

# Single Equality Scheme

2008 - 2011



**Stockton-on-Tees**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**3<sup>rd</sup> Edition**

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Kurdish

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Urdu

**A summary version of this document is also available. Please contact 01642 528830 or diversity@stockton.gov.uk**

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## Foreword

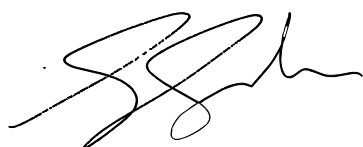
This Single Equality Scheme sets out how Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council will meet its duties under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006.

It meets the requirement in each piece of legislation to develop a specific Equality Scheme, bringing the three areas together without losing focus on the specific needs of any community.

Though the Council is only required by law at this time to publish a scheme or schemes about race, disability and gender, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's commitment to equality is wider. It also encompasses age, religion and belief and sexual orientation. The Council is committed to the equality agenda:

"Equality of opportunity and respecting difference is key to service provision in Stockton-on-Tees. This is why we look beyond minimum requirements to build equality and diversity and remove disadvantage. Through work on the action plans within this scheme, we also aim to build better community relations and build confidence in the council."

We will report progress against the scheme by 30<sup>th</sup> June each year, in line with the publication of our performance against equalities related Best Value Performance Indicators.



**George Garlick**  
Chief Executive

**Councillor Ken Lupton**  
Leader of the Council

## Executive Summary

This is Stockton's third Single Equality Scheme effective from April 2008 to March 2011, which will be reviewed on an annual basis. It brings together action plans for Race, Gender and Disability equality, thus meeting the Council's statutory duties in these areas. The scheme also goes beyond these three streams; it sets out the approach that is being developed to lesbian, gay and bisexual residents and further considers how the Council will develop its approach to equalities and diversity for all residents of Stockton. This is in line with the recent Equalities Review report and the report of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion. The Council is also committed to responding to all diversity related legislation and views a single equality scheme as the best mechanism for achieving this.

The scheme is organised by the **nine key** themes of the Council Plan namely;

- Economic Regeneration and Transport
- Environment and Housing
- Safer Communities
- Children and Young People
- Healthier Communities and Adults
- Stronger Communities
- Older Adults
- Arts and Culture
- Organisational Effectiveness

with specific actions for equalities identified under each. This ensures that equalities issues are set firmly at the heart of the Council's service planning arrangements, and as targets are written into service plans unique to individual services, ensures that equalities targets and actions are embedded across the Council.

The scheme also highlights how the Council has worked with and listened to its residents, how the results of these consultation exercises have fed into the development of action plans and also the need and commitment to the ongoing consultation and involvement required to ensure the scheme is a success.

As well as delivering high quality services to all residents, the Council is also committed to being a model employer and as such this scheme outlines how we meet our varied duties in terms of recruitment and employment practices.

It is an ambitious and challenging agenda but one to which we are committed to ensure that all residents of the borough have equal access to the excellent services provided by the Council.

## Introduction: The Borough of Stockton-on-Tees

Stockton-on-Tees is a diverse Borough located in over 20,000 hectares at the heart of the Tees Valley. It comprises an urban and rural environment with a number of towns and villages, each with its own distinctive characteristics, including Billingham, Stockton, Thornaby, Ingleby Barwick and Yarm. The area has a population of 189,100 (up from 175,300 in 1991) and records the largest population increase of the Tees Valley Boroughs over the last twenty years; this rise is projected to continue and population trends suggest a total population of 209,900 by 2029. Despite having some of the most populous urban centres in the Tees Valley the population growth figures are unevenly balanced across the area; with growth being driven in the south of the Borough, and particularly within the new Ingleby Barwick community. Projections show that the resident population will age sharply in the next ten years. There will be a 62% increase in the number of people at retirement age; this will be coupled with a slight decrease in the number of children and people of working age. In addition to this there will be a more prolific increase in the over 80 age group. In 2006 there were 7,000 people over the age of 80, this is expected to rise to 14,200 in 2020, an increase of 103%. The overall growth disguises these significant shifts in the population structure; for the council these changes will lead to rising demand for some public services such as housing, planning and adults' social care, and infrastructure pressures in the south of the borough where most of the growth is situated.

Across the Stockton-on-Tees' communities there is a wide social and economic mix, with areas of significant disadvantage situated alongside areas of affluence. Fourteen percent of Lower Super Output Areas (statistical areas typically consisting of 1500 people) within Stockton are in the 10% most deprived, but 22% of the Lower Super Output Areas are in the 20% least deprived nationally. Some 2.8% of the population is made up of Black and Minority Ethnic communities (an increase of 1.2% from 1991) and the area is culturally diverse with over 70 languages spoken within the Borough.

### **Stockton Renaissance**

Stockton Renaissance, the Local Strategic Partnership, brings together representatives from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors to drive forward the Community and Neighbourhood Renewal strategies to secure more jobs, better education, improved health, reduced crime and better housing, closing the gap between disadvantaged communities and the rest of the borough. The partners involved in Renaissance have a keen interest in ensuring all residents of the Borough have equal access to their services and are not discriminated against for any reason. With this in mind, public sector partners across Renaissance are both developing their own equality schemes and working to help secure the aims and objectives outlined within this strategy.

Renaissance created a Community Cohesion sub-group, which consisted of representatives from across the public, community and voluntary sectors.

The group developed a Community Cohesion Strategy for the borough which champions Renaissance's commitment to supporting community cohesion and outlines how partners will work together to ensure the Borough's communities are cohesive into the future. Renaissance believes equality objectives are best achieved by working in partnership and achievement will be monitored through thematic partnerships.

## **The Council**

The Council Plan sets out the key objectives of the Local Authority for the next three years and forms a business plan for achieving the Council's contribution to the Borough's Sustainable Community Strategy. The Council Plan also forms the overarching framework for delivery of individual service improvement and delivery plans, which set out in detail how the Council will provide key services and contribute to the key Sustainable Community Strategy themes. It is within the overall context of "promoting achievement and tackling disadvantage" that we work to eradicate the inequalities of resource and opportunity which prevent many of the people living in the Borough from participating in a culture of achievement.

The Council operates a Leader and Cabinet model with Scrutiny Committees. At the May 2007 elections no single party was able to form an administration. This led to a new 'Power Sharing' administration consisting of four Labour and four Conservative executive members. The Leader of the Conservative Group became Leader of the Council and membership of committees is politically balanced. Each Cabinet portfolio is matched by a scrutiny committee, with a focus on policy development. There are seven scrutiny committees with an Executive Scrutiny Committee to monitor the overall work programme.

