The Corporate Equality Plan

Equality Information
January 2018
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Cllr Allison Bucknell, LGBT forum and colleagues raising the flag for LGBT History Month with David Payne, Chair of the LGBT Forum in Wiltshire, February 2018. There was also a display in the Atrium.
Introduction

At Wiltshire Council, equality and inclusion is embedded into everything we do.

At Wiltshire Council we take the approach that equality and inclusion should be part of our mainstream work, we challenge issues where we find them and provide support and education.

Elected members and staff need to work together to ensure that Wiltshire Council, as a major employer, leads the way in providing employment and services which are inclusive and fit for purpose.

Our Equality statement outlines how we are firmly committed to the principles of equality and inclusion in both employment and the delivery of services. We are keen to celebrate the diversity of people who live and work in Wiltshire.

This information booklet provides detailed examples and case studies of how Wiltshire Council is applying the three strands of our Public Sector Equality Duty.
Wiltshire Council Equality Statement

Our Commitment to Equality and Inclusion

The council is firmly committed to the principles of equality and inclusion in both employment and the delivery of services. We are keen to celebrate the diversity of people who live and work in Wiltshire.

This means making our services accessible to all, treating people fairly and providing a fully inclusive working environment.

We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination and are committed to building a workforce which broadly reflects the diversity of the local community. By working with partner agencies, organisations and community groups, we can promote equality and inclusion within Wiltshire.

To reflect this commitment and our Public Sector Equality Duty obligations under the Equality Act, we work to the following principles:

- The information that we provide through our website will be continually improved so that it better reflects the diversity of the local community and is accessible
- We will pay due regard to equality and inclusion issues in all our decision making, including when we develop new policies and when carrying out large programmes of work (e.g. transforming services, building new homes)
- When working with partners, including contractors, we will continually ensure that robust consideration is given to equality and inclusion issues
- Our service provision will become more inclusive through actively monitoring and responding to the needs and preferences of our diverse community
- We will actively engage and empower under-represented groups through the broadening of our consultation processes and the strengthening of our links with community representatives
- We will build a workforce that can broadly reflect the diversity of the local community, improving access to careers within the council
- To improve the way we provide services, equality and inclusion will be embedded in the practice of staff and managers through training, monitoring and development
The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 came into effect on 1 October 2010 and it legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society.

It brought together many different bits of equality legislation, replacing previous anti-discrimination laws with a single act, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations. It sets out the different ways in which it’s unlawful to treat someone.

The act contains three general duties:

• Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
• Advance equality of opportunity
• Foster good relations between people

The act protects people from discrimination based on ‘protected characteristics’* in the receipt of services and in employment. These are:

• Age
• Disability
• Gender reassignment
• Pregnancy and maternity
• Marriage and civil partnership
• Race, ethnic or national origin
• Religion or belief
• Sex (female/male)
• Sexual orientation

*Carers and the military are protected under the Equality Act by ‘association’ and/or ‘perception’ but are not a protected characteristic in their own right
What is our Public Sector Equality Duty?

“The Three Strands”

- To foster good relations
- To eliminate discrimination
- To provide equality of opportunity

On 5 April 2011, a new Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) was introduced as part of the Equality Act. There are two ‘specific duties’ that are part of our PSED

The first requirement (starting 31st January 2012 for most public bodies, 6th April 2012 for schools) is to publish on an annual basis, relevant, proportionate information relating to:

- Employees who share protected characteristics (for public bodies with 150 or more employees);
- People who are affected by the public body’s policies and practices who share protected characteristics (for example, service users)

The second requires public bodies to prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives which will help them to further the three general duties. This requirement came into effect on the 6th April 2012 and is required to be reviewed and re-published every four years.

Our organisational approach to delivering equality – what are we doing?

Equality and inclusion underpins all of the council’s business and is integral to Wiltshire Council’s Business Plan 2017-2021.

Embedding equality and inclusion throughout the council's business is critical to achieving our overall vision.

