

**Wiltshire Council**  
**Race Equality Scheme**  
**2005-2008**

**(extended to cover 2009 and move towards unitary council)**

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## **Foreword**

This is our second Race Equality Scheme, and we hope that it will help us build on the progress made over the last few years.

Wiltshire is a diverse, significantly rural County, with half of the population living in villages and small towns. This diversity is a strength, but we also need to ensure that there is access to the Council's services for the whole population, including those groups such as minority ethnic people who may experience greater isolation.

We embrace the challenge and opportunity to build strong, cohesive communities where people from all backgrounds feel welcome and able to achieve their aspirations.

Leader of the County Council

Chief Executive

October 2006

## Introduction

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

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

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

The duty's aim is to embed race equality into the work of the County Council, through policy making, service delivery (including contracted services), employment practice, regulation and enforcement.

To meet its duty the Council is required to set out in a Race Equality Scheme how it proposes to fulfil its duties. This document is intended to fulfil that statutory requirement and provides the Council with an opportunity to explain the values, principles and standards that guide its approach to race equality. Within this Race Equality Scheme the Council will set out arrangements for:-

- assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies and procedures.
- monitoring policies, procedures and service delivery in relation to race equality.
- staff training and awareness raising.
- publishing results and consultations.

Our first Scheme was produced in May 2002. This revised Scheme covers the period May 2005 to May 2008.

The Council will need to carefully consider the necessary resource implications (in terms of people, time and money) to ensure the Scheme is effectively implemented, monitored and reviewed. It will report on progress annually and update the entire scheme at least every three years.

## **Wiltshire County Council's** **Commitment to Equality & Diversity**

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

This means:

- making services accessible to all; and
- treating people fairly

...regardless of their colour, race, ethnic or national origin, language, religion or belief, gender or gender reassignment, marital status, sexuality, disability, age, or any illness or infection.

The Council is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination and harassment. It seeks to provide services and employment in an environment which promotes equality, values diversity and celebrates excellence.

As a major public sector employer within Wiltshire, the Council is committed to building a workforce which broadly reflects the diversity of the local community and it seeks to celebrate this diversity with other partner agencies, organisations and community groups.

In furtherance of this commitment to equality and diversity, the Council has adopted the following corporate equality statements:

- The information that we provide – for instance, through the Wiltshire magazine and our website – will be improved so that it better reflects the diversity of the local community.
- When devising new policies we will give due regard to equality and diversity issues.
- When working with partners, including contractors, we will continually ensure that robust consideration is given to diversity issues.
- Our service provision will become more inclusive through actively assessing 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 reflects the diversity of the local community, improving access to careers within the council.
- In order to improve the way we provide services, equality and diversity will be embedded in the practice of staff and managers through training and development.
- Action plans to deliver against these statements can be found within our Race Equality Scheme at [www.wiltshire.gov.uk/](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/)

## Wiltshire's Minority Ethnic Population

Wiltshire has a small, but significant, minority ethnic population. According to the 2001 census, 3.83% of the population stated an ethnicity other than White British. Approximately 6% of the population of Wiltshire were born outside the UK.

### 2001 Census figures for Wiltshire

<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
White: British	416,371	96.17%
White: Irish	2,718	0.63%
Other White	6,894	1.59%
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	999	0.23%
Mixed: White and Black African	247	0.06%
Mixed: White and Asian	943	0.22%
Mixed: Other	656	0.15%
Asian or Asian British: Indian	731	0.17%
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	128	0.03%
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	243	0.06%
Asian or Asian British: Other	268	0.06%
Black or Black British: Caribbean	730	0.17%
Black or Black British: African	290	0.07%
Black or Black British: Other	129	0.03%
Chinese	840	0.19%
Other Ethnic Group	786	0.18%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>432,973</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

The census data does not capture the richness of the ethnic diversity within Wiltshire. The town of Trowbridge has the largest Moroccan community in the country outside of London. As a result of the significant army presence in the county, Wiltshire is home to people from Fijian and Nepalese origins. Many Gypsies and Irish Travellers live in, and travel through the county. In recent years, significant numbers of people from Eastern European – particularly Poland – have come to Wiltshire as migrant workers.

# **County Council Structure and Decision Making Process**

## ***Structure of the Council***

The Council is made up of 49 County Councillors who are elected every four years. They are democratically accountable to the residents in their electoral divisions. All Councillors meet together as the Council to decide the Council's overall policies and set the budget each year.

The Council's paid staff (officers) are organised into the following Departments:

- Adult and Community Services
- Corporate and Library Services
- Children and Education
- Environmental Services
- Finance and Information Technology

The Chief Executive and his team of Chief Officers form the Corporate Management Team and are responsible for providing strategic direction and advice to the Council, for the day to day management of services and the longer term planning and allocation of resources. A code of practice governs the relationship between officers and Councillors.

