

Every year we publish an Equality Statement on 31 January that shows how we take into account the varying needs of everyone living, working and visiting our district and in particular the needs of people with protected characteristics, such as older, disabled and people of certain religions or race.

Our Equality Statement shows how we are meeting our Public Sector Equality duty, under The Equality Act 2010. It also helps our customers, staff, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, regulators and other interested parties to assess our equality performance and our compliance with equality legislation.

Our current equality statement is available to download at [www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/equalitystatement](http://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/equalitystatement)

If you have any questions about our Equality Statement 2013, please contact Debbie Morgan, Equalities Officer on 01543 308145 or email [debbie.morgan@lichfielddc.gov.uk](mailto:debbie.morgan@lichfielddc.gov.uk)

If you would like this document in large print or another format, please contact Debbie Morgan, Equalities Officer on 01543 308145 or email [debbie.morgan@lichfielddc.gov.uk](mailto:debbie.morgan@lichfielddc.gov.uk)

## Introduction

We are committed to supporting and, where possible, improving the general quality of life of the people who live in, work in and visit our district.

Our Equality Statement demonstrates our ongoing commitment to ensuring people are treated with dignity and respect, promoting equality of opportunity and ensuring discrimination is not present in either our service delivery or employment practices.

We work to make our services available and accessible to all by removing barriers that may prevent certain individuals and groups from getting the services they need. We recognise and accept that people's needs are different and will work to make our services as flexible and responsive as we can.

This means that our residents, customers, contractors, partner organisations, job seekers and employees will all be treated fairly and equally regardless of their characteristics or lifestyle.

Like councils across the country, despite facing significant budgetary pressures, we remain committed to improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of our communities. We will achieve this by working in partnership with others and targeting our resources towards the greatest areas of need. This means our communities must be at the heart of everything we do. We will also equality impact assess any of the service changes we may need to make as a result of budgetary pressures.

## About this document

This Equality Statement provides an overview of our equality based priorities, and gives some examples of current services which have a particular benefit for individuals with protected characteristics.

Our statement also highlights our achievements from 2012 and sets out our plans for how we will continue this work this year.

The aim of our Equality Statement is to demonstrate through practical examples, case studies and priorities that equality considerations are embedded in our decision making processes and influence both our service delivery and our employment practices.

To support this, we have developed a detailed action plan, showing specific progress for each service area and priorities for 2013. To request a copy please contact Debbie Morgan, Equalities Officer on 01543 308145 or email [debbie.morgan@lichfielddc.gov.uk](mailto:debbie.morgan@lichfielddc.gov.uk)

# Contents

This document is broken down into the following section:

Sections	Pages
<b>1. Our equality duty</b>	
- Our three aims	4
- What is a protected characteristic?	4
<b>2. How we deliver equality in our services</b>	
- An overview	5
- How we improved equality in our services in 2012	6
- Our service priorities for 2013	8
<b>3. How we deliver equality in employment</b>	
- An overview	9
- How we improved equality in employment in 2012	10
- Our employment priorities for 2013	10
<b>4. Data and monitoring</b>	
- How we monitor our progress	11
- Getting the right data	12
<b>5. Equality based case studies</b>	13
<b>Any questions?</b>	13

# 1. Our equality duty

## Our three aims

Our duty requires us to consider three aims when designing and delivering policies, plans and services for local residents and our employees. These are:

- We need to work to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- We should strive to advance equality of opportunity for everyone and, in particular for people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- We should aim to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

## What is a protected characteristic?

Under the Equality Act 2012, the following are defined as groups with protected characteristics:

- Age
- Race, colour, national or ethnic origin
- Disability
- Religion or belief (including non belief)
- Gender (including transgender)
- Marital status (including civil partnership)
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity

## 2. How we deliver equality in our services

Treating people equally, fairly and with respect is an integral part of our daily customer service.

### An overview

We are committed to making our services available and accessible to all individuals and community groups. We aim to remove barriers that may prevent people from getting the services they need. We recognise and accept the fact that people's needs are different and will make our services as flexible and responsive as possible.

We do this by carrying out equality impact assessment on the services we deliver to ensure equality issues are assessed and embedded in all that we do.

We already provide a range of services that particularly support individuals with protected characteristics and these include:

- Our Community Transport scheme helps passengers to access basic amenities such as local shops. Local older people's groups and the Staffordshire Association for the Blind are regular users of the scheme. Our fleet of community transport buses accommodates wheelchair users.
- Our Play on Prescription scheme provides free play opportunities to children and families in need of extra support. The referral criteria for the scheme are broad, but it has supported children from families, where disabilities limit the opportunities to benefit from play. In 2012, the scheme supported 135 families.
- Our Summer of Fun initiative is a district wide inclusive summer playscheme and play activity programme for children aged between 5 & 13 years. In 2012 the scheme supported 15 children with additional needs.
- Our Leisure Activity Passports offer up to 30% savings on leisure activities across the district. People aged over 60, students, disabled people and registered carers can apply for a free passport.
- We provide free additional bins to families where extra waste is generated because of a medical condition, those with children in nappies, and for families of six or more.
- Equality impact assessment is embedded into the Local Plan process and is a statutory requirement.