The Business Plan states:

“We want to make it easy for everyone to participate and engage in their community and in public services and decisions that will affect their local areas. We want to help communities and local organisations to experiment with new innovative solutions to local issues.”

Measuring success is about how we know that we are performing well and moving in the right direction in order to achieve the vision to create stronger and more resilient communities. To measure our success a number of relevant performance measures have been selected to measure delivery of each outcome and the business plan overall. A subset of these measures is made available on Wiltshire Council’s Citizens’ Dashboard.

The external pressures that will have an impact on future demand, identified during the service planning process, are reviewed while preparing the council’s budget for the following year in
order that the council can plan to minimise the impact of required savings on vulnerable groups.

Complementary to this is the council’s Behaviours Framework. This Behaviours Framework underpins the principles set out within the business plan which guides the way we carry out business. This is a set of positive behaviours which applies to all employees and describes how staff are expected to carry out their work for Wiltshire Council.

The Behaviours Framework is embedded throughout the organisation – from job descriptions, during recruitment and interview, appraisal stages and performance management. Links are made with corporate learning and development opportunities. Explicit to the framework is ‘Trust and Respect’ which articulates the need to ‘...promote the values of diversity.’

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the council and organisations carrying out services on our behalf (e.g. our contractors and our delivery partners) to have to consider the needs of individuals in their day to day work. The way that Wiltshire Council demonstrates this is by completing individual Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) on the delivery plans for the respective budget decisions at the stage when plans for implementation are drawn up. These will be made available during the decision making process so that the full equality implications of proposals are understood, inform final decisions and due regard is paid to the Equality Duty.

EIAs are public documents and can be requested if not available on our website.

You will also find the outcomes from EIAs within all our committee papers to ensure our elected councillors understand the impact of decisions we make on different groups.

Internally, Wiltshire Council has developed a “Staff Voices” network. This followed a review of the existing three staff forums, which was carried out to ensure staff representation remained effective and relevant. We still maintain three groups representing some of the protected characteristics. These are the Black and Minority Ethnic network (BME), employees who are Carers and Disabled network, and a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT+) Network whose membership is extended to those working in any public sector organisation across Wiltshire and Swindon, including Wiltshire Police.

Staff voices was launched formally in October 2017 with a seminar attended by members, staff and senior managers. The event highlighted the importance of inclusive leadership and management through story-telling from members of the staff network. A further event is scheduled for May 2018 with a focus on unconscious bias. In addition to specific work that each of these networks will continue to do, the Staff Voices network will open up the issue of equality and diversity to all staff, with the aim of promoting diversity and inclusion across the organisation. Regular consultation and engagement will continue to take place with the network and they will be supported by the Corporate Office Team.

Specific task and finish work that has been looked at improving by the networks include:

- Evacuation (fire/bomb) procedures for those with a mobility impairment
• Consistency of the application of HR policies for staff (e.g. carers' leave, flexible working)

• Improving the content around our promotion of equality on the recruitment and careers webpages

• To ensure we are complying with our duty as an employer to make reasonable adjustments for our staff, the staff carers and disability network advised on the revision of our reasonable adjustment process

**Partnership working:**

Wiltshire Council is also a proactive member of the South West Equalities Network (of local authorities). There is a clear focus amongst practitioners within the south west to share information and to draw upon professional expertise nationally and locally to improve working practices. Information around performance against the PSED is shared regionally to support individual organisational improvements.


**Wiltshire Council Corporate Equality and Diversity Steering group:**

The Equality and Diversity steering group was set up to support Wiltshire Council with its commitment to integrate Equality and Diversity throughout its services and to help secure its vision of creating stronger, more resilient communities. The steering group provides guidance and advice on matters relating to equality and diversity to all areas within the council. This is achieved by:
• Providing a steer on the delivery of the council's aspirations and obligations in relation to equality and diversity. (This includes the development and progress reporting on
  o **Wiltshire Council's Equality Objectives**

• Facilitating communication, debate and dialogue at a strategic and service level relating to equality and diversity issues

• Identifying improvements needed to achieve the council’s aspirations and obligations in relation to equality and diversity and to monitor progress made

