

CUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL'S EQUALITY ACTION PLAN (2018-20)

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Section 1: Introduction

1. Cumbria County Council's Equality Plan sets out the organisation's activities to deliver on the Equality Objectives that were agreed by Cabinet. These are objectives that every public sector body has to produce every four years under the Equality Act (2010) (the current period being 2016-20). They also link to the Council Plan (2018-22) and its ways of working which include:
 - Working together
 - Enterprise and efficiency
 - Digital transformation
 - Prevention and early intervention
2. To link the actions detailed below to the equality objectives, the Equalities Action Plan has been divided into sections on 'Customers', 'Communities' and 'Workforce'.
3. Equalities will continue to play a vital role in supporting local authorities as they consider their core offer in the current financial conditions, and this plan sets out how the Council will meet its Equality Duty.

What we mean by Equality, Diversity and Discrimination

4. Equality is about everyone having the same chances in life and getting the same access to the services they need.
5. Diversity is about understanding and respecting people's different needs and aspirations. We cannot achieve equality without addressing diversity.
6. Discrimination is when a person is treated worse than another person on account of an aspect of their identity. Discrimination can take place at work, in the community, when travelling, when accessing public services, or as a consumer.

7. Groups with a history of discrimination will often experience poorer educational, health and employment outcomes, while being underrepresented in terms of power and decision making in society.
8. Decisions the public sector make can have a significant impact (positive and negative) on outcomes for people who have a history of or potential for discrimination.

Our responsibilities under discrimination law

9. The Equality Act (2010) protects people against discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, maternity, religion/belief, age and marital status. The Equality Act uses the term 'protected characteristics' as these protect individuals against discrimination.
10. All public sector bodies have a duty to consider Equality when carrying out their activities and particularly regarding decision making. The duty also requires them to set four year Equality objectives and publish an annual statement on the effect of their activities on people who share one or more protected characteristics.
11. In 2016 the following equality objectives were agreed by Cabinet:
 - Provide equality of opportunity through access to services for all and delivering services which meet the needs of our customers
 - Fostering good relations by understanding the communities we serve and deliver meaningful engagement
 - Eliminate discrimination through the systematic review of our operational and workplace policies and procedures.
12. These objectives will remain in place until 2020 when they are due for reconsideration. This plan sets out how we will be delivering on these objectives from 2018-2020.

Links to Council Plans and Strategies

13. The Equality Plan has been developed alongside the Council's key strategic plans that were agreed by Cabinet in April 2018. These included:
 - The Council Plan (and Council Plan Delivery Plan)
 - The Customer Strategy
 - The Workforce Plan.

14. The Council Plan vision is for Cumbria County Council to be:
- “A Council that works with residents, businesses, communities and other organisations to deliver the best services possible within the available resources.”*
15. The Council Plan is supported by four ways of working :
- Putting customers at the heart of everything we do;
 - Supporting communities to thrive;
 - Focusing on the most vulnerable;
 - Managing demand.
16. In terms of Equality this means:
- Understanding who are our customers and workforce who share a protected characteristic;
 - Taking extra steps where we have identified barriers for customers who share a protected characteristic (making reasonable adjustments)
 - Taking Equality into account when redesigning how services are delivered or making changes or reduce the cost of a service.
17. While this sets overall direction, the Equality Impact Assessments for the Customer Strategy and the Workforce Plan provide the detail that has been used in developing the Equality Plan.

Links to the Public Health Strategy

18. The Cumbria Public Health Strategy includes a statement on tackling discrimination and exploitation, which sets out the following objectives for partnership working in relation to Equality:
- Demonstration that people from groups that historically experience discrimination are benefitting across the actions committed to in the public health strategy.
 - Public services are delivered in a way that is culturally sensitive, accessible and inclusive in relation to gender and sexuality.
 - Community relations demonstrate an effective approach to integration, tackling hate crime and are benefitting from diversity.
 - Improvements in equality at work across all protected characteristics.

Section 2: Customers

19. Equality Objective

“Provide equality of opportunity through access to services for all and delivering services which meet the needs of our customers.”

