

Isle of Wight Council

EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

ACTION PLAN

2019 to 2022

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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 issues over the next four years (2019-2022); setting out our vision approach and monitoring. **The Equality Act (2010)** replaces previous anti-discrimination laws with a single act. It now incorporates 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 is now 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 issues are 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 public consultation 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 2019 to 2022 and will be reviewed by the 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.
Further information on Equality and Diversity and how the Council meets its statutory duty can be found by visiting the following website <https://www.iwight.com/Council/Working-for-the-Council/Equality-and-Diversity/Introduction/> 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 on all 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. | <p>Directors, Heads of Service and Members 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.</p> | <p>On-going as any council activities determine the need for an equality impact assessment to be undertaken</p> |
| | <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. | <p>Lead Officer for Equality and Diversity</p> | <p>September 2019</p> |

| 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 disabled people 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.</p> <p>Reports to be 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 | Any complaints relating to harassment or discrimination to be reviewed at 6 monthly intervals by the strategic equality board to ensure that any appropriate action is taken. |

| 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 |

| Objective | Action | Expected Outcome | Responsibility | Timescales |
|---------------------|--|--|----------------------------------|--|
| Promoting Awareness | General equality and diversity learning and development programme for all staff and elected members Monitor staff perceptions of equality via staff surveys and produce actions relating to the outcome of the survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand of what is required to behave in a non-discriminatory manner and to be proactive in promoting good relations. | Training and development service | All staff to have completed the e-learning module by January 2020. Further training modules on Equality Essentials, Equality Impact Assessment and Managing Diversity to be ready for delivery by April 2020. |
| | Raising awareness of the potential discrimination faced by gypsies and travellers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced potential for discrimination and increased understanding of this protected group of people | Training and Development service | Training to be made available to all staff and elected members during 2019/20 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. | | |

| 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 |
| | 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. |

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| | 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 |
| | 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 |
| 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 Services Team Leader | Ongoing |

