



RACE EQUALITY SCHEME

November 2007

1 INTRODUCTION

The Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000) places a general duty on a wide range of public authorities, (including District Councils) to promote race equality. This duty means that, in everything they do they should have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity; and
- promote good race relations between people of different racial groups.

Some time ago Kennet District Council established an (officer) Equalities and Social Inclusion Group to ensure that the Council was able to progress through the various stages of the Race Equality Standard with the help of the Wiltshire Racial Equality Council. With the support of elected Members and through the commitment of all the staff concerned the Council is approaching level three of the standard.

The Council has continued to progress this work by adopting the new "Equality Standard for Local Government" which embraces both racial equality issues and addresses wider anti-discrimination issues.

2 RACE EQUALITY SCHEME

The Commission for Racial Equality published a draft '*Statutory Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality*', and under that Code the Council produced a Race Equality Scheme in 2002. Following its introduction the scheme has been regularly updated and it now fits within the remit of the Council's Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy.

"A Race Equality Scheme shall state, in particular -

(a) those of its functions and policies, or proposed policies, which that person has assessed as relevant to its performance of the duty imposed by section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act; and

(b) that person's arrangements for -

1. assessing and consulting on the likely impact of its proposed policies on the promotion of race equality;
2. monitoring its policies for any adverse impact on the promotion of race equality;
3. publishing the results of such assessments and consultations as are mentioned in sub-paragraph (1.) and of such monitoring as is mentioned in sub-paragraph (2.);
4. ensuring public access to information and services which it provides; and
5. training staff in connection with the duties imposed by section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act."

This latest version of the scheme has been prepared with expert guidance from Racial Equality Groups.

3 RACE EQUALITY STRATEGIC AIMS

Kennet District Council is committed to fulfilling its duties under the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 in the performance of all its functions, duties and powers.

The Council has introduced a '*Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy*', this is shown in full in Appendix A. The Race Equality Scheme forms part of the Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy which covers all aspects of the Council's equality and diversity remit, including equal pay, equal opportunities, race equality and disability discrimination.

4 SPECIFIC AIMS FOR MEETING THE GENERAL DUTY FOR RACE EQUALITY

The Authority is committed to meeting its obligations under the general duty and in order to do this aims to:

- incorporate race equality aims and objectives into all strategies and plans;
- make race equality central to the day-to-day operations of the Council;
- ensure that the Authority reflects the diverse community that it serves;
- work with the Wiltshire Race Equality Council to achieve our aims;
- utilise existing (and where appropriate create new) policies and procedures to prevent racial discrimination and to promote good race relations and equality of opportunity.

5 OUR RACE EQUALITY VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS, AND HOW WE WILL MEET THE SPECIFIC RACIAL EQUALITY DUTIES

The Council's values, principles and standards with regard to race equality are set out in its '*Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy* in Appendix A under the race equality objectives identified in the Race Equality Standard, namely: -

1. Leadership and Corporate Commitment. The Council will ensure that racial discrimination is challenged and addressed in all its activities.
2. Service Delivery and Customer Care. The Council is committed to delivering quality services designed to meet the needs of all those in its communities ensuring that they are delivered without prejudice and discrimination.
3. Consultation and Community Development and Scrutiny. The Council recognises and values the importance of engaging and working in consultation with all parts of the community, staff and stakeholder groups. It will work towards developing and strengthening all such communities with a view to enhancing quality of life and choice.

4. Marketing and Public Image. The Council will adopt good practice and also engage with other key agencies in the promotion of equality. To help achieve this goal the Council will; ensure that all potential, new and existing staff are aware of the Council's position on equality; seek out best practice wherever it may be found; and publicise its commitment to equality amongst its partner organisations and the public generally
5. Monitoring and Review of Policy. The Council will implement procedures to monitor the implementation of its Corporate Policy on Equality and subject the policy to periodic review.
6. Employment - The Council as an Equal Opportunities Employer and an 'Investor in People'. The Council will develop employment strategies designed to ensure that discriminatory practices in recruitment, selection and employment do not take place. Strategies will be developed to ensure the full potential of all its employees is developed.
7. Harassment. In acknowledging the importance of the elimination of harassment, it will seek to pursue policies designed to address the elimination of harassment both within the Council and within its wider community. Staff disciplinary and grievance procedures, and indeed external complaints procedures, will emphasise the Council's intolerance of harassment on any grounds.

The Authority has assessed which of its functions are 'relevant' to the general duty as follows:

- All the main functions have been listed, including statutory and non-statutory functions.
- The identified functions have been subject to a top-level review to ascertain whether or not the work and policies involve or affect members of the public in any way.
- Information from the public and employees, such as complaints, has been examined to identify whether any functions or policies are affecting racial groups differently, or whether they are regarded as discriminatory.
- Functions have also been examined to investigate opportunities to promote equality of opportunity and good race relations more effectively.

The relevant main functions were prioritised on the basis of their impact on the general duty. The impact was assessed on a scoring grid designed to reflect the above assessment process and produce self-evident priority areas as set out in the scoring grids. A copy of the assessment grids and priority identification is set out for all services at Appendix B to this Race Equality Scheme. The relevance of individual service areas has been re-examined during June and July 2005 as part of a general review of arrangements for monitoring, (See Section 9 below).

However, the assessment of relevance to the general duty, whilst useful, does not mean that where services are seen as being less relevant that no action will take place in those areas. On the contrary, every one of the Council's service areas has a '*Racial Equalities Action Plan*'. The Council feels that all service areas should play a part in this important aspect of the Council's work.

6 ACTION PLAN AND TIMETABLE, AND REVIEW OF PLANS

The Council's '*Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy*' sets out the corporate action points. As noted above, each Service Area also has a detailed action plan which sets out who is to carry out the actions, when, the resources required, measures of completion, and targets. Those action plans have been approved by the Resources Executive Committee and progress on the corporate and service action plans are examined by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board each year.

The senior management team for each service area monitors progress against the action plans. In addition, as an audit function, the Council's Equalities and Social Inclusion Group will continue to monitor progress against action plans at its monthly meetings. The Steering Group will prepare the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board each year and, in conjunction with the Service Managers, make recommendations for amendments to plans and targets.

This '*Race Equality Scheme*' will be kept under review and amended as necessary to reflect changes arising from the review of action plans and timetables described above.

7 RACE EQUALITY TARGETS AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Council is subject to a number of national, statutory performance indicators.

Target BV2a. The level of the 'Equality Standards for Local Government' to which the authority conforms. The target for 2007/08 is to carry out work to achieve and then consolidate level 3.

Target BV11b. The percentage of top 5% earners from black and minority ethnic people. In 2005 we had 5% of our top 5% earners from an ethnic minority group. Unfortunately this constituted only one employee and since they left we have not met this target. This situation is under review and the target remains at 5%.

