Borough Police Panel Profile
- EHRC Assessment Findings

Monitoring and Reviewing the Scheme

The Scheme will be reviewed every four years and the action plan will be updated and reviewed on an annual basis.

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Action Plan: Priority One: Knowing our Communities

Ref	Action	Responsible Officer	Output	Completion Date	Outcome
1.1	Update the profile of place annually and distribute information to relevant personnel	Staffordshire County Council/ Policy and Improvement Officer/Apprentice	Profile regularly updated	May 2014	We have greater understanding of the needs of our communities to plan services and inform decisions
1.2	Develop and integrate equality objectives into all strategic plans	Policy, Improvement and Partnership Manager	Equality objectives integrated into plans	December 2014	Equality objectives are built into all high level strategic plans to ensure inclusivity and demonstrate equality in service provision
1.3	Ensure that data available is used consistently across all services	Policy and Improvement Officer/Apprentice	Services are aware of and use data available to improve customer satisfaction	March 2015	Services can be tailored to meet customer needs
1.4	Ensure intelligence available is used by those developing plan/strategies to inform documents produced.	Leadership Team and Service Managers	Improved customer satisfaction	March 2015	Services can be tailored to meet customer needs

Action Plan: Priority Two: Place Shaping

Ref	Action	Responsible Officer	Output	Completion Date	Outcome
2.1	Review and update the Equalities Scheme and associated objectives as a result of new legislation	Policy and Improvement Officer/Policy, Improvement and Partnership Manager	A refreshed Equality Scheme and Action Plan	June 2014	There is a greater understanding of equality and diversity issues and a commitment to improve outcomes in these areas
2.2	To identify good practice and areas for improvement within the organisation	Policy and Improvement Officer/Policy, Improvement and Partnership Manager	A more consistent approach to Equalities across the organisation	On going	Improvements in equalities knowledge across the organisation
2.3	Assess the impact of equality activities and policies across the organisation	Improvements in equalities knowledge across the organisation	Promptly completed CIA's for all new and refreshed policies. Improved rating on Equality Framework	June 2016	Improvements in equalities knowledge across the organisation

Action Plan: Priority Three: A Modern and Diverse Workforce

Ref	Project/Initiative/Action	Responsible Officer	Output	Completion Date	Outcome
3.1	Continue to imbed Community Impact Assessments (CIA) throughout the organisation	Leadership Team and Service Managers	CIA's undertaken for all new or revised policies and published on the intranet. Actions arising from CIA's incorporated into services plans for completion	On-going	All services will have a process in place to ensure that they are accessible and efficient for all communities
3.2	Increase diversity of workforce	Leadership Team	Increase in number of applications from under- represented groups	March 2018	A workforce that better reflects the community of Stafford Borough
3.3	Update the workforce monitoring form to reflect the changes in protected characteristics under the 2010 Act	Head of Human Resources	Workforce monitoring form details all the categories in the Equality Duty 2010	April 2015	The council has more knowledge of the workforce profile and where applicable can recruit from under represented groups
3.4	Review and refresh Access audit of all public buildings	Head of Human Resources	% buildings that are DDA compliant	March 2018	Community satisfaction with access to public buildings
3.5	Ensure that workforce information includes analysis or narrative and identifies gaps in information and plans to address the gaps	Head of Human Resources/Leadership Team	Compliance with EHRC Assessment	April 2015	Information is easier to understand and identifies plans to address gaps.
3.6	Update the knowledge and understanding of managers and employees around current legislation, the Equality Act 2010, and the new public sector duties	Policy, Improvement and Partnership Manager/Policy and Improvement Officer/Human Resources	Managers and officers complete relevant training on Equality legislation	Dec 2014	Managers and officers have greater knowledge and understanding of legislation and are able to incorporate this into the management of service

Action Plan: Priority Four: Accessible and Responsive Services

Ref	Project/Initiative/Action	Responsible Officer	Output	Completion Date	Outcome
4.1	Keep the Council's website up to date	Policy and Improvement Officer/Apprentice	Increase in number of hits on website	Updated by August 2014	Staff have increased knowledge of legislation and needs of customers
4.2	Review, refresh and develop new CIA's	Leadership Team and Service Managers	CIA's will be: published on the intranet/internet reviewed and refreshed actions included in service plans	On-going	All services will have a process in place to ensure that they are accessible and efficient for all communities
4.3	Refresh and develop the People's Panel to reflect the representation of the community	Head of Policy & Improvement	Increase the percentage of under-represented age groups	March 2018	People's Panel truly reflects the community
4.4	To provide customers with suitable channels to contact the Council	Customer Services Manager	Increase access channels e.g. Texting facility, dedicated e mail addresses	April 2015	To make services more accessible to customers based on their needs
4.5	Where possible to provide an interpretation and translation service to customers	Policy and Improvement Officer	Translation services available	On going	To ensure that all customers have fair access to services and right of complaint

APPENDIX 1: DEFINITIONS OF PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

Age

Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or a range of ages (e.g. 18-30 year olds)

Disability

A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Gender reassignment

The process of transitioning from one sex to another.

Marriage and civil partnership

Marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman'. Same sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters.

Pregnancy and maternity

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protect against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Race

Refers to the protected characteristic of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Religion and belief

Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

Sex (gender)

A man or a woman

Sexual Orientation

Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or both sexes

APPENDIX 2: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination consists of treating a person less favourably than others on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships and pregnancy and maternity.

Discrimination by Perception

A person treated less favourably or harassed/victimised based on a perception that the affected has one of the protected characteristics and is targeted because of this.

Discrimination by Association

Associative discrimination is behaviour motivated against an individual because of their associations with someone who has a protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination is a condition or requirement that applies to all, but in practice:

- has a detrimental effect upon a group of individuals
- means that a smaller proportion of people of a particular protected group can comply than the proportion of other persons;
- and cannot be justified

Discrimination Arising from Disability

Someone is treated unfavourably because of something connected to their disability and there is no good reason for doing this. It is also disability discrimination if someone does not make adjustments to allow disabled people to access a service or carry out a job. For example, providing an information leaflet in Braille. This is called the duty to make reasonable adjustments.

Harassment

Harassment takes many forms. It is the unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile or humiliating environment for the recipient.

The definition of harassment according to the act is described as follows:-

- violating a person's dignity
- creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person

Equality Act 2010

This brings together the majority of existing equality legislation into one place so that it is easier to use.

Equality Information

The information that you hold or will collect about people with protected characteristics, and the impact of your decisions and policies on them.

Equality Objectives

A requirement to prepare, set and publish objectives is one of the specific duties set out under the equality duty.

Protected Characteristics

The public sector equality duty covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. It also covers marriage and civil partnerships, but not for all aspects of the duty.