

Equalities Objectives and Activities 2013 – 14

Introduction

Following the introduction to the Equality Act 2010, public authorities are required to comply with the general equality duty and specific equality duties as set out below:

General Duty

In the exercise of our functions, West Berkshire Council must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and 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.

Specific Duties

In summary, the Council are required to:

- 1.** Publish information to demonstrate our compliance with the general equality duty. This needs to be done annually in January each year. This information must include information relating to people who share a protected characteristic who are employees or others affected by our policies and practices. (Employee information is published in the Annual Employee Report. Details of where this can be found are included below.)
- 2.** We must prepare and publish one or more objectives that act to further any of the aims of the general equality duty. This must be done at least every four years, beginning in 2012. The objectives must be specific and measurable.

The Council's equality objectives were drawn directly from the West Berkshire Council Strategy 2012-16 as updated in 2013, where equality is core to the way in which we plan and deliver our services.

The following table sets out the Council's equality objectives and supporting activities, and provides a summary of our progress over the last year.

	Objectives	Activities	Progress at November 2013
1	Pilot personal budgets for disabled children to ensure that services are tailored to individual needs	<p>To maintain the number of children accessing Short Breaks</p> <p>To maintain the number of nights of overnight care provided to disabled young people</p> <p>To increase the number of families engaged in West Berks Personalised Budgets Pilot</p>	<p>613 children and young people have been in receipt of short break care, across a range of activities, between July and September 2013, compared with 511 the previous quarter.</p> <p>178 nights of overnight care were provided to disabled young people between July and September 2013, compared to 55 the previous quarter.</p> <p>The number of families currently engaged in the West Berkshire Personalised Budgets Pilot is 6. The target is to engage 10 families by the end of the year.</p>
2	Focus care and support services on more targeted interventions, in particular addressing the needs of those most vulnerable in our communities	Maintain the percentage of vulnerable people maintaining independent living through the provision of a housing related support service	99.6% of vulnerable people have maintained independent living (596 out of 597 people). This has remained consistent in the first two quarters of this year.

	Objectives	Activities	Progress at November 2013
3	Support carers to continue caring through increasing the numbers of carers identified, carers assessments, support services, self help groups, carers breaks.	Increase the number of identified carers receiving help or support from the Council	<p>Q1 = 251 Q2 = 655 (target by year end 700)</p> <p>A temporary dedicated carers support worker has been employed by Oxfordshire and Newbury Crossroads who works in the Physical Disability Team to identify new carers and review known carers. This has led to a significant level of new carers identified and appropriately supported.</p> <p>Carers assessments are also offered as part of the service user assessment.</p>
		Baseline the number of carers identified and provided with advice, information and support through the new Berkshire Carers Service by 31/03/2014	A target was agreed of 375 new carers to be identified within a year in West Berkshire by year end. 187 new carers are expected to be identified in the next quarter and 188 in the final quarter based on current data.

	Objectives	Activities	Progress at November 2013
4	Deliver effective transport solutions for all by increasing choice and minimising congestion	Consult on and adopt a new Local Road Safety Strategy for West Berkshire by 31st March 2014 (this strategy supports the delivery of the LTP 2011 – 2026)	<p>The main Road Safety policy within the Local Transport Plan was subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment. Age and Disability are relevant areas for this piece of work.</p> <p>The assessment stated that <i>'This policy seeks the creation of a safer environment for all users. It covers all aspects of the Council's wide-ranging road safety activities including highway safety schemes, enforcement of speed restrictions, and road safety training, education, and publicity. The policy provides for vulnerable user groups, including older people, younger people, and disabled people.'</i></p> <p>Through the full Road Safety Strategy further details of this work are provided.</p> <p>The draft strategy was consulted on during September / October 2013 and the new strategy should be approved by the end of March 2014.</p>
		Develop a Planning Policy Parking Strategy for the District by 31 March 2016.	The development of this strategy is on track to be delivered by 2016. Currently consideration is being given to parking standards for new developments and this includes the provision of adequate disabled spaces.

	Objectives	Activities	Progress at November 2013
5	Challenge and support schools where outcomes for pupils need improvement and focus early years support on children and families who are most vulnerable.	Narrowing the achievement gap between SEN / non SEN scoring level 4 or above in English and Maths at the end of KS 2	<p>There is no longer a measure for English and Maths combined. The new measure is for Reading, Writing and Maths at level 4 or above.</p> <p>The gap between SEN and non SEN is 57.1% which is greater than the national gap by 4 percentage points.</p> <p>The SEN cohort is 353 pupils with SEN needs ranging from school action to those with a statement.</p>
		Increase the proportion of children eligible for Free School Meals who achieve 5+A*-C grades at GCSE (incl English and Maths)	<p>There has been a small reduction for West Berkshire across 10 secondary schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 schools achieved an increase, 2 of which were significant increases. • 5 schools reduced the gap, with 2 showing significant reductions; • 1 school stayed the same; <p>The Free School Meals cohort was 298 students out of a cohort of 2009.</p>