## ***Decision Making Process***

The Cabinet is the part of the Council responsible for most day-to-day decisions at elected Member level. Overview/Scrutiny Committees support the work of the Cabinet and the Council as a whole. They look at the effectiveness of the Council's own policies and inquire into matters of local concern. They also monitor the Cabinet's decisions.

The Council also works with its partners and local people within communities to improve services and plan for a sustainable future. The Council's working relationships with the District Councils in Wiltshire and the Town and Parish Councils are essential joint working arrangements in the interests of Wiltshire. The Council is also currently the lead organisation in relation to the Strategic Board. The Strategic Board involves key public and voluntary sector organisations that are working to improve the economic, social and environmental well being of Wiltshire as a whole. These organisations are engaged with partnerships that have specific significant responsibilities towards e.g., health and social care, community safety and environmental improvements.

## ***Responsibility for the Race Equality Scheme***

Statutory responsibility for the effective implementation of the Race Equality Scheme lies with the Council, which is committed to the fulfilment of its duties in the performance of all its functions and powers.

Operational responsibility lies with the Chief Executive and Chief Officers who will be responsible for ensuring the scheme is implemented corporately and within individual Directorates. The Director of Adult & Community Services has had responsibility for liaising with the Wiltshire Racial Equality Council and for promoting the Council's commitment to social inclusion and racial equality. Action priorities arising from the Scheme will be incorporated into the Council's corporate and departmental plans.

The Council has established a Corporate Equality and Diversity Steering Group, chaired by the Director, Department of Community Services. All departments are represented on the group, as well as Wiltshire Racial Equality Council and the Chair of the Black and Ethnic Minority Staff Forum. Its role includes:

- identifying priorities for action based on their Departmental experience and relevant research or other data
- providing practical advice and guidance on how to implement race equality priorities in Departments
- participating in the development, implementation and monitoring of the Council's Racial Equality Scheme
- promoting and sharing best practice
- ensuring corporate co-ordination of action to take forward racial equality

The Corporate Equality and Diversity Steering Group will develop its role to examine whether there is effective partnership working in relation to race equality, with other public bodies and voluntary sector organisations, or whether existing relationships require more clarity of purpose.

Key reports such as the Racial Equality Scheme are discussed with the Corporate Management Team and submitted to the Cabinet for decision.

The Council will produce an annual review of progress in meeting its duty to promote race equality. The annual review will be submitted to the Cabinet for discussion and approval.

## Our Vision for Race Equality

The County Council's goals, aims and priorities reflect its ambitions, for the Council itself and for the County of Wiltshire, and reflect the characteristics of the County and the needs of those who live and work here. The Council's aims are:

To provide **excellent services at an affordable cost**;

To achieve **high public satisfaction**; and

To be a **transparent and local** County Council

*Wiltshire 2009: Wiltshire County Council's Corporate Plan 2005/6 to 2008/9*

Our Corporate Plan sets out the key goals of the Council. Each of these goals are relevant to race equality:

- to achieve excellent services we need to take account of the diverse needs of the communities that live and work in Wiltshire. Although Wiltshire's minority ethnic communities are relatively small, we still need to take into account different linguistic, cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds.
- To achieve high public satisfaction we must strive to develop communities where people feel safe and valued. We know from research conducted by ourselves and our partners that some people from minority ethnic backgrounds experience discrimination and harassment and we must harness our resources to tackle these issues.
- To be a transparent and local County Council we need to understand the needs of our residents, and encourage greater involvement in decision making.

To achieve these goals we need to recruit and retain staff who appreciate and understand the need for equality and diversity, and we need to work in partnership with colleagues from the community, voluntary and statutory sectors.

In 2000 we adopted a Commitment to Anti-Racist Practices. This states that:

"We in Wiltshire believe and assert that all persons have the inalienable right to be treated with equal dignity, respect, consideration and without prejudice and to be given equal access to all our services without regard to race, colour, nationality, culture, languages spoken, religious beliefs, creed, ethnicity. We judge each person by his and her ideas, values, actions and character and not by his and her racial origins, religion, community or culture. Each of us is equal and different.

We in Wiltshire County Council will not tolerate any form of discriminatory behaviour by our employees or by those using our services. We will take all external as well as internal complaints seriously and we will ensure that our procedures allow open, constructive and healthy challenges both from within as well as from outside the organisation.

We in Wiltshire celebrate, encourage and enjoy the benefits that come from our people's ethnic, cultural, language, religious and other diversities. We believe that our cultural diversity as well as our individual and communal differences enrich all our diverse communities within the community of Wiltshire.

