

East Devon District Council

Race Equality Scheme Policy

Appendix A

Reviewed

May 2006

Policy Number

Policy Approval

Policy Statement

Having achieved Level 1 of the Equality Standard it is necessary to review our Race Equality Scheme and Action Plan.

The Race Relations Act 1976 as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, (RRRA), gives public authorities a general duty to promote race equality. The duty applies to all public authorities, including East Devon District Council.

Under the duty, when carrying out its functions, the Council must aim to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- promote equality for opportunity, and
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups

The duty's aim is to make race equality a central part of the way the District Council works, by putting it at the centre of policy making, service delivery, employment practice, regulation and enforcement. The Council welcomes its duty and believes that promoting race equality will improve public services for everyone.

To meet its duty the Council is required to set out in a Race Equality Scheme how it proposed to fulfil its duties. This document is intended to fulfil that statutory requirement. The Race Equality Scheme is part of, and integrated with, the Council's overall Equalities Policy, and Equality Standard work.

East Devon only has a small ethnic minority population. However the Council will commit the necessary resources (in terms of people, time and money) to ensure the Scheme is effectively implemented, monitored and reviewed. It will report on progress annually and update the entire scheme every three years.

The Council's Commitments

East Devon does not, and will not, tolerate racism in any form. This Scheme applies to every Member and Officer of the Council, and to everyone contracted to provide services on the Council's behalf.

The Council accepts the fundamental principles set out in the Macpherson Report relating to Institutional Racism and Racist Incidents.

Macpherson Working Definitions

Institutional Racism is the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service for people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen and detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour, which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping, which disadvantages minority ethnic people.

A Racist Incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person. *NB The purpose of this definition is not to prejudge the question of whether a perpetrator's motive was racist or not: that still has to be proven. Its purpose is rather to ensure that investigations take full account of the possibility of a racist dimension to the incident, and that statistics of such incidents are collected on a uniform basis.*

Corporate Priorities and Racial Equality Strategic Aims

The Council's Race Equality Strategic Aims are to:

- Ensure equality of opportunity and fairness in the delivery of our policies, services, and employment practices, which can mean treating people differently to ensure the same level of service.
- Work in partnership with other organisations in order to reduce the potential for racism to exist in our organisation and in any organisation that delivers a service on our behalf, in partnership with us, or in community.
- Ensure that all Members and staff are aware of the potential for Institutional Racism/Discrimination to occur, and to equip them to challenge inappropriate behaviour in others.
- Design and implement mechanisms to put things right if they are shown to be unfair or/and unlawful.
- Build a good working relationship with relevant local organisations.

This Race Equality Scheme links to the following Priorities and outcomes adopted by the Council:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| • Achieve thriving, balanced communities | - | An increase in the number of engaged communities. |
| • Provide Community leadership and good value for money, customer focused services | - | Deliver faster, better targeted services how, when and where our customers want them |

The General and Specific Duties

The Council has both a general and a specific duty to promote Racial Equality. We must have 'due regard to the need' to:

- Tackle Racial Discrimination;
- Promote Equality of Opportunity; and
- Promote good Race Relations

Specific Policy Areas

A. Employment

To strive to ensure that Council policies on equal opportunities and employment are effective in stopping any discrimination/disadvantage by ethnic minorities.

To strive to ensure that ethnic minority people will receive full and equal consideration throughout the whole recruitment process.

In undertaking external recruitment, the Council will welcome applications for all vacant posts, and aim to have a workforce that reflects the changing population of the district.

To monitor all aspects of the recruitment process, the termination of employment, and workforce statistics in order to review performance and to identify action required to successfully implement this policy.

To seek to prevent racial harassment of and violence against employees, through the Violent Persons Register, Acceptable behaviour policy, and grievance processes, and appropriate training.

To make provision for diversity training, and, where necessary, make additional provision for further training in order to address specific issues that are identified.

To ensure that all staff are provided with information on this policy and supported in understanding and implementing it.

B. Service Delivery

The Council will consider the needs of ethnic minority groups in the planning and delivery of services in accordance with legislation and the constraints of available and potential resources.

To strive to monitor the use of services by ethnic minorities, investigate the reasons for any lack of use of services, and take action to remedy the situation where necessary.

In so far as the Council has an obligation to prevent racial harassment of and violence against service users, it will seek to provide an effective response to deal with perpetrators, and provide support for complainants.

To inform contractors of the Council's policy and of the behaviour expected of them with respect to the treatment of staff and service users.

To ensure that Race Equality issues are considered integral to the service plans of all divisions and all service level agreements and contracts with private sector companies and other bodies will be in accordance with the current legislation.