The Council works in partnership with other public services within the borough, across the Tees Valley and beyond. This scheme applies to the Council's services only and a full list of the functions this scheme applies to can be found in the appendices. Council housing is managed by an Arms Length Management Organisation, Tristar Homes Ltd. Tristar is developing a separate Single Equality Scheme, that will link to and support this scheme. Leisure Services are provided by a Leisure Trust, Tees Active Ltd who work to The Equality Standard, A Framework for Sport.

## Strategic Context of the Council

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and its partners in Renaissance, have a shared, three-fold vision for the future of the borough:

- Stockton-on-Tees driving economic renaissance at the heart of a vibrant Tees Valley City Region
- An enhanced quality of place, including renewed town centres and improved local neighbourhoods
- Enhanced well being and achievement for local people.

The vision will be achieved by the Council and its partners concentrating on identified priority improvement themes, namely:

**Economic Development and Transport**, where the Council and its partners will work together across the Tees Valley to raise employment levels, strengthen the knowledge and skills base, create a more entrepreneurial culture, ensure vibrant and successful town centres and underpin this with improved transport links both within the borough and the wider area.

**Environment and Housing**, with a focus on improved waste management, better open spaces, tackling climate change, improving housing and ensuring good quality design in new developments.

**Safer Communities** will be developed through tackling crime, anti-social behaviour and reducing the impact of alcohol and drugs misuse.

**Children and Young People** will enjoy better health and well being with inequalities and disadvantage experienced by some children being tackled.

**Healthier Communities and Adults.** Health inequalities will be further reduced through improved access to health facilities and promotion of healthy living. Care and support for older people and vulnerable adults within our communities will also be further developed, with increased choice and input for service users.

**Stronger Communities**, will see the diversity of people's backgrounds appreciated and positively valued. This will happen through stronger community involvement, promotion of equality of opportunity and myth busting to reduce tensions.

**Older Adults.** Building on our current success, people will grow older with dignity, ensuring they have choice and access to services and facilities. Personal wellbeing will be improved through high quality health and social care, life long learning, leisure and cultural activities.

**Arts and Culture** will be used to promote quality of life and pride in the borough.



The Single Equality Scheme underpins and cuts across all themes and actions identified within both the Community Strategy and the Council Plan, ensuring that all residents of Stockton on Tees benefit fully from the range of initiatives being put in place to improve the local area.

The Council operates a competency scheme which identifies the skills and behaviours it expects from all its staff, these include:

- Communication:** Employees will express ideas and information clearly in a way which helps people understand.
- Flexibility:** Employees adapt to change and work effectively in a variety of situations.
- Making things happen:** Employees take responsibility for personal organisation and achieving results.
- Learning & developing:** Employees actively improve and develop new skills and knowledge, learning from past experience.
- Putting customers first:** Employees put the customer first and provide excellent service, to both internal and external customers.

A training programme has been developed in line with core competencies to ensure equalities are embedded throughout the competency framework and provide an opportunity for Officers to demonstrate how they promote the agenda in all aspects of their work. For example, providing flexible services for different groups of people or ensuring high quality communication through the use of translation services or hearing loop systems. Managers have additional competencies within their framework to ensure that their teams are operating effectively not least the specific requirement to effectively manage diversity.

## Our Equalities Objectives

In order to ensure Equality and Diversity are embedded in the Council's service planning and delivery processes, our equality objectives support the themes of the Council Plan:

- Economic Regeneration and Transport
- Safer Communities
- Healthier Communities and Adults
- Older Adults
- Organisational Effectiveness
- Environment and Housing
- Children and Young People
- Stronger Communities
- Arts and Culture

These are described in detail overleaf:

Council Plan theme	Equality Objectives
Economic Regeneration and Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To remove barriers to training and employment ensuring equality of opportunity for all</li> <li>• To ensure the transport network is accessible to all sections of the community</li> </ul>
Environment and Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide a range of accessible environmental, planning and housing services that meet the needs of local people</li> </ul>
Safer Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide a safe borough for all residents regardless of their age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender or disability</li> </ul>
Children and Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing of all children and young people</li> <li>• To ensure that children and young people are not subject to bullying, accidental or deliberate harm because of their ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, disability, religion, or any other reason.</li> <li>• To provide children and young people with an inclusive environment that enables them to enjoy and achieve</li> <li>• To enable children and young people to make a positive contribution to an inclusive and cohesive society</li> <li>• To enable young people to achieve economic wellbeing through access to equal opportunities in training and employment</li> </ul>
Healthier Communities and Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To reduce health inequalities within the Borough.</li> <li>• To improve quality of life for vulnerable groups through supported living arrangements and access to training and employment opportunities.</li> </ul>
Stronger Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To promote more cohesive communities</li> <li>• To effectively consult and involve all sections of the community</li> <li>• To provide strong leadership which enables the principles of equality to be embedded across the council</li> <li>• To improve the accessibility of our services to all residents</li> </ul>
Older Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To promote and enable independent living</li> </ul>
Arts and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure that all residents have equal opportunity to participate in cultural and leisure activities</li> </ul>
Organisational effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure our employment policies and practice are fair and equitable</li> </ul>

## National context for Diversity

As well as delivering on its commitment to promote equality across all the six strands of diversity- age, disability, faith and belief, gender, race and sexual orientation, the council has a duty to comply with a large and complex suite of equality legislation. As such, the Council's Single Equality Scheme has been devised to ensure that our employment practices and service delivery comply with the following Equal Opportunities Legislation, Codes of Practice and recommendations:

- Anti-social Behaviour Bill
- Childcare Act 2006
- Civil Partnership Act 2004
- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004
- Disability Equality Duty
- Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005
- Disability Rights Commission (DRC) Act 1999
- Employment Act 1990 (amended)
- Employment Equality Act 1998
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulation 2006
- Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulation 2005
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Relations Act 1999
- Equality Act 2006
- Equality Act 2004
- Equal Pay Act 1970 as amended by the Equal Pay (Amendment)
- Equal Opportunities Commission and Commission for Racial Equality Codes of Practices
- Equality Standard for Local Government
- Five Year Plan for Asylum and Immigration
- Gender Recognition Act 2004
- Gender Equality Duty
- Human Rights Act 1998.
- Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006
- Independent Living & Human Rights Act 1998
- Incitement to Religious Hatred Act (1986 Public Order Act)
- Macpherson Recommendations, Stephen Lawrence Inquiry
- "Our Shared Future" Commission on Integration and Cohesion
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Race Equality Duty
- Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and 1986
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001

