

EQUALITIES ANNUAL REPORT - 2019

Executive Summary

This annual report seeks to inform the Executive of progress on the equalities agenda. It covers the period April 2018 to March 2019. The Equality Act 2010 brought together, harmonised and in some cases extended previous equality law. The aim of the legislation is to make it more consistent, clearer and easier to follow in order to make society fairer. The Act also sets out the Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 5 April 2011. The Equality Duty ensures that all public bodies, including local authorities, play their part in making society fairer by tackling discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for all.

The Equality Duty covers the following protected characteristics; age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Duty requires the Council to have 'due regard' to the need to:

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

Having 'due regard' means consciously thinking about the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision making. This means that consideration of equality issues must influence the decisions reached by the Council, e.g. how it acts as an employer, how it develops, evaluates and reviews policies, how it designs, delivers and evaluates services and how it commissions and procures from others.

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

RESOLVE That

the report be received.

Reasons for Decision

Reason: To meet the requirement to report on annual progress on the equality agenda.

The Executive has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above.

Background Papers: [Corporate Equality Scheme](#)
Sustainability Impact Assessment
Equalities Impact Assessment

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Woking Borough Council believes that the diversity of its population and workforce is one of its greatest strengths. Equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination is a fundamental right and this Council has a duty to exercise leadership to promote this right. The Council intends to promote equality and prevent discrimination through its roles as:

- service provider;
- employer; and
- community leader.

1.2 The Council will follow best practice in all equality areas and work to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

1.3 From April 2011 the Equality Act 2010 brought together all previous equality legislation and gave full protection to eight protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Some aspect of the legislation also covers marriage and civil partnership.

1.4 Success in mainstreaming equalities in the organisation is measured by The Equality Framework for Local Government, which was adopted by the authority in March 2009. The Framework is based on three levels of achievement, developing, achieving and excellent. The Council has been successfully verified by external assessment at 'Achieving' level.

2.0 Progress

2.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty (specific duties) requires all public bodies to:

- Annually publish information that shows how they have complied with the Equality Duty. This was published on the Council website in January.
- Set equality objectives for the organisation. Overarching objectives have been developed which are relevant to each of the equality groups covered by the Equality Act. They relate back to the General Duty and are designed to ensure a holistic approach to tackling inequality and promoting equality through the organisation and Borough (attached at Appendix 1).

2.2 The Equality and Wellbeing Working Group met quarterly, monitoring progress on the equality and wellbeing agenda. An annual Wellbeing Week is held in September, which promotes healthy lifestyles, physical and mental wellbeing.

2.3 A comprehensive programme of equality and wellbeing awareness has taken place over the year, covering issues such as homophobia, mental health awareness and Dementia Action Week and Carers Week. This included displays around the building, information on ewok+ and emails. Feedback has been very positive and the more subtle approach has definitely stimulated conversations, hopefully achieving our longer term objective of informing hearts and minds.

- 2.4 In addition monthly health and wellbeing themes have also been highlighted on ewok+, offering helpful advice and tips on how to look after yourself and effectively manage life and work. Themes have included healthy heart, benefits of walking, diabetes awareness and staying safe in the sun. Advice is also provided on how to achieve good mental health and wellbeing, including dealing with stress and obtaining a better work-life balance. The organisation has 4 trained Mental Health First Aiders and the Employee Assistance Programme is promoted regularly.
- 2.5 The equality agenda has been successfully mainstreamed throughout the organisation and the Council's priority is to ensure accessible services are available to the vulnerable sections of the local communities. Highlights for the year include the provision of support for Syrian refugees through New Vision Homes and The Family Support Service, continued support to vulnerable families via the Family Support Service; further development of services for people with dementia at the Wellbeing Centre (e.g. advice sessions, creative lunch and carers choir); continued work with the Woking Dementia Action Alliance (DAA) where the Council is working with a variety of stakeholders and partners to make the Borough Dementia Friendly (see Appendix 2).
- 2.6 Working relationships with community groups, providing support to those protected by equality legislation, continue to be developed. Outline, a local support group for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender community, were supported in putting together information to mark International Day against Homophobia; Alzheimer's Society held some dementia awareness sessions for staff and Liaise Women's Centre actively participated in events such as Party in the Park and Refugee Week, worked on an upcycling project in Sheerwater and have started working with the Bengali community on Lakeview.
- 2.7 Equality monitoring figures are produced annually for employment, looking at areas such as workforce profile, appointments, training, promotion and discipline and grievance issues. These are broken down according to race, gender, disability, age, sexuality and religion and belief. These are detailed in Appendix 3.
- 2.8 From 6 April 2017 employers in Great Britain with more than 250 staff are required by law to publish annually its gender pay gap (mean and median averages) and the proportion of men and women in each quartile of the organisation's pay structure.

