

Leicestershire County Council's

# Draft

# Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008 – 2010

## Promoting Respect and Fairness

(Incorporating the requirement to publish a Race Equality Scheme in accordance with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000)

If you require this information in an alternative version such as large print, Braille, audiotape, or help in understanding it in your language, please contact the Equality and Diversity Team,  
Tel: 0116 305 6029/7446 or email [equality@leics.gov.uk](mailto:equality@leics.gov.uk)



## Contents

1. Foreword by the Leader & the Chief Executive, Leicestershire County Council	3
2. This Strategy	4
3. Context – The County of Leicestershire	4
4. Our Vision and the Proposed Equality and Diversity Outcomes for Leicestershire and for the County Council	6
5. Achieving our Outcomes and Objectives	12

### Appendices:

▪ Appendix 1 Equalities Legislation	23
▪ Appendix 2 Our Equalities Policy Statement	25
▪ Appendix 3 Statement on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity	27
▪ Appendix 4 Achievements	30
▪ Appendix 5 Equality and Diversity Responsibility and Accountability	36
▪ Appendix 6 Proposed Performance Indicators	37
▪ Appendix 7 Workforce Profile Information	38

## **1. Foreword**

Welcome to Leicestershire County Council's Equality and Diversity Strategy. This strategy sets out our equality and diversity objectives for the next three years. We are delighted to be able to demonstrate what we are doing as a County Council individually and working with our partners to provide fair and inclusive services for everyone living in Leicestershire and to celebrate the diversity of our community. This is a living document that will be monitored and updated on a regular basis to ensure services remain relevant to all our residents

The Council is legally required to produce equality schemes for race, disability and gender. This Equality and Diversity Strategy incorporates our Race Equality Scheme and makes reference to our Disability Equality and Gender Equality Schemes, which will be incorporated into this strategy as part of their review. The Council is committed to the promotion of equality and elimination of discrimination on the grounds of age, sexual orientation and religion or belief and to meeting its legislative duties. Therefore this strategy covers all six equality groups as demonstration of our commitment to equality for all.

Leicestershire is a place where equality and diversity are shared and valued. We are committed to ensuring our residents, our staff and people who may wish to work for us are treated fairly and without discrimination and with respect regardless of their race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion and belief. The Council will continue to work with its partners and the wider community to address the objectives contained within this Equality and Diversity Strategy.

The Council is a democratically elected body that represents all the people who live and work in Leicestershire and knows the importance of ensuring equality and diversity in how we carry out our functions and provide civic leadership. We are committed to fulfilling our legal duties under the relevant legislation and this strategy sets out how we propose to do this.

We welcome everyone's comments on this Equality and Diversity Strategy and on any other aspects of our work to promote equality and diversity.

**D. R. Parsons**  
**Leader**  
**Leicestershire County Council**

**J. Sinnott**  
**Chief Executive**  
**Leicestershire County Council**

**March 2008**

## **2. This Strategy**

2.1 The primary purpose of this strategy is to set out the equality and diversity objectives we will be focusing on over the next three years.

2.2 The strategy also:

- Sets out our intentions to make equality a reality for people accessing our services, seeking job opportunities and who are currently employed with the Council
- Fulfil our legal responsibilities
- Highlight some of the work we have undertaken and the progress we have made to promote equality and diversity
- Inform people of our responsibilities and what we expect of them. This includes residents, elected members, managers, staff, our partners in the public, voluntary and private sectors
- Explain how equality and diversity is integrated into the planning of our services and performance management systems
- Show how our strategy links to our broader equalities objectives and priorities
- Provide information about our consultation and engagement, monitoring and training arrangements, and
- Present progress on current performance

## **3. Context**

### **Leicestershire**

3.1 The County of Leicestershire:

- Has a population of 635,100<sup>1</sup>, of which about 9% are from Black and Minority Ethnic groups; it is an ethnically and culturally diverse County, benefiting greatly from close links with Leicester City, one of the most culturally diverse cities in the UK.
- Is home to a vibrant mix of people, from the Bengali and Gujarati communities settling in areas such as Loughborough in the 1970's, through to communities of Gypsies and Travellers, refugees and Asylum Seekers.
- Is becoming more and more diverse through migration of ethnic groups from Leicester and work-related migration from EU accession countries.
- Is mostly a rural County with almost half the population living in market towns, or urban areas close to Leicester.

---

<sup>1</sup> National Statistics Mid Year Estimate, August 2007

- Has approximately 152, 300 children and young people aged 19 and under, representing 22.6% of the total population.
- Has seen a rise in the proportion of pupils from black and minority ethnic backgrounds from 10.2% in 2003 to 12.2% in January 2007.
- Has 11,500 pupils of minority ethnic heritage in Leicestershire schools<sup>2</sup>. In addition to English, more than 50 different community languages are spoken in the County.
- Has 2,800 overseas nationals registered for a National Insurance number in 2005/2006, an increase of 1,140 (69%) on 2004/2005, with countries of origin including Poland, India, China, Philippines, Slovak Republic, South Africa, Republic of Latvia, France, Czech Republic and the Republic of Lithuania.
- Has a wealth of diversity in the religions and beliefs followed by local people, which include Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Pagan and Sikh faiths.
- 15.5% of the population have a long term limiting illness<sup>3</sup>, which compares with 10.5% from the 1991 Census. It is recognised that this will represent a broad range of disabilities.
- Has an equal gender split between women and men - 50.4% and 49.6% respectively<sup>4</sup>. However, there are more females over the age of 75 (61.8%) than males (38.2%).<sup>5</sup>
- Has no local data about its Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) communities, but in Britain LGBT people constitute 5 - 7%<sup>6</sup> of the total adult population and that the overall incidence of transsexualism<sup>7</sup> is in the order of 1 in 12,000 adults.<sup>8</sup>

### **The County Council**

- 3.2 The County Council is responsible for providing a range of services to its citizens, including education and training, social care services for adults and children, public transport, highways maintenance, libraries, museums and trading standards.
- 3.3 The Council is involved in many partnerships which seek to deliver efficient and effective services for all the people of Leicestershire including Leicestershire Together, the "partnership of partnerships". The Council encourages partnership working to get the best value from the services delivered. As a lead member of many partnerships, we will ensure that equality and diversity considerations are embedded into this way of working.
- 3.4 Our aim is for our workforce to reflect the make-up of the local community. We currently employ 7,774 staff (not including Schools staff). 7.89% of our workforce is from a Black or Minority Ethnic background; 70.92% of our staff are women; 3.78% of our staff have declared a disability. 4.36% of our employees are aged under 24; 45.35% are aged between 24 and 44 years; 31.07% are aged between 44 and 54 years and 19.05% are

<sup>2</sup> 'This is Leicestershire – An Evidence Base' for the new Countywide Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement, October 2007

<sup>3</sup> 2001 Census

<sup>4</sup> 2001 Census

<sup>5</sup> 2001 Census

<sup>6</sup> DTI Regulatory Impact Assessment: Civil Partnership Act 2004

<sup>7</sup> Transsexual person – legal/medical term for someone who lives permanently in their 'new' gender

<sup>8</sup> Civil Service website on equality and diversity in employment in the Civil Service.

aged over 55 years. We do not currently have data to show the range of religions or beliefs held by our staff or their sexual orientation.

- 3.5 The Audit Commission's recent inspection of the County Council has resulted in the award of a '4 Star, Improving Strongly' rating. The inspection highlighted some of the Council's work in relation to equality and diversity as best practice and acknowledged some of the positive outcomes which have been achieved for our service users. However, the Council is not complacent about what improvements still need to be made and is committed to working hard to ensure equality and diversity remains a priority.

