

***Tendring***  
***District Council***



**draft**

**Single Equality Scheme**  
**2011—2013**

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## Introduction

This is our first Single Equality Scheme, which helps us to provide services which meet the different needs of our many communities and become an employer of choice . It demonstrates how we will promote equal opportunities across the eight protected characteristics, defined by the 2010 Equality Act as grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful: age; disability; gender; gender reassignment (transgender); pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; and sexual orientation. As an employer we also need to consider a ninth protected characteristic—marriage or civil partnership.

The [2010 Equality Act](#) brings together for the first time all the legal requirements on equality that the private, public and voluntary sectors need to follow and places the following duties on Local Authorities

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment.
- Promote equality of opportunity.
- Promote good relations between persons of different backgrounds.
- Encourage participation in public life for people of different backgrounds.

However, regardless of our legal obligations we believe that it is right that we should:

- treat people fairly, justly and with respect in both service provision and employment ,
- find ways to support those who are disadvantaged or excluded,
- promote inclusion and celebrate diversity.

The Single Equality Scheme will support our [corporate priorities](#) by improving support for vulnerable people and building stronger communities by demonstrating that our services are fair, equitable and accessible. Where possible we will enhance and adapt our services to cater for people with special needs such as a disability.

## The District

The Tendring District has many geographic, demographic and economic characteristics that make it distinctive from other areas. These provide both opportunities and challenges. The main features are as follows:

Tendring enjoys over 36 miles of coastline, award-winning sandy beaches, numerous coastal towns providing anything from the traditional pleasures of the seaside to maritime heritage, a variety of beautiful and picturesque villages and one of the busiest harbours in Europe.

A large majority (79%) of people living in Tendring consider it a good place to live, which is reflected in the number of individuals who have decided to retire to the area. The population is growing rapidly and is predicted to grow from 146,000 in 2009 to 170,000 by 2026.

People live in five main areas of settlement (Brightlingsea, Clacton, Frinton/Walton, Harwich, and Manningtree) and villages across the District with differing community needs and aspirations.

Some parts of the District have significant disadvantages. There are major health inequalities across the District, with those in Alresford living, on average, thirteen years longer than those in Pier Ward, Clacton. There are pockets of social and economic deprivation and high unemployment. Within these areas there are significant differences in the standard of housing, and the health of the population. In particular part of the settlement of Jaywick is ranked as one of the most deprived wards in the UK.

## Our People

- ◆ We have a large elderly population with 26.7% of our residents being over the age of 65 and 4.3% being over 85. (ONS 2009 mid-year estimates)
- ◆ 48.2% of our residents are male and 51.8% are female. (ONS 2009 mid-year estimates)
- ◆ Although our population is predominantly white British (92.35%) we have a growing number of ethnic minority groups— 2.53% white Irish or white other, 1.71% Asian, 1.44% Black, 0.82% Chinese and 2.53% Mixed Race. (ONS 2007 projections)
- ◆ 5.3% of our school pupils belong to an ethnic minority group (2008 Essex County Council Education Statistics)
- ◆ The main religion in the district is Christian (76%) but there are also 174 Buddhists, 132 Hindus, 208 Jews, 322 Muslims and 34 Sikhs living in the Tendring area. (2001 Census)
- ◆ 24% of our residents have a limiting long term illness (2001 Census)
- ◆ Tendring has a higher than average rate of sensory impairment in adults (Social Services 2006/07 statistics)
- ◆ There were 1300 live births in 2008/09. We also have one of the highest under 18 conception rates in Essex. (ONS 2009 mid-year estimates)

There is currently no information about transgender or sexual orientation statistics for the Tendring district.

## Our Staff

- ◆ We currently have 646 members of staff
- ◆ 42% are over 50 years of age and 12% are over 60
- ◆ 42% are male and 58% are female
- ◆ Only 1% of our staff are from an ethnic minority group and only 3% are not English
- ◆ 9% of our staff have some form of disability

These statistics were produced by the Workforce System in November 2010. The system does not currently hold information on marital status, pregnancy, transgender or sexual orientation.

## Our Equality Objectives

The Council believes that it is important that we recognise and understand the different needs of everyone who lives in, works in or visits the district

To support this principle we have developed a number of equality and diversity objectives

- ◆ **Provide fair, equitable and accessible services, and where possible enhance and adapt our services to cater for people with special needs such as a disability.**
- ◆ **Consult and involve all our diverse communities to help inform our future plans**
- ◆ **Develop a robust evidence base on equality and diversity to inform our policies and practices**
- ◆ **Fully integrate the equality impact assessment process across the Council**
- ◆ **Implement a corporate equality and diversity training programme**
- ◆ **Ensure our procurement practices promote equality of opportunity**

## Achieving Our Objectives

We will gather evidence of our equality and diversity performance and assess our progress towards our objectives by way of an annual action plan. The first annual action plan is attached as appendix 1. Progress will be regularly reported to senior management and an annual report submitted to Cabinet and posted on the Council's website.

We use a range of methods to gather equality and diversity evidence on which to base our decision making processes, these include

- ◆ Public opinion surveys
- ◆ Focus groups
- ◆ Customer surveys
- ◆ Analysis of feedback
- ◆ Research
- ◆ Work in partnership with organisations to gather evidence of best practice.

We have a statutory duty to monitor our services for any adverse and differential impact across potential areas of discrimination. Any information gathered will be used to improve existing functions and services or to introduce new ones, as appropriate. This information will also be used to develop individual service equality targets as part of the service planning process.

We are committed to ensuring that when we procure goods and services from external suppliers the people who supply these are committed to equality and diversity. We are also committed to ensuring that our tendering processes are open to all.

We will promote a culture where all those who come into contact with the Council are treated with dignity and respect.