The equality and diversity agenda has been driven forward by a significant reform of equalities legislation, both in terms of service delivery and workforce management over the last five years. As part of this reform a range of initiatives and key documents have been developed, which set out proposals for change and the implications for councils like Stockton-on-Tees. Some of these are highlighted below:

- **Civil Partnership Act 2004** ensures same sex partners who register as civil partners will be treated the same as a married couple for a number of legal rights. These include pensions, recognition for immigration, equal treatment for tax purposes including inheritance tax and better protection from domestic violence. Civil partners are also exempt from testifying against each other in court as are married couples, as well as having next of kin rights, thus overcoming a number of previously experienced problems, such as hospital visiting. Local authorities are obliged to provide civil partnership ceremonies as part of their register office functions where there are requested. A couple who have not registered their partnership but have lived together as if they were civil partners are to be treated as heterosexual unmarried couples living together as husband and wife.
- **Our Shared Future, Commission on Integration and Cohesion** – proposes local action supported by a national framework to sustain cohesion and integration. The emphasis is on using local data and information to tailor solutions in recognition of 'local distinctiveness'. This includes focussing on what we have in common whilst valuing diverse histories or "shared futures". It focuses on the issue of migration on the context of integration and settled communities and a conscious shift away from 'extremism'. The report suggests three factors that have the most influence on cohesion are deprivation, rate of change and rural / urban. Key issues for understanding integration and cohesion are shared futures, a new model of rights and responsibilities, mutual respect and civility and the need to deliver visible social justice. The council and its partners are addressing issues of integration and cohesion through the Community Cohesion Strategy.
- **Disability Discrimination Acts (DDA)** - gives disabled people rights in a wide range of key areas such as employment, education, access to goods, facilities and services and buying or renting land and property. It requires public bodies to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people, and organisations to take reasonable steps to tackle policies, practices and physical features that act as a barrier to disabled people who want to access their services.
- **Equality Act 2006** – establishes a single Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) , and places a duty on public authorities to promote equality of opportunity between men and women (the 'gender duty'). It also makes discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the

provision of goods, facilities, services, premises, education and the exercise of public functions unlawful, and provides powers to outlaw discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services, including adoption.

- **Employment Equality (Religion or Belief)/(Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003** – outlaws discrimination in employment and vocational training on the grounds of religion, belief or sexual orientation. It prevents both direct and indirect discrimination as well as harassment and victimisation on these grounds.
  
- **Equalities Review**, which was jointly sponsored by the Equality Minister and the Minister for the Cabinet Office:
  - Investigated the social, economic, cultural and other factors that limit or deny people the opportunity to make the best of their abilities
  - Provided an understanding of the long term and underlying causes of disadvantage that need to be addressed by public policy
  - Made practical recommendations on key policy priorities for: the government and public sector; employers and trade unions; civic society and the voluntary sector to which the Council is now developing its response
  - Informed both the modernisation of equality legislation, towards a single equality act; and the development of the new commission for equality and human rights.
  
- **Equality Standard for Local Government** sets out a framework for integrating equalities in service and workforce planning. It requires that services across the Council take ownership of the equalities agenda and engage in dialogue with target groups, thereby developing and achieving clear equalities objectives. The Council is working towards achieving level 5 of the Equality Standard for Local Government. This will mean that it is continuously assessing all its policies, practices and procedures to determine if they have an adverse impact on the community. The Council is focussed on reaching level 3 of the Equality Standard by April 2009.
  
- **Gender Recognition Act 2004** - allows transgender people (who are able to satisfy the necessary evidential requirements) to apply for a Gender Recognition Certificate, which provides full legal recognition of their acquired gender. Following a successful application, the law regards the transsexual person as being of their acquired gender, and ensures they have all the rights and responsibilities appropriate to that gender.
  
- **Human Rights Act 1998** - The act applies directly to public authorities and incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law. Human rights are rights and freedoms that belong to all individuals

regardless of their nationality and citizenship. They are fundamental in maintaining a fair and civilised society.

- **Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000** amended the 1976 Race Relations Act which was introduced to prevent discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic and national origin in the fields of employment, the provision of goods and services, education and public functions. It also set up the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE). The 2000 amendment to the act introduced onto public authorities the general duties to promote racial equality and eliminate unlawful discrimination.

## The Gender, Race and Disability Equality Duties

These duties impose broad obligations on public authorities to:

- Eliminate discrimination and harassment;
- Have due regard to the promotion of equality and opportunity between persons and other persons;
- Promote positive attitudes;
- Encourage participation by minority and under-served groups in public life;
- Take steps to take account of people's specific needs even when this requires treating some individuals more favourably than others.
- Conduct impact assessments, and draw up relevant schemes (and publicise them).

The three duties are broadly similar in their approach and aims, however in order to ensure the Council is compliant with all, they are detailed overleaf:

## The Race Equality Duty

### What is Race?

A race is a distinct group or population of people distinguished in some way from others most often in terms of physical characteristics but also language, history, ancestry and culture.

### What is the Race Equality Duty?

The duty was detailed in the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and includes both a general and specific duty.

**The General Duty** as set out in section 71(1) of the Act, requires a public authority in carrying out its functions to have due regard to the need to:

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

**The Specific Duties** are set out in articles 2(3) and 2(4) of the Race Relations Act 1976 (Statutory Duties) Order 2001 which states that a public authority should develop a race equality scheme which highlights:

- Those of its functions and policies, or proposed policies, which it has assessed as relevant to its performance of the duty imposed by section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act and its arrangements for:
  - assessing and consulting on the likely impact of its proposed policies on the promotion of race equality
  - Monitoring its policies for any adverse impact on the promotion of race equality
  - Publishing the results of its assessments, consultation and monitoring, providing public access to information
  - Training staff in connection with the duties

The Race Equality Scheme must be reviewed every three years.