This year's report, covering the 12 months up to 31st March 2018, showed that the Council has a mean gender pay gap of 19.31% and a median gender pay gap of 16.20%. The mean gender pay gap nationally is now 17.9% according to the October 2018 Office for National Statistics (ONS) Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) figures. The figure is 17.7% for public sector employees. The median gender pay gap for the public sector is 19.4%. The main reason for Woking's gap is an imbalance of male and female colleagues across the organisation, the roles in which men and women work within the organisation and the salaries that these roles attract. The full report can be accessed at <https://www.woking.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Jobs/Pay%20Policy%20Statement%202019%20to%202020.pdf>

The Council is committed to reducing its gender pay gap and an action plan has been developed to look at how best to achieve this, including carrying out further analysis of pay, reviewing recruitment processes, promoting flexible working options and development opportunities. The action plan can be accessed at <https://www.woking.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Jobs/Pay%20Policy%20Statement%202019%20to%202020.pdf>

3.0 Future Plans

- 3.1 Across the organisation a huge amount of work is done to address the needs of the most vulnerable sections of the local communities and the equalities agenda has successfully been mainstreamed into service plans. In the current climate of scarce resources, partnership working with the statutory and voluntary sectors is increasingly important. Building the capacity of local voluntary and community organisations to support this is an essential part of ensuring this happens.

4.0 Implications

Financial

- 4.1 Equality work is mainstreamed into annual Service Plans and budgets allocated accordingly. In addition external funding is identified for specific projects as and when required.

Human Resource/Training and Development

- 4.2 Equality and Wellbeing Training is provided through Surrey Learn, a partnership of all Surrey local authorities. Internal awareness campaigns and training take place throughout the year. A Member awareness session is held annually.

Community Safety

- 4.3 As a crosscutting issue equalities impacts on all areas of the Council's work, including community safety. Work on areas such as community cohesion, anti-social behaviour, domestic violence and preventing extremism all contribute towards the community safety agenda.

Risk Management

- 4.4 The Council has statutory responsibilities to drive forward the equalities agenda, promote equality and eliminate discrimination. In the current economic climate, partnership working with the statutory and voluntary sectors is essential in delivering on these priorities. Continual progress in equalities will enable the Council to achieve its goal of helping the most vulnerable sections of the local community.

Sustainability

- 4.5 A Sustainability Impact Assessment has been completed.

Equalities

- 4.6 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

Safeguarding

- 4.7 Due consideration has been given to the Council's corporate Safeguarding Policy when undertaking the Council's equalities agenda.

5.0 Consultations

- 5.1 Narrowing equality gaps and improving the life chances of different groups will require a pooling of evidence, resources and action planning. Working in partnership with the statutory, voluntary and community sectors will become increasingly important. Building and supporting the capacity of the voluntary/community sectors to enable this will be essential. The Council will have to become smarter at involving communities of interest in decision

making, service and workforce planning, particularly groups who may experience disadvantage and inequality.

REPORT ENDS

Equality Objectives:

Overarching objectives that have been developed for the council's Corporate Equality Scheme which are relevant to each of the nine equality groups covered by the Equality Act, relate back to the General Duty and are designed to ensure a holistic approach to tackling inequality and promoting equality through the organisation. The overarching objectives are to:

Tackle victimisation, harassment and discrimination

Take reasonable steps to ensure that residents, service users and employees are not unlawfully discriminated against and take appropriate action to prevent & tackle victimisation and harassment.

Improve access to services

Take reasonable steps to ensure that services are inclusive, responsive to risk, physically accessible and provided through the most efficient and effective channels available.

Close the gap in outcomes for citizens

Take reasonable steps to improve life chances for citizens by reducing outcome gaps that may exist within the Borough as well as those that may exist between the Borough and elsewhere.

Increase understanding and mutual respect between communities

Take reasonable steps to build stronger communities and promote good relations, both within and between communities.

Increase participation and engagement

Take reasonable steps to remove barriers that may exist to engagement and help residents (especially those who are under-represented) to participate in local decision making and influence local decisions.

Ensure equitable employment policies and practices

Provide equality of opportunity for all Council staff by ensuring all employment policies and practices, (concerning recruitment, retention, promotion, training and discipline), are designed to reflect and attract the communities that Woking serves.