In order to ensure that we succeed in fulfilling our commitment to the inalienable right to equal access we, in Wiltshire, will:

- a) adopt whatever anti-discriminatory measures are necessary to increase trust and confidence in our County Council's services amongst all our users;
- b) adopt The Macpherson Report's definition of a "racist incident" as being "any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person";
- c) ensure that all our practices comply with the letter as well as with the spirit of all anti-discriminatory laws;
- d) produce a long-term action plan that will help us to ensure that our services and our employment practices are consistently rigorously anti-discriminatory;
- e) create an open self-critical human rights culture that consistently seeks to improve our practices through regular monitoring, training, awareness of legal obligations and a thorough understanding of anti-discriminatory human rights issues;
- f) adopt The Macpherson Report's definition of "institutional racism" as being "the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantages minority ethnic people". We accept that this definition applies to any institution including our own.

We will seek to work with all our partners, our service users, other service providers and all interested parties and individuals to ensure that we all make a contribution to creating a human rights culture across our County of Wiltshire. This public commitment places a responsibility on all our staff and all our members to behave in a way that fulfils this clearly stated intent."

## **Progress Report on first Race Equality Scheme (2002-5)**

Progress has not been at the pace anticipated by the 2002-05 RES and its Action Plan; there was slippage over all three years and again there have been delays in finalising the RES Scheme for 2005-08 (it should have been completed and published by April 2005) which has resulted in the final document not being completed until November 2006.

Positively, between 2005 and November 2006 (completion of the RES 2005-08) considerable progress has taken place in identifying and implementing appropriate developments, it will be important to ensure that this work is consolidated and built upon during 2006-08.

This section seeks to give a summary of the progress on race equality over the last three years:

- Hidden Voices: a major research report on the experiences of people from minority ethnic groups living in Wiltshire was presented in 2002 and has continued to provide information to influence the work of the County Council.
- The service planning process has been amended to more effectively link equal opportunities practices to service plans.
- A strategy has been developed to increase the involvement of Black and Ethnic Minority people in consultation processes including 'Tomorrow's Voice' and 'People's Voice'. This aims to ensure that the numbers of BEM people engaging in these processes provides results which are statistically valid and therefore can be used to inform service planning and delivery.
- More rigorous data collection has improved the statistical information on the ethnicity of our workforce and has enabled a better understanding of areas where staff from minority ethnic backgrounds may be under-represented.

- There has been a review of personnel policies.
- Staff information monitoring systems now meet the statutory requirements. Monitoring of employees promotion, appraisal and training has been implemented for all staff groups.
- Action has been taken to increase job applications from BEM groups.
- Corporate induction includes equality and diversity issues.
- The Council has supported the creation of a Black and Ethnic Minority Staff Forum. Its role is to provide support to individual members and to help ensure that Council policies are not discriminatory. The Chair of the Forum is a member of the Council's Equality and Diversity Steering Group.
- Training has been provided in dealing with reported incidents of racial harassment.
- Equality and diversity training for staff has been delivered as a part of a corporate programme of awareness training, there has also been service-led training related to professional practice and service delivery. Progress has been made in planning and implementing a more strategic and consistent approach to equality and diversity training for both staff and members.
- A 'Clear Communication' document has been written and implemented.
- A process for the completion of Equality Impact Assessments has been compiled. Training and development opportunities to support staff in the implementation of E.I.A.'s have been provided.
- Assessments of functions and policies have been undertaken by all Departments and Equality Impact Assessments are being produced.
- The Council has achieved Level 2 of the Equality Standard.
- The Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) supports Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) pupils at risk of being excluded - a minority ethnic mentor scheme is currently being developed.
- EMAS Outreach Work has been developed to focus on the needs of Black and Ethnic Minority young people who face difficulties related to isolation in the school setting. The objective has been to set up targeted activities and events for young people in partnership with the Youth Development Service and other groups.
- A data base of families is being established for contacting a rural BME population that is spread thinly across the county.
- Monitoring of young people who are contacts with the Youth Development Service show that a high proportion of Black and Ethnic Minority young people access the service and are seen to develop through the experiences in which they engage.
- In acknowledgement of the potential for black and minority ethnic people with learning disabilities to experience difficulties in accessing services, Wiltshire has initiated and funded work with partner organisations - Wiltshire People 1<sup>st</sup> is working with the Wiltshire Race Equality Commission to develop opportunities for people who have a learning disability. They are currently mapping the resources and networks used by people from ethnic communities and assessing how people with a learning disability can be supported to use them. Wiltshire People 1<sup>st</sup> have been able to recruit a black development worker, who has a learning disability, to engage in this work. An innovative, ground-breaking partnership between the County Council, the University of Bath and Wiltshire People 1<sup>st</sup>, has established a certificated leadership course for people with learning disabilities.