### What are the key issues in Stockton-on-Tees?

Stockton-on-Tees has a relatively low number of BME residents at 2.8%, mainly of Pakistani and Indian origin, although these figures do not include all asylum seekers and refugees in Stockton. As of March 2007, there were 372 registered asylum seekers in Stockton. Residency is concentrated in the 2 main town centre wards of Stockton Town Centre with an 11.5% BME population and Parkfield and Oxbridge with 11.7%. (Census 2001)

The age profile for the borough shows that on average, Stockton's BME population is younger than the borough as a whole with 34% of BME residents being aged 16 or under compared with a whole borough figure of 21%. In contrast to this, the older population shows a different picture with only 4.8% of the BME population in the "retired" group compared with a whole



borough figure of 21%. This leads to the take up of different services within the BME population.

The number of BME residents recording long term health problems or disability is at 12%; considerably lower than whole population figure of 20%. This may in part be due to the age profile however, supported by the fact that in the over 65 age group, the number of BME residents recording health problems and disability is slightly higher at 55% than the wider population at 52%. This has implications for the ways the BME communities access health, education and social services.

### **What matters to Stockton-on-Tees residents?**

This scheme and its associated action plan has been developed as a result of significant consultation with Stockton's BME residents. The issues raised and concerns identified will be addressed in detail in the action plan and individual Service Improvement Plans. The following key issues were highlighted:

- Consultation, Participation and promotion of services were seen as key and BME residents call on the Council to provide culturally appropriate techniques and materials to allow them to play a full part in consultation.
- Access to leisure, cultural activities, events, parks and open spaces is important to people. Again information about what is happening needs to be accessible and a sense of wellbeing and feeling safe is a priority.
- Many members of the BME community are keen to take up work locally, including for Stockton Council. Recruitment techniques need to accommodate how the local community access recruitment materials and traditional working patterns

### **What impact have we already had on race equality in Stockton-on-Tees?**

- A comprehensive telephone interpretation training programme has been delivered which, as well as providing staff with the practical skills to access interpreters in 150 languages through National Interpreting Service, has also raised staff awareness of the diverse cultural make-up of the borough. It has focused services to think about why and how they made need to adapt service provision to ensure equality of access. This had led to services being more accessible to a greater number of people.
- The distribution of "Mythbuster" booklets across the borough has both informed the community and prepared Council staff with facts to counteract many of the misunderstandings about Asylum Seekers and Refugees.
- Implementation of the Offensive Incident reporting procedure now enables council staff and local residents to report incidents that may not require Police or enforcement action. This is being increasingly used to monitor and identify patterns of racist or other hate based

incidents. This will help plan and deliver effective multi-agency responses.

- Piloted community projects such as the “Community Wardens Volunteers (CWV) programme”. Previously, BME residents had been underrepresented in the warden’s scheme and other services. The volunteering programme not only gives BME residents the opportunity to make a difference in their community, but provides a career and progression route into employment within local authority.
- Promoted the Council’s resident’s panel (Viewpoint) to BME communities and successfully recruited members from the community onto the panel. Therefore creating the opportunity for BME residents to engage with council services and staff.
- In early 2005, Stockton Renaissance, the Local Strategic Partnership, endorsed a proposal put forward by Stockton International Family Centre (SIFC) to develop a ‘BME’ Network group in order to facilitate the ‘BME’ communities engagement in the LSP processes. The BME Network became a strong organisation with a representative on the LSP Board, and has now been mainstreamed into the Community Empowerment Network.
- Part of the May 2007 elections training included information to ensure there was full accessibility of polling stations for local residents whose first language is not English.

## The Disability Equality Duty

### What is Disability?

People are affected by disability or health conditions in different ways. This can happen suddenly, as a result of accidents or strokes for example, or gradually as a result of conditions such as arthritis and multiple sclerosis. There is often no defining moment when a health issue becomes a disability, at least for the individual concerned. If a condition affects everyday activities, such as

- the ability to move around
- manual dexterity
- physical co-ordination
- continence
- the ability to lift, carry or move ordinary objects
- speech, hearing or eyesight
- memory, or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- ability to recognise physical danger

and has lasted, or is likely to last, at least a year, then it is likely to be covered by the Disability Discrimination Act

There are two approaches to disability commonly used, the Medical Model and the Social Model.

### Medical Model

The “medical model” is a traditional model of disability focused on the individual and their particular physical difficulties which prevents them from undertaking everyday activities which non-disabled people take for granted. The range of social contact for the disabled person where the 'medical model' is applied is illustrated in the diagram overleaf.



## Social Model

The “social model” focuses on the social environment and how it causes some people to be disabled. As a result if the organisation of society e.g. stairs to access buildings, lead to disability then it is these things which must be changed. The disabling forces at work where the 'social model' is applied can be seen below:



The Council fully supports the Social Model definition of disability. As service providers we must ensure that we do not impose barriers on anyone accessing our services and that we consider the needs of the individual person rather than focusing on any impairment.

## What is the Disability Equality Duty?

There are two duties which apply to councils.

The **General Duty** requires the Local Authority to:

- 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; and

- Take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

This general duty provides a framework for the council to carry out their functions more effectively and to tackle discrimination and its causes in a proactive way. It requires us to adopt a proactive approach, mainstreaming disability equality into all decisions and activities.

The **Specific Duties** require the Local Authority to:

- Publish a Disability Equality Scheme demonstrating how it intends to fulfil its general and specific duties.
- Involve disabled people in the development of the scheme which outlines:
  - The way in which disabled people have been involved
  - The authority's methods for impact assessment
  - Steps which the authority will take towards achieving the general duty
  - The authority's arrangements for gathering information in relation to employment, education and service delivery
- Deliver the scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable and impractical to do so

### What are the key issues in Stockton-on-Tees?

Stockton has a higher percentage of permanently sick and disabled people and people with a long-term limiting illness than the national average.

	<b>Stockton</b>	<b>England &amp; Wales</b>
<b>Permanently sick and disabled</b>	7.1	5.3
<b>Limiting long-term illness</b>	19.9	17.9

- Within Stockton, there are an estimated 500 adults with a severe disability and nearly 3,000 adults with a mild disability.
- There are 9,552 blue parking badge holders as at 31 March 2006.
- As a service provider in 2006, we had:
  - 4374 clients who received a service who have been classified as having a Physical Disability or Sensory Loss,
  - 1004 clients with a Mental Health support need,
  - 407 who had a Learning Disability
  - and 340 Vulnerable adults
- We have 200 children with a disability receiving services through the local authority and in combination with Health Services.
- Around 1,000 children have a statement of special educational needs

- Over 500 people are registered as partially sighted, and almost 400 people registered as blind in Stockton. Of those 74 per cent are 65 and over and 60 per cent 75 and over.
- The majority (85 per cent) of people with sight problems are older people, aged over 65.
- 2135 people are registered as hard of hearing, with over 140 registered as Deaf
- In the 2001 Census almost 19,000 people in Stockton on Tees said they looked after someone

### **What matters to Stockton-on-Tees residents?**

Both through the Council's usual consultation mechanisms and in developing this scheme we gathered the views of a large number of disabled residents who raised the following as key issues:

- Equality of access to information and services
- The opportunity to influence decision making, both on a personal level about issues like individual care packages and at a strategic policy level
- The need for a more formal mechanism for disability groups or individual residents to have an ongoing dialogue with the council specifically about disability issues.
- Receiving information in appropriate and accessible formats.