Equality actions/achievements: 2018/19:

Living Well Week October 2018

Programme of events to celebrate and value the diversity of the borough of Woking under the Celebrate Woking umbrella, including Chinese New Year, Interfaith football tournament and Refugee Week. These events engage with local community groups, schools and the wider community, including working with a number of SEN (eg. The Park School, Freemantles, LinkAble and Surrey Choices).

Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme – 41 families have arrived in Woking under the VPRS Scheme and are supported in areas including areas such as access to housing, benefits, education and employment. The programme is running very successfully and Woking's success at supporting families into employment has boosted both Surrey's and the SE region's figures. Currently Woking's employment figures are almost three times higher for Syrian refugees than the rest of the UK. Recently, a Syrian lady teamed up with a local Chef and organised, with a number of other Syrian women, to sell food at the Lighthouse at lunchtime to raise money for the project. This was a great success and will happen again as part of Refugee Week events.

Family Support Programme - 84 families were identified as having multiple and complex needs. Support focusses on parenting, housing, financial management, training and employment, healthy relationships and positive health and wellbeing.

Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – The SPD sets out specific standards for disabled parking provision to serve various types of development.

Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) – The DPD seeks to allocate specific sites to meet the accommodation needs of Travellers.

The Business Liaison Team, through its Woking Works partnership with select local firms and business organisations, delivered its first event on wellbeing, to coincide with Mental Health Awareness Week. The morning's event had a strong focus on mental health, and the links to productivity and the local economy, and practical tips for how employers can best support their teams. In addition, the benefits of good nutrition and exercise, and eye health, were covered by event sponsor, Nuffield Health Woking.

Continued to contract Surrey Choices' Growth Project team, who work with adults with learning disabilities, to undertake countryside management work at White Rose Lane Local Nature Reserve. Support of volunteer groups such as the Woodlanders (based in Horsell), and Westfield Common Volunteers (through SWT, and the GCN project).

Agreed new five year contract with AccessAble (formally Disabled Go) to provide on-line access guides for Woking. The company have rebranded and launched a new website to keep a breadth with advances in technology.

Started working with Surrey Choices EmployAbility service, which helps to find work placements, volunteer opportunities and paid work for disabled people, autistic people, those with sensory needs and those with mental health issues. Placements found in centres in the community and the Civic Offices. This is currently being developed to provide paid work.

Community Matters Partnership Project - an exciting, innovative business to community partnership project, run, driven and funded by local companies who want to support the health, happiness and wellbeing of local people in their community. There are currently 14 partners who have supported 8 projects over the year, both financially and in volunteer time. 84 volunteers have taken part in the various projects.

Sheerwater project group have been supporting a number of elderly people who are very isolated and have no support network to help them through the process of moving and setting up a new home. Using links with other agencies, have managed to help these tenants re-engage with the community and ensure that their standard of living and well-being is improved.

The Housing Standards team have recently worked with Landlords who have been unable to communicate with the Council due to language barriers. As a result of these issues landlords were unable to complete their Selective Licence applications which had been submitted with missing documentation. With the support of their local counsellor and the team issues have been resolved and applications validated and authorised.

The Woking Local Dementia Action Alliance (made up of over 30 local organisations) are working together to help enable Woking be recognised as a Dementia Friendly Borough. 6 Dementia Champions have been appointed to carry out the training and have held 8 sessions for the public over the year. This included a special session at the mosque for the Muslim community. Awareness raising activities were held during Dementia Action Week, including a 'relaxed' screening at the Ambassadors Cinema and a tea dance.

Woking is the first authority in Surrey to train and enable staff in all teams to complete carers prescriptions to help our carer residents get the help and support they need

Funding was awarded from the NW Surrey CCG to have a Falls Responder Service, enabling residents who are Careline clients to be picked up off the floor within an hour rather than wait 6-8 hours for an ambulance when they have simply fallen with no medical issues.

The category of referrals for the social prescribing team have been extended providing a range of non-medical support provided in the community to any adults over 18 years of age who need social, emotional and practical support. These may be adults who are vulnerable, feel isolated, have mental health issues etc.

Introduction of a trial Home2Home scheme whereby owner occupiers are assisted to move to more appropriate properties for their health care needs. Often elderly residents are living on their own, with no family and carers and simply need to move to a smaller, more manageable and appropriate property but do not have the capacity to organise with all the paperwork and stress.

Partnership project with Surrey Police, New Vision Homes and local charity to make improvements to the Walton Court area, including upgrade of lighting, CCTV, decorating and clearing of overgrown greenery.

