

Chapter Six Race Equality Chapter

Contents

1. Background

- 1.1. The Race Equality Duty
- 1.2. The Wealden Equality Scheme
- 1.3. National and Local statistics

2. Identifying relevant functions and policies

3. Assessing proposed policies

4. Monitoring existing policies

5. Publishing the results

6. Ensuring access to information and services

7. Training and Development

8. Employment duty

9. Racist incident reporting

10. Racist incidents in Wealden

11. Implementing the scheme

12. Concluding comments

13. Relevant functions and priorities

1. Background

The Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all individuals and communities in Wealden and this race equality chapter should be read alongside the introductory chapters and action plans of the Wealden Equality Scheme.

The race equality duty (Race Relations Amendment Act 2000) came into force in December 2001 and amends the Race Relations Act 1976 to ensure public authorities positively promote race equality. Wealden District Council developed a race equality scheme in 2002 which was later incorporated into the wider Wealden Equality Scheme.

1.1 The Race Equality Duty

As a District Council responsible for delivering services to the people who live, work in, and visit Wealden, we are committed to meeting our statutory responsibility to promote race equality.

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a duty on a wide range of public authorities when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
- Promote equality of opportunity; and
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

'Due regard' means that in all our decisions and functions the Council gives weight to race equality in proportion to its relevance to a particular function.

A racial group is defined as a group of people defined by their race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins.

The Act also set out specific duties for the Council to:

- Prepare and publish a race equality scheme which sets out the 'functions' or 'policies' that are relevant to meeting the general duty, and the arrangements that will help to meet the duty in areas of policy and service delivery; and
- Monitor employment procedures and practice.

1.2 The Wealden Equality Scheme

The Council aims to ensure that all our services and employment opportunities are provided with equity and fairness to everyone. This will be achieved through the following priority objectives (specific actions are detailed in the Service Delivery and Employment Action Plan):

- Promoting equality of opportunity and good race relations for all individuals and communities in Wealden.
- Collecting data and information on the impact of our policies and practices.

- Eliminating any unlawful discrimination or harassment in the provision of our services and employment.
- Improving the accessibility of our services and employment opportunities for all and tackling the causes of social exclusion; and
- Ensuring effective implementation of equality duties across all service areas.

This chapter identifies the key areas that we will be working on over the next three years to achieve equality for racial groups and has been incorporated into the Service Delivery and Employment Action Plan of the Wealden Equality Scheme.

1.3 National and local statistics

At the time of the Census 2001, Wealden's population was 140,023. The main ethnicity was white British with a population of 133,405 assessing themselves to be in this category (95.27%). Of the remaining population 6,618 (4.73%) people belonged to other ethnic groups. The largest non-white ethnic minority group living in Wealden was Chinese, with a population of 664 (0.47%).

The demographic make-up of Wealden can be compared to the population of the South East in 2001, where 91.30% of the population were white British with the remaining 8.7% of the population belonging to other ethnic groups.

More detailed demographic data for Wealden in 2001 can be found at Appendix Two of the Wealden Equality Scheme.

Although Wealden has a relatively small Bme population we aim to increase our understanding of the needs of this broad group to help ensure our services and employment opportunities are available to everyone.

2. Identifying relevant functions and policies

In order to address the general and specific duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the previous Equality Scheme ranked all relevant Council functions and policies in order of relevance and priority using the following procedure:

- Determining Relevance:
 - Identify which parts of the general duty apply
 - Assess if there is potential for different ethnic groups to be affected differently
- Determining Priority:
 - Determine what data is available
 - Ascertain whether there is any evidence that policies or functions are racist or unfairly discriminatory
 - Identify any evidence of public concern that there are significant differences in outcomes for different ethnic groups

The results of the prioritisation exercise led to a timetable for auditing the Council's services to identify any actions needed to eliminate unlawful racial

discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and good race relations. As well as considering race equality, the audits also incorporated a preliminary review of wider equality issues. The key findings from this process were reported to Corporate Management Team and Committee. Issues arising were carried forward into the 2005-2008 action plan.