### **The Partnership**

- 3.6 Leicestershire Together is the "partnership of partnerships" for Leicestershire, bringing together the wide range of partnerships and organisations that provide services across the county. It provides an over-arching governance framework within which other thematic and area-based partnerships can operate and provides a forum for debate and decision making at a strategic level.
- 3.7 By the end of May, Leicestershire Together will have published a new Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and second Local Area Agreement. The SCS sets out the priority issues for Leicestershire to be tackled over the next 5 years (in the form of outcomes) and the LAA outlines how we will deliver the most important of these and how our progress will be measured through up to 35 indicators drawn from the new National Indicator Set.
- 3.8 There are 49 outcomes in the Sustainable Community Strategy, grouped under seven high-level themes, including one directly relevant to equality and diversity - "Stronger, more cohesive communities" which is led by the Stronger Communities Board. The outcomes under this cross-cutting theme include:
- 2.1 Stronger communities where people are involved, engaged and play a role in decision making
  - 2.2 There is a positive view of diversity and equalities
  - 2.3 Leicestershire is integrated, cohesive and inclusive
  - 2.4 There is equality of access to life opportunities
  - 2.5 All sections of the community to empowered to influence local decision making

## **4. Our Vision and the Proposed Equality and Diversity Outcomes for Leicestershire and for the County Council**

### **The Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement**

- 4.1 The Sustainable Community Strategy sets out a long term vision for Leicestershire and the priorities for improvement in Leicestershire over the next 5 years. These strategic priorities for the County will be delivered through the Local Area Agreement and other implementation plans,
- 4.2 The Strategy is based on the priorities for action identified by local people. It sets out what the Leicestershire Together Partnership will do to tackle these priorities.
- 4.3 The Vision for Leicestershire states:
- Leicestershire is cohesive and inclusive

- Social justice and mutual respect is promoted through all our services and in our employment practices
  - The needs of all sections of the community are understood and all residents can access essential services
  - Levels of hate incidents are reduced
- Equality of access to life opportunities
    - No individual experiences disadvantage because of their race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief
    - People have equality of access to life opportunities, employment, learning and services that meet individual needs

4.4 The priority outcomes related to equality and diversity in the Strategy are:

- All sections of the community are empowered to influence local decision making
  - The barriers that prevent people from being involved in affecting the decisions that affect their lives have been removed
  - All sections of the community can, and are actively encouraged, to influence local services

4.5 The SCS forms the basis of a new Leicestershire Performance Framework, shared by the key agencies and partnerships across the County. Delivery planning is underway for the outcomes against which progress will be measured through LAA indicators and delivery planning for all other outcomes in the SCS will follow in phase 2.

### **County Council Objectives**

4.6 The County Council also needs to achieve some outcomes related to its own activities and services. Because in Leicestershire we believe in an inclusive approach to tackling inequalities and discrimination, we have used the strength of the duties arising from the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006 and extended their scope to encompass all six equality strands – race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief.

4.7 More information on our disability and gender equality schemes can be found on the Council's website.<sup>9</sup>

4.8 We have already adopted two policy statements:

- The Equalities Policy Statement (Appendix 2) sets out our commitment to providing fair and equitable services and employment opportunities for all sections of the community. It identifies the specific responsibilities of our employees who are required to be non-discriminatory and promote diversity at every opportunity.
- The Policy Statement on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (Appendix 3) which was produced together with our Trade Unions. This policy statement focuses on our commitment to creating an environment where the sexual orientation and gender identity of all workers and service users are respected, and where all are afforded dignity and equal rights.

---

<sup>9</sup> The Disability Equality Scheme and the Gender Equality Scheme can both be found at [http://website/index/your\\_council/equality\\_and\\_diversity](http://website/index/your_council/equality_and_diversity)

4.9 A key element of this Equality and Diversity Strategy is to engage and involve members of the community in its development. We want to ensure that representatives from all sections of Leicestershire's diverse community are empowered to influence our equality and diversity objectives to ensure that they include issues of the moment as well as historic priorities.

4.10 In order to do this effectively, we established working groups where we engaged with representatives from a wide range of stakeholders, including members of the community, partner organisations and members of the Council's Workers Groups.

The aims of the Working Groups were as follows:

- look at what the Equality and Diversity Strategy should cover;
- review the existing schemes and their action plans; and
- identify specific actions/priority areas for the strategy to focus on.

4.11 These working groups were important to the development of the objectives in this strategy and the views, experiences and suggested actions identified by attendees have helped to determine the Council's future direction on the equalities and diversity agenda.

### **Lessons Learnt**

4.12 We have learnt from our previous equality and diversity schemes that we need to:

- be more consistent in collecting and using data to inform service development and change
- be better at communicating, consulting and engaging with the residents of Leicestershire
- make better use of the views of our staff, especially the Workers Groups, to help us shape service development and change
- pay particular attention to our duties and responsibilities under equalities legislation in relation to the contracting out of services
- improve representation at senior levels of the organisation so that it more fully reflects the community we serve
- ensure that all staff in all areas of the Council know about and have access to equality and diversity learning and development opportunities
- ensure that Elected Members have access to, and are encouraged to attend, equality and diversity learning and development opportunities
- improve and better co-ordinate our approach to Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's), and
- address the issue of lower success rates for certain groups when applying for jobs at the County Council.



4.13 All of the above have shaped the development of the 2008-2010 Equalities and Diversity Strategy.

**What do we need to do?**

4.14 Corporately we need to:

- be more consistent and better at communicating with all our residents to let them know what services are available and how they can access them;
- ensure that we understand the needs of our newest arrivals in the community, for example migrant workers from Eastern Europe and refugees and asylum seekers;
- be more sophisticated in our methods of consultation, engagement and involvement and ensure that all residents know how we have used their feedback to make changes to services or policies;
- support our staff as they manage external contracts to ensure services delivered through others meets the needs of our diverse community;
- ensure efficient and fair delivery of services through a well trained workforce knowledgeable about equality and diversity issues;
- improve minority ethnic representation at all levels and in all departments within the Council;
- further develop the Council's approach to the scrutiny of progress being made on equality and diversity; and
- strengthen our work with partners in the public sector to promote equality and diversity and to develop and share good practice.

4.15 At service level we need to:

- be more consistent and better at communicating with all our residents to let them know what services are available and how they can access them;
- continue to undertake robust and effective Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's) to enable us to better understand the needs of our diverse community;
- improve our data analysis in order to better understand who is and is not using our services and why;
- better engage and involve the community in the decision-making process;
- use the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) tool to more effectively identify service level equality objectives and targets;
- take positive action to make our workforce representative of our diverse community;
- strengthen individual Service Plans to contain equality and diversity priorities for action; and

- better promote the Council’s message on equality and diversity so that all members of staff better understand their roles and responsibilities.

4.16 In relation to our workforce, we need to:

- improve our communication with the workforce – in terms of both understanding their diverse needs and in terms of promoting the Council’s messages on equality and diversity;
- build capacity in the workforce (through, for example, Positive Action measures) in order that all staff have the opportunity to realise their potential and progress within the Council;
- address the issue of lower success rates for certain groups, such as members of the Black and Minority Ethnic community, who apply for County Council jobs, as highlighted by the annual workforce analysis;
- monitor and review the take-up of learning and development opportunities in order to take appropriate action to ensure all staff at all levels have access to these activities;
- actively support and promote our Workers Groups, and use them more effectively in the Council’s decision-making processes;
- improve take up of equality and diversity learning and development activities for all staff; and
- review employment policies and guidance to managers in line with the findings of the Equality Impact Assessments (EIA’s).

4.17 We therefore propose the following outcome and objectives:

Outcome	Objective
Demonstrable leadership and corporate commitment to equality and diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• complete all Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) as indicated in the 3 year schedule, quality assure them and establish process for their scrutiny</li> <li>• Cabinet reports to contain a section on EIAs</li> <li>• managers to undertake the “Managing Diversity” training</li> <li>• Elected members to undertake equality and diversity training</li> <li>• strengthen consideration of equalities and diversity issues in Partnerships</li> <li>• set up the Leicestershire Interfaith Forum</li> <li>• embed equality and diversity in partnership working and activities</li> <li>• tackle issues of myths and misinformation about certain sections of the community in a positive and proactive way</li> <li>• actively champion and raise awareness and understanding of equality and diversity issues in relation to employment and service delivery</li> <li>• support and organise activities and events to promote and celebrate diversity</li> </ul>
Improved Community engagement and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establish more effective mechanisms to positively</li> </ul>

