



Equality Scheme

November 2011

Purpose of this Equality Scheme

This scheme sets out the steps the Council will be taking over the coming years to proactively promote equality through its roles as a service provider, community leader and employer.

It also enables the Council to set out its plans as to how it will meet the Equality Act 2010 in terms of both the general duties and the specific public sector duty.

A strong commitment to equality and diversity does not only have a strong moral argument, and legal obligations, but it also makes good business sense. As an organisation that is committed to understanding and shaping services around customers needs, the Council needs to be able to recognise and adapt to the diverse nature of its communities.

This Equality Scheme sets out:

- Identified equality strands, and an understanding of the community of Allerdale
- Processes for embedding equality and diversity
- Commitments to meeting the general duty and the specific public sector duty

Equality Strands

Nine equality strands have been identified. Each strand identifies a group of customers who share a similar characteristic, which is protected. These groups may need additional support or consideration in service delivery or policy development.

The strands are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion and Belief
- Rurality
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

All strands, except rurality, are protected by law through the Equality Act as people who have protected characteristics. The Council has chosen to recognise rurality as an equality strand because of the issues that people living in rural areas can face when accessing services. It is important to recognise that rural and urban communities have diverse social, economic and health needs and an understanding of the extent of these needs is necessary in order to address local issues.

As well as making sure that the Council meets the duties set out in the Equality Act, this scheme will ensure that consideration is given to the particular needs of different individuals and communities.

Understanding the Community

Age

(source: Office for National Statistics (ONS): 2010 Mid-Year Estimates - Rounded to the nearest 100)

TOTAL	94,100	
Under 1	1,000	1.06%
1-4	3,900	4.14%
5-9	4,800	5.10%
10-14	5,500	5.84%
15-19	5,700	6.06%
20-24	4,400	4.68%
25-29	4,400	4.68%
30-34	4,300	4.57%
35-39	5,700	6.06%
40-44	7,100	7.54%
45-49	7,300	7.76%
50-54	6,800	7.23%
55-59	6,500	6.91%
60-64	7,400	7.86%
65-69	5,600	5.95%
70-74	4,800	5.10%
75-79	3,800	4.04%
80-84	2,700	2.87%
85+	2,400	2.55%

Disability

(source: ONS, Census 2001 - Rounded to the nearest 100)

Limiting long-term illness (all ages)	Permanently sick or disabled (all people aged 16-74)
18,860 20%	4,273 4.6%

Limiting long-term illness covers any long-term illness; health problem or disability which limits daily activities or work

Race

(source: ONS, mid 2009 estimates - Rounded to the nearest 100)

	TOTAL	%
All Groups	94,300	-
WHITE		
White: British	90,200	95.7%
White: Irish	400	0.4%
White: Other White	1,300	1.4%
MIXED ETHNICITY		
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	200	0.2%
Mixed: White and Black African	100	0.1%
Mixed: White and Asian	200	0.2%
Mixed: Other Mixed	200	0.2%
ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH		
Asian or Asian British: Indian	600	0.6%
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	300	0.3%
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	100	0.1%
Asian or Asian British: Other Asian	100	0.1%
BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH		
Black or Black British: Black Caribbean	100	0.1%
Black or Black British: Black African	200	0.2%
Black or Black British: Other Black	0	0.0%
OTHER ETHNIC GROUP		
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group: Chinese	200	0.2%
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group: Other	200	0.2%

Religion or Belief

(source: ONS, Census 2001 - Rounded to the nearest 100)

	TOTAL	%
All people	93494	-
Christian	79695	85.2%
Buddhist	87	0.1%
Hindu	35	0.0%
Jewish	29	0.0%
Muslim	102	0.1%
Sikh	3	0.0%
Other religions	110	0.1%
No religion	7636	8.2%
Religion not stated	5797	6.2%

Rurality

(source: Population data are for 2007-mid-year estimates based on the 2001 Census)

The government's preferred level of rural/urban classification is at a small area level. Its 2004 classification system for small areas classifies a small area as 'urban' if the majority of its population live within settlements of more than 10,000 people and as 'rural' if this is not the case.