## Benchmarking Our Performance

The [Equality Framework for Local Government](#) (EFLG) is a performance improvement and benchmarking tool. The framework is designed to allow authorities to benchmark their performance across three levels—“developing”, “achieving” and “excellent”.

At each level the Council will be able to self-assess against the five performance areas

- ◆ Knowing your communities and equality mapping
- ◆ Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- ◆ Community engagement and satisfaction
- ◆ Responsive services and customer care
- ◆ A modern and diverse workforce.

We have adopted the EFLG and are at level 1 ‘developing’. Our achievements to date include

- ◆ Equality Champions Group to lead on equality and diversity issues across the Council
- ◆ Disability Equality Panel—to provide feedback from a customer’s perspective
- ◆ Equality Impact Assessments completed on key corporate strategies
- ◆ Disability Two Ticks award for our recruitment and personnel practices
- ◆ Equality and Diversity awareness training programme for members and officers

We are now working towards level 2—“achieving”

## Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA)

An EqIA is a tool for identifying the potential impact of our policies, services and functions on our residents and staff. It can help staff provide and deliver excellent services to residents by making sure that these reflect the needs of the community.

EqIAs offer an opportunity for all members of staff to think carefully about the impact of their work on local people and other members of staff. They can then take action that will promote equality for all.

Ownership and responsibility for an impact assessment lies at service level. Service managers and frontline staff are important in the assessment process. They will be involved in implementing actions and changes that the assessment identifies as necessary. It doesn't have to be an equalities officer who carries out the EqIA. When considering the equalities implications it is necessary to involve others who may offer challenge to views or some evidence of impact.

When carrying out equality impact assessments we will follow the process outlined below.

- ◆ Carry out a relevance test on the policy, function or service to establish whether there is likely to be any impact.
- ◆ Identify whether internal and/or external consultation is necessary.
- ◆ Gather data and evidence to ensure that sufficient information is available to inform decision making.
- ◆ Assess and analyse the policy, function or service for positive or negative impact and any unlawful direct or indirect discrimination.
- ◆ Amend or identify alternative policies where necessary.
- ◆ Establish what actions might be necessary to reduce or remove any adverse or negative impact.
- ◆ Decide whether a full impact assessment is necessary and, if so, undertake this.
- ◆ Publish the results.
- ◆ Conduct regular evaluations of completed EqIAs

We are currently carrying out EqIAs on all our key functions and strategies. A matrix showing our prioritised list of assessments including date completed and next due is attached at appendix 2. The template to be used for EqIAs is attached at appendix 3.

## Managing Equality and Diversity

The **Executive Leader and the Chief Executive** provide leadership and promotion of equality throughout the Council.

The **Member Champion** for equality helps raise the profile of equality and diversity among the other members of the Council, and acts as the elected member 'sounding board' for the work of the Equality and Diversity Service Champions Group.

The **Community Operations Manager** provides strategic leadership on the equalities agenda and chairs the Equality and Diversity Service Champions Group.

### **Equality and Diversity Service Champion Group**

The Equality and Diversity Service Champions group, which is made up of representatives from across the Council, manages the Council's equality and diversity agenda. Its primary purpose is to oversee and monitor all Council functions to ensure anyone who comes into contact with the Council, whether they are residents, staff, partners or stakeholders, is not discriminated against. The Service Champions Group underpins the corporate commitment to equality within the district.

The Equality and Diversity Service Champions Group meets regularly to:

- ◆ Identify and prioritise key issues affecting the Council in relations to equality and diversity
- ◆ Review, monitor and evaluate the Equality Impact Assessments
- ◆ Influence and ensure equality and diversity are embedded into the culture of the Council
- ◆ Steer and advise services in relation to the implementation of our duties under the Equality Act 2010
- ◆ Monitor the progress of the equality action plan and report annually to Cabinet

**Heads of Services and Managers** implement EqIA's and equality action plans in their respective service areas and support staff to contribute towards delivery of key objectives in the scheme.

## Managing Equality and Diversity (ctd)

**Community Services** co-ordinate the Equality and Diversity Service Champions Group, updates equality and diversity policies to reflect current legislation and monitors relevant performance indicators.

**Human Resources and Customer Services** develop policies to ensure that all staff are treated fairly and that adjustments to work areas or procedures are made where appropriate

**Staff** uphold and put into operation the aims of the scheme and act as a 'consultative group'

**Unions** are consulted on equality issues and have responsibility of representing the views and concerns of staff on equality issues supporting the continuous improvement of equality procedures and policies.

**Community Groups and Partner Organisations** offer a means of consultation feedback to support the development of equality policies.

## Monitoring

Tendring District Council has a legal duty to ensure that its services and employment are provided fairly, but without effective equality monitoring the Council will not know whether its equal opportunities policy is working. Equality monitoring can help all services to ensure that they are reaching and offering equality of opportunity to all individuals and groups, and can help us to make changes based on facts and not assumptions

## Alternative Formats

For more information on the services provided by **Tendring District Council** please visit our website at: [www.tendringdc.gov.uk](http://www.tendringdc.gov.uk)

**If you require the Single Equality Scheme in an alternative language or format please contact the Community Operations Manager on 01255 686360**

### **By post**

Tendring District Council, Barnes House, 92 Pier Avenue, Clacton on Sea, CO16 1NJ

### **By email**

Equality&diversity@tendringdc.gov.uk

## Feedback

The Council is interested in hearing from you whether you have a compliment, a complaint, or would like to express your comments or views on any aspect of this Single Equality Scheme.

Any complaints about the way the Council is meeting the duties under the 2010 Equality Act, or other equality complaints will be dealt with through the standard corporate complaints procedure.

These should be sent in the first instance to the Community Operations Manager as shown above.

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