accountability	<p>communicate the Council's messages on equality and diversity to employees, partner organisations and other stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify current consultation with communities at risk of discrimination with a view to establishing new approach to engagement and involvement to encourage active participation in the Council's decision-making processes</li> <li>• work with stakeholders to decide the right approach to scrutinising the Council's progress on equality and diversity</li> <li>• develop a thorough understanding of the needs of the Leicestershire community through targeted research</li> </ul>
Equality and Diversity reflected in service delivery and customer care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increase the number of hate incident reporting centres across the County</li> <li>• actively promote the importance of reporting all hate crime – racist, disablist, homophobic, sexist, ageist and religious</li> <li>• departments to better embed equalities and diversity in service planning</li> <li>• ensure fair and equitable access to our services</li> <li>• ensure equalities and diversity is embedded within the Council's procurement processes</li> <li>• ensure a more consistent approach to equality monitoring across the Council and partnerships, and ensure such information is used to inform policy development and service delivery</li> <li>• improve access to information about employment and services to employees/potential employees and customers/potential customers</li> <li>• ensure all policies and services are culturally appropriate and meet the needs of all sections of the community</li> </ul>
Employment practices and training to improve equality and diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increase the number of BME, Disabled people and women at senior levels in the authority</li> <li>• improve the intake of people from all sections of the community through improving the recruitment process</li> <li>• extend our workforce monitoring to include sexual orientation and religion or belief</li> <li>• improve our standing in the Stonewall Diversity Champions Employers Index</li> <li>• improve the work-life balance of our staff through the rolling out of the new Flexible Working Project, 'Work Wise'</li> <li>• continue positive action schemes for certain groups of staff</li> <li>• ensure all elected members, managers and staff are trained on equality and diversity issues and their responsibilities</li> <li>• support and develop the Workers group to enable them to become a crucial element of the consultation and service improvement mechanism</li> <li>• undertake an Equal Pay Audit</li> <li>• provide a voice for under-represented groups in the workforce</li> </ul>

Action Plans to support these objectives can be found on the Council's website at [www.leics.gov.uk](http://www.leics.gov.uk). And performance indicators are at Appendix 6.

## 5. Achieving our Outcomes and Objectives

5.1 We are already doing a lot and our achievements so far are set out in Appendix 5. In the future the following processes and activities will be used to achieve equality and diversity outcomes.

### Identifying which functions and policies are relevant to equality

5.2 The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006 all state that we must identify everything we do that is relevant to the duty to promote equality. This is called our 'assessment of relevance'.

5.3 We have revisited the initial assessment of relevance, produced for our first Race Equality Scheme in 2003, and have produced an updated version which includes an assessment against all six equality strands – race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief. This has been used to prioritise areas for Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and to develop a three-year timetable for their completion.

### Equality Impact Assessment

5.4 We need to be sure that what we do meets the needs of all members of our community. We need to be confident that the policies we develop do not mean a particular section of our community is treated unfairly or disadvantaged. We need to ensure that all our services, in terms of their design and delivery, are fair and accessible to everyone.

We have developed a process that enables us to check what we are doing for its impact on equality and diversity. We have called this process an Equality Impact Assessment or EIA.

An EIA will be carried out on:

- new functions, policies, procedures and services as they are developed;
- significantly altered functions, policies, procedures and services; and
- over time on existing functions and policies.

**Please note:** A new timetable of EIAs on existing functions, policies, procedures and services is currently being developed and will be appended to the strategy when completed.

5.5 Our EIA process considers all six strands of equality – race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief. The EIA Toolkit can be found on the Council's website<sup>10</sup>.

5.6 All completed Equality Impact Assessments will be published on the Council's website<sup>11</sup>. Summaries of completed EIAs and their action plans will be reported as part of the annual review of the Equality and Diversity Strategy.

<sup>10</sup> Search for 'EIA Toolkit' on [www.leics.gov.uk](http://www.leics.gov.uk)

<sup>11</sup> [www.leics.gov.uk](http://www.leics.gov.uk)

## **Service Planning and Monitoring**

- 5.7 Guidance has been produced to help departments identify and establish equality objectives and targets that will feed into the way they plan their services. This enables managers to consider how they will address equality and diversity issues that are impacting upon the way their service is being delivered or on a particular group of their employees.
- 5.8 One of our objectives is to better integrate equalities and diversity into the planning of our services and ensuring that it forms part of the corporate business planning cycle.
- 5.9 The Council recognises the importance of the equality monitoring of services and believes it is an essential part of service delivery and policy development. Without it, assessing the impact of services or policies on different sections of the community is extremely difficult. Monitoring lets the Council see how services have operated in the past and how policies have affected certain groups of people.
- 5.10 Some services have well established systems for the collection of monitoring data. These services tend to have on-going contact with people who use their services, for example, social services or education. Other services will not have close contact with the public and will need to think carefully about how they will collect this information.
- 5.11 Corporately produced guidance on equality monitoring has been developed to:
- assist service areas to introduce relevant equality monitoring systems
  - provide a basic framework for the collection of equality monitoring
  - offer advice on how equality monitoring data should be used to inform service planning and target setting
  - advise officers responsible for performance management of the need to monitor for equality, and
  - support the effective implementation of the Equality and Diversity Strategy.
- 5.12 We will be updating this guidance in accordance with new legislation and best practice. The new guidance will give consideration to equality monitoring in consultation exercises as well as in the planning of our services.
- 5.13 All services will be undertaking Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's) of their policies, procedures and operational service delivery practices. Reliable equality monitoring data is crucial to understanding the profile of the community, service users and non-users in order to provide services that better meet people's needs.

## **Consultation, Engagement and Involvement**

- 5.14 We are always looking for ways to improve the services we deliver to local people, which may result in us making changes to what we do and how we do it. It is possible that these changes may affect some people differently to others and result in changes to how people use a particular service.

5.15 To ensure that we are aware of the possible impacts of a change to existing policies and services on all members of our community, we undertake a careful assessment - Equality Impact Assessment or EIA - and consult carefully to ensure that we have a full understanding of the issues before implementing any changes.

5.16 The Council already has strong foundations in place for consulting with the public. These include:

- our Comprehensive Engagement Framework, which recognises the need and opportunities to engage with communities of interest and geography
- our Community Forums, of which there are 27 across the County
- Neighbourhood Forums in the 19 priority neighbourhoods
- the Leicestershire Together partnership
- the Citizens Panel, which is a representative sample of the County's population and which has been particularly valuable for one-off consultation work to find out what residents think of a particular issue
- CYCLe (the County Youth Council)
- The Older People's Network
- District-based Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs)
- Disabilities Partnership Board and Learning Disabilities Partnership Board
- the Leicestershire Ethnic Minorities Partnership (LEMP), and
- the Leicestershire and Rutland Ethnic Minority Forum.

5.17 The Leicestershire Together partnership has identified the need to better engage with communities of interest, including the Black and Minority Ethnic community, and actions to address this gap form part of the new Sustainable Community Strategy and the Leicestershire Together Engagement Framework. The new Leicestershire Together E-Magazine will allow us to get information about progress and projects out to a wider range of people.

### **Publishing the Results of Consultation, Involvement and Engagement Exercises**

5.18 We recognise the importance of not only communicating our clear commitment to equality and diversity but also the importance of keeping local people regularly informed of the progress being made and the outcomes being achieved. This includes opportunities for local people to take part in this work and help contribute to the improvements that the Council is seeking.

5.19 To help keep local people informed we do, and will continue to:

- share results with designated consultation groups
- provide direct feedback to people who have been involved in consultation exercises

- produce a detailed report of our progress against the equality and diversity objectives as part of the action plan and make this available on the website and in our public libraries
- publish information in service specific publications, newsletters and leaflets
- communicate face to face with local people and organisations through our local strategic partnership, the Leicestershire Together Partnership; particularly the Leicestershire Together Forum which involves a wide range of communities of interest
- report on the work we are doing to the Equality and Human Rights Commission, other Government agencies as well as partner organisations and other stakeholders
- produce an annual report summarising the progress and impact of the Equality and Diversity Strategy
- publish information on the Council website about our work to progress the equality and diversity agenda, and
- ensure that a number of reception centres hold leaflets on Council services and information on new initiatives including information in community languages.

5.20 Our aim is to publish the information required in the most customer friendly, accessible, practical and cost effective way and by:

- letter
- the media
- at public meetings
- email or text message
- telephone, using an interpreter if needed
- a summary report
- using appropriate and accessible multi-media

### **Access to Services and Information**

5.21 One of the Council's priorities is that all of our services should become fully accessible to all parts of the community in order to meet the commitments in draft Sustainable Community Strategy. Our programme of Equality Impact Assessments should highlight any factors which indirectly discriminate by making a particular service less accessible to particular groups, and we are committed to taking action to address any barriers experienced by any section of our community. Our initial Equality Impact Assessment on the Sustainable Community Strategy should help us and our partners to target particular activities.