The list of functions and policies has been reassessed to reflect the changes that have recently taken place within the Council's structure. This can be found at the end of this chapter. The Council is committed to continued monitoring of these functions as scheduled in Appendix 6.

3. Assessing proposed policies

All proposed policies will be assessed for their potential to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. Assessments will be based on evidence gathered in a variety of ways which may include some or all of the following:

- consultation with equality stakeholders such as members of the BME community
- consultation with key advocacy groups
- consultation with the Council's Internal Equality Group
- comparison of policies with those from other authorities
- consideration of a pilot implementation
- analysis of existing data and research findings¹ ;
- advice from statutory agencies.

It should be noted that quantitative surveys do not give statistically reliable results when there is a very small number of minority group representatives. As such, we will aim to use qualitative data where possible e.g. when seeking the views of BME groups, we will (in partnership with other Councils within East Sussex) use information gathered from dialogue with the BME community and community development workers via the Connecting Communities Plus project.

Connecting Communities Plus is a Programme within East Sussex supported by funding from the Department of Communities and Local Government, over the period of June 2006 to March 2009. Each local partner to the Connecting Communities Plus Programme has made contributory funding to this programme. The partnership has been formed between Sompriti² and 8 local public authorities.

The three year connecting communities plus programme has four main objectives:

¹ Data to be analysed will include service applicants, service users, levels of use, census information, satisfaction rates and complaints.

² Sompriti is defined as an independent Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) voluntary and community organisation.

- A. Improving access and outcomes for Black and minority ethnic communities (Bme)
- B. Increasing Bme confidence in public sector.
- C. Tackling racism and extremism
- D. Improving community cohesion

It is intended that learning from the programme will inform future service delivery and employment practice. This will involve mainstreaming emerging good practice. Sompriti will provide the Council with a pro forma report of selected case studies and a half yearly monitoring report. Both of these will be presented to the internal equality group. In this forum, agreed actions will be identified and used as a learning opportunity. This will be reported back to Sompriti, who will provide feedback to the beneficiaries.

The impact assessment of proposed policies will be mainstreamed within the Council's standard policy-making process thereby ensuring that a proposed policy with a potentially adverse impact can be revised prior to implementation. The results of the assessment will be recorded on the Council's committee report template under 'Equality and Diversity'.

4. Monitoring existing policies

The monitoring we carry out will be part of an ongoing process of analysis, asking questions, investigation and change.

Monitoring of our existing policies allows us to see how racial groups are affected by our policies, whether people from all groups are equally satisfied with the way they are treated, whether our services are provided effectively to all communities and are suitable and designed to meet different needs.

We aim to ensure that the monitoring we undertake is practicable and proportionate to each service area. This is in line, for example, with guidance from the Employers' Organisation 'DIALOG', which says, "In the case of rural authorities with small black and minority ethnic communities, episodic monitoring, or surveys, or community studies may be more appropriate as a first step rather than establishing elaborate systems of continuous monitoring".

We will monitor the impact of our policies and practices through our Equality Impact Assessment process, which is detailed in Chapter Ten of the Wealden Equality Scheme.

5. Publishing the results

Results of the equality impact assessments, consultation and monitoring (including any evidence of unfair discrimination) and how the results of the monitoring and consultation have developed policy and practice will be summarised in our annual equality progress report. The full report will be made available upon request. The results of specific consultation exercises will also be publicised through appropriate routes such as relevant local newsletters (ie. Sompriti's 'Voice').

6. Ensuring access to information and services

One of the Wealden Equality Scheme's priority objectives is to improve the accessibility of our services and employment opportunities for all. The Council is committed to providing services which address the needs and concerns of all local people. The Service Delivery and Employment Action Plans detail our actions to ensure access to information and services. In summary the Council aims to ensure equality of access to services in the following ways:

- By engaging all sectors of the community.
- By providing efficient customer service arrangements
- By ensuring that people from all communities within Wealden know about the services we provide.
- By ensuring that people from all communities within Wealden are confident about using our services.
- By ensuring that people from all communities within Wealden do not meet unreasonable barriers when accessing our services.
- By providing a complaints procedure that instils public confidence in our commitment to improving access to services
- By mainstreaming action on equalities throughout the Council via the Internal Equality Group comprised of nominated officers from each service.