Target BV17a. Percentage of minority ethnic employees. The target in 2006/07 was 1.4% with an actual of 1.16%. The target for 2007/08 remains at 1.4%.

Target BV17b. Percentage of economically active minority community people in the authority area. The target for 2006/07 was 1.4% which was achieved. The target for 2007/08 is again set at 1.4%.

Target BV17X (TargetBV17a divided by Target BV17b). Ratio of KDC employees to local minority ethnic population. The target for 2006/07 was 100%, but the actual was 82.86%. The target for 2007/08 remains at 100%.

Target BV174. The number of racial incidents recorded by the authority per 100,000 population. The target for 2006/07 was 5.38 with an actual of 5.38. For 2007/08 the target remains at 5.38.

Target BV175. The percentage of racial incidents that resulted in further action to be reported. The target remains at 100% and has been achieved every year.

In order to ensure compliance with targets BV174 and BV 175 as above the Council has introduced a procedure as set out at Appendix C to this '*Race Equality Scheme*'.

As noted in part 6 of this *Race Equality Scheme*, there are, in addition to the national performance targets a range of targets at Service Area level contained within the detailed service area action plans.

8 HOW WE DEAL WITH COMPLAINTS

If a complaint concerns racial equality there is a formal Complaints Procedure and a Harassment Policy, the Council does not tolerate harassment or discrimination in any form. All complaints are fully investigated and appropriate actions taken as a result. Complainants are treated with sensitivity and details retained in strict confidence.

The Council is committed to developing strategies and implementing policies for promoting cultural diversity through racial equality measures based upon its adoption of the Commission for Racial Equality's Standards. The Council, in adopting such policies will ensure that they are well publicised and accessible ensuring that its Service Action Plans are targeted to achieve the eight race equality objectives listed in the policy.

The policy applies to elected Members and every member of staff employed by the Council and is applicable for all members of the public. Complaints about racial equalities matters will be pursued vigorously by the Council.

9 MONITORING POLICIES

Monitoring functions and policies enables the Council to assess how they are affecting different racial groups or whether they are having an adverse impact. Service areas will test, where relevant:

- levels of participation;
- level of satisfaction;
- how effectively the service is delivered to different communities;
- how services are provided, i.e. appropriateness.

In order to monitor effectively the Council uses the following methods, as appropriate: -

- measuring the level of use of services;
- measuring outcomes as between different racial groups, (e.g. in respect of enforcement action);
- satisfaction surveys;
- data on complaints;
- discussion groups and meetings;

If the monitoring identifies that a policy has or is likely to have an adverse impact on a minority ethnic group then the Service Manager responsible for that service or policy will consider how best to eliminate this effect.

The Council has much evidence of good practice in monitoring in many services, with procedures having been introduced and developed over several years. This good practice has now been reinforced by an "Equalities Monitoring – Policy and Practice Guide" which is reproduced as Appendix E to this Scheme.

10 ASSESSING AND CONSULTING ON NEW POLICIES, AND PUBLISHING THE RESULTS OF CONSULTATION

In order to build race equality into the policy making process the Council will assess and consult on, where practicable, the likely effects of policies before they are introduced. This will be carried out using Equality Impact Assessments. New policies will aim to promote equality of opportunity and good race relations.

The Council has a Consultation Strategy; the relevant extracts for the purpose of this Race Equality Scheme are as follows:

"Introduction

Kennet District Council is committed to making evidence based decisions that take into account the views and experiences of all those affected by them. We are dedicated to engaging with all sectors of the community and ensuring that everyone has an equal chance to have their say."

"Objectives

To support a process of informed, open, honest and transparent decision-making.
To support the Community Planning process.
To raise the standard of consultation that takes place throughout the Council.
To enable the Council to communicate with all sectors of the community, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion/belief, or disability."

"Roles and Responsibilities

Service Managers and Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring that all Council employees understand and apply the consultation process outlined in this strategy. Service Managers and Heads of Service must ensure that staff consult with stakeholders when making key service and policy making decisions."

"Methodology

Ensure that those consulted promptly receive feedback about actions that have taken place as a result of the consultation. This feedback must be given in a format suitable for those who have taken part in the consultation."

"Equalities

All staff must consider equalities issues when undertaking consultation. All people should be considered when making Council decisions, regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion/belief or disability."

In addition, advice is given on possible barriers to consultation, and how to overcome them. This advice is reproduced as Appendix D to this Race Equality Scheme.

The Consultation Strategy demands that feedback is provided to those who take part in a consultation process. In addition the Council will note every consultation exercise as part of the consultation recording system. Summaries of the notes will also appear within the annual Best Value Performance Plan.

When the Council and its committees are considering new policies, strategies and service delivery plans, any relevant consultation, including that with minority ethnic groups, will be brought to their attention.

As regards the Race Equality Scheme, the original version in May 2002 was the subject to consultation with, and assessment by, the Wiltshire Race Equality Council, as is the case with the Council's '*Corporate Policy on Equality*' and service area race equality action plans. This revised Race Equality Scheme has been subject to the same process.

11 TRAINING STAFF

The Council provides regular equality and diversity awareness training for staff, this includes racial equality awareness and equality now forms part of the Council's formal induction process for new staff.

The Council's internet site and intranet are used to convey the Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy and related policies such as the Race Equality Scheme. These are readily accessible to all members of the public and staff within the Council.

12 EMPLOYMENT

The Council currently monitors the following by racial group:

- staff in post;
- applicants for employment;
- leavers;
- applicants for training;
- applicants for promotion;
- staff receiving training;
- staff involved in grievance procedures;
- staff who are the subject of disciplinary procedures.

This monitoring information is reported annually to the Council's Human Resources Committee.

13 HOW WE WILL TELL THE PUBLIC ABOUT OUR RACE EQUALITY PROGRESS

All the Council's policies on racial equality require reports to elected members, and those reports will be considered in meetings open to the public and press.

Performance against national and local performance indicators are published in the Council's *'Best Value Performance Plan'*.

The Council's staff newsletter and Member's Bulletin will carry information on progress made and examples of good practice.

Press releases will be made, and the Council's Internet site used to provide information to the public in this area.

The Council's consultation strategy requires feedback to be given to the participants on the outcomes of consultation.

KENNET DISTRICT COUNCIL

CORPORATE EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

The Council is committed to developing strategies and implementing policies to support equality and diversity both in the services it provides and as a local employer.

The Council Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy promotes equality based approaches that cover, age, disability, gender, race, religion/belief and sexual orientation. The Council aims to make equality principles central to the delivery of service provision, giving equality of access to all and recognising the diversity within our local community.

There is a considerable amount of legislation supporting equality and diversity. This includes the Race Relations Act (1976), the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000), the Disability Discrimination Act (1995), the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) and the Equal Pay Act (1970) to name but a few. The Council will adopt all the statutory duties needed to fulfil its equality and diversity aims and will follow the codes of practice issued by best practice bodies such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

This policy applies to elected members, all staff employed by the Council and all members of the public.

