

East Devon District Council

Draft Integrated Equality Scheme Statement and Policy

Reviewed

February 2008

Policy Number

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Policy Approval

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Policy Statement

East Devon District Council aspires to improving its performance against the Local Authority Equality Standard (it currently achieves Level 1). It has an Equalities and Diversity Policy setting out its approach and basic stance. As part of its approach it will of course embrace the Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2006.

This policy seeks to combine and integrate the previous schemes and statements on Race, gender and disability into one consistent document and action plan, with other Equality strands..

The Council values people of both genders, all races, religions, types of sexuality, ages and disabilities in its employ, its community, and as visitors to the area.

52.83% of our East Devon population are female. 49% of our employees are female, 29% of Corporate Management Team are female. The age profile of East Devon is much older than the England average, we have low minority ethnicity (0.7%) amongst our permanent residents though migrant workers are now prevalent. The number of people registered as disabled is 20.3%, and sexuality is likely to be as diverse as elsewhere.

We must ensure that all people have their needs met equally. Where it is proportionate and reasonable to do so we must make particular arrangements for people of all types, to ensure this equality.

We must of course ensure that any unlawful Discrimination against people of all types is prevented within the Council (and where possible within the community), similarly we must not tolerate harassment and look to this being eliminated. We must ensure we promote positive attitudes towards all types of people.

The Macpherson principles of institutional racism must also be avoided in terms of prejudice against people from the other equalities strands.

Evidently some individuals may fall into several of the groups covered by legislation. The Council's Equality policy seeks to address such multiple issues.

People within legally defined groups are just some of the many diversity issues for the Council. Our ambition and commitment is to deal with every customer and employee as an individual with their own particular needs.

The Council's Commitment

East Devon District Council does not, and will not, tolerate prejudice in any form and will strive to eliminate this and any inequalities that arise from differences and imposed or chosen roles. The Equality scheme statement and policy applies to every Member and officer of the Council and to everyone contracted or commissioned to provide services on the Council's behalf.

How we will tackle the issue

Context –

Involving people of all types in informing the scheme and policy

The Council actively seeks the views of people and has sought to recognise these in drawing up the scheme statement and policy (which itself has also gone out to consultation).

Recent consultation and research seeking, or identifying, differences in service, or views from people of all types, about Council services and approaches, include:-

- Gender split of staff, by occupational group
- Diversity questionnaire at reception
- Tenant profiling
- Review of hate crime and domestic violence information
- Common Ground – review
- Request for equalities issues via householder newsletter and in staff newsletter
- Review of training update
- 'Social inclusion checklist'
- Information from Devon Equality groups
- Differences in General Survey responses
- Information from Census
- 'Speak Now' panel survey
- Housing Register data
- Race Equality Focus Group
- Customer satisfaction surveys
- Youth survey data
- Transport survey data
- Play strategy survey
- Access surveys
- Neighbourhood Assessments/PACT work

Impact Assessment of policies and practices

- The Council has carried out a self-assessment of impacts and service accessibility for people of many types via its Social Inclusion Checklist process. The outputs have been monitored.
- The Council's policy impact assessment tool (embedded in the Committee template) seeks to anticipate impacts of decisions on people of all types.
- Recruitment impact is assessed by the Human Resources team

Gathering further information

- We will be undertaking Equality Impact Assessments of policies, and services
- The Council will seek to continue to work to identify shortfalls in good practice against similar authorities
- The Council will further use information at its disposal including data on employment, housing needs and census data to help inform its approach
- We will actively seek customer satisfaction survey data, and review formal complaints relating to people with gender related problems

- We will be continuing work as part of a Devon wide equalities consortium
- We will be integrating Equalities work into “systems thinking” reviews

Using the information gathered

The Council’s “Passionate about People” Steering Group (representatives of all Council services, chaired by the Member Champion for Equalities) will consider the information gathered, and impact assessment information, in order to shape and challenge current practice, future policy, and thus create the next Equalities Scheme Statement and Policy (due January 2010).

This body will also produce an annual review. This review will be published on the Council’s website.

Prioritisation

In order to develop a rational and manageable approach to this work our priorities will relate to these policies which are seen as likely to have the highest equality impact (as assessed under the Equalities Impact Assessment Scheme, and to those services with greatest contact with customers, starting with services being assessed under a “system thinking” approach (customer needs drive the process).

Outcomes

The action plan at Appendix A1 will be delivered.

Who is responsible for delivery?

All staff.

The Corporate Director – Communities is the Council Lead Officer.

Heads of Service have clear Equalities responsibilities through their Performance Effectiveness Reviews.

The Learning and Development Manager is managing work on the Equality Standard.

Performance Monitoring

The ‘Passionate about People’ Steering Group will monitor this scheme.

Policy Review

January 2009

Related Policies and Strategies

Equality and Diversity Policy
 Consultation Strategy
 Procurement Strategy
 Contracts Policy
 Partnership Policy
 Customer Excellence Policy
 Domestic Violence Policy
 Safeguarding Children Policy