- Traveller families who are new to the county, staying by the roadside, on unauthorised or transit sites are visited within 48 hrs of arrival, school places are offered and children start school within 5 days. Wiltshire Traveller Education Service works to provide unhindered access and full inclusion into mainstream education for all Traveller children and young people in the county. The service continues to assist schools in developing whole - school practices which include all pupils and cultures.
- All unauthorised sites are visited by the service's Education Welfare Officers and school places offered for children on site. In liaison with site management, families staying temporarily on the Odstock transit site are visited and school places and transport arranged. The service provides in -school support for these pupils, many of whom may have had little schooling. In 2003 the service worked with Jamie King a Gypsy Traveller in the Downton area to produce 'Two for One' a story book which gives an accurate representation of Traveller culture.
- The Traveller Education Service has provided a 'Books to Sites' mobile library service to families on 3 of the county council Traveller sites. This project, funded by Wiltshire Children's Fund has been well received by Traveller families who have not previously had access to books, videos and computers on site. Wiltshire Libraries, Salisbury Baptist Church and Wiltshire Scrapstore have worked with the service to provide additional on-site activities. The 'Books to Sites' service has now been mainstreamed in the north of the county with the Mobile Library Service stopping at the Thingley site fortnightly.
- In October 2005, during Family Learning week, the service worked with Travellers on 3 sites in the county. Activities involved three generations of Travellers and included crafts and Basic Skills training. The service is planning further on-site Family Learning events for October 2006. Since January 2005 the service has obtained funding from Early Years to provide outreach to all Gypsy and Traveller families with 0-4 yr old children. Families are visited by an Early Years worker who advises on access to pre-school settings, provides playbags and distributes Bookstart books.
- Fairground, circus & other Traveller children with winter bases in the county are supported with work packs for use during the travelling season. The Traveller's Education Service is also part of our Bookstart Partners group and supply Bookstart packs to Traveller's sites.
- Wiltshire has developed a protocol for joint working with the Police in relation to traveller sites in the context of cross - authority and cross – agency co-ordination of a balanced approach to traveller sites.
- The County Council regularly holds meetings with the Gypsy and Traveller Communities. We also have meetings with representatives from all departments within County Hall involved with the welfare and education services of the travelling community. We have been able to provide information to the ODPM regarding the Housing Needs Assessment.
- Libraries are working with the Ethnic Minority Advisory group with regard to Bookstart – supplying dual language texts to families and Bookstart leaflets "Babies Love Books" in various languages.
- Libraries having been setting up a dual language collection to use for promotions and for individuals to request. Polish, Russian and Portuguese collections are held at the Trowbridge Library.
- Dual language children's books have just come into the Library stock as part of a community fund bid.

- In partnership with the Police and West Wiltshire District Council's Community Safety Manager, Trowbridge Library is the venue for a programme of externally funded meetings to enable the local Polish community to learn about community safety, rules of the road, fire safety, language learning opportunities and other topics to help them settle into the local community.
- Guidance on joining the library and use of ICT is provided in 30 languages known to be spoken in Wiltshire libraries (following staff survey): to assist migrant workers to Wiltshire.
- An Interfaith women's group is using Trowbridge Library as a safe and welcoming site in the community for women.

## **How we will meet the general and specific duties of the Act**

The General Duty of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 states that we should:

“in carrying out its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- a) eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- b) promote equality of opportunity between persons of different racial groups
- c) promote good race relations between persons of different racial groups

Specific duties require that we publish a Race Equality Scheme. In that we must set out:

- how we will assess and consult on the likely impact of our proposed policies on the promotion of racial equality
- how we will monitor our policies for any adverse impact on the promotion of race equality
- how we will publish the results of such assessments and monitoring
- how we will ensure public access to information and services which we provide
- how we will monitor our workforce by ethnicity, and how we will publish the results of this monitoring
- how we will train staff in connection with the duties within the Act
- how we will review the Scheme on a three year basis

### **Assessing and consulting on the likely impact of our proposed policies on the promotion of racial equality and monitoring our policies for any adverse impact on the promotion of race equality.**

We have listed all the functions and policies of the county council, and assessed these for their relevance for race equality. This list is included in Appendix 1 of this document. We will carry out Equality Impact Assessments on all those policies and functions that we have identified as being ‘high priority’ during the first year of this Scheme. We will also carry out Equality Impact Assessments on proposed policies. A template for Equality Impact Assessments has been developed and has been shared with managers throughout the organisation. Appendix 2. A programme of staff development has been available to staff involved in leading on Equality Impact Assessments.

### **Publishing the results of our assessments and monitoring.**

The results of our Equality Impact Assessments and other research and consultation relevant to race equality will be summarised on our website: [www.wiltshire.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk) and in corporate publications. Full details will be made available on request.