Approach

The Council operates an Equalities and Social Inclusion Group. The purpose of this internal group is to identify and implement equality and diversity principles as core to all Council activities. The work of the group is monitored by the Resources Policy Committee.

The Council follows the principles shown in the “Equality Standard for Local Government”. The Equality Standard is a management and policy tool that is designed to support the implementation of equality law and the delivery of effective policies. The standard has five levels; Kennet has successfully achieved levels one and two and has plans in place working towards level three of the standard.

This Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy brings together all the Council’s equality activities. The policy has two sections. Section one outlines details of all the equality schemes that support equality and diversity. Section two outlines the Council objectives that are in place, these translate into Service Unit Action Plans targeted to achieve specifically identified equality objectives.

Section 1

Policies and schemes;

1. The Race Equality Scheme
2. The Gender Equality Scheme
3. The Disability Equality Scheme
4. The Council as an Equal Opportunities Employer
5. Equal Pay (Claim Procedure)

6. Harassment Policy Statement

Section 2

The council equality objectives are shown under the following headings;

1. Leadership and Corporate Commitment
2. Service Delivery and Customer Care
3. Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny
4. Marketing and Public Image
5. Monitoring and Reviewing Equality

SECTION ONE

1. The Race Equality Scheme

The Council has a legal obligation to have a Race Equality Scheme and has a statutory duty to promote race equality. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000) and the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) both outline the key requirements to promote race equality within public sector organisations such as Kennet District Council.

- a) **The Race Equality Scheme** is found on the Council website and internally on its 'Kennect' intranet site. This scheme fits within the overall Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy which sets out to promote equality and diversity within our community and to challenge all forms of discrimination.
- b) The Council has made a funding commitment to the voluntary sector and will continue to support ethnic minority groups and diversity groups where appropriate in the future.
- c) The Council will take into account the cultural differences of individuals in its approach to addressing the issue of institutional racism.
- d) The Council works with its Community Safety Partners to ensure that reporting of any racial harassment incidents is encouraged and channelled to the relevant organisations by means of clear, pre-determined procedures. The council operates a Harassment Policy, details can be found on the Council website and internal Kennect site.

2. The Gender Equality Scheme

The Gender Equality Duty (GED) came into effect as a legal obligation in April 2007, it was introduced by the Equality Act (2006). The GED requires the Council to adopt positive approaches to promote gender equality and eliminate discrimination.

- a) The Council operates a **Gender Equality Scheme**, full details can be found on the Council website and internal Kennect site. This scheme fits within the overall Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy.
- b) The Council constantly seeks to achieve this by regularly reviewing its strategies and provision of services to ensure they are delivered equally to all and are free

of discrimination. The Council has an Equality Action Plan in place that is regularly reviewed to ensure delivery of gender equality based services. The Council follows the Equality Standard for Local Government and adopts the latest statutory legislation to ensure its equality aims are met.

3. **The Disability Equality Scheme**

- a) The Council operates a **Disability Equality Scheme**. A full copy can be found on the website and internal Kennect site and it forms part of this overall Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy.
- b) Our Services are regularly reviewed to identify any improvements that will ensure disabled people have equal access to services. This is a requirement of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and more recent related legislation. Any future improvements identified through support groups and members of the community will be put into the Kennet Equality and Diversity Action Plan to ensure they are achieved.
- c) The Council follows the definition for disability provided by the Disability Discrimination Act (1995); "A person has a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities."
- d) The Council however also acknowledges that disability is a consequence of barriers that prevent many people from maximum participation in society. These barriers take little account of people who have impairments and may be:
 - Built environment problems
 - The rules and policies of organisations and institutions
 - Attitudes of people
 - Information and communication issues.
 This is the 'Social Model' approach and was developed by disabled people and it makes a clear distinction between an impairment and a disability.

4. **The Council as an Equal Opportunities Employer**

The Council will develop employment strategies designed to ensure that discriminatory practices in recruitment, selection and employment do not take place. Policies and strategies will be developed to ensure that the full potential of all employees can be realised;

- a) As an employer the Council operates an **Equal Opportunity Policy** which forms part of our overall strategy on equality and diversity. A copy of the policy is on the Council website and internal Kennect site. The Council is committed to equality of opportunity, it sets out to recruit, train and promote individuals on the basis of merit, ability and suitability for the work to be performed regardless of disability, gender, race, age, national origin, religion, belief, sexual orientation and regardless or not of membership of a trade union.

- b) The council will ensure that all staff are rewarded fairly and equitably. It operates an Equal Pay Policy and provides a Grievance Process for any employees who may wish to raise an issue about their pay.
- c) The Council carries out regular Equal Pay Audits to monitor all aspects of pay. The equal pay audit uses software, called Equal Pay Reviewer this follows best practice principles, being designed specifically for the Equality and Human Rights Commission.
- d) The Council will adopt and subscribe to the equalities codes of practice and will apply best practice techniques as recommended by professional bodies (e.g. the CIPD).
- e) In advertising for recruitment purposes the Council will advertise in the appropriate media to ensure that it targets its audience to attract the best available candidates.
- f) The Council will promote its commitment to equal opportunities, both internally and externally, in staff advertisements and job packs emphasising that the Council will welcome job applications from all regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, age etc.
- g) The Council may take positive lawful action when groups (e.g. women) are under represented at particular grades. The Council will adhere to statutory requirements outlined in legislation, such as the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) and Race Relations Act (1976).
- h) Kennet will acknowledge that recruitment and selection decisions should be based upon objective, measurable and reasonable selection criteria. It will develop policies and action plans that are designed to ensure this happens, e.g. the universal application of up to date job descriptions, person specifications and assessment-centred selection approaches.
- i) The Council will systematically review and develop training programmes for staff to raise awareness of equality and to enable managers to make recruitment selection decisions and promotion decisions based upon objective, measurable and reasonable criteria.
- j) The Council will continue to maintain and develop equality monitoring arrangements and take appropriate action as a result of its findings.
- k) The Council will monitor its Employee Development Review process to ensure that training and development opportunities continue to be open to all employees and are not influenced by factors such as age, race, religion/belief, sex etc..
- l) The Council does not tolerate bullying or harassment. Harassment can be unlawful discrimination and a criminal offence. A Harassment Policy is in place and can be found on the Council website or internal Kennet site. Any incidences will be dealt with swiftly and will respect the confidence of the potential victim.

- m) The Council will use an objective job evaluation tool and approach to ensure that all jobs are evaluated fairly and consistently within the Council.