### **What impact have we already had on disability equality in Stockton-on-Tees?**

- The establishment of the Disability Advisory Group has provided opportunity for local people with an interest in disability to work with council officers on policy development and look at some of the practical ways to improve access to services (they have so far been involved in more than 10 projects). The group also provides networking opportunities for local groups to share information and good practice
  - More than 40 members have been recruited to the group
  - 2007 saw four meetings and four newsletters
  - Projects worked on include the redevelopment of two town centres, redesign of a housing reception, access to services and more.
- The translation and transcription guidelines produced by the Diversity Team have provided guidance to services about when and how to provide information in alternative formats
- Preparation for the Disability Action Plan has enabled services to identify priorities to ensure equality of access for disabled residents
- All forms of public transport are now fully accessible by wheelchair users.
- Feasibility studies have been carried around access to railway stations, and plans for a new footbridge at Thornaby have been put in place.
- Direct Debit facilities have been promoted to disabled people.

- The benefits Content Relationship Management system has been introduced to improve the benefit claims processes.
- The Visually Impaired People's library service and registering system has been promoted through work with Blind Voice UK, Teesside Society for the blind and a Gateway champion has been put in place.
- ADHD care pathways have been revised to identify clear referral routes for services.
- A review of services for children with complex needs has been completed.
- Customer First criteria has been revised in consultation with the Disability Advisory Group.

## The Gender Equality Duty

### What is Gender?

Typically, we are divided by our biological differences into male and female. However, physical differences describe our sex, rather than gender. Gender identity refers to the inner sense of knowing whether we are men or women. Roles and expectations tend to be assigned to men and women based on their sex and this means the lives and experiences of women and men, including their experience of accessing services, can be significantly different. It is important to note that, as part of this, the council is committed to meeting transgender needs; that is the needs of those people whose biological sex at birth does not match their gender.

### What is the Gender Equality Duty

The duty to promote Gender Equality was issued under the Equality Act 2006 which amended the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975, in a similar vein to Race and Disability legislation, it contains both a general and specific duty:

**The General Duty** on all authorities is when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination between women and men
- to promote equality of opportunity between men and women

**The Specific Duties** are as follows:

- to prepare and publish a gender equality scheme, showing how it will meet its general and specific duties and setting out its gender equality objectives,
- in formulating its overall objectives, to consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap,
- to gather and use information on how the public authority's policies and practices affect gender equality in the workplace and in the delivery of services,
- to consult stakeholders and take account of relevant information in order to determine its gender equality objectives,
- to assess the impact of its current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality,
- to implement the actions set out in its scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impractical to do so,
- to report against the scheme every year and review the scheme at least every three years.



## **What are the key issues in Stockton-on-Tees?**

The balance of males and females within the borough is fairly evenly split with 49.6% of the population being male and 50.4% female. However, the workforce of the Council does not reflect this balance, with 76% of the workforce being female and 24% male. Although this is a large difference, this is not unusual for similar types of authority.

Transgender people's needs must be accounted for as part of the Gender Equality Duty. However, there is no data available outlining the numbers of transgendered residents of Stockton.

## **What matters to Stockton-on-Tees residents?**

Generally, females tend say they are more satisfied with the way the Council is running the Borough. However, males are happier with Stockton as a place to live. There is also a higher sense of belonging among females even though males express more pride in their local area.

More detailed data shows there are differing levels of take-up and satisfaction between men and women across a number of service areas, notably, transport related services, community safety and council communications. In many of these areas, further investigation work will need to be carried out to determine what can be done to improve satisfaction and use of a range of services.

## **What impact have we already had on gender equality in Stockton-on-Tees?**

In general, satisfaction is high with Council services. Females are particularly satisfied with libraries, events and doorstep recycling. Males are particularly satisfied with support services for the elderly, parks and open spaces and council housing. Further work will be carried out to ensure equality of opportunity between males and females which will in turn raise satisfaction with Council services to the same levels.

The authority has systems of gender monitoring for the recruitment, retention and progression of staff. This helps to ensure the HR systems are fair, and where discrepancies appear, action can be taken to address them.

We are doing well with females in top managerial positions, with the percentage of the top 5% of female earners employed by the authority at 49.47%. However, as the action plan shows there is ongoing work to address the areas of equality and employment.

Preparation for the Gender Action Plan has allowed the Council to identify priorities to ensure equality of access for male and female residents. **A major achievement in this area is the completion of a job evaluation exercise, as**

part of the Single Status Agreement. Analysis and detailed equality objective setting will take place once the scheme is fully complete.

## Age, Faith & Belief, Sexual Orientation and Further Dimensions of Diversity

“Strong and Prosperous Communities” the Local Government White Paper has recognised the importance of community cohesion and valuing all residents to improving quality of life. In addition to this, the equalities review investigated the causes of persistent discrimination and inequality and published a final report in February 2007. It set out a framework for measuring inequality and narrowing gaps. It recommended empowering people in local communities to promote equalities. The report recommended ten steps to improve equality. These were defining equality, building a consensus, measuring progress, transparency about progress, targeted action on persistent inequalities, a simpler legal framework, more accountability for delivering equality, using procurement and commissioning positively, enabling and supporting organisations in all sectors and a more sophisticated enforcement regime.

Finally, the Discrimination Law Review published a consultation paper in June 2007. It took into account, the feedback of the Equalities Review and set proposals for a single Equality Bill; looking at harmonising and simplifying the current protection. The consultation focused on:

- analysis of the fundamental principles of discrimination legislation
- exploring the scope for harmonising and simplifying current law
- considering areas where protection is currently inconsistent
- exploring positive action measures
- the effectiveness and scope of public sector equality duties
- exploring how public sector procurement can be used to promote equality
- exploring appropriate measures to protect against harassment outside the workplace
- updating discrimination law on grounds of sex and gender reassignment,
- considering how to promote compliance with discrimination law and reviewing dispute resolution procedures.

