



**Summary of the
Wealden Equality Scheme
2007-2010**

If you, or somebody you know, would like the information contained in the Wealden Equality Scheme in large print, Braille, tape/CD; or in another language please contact, Wealden District Council on 01323 443322 or info@wealden.gov.uk .

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| Policy Statement: Equal Opportunities Policy Statement | | A one page summary of the aims and objectives |
| The Full Scheme includes the following Chapters: | | |
| One | Wealden's Approach To Equality | Sets out the Council's equality principles, values and approach |
| Two | Service Delivery Action Plan | Identifies how, in the provision of services, the Council will meet the aims and objectives |
| Three | Employment Action Plan | Identifies how, in the employment policies and practices, the Council will meet the aims and objectives |
| Four | Disability Equality Scheme | Sets out how the Council will meet the general duty under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. |
| Five | Gender Equality Scheme | Sets out how the Council will meet the general duty under Part 4 of the Equality Act 2006. |
| Six | Race Equality Scheme | Sets out how the Council will meet the general duty under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 |
| Seven | Religion or Belief | Details the provisions of Part 2 of the Equality Act 2006 to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief and how the Council will meet these provisions. |
| Eight | Sexual Orientation | Details the regulations prohibiting discrimination on grounds of Sexual Orientation and how the Council will meet these regulations. |
| Nine | Age and Employment | Details the duty under the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 and how the Council will meet the duty. |
| Ten | Equality Impact Assessment | Sets out the Equality Impact Assessment process and what the Council will do with the information gathered |
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Summary of the Wealden Equality Scheme

Equality of opportunity is central to the Council's objectives and values.

What is the Wealden Equality Scheme?

The Wealden Equality Scheme sets out how we will ensure that all our services and employment opportunities are provided with equity and fairness to everyone.

All equality issues will be treated with a high degree of importance in addition to complying with relevant legislation.

Why is it needed?

It is unlawful to discriminate against anyone because of their age, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or sexual orientation when applying for a job and on any of these grounds, except age, when people are accessing our services, except in prescribed circumstances.

The Council has a duty to produce an equality scheme for disability, gender and race and these are found as individual chapters within the Scheme and should be read alongside the introductory chapters and Action Plans.

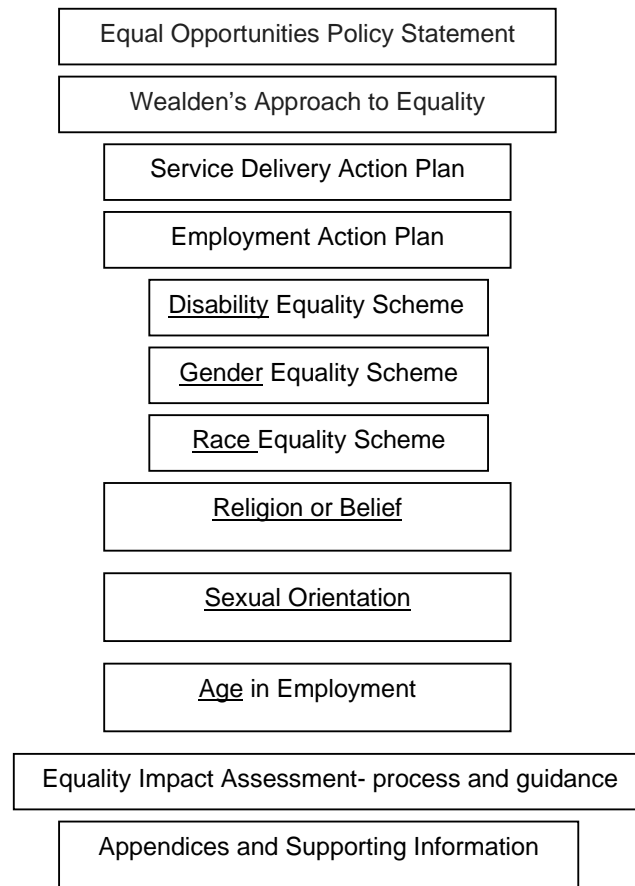
What are we going to do?

The Council is committed to:

- 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.

The service delivery and employment Action Plans focus on the principal aim of this Scheme and sets out how we will meet our objectives. The plans incorporate actions to meet all of our equality duties.

What is in the Wealden Equality Scheme?



Resources

Many of the actions within the Wealden Equality Scheme Action Plans will be met from existing resources and will be mainstreamed into the work of the Council. In addition, the Council has made a commitment in 2007/08 to designate a £20,000 corporate budget to pursue the equalities agenda and implement specific initiatives such as consultation and publication of results.

Equality Impact Assessment

We are required to carry out Equality Impact Assessments on our policies and services. The process is outlined in the Wealden Equality Scheme and covers all equality groups. The assessments will provide the tool to monitor our process and ensure that we are operating within the law.

Review of progress

On an annual basis we will publish a report containing a summary of the steps taken to fulfil our priority objectives, 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.

Definitions

The Wealden Equality Scheme sets out how we will ensure that all our services and employment opportunities are provided with equity and fairness to everyone, whatever their disability, gender identity, race, religion, belief, or sexual orientation and, with regard to our employment policies, age.