5. Harassment

The Council will not tolerate harassment in any form. The Council has a Harassment Policy, copies can be found on the Council website or internal Kennect site. The policy supports any member of the public or employee in raising a grievance or complaint on the basis of harassment. It will protect those affected and treat their grievance or complaint in complete confidence. The Harassment Policy is publicised to all new and existing employees to promote our position on equality and diversity. The Council will seek to put policies in place that help eliminate harassment both within the Council and the wider community.

- a) The Council Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures will continue to identify all forms of harassment as a grievance and disciplinary issue.
- b) The Code of Conduct will be reviewed together with the associated “Whistle Blowing” policy to ensure that harassment issues are properly addressed and clearly identified as unacceptable.
- c) The Council Complaints Procedure makes it extremely clear that the Council wishes members of the public to raise any instances of harassment or inequality in the delivery of services as a subject of complaint. Any complaint raised will be fully investigated and appropriate action taken as a result.
- d) The Council will maintain and publish statistics and examples of complaints and incidents that it receives, the actions taken and outcomes to ensure that lessons are learned and improvements are made. The identity of anyone making such a complaint will remain confidential.

SECTION 2

1. Leadership & Corporate Commitment

The council will ensure that equality principles are fully promoted and that any form of discrimination is addressed in all its activities.

- a) The Council believes that it has an important role in promoting equality and diversity. It will work to support the elimination of all forms of discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relationships between different groups within the community.
- b) Kennet District Council has adopted and uses the following working definitions from the Macpherson report;

“Discrimination” – *“The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture,*

ethnic origin, gender or disability. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping which disadvantage people.”

“A discriminatory incident” – *“Any incident which is perceived to be discriminatory by the victim or any other person.”*

- c) The Council will actively strive to promote equality and diversity through the regular review of its processes, attitudes and behaviours. Employee training programmes will be actively developed and implemented on a regular basis to highlight equality and to challenge discrimination.
- d) The council will record and monitor information on equality and diversity. This will be reviewed to highlight future strategies to promote equality and diversity and help prevent discrimination.
- e) Kennet District Council will set and review equality targets as part of processes such as the Best Value Service Review and Performance Plans

2. **Service Delivery and Customer Care**

The Council is committed to the delivery of quality services designed to meet the needs of those in its communities, ensuring that they are equally available to all.

- a) Kennet District Council will incorporate equality principles into its communication and consultation strategies and provide mechanisms for assessing community needs. It acknowledges that a quality service cannot be achieved unless it reaches all those to whom it is relevant in the community.
- b) Individual Service Areas will adopt the Codes of Practice relevant to their own service delivery in relation to equality issues.
- c) Groups within the community whose requirements may be less well met by the Council will be identified and action taken to improve services.
- d) A commitment will be made to community profiling, monitoring of service usage, equality action planning and target setting within all departments and service areas. Individual service areas will undertake to compare community profiles with service user profiles and if needed, take action where the profiles diverge.
- e) The Council will ensure that service areas carry out “Equality Impact Assessments” on their policies.

3. **Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny**

The Council recognises and values the importance of engaging and working in consultation and partnership with all parts of the community, employees and stakeholder groups. It will work towards developing and strengthening all such communities with a view to enhancing quality of life and choice.

The Council currently supports and works with numerous groups within the community, for example; the Community Safety Partnership, CAB, Phab.

- a) The Council supports the development of strong, secure self-reliant, self-confident communities that are treated equally and are free from unlawful discrimination.
- b) All community area planning, community strategies and corporate planning (i.e. the Four Year Strategy, Best Value Performance Plans, Annual Reports) will reflect the needs and views of all members of the Community.
- c) Community development work will seek to embrace minority communities within the District.
- d) The Council will actively seek to consult and liaise with diverse local communities and will ensure that this is an integral part of the Council's Consultation Strategy.

4. Marketing and Public Image

The Council has adopted good practice and will engage and share this with other key agencies in the promotion of equality. The Council will publicise its commitment to equality within the community. To help achieve this goal the Council will do the following;

- a) Ensure all employees, candidates and new recruits are aware of the council position and are provided with copies of the Council Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy.
- b) The Council Equality Action Plan will be communicated and publicised regularly in press releases to the local media and through advertisements in the media and internet.
- c) The Council's commitment to equality in employment and in service delivery will be reinforced in staff training and induction programmes.
- d) Translation facilities (including Braille, large print and audio tapes) will be available to the public, particularly for excerpts of key documents and services. This includes documents such as the Best Value Performance Plan Summary, the Council Tax Leaflet etc.
- e) The Council will seek out best practice, e.g. the Equality Standard for Local government, the Equality and Human Rights Commission. It will share good

practice via the Equalities and Social Inclusion Group, the local media and the Council website.

- f) The Council will publicise its commitment to equality amongst its partner organisations, contractors, agents and suppliers making it clear that the Council expects the people with whom it enjoys a formal relationship to adhere to the Council Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy.
- g) Any promotional material published by the Council will reflect the diverse nature of the community within the district.
- h) Team meetings will regularly include equality as a topic, to support the Equality Action Plans for each service area. This will help develop future improvements and review planned actions.
- i) Best Value and other reviews will address equality issues.
- j) The Council will work with the key partner organisations to help promote equality and diversity within the community and identify improvements to service delivery.

5. **Monitoring and Reviewing Equality**

The Council has monitoring approaches in place to assess progress in all aspects of Equality and Diversity. The policies will be regularly reviewed to ascertain their effectiveness and ensure they reflect the latest developments in legislation.

Key aspects of monitoring will include completion of; equal pay audits, equality impact assessments and community consultation to ensure fulfilment of the Council's Gender Equality Plan.

In addition the Council will use the Equality Steering Group to;

- a) Monitor the implementation of the Equality Action Plan.
- b) Report progress on the agreed targets to the Resources Policy Committee.
- c) Use surveys and relevant information to assess the impact of the Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy on the awareness of the Council's staff and others to equality issues.
- d) Consult relevant organisations on current policy developments that will improve the effectiveness of equality policy and practice within Kennet.

ASSESSMENT OF RELEVANCE TO THE GENERAL DUTY TO PROMOTE RACE EQUALITY - METHODOLOGY

Public authorities must publish a R.E.S which:

- states the functions and policies they have assessed as being relevant to the general duty to promote race equality; and
- sets out their arrangements for meeting the duty by:
 - ☆ monitoring their policies for any adverse impact on race equality;
 - ☆ assessing and consulting on the likely impact of proposed policy;
 - ☆ publishing the results of their assessments, consultation and monitoring;
 - ☆ making sure that the public have access to information and services; and
 - ☆ training their staff on the general duty.

The general duty says that public authorities must:

- tackle racial discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunity; and
- promote good race relations.

What public authorities need to do:

1. Identify which functions are relevant to race equality
2. Prioritise these functions
3. Assess all relevant functions and policies for their impact on race equality
4. Consider and make changes to your policies, if necessary, to meet the general duty

The R.E.S. must set out which of the current and proposed functions and policies are relevant to the general duty to promote race equality.