Equalities Monitoring Data for the period 1/4/2018 – 31/3/2019

1. *Breakdown of all employees by:

*These figures are based on 420 employees; this includes all employees all on the payroll including casual employees who may only work very occasionally.

a) Ethnic background

Asian/ Asian British	36
Black/Black British	12
Chinese/Other	4
Mixed	3
White	319
Gypsy/Traveller	1
Romany Gypsy	0
Irish Traveller	0
Other (please specify)	31
Not Known	8
Prefer not to say	6

b) Gender

Male	155
Female	265
Transgender	0
Prefer not to say	0

c) Declaration of Disability

Yes	19
No	381
Prefer not to say	17
Not Known	3

d) Age

Under 25	22
25 - 34	69
35 - 44	94
45 - 54	108
55 - 64	106
Over 65	21

e) Sexual orientation

Heterosexual/Straight	366
Bisexual	3
Gay or Lesbian	8
Prefer not to say	30
Not Known	13

f) Religion

Christian	209
Buddhist	1
Hindu	10
Jewish	1
Muslim	29
Sikh	1
No Religion	127
Other (Please specify)	5
Not Known	4
Prefer not to say	33

2. How many people belonging to each group applied to the Council for employment during the period?

a) Ethnic background

Asian/ Asian British	106
Black/Black British	60
Chinese/Other	9
Mixed	12
White	319
Gypsy/Traveller	0
Romany Gypsy	0
Irish Traveller	0
Other (please specify)	27
Not Known	11
Prefer not to say	22

b) Gender

Male	208
Female	336
Transgender	0
Prefer not to say	10
Not Known	12

c) Declaration of Disability

Yes	33
No	526
Not known	0
Prefer not to say	7

d) Age

Under 25	94
25 - 34	145
35 - 44	128
45 - 54	124
55 - 64	61
Over 65	4
Not Known	10

e) Sexual orientation

Heterosexual/Straight	492
Bisexual	4
Gay or Lesbian	17
Prefer not to say	35
Not Known	17

f) Religion

Christian	204
Buddhist	6
Hindu	18
Jewish	1
Muslim	88
Sikh	5
No Religion	162
Other (Please specify)	17
Not Known	17
Prefer not to say	47

3. How many people belonging to each group applied for/received training during the period?

a) Ethnic background

BME	30
White	94
Prefer not to say	0

b) Gender

Male	62
Female	76
Transgender	0

c) Declaration of Disability

Yes	10
No	114
Prefer not to say	0

d) Age

Under 25	12
25 - 34	27
35 - 44	30
45 - 54	31
55 - 64	22
Over 65	2

4. How many people belonging to each group were promoted during the period?

a) Ethnic background

BME	0
White	8

b) Gender

Male	3
Female	5
Transgender	0

c) Declaration of Disability

Yes	0
No	8

d) Age

Under 25	0
25 - 34	4
35 - 44	1
45 - 54	2
55 - 64	1
Over 65	0

5. How many people belonging to each group "benefited or suffered detriment as a result of formal performance assessment procedures"?

None

6. How many people belonging to each group were involved in grievance procedures?

a) Ethnic background

BME	0
White	1

b) Gender

Male	0
Female	1
Transgender	0

c) Declaration of Disability

Yes	1
No	0

d) Age

Under 25	0
25 - 34	0
35 - 44	0
45 - 54	0
55 - 64	1
Over 65	0

7. How many people belonging to each group were the subjects of disciplinary procedures?

a) Ethnic background

BME	0
White	1

b) Gender

Male	1
Female	0
Transgender	0

c) Declaration of Disability

Yes	0
No	1

d) Age

Under 25	0
25 - 34	1
35 - 44	0
45 - 54	0
55 - 64	0
Over 65	0

8. How many people belonging to each group ceased employment with the Council during the period?

a) Ethnic background

Asian/ Asian British	4
Black/Black British	0
Chinese/Other	1
Mixed	0
White	35
Not Known	0
Gypsy/Traveller	0
Romany Gypsy	0
Irish Traveller	0
Other (please specify)	4
Prefer not to say	2
Not Known	6

b) Gender

Male	26
Female	26
Transgender	0

c) Declaration of Disability

Yes	2
No	46
Prefer not to say	2
Not Known	2

d) Age

Under 25	5
25 - 34	12
35 - 44	12
45 - 54	6
55 - 64	11
Over 65	6

9. Carers

a) Ethnic background

BME	2
White	11

b) Gender

Male	1
Female	12
Transgender	0

c) Declaration of Disability

Yes	2
No	11

d) Age

Under 25	0
25 - 34	1
35 - 44	3
45 - 54	9
55 - 64	0
Over 65	0

10. Flexible Working Requests

Number received:	11
Number agreed:	11
Success rate %	100%

10. Return to Work from Maternity

Number returned:	9
Success rate:	100%