



Norfolk County Council

Equality Act 2010

Equality Duty Information Report for 2018/2019



If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact Neil Howard on 0344 800 8020 or Text Relay: 18001 0344 800 8020.

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Introduction

1. The Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities to publish information to demonstrate compliance with the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty.
2. The information published must include:
 - Information relating to people who are affected by our policies and practices who share 'protected characteristics'ⁱ (for example service users); and
 - Information relating to employees who share protected characteristics.
3. The information published in this document is our response to this.

The Public Sector Equality Duty

4. The Public Sector Equality Duty is set out in Section 149 of Equality Act 2010. The Duty requires public authorities to pay due regard to the following when exercising public functions:
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Actⁱⁱ
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share itⁱⁱⁱ
 - Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it^{iv}.
5. The full Act is available [here](#).

What we did during 2018

When planning and commissioning services, we take full account of equality diversity and inclusion, and where necessary, put actions in place to address any barriers faced by people with protected characteristics.

6. Norfolk County Council provides or pays for many different services for Norfolk residents – from child protection to road maintenance, the care of older people and library services. When we plan and commission services, or propose changes to services, we conduct an equality assessment to consider the impact on people with protected characteristics.
7. The findings of equality assessments are reported to our decision-making committees, to enable elected members to take any issues into account as part of the decision-making process. See [here](#) for more information about our committees and their different roles.
8. We continue to manage unprecedented financial challenges, and equality assessments are always carried out on our annual budget proposals. These are published on the Council's website, <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/> for inspection and

scrutiny. Where an assessment identifies the possibility of detrimental impact, actions are agreed to try to mitigate this impact.

9. In carrying out an equality assessment, the Council reviews a wide range of evidence before drawing conclusions about likely impacts. This involves reviewing, for example, data about people and services that might be affected, contextual information about local areas and populations and other data sources. Where appropriate, equality assessments are informed by the findings of [public consultation](#), and in particular feedback from people about the impacts that proposals might have.
10. For information, data and intelligence about Norfolk and its communities, see our online resource www.norfolkinsight.org.uk.

We are implementing a range of initiatives to promote accessibility and tackle inequality across the different services we pay for and deliver, based on what people who live, work in and visit Norfolk have told us will make the most difference.

11. We are continuing to embed heightened levels of accessibility into Norfolk County Council buildings, ICT and services, to make good accessibility for service users and staff the 'norm'.
12. Over the last year, Phase 1 of an evidence review has taken place with chairs of Norfolk's five county-wide independent Access Groups (led by disabled people) to compile a list of barriers in Norfolk to disabled people's independence.
13. In summary, the barriers include:
 - 1) Lack of information on public agencies' websites about the accessibility of their individual public services (making it challenging for disabled service users to know in advance before they visit a service whether they will be able to access the service, park nearby, etc)
 - 2) Lack of understanding by some public agencies of inclusive design and how to promote access for disabled people when service planning and commissioning
 - 3) Reducing stress and anxiety in public spaces and at customer service points for people who are neurodiverse (e.g. on the autism spectrum)
 - 4) Poor access to public leisure centres and private gyms
 - 5) Barriers in public transport
 - 6) Inaccessibility of national "Shared spaces" initiative
 - 7) Perceived shortage of disabled parking and inappropriate use of Blue Badges
 - 8) Digital exclusion – many disabled people cannot access public agencies' websites due to a lack of compatibility with access software or poor design
 - 9) Lack of 'changing places' toilet facilities across the county
 - 10) Clear pavements/pathways in urban centres
 - 11) Affordability and cost of living
 - 12) School premises, curriculums and information that are not accessible
 - 13) More effective enforcement of failures to make reasonable adjustments.
14. Some of these issues are not within the Council's gift to address, and others will be challenging to resolve, but the aim of the review is to be ambitious across the whole system in Norfolk to find ways to address these issues over the next 25 years – to achieve a more accessible Norfolk.

15. These findings are being embedded into the local services strategy. Further work is planned to consult on these barriers with disabled groups in Norfolk.
16. Following this, options will be considered for addressing these barriers over the short to long term. Issues not within the Council's gift to address will be reported to relevant agencies.
17. Over the last 12 months, work has taken place to implement Norfolk's Multi-Agency Protocol on Hate Incident Reporting. The Protocol sets a consistent standard for tackling hate incidents in Norfolk, to make it easier for residents (particularly residents with care and support needs) to report hate incidents:
 - Over the last year, 275 Norfolk County Council and public agency staff have been trained to report hate incidents.
 - Tackling hate incidents has been built into the Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board Strategic Plan 2018/2021 as a strategic intention, supported by relevant actions.
 - An e-learning module for staff on tackling hate incidents has been refreshed and will be published shortly.
18. The Council has published a new accessibility strategy for schools, which draws on the experiences of over 100 disabled young people in Norfolk. The strategy is a statutory responsibility and sets the context for individual school accessibility plans. The strategy can be viewed [here](#).
19. Policy and Resources Committee has agreed a revised [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy](#), that sets clear expectations for staff, contractors and service standards.

Looking ahead – what next

20. In 2019, work will continue to deliver the Council's equality objectives.

Further information

21. For further information please contact Neil Howard, Equality and Accessibility Officer on neil.howard@norfolk.gov.uk, Tel: 0344 800 8020 or Text Relay: 18001 0344 800 8020.

i The protected characteristics are:

Age – e.g. a person belonging to a particular age or a range of ages (for example 18 to 30 year olds).

Disability - a person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Gender reassignment - the process of transitioning from one gender to another.

Marriage and civil partnership

Pregnancy and maternity

Race - refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Religion and belief - has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (such as Atheism).

Sex - a man or a woman.

Sexual orientation - whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

ii **Prohibited conduct:**

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have, or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination occurs when a condition, rule, policy or practice in your organisation that applies to everyone disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.

Harassment is “unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual”.

Victimisation occurs when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act; or because they are suspected of doing so. An employee is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.

iii The Act specifies that having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity might mean:

- Removing or minimizing disadvantages suffered by people who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of others;
- Encouraging people who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such people is disproportionately low.

iv Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between people and communities involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to (a) tackle prejudice, and (b) promote understanding.