- Together with our partners we support two community hubs in the district, including the Jigsaw Shop in North Lichfield and Mill Lane Link in Fazeley. The hubs make it easy for people to access a wide range of local information, support and guidance near to where they live. Information provided ranges from debt advice and information about our local credit union, free training for skills development, and Surestart sessions for families. Our customer feedback shows that community hubs are particularly beneficial to our older residents and those with a disability.
- We provide assisted bin collections for people who struggle to get their bins to the roadside for collection, such as older residents and disabled people. In 2012 we supported 1469 homes with assisted bin collections.
- We help people to apply for disabled facilities grants to deliver improvements within their home. In 2012 we helped over 74 people improve their homes through disabled facilities grants.

## **How we improved equality in our services in 2012**

We are continually working to support and increase the range of services that particularly help people with protected characteristics. In 2012:

- We developed accessible changing facilities in Beacon Park, improved access to woodland areas and created a poolside viewing area. We also installed inclusive play equipment and facilities.
- We commissioned partners to deliver services on our behalf for the next three years through new Service Level Agreements (2012 – 2015). As part of this we are funding Burntwood Live at Home which offers friendship and support to older people, and Cherry Orchard Gardening Services, which trains, supports and employs local people with learning disabilities to become gardeners. Once trained the gardeners then support older residents to maintain their gardens.
- Currently 22% of local households are at risk of fuel poverty, especially people who are elderly and disabled. This year we established a Member Task Group to focus on fuel poverty and identify ways to promote affordable warmth.
- We successfully bid for £190,000 funding to alleviate fuel poverty, particularly for the elderly and disabled. The funds came from the District Board, Department of Health's Warmer Homes Healthy People fund and the Department for Environment and Climate Change.

- We provided funding to help the Step Forward Stroke Club provide therapeutic swimming sessions.
- Section 106 funding helps to make sure new developments enhance local communities, and aims to reduce the impact of developments on local areas. In 2012 Section 106 funding helped to deliver a range of projects that particularly support people with protected characteristics, including disabled access into a local church and improved disabled access at a local scout hut. To find out more visit [www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/section106](http://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/section106)
- Our customer services team Lichfield Connects took on a new role to issue personal money to vulnerable adults with a learning disability.
- We are working on plans for a new toilet facility which meets the Changing Places national standard and disabled parking in the new Friary car park. The development will also provide 54 units of sheltered accommodation for older people.
- We contributed to the cost of a children's worker for the Pathway Project to help support families who have been victims of domestic violence.
- We submitted a bid to Sports England and Aiming High to improve changing rooms and disabled access to the pool at Friary Grange Leisure Centre.
- We provided specialist care sessions at Friary Grange Leisure Centre to support people recovering from cardiac arrest, through a Cardiac Rehabilitation Programme delivered in partnership with South Staffordshire Primary Care Trust.
- We appointed our Housing Cabinet Member as Older People's Champion to focus on older people's issues across all council services.
- We developed a new local council tax support scheme in line with Government directives. The scheme will impact on vulnerable members of our community, and we asked people for their view to both shape our plans and to heighten awareness of the changes. Our new scheme protects discounts provided to pensioners, severely disabled and people with children aged under five.

## Our service equality priorities for 2013

- We will continue to ensure new developments, such as the current Friary Car Park take into account equality issues, such as access, parking and the provision of quality toilet facilities for the disabled.
- We will implement and monitor the new local council tax support scheme. This will include communicating the changes, developing a hardship fund to help those most affected by the cuts, and work with support groups and the voluntary sector to help them to assist people most affected by the changes.
- We will monitor the progress of Universal Credit and the effect on the current residents who may transfer to the new scheme in October 2013.
- We will secure funding to improve Friary Grange Leisure Centre's facilities. This includes improved access, parking and changing facilities for disabled customers.
- Our emerging Sport and Physical Activity Strategy will undergo equality Impact assessment.
- We will increase number of concessionary Leisure Activity Passports we issue by 5%.
- We will work to ensure our approach to community consultation is robust and captures equality data, so we can use it to inform our service delivery. This will include capturing usage, satisfaction and performance data.
- We will continue to equality impact assess our key policies and procedures, including considering the implications of savings proposals, which may impact on people with protected characteristics.
- We will update and republish the Statement of Community Involvement for 2013/2014 to ensure the needs of the community are included, together with specific equalities issues where they have been identified.
- We will provide service managers with specific demographic information to inform emerging plans. For example research into housing need that looks into the needs of specific groups, such as age and disability. This can then be used to inform strategies to provide affordable warmth, flexi care, helping older people to live at home longer, as well as help our partner to plan provision for institutional care.

## 5. How we deliver equality in employment

We aim to provide an inclusive, respectful and discrimination free work environment for all our employees. We want all our employees to feel respected and be able to give their best.

### **An overview**

We have 506 employees - 192 (38%) are women, 314 (62%) are men, 10 (2%) are from black and minority backgrounds and 136 (27%) have a disability.

