

Isle of Wight Council

EQUALITY OBJECTIVES ACTION PLAN

2023 to 2027

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Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty

This document sets out the Isle of Wight Council's approach to equality and diversity over the next four years (2023 - 2027); setting out our vision approach and monitoring. **The Equality Act (2010)** replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single act. It now incorporated the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. This enables the law to be easier to understand and comply with, but also helps to tackle discrimination and inequality.

Following the introduction of The Equality Act (2010) the council was required and committed to undertake specific duties:

1. It must publish information to show compliance with the equality duty, at least annually; and
2. set and publish equality objectives, at least once every four years.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the act) came into force on 5 April 2011, and the Equality Duty applies to public bodies and others carrying out public functions. The duty has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

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

This duty enables the support of good decision making by ensuring that all public bodies consider how people in the community will be affected by their activities. This means that the Isle of Wight Council must consider the needs of people before changing, introducing, or ending a policy, strategy or service. This document outlines the equality objectives that we are progressing over the next four years.

The Equality Objectives

The council's overall vision is for the Island to be a great place to live, work and visit. The equality objectives will ensure that equality and diversity is at the forefront of the plans that are made and the services that are developed and actions taken.

In supporting this vision, the Isle of Wight Council has adopted five equality objectives:

1. Understanding community impacts when making business decisions
2. Promoting good relations
3. Promoting awareness
4. Increasing accessibility
5. Compliant procurement and commissioning.

There will be consultation with partners for these Equality Objectives prior to approval by the Isle of Wight Council's Executive.

To identify how these objectives will be met an Equality Objectives Action Plan has been produced and can be found in Appendix 1. This plan will run from 2023 to 2027 and will be reviewed by the Councils Equality and Diversity Board on a six-monthly basis to ascertain progress.

To help the Isle of Wight Council to meet these objectives the following measures are in place:

- **Strategic Equality and Diversity Board** – comprises of service managers and trade union representatives. The board has the responsibility to lead the strategic direction of Equality and Diversity matters, including ensuring that the Equality Objectives are met. This includes reviewing the position of Equality Impact Assessments, devising learning and other interventions as well as maintaining an overview of equality and diversity strategy and policy development.
- **Staff Equality Forum** – comprises of staff and trade union representatives. This group meets to assist in the delivery and review of the Equality Objectives Action Plan and the group also considers staffing issues in respect of equality and diversity, providing support and advice where appropriate. The group is not only involved in consultation and consideration of new and established council processes, but it also has a social and pastoral function that supports the promotion of equality and diversity issues.

[Find more information on Equality and Diversity and how the Council meets its statutory duty on our website](#) or contacting the Lead Officer for Equality and Diversity via telephone on 01983 821000.

Appendix 1 – Equality Objectives Action Plan

Objective	Action	Expected Outcome	Responsibility	Timescales
Understanding equality impacts when making business decisions	Publish equality data and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better understanding of the make-up of our population Information that will help to underpin our business decision making processes Informed action plans that assist with improvements in our approach to equality and diversity and in promoting equality of opportunity. 	<p>Public Health will collate and report on the demographics of the Isle of Wight population.</p> <p>Human Resources will produce and publish an annual report on workforce demographics.</p>	<p>Reviewed annually.</p> <p>All information is published annually iow.gov.uk..</p>
	Ensure equality impact assessments are carried out where necessary in relation to committee reports, reviews that lead to new or the ceasing of services, strategies, and policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informed decision making when considering service or business changes Identification of opportunities for promoting equality and diversity Planned mitigation of any identified impacts Transparency in decision making. 	Directors, Assistant Directors, Strategic Managers Service and Councillors are responsible for ensuring that all necessary equality impact assessments are carried out in advance of decisions being made and are appropriately referenced in decision making reports.	On-going as council activities determine the need for an equality impact assessment to be undertaken.
	<p>Provide training in the completion of equality impact assessments</p> <p>Develop a catalogue of good equality impact assessments to promote best practice in their completion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements in the quality of all Equality Impact Assessments undertaken based on best practice Greater understanding and confidence in the completion of impact assessments. 	Lead Officer for Equality and Diversity	On going refreshing, simplification and updating of guidance and templates.

Objective	Action	Expected Outcome	Responsibility	Timescales
Promoting Good Relations	Continuing with our demonstrated commitment by being a level 2 disability confident employer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All job adverts reflect our commitment to the employment and training of disabled people All applicants with disabilities who meet the minimum criteria for the job will be offered an interview We proactively offer reasonable adjustments as required to enable disabled people to enter and remain in employment wherever possible. 	Lead Officer for Equality and Diversity	To be reviewed annually with a report and associated recommendations provided to strategic equality board.
	Ensuring that all the council's publications and business material promote inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities will recognise the council's commitment to equality and diversity We deliver our services in a non-discriminatory manner and encourage others to do the same. 	Media and Communications Service	On-going.
	Publication of the council's equality & diversity statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone will understand the council's commitment to equality and diversity, promoting of good relations and action that it will take to deal with discrimination. 	Lead Officer for Equality and Diversity	To be reviewed annually with a report and associated recommendations provided to strategic equality board.
	Codes of conduct in place for staff and elected members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone is clear about their duties and responsibilities towards equality and diversity Staff and elected members will be confident in reporting matters of concern Discriminatory practices are investigated and where necessary appropriate action taken through council policies and procedures. 	Monitoring Officer	Report to be made to strategic equality board on an annual basis of the numbers, types and actions taken from complaints raised.
	Up to date policies and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policies are updated in line with their identified review timetable or when legislation changes, or case law takes effect. 	HR Manager and Legal Services	<p>Policies are updated in line with the agreed schedule for review or when legislative changes dictate a requirement for review. Completed with many policies updated including LGBTQ+.</p> <p>Regular reports made to strategic equality board.</p>

