



Equality Act 2010

Equality Duty Information Report

January 2017



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 0344 800 8011 (Textphone).

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Introduction

1. The Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities like Norfolk County Council 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', as it is known, requires public authorities to pay due regard to the following, when exercising their 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 2016

When planning and commissioning services, we take full account of equality and accessibility, 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 and Full Council, to ensure that elected members can 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, www.norfolk.gov.uk for inspection and scrutiny.

Where an assessment identifies the possibility of adverse 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. For many proposals 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 service users and tax payers have told us will make the most difference.

11. We have embedded heightened levels of accessibility into County Hall refurbishment and Digital Norfolk Ambition (DNA), to make good accessibility for service users and staff the 'norm'. This approach is now standard, is being used with other refurbishment projects and won last year's Municipal Journal Award for 'Disability Confident'. You can read more about the award [here](#).
12. A set of accessibility standards and toolkit has been developed, to enable services to explore approaches to taking a more holistic and evidence-led approach to accessibility improvements across services, buildings and ICT systems.
13. We reported last year on our audit of the effectiveness of partnership working in Norfolk on hate incident reporting. We have worked with Norfolk's Community Relations and Equality Board (CREB) to address the findings of the audit, which has included revising Norfolk's Multi-Agency Hate Incident Protocol.
14. The revised Protocol clarifies and simplifies local agencies' responsibilities on hate incident reporting, with a view to enabling more effective partnership working in Norfolk on hate incidents and crime. It has been structured to enable any agency to adopt it, whether large, small, public, voluntary or community.
15. Development has been led jointly by Norfolk County Council and Norfolk Constabulary. Different statutory and voluntary agencies contributed to development through a multi-agency workshop which took place on 14th September 2016.
16. The Chair of Norfolk's Community Safety Partnership and the Chair of CREB will shortly write to all statutory agencies in Norfolk, outlining the work undertaken to revise the Protocol, and encouraging them to adopt the Protocol.
17. Our Children's Services department is part-way through delivery of an equality strategy to implement specific equality actions in response to Ofsted findings. In addition to the actions we reported on last year, this has included developing a paper for Children's Services Committee which looks in detail at demographic issues and potential inequalities affecting young people in Norfolk from different backgrounds. A link will be added to this report when the paper is published.

18. We have supported events which matter to local communities and which promote awareness – such as Black History Month, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) History Month and Norwich Pride.

We are working hard to be a good employer of people from protected groups, especially those people who find it difficult to get into and stay in work.

19. Each year we report on how we are doing as an employer to monitor how representative our workforce is of the wider working-age population. Currently, this monitoring highlights:
 - a. Norfolk County Council (NCC) is the largest employer in Norfolk, employing just over 6,000 employees.
 - b. The workforce remains predominantly female; 71% of the workforce, of which 42% are part time. Women comprise 51.56% of employees earning more than £50k.
 - c. Employees declaring a disability comprise 4.52% of the overall NCC workforce, marginally up from 4.34% in 2015/16 and 3.52% of employees earning over £50k. However, we know that on average 30% of employees prefer not to declare their disability status, therefore it is likely that this figure under-represents the actual number of disabled people employed.
 - d. Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) employees make up 2.81% of the overall workforce, a small increase from 2.48% in 2015/16 and 1.95% of employees earning over £50k. This compares to Norfolk's wider BAME population of 3.5%.
 - e. It should be noted that around 17% of employees prefer not to indicate their ethnicity status.
 - f. The age profile of the organisation shows that there has been an increase in the number of people aged 45 or over which account for 57.3% of employees (up from 51.33% in 15/16). The number of employees aged 25 and under however has increased slightly at 3.48%, considerably below the labour market average (down from 3.39%).
 - g. Over the last four years we have also been monitoring the number of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) employees, and employees of faith or no faith. Whilst a significant proportion of the total workforce remain undeclared (73%), 0.94% of the workforce disclosed their LGB status and 12.7% have disclosed they have a religion.

Looking ahead – what next

20. In 2016, elected members on the Council's Strategic Equality Group considered a range of information about inequality in Norfolk, to enable consideration to be given to potential draft priorities and actions for 2017-2020.
21. As well as demographic and population information this included evidence provided by 50 young people in Norfolk from different diverse groups, including disabled, Black and minority ethnic and LGBT young people, and young people from different faiths.
22. Later on this year, the Council will publish revised equality objectives for 2017-2020, as required by the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Further information

23. For further information please contact Norfolk County Council's Corporate Planning & Partnerships team:

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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.