Women are well represented in senior positions within the organisation. There are six positions on our Leadership Team and four are occupied by women, including our Chief Executive.

We regularly monitor our performance by assessing the following:

- Employee turnover by directorate.
- Employee turnover by age
- Age profile by directorate
- Employee full and part time working by age and gender.
- Age and gender by grade and pay band
- Race, disability by grade and pay band
- Recruitment activity

Our 2012 Equality Statement includes detailed information on the initiatives we have put in place to ensure our employment practices are equally accessible and fair. To find out more, download our Equality Statement 2012 from [www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/equalitystatement](http://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/equalitystatement)

## **How we improved equality in employment in 2012**

- We reviewed, updated and distributed our Employee Survey. This was designed to provide employees with the opportunity to highlight their concerns and satisfaction and feed into an updated workforce profile. We ensured appropriate equality questions were included.
- We carried out our first Equality Survey with staff and elected members. It was developed to help to measure knowledge and commitment to equality considerations. The aim is to ensure employees and members have the confidence and understanding to deal with equality based issues, both with our customers and with colleagues, and to recognise where improvements need to be made.
- We published our first Pay Policy Statement in February 2012, which includes the equal pay requirement contained in the Equality Act 2010. Our current Pay Policy Statement is available from [www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/paypolicy](http://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/paypolicy)

## **Our employment equality priorities for 2013**

- We will analyse the results of the recent Employee Survey and Equality Survey and share them with staff and our workforce representatives. Based on the results we will take appropriate action which will be monitored and reported on in the Equality Statement 2014.
- We will continue to equality impact assess key policies and procedures, including considering the implications of savings proposals, which may impact on staff with protected characteristics.
- We will collect and publish key workforce data.
- We will review the Council Pay Policy Statement.
- We will improve staff access to equality awareness training. A new online training programme is being piloted at Burntwood Leisure Centre and will be available to all employees through 2013.

## 6. How we monitor and identify equality issues

Monitoring our progress, and ensuring we have the right data to both inform and review how well equality issues are embedded into our services, is vital. Here's how we achieve this:

### How we monitor our progress

- We regularly monitor relevant equality information and actions we have delivered, especially in the services that have the greatest impact on our vulnerable customers such as housing, leisure and revenues and benefits.
- The actions and priorities identified in the Equality Statement for 2013/14 will be monitored throughout 2013 and progress reported in the Council's next Equality Statement (31 January 2014).
- As part of our 'A Plan for Lichfield District' we produce an annual Action Plan. This includes key milestones in our service delivery, and where appropriate references equality based targets.
- Our service plans include a 'Being Fair' section that specifically relates to equality impact assessments and the priorities set out in the Equality Statement.
- We are carrying out an internal Equalities Audit to assess the council's awareness, commitment and due regard to the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- The Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee will review the Equality Statement 2013 as part of their work programme for this year.
- We regularly review our Equality Statement Action Plan to ensure service commitments, progress and priorities are met.
- We are monitored by the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the government's Government Equalities Office to ensure equality issues are addressed.

## Getting the right data

We use national and local data to produce a profile of the district.

This data is published annually in our Lichfield District Community Profile and which can be downloaded at [www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/districtprofile](http://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/districtprofile)

We use population profiling to identify local priority issues. One very clear message that comes through from local data is the high proportion of over 65 year old people (20%) in our community. However, we have much less data on other protected characteristics such as sexual orientation, and are conscious of the sensitivities around collecting this information.

In addition to statistical data, we conduct an annual Residents' Questionnaire which provides further evidence for our Equality Statement. The results of 2012's survey will be published in March 2013 at [www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/residentsurvey](http://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/residentsurvey). Other survey results are published at [www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/voiceit](http://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/voiceit)

We also conduct employee surveys and our first workplace Equality Survey took place in autumn 2012.

## 8. Equality based case studies

The following examples highlight our commitment to provide fair accessible and caring services, and how we work with our partners to achieve this:

Following a noise complaint about from a local resident, our officers discovered it was linked to problem with English speaking issues. The Parent Support Worker arranged English speaking lessons and encouraged contact with others facing the same problems in the immediate community.

We identified that some local complaints about harassment were linked to mental health issues. Working with our partners we provided safe relocation and help for the adults and children involved.

Our newly assumed role of issuing personal monies to vulnerable adults has helped our staff to be more aware of the customers' needs and personal circumstances. This has helped staff to notice when the vulnerable adults may need additional help. For example we were aware one customer was experiencing problems with heating during a particularly cold snap. We alerted their social worker to ensure the customer was safe during this time.

## Any questions?

Our current equality statement is available to download at [www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/equalitystatement](http://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/equalitystatement)

If you have any questions about our Equality Statement 2013, please contact Debbie Morgan, Equalities Officer on 01543 308145 or email [debbie.morgan@lichfielddc.gov.uk](mailto:debbie.morgan@lichfielddc.gov.uk)

If you would like this document in large print or another format, please contact Debbie Morgan, Equalities Officer on 01543 308145 or email [debbie.morgan@lichfielddc.gov.uk](mailto:debbie.morgan@lichfielddc.gov.uk)