• Using the expertise within the group to find practical solutions to any barriers that may present themselves in delivering the council’s aspirations and obligations around equality and diversity

• Identifying and communicating examples of good practice and support continuous improvement

• Sharing and exchanging information, expertise, advice and guidance across the council from which all can learn and develop

• Promoting the need for fairness, justice and equality of access to services for all

The group consists of representation from all areas across the council.
Who we serve
A summary of information by protected characteristic groups

- Wiltshire Council is a unitary authority created in 2009 from the former county council and four district councils. The council delivers services across 20 community areas and with 5,270 employees (excluding schools)

- Wiltshire has a total population of 471,000 persons, making it the fifth largest authority in the south west. Over the period Census 2001 to Census 2011, Wiltshire’s population growth was 8.8%, higher than England’s at 7.9% and higher still than the south west’s growth at 7.3%.

- The percentages of **men and women** in Wiltshire are roughly equal (49.2% and 50.8%) although more women feature in the older (85+) age ranges (see below)

**Age:** The Census 2011 estimates show that:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Wiltshire</th>
<th>South West</th>
<th>England</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>Retirement age and above</em></td>
<td>21.15%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Working age (15-65)</em></td>
<td>60.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td>29%</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Under 15 years old</em></td>
<td>18.0%</td>
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Wiltshire’s population is set to increase by just over 10.4%. The fastest population increase has been, and will continue to be, in the number of people aged 85 years and over. There are currently more than twice as many females as males in this population group.

**Unpaid care:**

<table>
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<th>Carers’ health – bad or very bad*</th>
<th>Ratio women men – providing</th>
<th>Carers from BME</th>
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<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
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Those providing **unpaid care** constitute just over 10% of the general population.
All data, unless quoted otherwise, taken from analysis of the census 2011

*There is little % difference in ‘bad/very bad’ health status between men and women

**Ethnicity:**
By examining the 2011 census against the 2001 census, it is suggested that Wiltshire has become more diverse:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>2001 census – White population</th>
<th>2011 census – White population</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wiltshire</td>
<td>96.20%</td>
<td>93.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England and Wales</td>
<td>80.50%</td>
<td>80.50%</td>
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‘Other White’ was the second highest group with 12,108 people (2.57%); the nature of Wiltshire’s minority ethnic population has changed from a largely Asian or Asian British grouping since 2001 to an Eastern European grouping where Polish migrants feature prominently.

The number of those classifying themselves as from a ‘mixed’ background increased by just over 0.5% from 2001-2011 with the Black African population growing significantly over this period also. There is a long history of some minority communities in Wiltshire – for example, Polish in Westbury, Moroccan in Trowbridge and Gypsy Traveller communities in the South of the county. We also know that 2.5% of those aged three and over do not have English as a first language (see Schools Equality Information Report for further breakdown of languages spoken).

**Health:**
There are 75,000 people in Wiltshire who are limited in daily activities because of a health problem or disability:

```
6.7% limited 'a lot'
9.3% limited 'a little'
84% other responses
```

The figures above are below the England and south west averages.

**Sexual orientation and gender:**
Data around sexual orientation (heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual) and gender reassignment was not collected as part of the Census 2011. However, there are a number of national pieces of research which can help Wiltshire understand potential population statistics:
• Data from the Office for National Statistics shows in 2016, just over 1 million (2.0%) of the UK population aged 16 and over identified themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB).
• GIKES (the Gender Identity Research and Education Society) puts the number of people living with some form of ‘gender variance’ in the UK as approximately 1.3%.

If applied to the general population figures for Wiltshire, this would mean that just over 5,000 people would identify themselves as Gay or Lesbian with nearly 2000 identifying as Bisexual and 4,700 as Trans* (across a wide spectrum of gender variance). The workforce report also extrapolates these national figures for estimating numbers of staff who could be Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Trans*.

Religion and belief:
The predominant religion in Wiltshire is Christian (64%) followed by ‘other religions’ (0.5%) and Muslim (0.4%). There are active Muslim community groups and religious bases in Trowbridge and Salisbury.