### **Ensuring public access to information and services which we provide**

We will endeavour to make all our information and services accessible to the people who need them. This may involve providing information in translation, or offering interpreters. It may also involve reviewing services to ensure that they are appropriate and accessible to people from different cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds.

### **Monitoring our workforce by ethnicity, and publishing the results of this monitoring**

We have developed systems for monitoring the ethnicity of our workforce, and annual reports are made to the Staffing Committee. We encourage staff to self-identify their ethnicity, so that our records are as accurate as possible. The purpose of this monitoring is to ensure that we are recruiting a workforce that reflects the ethnicity of the local community, and that all ethnic groups have equal opportunities to develop and progress within the organisation.

### **Training our staff in connection with the duties within the Act**

We are committed to ensuring that all staff have the knowledge and skills they need in order to carry out their roles effectively. This includes having a good understanding of what race equality means, and in particular, what it means in the context of a rural county such as Wiltshire. We have already introduced equality and diversity training for managers, and are now looking to expand the range of opportunities available.

We are implementing systems to enable the monitoring by ethnic groups of all:

- Applicants for training
- Participants at all training events

### **Reviewing the Scheme on a three year basis**

We will regularly review progress that we make in meeting our commitments within the Race Equality Scheme, and will ensure that the whole Scheme is updated within three years.

## Consultation

Wiltshire County Council recognises the value of consulting with stakeholders in developing our strategies and plans. By listening to others we are better able to develop services that are responsive to the needs of individuals and communities. We know that some groups of people are under-represented within decision-making bodies and in senior management positions, including within the Council itself, and that we must therefore take special care to ensure that we listen to those who might otherwise not be heard.

Our main route for consultation on race equality issues is through Wiltshire Racial Equality Council. WREC is part-funded by the County Council, and is represented on our Corporate Equality and Diversity Steering Group.

The Corporate Equality and Diversity Steering Group brings together key representatives from within the County Council with representation from WREC to direct policies and practices.

Consultation has taken place with BEM groups related to Wiltshire County Council as an employer, which aimed to:

- Uncover their current perception of the council both in general and as a workplace – what stereotypes are out there and why?
- Disseminate information on the benefits of working for the council and to promote the diversity of work available
- Identify possible recruitment channels for more effective engagement with BME communities
- Establish work areas of interest to these communities
- Identify whether those consulted would be interested in maintaining links with the council for future consultation exercises

Various community groups and individuals have been consulted since 7<sup>th</sup> March 2006, including:-

- West Wiltshire Community Club
- Wiltshire Racial Equality Council
- Trowbridge Islamic Trust
- Moroccan Community Association
- Wiltshire and Swindon Users' Network
- Wiltshire Bangladeshi Community Association
- New Testament Church – Trowbridge and Chippenham
- The Bridge Project
- Voluntary Action Kennet
- Westlea Housing
- Wiltshire County Council's BME Staff Forum
- North and West Wilts Diversity Forum
- Salisbury Housing Association Officer
- Kennet Diversity Forum
- Individuals not associated with any community group / organisation

In total, some 120 people have been involved via a mixture of focus groups, interviews, e-Consultation, open meetings and user groups.

This process culminated in a Black and Ethnic Minority Consultation Event on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2006 which raised four key themes:-

1. How to find out about job vacancies and how to apply for them?

2. Belief that the council provides customers with a poor service where staff are often unhelpful.
3. Is Wiltshire County Council serious or sincere about promoting racial equality in employment and education?
4. Concerns regarding the fairness of the council's recruitment procedures.

A leaflet has been produced to provide feedback and identify the proposed actions arising from the Black and Minority Ethnic Consultation Event held on 8<sup>th</sup> May. This leaflet also provides contacts by email and telephone for anyone who would like to contribute further to the development and implementation of equality and diversity plans.

There are plans to follow-up this consultation event, to provide an update and seek feedback on the actions which arose.

The final draft Race Equality Scheme has been circulated for consultation to:-

Corporate Equality and Diversity Steering Group

Black and Ethnic Minority Staff forum.

Wiltshire Race Equality Council

We recognise the importance of engaging BME community groups and organisations in the development of the RES and Action Plan, also the importance of having a robust process for consultation. We are seeking in partnership with other public authorities, community and voluntary organisations in Wiltshire, to create a framework which will enable effective and efficient processes of engagement and consultation, seeking to avoid some individuals or groups being repeatedly engaged in consultation processes for different organisations. It is envisaged that this framework will build on existing structures, such as those related to Community Planning, voluntary and community organisations, BME staff forum.

## **Improving Service Delivery**

Examples of how service delivery can help promote race equality.