5.22 Another way in which access to our services will be improved is through the Customer First Programme. This will make access to our services more flexible. It will provide customers with improved web, telephone and in-person access to obtain information and request Council services. The aim is to improve the Council's provision and accessibility of customer services through:

- defining the Council's services in a way that customers understand
- improving customer service skills to meet expectations

- creating a Council-wide systems infrastructure to support customer services staff
- providing extended telephone operating hours to customers, and
- improving the usability and functionality of the Council's website.

5.23 The revised Communication Strategy and Action Plan 2007-2010 outlines the Council's communication aims and sets out the Council's objectives and planned activities in all areas of corporate communication to 2010. The strategy was revised following the results of the recent Best Value User Satisfaction Survey, which identified communications as a priority area for improvement. A copy of the strategy and action plan can be found on the Council's website<sup>12</sup>.

### **Comments and Complaints**

5.25 The County Council provides a wide range of services to over 600,000 local people. Impacting on almost every aspect of life, these services include education, social care, roads, libraries and museums.

5.26 We always strive to provide services that are responsive and combine quality with value for money but can only achieve this if we listen to the views of local people who use them.

5.27 However, as with all providers of services, occasionally things do not go according to plan. To deal with this we have developed a procedure for handling complaints that is simple, speedy, flexible and regularly monitored. This approach to comments and complaints applies to our work that relates to equality and diversity.

5.28 We recognise and fully accept our responsibility to look closely at what we do to ensure that the residents of Leicestershire do not experience unlawful discrimination or barriers when trying to use our services. We know that sometimes discrimination can occur because of long standing ways of doing things, which can make it difficult for people to contact us or participate in engagement activities.

5.29 We want to ensure that any person who does experience difficulty knows how to raise their concerns and assert their rights through the Council's complaints process.

5.30 If anyone feels that they have not received the standard of service that they would expect or that the Council may not be providing an adequate service in a particular area, it would be best to try to resolve the issue with the relevant department. All the complaint would need to do would be to contact the department concerned, by letter, telephone, email, as a personal caller or by filling in a form on the Council's website<sup>13</sup>.

5.31 However, if anyone wanted the issue dealt with by the Chief Executive, all they would need to do would be to contact his department. Alternatively, they may contact the County Solicitor or ask their local County Councillor to help with their complaint. Names, addresses and contact numbers of County Councillors are listed on the Council's website or can be obtained from a local library or service shop, or by telephoning 0116 265 6002.

---

<sup>12</sup> [www.leics.gov.uk](http://www.leics.gov.uk)

<sup>13</sup> [www.leics.gov.uk](http://www.leics.gov.uk)



- 5.32 Leicestershire County Council has grievance and disciplinary procedures in place and has recently revised its policy on dealing with complaints of bullying and harassment relating to employees and service users. It also has a procedure for staff called “how to raise issues which cause you serious concern”. This procedure advises staff on how they can draw attention to issues of bad practice, possible fraud or corruption or other matters that seem to be against the interests of the public, the Council or its staff.
- 5.33 These procedures will be used as appropriate to investigate complaints relating to County Council employees in respect of responsibilities under equalities legislation and this strategy. The code of conduct for officers reinforces these procedures.
- 5.34 The Members’ Code of Conduct and Standards Committee provide the mechanisms to address complaints about the conduct of elected members.

### **Employment Monitoring**

- 5.35 We collect information about the profile of our workforce in terms of ethnicity, age, gender and disability on an annual basis. This includes an analysis of: pay grades, starters and leavers, grievance, disciplinary, harassment and bullying, training applications and training received, employees on career grades and undergoing probationary periods. We will also report on the profile of job applicants and their success rates. It is not possible to identify individuals through the data analysis.
- 5.36 The data is used to identify any differential impact of the Council's employment and recruitment practices on people from different groups, such as ethnic background. The Council takes steps to address any adverse findings as a result of this analysis. Once collated the information is made publicly available via the Council’s website<sup>14</sup>.
- 5.37 The systematic collection, analysis and publication of the monitoring information as required by equalities legislation, such as the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, have made a major contribution to our work in this area. It has identified issues that we need to address. More information on the information we regularly collect and analyse is in Section 11.
- 5.38 We have shared the information and analysis with the Council's Cabinet and Scrutiny Commission, Corporate Management Team, Departmental Management Teams, Equalities Board, Black Workers Group and with partners in the voluntary organisations who audited our performance against Level 2 of the Equality Standard, including Leicester and Leicestershire Racial Equality Council.

### **Issues arising from previous equality monitoring analysis**

- 5.39 The main issues arising from previous equality monitoring of employment related data are:
- There is a continuing trend of white applicants being more successful in their applications for employment than BME applicants - an analysis of applicants and appointees across departments indicates that this is occurring consistently across the Council
  - There has been an increase of 62% in the numbers of Black and Minority Ethnic employees since 2004

---

<sup>14</sup> as above

- There is significant variation between departments on the quality of applicant data. An improvement in the availability of applicant ethnicity information is likely to have an impact on the success rates
- The trend of white applicants being more successful than black applicants continues when internal applicants are applying for promotion
- Asian Indian and Other BME employees seem to be comparatively well represented at the junior professional/ supervisor level (grades 9-10). They are again under-represented in more senior positions within the organisation. However, there has been a small improvement in this area since 2006
- BME employees are generally a younger group than white employees, and
- The gender breakdown is similar for white and BME employees.

More detailed workforce profile information is available at Appendix 7.

5.40 The results of regular employment ethnic monitoring analysis has led to the Council undertaking further investigation of the issues and has resulted in the instigation of positive action measures. To date these include:

- Coaching in application and interview skills for black and minority ethnic employees, launched June 2007
- A corporate Mentoring project for BME and disabled employees, launched September 2006, and
- A register of trained employees from BME groups to take part in recruitment processes, launched June 2007.

5.41 The lower success rates of BME applicants is also a theme that will be addressed through the new Recruitment, Retention and Selection Strategy. Specific measures within this will include:

- Coaching on application skills in the community
- Wider take up of Recruitment and Selection Training, and
- A greater focus on advertising to BME groups.

5.42 The employment information will continue to be reported annually and will be used to inform the development of employment related equality objectives and targets as part of this Equality and Diversity Strategy.

### **Equality and Diversity Learning and Development for Staff and Elected Members**

5.43 The Council has recently produced an updated Equality and Diversity Learning and Development Plan 2007-2010 which communicates the provision of learning and development activity to support the organisation's objectives of promoting equality and diversity and tackling discrimination.

- 5.44 It contains courses to train staff on the race equality duties to ensure they are aware of the Council's responsibilities and their responsibilities as employees, and how it may relate to their work.
- 5.45 The plan clarifies the roles and responsibilities of line managers, employees and the learning and development functions in supporting learning to assist the organisation's commitment to ensuring equality and fair treatment for all.
- 5.46 All employees are expected to undertake some form of learning and development in relation to promoting equality and valuing diversity. To ensure accessibility to this learning by everyone, it is being delivered in a number of ways, including:
- attending face-to-face learning events delivered by trainers
  - self directed learning
  - e-learning
  - discussion in teams, and
  - engaging with community groups or other members of staff.
- 5.47 Managers are responsible for ensuring that members of their team have access to and receive the appropriate level of learning and development.
- 5.48 Equality and diversity has also been built into the Council's Management Competencies Framework.
- 5.49 Elected members are also required to undertake equality and diversity learning and development. As well as having access to the courses developed for staff, they receive regular written briefings on equality through the Members Information Service and there are plans to run workshops covering the specific equality themes of race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age and religion or belief.
- 5.50 Specific training on Equality Impact Assessments is provided to all staff that may be responsible for undertaking such assessments. This is run on a rolling basis throughout the year, based on need, and consists of a series of half-day sessions.
- 5.51 We will evaluate the overall equality and diversity learning and development programme on a yearly basis. If there is evidence to show that the training needs to be changed, we will take action to ensure that this happens.

### **Ensuring Equality and Diversity in Procurement**

- 5.52 A new Purchasing Guide has been produced to provide employees and contractors with practical advice and guidance on how to comply with the Council's contract procedure rules when completing any procurement exercise.
- 5.53 The Council recognises that equalities and diversity is a key procurement consideration and has produced specific guidance, forming part of the Purchasing Guide, on how to integrate equalities and diversity into the procurement process.