Marriage and Civil Partnership:
A very small percentage (0.1%) of those 16 years and over in Wiltshire are in a civil partnership. 43% of those aged 16 years and over are married which is slightly higher than the south west and England averages.

Military:
Military personnel constitute around 3.5% of the total population and the total number of military personnel and their dependents is estimated to be around 30,000 (6.4%). There is a strong link between population concentrations of Gurkha (Nepalese) and Black African-Caribbean and the military bases in Wiltshire. Wiltshire has the highest concentration of Polynesian residents outside of London and again, this is linked to Wiltshire’s military presence. There will also be an increase in military personnel as a result of the Army Basing Programme which will bring approximately 7,600 additional service personnel and their families to Wiltshire.

Deprivation:
While Wiltshire is generally less deprived than England as a whole, the county has seen an increase in relative deprivation and in 2010, for the first time, had one Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) in the 10% most deprived in England: Salisbury St Martin Central.

For further information, please see: Wiltshire’s Joint Strategic Assessment which brings together key evidence and analysis by theme and the Equality in Wiltshire sections of the Intelligence website.
Understanding how our services affect the community is paramount to effective decision making. To ensure we are able to take into consideration the views of the community, Wiltshire Council undertakes a process of equality analysis. Equality analysis involves considering how decisions made and services delivered affect people who share protected characteristics. This can include identifying the potential to impact positively on equality by reducing or removing inequalities and barriers that exist. It can also include identifying negative impact and considering how this can be minimised.

There are various routes in which the council engages and listens to communities. Some of these ways include:

- **18 Area Boards** with devolved funding to support local initiatives
- **Wiltshire Learning Disability Partnership Board**
- **Local Youth Networks (LYNs)** supported by their own Local Youth Facilitators designed to support young people and their communities to come together to offer a range of activities for those aged 13-19. LYN is active in all 18 community areas and a local youth officer will be the “go to” person for youth issues and developing activities. Marlborough LYN has supported two new youth clubs that help to support young people from the town’s more deprived areas.
- Development of **health and wellbeing centres** and specific consultation carried out with particular community groups in their design
- Following earlier work commissioned by Wiltshire Council to identify barriers to engagement with BME and LGBT residents, the council has been working with the West Wiltshire Multi Faith Forum to devise a roadshow which gets out into communities and enables them to engage with the council in a familiar setting.
- Commission specific support services for those identified at risk or vulnerable. For example, Wiltshire Parent Carer Council, Age UK, memory cafes with the Alzheimer’s Society, social clubs for those with a sight impairment, learning disabilities, mental health etc.
- **Dementia Friends**
• **Have your Say** which details the many ways in which our communities can speak up about the decisions the council is making

• **People’s Voice (Wiltshire’s Citizen Panel)**

• Local Housing panels / Older People’s Panels

• Mental Health Service User group (FOTP)

• Celebrating LGBT+ Month, including flying the LGBT flag at County Hall.
Putting our duties into action

The overall aim of this report is to give a high level picture of how the council is tackling inequality and what action it is taking to make improvements. We have deliberately decided not to publish lots of statistics, facts and figures. Our approach is to provide examples and case studies including links wherever possible to reports and summaries of data and in particular to show how data and information is being used in the decisions we made or planned services for a range of diverse groups (e.g. disabled people, Black and Minority Ethnic, older people, younger people etc.)

Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme

Since December 2015, Wiltshire has been welcoming vulnerable refugees who have been displaced from Syria as part of the Government's Vulnerable Person's Relocation Scheme (VPRS scheme).

Wiltshire Council is committed to providing equality of opportunity to refugees who are making their homes in Wiltshire by supporting attendance of English Language classes and supporting them to find employment and integrate into the local community.

Wiltshire Council supports a team of VPRS volunteers who play a key role in encouraging the development of community relations with refugee families.
**Education and Learning**

**Library Service**

Customers unable to visit a local library due to disability, long term illness or with mobility issues can access library services through our [home service](#) which is delivered by volunteers.