- Libraries offer books and resources in community languages and hold multi-cultural events.
- EMAS works with schools to incorporate race equalities issues within the curriculum so that all young people have opportunities to learn about what it means to live in a multicultural society.
- Registration Services offer Citizenship ceremonies to welcome new British citizens
- The Youth Development Service engages young people on a voluntary basis in activities which are fun and enable learning, personal, social and skill development; this curriculum addresses equality and diversity.
- Events to celebrate Black history month in October can help to promote race equality.

We will use the process of Equality Impact Assessments to regularly review our services and continually seek ways of improving them through consultation with the community and the evaluation of delivery and practice.

# Procurement and Partnership

## ***Introduction***

Although the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) only applies to public authorities, when public authorities work with external contractors or partners they must ensure that they too meet the requirements of the legislation.

## ***Procurement***

As the Council becomes an increasing procurement organisation utilising Contractors for the provision of services, it will become critical that service providers sign up to the Council's expectations that in delivering contracted services, they promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice and work towards the elimination of racial discrimination. The Council will ensure that appropriate contract monitoring is put in place, in addition to the examination of equal opportunities policy and practice during the initial procurement process prior to award of contract. Consideration will be given to the reporting of contract monitoring information.

## ***Partnership***

The Wiltshire Strategic Board (Wiltshire's Local Strategic Partnership) has produced a draft strategy for consultation entitled "A Sustainable Strategy for Wiltshire: Creating a County fit for our Children: 2006-2014." A final version will be agreed by the Board in June 2006.

Recognising the importance of diversity within the county, the "Board has invited an inter-agency group, the Wiltshire Social Inclusion Partnership, to advise it about the impact of policies across all these themes upon the objective of achieving greater social inclusion in Wiltshire"

Wiltshire County Council has also agreed the "Wiltshire Compact" which sets out how we, and other public sector organisations in the county, will work with voluntary and community groups to improve the lives of people in Wiltshire. The Compact includes a Code of Practice on Equality

*From the Wiltshire Compact, Code of Practice on Equality and Diversity, September 2005:*

The Wiltshire Compact is a set of principles within which the statutory, voluntary and community sectors agree to work and seeks to recognise and value the diversity that exists in society generally and in Wiltshire.

It aims specifically to promote the inclusion of groups and individuals that have in the past been under-represented or excluded, for the benefits of both individuals who make up those groups and the communities, villages and neighbourhoods...

The partners using the Compact are committed to:

- recognising that everyone is different in terms of their race, age, sex, disability, sexuality, age or religion
- recognising the importance of equality and diversity and human rights to a prosperous and cohesive society
- developing effective methods so all groups can get involved
- supporting marginal groups
- celebrating people's differences in our communities.

## Employment

Wiltshire County Council is committed to building a workforce that reflects the diversity of the local community and improving access to careers within the Council. We are committed to fair employment practices, and believe that we can offer better services to our customers by harnessing the diverse skills and life experiences of our workforce.

The Race Equality Scheme has a specific duty relating to employment. This duty requires the County Council to set out how it will monitor employment on a continual basis with a view to setting specific targets covering all aspects of employment.

The Council reports workforce data in its annual Equality and Diversity Report. The report includes an analysis on disability, gender and age as well as ethnicity, providing a holistic view of equality issues across all service areas and taking account of the Best Value Performance Indicator requirements.

The table below shows the percentage of Wiltshire's economically active population broken down by ethnicity, taken from the 2001 census data. More up-to-date figures are not available, however it is likely that these figures will have changed since 2001, particularly for the 'White Other' category, e.g. due to increases in the local Polish population.

The table also shows the percentage of Wiltshire County Council employees by ethnic group as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2006. The Council wrote to all of its employees in February 2005, asking them to check a number of personal details, including ethnicity. This has greatly improved the information available, although ethnicity remains unknown for 12.36% of staff.

Table 1. Wiltshire County Council Employees by Ethnic Group.

Percentage	White British	White Irish – White Other	Black	Mixed	Asian	Chinese / other	BME total	Unknown
Wiltshire Population (economically active)	96.18	2.37	0.30	0.45	0.34	0.37	1.46	-
Wiltshire County Council employees	85.26	1.41	0.27	0.32	0.26	0.11	0.96	12.36

## Recruitment

The table below shows recruitment data for 2005/06 broken down by ethnicity, where known (see note below). The figures show the percentage of job applicants and appointees, as well as the "success rate", i.e. the percentage of applicants of each group who were successful in being appointed. Where the BME applicants are split by groups, such as Black and Asian, they are based on small numbers and therefore more prone to variation. For this reason, the average "success rate" over the 3 year period 2003 – 2006 is also shown.