Following consultation, there is further consideration being given to exploring options to permit representative actions and wider recommendation powers in the courts, looking at a variety of measures to address the Gender Pay Gap, and exploring the feasibility of permitting individuals to bring claims based upon multiple-grounds

The above influences will enshrine all aspects of equalities into the work of public authorities. The Council is already committed to improving its services and the quality of life for all Stockton residents regardless of their race, gender or disability but also recognises that people have a number of further

diversities and may be disadvantaged for a number of reasons in addition to those already mentioned. For example, marital status, family circumstances, caring responsibilities, class, level of income, housing circumstances, membership or non membership of trade unions, or involvement or non involvement in trade union activity. There is a commitment to removing direct and indirect discrimination on any basis but the Council is concentrating on the three further key strands of age, sexual orientation and faith and belief. Strategies and action plans in these areas will be developed over the short to medium term. This will supplement the general commitment in this scheme to introduce actions which wherever possible cut across all six diversity strands. The council also recognises that different types of disadvantage have differing impacts in different localities. In line with the report of the Equalities Review and the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, issues will be investigated and dealt with on a local basis. This can include, for example, taking into account the 'family group' the authority belongs to and developing 'shared futures'. Further information on age, faith and sexual orientation is given below.

## Age

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2006. They apply to employment and vocational training, and prohibit unjustified direct and indirect age discrimination, as well as harassment and victimisation on grounds of age. The regulations (which do not affect the age at which people can claim their state pension):

- ban age discrimination in terms of recruitment, promotion and training.
- ban unjustified retirement ages of below 65.
- remove the current age limit for unfair dismissal and redundancy rights.

They also introduced:

- A right for employees to request working beyond retirement age and a duty on employers to consider that request.
- A new requirement for employers to give at least six months notice to employees about their intended retirement date so that individuals can plan better for retirement, and be confident that "retirement" is not being used as cover for unfair dismissal.

The Council is implementing these regulations through its Human Resources function and employment practices to ensure no current or potential employee experiences discrimination as a result of their age. However, the Council is also committed to ensuring that no member of the community experiences any such discrimination in all aspects of their lives and has equal access to the services provided by the Council. As such, the Council has developed an Older People's Strategy through consultation with older people and their representatives, focussing on four key areas of priority:

- Older people will be at the heart of community leadership and community development

- Older people will be an important part of local, welcoming communities that provide a safe, positive environment for people of all ages
- Older people will have real choice about the services they use, and control over how they use them, and services will be accessible equitably by all
- Older people will have opportunities, all the time, to improve their personal well-being.

A number of organisations within our Local Strategic Partnership will help address the necessary actions

## Faith & Belief

As a result of the Employment Equality (Religion or belief) Regulations 2003, it is unlawful to discriminate against an employee on grounds of their religion or belief. These regulations prevent the indirect and direct discrimination as well as harassment and victimisation of an individual and have been implemented across Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.

In the wider community, the Council and its partners have tended to consider race and faith together and indeed representatives of different faiths have been involved in the development of this scheme to date. Work will continue with the community to further develop understanding of the issues and consideration given to how best to address any faith based discrimination identified. Also we will work to further develop our understanding of the issues surrounding belief. Appropriate actions for faith and belief will be developed through the implementation of this scheme.

## Sexual Orientation

Gay men, lesbians and bisexuals are protected at work by the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations of 2003, which in a similar way as faith regulations, prevents discrimination and harassment at work as a result of sexual orientation. Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council has implemented these regulations and works to ensure no discrimination takes place amongst its workforce.

The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulation, introduced in 2007 made it illegal to discriminate against people on the basis of their sexual orientation when providing goods and services. The Council is committed to creating a borough where all residents have equal access to its services and events and feel accepted and valued as citizens. As such renewed efforts will be made to consult and involve gay, lesbian and bisexual residents of Stockton in the development of services. This will be done in consultation with existing community groups, resources and voluntary agencies.

In the wider community the Government estimates that approximately 5% of the population are either gay men, lesbians or bisexuals although figures are

not clear as no national census has requested data on sexual orientation. This would potentially equate to over 9,000 Stockton residents.

There is not a strong “gay scene” in Stockton, and that in nearby Middlesbrough is still relatively small compared with other urban areas such as Manchester, Liverpool or even Newcastle-upon-Tyne. However, the local college and university campus are organising activities for lesbian, gay and bisexual students.

## How Have We Developed the Scheme?

This scheme has been developed collaboratively and is the result of consultation and involvement with local people as well as Members and officers of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council. Detail of how specific groups have been involved is given below with more general information on how the Council consults and uses data detailed later in this scheme.

### Disabled people

The council has actively involved disabled people in the development of the disability section of this scheme. This has included:

- A targeted questionnaire focusing on making contact with the council, visiting buildings, information, services, employment, and a section for open comments
- Face to face discussions with local representative groups such as Stockton Blind People's Voice, Diabetes Support Group, Stockton Helps All (learning disabilities), and Hartlepool Deaf Club.
- A "tell us what you think" event open to all disabled people providing direct access to council staff to discuss issues and experiences
- Work with disabled young people to identify issues and get ideas for how services can be improved
- A questionnaire to employees identifying themselves as disabled

The feedback received from disabled people has been used to form the Disability Action Plan which can be found in later in this document. We have set up a representative Disability Advisory Group to work with us on further developing and delivering the Disability Action Plan.

In addition the Council has access to a range of established mechanisms for seeking the views of and working with Disabled people. These include:

- The Disability Advisory Group and sub group who work with the council to develop services and scrutinise progress.
- Adult and Youth Viewpoint (our residents panels) where Disabled people are included in all our regular consultations as well as those specifically related to disability issues.
- Service user groups e.g. Stockton Helps All – self advocacy and consultation for people with learning disabilities; Creative support – consultation forum for people with mental health problems
- Stockton Disability Forum
- Working with established disability groups including Blind People's Voice UK, Shopmobility, Stockton Parent Support, North East Centre for Independent Living

## **BME Residents**

The Council's approach of engaging with BME communities in Stockton, has taken a number of different forms consisting of:

- The Development the Parkfield & Mill Lane 'BME' Forum (Hamari Awaaz),
- Commissioning from the LSP to develop the BME network group
- The engagement of Viewpoint members from BME communities
- The support of Stockton's Asian women's forum
- Promoting services to the BME communities using art, leisure and cultural events for e.g. Mela.
- A "tell us what you think event" open to all BME residents providing direct access to council staff to discuss issues and experiences and promote services. This shaped the race action plan.