5.54 Equality in procurement involves ensuring not only that our suppliers are appointed fairly but also that there is equality in service delivery and that our suppliers practice equality in employment.

5.55 It is important that equality is integrated into the council's procurement policies and processes and not just merely an add on. Taking this approach will help us to deliver better services that meet the needs of the diverse community of Leicestershire by building into the contract equality requirements where relevant and then ensuring compliance.

5.56 Building equalities into the procurement process enables the Council to:

- improve the quality of services delivered by external providers
- make services more appropriate and responsive to the needs of the diverse communities of Leicestershire
- help improve overall value for money, and
- ensure that our suppliers follow good equalities practice.

### **Meeting our Employment Duties**

5.57 The Race Relations (Amendment) 2000 places specific duties on the County Council in relation to employment and staff training. It provides us with a framework for measuring how far black and minority ethnic people have equality of opportunity in public sector employment.

5.58 The County Council is committed to eliminating discrimination and promoting race equality and good race relations within employment. It has developed systems for monitoring and reporting information across a range of employment practice, which allows it to identify areas where there may be unfair discrimination on the basis of race.

5.59 The information will be used to inform the development of our policies and procedures. Our systems will be a key tool in enabling us to achieve our aim of a workforce that reflects the make-up of the population in Leicestershire at all levels of the organisation in terms of race as well as gender, disability, sexual orientation and age.

5.60 We currently collect workforce monitoring data for ethnicity, age, disability and gender on:

- (a) the numbers of:
  - (i) employees in post
  - (ii) applicants for employment, training and promotion, and
- (b) the numbers of employees who:
  - (i) receive training
  - (ii) benefit or suffer detriment as a result of performance assessment procedures
  - (iii) are involved in grievance procedures
  - (iv) are the subject of disciplinary procedures, and
  - (v) cease employment with the County Council.

5.61 We analyse and publish on our website<sup>15</sup> the full set of employment monitoring information by ethnicity on an annual basis, as required by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

### **The Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG)**

5.62 In order to achieve its overall commitment to equalities and diversity, the Council has adopted the Equality Standard for Local Government. The ESLG has been produced to provide a framework through which local authorities can meet their legal obligations under anti-discrimination legislation. It has five levels of achievement:

**Level 1** Commitment to a comprehensive Equality Policy

**Level 2** Assessment and consultation

**Level 3** Setting equality objectives and targets

**Level 4** Information systems and monitoring against equality targets

**Level 5** Achieving and reviewing outcomes

The County Council has achieved Level 2 of the ESLG and is seeking to achieve Level 3.

5.63 The ESLG has been designed to help Council's consider equality and diversity issues as a part of their everyday practice.

### **Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion**

5.64 Central Government is encouraging local authorities to work with partners from a range of statutory and voluntary agencies to develop cohesive communities where:

- everyone has a shared sense of belonging
- our differences are valued
- everyone can exercise their rights and recognises their responsibilities
- everyone has similar opportunities and life chances, and
- where our diversity is promoted as strength.

5.65 A recent report commissioned by the Government called 'Our Shared Future' recognised that cohesion is simply about how well we get on with each other and within communities. The Equalities Review report called 'Fairness and Freedom', published in 2007, highlighted the need to tackle specific inequalities in early years and education; employment, health, crime and criminal justice.

5.66 The Stronger Communities Board, which is led by the third sector, leads the development and implementation of work enhancing "social capital" and increasing the number and quality of volunteering opportunities across Leicestershire. The Board is also responsible for overseeing work around community cohesion, which will be more closely integrated with our work around equality and diversity in the future. We are currently producing a cohesion framework and delivering a range of projects including a "New communities welcome pack", myth-busting fact sheets and an annual inter-faith calendar.

5.67 The Board has produced a rolling Stronger Communities Strategy which is available at <http://www.ccp.org.uk/strongercommunitiesstrategy2008-.html>. The website also includes more information about social capital – "the glue that holds a community together and the

---

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.leics.gov.uk/your\\_Council/Council\\_plans\\_policies/race\\_equality.htm](http://www.leics.gov.uk/your_Council/Council_plans_policies/race_equality.htm)

resources and relationships to help it move on” and explore the relationship between social capital and community cohesion.

### **Older People**

- 5.67 The Council places a high importance on seeing older residents as active contributors to Leicestershire rather than just as service recipients. Four overarching priorities for older people have been identified:
- to develop partnerships in health and social care services
  - to improve engagement with older people
  - to support more older people to live at home, and
  - to maximise older people’s take up of benefits.
- 5.68 An additional number of priorities for older people have been agreed with strategic partners through the Local Area Agreement (LAA). A Countywide Integrated Partnership for Older People (CIPOP) is a cross-cutting multi agency group which involves older people and voluntary sector providers and brings together strategies from different agencies, including overseeing the LAA targets.
- 5.69 The Council commissioned an in-depth analysis of the older population in Leicestershire entitled “Ageing Well in Leicestershire” which highlights considerable implications for how public services will need to respond in future. This profile of older residents has been used to develop an Ageing Well Strategy which is currently being agreed through the Older People’s Network and with partner agencies (more information in section 6). This will be fed into the new Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS).

### **Children and Young People**

- 5.70 We recognise that there are some groups of children and young people who face particular barriers to success and we are committed to improving their life chances. We recognise and are confronting such issues as pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) being more likely to be excluded from school than non-SEN pupils and of mixed heritage pupils being more likely to be permanently excluded from school and not in education, employment or training than any other ethnic group. We are actively working in partnership with a number of partner organisations, such as Connexions, to identify ways to tackle these issues.

### **Equalities Legislation**

Legislation outlawing discrimination on the grounds of gender and race has been in force since the mid-1970s. More recently, legislation covering disability, religion or belief, age and sexual orientation has been introduced. This Corporate Equality Plan will help the authority to meet the requirements of current and future legislation on equality and diversity.

#### **Equal Pay Act 1970 (Amended)**

This gives an individual a right to the same contractual pay and benefits as a person of the opposite sex in the same employment, where the man and the woman are doing: like work; work rated as equivalent under an analytical job evaluation study; or work that is proved to be of equal value.

#### **Sex Discrimination Act 1975**

The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of sex. Sex discrimination is unlawful in employment, education, advertising or when providing housing, goods, services or facilities. It is unlawful to discriminate because someone is married, in employment or advertisements for jobs.

#### **Race Relations Act 1976**

The Act prohibits discrimination on racial grounds in the areas of employment, education, and the provision of goods, facilities, services and premises.

#### **Disability Discrimination Act 1995**

Outlaws the discrimination of disabled people in employment, the provision of goods, facilities and services or the administration or management of premises.

#### **The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999**

The Act seeks to prevent sex discrimination relating to gender reassignment. It clarified the law for transsexual people in relation to equal pay and treatment in employment and training.

#### **Race Relations Amendment Act 2000**

Places a statutory duty on all public bodies to promote equal opportunity, eliminate racial discrimination and promote good relations between different racial groups.

#### **Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulation 2003**

The directive protects against discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief in employment, vocational training, promotion and working conditions.

#### **Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulation 2003**

The directive protects against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in employment, vocational training, promotion, and working conditions.

#### **Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulation 2003**

Introduced new definitions of indirect discrimination and harassment, new burden of proof requirements, continuing protection after employment ceases, new exemption for a determinate job requirement and the removal of certain other exemptions.

#### **Civil Partnerships Act 2004**

Provides legal recognition and parity of treatment for same-sex couples and married couples, including employment benefits and pension rights.

**Gender Recognition Act 2004**

The purpose of the Act is to provide transsexual people with legal recognition in their acquired gender. Legal recognition follows from the issue of a full gender recognition certificate by a gender recognition panel.

**The Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005**

Introduces new definitions of indirect discrimination and harassment, explicitly prohibits discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity leave, sets out the extent to which it is discriminatory to pay a woman less than she would otherwise have been paid due to pregnancy or maternity issues.

**Disability Discrimination Amendment Act 2005**

Introduces a positive duty on public bodies to promote equality for disabled people.

**Employment Equality (Age) Regulation 2006**

Protects against discrimination on grounds of age in employment and vocational training. Prohibits direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation, harassment and instructions to discriminate.

**Equality Act 2006**

Establishes a single Commission for Equality and Human Rights by 2007 that replaces the three existing commissions. Introduces a positive duty on public sector bodies to promote equality of opportunity between women and men and eliminate sex discrimination. Protects access discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in terms of access to good facilities and services.

**Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006**

The Act seeks to stop people from intentionally using threatening words or behaviour to stir up hatred against somebody because of what they believe.



### **Our Equalities Policy Statement**

#### **Committed to equality of opportunity in employment and services**

The County Council wants to create a culture where people of all backgrounds and experience feel appreciated and valued. It is totally committed to achieving equality of opportunity in service delivery and employment. Citizens who access services, job seekers and employees will be treated fairly and without discrimination. Discrimination on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, sexuality, disability, age or any other unjustifiable criterion will not be tolerated.

The County Council is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination (including harassment of any kind). The Council will take appropriate action wherever instances of discrimination and harassment occur, in the delivery of services and in the course of employment. It will work tirelessly with its partners to develop effective procedures and policies to combat all forms of unlawful discrimination and to share good practice.

The Council will fulfil its legal obligations under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Equal Pay Act 1970 (as amended 2004), Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended 2000), the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Employment Equality (Sexuality) Regulations 2003, the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 and other European Union Employment Directives, such as that covering age.

#### **Delivery of Services**

Leicestershire County Council will ensure that all services are provided fairly and without discrimination. Reasonable adjustments will be made so that services are accessible to everyone who needs them. People's cultural and language needs will be recognised and services will be provided which are appropriate to these needs.

The County Council will monitor the take up of services from different sections of the Leicestershire population. The information collected will be used to inform service planning and delivery. Equality impact assessments (EIAs) will also be carried out on Council services to assess how services are provided to different sections of the community. The results of the EIAs will highlight areas for improvement, which will be dealt with through service plans.

Before awarding contracts enquiries will be made of potential contractors about their equality policies and practices. Contract documents will contain terms requiring contractors to comply with their statutory equality obligations and the Council's equality policies and practices.

Voluntary sector organisations grant aided by the County Council will be expected to have equal opportunities policies and procedures covering employment and service delivery. They will be expected to comply with their statutory equality obligations and the Council's equality policies and practices.

The County Council takes complaints seriously. Members of the public, including job seekers, who feel they have been unfairly treated, have the right to use the County Council's complaints procedure.

## **Employment**

The County Council will work towards creating a workforce which reflects Leicestershire's diverse population. It will ensure that no-one is unfairly discriminated against when applying for a job or during the course of their employment with the Council.

All employees have equal access to training and career development regardless of any of the considerations mentioned above. The training needs of particular groups of employees who are under-represented in specific occupations and management posts will receive positive attention.

Comprehensive monitoring of the workforce and job applicants by ethnic origin, gender and disability is undertaken and is published. Where required, we will consider introduction of monitoring in other equality areas. The purpose of monitoring is to evaluate the effectiveness of the Equal Opportunities Policy and take action where evidence shows unfair treatment or where particular communities are not adequately reflected within the workforce.

An employee who has a concern regarding unfair discrimination or harassment at work may use one of the County Council's formal procedures e.g. grievance, bullying and harassment. This does not affect an employee's right of reference to an employment tribunal within the statutory time limits.

### **Responsibilities of all County Council Employees**

The County Council requires all its employees to behave in ways that promote equality and are non-racist, non-sexist and generally non-discriminatory. This applies to the way they behave to members of the public in the delivery of services and to other employees in the course of their work.

Employees should participate actively in measures introduced by the County Council to ensure that there is equality of opportunity and non-discrimination. Employees should also draw the attention of management to alleged unlawful or unfair discriminatory acts or practices.

Should employees, through the course of their employment, be found to have caused or encouraged discrimination, this will be regarded as a particularly serious offence, rendering them liable to disciplinary action.

## Statement on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

This statement has been jointly agreed by management and the trade unions, who are equally committed to its implementation.

### 1. Leicestershire County Council recognises and values the diversity of its workforce.

- We are committed to creating an environment where the sexual orientation and gender identity of all workers and service users are respected, and where all are afforded dignity and equal rights.
- We also recognise and value the diversity of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people themselves, who are of every age, race, nationality, religion, disability, occupation, and family situation.

### 2. Leicestershire County Council recognises the existence of discrimination and prejudice

- We recognise that false assumptions, prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping are widespread in society and that to achieve our aim, we must take steps to actively promote equality and combat prejudice, discrimination and harassment.
- We will not make assumptions about people's sexual orientation, gender identity, relationships or caring responsibilities.
- We will not discriminate either directly or indirectly against job applicants or workers on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity, including in recruitment, selection, promotion, training, pay, conditions, leave or benefits.
- We will not discriminate either directly or indirectly on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity in the delivery of our services.
- We will not discriminate on grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity or marital/Civil Partnership status in the provision of family benefits or facilities for job applicants, workers or service users
- We will not tolerate prejudice or harassment.
- We will take seriously and investigate any complaints of discrimination or harassment, using the agreed procedures and respecting confidentiality.

### 3. Leicestershire County Council recognises the need to take positive steps to promote equality and tackle discrimination

- We will work with the trade unions to take positive action to redress past and present discrimination, both individual and institutional. All policies, procedures and practices will be regularly reviewed in consultation with the trade unions, for their impact on equality on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Our literature, language, publicity and images will reflect the diversity of the workforce, including LGBT members

- We will work to provide services accessible and appropriate to the diversity of LGBT service users.
- We will consult LGBT workers and service users on steps to equality.

#### **4. Leicestershire County Council recognises people's right to be open about their sexual orientation/transgender identity *and* their right to keep this confidential**

- We aim to provide a supportive environment for LGBT workers and service users who wish it to be known they are LGBT and respect the confidentiality of those who do not.
- We recognise that to out someone without their permission is a form of harassment and we will treat it as such.
- We recognise that this has implications for record keeping, for how some rights can be accessed and for how complaints of discrimination are reported and investigated.
- We will support workers undergoing gender reassignment and work with them and their trade union representative to agree a process for this in the workplace.

#### **5. Leicestershire County Council is committed to effective implementation and monitoring of steps to equality**

- We will publicise this statement widely and include it in our equality strategy and equality action plan.
- We will work with the trade unions to monitor and report on progress in achieving our aims.
- We will establish clear lines of responsibility and accountability and make sure they are well publicised.
- We will include these equality issues in existing training programmes, and run specific training where necessary.
- We recognise that effective implementation requires the full participation of the trade unions.
- We will make clear to contracting companies and external agencies that they are expected to demonstrate compliance with our equalities policies.

#### **Explanation of terms:**

**Sexual orientation** - defined in the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 as orientation towards persons of the same sex, the opposite sex or both sexes; in common language - lesbian/gay, straight or bisexual

**Gender identity** – the gender a person identifies with. This is not necessarily the same as the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Transgender person** - someone whose perception of their own gender differs from the sex they were assigned at birth

**Transsexual person** – legal/medical term for someone who lives permanently in their ‘new’ gender

**Gender reassignment** – the process of transitioning from the gender assigned at birth to the gender the person identifies with. This may (or may not) involve medical/ surgical procedures

**LGBT** – lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender

**To come out/be out** - to be open about your own sexual orientation or gender history

**To ‘out’ someone** - to reveal another person’s sexual orientation or gender identity without their consent.

**Direct discrimination** – less favourable treatment

**Indirect discrimination** – a provision or practice that everyone has to conform to, but which some groups cannot meet so easily

### Achievements

The following section gives some examples of the work that is already going on within the Council to tackle inequality, eliminate discrimination and promote diversity:

#### Consultation, Engagement and Involvement

The Council ran a Citizen's Jury for people from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities in November 2005. This was on behalf of Leicestershire Together (the Local Strategic Partnership). It enabled the Council and Leicestershire Together to develop a clear focus on the issues important to minority ethnic communities. A new group, "Citizens Eye", has been established to consider progress in tackling the issues identified by the Jury

There are established Black Workers and Disabled Workers Groups which play an active part in the development and scrutiny of Council policy and service delivery. Both are involved in the development of this strategy. A Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Workers Group is currently being established.

We have established a new Older People's Network that brings together representatives from local older groups across Leicestershire. The Network has identified several priorities they wish to see built into the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and are actively engaged in a range of planning and partnership boards where service developments are being agreed. The Council also provides support to the Leicestershire Ethnic Elders Forum which, supported by Age Concern, represents all minority groups and is currently undertaking research into the experiences of ethnic elders of community care services in Leicestershire.