To meet this duty, the authority will need to:

- list all functions and policies;
- decide how to will assess whether a function or policy is relevant; set up a procedure for assessing all policies for their relevance to the general duty and give them an authority based on this assessment;
- set up a procedure for regularly reviewing the relevance of the functions and policies to the general duty; and
- set out the arrangement in the R.E.S. and put them in to practice.

How will we know if a function is relevant to the general duty?

- the basic question is: ‘ How does this function affect different racial groups in the community we serve?’
- for each function you should ask yourself the following questions:
 - which of the three parts of the general duty – eliminating discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and promoting good race relations – is relevant to this function?
 - is there any reason to believe that people from some racial groups are being, or could be, adversely affected by this function?

How should we decide how relevant a function is?

- To decide how relevant functions are, you should ask two questions:
 - how much evidence do you have – none, a little, some or a lot (for example, from research, consultation, complaints or ethnic monitoring)?
 - Is there public concern that certain functions are discriminatory or racist?

**ASSESSMENT OF RELEVANCE TO THE GENERAL DUTY TO PROMOTE RACE
EQUALITY - RESULTS**

a	Which of the three aspects does it relate to: 1 = eliminating discrimination, 2 = promoting EOP, 3 = promoting good race relations.
b	Is there evidence or reason to believe some racial groups could be differently affected? Which racial groups?
c	How much evidence do you have? 0 = none, 1 = a little, 2 = some, 3 = a lot.
d	Is there any public concern that functions/policies are being operated in a discriminatory manner? 0 = none, 1 = a little, 2 = some, 3 = a lot.

Finance Services

Function	Is it relevant to the general duty?		What is the degree of relevance?	
	a	b	c	d
Council Tax/NNDR				
Billing	1	No	0	0
Collection	1	No	0	0
Recovery	1	No	0	0
Cashiers				
Cashiering	-	-	-	-
Corporate Finance				
Accountancy	-	-	-	-
Audit	-	-	-	-
Exchequer	-	-	-	-
Creditors	-	-	-	-
Debtors	-	-	-	-
Benefits				
Claims	1 & 2	Yes – access to info etc	1	0
Disc Housing Payments	1 & 2	As above	1	0
Overpayment recovery	1	No	0	0
Home visits	1 & 2	As above	1	0
Fraud Investigations	1	No	1	0

(Survey completed by only 5 persons from ethnic groups)

Housing

Function	Is it relevant to the general duty?		What is the degree of relevance?	
	a	b	c	d
Housing Enabling	2, 3	Design important for some cultural/religious groups	1	0
Housing Needs	1,2,3	Yes. Some evidence nationally that BME population disadvantaged by systems	2 (ethnic monitoring)	0
Partnership Working (on housing etc)	1,2,3	Some health problems disproportionately affect ethnic minorities Racial harassment may occur	0 2	0 0

Legal and Democratic Services

Function	Is it relevant to the general duty?		What is the degree of relevance?	
	a	b	c	d
Local Land Charges	-			
Office Administration	-			
Conveyancing	-			
Advocacy	-			
Debt Recovery	-			
Legal Agreements	-			
Legal Advice	-			
Committee Servicing	-			
Elections	-			
Electoral Registration	-			
Boundary Reviews	-			
Procedural Advice	-			
Street Closures	-			
Twinning Administration	-			

- = not relevant

Human Resources

Function	Is it relevant to the general duty?		What is the degree of relevance?	
	a	b	c	d
Recruitment and Resourcing	Very relevant 1,2,3	Application forms show name and this could lead to discrimination.	0	0
Training and Development	Relevant 2,3	No	0	0
Employee Relations	Relevant 1,2,3	No	0	0
Health and Safety	Relevant 3	No	0	0

Information Services

Function	Is it relevant to the general duty?		What is the degree of relevance?	
	a	b	c	d
Business Unit				
Business	-			
Software	-			
Web Development	1,2,3	No	0	0
Admin & Procurement				
Procurement	-			
Administration	-			
Infrastructure				
Infrastructure	-			
Desktop Support				
Desktop Support	-			
Training	-			
Tourism				
Promotion	2,3	Non-English speakers	1	1
Policy & Management	1	No	0	0
Tourist Information Centres				
Accommodation Bookings	2	No	0	0
Accommodation Registration	1,2,3	No	0	0
Tourist Information	2,3	Non-English speakers	1	1
General Information	2,3	Non-English speakers	1	1

- = not relevant

Planning Services

Function	Is it relevant to the general duty?		What is the degree of relevance?	
	a	b	c	d
Development Control				
Planning Applications	1			
Appeals	1			
Enforcement	1			
Admin	-			
Building Control				
Building Regulations applications	1			
Administration	-			
Conservation				
Advice on applications for Listed Building Consent	-			
Applications for works to trees	1			
Public advice	-			
Forward Planning				
Statistics and research	-			
Preparation of policy	-			

- = not relevant

Environment and Amenity Services

Function	Is it relevant to the general duty?		What is the degree of relevance?	
	a	b	c	d
Support Services				
Procurement	-			
Administration	-			
Works Section				
Drainage	-			
Grounds Maintenance	-			
General Gang	-			
Cleansing				
Waste and Recycling	1,2,3	No		
Street Sweeping	-			
Public Conveniences	-			
Design/Parking and Markets				
Engineering Design	-			
Parking	1,2,3	No	0	0
Markets	1,2,3	No	0	0

- = not relevant

Policy Support Services

Function	Is it relevant to the general duty?		What is the degree of relevance?	
	a	b	c	d
Policy Unit				
Corporate Policy guidance and advice	1,2,3	Very little	0	0
Best Value	1,2,3	Very little	1	0
Consultation Development	1,2,3	Very little	1	0
Performance Management	1,2,3	Very little	1	0
Community Planning	1,2,3	Very little	1	0
Community Development				
Market Town Regeneration	1,2,3	No	0	0
Rural Economic Regeneration	1,2,3	No	0	0
Community Planning	1,2,3	No	0	0

Leisure Services

Function	Is it relevant to the general duty?		What is the degree of relevance?	
	a	b	c	d
Arts Development	Very relevant 1,2,3	Offers good opportunities to celebrate cultural diversity.	None	None
Leisure Development	Relevant 1, 2, 3	Experience elsewhere noted from CRE Leisure Services Code of Practice	None	None
Leisure Centres	Relevant 1, 2, 3	Experience elsewhere noted from CRE Leisure Services Code of Practice	None	None
Grants	Relevant 1, 2, 3	None	None	None

Environmental & Protection Services

Function	Is it relevant to the general duty?		What is the degree of relevance?	
	a	b	c	d
Housing and Pollution	1,2,3	No	0	0
Animal Welfare				
Housing Grants				
Pest Control				
Noise Nuisance				
Pollution				
Water Supplies				
Environmental Protection				
Contaminated Land				
Affordable Warmth				
Energy Conservation				
Food and Health Safety	1,2,3	No	0	0
Food Safety				
Health Education Training				
Health and Safety at Work				
Infectious Disease Control				
Health Promotion				
Administration	-			
Community Safety	1,2,3	No	0	0
Community Health	1,2,3	No	0	0

- = not relevant

PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING ON RACIAL INCIDENTS BV 174 AND BV 175

The Authority is required to report on the number of racial incidents recorded by the authority per 100,000 population (BV 174). "Racial Incidents" are any incidents regarded as such by the victim or anyone else. The indicator applies to all an authority's services including employment by the authority.