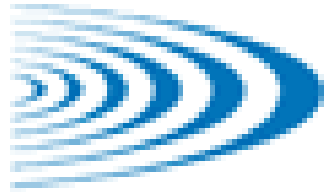
## **Gender**

The council has carried out a number of thorough consultation activities. The thrust of the investigation for this scheme has involved reanalysing existing data, to determine whether there is any gender difference. The analysis of this data has directly fed into objectives for the Gender Action Plan aimed at tackling the observed issues. To ensure ongoing engagement, services are being encouraged to collect further service user data and investigate reasons for differing use and satisfaction in services.

Viewpoint carries out questionnaires and focus groups on a regular basis giving residents the opportunity to give their views on a variety of services offered by the Council and its partners. Demographic data is routinely collected from Panel Members which allows for detailed and targeted analysis. Results from recent consultation exercises have been analysed by Gender to highlight areas of difference between men and women.

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council has well embedded Human Resources recording systems which hold a variety of workforce data, analysis of which has informed the development of the Action Plan. Moreover this is supplemented by regular staff surveys which gather employee views on their experiences of working for the authority. Results have been considered and any observed differences between male and female employees will be investigated and addressed through the Action Plan. The Council benefits from strong relations with Trades Unions and will work closely together to improve gender equality.





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# **Quality Service Provision**

## Equalities Impact Assessments

Equalities Impact Assessments are a crucial mechanism for ensuring the embedding of equalities and diversity across the Council. Impact assessments are carried out covering all 6 equality and diversity strands (race, religion, disability, age, gender and sexual orientation) and identify both good practice as well as areas where our performance in diversity could be improved. They are based on a variety of data held by the Council to give as full a picture as possible of the impact of individual services and policies and, where weaknesses are identified ensure that they are addressed in the shortest possible timeframe. In line with statutory requirements our equality impact assessment process is applied to both new policies as well as targets for assessing existing policies and functions being agreed. A number of staff have been trained across services to maximise the use of all staff in Equality Impact Assessing. The Equality Impact Assessments carried out within the sections then translate into target setting within the Service Improvement Plans.

There are a number of practical resources dedicated to Equality Impact Assessments; the Corporate Diversity Working Group are looking to further strengthen these and make the process more challenging. Current resources include:

- Equality data profiles
- Training
- Proforma
- Support from the corporate Diversity Team

### **Impact assessments - existing policies and functions**

There is a commitment, within the 2008-11 Council Plan and Service Improvement Plans for each service to carry out 50% of all backward looking equality impact assessments by March 2009, with the remaining 50% being programmed in for the following year. Functions and policies will be impact assessed in order of priority with those having the most impact on equalities being carried out first.

Our approach of applying one impact assessment covering all six areas to current practice and policy will ensure that we come to a rounded view and that by altering our policy or practice to address the equality of one group we do not disadvantage another. It also reduces the potential administrative burden that could prevent impact assessments being effectively carried out.

## **Impact assessments – new policies and practice**

A similar process to that described above for existing policy and practice is applied to new policies and practice, as required by the relevant statutory codes of practice. Where decisions require Cabinet approval, the outcome of the impact assessment is included in reports. Where decisions require a “delegated decision” to be recorded the outcome of the impact assessment is be included on the appropriate record. Both reports to Elected Members and delegated decision records are available on the council’s website. Equality issues are also embedded within the Council’s constitution.

All impact assessments are carried out by services, with appropriate support and challenge from the council’s Diversity Team. The results of impact assessments are published on the council’s website.

A small team of officers, on behalf of the Corporate Diversity Working Group, check all equality impact assessments to quality assure. They support staff in completing them where necessary, including training, helping with data analysis and so on.

It is essential that the community are involved in the Equality Impact Assessments process and there has been progression in this area with work through the Disability Advisory Group. Further work will strengthen this in the other areas of diversity.

## Consultation and Involvement

### Consultation and involvement

The Council has developed a communication, consultation and engagement framework. This forward looking participation and engagement strategy assists services through offering advice on making sure activities are accessible. Equality actions are informed through encouraging services to look for diversity implications within their consultation activities. Guidance and information is available from the Consultation and Diversity Teams to assist with this.

The council's existing mechanisms for consulting local people include:

- Biennial independently carried out residents surveys
- Our residents panel (Viewpoint) which includes young people, disabled people and members of our Black and Minority Ethnic Communities. A range of surveys and focus groups is undertaken each year
- Specific consultations on key issues such as town centre re-developments

The council has published guidance on consulting with young people and disabled people and BME people and offers training to all staff across the council on these areas, as well as general consultation courses.

In order to increase the level of involvement that local people have in shaping services and ensuring they meet specific needs the Council and its partners support a number of advisory groups to provide both guidance and act as a critical friend in policy development and review. For example the disability advisory group has been established to work with us on improving and testing services and we will consult this group on priorities and proposed actions relating to disability. There is a commitment to further strengthen this community involvement through the Community Empowerment Network, a mechanism which works to involve local people in decision making.

### Gathering information

We have processes in place to analyse information about the borough and its residents to develop "profiles" focused on the six strands of diversity. These profiles are published on the council's website and used by services to provide contextual information for developing and providing services. They are also crucial in supporting the Equality Impact Assessment process and inform service planning and delivery.

We are seeking ways to improve the collection of meaningful data which will help us to understand the relationship between being within a minority group and other socio-economic data such as health, employment, and crime.

Feedback from residents and service users is collected via a number of mechanisms including the council's complaints system. Those providing feedback are asked to provide some information about themselves e.g. ethnicity, disability to enable a full analysis of the feedback.

We are also developing a range of local performance measures to help us monitor the impact of the improvements set out in the action plans and progress towards our objectives. Ways of developing capacity within the community to help evaluate performance are being considered.

## **Education**

In terms of education we have an overarching Accessibility Strategy, together with individual School Accessibility Plans. These provide a framework for monitoring the impact of practices on disabled pupils and students. Guidance and training is provided to schools to assist them in this work. We also monitor School Ofsted inspections (which include a number of judgements relating to equality, diversity and inclusive practice) to help us assess the impact of schools' work on pupils with particular needs, including those with a disability. Value added analysis of outcomes for SEN pupils is undertaken annually. The impact of policies in relation to school admissions and school transport have considered the needs of disabled pupils and made appropriate provisions.