Wiltshire County Council Recruitment Data 2005-06

Percentage	White British	White Irish – White Other	Black	Mixed	Asian	Chinese / other	BME total
Applicants 2005/06	92.26	4.26	0.94	0.89	1.25	0.40	3.48
Appointees 2005/06	94.72	2.45	0.37	0.74	1.10	0.61	2.82
Success Rate (% of applicants appointed)	14.0	7.8	5.4	11.3	12.0	20.8	11.1
Success Rate over 3 years 2003 - 2006	13.5	10.3	9.4	9.2	7.9	8.0	8.6

These figures suggest that

- the proportion of ethnic minority applicants is higher than the population figures. However, the figures are for applicants who completed their monitoring forms, which is voluntary. It is clear that these forms have not been completed by a significant proportion of applicants and this is likely to have artificially raised the percentage of applicants from BME backgrounds. There may also be barriers for specific communities such as those of Moroccan origin that are hidden within these figures. The Council's HR department is working to improve this aspect of its reporting. In particular, we have redeveloped our jobs website, which, as well as reinforcing our commitment to diversity, will allow for more robust monitoring data.
- the "success rate" in being appointed is lower for BME applicants (8.6% over 3 years) than for White British applicants (13.5%). However, the BME success rate has risen significantly in 2005/06 to 11.1%.
- there was a 5.4% success rate for Black applicants in 2005/06. However, where figures are based on such small numbers they clearly vary as a result and the 3 year average is likely to be more reliable. Black applicants had significantly higher success rates in the preceding two years and their averaged success rate is 9.4%. Conversely, Asian applicants' averaged rate is 7.9%, although it was higher at 12.0% in the last year.

Other employment figures collected in 2005/06 show that:

- Of the top 5% of earners, which currently represents a salary of around £42,000 p.a. and includes 139 fte staff, one is a BME employee (0.72%) and 5 are White Irish/White Other (3.61%).
- Of 448 managers in the County Council (as defined internally), 7 are from a BME origin (1.6% 2005/06 - up from 1.1% in 2004/05), 17 are White Irish/White Other (3.8% - up from 3.3% in 2004/05).

The Council sets employment targets on an annual basis specifically for engaging employees from underrepresented groups. These targets are reviewed annually in the light of monitoring information and targets seek to be representative of Wiltshire's ethnic minority populations. Improvements in the quality of the data held on ethnicity will help Wiltshire to act on its commitment to equality and diversity.

The Council is committed to consulting with local ethnic minority communities in order to actively engage under-represented groups and to strengthen links with the community. In May 2006, the County Council held a consultation meeting with members of the local Black & Minority Ethnic communities, addressing recruitment issues with a view to increasing the number of job applications from ethnic minority groups. From this event, we have made a number of commitments which we have fed back to those who attended. These include a range of measures re:

- training of staff and managers, e.g. equality and diversity training is now mandatory for all new starters with the Council.
- recruitment and selection procedures, e.g. we will review our processes to ensure fairness; our adverts will be written in plain English and will promote our commitment to equality and diversity.
- the way we work with schools and colleges and promote ourselves, e.g. we will promote our work experience programme through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service.
- our staffing plans. Equality and diversity issues will be included in workforce plans, which will be used to identify any under-representation in specific job roles and positive action schemes will be used where appropriate.

The County Council has carried out an equality impact assessment on its recruitment processes to ensure the fairness of policies and procedures. The Council's Recruitment & Selection course for managers is also reviewed continually from feedback given by course participants and to take account of legislative changes. All recruitment interview panels must be chaired by an employee who has attended the course.

The restructure of the County Council's Human Resources section and its adoption of the Success Through People Strategy mean that HR is now better able to focus on a range of equality and diversity employment activities and to deliver on our commitment to promoting equality and celebrating diversity.

The County Council's Equality and Diversity Steering Group, chaired by the Assistant Director (Resources & Improvement), addresses both employment and service issues.

An 'Equality & Diversity Sub-Group', which will report to the Success Through People Board, has been set up to ensure the implementation of equalities workforce issues coming out of the HR strategy (initiatives, legislation, workforce equalities data, disability/race relations, employee networks), to disseminate information to departments and to feed employee concerns back to the group.

The County Council has supported the creation of a Black and Ethnic Minority Staff Forum, which meets on a quarterly basis. The forum's role is to provide support to individual members and to help ensure that Council employment policies and procedures are fair. The Chair of the Forum is a member of the Council's Equality and Diversity Steering Group. Managers are urged to allow staff to attend the forum, as this can make a real difference to the County Council's understanding of the issues that employees face.

## **Training Staff and Members**

This part of the duty aims to ensure that staff has the skills they need to ensure that the County Council meets its general duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and promote good race relations.

The Council recognises that effective communication; learning and development of both employees and Members will play a key role in the implementation of the scheme and will work towards addressing any institutional racism or discrimination.

Our HR department have corporate responsibility for co-ordinating equality and diversity training. This includes ensuring that there is specific equality and diversity training that enables staff to identify and challenge discrimination, harassment and prejudice with regard to race and other equalities issues.