7. Training and Development

Over the previous years equality training has been held for council Members and employees on race equality.

The Council will continue to provide training to all its Councillors and staff to raise awareness on all equality issues, ensure Councillors and staff understand how the duties affect their work and have the skills to implement. Councillors and staff will receive training appropriate to their role within the Council.

In addition to the formal arrangements for training, Heads of Service and Equality Group representatives will be responsible for disseminating information to colleagues, as appropriate.

8. Employment duty

The Council will ensure there is equality of opportunity and treatment in recruitment and selection, appraisal, training, secondment, promotion, redeployment and redundancy processes. Decisions on recruitment, training, promotion and career management will be based on objective criteria and pay, benefits, conditions of employment and procedures will be fairly applied.

We will ensure that complaints about discrimination and harassment are thoroughly investigated, promptly, fairly and objectively in accordance with clear written procedures and that employees receive appropriate support if they feel they have experienced unfair discrimination.

The Council will collect and monitor, by ethnic background and other equality categories, information on:

- The numbers of staff in post and at what grade;
- The numbers of applicants for employment, training and promotion;
- The numbers of staff who receive training;
- The numbers of staff who are involved in grievance procedures;
- The numbers of staff who are subject to disciplinary procedures; and
- The numbers of staff who cease employment with the Council.

Results of this monitoring will be included in the annual equality monitoring progress report.

9. Racist incident reporting

A racist incident is defined as 'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person' (Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report 1999).

In 2002, the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP) across East Sussex, working with Sompriti (an independent Black and minority ethnic voluntary and community organisation working across East Sussex), designed a reporting process for racist incidents together with a reporting form. This scheme collects reports on racist incidents as well as providing a confidential service to support victims of racist incidents and their families.

A full time Racist Incident Caseworker post is funded equally by each CDRP and the post is situated within Sompriti. The caseworker supports individuals and organisations to raise awareness of racist incident reporting as well as:

- supporting people who have experienced racist incidents
- providing an effective response for victims and their families
- advising victims of where they can find further help or support
- increasing trust and confidence of Black and minority ethnic people to report racist incidents
- promoting the use of Racist Incident Report Form for all victims of racism
- engaging with statutory and voluntary organisations and the community to influence policy and services to the public

All reported racist incidents are logged on the 'CADDIE'³ system.

10. Racist incidents in Wealden

The caseworker prepares periodic reports for each area containing data on the numbers and types of incidents and subsequent follow-up action. From April 2002 to March 2007, 2,041 racist incidents have been referred to the Racist Incident caseworker from all over East Sussex; 141 of these have been reported in Wealden.

³ An E-government and E-policing project CADDIE allows emergency services, local authorities and community organisations to share information to prevent, and reduce the fear of crime and disorder, and give tools for greater crime and disorder prevention. It is ground breaking internet site aimed at reducing the fear of crime across Sussex, launched in March 2004.

There has been a steady increase in the number of incidents reported in Wealden. This increase does not necessarily signify a rise in incidents taking place, as it could equally be the result of more people having awareness of the scheme and having the confidence to use it.

The Council works with the Caseworker and members of the Internal Equality Group to formulate a joint response to any emerging trends.

The racist incident reporting form can be obtained from Sompriti or the Wealden District Council website www.wealden.gov.uk >Health and Public Safety> Crime and Disorder.

11. Implementing the scheme

We aim to gather and use information identified in this chapter to meet the duty to promote racial equality.

On an annual basis we will publish a report containing a summary of the steps taken to fulfil the race equality duty, the results of the information gathered in this time period, and what action we will take as a result. This will form part of an annual review on all equality work and will be reported to Members and published on the Council's website.

12. Concluding comments

The aim of the race equality duty is to identify and tackle discrimination, to prevent harassment, and to ensure that the Council's work promotes equality of opportunity and good race relations between people of different racial groups. The Wealden Equality Scheme Action Plans outline our proposed actions for 2007-2010 to ensure all of our services and employment opportunities are provided with equity and fairness to everyone.

