

WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE

7 NOVEMBER 2012

Equality and Diversity update

Purpose of Report

1. To provide an update regarding the actions Wiltshire Council is taking to meet its requirements under the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector Equality Duty.

Background information

2. A report to Staffing Policy Committee in November 2011 outlined the impact of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector Equality Duty which came into effect from April 2011 and the specific duties published in September 2011.
3. Staffing Policy Committee requested an annual update on progress made and any additional work being undertaken.
4. This work now reports to the Shaping the Future Group to ensure a high level focus and priority internally.
5. Participation in the Public Service Board's Equality and Diversity Lead Officers group also ensures a partnership approach across Wiltshire.

Data monitoring

6. Currently we only collect, monitor and publish data on sex, disability, ethnicity and age in relation to our current workforce, leavers and applicants for employment.
7. It was recognised that, prior to extending data collection to other protected characteristics, there was a need to ensure that staff felt safe to disclose this sensitive personal data.
8. The focus since November 2011 has therefore been on positive action which has included the formation of a LGBT forum and Carers forum.
9. Data relating to our equality and diversity monitoring is fed back to the business through the quarterly workforce measures, presented to Staffing Policy Committee regularly throughout the year.

10. In January 2012 Wiltshire Council published its [Equality And Diversity Employment Monitoring report 2010/11](#) and the report for 2011/12, due to be published in January 2013, is currently being drafted.
11. In general the data is positive, with an increase in the percentage of BME and disabled staff employed by the council on 1 April 2012, compared with the previous year.
12. A concern is that, despite a number of communications through both Managers Wire and Electric Wire asking staff to update their details on SAP, we still have a high percentage of “unknown” data with regards to both ethnicity and disability.
13. The aim is that, when the organisation introduces methods to collect data on additional protected characteristics, this will also enable a focus on improving and validating the data held against those characteristics that are already monitored.

Publishing equality objectives

14. In January 2012 the council, working in partnership with NHS Wiltshire, Wiltshire Police and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service, published a [Partnership Action Plan](#), outlining ten key equality objectives.
15. Work is currently underway to review progress against these objectives which will also prepare the council for peer assessment against the Equality Framework for Local Government.

Review of the corporate EIA (Equality Impact Assessment) strategy

16. The Communities and Voluntary Sector Support team are briefing the extended leadership team this month regarding the launch of the new approach to equality impact assessments.
17. The focus will be on “equality analysis” and involves considering how decisions made and services delivered affect people who share protected characteristics. This can include identifying the potential to impact positively on equality by reducing or removing inequalities and barriers that exist. It can also include identifying negative impact and considering how this can be minimised. Equality analysis should be a lively, stimulating debate of relevant issues with interested parties to ensure open and informed decision making.
18. Within HR we are reviewing our process of equality impact assessments for projects and policies, based on the new corporate approach.

Review of the HR People Strategy

19. The HR People Strategy 2012-2015 was launched in October 2012. The strategy works alongside the business plan and supports the behaviours

framework. It is underpinned by an equality and inclusion ethos. The purpose for this is not only to ensure that we are meeting obligations under the equality duty, but to actively demonstrate, and work towards, our commitment to deliver equality and inclusion outcomes.

Ongoing initiatives

20. Award of the “Double tick symbol” – Positive about Disable People. Our 2012 submission, written with input from key stakeholders including the Staff Disability Forum, was successfully approved in September 2012. The symbol is awarded by Jobcentre Plus to employers who have made commitments to employ, keep and develop the abilities of disabled staff.
21. An Equalities Networking Lunch event is planned for early 2013 – this will focus on a wide range of equalities issues. A suggestion is to have a “living library” where people share their experiences and help the organisation to build its equalities knowledge.

Recommendation

22. That the Committee note the contents of this report.

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The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report: None