There is a further indicator (BV 175) requiring the percentage of racial incidents that resulted in further action to be reported. Subsequent action must be recorded in writing and would entail such things as:

- i) detailed investigations e.g. interviews with alleged perpetrator(s)
- ii) referral to the police or other body (CRE, Cab etc.)
- iii) mediation
- iv) warning to the perpetrator which if oral must be recorded at the time
- v) relocation of the victim
- vi) removal of graffiti.

The following procedure has been drawn up to ensure that data is collected from every service of the Council and collated centrally.

- 1. Every individual department is responsible for collecting information on racial incidents occurring within their service. Each department will appoint an Equal Opportunities Representative, who will collate and report on racial incidents to the Equalities and Social Inclusion Group on a quarterly basis at the Group's January, April, July and October meetings. The name of the EOR is to be notified to the Equalities Monitoring Officer.**
- 2. Each department will use two types of forms:**
 - a. The Racial Incident Log**
 - b. The Racial Incidents Record**

The Racial Incidents Log will record in detail any racial incident that is deemed to have occurred with reference to the above definitions. This will be kept for internal Service records by the EOR. The EOR is to notify their Line Manager and/or Service Manager of such an event as soon as possible. The EOR is also responsible for ensuring that any racial incident is also noted on the Racial Incidents Record to be passed immediately to the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Officer in Human Resources.

The Service Manager is responsible for ensuring that any appropriate action is taken. In the event of his/her absence this duty falls to the Line Manager. Likewise, the Service Manager or Line Manager is responsible for checking that the EOR has sent the Racial Incidents Record to Human Resources.

- 3. The Community Safety Officer will collect data on racial incidents reported directly via the Victim Support leaflet.**
- 4. Human Resources would collate data on any issues relating to employment.**
- 5. The Press and Public Relations Officer will collect details of any racial incidents reported through the Council's complaints' procedure, recently modified to identify these.**
- 6. All incidents will be reported to the Equalities and Social Inclusion Group and an overall figure compiled by the Human Resources Section as part of their reported performance indicators. This will form a standard item for the agenda for meetings of the Equalities and Social Inclusion Group. Human Resources are not responsible for compiling the initial figures, but for collating them together into one set of figures for the Policy Unit.**
- 7. The Equalities and Social Inclusion Group will report performance annually to the Resources Policy Committee.**

APPENDIX D

CONSULTATION - OVERCOMING BARRIERS FOR SPECIFIC GROUPS

Rural communities	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use local buildings as a venue • Consider providing transport • Attend local community events • Tap into networks established by other Services (e.g. Leisure's LinC scheme)
People with disabilities and special needs	
People who are deaf and hard of hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish specific groups • Consider the use of portable loops • Use private rooms for one to one discussion • Use sign language interpreters • Use well lit, visually and acoustically quiet areas • Consider training for staff in deaf awareness and communication methods
The visually impaired	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish specific groups • Link into existing representative groups such as the RNIB • Contact the Policy Unit to provide literature on audio tape or Braille • Develop links with the local talking newspaper
People with physical disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go direct to the people concerned • Use appropriate access and facilities to and within buildings • Provide special transport
People with learning disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link with established groups via social services or the health authority
People with low literacy levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the use of drawings, cartoons, audio and video cassettes and local radio
Women facing barriers deriving from child care, other caring commitments or access to transport	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the timing of meetings - during school time or after children's bed time • Provision of crèches or baby sitting expenses • Use shopping centres • Use established women's groups

CONSULTATION - OVERCOMING BARRIERS FOR SPECIFIC GROUPS

People from ethnic groups	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Translate literature into different languages• Set up specific focus groups for specific ethnic minorities/languages, run by people from the same ethnic group/language• Recruit participants through members of the ethnic community and existing contacts or through word of mouth and outreach work• Talk to different ethnic groups about how best to consult with them!
Young people	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop links with the County Youth Service and schools• Set up youth forums, student councils• Use Tomorrow's Voice• Set up specific focus groups, heavily publicised in schools and other places where young people go. Ensure people who know how to communicate with young people run them.

APPENDIX E

KENNET DISTRICT COUNCIL

EQUALITIES MONITORING

POLICY AND PRACTICE GUIDE

March 2005

Introduction

The Council is committed to developing strategies and implementing policies for promoting cultural diversity through equality measures based upon its adoption of the Equality Standard for Local Government.

The Council's 'Corporate Policy on Equality' relates to the statutory obligations placed upon it by the Race Relations Act and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, the Sex Discrimination Act, and the Disability Discrimination Act

The Council's 'Corporate Policy on Equality' promotes the practice of equalities monitoring in the following terms:

"There will be a commitment to community profiling, monitoring of service usage, equality action planning and equality target setting within all departments and service areas. Individual service areas will undertake to compare community profiles with service user profiles, by keeping appropriate records and monitoring service usage, reviewing its methodology, analysis and reporting mechanisms."

Community profiles can be derived from the 2001 Census. Summary profile material is given at Appendix A. Profiles at Parish and Community Area level can be derived for the Census reports on the Open Directory under the heading of Census.

Why Equalities Monitoring is Important

The initial aim of equalities monitoring is to give an indication of the extent to which the Council provides a fair and equal service to all citizens. This is particularly important for service delivery; if you cannot demonstrate that you are meeting the needs of all of your clients, you are not providing the optimum service.

Equality does not mean providing the same service for all your clients or treating them all in the same way. It is about adapting the service, when and where appropriate, to meet the needs of diverse groups of people. If the Council does not know who its customers are, it will not know whether, for example, women, minority ethnic people, older people or the disabled are using the service equally or at all.

Equalities monitoring enables the Council to assess if a service is discriminating against certain groups and whether people are getting what they want and need. It is a means of ensuring high-quality, appropriate services.

What is Equalities Monitoring?

Equalities monitoring is not a bureaucratic data gathering exercise. The reason for gathering information on service users is so that the Council can; analyse the use and experience of service delivery by different groups; take necessary and appropriate action to improve services for particular groups. Data alone will not explain why a service is under or over used. However, it will provide a starting point for asking questions and highlighting issues. It is the analysis and interpretation of these issues that will lead to a more detailed overall picture of the service and how it works. In short, gathering equalities data is merely equalities record keeping. Interpreting the data and taking action is effective equalities monitoring.