	Objectives	Activities	Progress at November 2013
6	Improve the health and well being of the adult population of West Berkshire through tackling inequalities in health (Health and Well-Being Board)	Preventative Public Health outcomes to be developed through the Health and Well-Being Board	<p>The Health and Wellbeing Strategy was published in May 2013 and it sets out how the West Berkshire Health and Wellbeing Board are working collectively to address inequalities in health. Public Health and other West Berkshire Council departments and the third sector are working towards the following strategic objectives that were developed collaboratively by all those involved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reducing childhood obesity in primary school children 2. Supporting those over 40 years old to change life style behaviours detrimental to health and wellbeing 3. Promoting independence and supporting older people to manage their long term conditions 4. Giving every child and young person the best start in life 5. Supporting a vibrant district <p>An Action Plan for the Public Health team has been developed and a Public Health Integration Programme Board has been established.</p>

Objectives	Activities	Progress at November 2013	
7	Explore the different ways in which we can work more closely with our partners in the voluntary and community sector, parish councils and other community groups;	Closer working outcomes to be developed through Community Involvement Board	<p>We support the community and voluntary sector to deliver projects through parish planning and via the support contract we have with the Community Council for Berkshire (CCB).</p> <p>The new Localism Act provisions will ensure there is greater consideration of contracts which can be delivered by the voluntary sector.</p> <p>We also work closely with Empowering West Berkshire, who are developing a quality mark for the voluntary sector to ensure best practice and the adherence to safe standards in West Berkshire.</p> <p>Within the Council, community engagement and partnership working is regularly monitored through the Community Involvement Programme Board</p>
8	Endeavour to minimise discrimination, harassment and victimisation and advance equality of opportunity for employees and all members of our communities	<p>Ensure that all employees have taken part in mandatory equalities training at least every 3 years</p> <p>Proportion of members trained / refreshed in equality training</p>	<p>69% of West Berkshire Council employees were up to date with equalities training compared to 55% a year ago.</p> <p>31% of Members have completed equalities training within the last three years. Member training is arranged every three years with the next session due in June 2014.</p>

Objectives**Activities****Progress at November 2013**

Ensure all new and revised policies entered into the executive cycle have been subject to a impact assessment establishing any potential adverse impact on people with protected characteristics

The Equality Impact Assessment process was amended in 2013 with the intention of simplifying the process for Officers. The decision making process requires equality to be considered and reports will be returned to Officers if it is considered that this has not occurred.

Ensure that the Council's procurement processes require any third parties which exercise functions on its behalf comply with the Equalities Duty

The council's Procurement Board have agreed that individual service areas will monitor how the contractors that they employ comply with equality requirements.

Publish equality data on the equalities web pages covering the impact of the Council's policies and services on an annual basis.

The Council provides information relating to employees in its Annual Employee Report. Information relating to 2011/12 can be found at:

<http://www.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=34452>

The Council maintains a range of research, information and data relating to the residents of West Berkshire. This can be located at:

<http://www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=22320>

Equality Impact Assessments, where applicable, are published alongside the relevant report on the Council's Committee web pages at:

<http://www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=20398>

	Objectives	Activities	Progress at November 2013
9	Ensure that our workforce is reflective of our communities	Any approved recommended actions from the annual employment report be actioned within 12 months.	The recommendation, 'to review the proportions of male/female staff at senior management level' was undertaken during 2013. See below.

Male / Female Staff Split

A review of the 2011/12 annual employment report by the Including Everyone Group recognised that whilst three quarters of the Council's total work force are female, just one fifth of senior managers are female. Although this is a pattern that is not unusual within local authorities, it is a significant difference that the Including Everyone Board agreed merited further consideration.

Directorate groups each discussed this finding with reference to their own work areas, considering whether any practices existed that might affect women's ability to be promoted when compared to men.

A number of barriers were identified that might impact on the chances of women being promoted into senior roles, but none were considered to be within the control of the Council. For example the CIEG considered the impact of the traditional view of male and female roles within the family:

- Many stereotypes are learned early in life and might have influenced the educational choices that men and women made, and which now might limit, or otherwise affect, their career choices. This was considered particularly relevant in areas such as Highways, Transport and Planning.
- The increase in flexibility of working, in recognition of the differing needs of people, has resulted in almost half of all women now working part time, compared to just 16% of men. Again, this might be rooted in the perceived traditional roles of men and women learned at an early age. As, by far the majority of all part time roles are at less senior levels, this is likely to have impacted on the ability of women to progress.

To counter this, the Council are able to offer a number of development opportunities to women and to men, aimed at enabling a transition to management for those who are interested:

- Perspectives: an in-house development programme for those wishing to move into management;
- Institute of leadership and Management (ILM) programmes: for those in management or those aspiring to management positions;
- The Springboard programme: an international programme designed to enable women to develop themselves both personally and professionally.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that there are no Council made barriers to promotion for women, and that the greatest effect is from the number of women putting themselves forward for promotion. In addition there is a very low turnover of staff at management level limiting opportunities for anyone to progress.

No areas for activity were identified as a result of this review, however it is an area that will continue to be monitored through the annual employment report, and equality impact assessments. No action is proposed at this time.