In terms of what we're doing for younger people, the Council has adopted the nationally recognised 'Hear by Right' Standards. This means that we will actively involve children and young people in the decisions that affect their lives. This applies most particularly to the contribution of those groups of young people who are most likely to face inequality and discrimination.

Our County-wide Youth Council, CYCLe, aims to improve facilities in Leicestershire by bringing together young people and giving them a voice. The Jitty<sup>16</sup> is a website designed by young people, for young people and was one of the projects that came out of our Young Persons Citizens Jury.

#### Interpretation and Translation

The Council has developed and is implementing a policy on the provision of translation and interpretation services<sup>17</sup>. It sets out our commitment to making sure that there are no barriers stopping people from accessing our information and services, however it recognises the importance of learning the English language.

#### Tackling Hate Incidents

---

<sup>16</sup> The Jitty website is at [www.thejitty.com](http://www.thejitty.com)

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/your\\_Council/equality\\_and\\_diversity/interpretation](http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/your_Council/equality_and_diversity/interpretation)

Launched in 2007 the Hate Incident Monitoring Project (HIMP) is a multi-agency initiative to develop more effective reporting of hate incidents and to inform work undertaken across Leicestershire County in tackling hate incidents. The HIMP is an extension of the Racist Incident Common Monitoring Project but has a wider remit and incorporates monitoring of hate incidents across the county. The project monitors hate incidents perceived to be motivated by age, disability, gender identity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

### **Employment Positive Action Measures**

We have established a Representative Recruitment Panels' Register. This contains the names of some of our Black and Minority Ethnic employees who are all trained in recruitment and selection issues and who can be approached to take part in the recruitment exercise. The register has been well integrated into the recruitment process and selection process with 40% of panels being representative within the first 6 months of its operation.

We provide First Line Management Training for our black and minority ethnic and disabled aspiring managers. Already 19 black and minority ethnic employees, who are aspiring managers, have achieved a formal management qualification.

The Council has introduced a Mentoring Scheme and coaching in interview and application skills for our black and minority ethnic and disabled staff. The mentoring scheme has been running for 3 years now with a year on year increase in participation.

The Council is an age positive employer and it has adopted a 'no retirement age' policy for all employees which means that those wishing to continue in their employment after they have reached the age of 65 are able to do so.

As previously mentioned the Council has well established groups for disabled and black employees and is currently setting up a group for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Workers

### **Improving Access to Services/Meeting Individual Needs**

The Council has signed up to a national initiative that allows young people on the move, such as Traveller and Gypsy children or children from asylum seeker or refugee families, to return library materials to any library in the U.K. Arrangements will then be made to return the items to the originating library free of charge, and without overdue charges.

Leicestershire and Rutland Minority Ethnic Forum, which represents many of the local Black and Minority Ethnic communities and groups in the County, were consulted about the appropriateness of the 'meals on wheels' provision. Those consulted were unhappy with the community meals menu - lack of authenticity, content and that it was not freshly cooked. In response to the outcomes of this consultation, we have negotiated with the meals supplier who has introduced an improved menu and the issue of fresh cooked meals has been fed into the community meals review.

Following consultation with users of Library Services libraries have bought more Hindi periodicals and the Hindustani Times; increased the language stock on mobile libraries and has run introductory ICT beginner classes for Gujarati and Hindi speakers (in partnership with local adult learning services in Loughborough and Thurmaston). Additionally, a Gujarati and Hindi speaking book group has been set up to meet monthly at Loughborough library.

The Council is actively supporting the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Centre's groundbreaking conference, being held in Leicester on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2008. The 'A Life In A Day' conference is aimed at service providers in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors within Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. It will give delegates practical ideas to eliminate discrimination and make their services more welcoming to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people.

### **Addressing Culture and Cohesion Issues**

Surveys consistently identify bullying as a key worry for children and young people. In response to this, the Council developed an anti-bullying strategy which has achieved considerable success and is seen nationally (and internationally) as an example of good practice. The strategy covers all forms of bullying, including racist and homophobic motivated bullying. The 'R-Time' programme (a relationship programme helping students develop social and communication skills) is now used in over 175 primary schools and research has concluded that it has a positive effect on relationships and social inclusion.

Targeted work takes place for traveller children through the Traveller Education Service, ensuring those children have educational programmes in place whilst travelling. The service provides lap-tops to facilitate e-learning, allowing pupils to access the curriculum away from schools.

The Ethnic Minority Achievement Support Service is a small team that provides specialist support for newly arrived students knowing little or no English language. The team offers an initial assessment services which may lead to further support or advice and training as appropriate. This service is invaluable in providing support to minority ethnic pupils and their families.

We have just produced the final draft of a New Communities Welcome Pack, incorporating the IDeA model, which provides a wealth of basic information about life in Leicestershire.

### **Tackling Myths and Misinformation**

An exhibition ran at Leicestershire's Record Office from 1 May to 15 June 2007 to celebrate the history and lives of gypsies and travellers entitled 'The Thousand Year Story: Gypsies and Travellers in Leicestershire' told of the origins of Gypsies in India and of their migration across Europe. Arriving in England in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, they travelled the country, as entertainers, or earning a precarious living by selling and repairing small items for the settled community. Some of the historic documents, many of which were loaned by members of the local Gypsy and Traveller community, recording Gypsies in Leicestershire and Rutland from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, were on display.

An event on 19 May 2007 entitled 'A Life on the Road' provided a unique opportunity to find out about the lives of Leicestershire's Gypsies and Travellers. A member of a local Gypsy family spoke about life on the road, life on the sites, about what is important to her and her family and what she thinks of non-Gypsies. There was archive film of the old horse fair at Belton, music and an appearance by the Dancing Dolls who entertained with stories of Gypsy life.

The Youth Service established Dreamers in 2002 in response to concerns about young asylum seekers and refugees and their increasing marginalisation and media generated prejudice. Dreamers offers young asylum seekers educational opportunities that support their integration into the wider community. The group also seeks to educate the wider community about young asylum seekers. The group currently supports over 90 young people from Iraq,



Iran, Somalia, Eritrea, Kosovo, Albania, Syria, Lebanon and Afghanistan. The project has achieved national recognition for its good practice.

The Factory Project works to ensure the voice of Asian young men gets heard. It is based in Loughborough with 72 registered members. The project secured funding to develop a peer education project which enabled a team of young men to visit other youth groups to talk about British Asian Culture and Islam. The peer education team offers an opportunity for positive dialogue and interaction.

We are in the process of developing a series of “myth-busting” factsheets for use in a wide range of settings, including schools.

### **Celebrating Diversity**

Events to celebrate cultural diversity, for example Diwali and Eid, are held annually at libraries across Leicestershire. As part of Family Learning Week, dual language storytelling and a World Dance event was arranged. As part of Adult Learning Week, a Cultural Diversity Day was held which included activities and workshops reflecting the cultural diversity of the community.

Leicestershire 2000 years of cultural diversity exhibition draws on museum objects to show how our present cultural landscape is drawn from influences across the world (i.e. no such thing as Englishness). This exhibition tours the county in non-museum and non-traditional venues.

Events and activities, supported by the Council, were planned across Leicestershire to mark and celebrate Islam Awareness Week. Islam Awareness Week was initiated in 1994 as a national project of the Islamic Society of Britain (ISB). With activities in over 30 towns/cities across the UK, the week aims to help remove misconceptions about Islam and to increase understanding amongst local communities. The Chairman of the Council unveiled a bench at Watermead Country Park in honour of this year’s theme for Islam Awareness Week - One World: Our Children: Our Future.

### **Working with Faith Communities**

During 2007 preparatory work took place to set up an Interfaith Forum for Leicestershire. A meeting with people of Hindu, Christian, Muslim, Sikh, Jain, Jewish and Pagan faiths was held to discuss the possibility of a Forum and the proposal received widespread support.

The Leicestershire Interfaith Forum offers a structured way of engaging with people from these, and other faith communities, and one of the things flowing from it will be a more systematic approach to the promotion of awareness and the understanding of different faiths.

### **Delivering improved outcomes**

In Leicestershire we measure the success of our Equality and Diversity Strategy through the outcomes that are achieved for our local community. These outcomes are measured in a variety of ways, including attainment, satisfaction, service take-up, employment data and the achievement of wider quality of life outcomes. These are closely monitored through the Council’s performance management arrangements and are increasingly subject to third party assessment.