20. The Customer Strategy sets out our vision of putting customers at the heart of everything we do. The table below sets out the approach to addressing Equality as part of the delivery of Customer Strategy.

Customers Objective – Provide equality of opportunity through access to services for all and delivering services which meet the needs of our customers		
Overview	Key deliverables	Target Dates
Redesign of services	Each service redesign will demonstrate how it has addressed Equality in terms of accessibility, understanding the needs of customers who share a protected characteristic and ensuring staff are given the right training and support to make appropriate reasonable adjustments.	From April 2019
Digital inclusion	Establish network of digital champions from different protected characteristics. They will include people who can promote digital access to people in their networks, and also be involved in helping the Council to shape its digital offer.	From April 2019
	Achieve Triple A standard for web accessibility.	October 2019
Targeted services	New strategies and policies relating to target customer groups have had an Equality Impact Assessment. This will be kept updated and currently covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers Charter • Children Looked After Strategy 	From January 2019
Fire Service Equality Strategy	Delivery of Fire Service Equality Strategy in terms of customers, communities and workforce.	From June 2018
Measures of success (by April 2020) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers from diverse backgrounds actively influencing the way we design and deliver services. • Children looked after, care leavers and carers from diverse backgrounds can report that they experience a service that respects diversity. • Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service is inclusive in terms of relations with customers, support for communities and support to staff. 		

Section 3: Communities

21. Equality Objective

“Fostering good relations by understanding the communities we serve and deliver meaningful engagement.”

22. From an Equalities perspective this means that people who share a protected characteristic experience an inclusive community. Strong community relations are at the heart of delivering the Council Plan. The Council is strengthening its approach to Area Planning to make sure that services currently managed centrally are devolved to the six Local Committees. This would give the frontline Councillor a stronger role to see what services are being delivered in their local division, and to understand more about the people in their local division who are using services.

23. Embedding Equalities consists of general support to the community, key programmes of work, and local implementation of national government strategies relating to Equality in the community. Key programmes of work include:

- Delivery of the Cumbria Community Integration Programme, which is a 2 year government funded programme to support integration between migrant and settled communities, and to improve access for migrants and BME groups to children’s services.
- The Syrian Refugee Programme including the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children (UASC) programme.
- Strengthened approach to tackling hate crime and supporting communities at risk of hate crime.
- Visible support for high profile events that promote diversity, including Pride in Cumbria, and flying the rainbow flag from Council buildings;
- Delivery of adult and community education in relation to the skills agenda and targeting groups who are underrepresented.
- Delivery of the Active Cumbria 3 Year Plan with its focus on reducing inequalities in access to physical activities.

24. There are a number of Government plans, strategies and programmes that support effective community integration including:

- The Community Integration Strategy;
- The Syrian Refugee Programme;
- The Hate Crime Action Plan;
- The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Action Plan;
- The Inclusive Transport Plan.

25. To deliver on this Equality objective a key focus will be on how we work with partners to implement relevant parts of these plans in Cumbria.

Communities Objective – Fostering good relations by understanding the communities we serve and deliver meaningful engagement		
Overview	Key deliverables	Target Dates
Develop Local Area information on diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Diversity Profiles that include statistical data, community groups and contacts, local assets that assist integration. Support Members to develop their awareness of Equality issues in the local area 	November 2018
Cumbria Community Integration Project	Oversee delivery of the project through partner delivery organisations.	From September 2020
Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme	Deliver multi-agency programme of work to integrate Syrian refugees into Cumbria.	Ongoing
Local implementation of Government plans and strategies	Respond to and work with partners around local implementation of the Hate Crime Plan, Inclusive Transport Strategy, and LGBT Action Plan.	From January 2019
Skills – basic literacy, numeracy and IT	Increase equality of access, attainment and progression by protected characteristic.	Ongoing
Participation in physical activity	Delivery of Active Cumbria 3 Year Plan	Ongoing
Participation in Pride in Cumbria	Council to have a visible presence at Pride which promotes Council services, employment and apprenticeships to the LGBT community.	September 2019 and annually
Measures of success (by April 2020) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate nationally recognised community integration programmes that foster good relations. Improved migrant and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) access to children's services, early years settings and schools, while reducing unnecessary demand on statutory services. Successful integration of refugees into the community. Improved outcomes for adult and community education learners from diverse backgrounds. Reduction in inequalities in participation in physical activities 		

Section 4: Workforce

26. Equality Objective

“Eliminate discrimination through the systematic review of our operational and workplace policies and procedures.”