The public mobile library service visits rural communities across the county and provides reading and learning opportunities for all. A mobile library also visits care homes and sheltered dwellings delivering deposit collections of books.

The mobile library [timetables](#) can be found on the Wiltshire Council website.

![Image of two people reading a book](image)

Membership concessions are available for those customers requiring support in using the library service, for example, carers, visually impaired customers and those needing more assistance from friends and family to visit the library.

Additional services that tackle inequality include:

- Rhyme times for pre-school children (including a Polish rhyme time at Trowbridge library)
- [Bookstart](#) packs for pre-school children with books in alternative languages available.
- [Talking book reading group](#) for people with sight loss at Trowbridge Library
- [Library Memory Groups](#) aimed at people with memory loss, dementia and their carers at Salisbury, Trowbridge and Royal Wootton Bassett libraries.
- [Books in alternative formats](#) – talking books, large print books, eBooks and eAudiobooks.
- [Bag books](#) - multi-sensory stories for children with additional needs.
- Comprehensive collections of books to support a wide range of health and well-being and information needs including autism, dyslexia, dementia and mental health.

We monitor the effectiveness of our libraries through the [customer satisfaction performance reports](#)
Employment

Wiltshire Council is firmly committed to the principles of equality and inclusion in both employment and the delivery of services. Examples include:

- Under 25s workforce work (positive action)
- Supported internships for disabled young people with learning difficulties/and or disabilities
- Apprentices - [https://workwiltshire.co.uk/](https://workwiltshire.co.uk/)
- Membership of the employers network for equality and inclusion (ENEI)
- Reasonable adjustment budget of £10,000 per annum for disabled staff and applicants
- An accessible careers website with links to information for disabled applicants
- Introduction of e-learning for all staff on equality and diversity last year
- Supporting equality events and raising awareness about specific disabilities e.g. autism training
- Volunteers
- Flexible working and time off for carers’ responsibilities
- We are part of the new Disability Confident scheme and adopt the Disability Confident Employer badge. The scheme reaffirms the commitments made under the previous ‘two ticks’ scheme and also sets some new expectations in relation to how we attract, recruit and support people with disabilities. We are delighted to have been awarded the Disability Confident employer (level 2) status for a further two years until September 2019

Further evidence includes:

- [Wiltshire Strategic Economic Assessment](#)
- Volunteer Strategy
- Transgender guidance – transitioning at work produced and made available to managers and staff through HR portal
- Signing the “Working for Carers” Charter - Our commitment to creating a carer-aware workplace (Jan 2017)
Standard of Living

Wiltshire Council is committed to providing excellent housing services. One of our key priorities is to make best use of existing stock and that, working with our partners, we increase the supply of decent new affordable homes in Wiltshire. The aims and priorities for strategic housing in Wiltshire over the next five years have been developed through consultation with our customers, our community and our partners.

Housing and Financial Inclusion

➢ Tenancy Sustainment: This service provides a comprehensive in-house support to tenants who would otherwise be at risk of failing in their tenancies. Officers work with tenants, who may have:
  - Financial worries,
  - Debt issues,
  - Vulnerabilities

They will help people to sustain their tenancies and to encourage and facilitate their independence. We are accessible to tenants by offering home visits to try and increase tenant engagement. We will also be setting up drop-in sessions in conjunction with this throughout the county to give tenants the opportunity of accessing services in their own community.

➢ Rental Exchange: The Big Issue in partnership with Experian helped us to implement the Rental Exchange in March 2016 which continues to be used. The Rental Exchange helps tenants to:
  - Create an online proof of identity - increasingly important when applying for goods or services
  - Build a positive credit history to help increase access to mainstream credit

It aims to tackle the financial, digital and social exclusion challenges faced by rental tenants in the UK. We believe that people should get credit for paying their rent on time. The Rental Exchange incorporates a tenant's payment history in their credit file in a secure and compliant way, with no cost to either the housing provider or tenant. The Rental Exchange is a way to enhance a person’s credit report without needing to take on new credit agreements.