Definitions used within the Scheme:

Disability: A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Gender: The term 'gender' refers to the wider social roles and relationships which structure men's and women's lives. The term 'sex' is used to describe biological differences between women and men.

The Gender Equality Duty includes transsexual people, people who intend to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment.

Race: Covers race, nationality, ethnic or national origin and includes Gypsies and Irish Travellers.

Religion: The concept will include, but not be limited to, those religions widely recognised in this country, such as the Baha'i faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Rastafarianism, Sikhism, and Zoroastrianism. Denominations or sects within a religion can be considered as a religion or religious belief, such as Catholics or Protestants within Christianity.

Belief: The concept of belief includes beliefs such as Humanism, or other philosophical beliefs similar to a religion. However, other categories of beliefs, such as support for a political party, are not included.

Sexual orientation: Means an individual's sexual orientation towards:

- People of the same sex as him or her (gay or lesbian)
- People of the opposite sex (heterosexual)
- People of both sexes (bisexual).

It does not include transsexuality, which is related to gender and covered in the Gender Equality Duty.

An individual may identify with more than one of the definitions identified above. E.g. a woman may be from an ethnic group and have a physical disability. This is important to consider in our approach to equalities.

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Summary of Relevant Legislation

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| Age | Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 | Outlaws age discrimination in employment and vocational training. The Regulations apply to workers, applicants for jobs, employees, ex-employees, elected members, temporary staff from agencies and people on work experience. |
| Disability | Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and (Amendment) 2005 | <p>General duty to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons. Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act. Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities. Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons. Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life Take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons |
| Gender | Equality Act (Part 4) 2006 Equal Pay Act 1970 (Amendment 2003) Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (Amendment 2003) | <p>General duty to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate discrimination and harassment that is unlawful under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and discrimination that is unlawful under the Equal Pay Act 1970. To promote equality of opportunity between men and women. |
| | The Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005 | Explicitly prohibits discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity leave |
| | Gender Recognition Act 2004 | Gender Recognition: The Act provided transsexual people with legal recognition in their acquired gender. Legal recognition follows from the issue of a full gender recognition certificate by a gender recognition panel. |
| Race | Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 | The Act seeks to stop people from intentionally using threatening words or behaviour to stir up hatred against somebody because of what they believe. |
| | Race Relations 1976 and (Amendment) Act 2000 Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003 | <p>General Duty:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination. Promote equality of opportunity between persons of different racial groups.. Promote good relations between persons of different racial groups Produce a Race Equality Scheme and monitor employment. |
| Religion or Belief | Equality Act 2006 (Part 2) | <p>Part 2 of the Equality Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A person's actual religion or belief A religion or belief they are thought to have or The religion or belief of someone else with whom they are associated (for instance, someone such as a friend or member of their family). <p>It also prohibits discrimination against a person because they do not hold a religion or belief.</p> |
| | Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 | Made unlawful discrimination on grounds of religion or belief in employment and vocational training, promotion and working conditions. |
| Sexual Orientation | Equality Act 2006 (Part 3) | <p>The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 prohibit discrimination on the basis of a person's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actual sexual orientation The sexual orientation he/she is thought to have and/or The sexual orientation of someone with whom he/she is associated. |
| | Civil Partnership Act 2004 | Provides legal recognition and parity of treatment for same-sex couples and married couples, including employment benefits and pension rights. |
| | Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003. | Made unlawful discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation in employment and vocational training, promotion, and working conditions. |

◆ A more detailed list can be found at Appendix 3 of the Scheme.

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Equal Opportunities Policy Statement

Policy Statement

In line with our corporate values, set out in the Wealden Corporate Plan, Wealden District Council is committed to ensuring that all our services and employment opportunities are provided with equity and fairness to everyone.

The Council acknowledges that there are many forms of prejudice and discrimination and is committed to taking action to ensure equality for everyone, whatever their disability, family status, gender, race, religion, belief, marital status, or sexual orientation and, with regard to our employment policies, age.

Our objectives

The Council is committed to

- 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
- Ensuring effective implementation of equality duties across all service areas.

The Council treats all equality issues with the same degree of seriousness, in addition to complying with relevant legislation.

To ensure we meet our aims we will

- Monitor, assess and report our progress.
- Publicise our equality policy, action plans and achievements.
- Incorporate our equality policy into all of the work of the Council.

Further Advice

Further advice or information about the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy or Equality Scheme is available from:

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| Nicola Millward - Policy Officer Wealden District Council Council Offices, Vicarage Lane, Hailsham, BN27 2AX Tel: 01323 443322 Fax: 01323 443333 Email: pr@wealden.gov.uk MINICOM: 01323 443331 | Isabel Garden - Head of Human Resources Wealden District Council Council Offices, Pine Grove, Crowborough, TN6 1DH Tel: 01892 653311 Fax: 01892 602222 Email: personnel@wealden.gov.uk MINICOM: 01323 443331 |
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If you consider that you have experienced unfair discrimination or harassment by the Council, or would like information or advice about making a complaint, please contact the Complaints Helpdesk on 01323 443114.