**national**

Achieved Level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government

**standards:**

The Times Best Big Council Award 2007

Two Ticks accreditation for disability employment practice

Winner of the Remploy Leading the Way award in employing disabled people (2005 and 2006)

Stonewall Diversity Champion

A 4 star, improving strongly ranking in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment

**Examples of improving outcomes**

**better outcomes for children and young people:**

Bullying of primary school age children reduced by 15% between 2002 and 2006, and 10% for secondary school age young people between 2003 and 2006

Reduced by 36 the numbers of young people aged 15 and 16 entering care in 2006/7

Proportion of young people leaving care with 1 or more GCSEs at Grade A\* to G has increased from 38.6% in 2005/6 to 46.5% in 2006/7

Decreasing numbers of young people not in employment, education or training falling 18% between March 2006 and March 2007 to 6.2%

Increased take-up of early years provision amongst Bangladeshi families following intervention

Increase of 32% in take-up of youth activities by vulnerable groups; the number of young people with learning difficulties or disabilities who are involved has increased by 98% since 2005/6

**better outcomes in reporting hate incidents and reducing crime:**

27 agencies registered as hate incident reporting centres

13% increase in the number of hate incidents reported to the police during 2006/7 compared to 2005/6

Significant reductions in the percentage of people who felt that Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) was a problem across the County, falling from 31% in 2003/4 to 17% in 2006/7

**better outcomes in social care:**

Greater numbers of older people received intensive home care services in 2006/7

Set up a Direct Payments service to allow Disabled people to take control of their own lives and have increased the number of people receiving Direct Payments to 548 at the end of January 2008

Increasing the number of disabled people entering open employment through the Supported Employment Scheme

**better outcomes  
in culture:**

Over 91% of Black and Minority Ethnic service users rated their library as being 'Very good' or 'Good'

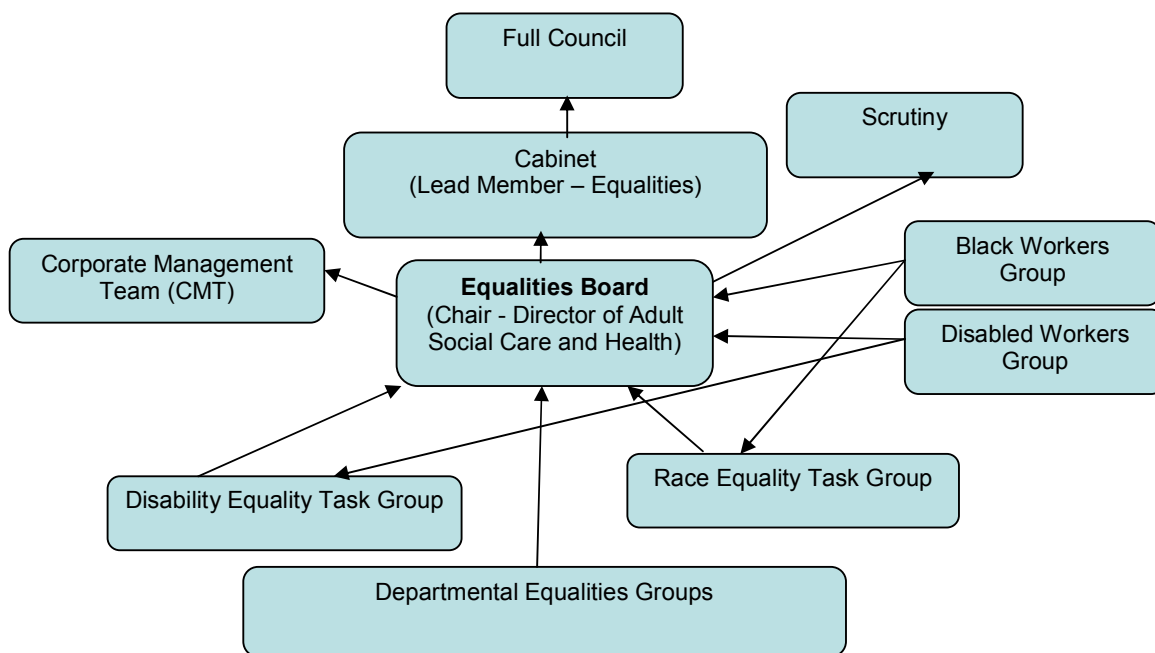
A similar percentage of disabled service users, over 91%, also rated their library as being 'Very good' or 'Good'

## Equality and Diversity Responsibility and Accountability

The County Council has overall statutory responsibility for the Equality and Diversity Strategy. The Chief Executive and Chief Officers are responsible for ensuring that the strategy is implemented corporately and within departments.

Responsibility for equality issues has been assigned to a named Cabinet Lead Member. An Equalities Board has been established and is made up of senior managers from all departments. It is chaired by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health, who is accountable for overall equalities issues at Corporate Management Team level reporting to the Cabinet Lead Member for Equalities.

### Equalities Reporting Structure at Leicestershire County Council



### Our equality reporting processes

Key reports such as the Equality and Diversity Strategy are discussed with the Corporate Management Team and submitted to the Council's Cabinet for decision. The views of the relevant Scrutiny body are also invited. Employment issues arising from the Scheme will be referred to the Employment Committee as necessary.

We will produce an annual report on our progress in meeting our duty to promote equality and diversity. The report will be submitted to the Equalities Board, Cabinet and relevant Scrutiny body and to the Employment Committee as necessary.

## Proposed Performance Indicators for Equality and Diversity

We are proposing that the following Performance Indicators to measure our progress towards achieving equality are embedded into our performance framework.

Category	Performance Indicator
National Standards	Level of the Equality Standard for Local Government achieved
Attitudes and perceptions	Perceptions that people in the area treat one another with respect and consideration
Satisfaction	% of citizens satisfied with the overall service provided by their authority
	% of complainants satisfied with the handling of their complaint
Hate Incidents	Reporting and recording of all hate incidents
Access to Services	Fair treatment by local services (disaggregated by equality strand)
Community Cohesion and Engagement	% of people who feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds can get on well together
	% of respondents who feel they belong to the local area
	% of adults surveyed who feel that they can influence decisions affecting their local area
	% of people who feel that Leicestershire is a place where local ethnic and other differences are respected
Workforce	%age of employees with a disability
	%age employees from black and minority ethnic communities
	Top 5% earners: women
	Top 5% earners: black and minority ethnic
	Top 5% earners: with a disability
	% staff who believe that their managers treat them with fairness and respect
	% staff who believe that the organisation is committed to equality and diversity

## **Leicestershire County Council - Workforce Profile**

**[Workforce information for Leicestershire County Council will be inserted here]**

ਜੇ ਆਪ ਆ ਮਾਭਿਨੀ ਆਪਨੀ ਆਖਾਮਾਂ ਸਮਝਵਾਮਾਂ ਥੋੜੀ ਮਦਦ ਈਝਨਾਂ ਭੀ ਤੇ  
0116 305 6029/305 7446 ਨੰਬਰ ਪਰ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਫ਼ਰੀਓ ਅਨੇ ਅਮੇ ਆਪਨੇ ਮਦਦ ਫ਼ਰਵਾ ਆਵਝਯਾ ਫ਼ਰੀਯੁੰ.

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਿਚ ਕੁਝ ਮਦਦ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ  
0116 305 6029/305 7446 ਨੰਬਰ ਤੇ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਅਤੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਮਦਦ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਰ ਦਵਾਂਗੇ।

এই তথ্য নিজের ভাষায় বুঝার জন্য আপনার যদি কোন সাহায্যের প্রয়োজন হয়, তবে  
0116 305 6029/305 7446 এই নম্বরে ফোন করলে আমরা উপযুক্ত ব্যক্তির ব্যবস্থা করবো।

假如閣下需要幫助，用你的語言去明白這些資訊，請致電  
0116 305 6029/305 7446，我們會安排有關人員為你提供幫助。

Jeżeli potrzebujesz pomocy w zrozumieniu tej informacji w Twoim języku,  
zadzwoń pod numer 0116 305 6029/305 7446, a my Ci dopomożemy.



County Hall, Glenfield, Leicestershire LE3 8RA  
[www.leics.gov.uk/equality\\_and\\_diversity](http://www.leics.gov.uk/equality_and_diversity)