

Annual Review of Equality Objectives

May 2014

Introduction

Herefordshire Council has produced and monitored Equality Objectives since they came into force through the Equality Act in 2012.

The Equality Act imposes a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) on public service providers when exercising public functions to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

The Equality Act imposes further duties to enable the authority to demonstrate its performance, and these are referred to as “specific duties”. The specific duties require local authorities to:

1. Publish information to show their compliance with the Equality Duty, at least annually

What we have done:

- Published equality data (January 2014)
- Published our achievements for Jan-Dec 2013

2. Set and publish equality objectives, at least every four years.

What we have done:

In 2012 Herefordshire Council committed to focus on improving outcomes for employees and residents by working on the following equality objectives:

1. Improve workforce data and analysis
2. Embed equality and human rights throughout the organisation
3. Achieve greater engagement between Herefordshire Council and minority groups
4. Ensure that organisations delivering services on our behalf pay ‘due regard’ to their own impact on the community

This report provides the annual update of progress towards these objectives.

It is worth noting that, when originally drafted, these objectives were intended to extend to both Herefordshire Council and NHS Herefordshire. However there have been significant changes in local government, and the restructure of public services has resulted in this document applying to Herefordshire Council only.

Objective 1: Improve workforce data and analysis

Why: To ensure that our workforce broadly mirrors the communities it serves so that service improvement reflects their needs

When: By January 2013

What we set out to do:

- Introduce software which allows employees to update their own record
- Improve the accuracy of the data collected about new employees
- Analyse workforce data to determine if action should be taken

What we have done

The organisation introduced new computer software to manage our workforce data. This allowed individual members of staff to update their own personnel record with information about their personal identity.

However this is no longer available to individual members of staff due to development of the software, and the information needs to be updated centrally rather than by individuals. So Human Resources are working on updating records in batches in order to produce more comprehensive data.

Where it is provided, diversity data is collected and recorded for everyone who starts to work for us.

We annually publish our Workforce Analysis (click [here](#) to see the 2014 version).

Currently, no process is in place to analyse our employees' diversity data, however we are able to pull out information relating to particular groups as required (eg. the % of top-paid 5% of staff who are women).

Objective 2: Embed equality and human rights throughout HPS

Why: To ensure that employees understand their rights and responsibilities, and so that everyone across the organisation will aim to make our information and services more accessible to the people we serve

When: By March 2013

What we set out to do:

- Complete an Equality Analysis for all new or changing services or policies
- Deliver an Equality and Diversity e-learning package to all staff and Members
- Ensure that all employees understand the full scope of "reasonable adjustments" so that individuals are given the support they need in the workplace

What we have done

We have continued to update our Equality Analysis guidance for employees, and to support and advise managers who are responsible for reviewing policies or services.

In January 2014, an Equality Analysis was carried out which looked at the potential impact of the Council's budget proposals as a whole.

Managers who send proposals for change to the Council's Cabinet are now required to complete a new template report form. This incorporates Equality and Human Rights, obliging them to pay due regard to these considerations, and how their proposal might impact on minority groups.

Two e-learning packages are now live and form part of the mandatory training for all staff. They are:

- Equality and diversity (incorporating the Public Sector Equality Duty)
- Prevent (the Government's counter-terrorism programme)

We have ensured that equality is mainstreamed throughout our Human Resources policies including consideration for flexible sickness leave and disability leave.

We have delivered bespoke training sessions for service managers to help them understand their responsibilities regarding "reasonable adjustments".

Objective 3: Achieve greater engagement between HPS and minority groups

Why: To build our communities' trust and confidence in us, and to give us a better understanding of their priorities and issues

When: By March 2013

What we set out to do:

- Use consultation and feedback to better understand what's happening locally
- Engage community leaders and multi-disciplinary groups in the specific issues relating to their particular geographical area

What we have done

All community cohesion work is now undertaken by the Community Safety Partnership, of which Herefordshire Council is a member. The work is funded by the Police Crime Commissioner.

One of the priorities identified for the Community Safety Partnership in 2013/14 is "empowered localities", and the project designed to deliver this priority is called "Building Community Bridges". This project will aim to deliver the following initiatives which will contribute to the overall cohesiveness of Herefordshire's minority and emerging groups:

1. "Here for all" newspaper
2. Empowering Generations Partnership
3. Herefordshire "Chatterbox"
4. "No Prejudice" campaign in schools
5. Values Partnership Board (to challenge hate crime/incidents and promote cohesion through "FACE" (fairness, acceptance, community, equality))

[The Herefordshire Community Safety Strategy can be viewed by clicking here.](#)

Objective 4: Ensure that organisations delivering services on our behalf pay "due regard" to their own impact on the community

Why: To ensure that our partners consider the needs of diverse groups in the community when designing and delivering their services, and also to ensure that our procurement process is compliant with the Equality Act

When: By March 2013

What we set out to do:

- Make our tendering specifications clearer to include what we expect from organisations with whom we work
- Include information in the specification about the Public Sector Equality Duty and how it will affect them
- Introduce and enforce robust monitoring arrangements

What we have done

Tendering specifications require organisations to provide information about their compliance with the Equality Act.

Comprehensive guidance is available to help commissioners make good decisions and ensure that they understand what to look for in partner organisations.

What next

Herefordshire Council has gone through significant change since 2012; we are a smaller organisation with reduced resources, and have had to redefine our priorities.

Over the next 12 months:

Objective 1

- We will continue to improve our workforce data and analysis.
- We will profile our staff at different grades, levels and rates of pay including any patterns of occupational segregation and part time work.
- We will continue with the work we are doing around the “employee lifecycle”, and continue to improve the data we have on our employees at different stages of the employment relationship, including:
 - Recruitment
 - Training
 - Promotion
 - Leavers
 - Complaints and grievances

Objective 2

We will continue to embed equality and human rights throughout the organisation, to ensure that we understand our duty to have “due regard” when making decisions, and in our day-to-day activities.

- We will publish Equality Impact Assessments when making decisions.

- We will monitor these Impact Assessments through the governance process.

Objective 3

We will support the Community Safety Partnership’s “Building Community Bridges” project. This has been funded to develop and embed a culture of community cohesion and integration in Herefordshire, which will lead to a greater understanding and tolerance of various communities within the county. In particular it will support Black, Asian and other Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, disabled people and others who might be subject to hatred.

The project is to support more cohesive communities and to enable a transition from “doing for” communities to supporting communities confident to “do” for themselves.

Objective 4

We will monitor our procurement process to ensure:

- A clearer understanding of the needs of service users resulting in better quality services.
- More effective targeting of resources.

We will continue to review our equality objectives annually.



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