What Equalities Monitoring Can Reveal

Equalities monitoring can:

- Show the numbers of particular groups using the service and what outcomes they experience
- Show over or under-use of a service by a particular group
- Reveal discrimination or demonstrate that services are not discriminatory
- Measure the effectiveness of service changes
- Identify the need for new or changed services.

Monitoring Guidance

Appendix B to the policy sets out guidance on equalities monitoring in practice. Appendix B will also be attached to the Council's Communications Strategy, and is a companion document to the Council's Race Equality Scheme.

Workforce Monitoring

The Council carries out extensive workforce monitoring as an integral part of its Human Resources practices and procedures.

Through workforce monitoring the Council can check that personnel practices are fair to all groups. It also indicates whether or not the Council is recruiting a diverse workforce that is representative of the community that it serves; and identify and address any obstacles to equality of opportunity that could be unlawful. In particular, it can help the Council to check that our equal opportunities policies are effective.

Monitoring of our workforce can help the Council to collect information about whether:

- there are differences in the pay rates of different groups
- the likelihood of being selected for training, transfer or promotion is different for different groups
- disciplinary procedures are applied in the same way to all staff
- people from one group are more likely than others to leave our employment.

A report has to be made each year to the Council's Human resources Committee on the summary data collected and any conclusions and actions necessary in the light of that data.

Application of the Equalities Monitoring Policy and Guidance

The equalities monitoring policy and guidance will be applied to all services which have been identified as relevant within the Council's Race Equality Scheme. It will also support the Wiltshire Compact and in particular the code of good practice on equality and diversity.

Equalities and Social Inclusion Group
March 2005

The authors are indebted to the London Borough of Lewisham for providing content for this document.

KENNET COMMUNITY POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Source: District and Community Area Level Population Estimates
and Projection 2001-2026 Published October 2007 by Wiltshire County Council

Total Population: 78,560

Gender		Age Structure	
Male	40,280	0-4	4,380
Female	38,280	5-9	4,730
		10-14	5,790
		15-19	5,640
		20-24	3,790
		25-29	3,660
		30-34	4,240
		35-39	5,770
		40-44	6,640
		45-49	5,980
		50-54	5,060
		55-59	5,160
		60-64	4,730
		65-69	3,710
		70-74	3,100
		75-79	2,550
		80-84	1,790
		85-89	1,240
		90+	600
			78,560

Source: Census 2001

Ethnicity: (All racial equalities monitoring should use the following racial groups as standard.)		
White	British	72,091
	Irish	415
	Other White	1,285
Mixed	White and Black Caribbean	138
	White and Black African	50
	White and Asian	159
	Other Mixed	109
Asian or Asian British	Indian	93
	Pakistani	19
	Bangladeshi	32
	Other Asian	39

Black or Black British	Caribbean	79
	African	31
	Other Black	26
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group	Chinese	123
	Other Ethnic Group	149

Health:

People with a limiting long-term illness 10,524

People of working age population with a limiting long-term illness 4,454

N.B.

The Council works within the definition of disability given by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, namely:

“A person has a disability if he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

The Council also acknowledges that disability is a consequence of barriers that prevent many people from maximum participation in society. These barriers take little account of people who have impairments and may be:

- Built environment problems
- The rules and policies of organisations and institutions
- Attitudes of people
- Information and communication issues.

This is the ‘Social Model’ approach and was developed by disabled people and it makes a clear distinction between an impairment and a disability.

EQUALITIES MONITORING GUIDANCE

What and when to monitor

Equalities monitoring should only be undertaken where there is a possibility of gathering useful information that can be acted upon. People should not be asked equalities questions unless the information is used to improve services or reveal possible discrimination. That being said, most services will need to carry out equalities monitoring so they have accurate information on the particular groups using their service.

Generally, equalities monitoring should be undertaken to help meet our duties under legislation covering equal opportunities and their respective Codes of Practice. Compliance with these is now monitored through nationally set indicators and frameworks.

In addition, individual service units have a duty to reflect the Council's equal opportunities commitment to the people of Kennet through its equal opportunities policies; service specific initiatives to achieve this should also be monitored. These, along with our duties under national legislation, should continue to be monitored and the results, together with results from other processes such as consultation, surveys etc., analysed and used to address any glaring disparities highlighted from the data gathered. Where no significant disparities are highlighted, the data can be used to support claims that service, employment or community involvement opportunities are provided equally, and monitoring will continue to ensure that they stay that way.

Equalities monitoring reports should then be produced in accordance with the Council's current reporting cycle and made available to the wider public. This will ensure transparency is maintained and the Council's residents are informed.

What types of monitoring are there?

In general, there are four main monitoring methods.

Ongoing contact

This measures people's experience - over a period of time - of the processes that the Council uses to deliver its services. It shows how different groups are treated at different stages of a process, from when they first contact the Council through to a range of possible outcomes. An example of where this method may be used is in the processing of housing applications where it is likely that service groups would like to find out whether or not:

- there is a difference in outcomes of applications for different equalities groups;
- there is a difference in the perception of service delivery for different groups;
- all groups are accessing the service equally;
- any action that has been taken to improve the service is working.

Episodic contact

This looks at what happens when contact between the Council and the service user is fairly short-term, limited and occasional. An example of where this method may be used is in the processing of planning applications. It is likely that service groups would like to find out whether or not:

- there are any particular equalities groups that are using the service more than others;
- all groups are accessing the service equally;
- there are differences in the outcomes of applications for different equalities groups;
- there is a difference in the perception of the service for different groups.

Usage

This type of monitoring is used to draw up profiles of service use and needs for different groups. This can help to assess and allocate the resources needed in the future; and to develop service delivery methods that meet the needs of different groups. An example of where this method may be used is in the leisure centres where service groups may like to find out if:

- there are differences in the frequency of service usage by different equalities groups;
- there are differences in the ways that different equalities groups use services;
- the services and the way that they are delivered are meeting the needs of the communities they serve;
- there is anything the service can do to increase usage by those groups that under-use the service.

Satisfaction or complaints

This kind of monitoring can be carried out by adapting routine customer satisfaction surveys and records of service complaints to include a question that asks the respondent to indicate which equalities group they belong to. This will help to assess whether satisfaction varies between equalities groups and, if so, why. Using this method service managers may want to find out if:

- there are differences in the satisfaction levels or complaint rates for different equalities groups;
- there are particular areas of their service that cause a problem for different equalities groups;
- whether or not different equalities groups have different expectations of their service;
- there is an underlying cause or barrier that means that different equalities groups are receiving a better service than others.