Key benefits include:

- Proof of financial reliability,
- Access to cheaper credit and automated evidence of ID and proof of address,
- Inclusion in the digital society and a system that is seen as “fairer” for social tenants, and more in line with other forms of tenure

We are further supporting the most vulnerable in our communities through initiatives such as adapted bungalows, the New Tenancy Sustainment Service, the Wiltshire Core Strategy Topic Paper: Gypsy and Travellers and the Allocation Policy 2015

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Health

“There are many ways to get active in Wiltshire. Whether you’re looking for a new activity, wanting to join a club, or just wanting to find out about opportunities near you, you’ll find what you’re looking for here”

Active Wiltshire or www.wiltshire.gov.uk/leisure

Wiltshire council is committed to working towards reducing health inequalities. Examples of initiatives we are involved in include:

- Kick it out 2017. Wiltshire’s equality and inclusion football programme http://wiltshire.gov.uk/leisure-activities-for-young-people. This is the national link https://twitter.com/kickitout
- Street Games offer and Doorstep Sports Clubs Disabled sports. In addition there is the volunteer academy, Wiltshire Skate Series, Fit and Fed and Club1, all of which aim to tackle inequality: http://wiltshire.gov.uk/leisure-activities-for-young-people
- Disability Sports - for more information visit http://wiltshire.gov.uk/leisure-ability-sports
- Concessionary schemes to access leisure services www.wiltshire.gov.uk/leisure-memberships. We also offer a 50% discount to the cost of attending a school holiday sports camps if families are in receipt of certain benefits.
- Walking Sports – People are less likely to be physical active as they get older. Walking sports provides a vehicle for individuals to remain active by offering slower paced versions of traditional sports including football and netball: http://wiltshire.gov.uk/leisure-returning-to-sport
- This Girl Can – Women are less likely to be physically active then men especially if they reside in an area with high levels of inequality in terms of deprivation. Wiltshire Council are piloting a scheme in Melksham that offers female only physical activity sessions in the heart of an estate known to suffer from levels of inequality http://wiltshire.gov.uk/leisure-returning-to-sport
- Health Fairs
- Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015 – 2018
Wiltshire Council also offers a Health Trainer service which is available for people aged 18 and over and is free of charge. A dedicated health trainer can assist you every step of the way to achieving and maintaining your goals. Our health trainers concentrate on behaviours associated with ill health including unhealthy eating. Through individual sessions, your dedicated health trainer will help build your motivation and increase confidence, enabling you to help yourself and maintain changes for the future. This service can be extremely beneficial to adults who require that extra bit of support to achieve wellbeing.
Participation

To work towards ensuring that everyone can participate in their community, several initiatives have been put in place.

These include:

- **Our Community Matters website**
- **Classes** for non-English speakers in Melksham
- Youth focused area board meetings
- Older peoples events through Area Boards
- Multi-cultural carer awareness events
- **Wiltshire Voices**: A series of short films providing an insight into the lives and experiences of communities with a protected characteristic and beyond. The films were used to inform strategy development including the "before I forget" campaign which has led to Dementia Friendly towns
- Wiltshire Council's staff survey 2016
- #EPIC – staff engagement initiative
- **Wiltshire Learning Disability Partnership Board**
- Winter weather scheme – a programme run by volunteers to help with gritting local roads and pavements to keep services open/allow access in extreme weather

General evidence basis

- **Equality Impact Assessments**
- **Equalities research**
- **Community Area profiles**
- **Community Area Joint Strategic Assessments**
- **Learning Disability Partnership Board**

What next?

Wiltshire Council has been looking towards the future and thinking about what can be done to support the most vulnerable in our communities. The action plan is a working document to ensure equality and inclusion is embedded in policies and strategies to be inclusive for everyone in our workforce and communities.
Wiltshire Council Equality Objectives 2017

These objectives are from the current action plan but are under constant review and are likely to be revised during 2018.