The key outcome will be equality for different racial groups.

Relevant functions and priorities to the Race Equality duty

The list has been developed to reflect the Council's current structure. It has been assessed under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and will be reviewed every 3 years.

Function	RACE EQUALITY DUTY Relevance to the general duty		RACE EQUALITY DUTY Degree of Relevance		Priority for mainstreaming racial equality
	which aspect of the general duty applies	potential to affect racial groups differently	Data available	Evidence that policies or functions are racist or discriminatory	
	1 = Eliminating discrimination 2 = Promoting Equality of Opportunity 3 = Promoting good race relations	0=none 1=little 2=some 3=a lot	0=none 1=little 2=some 3=a lot	0=none 1=little 2=some 3=a lot	1= Low priority 2= Medium priority 3 = High priority
CHIEF EXECUTIVE					
Policy and Review					
Policy Development	1,2,3	3	2	1	3
Community Planning	1,2,3	3	2	0	
Corporate Consultation and Communications	1,2,3	3	2	1	3
Performance Management	2	0	2	0	1
Internal Audit Function	2, 3	0	2	0	1
Legal and Democratic Services					
Electoral Services	1,2	1	0	0	3
Member Services	1,2,	0	0	0	3
Legal Services	0	0	0	0	0

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CORPORATE SERVICES					
Human Resources					
Personnel Services	1,2,3	3	2	0	3
Training and development	1,2,3	3	2	0	3
Financial Services					
Accountancy and treasury management	1,2	0	0	0	1
Council Tax-collection and benefit	1,2	2	1	0	2
Housing benefit	1,2	2	1	0	2
Customer Services and Systems					
Customer services	1,2, 3	3	0	0	3
Information Communications and Technology	1,2, 3	3	0	0	3
Corporate Assets					
Corporate Property Maintenance	-	0	0	0	1
Energy Management	1,2	0	0	0	1
Asset Management	1	0	0	0	1
Facilities Managements	1	0	0	0	1
Procurement	1,2,3	2	1	0	3

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Emergency Planning and Business Continuity	2	3	0	0	3
Car Park Management	1,2	0	0	0	1
Public Convenience provision	1,2	0	0	0	1
COMMUNITY SERVICES					
Housing					
Housing Strategy and Policy	1,2,3	2	2	0	2
Housing Needs	1,2,3	2	2	0	2
Private housing and Special Needs	1,2,3	2	2	0	2
Council Housing	1,2,3	2	2	0	2
Sheltered Housing	1,2,3	2	2	0	2
Right to Buy	1,2,3	2	2	0	2
Public Health and Community Development					
Food Safety	1,2,3	2	1	0	3
Health and Safety	1,2,3	2	1	0	3

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Crime and Disorder	1,2,3	2	1	0	3
Community Grants	1,2	2	1	0	3
Sports Development	1,2	2	1	0	3
Leisure Development	1,2	2	1	0	3
Arts Development	1,2	2	1	0	3
Public Health Development	1,2	2	1	0	3
Environmental Protection					
Pollution Control	1,2,3	1	0	0	3
Licensing and Registration	1,2,3	1	0	0	3
Animal Welfare	1	0	0	0	1
Coast Protection & Beach Management	2	0	0	0	1
Engineering Services	-	0	0	0	1
Environmental Services					
Planning and Building Control					
Planning	2	1	0	0	1
Building Control	2	1	0	0	1
Local Land Charges	2	0	0	0	1
Planning Enforcement	1	1	0	0	1

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Waste and Commercial Services					
Abandoned Vehicles	1	0	0	0	1
Refuse and recycling service	3	0	0	0	2
Street Cleaning	-				
Building Maintenance	-				
Building Cleaning	-				
Grounds Maintenance	-				
Cesspool Services	-				
Planning and Environmental Policy					
Local Plan and supplementary planning guidance	2	2	0	0	2
Corporate Policy work e.g. Affordable housing, Asset Management	2	2	0	0	2
Economic Development & Tourism	1,2	2	1	0	3
Conservation and Design/ Arboriculture and Landscape	-				