Once a decision to carry out equalities monitoring has been made, and a method has been chosen, a strategy for implementation should be developed. The strategy should detail:

- who is to do what and when
- how information will be constructed
- against what the information is being compared
- how and when information will be analysed
- how the results will be distributed
- who will be responsible for taking action/and when.

Officer briefing

Officers should be briefed prior to equalities monitoring being introduced. They should be clear about the reasons for introducing equalities monitoring and be able to explain these reasons to service users in a clear and precise manner. This is essential, as the way in which service users perceive the purpose of monitoring can reduce or increase the response rate.

Publicity

The introduction of equalities monitoring should be publicised by the service. More targeted publicity, aimed particularly at the groups you wish to monitor, should also be considered, as good publicity can help to improve response rates. Additionally, improvements to services and any initiatives for service development resulting from equalities monitoring should be widely promoted.

Providing an explanation

When requesting equalities information, an explanation must always be given. The explanation should state why the information is being requested and what will be done with it. It should also emphasise confidentiality. You also need to explain that we need people's consent to record their personal or sensitive data. If someone is unhappy about answering a particular question, they do not have to. It is also useful to

include the name, job title and telephone number of a specific officer who could be contacted if there are any further queries as to why the information is needed. A possible explanation is as follows:

'Kennet District Council provides a wide range of services that affect the daily lives of Kennet residents. We are determined to make Council services responsive to the needs of all members of our community. This means we must take account of the different needs and requirements of people from a variety of backgrounds. We want to make sure that Council policies and practices do not directly or indirectly discriminate against people on the basis of colour, ethnic origin, gender, age or disability. In order to turn these commitments into action we must have accurate information on the composition of our service. Therefore, may we have your consent to collect this information from you? The records collected will be kept confidential and will only be used to enable the Council to monitor the delivery of its services. Thank you for your co-operation.'

Questions

Questions should be as user-friendly as possible, with the aim being to elicit self-classification by the respondent. Personal identity is a subjectively held conviction, therefore, it is necessary to adhere to the principle of self-classification to ensure consistency of data quality. Only in exceptional circumstances should staff classify or prompt the respondent to a particular category as this may lead to inaccurate classification.

It is important to keep in mind that the analysis of the situation will be more representative and the consequent positive actions recommended will be better suited to the groups you are monitoring if there is a high response rate. Therefore, obtaining a high level of response is crucial; if the response rate is low, a strategy should be developed to address the situation.

The strategy could include improving awareness and understanding amongst respondents of the reasons for monitoring; training employees so they are more able to encourage response; redrafting and/or relocating the equalities questions; and re-publicising the monitoring and the reasons why it is being undertaken. One example of how to increase the response rate is to not say anything in your explanation of the equalities query that might encourage people not to answer. For example, do not say 'this question is entirely voluntary', or offer a 'would rather not say' option.

Storing the information

The Data Protection Act 1998 sets out certain requirements for the collection and storage of personal information. Obviously, the data gathered in an equalities monitoring exercise falls into this classification. Consequently, the data collected from your monitoring must be stored in a secure manner and access to the information should be restricted to key staff only so as to maintain confidentiality. You must also only gather data for lawful and specified purposes. This highlights the need to ensure that the statement explaining how and why the equalities data will be used is comprehensive.

Additionally, you should not publish the data in any way that makes it possible for an individual to be identified, without that individual's permission. As such, it is important to note that some monitoring analysis may make it possible to identify individuals.

The information collected should be analysed regularly and, whenever possible, shared with officers and relevant community groups and individuals so that their views can inform the analysis of the data. Any issues that arise from the interpretation of the data will need highlighting if the monitoring is to be useful.

Also, the system set up for recording and collecting information on equalities should be merged into existing service management systems, as the equalities information will need to cross-relate to key activities/stages in the service being monitored. Decisions will also need to be made regarding where information is stored, who has access to it and how confidentiality is maintained.

Your equalities data could possibly be used in a number of ways.

You can! Undertake statistical significance testing

Statistical significance testing is a way of assessing differences between various groups. Statistical tests are used to assess how likely it is that difference could be down to chance. For instance, in the case of planning applications, if the proportion of an equalities group observed in a sample is ten percentage points less than the 'successful group', this would suggest that this is a 'real' difference (as opposed to 'down to chance') that needs to be investigated.

It is important to remember that 'real' differences between groups are not in themselves evidence of discrimination. Rather, they indicate that further analysis of the results is needed in order to find out why these differences occur and to develop strategies to overcome any possible barriers.

You can! Undertake consultation

Consultation is integral to the 'usage' type of monitoring and is also a means of flagging up possible causes of the 'real' differences identified through statistical significance testing. Service providers know a great deal, but it is fair to say that the true experts on the needs of the various equalities groups are the equalities groups themselves. Therefore, consultation or some form of public involvement is crucial to ensure that services are appropriate. Moreover, by consulting with service users, changes to service delivery should be more easily implemented, as users will understand why this is being done and, to some extent, feel that they have been involved in the decision making process.

A full range of consultation techniques is available in the consultation area of Kennect.

Generally, a consultation exercise should aim to find out:

- what people think of the service
- if they know about the service
- whether people's experience of the service is different for different groups of people
- if they know how to get and use the service
- if all users are treated equally.

You can! Undertake target setting

Equalities monitoring is an important mechanism for improving the Council's services, but it is a means to an end, not an end in itself. It is essential that action is taken following the analysis of the data and changes are made to improve services. To ensure that service improvement occurs, service areas can set targets. These should be:

- legitimised by the analysis of the data;
- achievable, so that expectations are not raised too high;
- realistic, so that they are capable of changing the service; and
- time-scaled, so that it is something which needs to be reached by a certain point in time.

You can! Include data in your performance indicators

Targets are an indication of what type of service the Council is aiming to deliver. Performance indicators are about what is currently being delivered. For example, if equalities monitoring indicates that a service is discriminatory towards women, then a target could be to increase female usage of the service by ten per cent. The indicator will be the number of women using the service. This can then be an indication of the extent to which the target is met.

You can! Use it in Best Value

Best Value is a good mechanism for integrating equality principles into the Council's mainstream policies and practices. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, local authorities have a legal obligation to ensure that Best Value delivers service improvements for all.

Secondly, Best Value cannot be achieved unless equality is an integral part of the Council's approach to meeting its duties under Best Value. If the Council fails to respond to the diversity of its users or employees or fails to maximise the potential for diversity at all levels of the workforce, it will not, by definition, be an excellent service provider or employer. If the Council integrates equality objectives into its corporate priorities and Best Value reviews it will be more capable of delivering high quality services that reach everyone. This will help to improve the perception of the Council by equalities groups and may in turn increase their desire to be involved as service users, potential or actual employees, voters, members and/or contractors. Consequently, this increased involvement is likely to improve services and employment practices.