We will also ensure that equality and diversity themes and examples are included in other training that is offered to council employees, both to reinforce our commitment to equality and diversity, and to help staff understand how equality and diversity are an integral part of mainstream council activities.

We will ensure that employees from minority ethnic groups have equal access to all training and development opportunities.

All training will be reviewed to determine the effectiveness of each training programme.

## **Access to Information and Services**

This part of the duty is about ensuring that public services work for everyone by making information available about the Council and its services. If people from ethnic minorities do not know about particular services, are not confident about using them, or meet barriers when they try to use them the Council will be failing in its duty to make its services equally available to everyone.

The Council intends that this approach should become an integral aspect of everyday policy and decision-making within the authority. The Council also intends that all of its services should become fully accessible to all parts of the community. Equality impact assessments should highlight any factors, which indirectly or directly discriminate by making a particular service less accessible to particular groups. Equality impact assessments must therefore inform service planning, development, practices and policies.

We currently do not regularly produce documentation in community languages, since the numbers of people needing documents in translation is low. However we will translate documents if requested, or if aimed at a specific non-English speaking community. We will also review this approach regularly since we know that the population of the county is changing.

## **Compliments, Complaints and Comments.**

The Council positively welcomes feedback and complaints about any aspect of its work. The information the Council collects from investigating complaints is used to improve service delivery to all its clients.

The Council will include complaints under the grounds of racial discrimination as part of its complaints procedure. The software which is being introduced to support the complaints management function includes an ethnic monitoring facility. This will enable the Council to identify areas of service delivery that may have a disproportionately adverse impact upon clients from ethnic minority groups, and to make appropriate changes to its procedures and policies when necessary.

The Council has a three-stage complaints procedure that aims to deal with all complaints at the lowest possible level within the organisation. If clients remain dissatisfied, they will be given clear advice about how to progress their complaint to the next stage of the procedure.

The Council is aware that for some sections of the community who experience difficulty in accessing services the complaints procedure may be similarly inaccessible. The Council recognises the value of the Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary and Community sector in this regard and will invest in and support its development.

If a member of the community remains dissatisfied having gone through the Council's various procedures the Council will advise them of their right to take the complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

The Council will invest in learning and development for its officers and Councillors to help them recognise and tackle institutional racism, and deal effectively with prejudice and discrimination in all its forms.

The Council will respond constructively to suggestions on how its complaints procedure may be improved and will work hard to make it accessible to all persons who wish to complain.

The Council is developing systems which will enable annual publication of the number of complaints received that have a race equality dimension and brief information as appropriate, on their outcome.

## **Racial Discrimination**

The County Council does not tolerate racial discrimination in relation to Council staff, service users, members of the public or in any other circumstances. The Council has adopted the definition recommended by the Stephen Lawrence inquiry; “a racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or by any other person,”

We are aware from our racist incident monitoring that some young people from ethnic minority groups encounter racist bullying in schools – usually in the form of racist name-calling. We are working with Wiltshire Racial Equality Council to develop strategies and interventions that schools can use to respond to any incidents and to create environments where bullying is less likely to occur.

The Council has an existing Racial Harassment procedure in relation to any incidents occurring between members of the Council’s staff. However recent staff surveys indicate that some staff may not feel confident about using these procedures. As a consequence, we will undertake a review of existing policies and procedures and revise them as necessary.

## **Monitoring and Reviewing Progress**

Knowledge of community perceptions, the uptake of services provided by the Council and the impact of its policies on different groups will help us assess progress towards equality of opportunity, eliminating unlawful racial discrimination and promoting good race relations.

Monitoring will help the Council check whether its operations and culture are discriminating against some racial group. Monitoring data will be used to inform service planning, major strategies, and the future procedures for the delivery of services and to trigger, where appropriate, changes to policy, procedure or service delivery. Monitoring data may include numerical data but often it is qualitative feedback that provides key information that can influence future service delivery.

The Equality and Diversity Steering Group will play a key role in reviewing progress against the actions identified in this Scheme. An annual report will be publicised which will summarise the results of Equality Impact Assessments as well as progress on delivering the Action Plan. It will also make recommendations for future actions to Chief Officers and Cabinet.

The Race Equality Scheme will be revised and updated in May 2008, in line with the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act.

## **Publication**

This part of the duty is about accountability, transparency and openness and aims to make sure that monitoring, assessment and consultation activities, and their results are clear and plain to the public.

The Race Equality Scheme and its action plan will be published on the Council's website, and will also be available to staff through our intranet site.

A printed summary version will be produced to share with partners in the statutory, voluntary and community sectors, and this be publicised to the community through our quarterly publication "The Wiltshire Magazine".

Copies of the summary version, or the full Scheme, will be made available in community languages or alternative formats on request.