Cumbria is primarily a rural county with the third lowest population density in England of 0.7 people per hectare.

Urban-Rural Classification		Percentage of Total Population
Urban	Urban >10k - Less Sparse	29.8
	Urban >10k - Sparse	0.0
Rural	Town & Fringe - Less Sparse	22.3
	Town & Fringe - Sparse	16.1
	Village, Hamlet & Isolated Dwellings – Less Sparse	14.4
	Village, Hamlet & Isolated Dwellings - Sparse	17.4

Sex

(source: Office for National Statistics (ONS): 2010 Mid-Year Estimates - Rounded to the nearest 100)

	TOTAL	%
Male	46,200	49.1%
Female	47,900	50.9%

Sexual Orientation

(source: 2006 Cumbria Quality of Life Survey)

	TOTAL
Heterosexual	79
Not Heterosexual	5
Not Stated / Prefer Not To Say	17

Lack of stable data on sexual orientation is a national issue. The North West Regional Development Agency estimates that 5-7% of people are Lesbian, Gay or Bi-sexual. This translates into 25,000 to 35,000 Cumbrians.

Legal Duties

The Equality Act imposes duties on all public bodies, including the Council. There is the general equality duty and the specific public sector duty. The section below gives some summary information about what the duties mean. This scheme supports the Council in complying with these duties.

The General Equality Duty

When exercising its functions (for example, making policies or delivering services), the Council must give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate 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.

The Act explains that having due regards involves; removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics; taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people; and encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low. This may involve treating some people more favourably than others.

The Specific Public Sector Duty

As well as complying with the general duty, the Council must also comply with some specific duties. These are:

1. Published information to demonstrate it complies with the general equality duty. This must be done by 31st January 2012
2. Prepare and publish equality objectives to help it meet the aims of the general equality duty, and details of the engagement it undertook when developing the objectives. This must be done by 6th April 2012.

Ensuring equality issues are considered in service provision

The Council already does much to ensure that the needs of particular customers and residents are met, and that equality and diversity are considered in service delivery and policy making. This section outlines how the Council ensures that the needs of groups with protected characteristics are always considered.

Equality Impact Assessments

Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) assess the possible impact that a proposed policy, function or service may have on different groups within Allerdale. Anyone who is designing or changing a service, or developing or changing a policy or procedure, is responsible for carrying out an EIA. Strategic Managers have overall responsibility for ensuring that equality impact assessments are undertaken and acted upon.

The Policy and Communications Team can provide support to anyone carrying out an assessment, to ensure consistency.

The Council will carry out an EIA for all services as part of the Service Planning process on an annual basis. All new policies and strategies will also be assessed along with all Executive Committee decisions. In addition all policies and strategies will be reviewed every 3 years.

The assessment involves assessing the policy, function or service against the protected characteristics plus rurality.

Each assessment requires an action plan to be compiled from any actions identified through the assessment or alternatively the service re-designed if necessary.

How the Council Monitors Progress

All **Committee and Council reports** include details on equality implications of proposed recommendations, so that elected Members are aware of them when taking decisions.

The Policy and Communications Team maintains an officer oversight and is accountable for ensuring implementation of the Equality Scheme. Human Resources monitor and provide information about staff make-up, recruitment and other workforce related issues.

Roles and Responsibilities - The Executive Member for Organisational Development has responsibility for Equality and Diversity. The Deputy Chief Executive is the lead Chief Officer. However, all elected Members and Managers are responsible for ensuring that equality and diversity principles are reflected in all functions of the Council.

Sources of Support and Information

The Policy and Communication Team ensures that information about customer groups is available for staff to use to inform assessments. This includes population profiles which ensure that the specific needs of customers and communities are accounted for when planning and delivering services.