	Provision of a complaints process, regularly monitoring and acting upon complaints received	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All complaints received are dealt with in a fair and non-discriminatory manner • Anyone wishing to make a complaint will know where to find it and be able to complete it easily and will be responded to promptly. • Complainants will feel that their concerns have been taken seriously and appropriate action taken when a complaint is upheld or has identified learning for improvement. 	Strategic Manager – Business Centre	The board will receive reporting twice a year outlining any complaints received for their review.
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Objective	Action	Expected Outcome	Responsibility	Timescales
	Actively promote IWC vacancies to diverse community groups	Increased number of applicants and successful appointments to job vacancies of people from minority community groups	HR Manager	On-going Not specifically sent to diverse community groups; but public adverts confirm disability confident scheme.

Objective	Action	Expected Outcome	Responsibility	Timescales
Promoting Awareness	General equality and diversity learning and development programme for all staff and elected members	Understand of what is required to behave in a non-discriminatory manner and to be proactive in promoting good relations.	Workforce, Learning and Development Team	All staff to have completed the e-learning module.
	Monitor staff perceptions of equality via staff surveys and produce actions relating to the outcome of the survey			The ongoing commitment to ensuring that new staff are training and those that have completed the training regularly access refresher training.
				This is being monitored at the strategic equality board meetings and a group has been set up to assist difficult to reach staff from accessing the training.
				Further training modules on Equality Essentials, Equality Impact Assessment and Managing in place on the learning hub:
				Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
				Equality and Diversity - Dignity at Work
				Communicating with Deaf Customers
				Disability and Discrimination
				Learning Disability Awareness
				LGBTQI Awareness
Racial Inequality				
Trans Awareness				

				Equality Impact Assessment
	Raising awareness of the potential discrimination faced by gypsies and travellers	Reduced potential for discrimination and increased understanding of this protected group of people	Workforce, Learning and Development Team	Training to be made available to all staff and elected members with regular reports on completion rates to the strategic equality board.
	Work with different protected characteristic groups across the Island to tackle inequalities and improve access to our services	Empowerment of those with protected characteristics.	Directors, communications team and Strategic Manager for Human Resources.	Completion of the Local Government Association document and action plan stage 1 following the self-assessment and objectives shared with different island group for input for the next four years. Joint partnership workshop completed with Autism Inclusion Matters (AIM). AIMS sensory checklist incorporated into our Display screen equipment (DSE) assessments to ensure these needs/considerations become part of the 'usual' considerations without the need for a formal diagnosis.

Objective	Action	Expected Outcome	Responsibility	Timescales
Increased Accessibility	Ensure that there is access to IT facilities in key locations for people who may not have access in their own homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone will be able to access on-line council services through libraries and help centres 	Strategic Manager – Digital Services	On-going The peoples network continues to be available in all of our libraries. We continue to base our provision for the public through libraries.
	Provision of support to people in need of help in developing their IT skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased confidence in the use of computers and associated software. 	Adult and Community Learning Manager	On-going reports to strategic equality board on the numbers of people accessing IT skills training.

	Information, Advice and Guidance Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ease of access in obtaining access to the required services without duplication of effort or being passed from one service to another Help centre facilities recognise and can accommodate the needs of individuals. 	Strategic Manager – Business Centre	On-going
	Alternative formats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those who require different ways in which to receive information are able to do so. 	Strategic Manager – Business Centre Directors	On-going. Amended service redesign paper to include reference to alternative consultation formats
	Ensure all digital channels of communication is accessible to all people including those that use assistive technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-line services are easy to find and accessible to use On-line services are designed with the customer in mind and in accordance with government standards. 	Strategic Manager – Digital Services Strategic Manager – Business Centre	On-going The refreshed website has ensured that content is in plain English and easier to understand, and we are now undertaking a further activity to ensure that our information and website conforms to the new accessibility legislation.
Objective	Action	Expected Outcome	Responsibility	Timescales
Compliant Procurement & Commissioning	Provide clear commissioning and procurement guidelines that are available to the public Mainstream equality considerations in procurement to secure wider social benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anyone wishing to deliver goods and services to and on behalf of the council are clear on their equality and diversity responsibilities The council procures goods, works and services in a way which promotes equality. 	Procurement Services Team Leader	Guidance published and support from the procurement team on an ongoing basis.
	Provide clear standards and expectations for contract compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goods and services are commissioned and procured have due regard to the equality act 2010 Suppliers are judged by the quality of their equality and diversity policies and procedures All contracts have an equality clause as standard to ensure that suppliers meet their relevant statutory duties Tender criteria for suitable works do not disadvantage small and medium enterprises, minority and voluntary groups. 	Procurement and Contracts Manager	Companies are evaluated on a pass/fail basis where procurement look at things such as prosecutions, remedial action etc. Some procurements might have more bespoke questions, where relevant and proportionate to the subject matter of the contract, and commissioners are prompted to think about this in the planning stages of the procurement process.