C. Consultation/Partnership

The Council has adopted a consultation strategy and will look to identify ethnic groups, their representatives and their needs, representing the population of the local community. This may also involve using representations through 'Speak Now' focus groups and other community forums.

D. Access/Communications

To seek to ensure full and effective access to its services for ethnic minority people.

To make information available in necessary languages and formats where requested and reasonably required.

To ensure that information is disseminated effectively to ethnic minority people.

To use interpreters where necessary and reasonable for full and effective access to services.

To promote a culture and ethos which is welcoming and accessible to ethnic minority people.

To ensure that all information, publicity and advertising over which the Council has control is non-racist.

To seek to promote the Council's equality, approach in order to help reassure all residents of confidentiality, sensitivity, and intent.

E. External

Where the Council's services are provided by external contractors or third parties on the basis of a specification set by the Council, these Contractors or third parties are responsible for implementing the Equal Opportunities Policy when providing these services on the Council's behalf. The Council will take necessary steps to try to ensure good performance.

Action Plan and Timetable

The Action Plan is attached at Appendix A1. This will be reviewed by the Equalities Steering Group on an annual basis.

Monitoring Ethnicity

The Council will monitor its service delivery across all of its services and functions and in its employment practices and procedures.

Dealing with Complaints

The Council is continuing to improve its comprehensive complaints procedure. This procedure covers complaints about racial incidents in service delivery and in employment.

There are two officers nominated to investigate and deal with complaints of racial incidents amongst officers, the Chief Executive and the Head of Organisational Development.

The Standards Board will investigate any complaints against Members of the Council.

Mechanisms for Accountability

Proven incidents of racism amongst officers will be treated as a disciplinary offence, and may be deemed to be gross misconduct. If staff are concerned about potential racist incidents amongst colleagues and senior officers, they may seek redress through the Grievance Procedure.

Staff concerned about possible racist attitudes and behaviour amongst Members, should refer to the Monitoring Officer for advice and guidance.

Reports of racist activity or criminal racist views held and expressed by members of the public should be referred to the Police, and if any racist view is expressed to an Officer or Member it should be clearly rejected and discussed with the appropriate Head of Service.

Overall responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of this scheme lies with the Chief Executive and Executive Board.

Outcomes

Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, promotion of equality of opportunity, promotion of good relations between people of different racial groups.

Who is responsible for delivery?

Everyone. Corporate Director – Communities is the lead officer.

Performance Monitoring

Equalities Steering Group

Policy Consultation

DEREC, LSP

Policy Review

Annual

Related Policies and Strategies

Equality and Diversity Policy

RACE EQUALITIES SCHEME – ACTION PLAN 2006/7

Continue Equalities Steering Group.	Ongoing
Ensure customers, contractors, partners, members, staff, and Unison remain aware of the scheme through, for example, publicity, training seminars, information sheets, and welcome training for new employees.	Ongoing
Complete and report upon the Social Inclusion proofing tool as used on Council front-line services.	Mar '06
Embed the adopted Race Equalities Standards for housing work (adopted in 2005).	Mar '06
Refine monitoring systems for employment/service delivery to meet level 2 of the Equalities Standard	June '06
Maintain Officer Champions in each Directorate.	Ongoing
Agree an action plan for issues arising from Social Inclusion Review	June '06
Further revise and re-issue Complaints Procedure	June '06
Maintain the system for recording recruitment monitoring, and develop it to meet the needs of level 2 of the Equalities Standard.	June '06
Set up and develop Intranet information for staff on equalities and also website information for the public.	June '06
Retain a Member Champion for Equalities work.	Ongoing
Develop a programme of work and advice with Devon Race Equality Council.	Dec. '06
Seek views from representative organisations for Black and Minority Ethnic Groups.	June '06
Create a project plan of work to enable the Council to reach level 2 of the Equalities Standard by the end of the year 2006/07.	June '06
Undertake a risk management assessment of Equalities work.	June '06
Seek a programme for community consultation with BME groups (preferably in partnership with other public sector organisations).	June '06
Develop and sign up to joint protocols and policy for traveller communities across Devon.	Aug '06
Create a Customer Services Centre	As from April '06
Create Corporate Customer Care Standards published and Customer Assistants Training Scheme	Mar '06

Definition of Racial Group

'Racial Group' is a group of persons defined by reference to race, colour (including citizenship) or ethnic or national origin.

The definition of 'racial group' includes a number of sub-categories, covering a wide-range of people.

Racial Group and Sub Categories	Examples
Colour	Black, White
Nationality	German, Greek
Ethnic Origin	Indian, Gypsy
National Origins	Scottish, Welsh, Irish, English