The Council will be reviewing its Community Engagement Strategy which sets out the approach it will take to engage with its communities. This will include the approach taken to ensuring that all members of the community are able to actively shape the Council's services through consultation and participation.

The Council will invite representatives from groups from all strands of diversity to participate in discussions about new policies and Council activities and raise any concerns with regards to policies and service delivery through the West Cumbria Equality and Diversity Partnership.

The Council has a Service Level Agreement with 3 organisations:

- AWAZ (Cumbria) who are an independent organisation whose aim is to influence policy so that the planning and delivery of services for Cumbria and the North West takes into account the needs of the BME people in Cumbria and rural areas.
- The Cumbria Disability Network who is an independent organisation representing disabled people in Cumbria. Cumbria Disability Network is a membership organisation open to any disabled person in the county. They provide strategic advice, guidance and support to the organisations on

Disability related matters and in working toward complying with their positive duty to promote disability equality.

- OutREACH Cumbria provide strategic advice guidance and support to the organisation to promote Lesbian, Gay and Bi-sexual people in Cumbria.

In terms of Staff Training, Equality and Diversity (Knowing Your Customers and Communities) is built into the Council's induction process, with all new staff receiving training on equality and diversity and the Council's objectives and processes. Specific training is given as required, including training sessions on how to carry out an EIA.

Processes

Equality and Diversity is built into the Business Planning cycle, with equality being considered in the development of Service Plans. The Council's EIA process will be regularly reviewed by the Scrutiny Board.

The process of undertaking equality assessments is built into the procurement and contract management framework to ensure that the equality and diversity implications of contracted out services is fully addressed. Guidance on embedding equality and diversity into the procurement process is available on the Council's website and covers all elements of the procurement process and contract monitoring process from pre qualification questionnaire. The Council's framework for partnership Working and Sustainable Procurement Policy explicitly address equality monitoring objectives.

In terms of Project Management the requirement to undertake an EIA is built into the Project Management Toolkit. For Performance Management, there are some key performance indicators that are built into the monitoring of services and monitoring of the workforce that are measured and reported.

The Council as an employer

The Council recognises its specific and general duties under the Equality Act 2010, in relation to its arrangements for monitoring employees. Equal opportunities monitoring of applicants, shortlisted and successfully appointed candidates takes place at all stages of the recruitment and selection process. Monitoring covers the following areas and is taken from the equal opportunities monitoring form of the Council's application form:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage & Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy & Maternity

- Race
- Religion and Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Measures will take place where it is found, through monitoring of the work force and the recruitment and selection process, that there is under-representation of certain groups. Measures may include the provision of training targeted at people from specific groups so that they may gain appropriate experience and skills to give them an equal opportunity in competing for jobs.

The Equality Act 2010 limits the circumstances when health-related questions can be asked before a post has been offered. Consequently, the council will only ask a candidate to complete a pre-employment health questionnaire when a job offer has been made. The council will not ask health-related questions during the recruitment process unless it is to help decide whether reasonable adjustments should be made, decide whether an applicant can carry out a function that is essential to the job, to monitor diversity among job applicants, to take positive action to assist a disabled person or if the post has an occupational requirement.

Training and Development

All employees will be given equal access to training and development opportunities that are identified via the Council's Annual Appraisal Scheme.

Monitoring Equality in Employment

The Council also monitors and analyses data and information arising from:

- Annual Staff Survey
- Performance Reviews (where there is benefit or detriment)
- Bullying and harassment cases
- Disciplinary cases
- Grievances
- Mediation
- Capability

Monitoring these areas during recruitment, selection and promotion and in employment ensures that our services extend to those hard to reach and disadvantaged groups, that our processes are fair and within the remits of legislation, that people from all backgrounds are represented and have equality of opportunity and that all forms of discrimination are eliminated.

Processes for Embedding Equality and Diversity

- Project Management
- Procurement
- Performance Management
- Equality Scheme
- Business Planning
- Staff and Member Training