OBJECTIVE 1:

Ensure (high level) equality considerations are given to all service plans across the council to complement the council’s equality vision and statutory duties

OBJECTIVE 2:

Help develop a strong equalities community infrastructure, (specifically in respect of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, BME and Trans communities) that represents the voices and diversity of Wiltshire

OBJECTIVE 3:

Improve workforce profile statistics by improving existing rates of reporting (disability and ethnicity) and increasing the range of protected characteristics captured about the workforce via SAP, particularly for sexual orientation, gender reassignment, carers, and religion and belief (*subject to level of financial resources needed to make the changes within SAP)
OBJECTIVE 4:
Improve the percentages of under 25 year olds within the Council’s workforce

OBJECTIVE 5:
Reduce the percentage of staff who report that they have experienced bullying and harassment, with a focus on disabled staff.

Embedding an inclusive workplace for all employees

OBJECTIVE 6:
Ensure equality considerations are built into the review and refresh of the Customer Access Strategy (to Wiltshire Council Services) which will ensure that our Services are fully accessible for all our diverse communities and customers

OBJECTIVE 7:
Ensure the Accessibility Strategy is implemented by engaging more schools and communities in robustly embedding their joint equality responsibilities and actions towards children and young people

OBJECTIVE 8:
Ensure equality considerations are built into the review and refresh of the Customer Access Strategy and Digitisation Strategy (to Wiltshire Council Services) to ensure that our services are fully accessible for all our diverse communities and customers

Throughout 2017 the underlying action plan has been refreshed and is a live working document.
Further information:

To view specific equalities information about our workforce only

National Guidance available on the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) website

Equality Act guidance from the Government Equalities Office

The Equality and Human Rights plans for monitoring and enforcing the Public Sector Equality Duty

Publishing equality information: commitment, engagement and transparency (EHRC publication)

Contact details:

Corporate Office
Wiltshire Council
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
BA14 8BS
equality@wiltshire.gov.uk

www.wiltshire.gov.uk
0300 456 0100
Appendix 1

Needham Court – extra care housing facility which opened in May 2017

Extra care allows older people to live independently in their own homes with on-site care and support. The communal areas are also open to the general public and can provide a range of facilities. At Needham House in Devizes, there is a treatment room, a mobility scooter store, a restaurant, a communal lounge, a communal dining room and three activity rooms.

Devizes extra care consists of 47 self-contained apartments. Every apartment has its own private outdoor space (balcony or patio), one or two bedrooms, a lounge/diner, a fully integrated kitchen and a wetroom.

Further information can be found at:

http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/housing-extra-care-supported-needham-house-devizes
Appendix 2

Our new Tenancy Sustainment Officers have already helped and made a difference to several tenant’s financial situations. They continue to offer support to tenants who would otherwise be at risk of failing in their tenancies. They concentrate mainly on financial worries, debt issues and welfare benefits and they are flexible in their approach by visiting tenants in their own homes or carrying out appointments over the phone.

Success story – Ms. ‘X’

Background to the referral:
Mrs ‘X’ was referred by her income officer due to growing rent arrears, council tax arrears and other outstanding debts. She didn’t realise that her housing benefit had stopped and she had failed to claim in August due to not having the correct supporting documents.

What did Tenancy Sustainment do to help?
Our Tenancy Sustainment Officer helped Mrs ‘X’ by completing an income and expenditure form and creating a budget. This highlighted priority debts and an action plan was made for immediate actions. Mrs ‘X’ took responsibility for chasing supporting documents and getting them to housing benefit. Our Tenancy Sustainment Officer also stopped debt collectors from council tax coming to collect outstanding debts and negotiated an affordable payment for Council Tax that if sustained, would result in the debt collectors being removed completely.

What was the outcome?
Full housing benefit is now in place and the next action is to set up an affordable arrears repayment to get existing arrears cleared. Following the grant and back payment of housing benefit the arrears are three quarters of what they were. Mrs ‘X’ is now also successfully engaging with Step Change to manage her other debts and maximise her income further.

If you would like more information on the new Tenancy Sustainment Service, or would like to take advantage of the support on offer, please contact the income team on 01722 434614 or email housingtso@wiltshire.gov.uk