27. The Council’s Workforce Plan sets out the vision for the workforce for the period 2018 -2022 which is:

“to have a motivated and committed workforce that is innovative, supported, skilled and customer focused.”

28. There are three main themes to the Workforce Plan:

- To improve employee engagement
- Build on skills and behaviours
- Promote employee wellbeing

Workforce Objective - Eliminate discrimination through the systematic review of our operational and workplace policies and procedures		
Overview	Key Deliverables	Target Dates
Compliance with legislation	Compliance with key legislation applicable to the Council workforce (examples include Equalities Act, Employment Act etc.	Ongoing
Accreditation	Successfully achieving accreditation for Disability Confident	August 2018
	Achieve Stonewall accreditation	November 2019
Equal Pay	Deliver Gender Pay Gap action plan tracking the gender pay gap.	Annually April
Positive Action	Deliver positive action programmes to increase representation in the workforce from deprived, disadvantaged and under-represented groups.	From May 2019
Apprenticeships	Sign up to the national Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network by pledging what we will do around apprentices and diversity.	From October 2018
Staff engagement	Establish arrangements with public sector partners for BME, LGBT and Disability staff networks. Support development of Blue Light Women’s network between Police, Fire and emergency services.	From November 2018

Measures of success (by April 2020)

- The Council has public accreditation as disability and LGBT friendly employers.
- The gender pay gap has reduced and gender balance across the workforce has improved in areas where there was an underrepresentation of males or females.
- The workforce profile reflects the make-up of our customers.
- BME, disability, LGBT and female staff have better access to public sector staff networks in Cumbria.
- The diversity profile of apprenticeships has increased and Cumbria can demonstrate nationally recognised best practice in relation to diversity and apprenticeships.

Section 5: Organisational support

29. This section focuses on how we will provide organisational support to deliver the Equality Plan.

Organisational support		
Aim – to provide organisational support to deliver on the Equality plan		
Overview	Key Deliverables	Target Dates
Policy development	<p>Embed Equalities into the Council’s responses to government consultations and calls for evidence.</p> <p>Maintain overview of key Government Strategies relating to Equality.</p>	Ongoing
Awareness and Training	<p>Refresh Council package of Equality awareness and training to have a more targeted and flexible approach.</p> <p>Embed equality training and awareness within the Member Development Programme.</p> <p>Develop Member capacity to raise awareness with staff, Members and partners about particular groups who share a protected characteristic – current examples include Autism and Mental Health.</p> <p>Develop an annual calendar of Equality related events to promote and use for awareness raising.</p>	From October 2018

Equality Impact Assessments	EIA Introduce a new approach to EIAs with revised guidance	October 2018
	EIAs embedded in project and programme management toolkit	November 2018
	EIAs embedded in decision making and key programmes of work.	From February 2019
	Training for identified staff on how to complete EIAs	From March 2019
Interpretation and translation services	Procure new provider to address issues of increased demand.	September 2018
	Work collaboratively with Police and NHS to develop more consistent standards and price.	From October 2018
<p>Measures of success (by April 2020)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality embedded within national consultation responses. • Clear evidence of Equality being considered in the budget setting process and other major Council decisions. • Staff and Members understand how Equality relates to their role and this is reflected in behaviours. 		

Section 6: Monitoring Arrangements

30. The Council Plan Delivery Plan commits to the production of an Equality Plan for delivering the Council's Equality Objectives and quarterly update.
31. Each quarter through the Council Plan Delivery Plan, Cabinet will receive an update on progress in implementing the plan. At this point the Portfolio Holder will receive a more detailed update on progress.
32. An Equality reference panel made up of organisations representing people who share a protected characteristic and the Members who sat on the Scrutiny Panel will meet to review progress and explore ideas for developing the Equality agenda in Cumbria. They will meet six monthly.
33. The Equality Plan will be a 'live' document that is updated continually.