In relation to race issues, 'The Race Relation Act' 1976 (statutory duties) order 2001 highlights that the governing body of a school must have a race equality policy in place which describes how the school will prevent racial discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and promote good race relations across all areas of schools activity, thereby meeting both the general and specific duties. The policy should be embedded within the schools development plan, give details of how and by whom it will be implemented and outline remedial actions should implementation fail.

A priority within the Children & Young People's Plan is to raise achievement for all children and in particular for vulnerable and hard to reach groups. Review and evaluation of performance has shown good progress in narrowing the attainment gap for BME groups and for those with special educational needs; and in addressing the gender gap in attainment in certain subject areas e.g. Support for schools in developing anti-bullying strategies continues, linked to an anti-bullying accreditation scheme.

## Ensuring Access to a Quality Service

The Council is committed to ensuring that all residents and potential service users have access to information and services, provided by trained, efficient and helpful staff and which are consistent and appropriate to their needs.

A range of facilities are already available to help people access information and services from the Council:

- Telephone interpretation (over 150 languages)
- Face to face interpretation by prior arrangement, including sign language
- Transcription into a variety of formats such as Large Print, Braille and audio
- Translation of written documents on request

All services have access to face to face interpretation, transcription and translation services and the telephone interpretation service. Training in the telephone interpretation service is ongoing, with almost 500 people already trained.

The Council's Access to Services strategy and Customer First programme includes equalities and diversity issues. The Access to Services Strategy includes ensuring that new contact centres (both walk in and telephone) are fully accessible to all groups including Black and Minority Ethnic residents and disabled people.

The Customer First programme includes equality criteria which must be met in order to achieve each level of award. For example, in order to achieve Level 2, services must ensure that they have trained staff in using the telephone interpretation service and that the service is operational, that there is a hearing loop installed and working at each reception point, and that the appropriate reception points are fully accessible. All services will have achieved level 2 by March 2009.

All council buildings have been audited for compliance with the accessibility criteria in the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act, and conform using Document M of the Building Regulations as guidance. However, the Council is committed to ensuring good quality access and will be looking at the British Standards in addition to this; for example, those relating to evacuations and ensuring any areas the public may need to access are suitable.

## Equalities Training for Staff and Councillors

The Council provides training to staff on a range of equalities related issues and will be rolling out the existing programme of training during 2008. The programme includes:

- Diversity essentials for all staff
- Diversity for managers
- Diversity for councillors and co-opted members
- Specific courses on age, disability, gender, race, religion and sexual orientation

The corporate Diversity Team are working with Organisational Development to review staff inductions and the diversity element of other courses. Training needs are identified through annual appraisals of all employees. Equalities and Diversity are now embedded in our organisational values and the competency framework. We have met our initial target of delivering equalities training to all first, second and third tier officers as well as 10% of all other staff by the end of March 2008. A programme for the roll out to all staff will be developed during 2008/9. The training introduces staff to the terms equality and diversity, the drivers for diversity within the Council, legislation, dimensions of discrimination and communication. In addition to this bespoke training is available to services, to cater for particular needs / specialisms and Social Care deliver on awareness courses related to specific disabilities.

Equality and Diversity is included in the induction of new elected members. All Elected Members have signed the Model Code of Conduct which is based on the general principles of conduct both of which include obligations to promote equality.

We evaluate the quality of our training through attendee feedback and are seeking ways to link training outcomes with customer satisfaction and behavioural changes in our staff.

## Resources Dedicated to Diversity

The council has a Diversity Team embedded in the corporate centre. The team has 3 members, each of which has expertise and experience in two of the six diversity strands, age, faith, gender, sexual orientation, disability and race. The team has a dual role both to work proactively with community groups and representatives to ensure that we have accurate and complete information on our residents' needs and then help, support and advise council service groupings to ensure their services are accessible to all. In order to effect change across the Council, the Diversity Team has a key role to play in Policy Development, both corporate diversity strategy and policy but also in embedding the equalities agenda within all plans, policies and strategies produced by the Council thereby ensuring all of our activities are promoting equality.

The introduction of the Diversity Team represents a significant investment of resources by the Council to ensure that its services are delivered in a fair and equitable way. All financial planning and expenditure associated with the team and its operation will be subject to the usual robust financial management arrangements.

The Diversity Team also works with the Human Resources function to ensure recruitment, retention and all HR related policies and activities actively promote equality and diversity and that as such the Council is moving towards a more diverse workforce which reflects the diverse nature of our resident population.



## Procurement

The European Union and Government are committed to developing public sector procurement to promote greater equality and diversity in our communities and have developed both legal arrangements and guidance to help ensure this happens. There is great scope for improving public sector procurement to achieve greater equality through:

- ensuring suppliers comply with equality requirements, including discrimination law and family friendly legislation
- ensuring that contracts for delivering services meet the needs of diverse communities
- promoting the engagement of businesses led by people from disadvantaged groups

The Discrimination Law Review has been considering the issue of procurement within its terms of reference and will develop recommendations in the forthcoming Green Paper for consultation.

Diversity and inclusiveness in public sector procurement is an issue of great importance and the Council is already committed to procurement processes that eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. Further improvement to the processes is occurring through regional work to harmonise documents and ensure an effective approach to assessing potential contractors / service providers. As part of the duty to promote equality, the council will also be willing to work with companies to further develop their approach where needed. Work on the pre-qualification stage has been completed, with further improvements to terms and conditions to be tackled in 2008. Contract monitoring is already in place, however, this will be strengthened, particularly when looking at contractor performance, as work on standard terms and conditions is carried out in a regional forum.

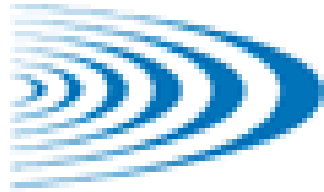
### **Impact assessments – Contracts for goods, works and services**

A timetable for Equality Impact Assessing contracts has been drawn up and is included in individual Service Improvement Plans.

## Partnership Arrangements

Because equality and diversity are central to the core business of the council, it is also important that anyone the council works with respects similar values. As part of this a compact has been drawn up for Renaissance and the Voluntary and Community Sector. The Compact links with this scheme and recognises equality is a key issue for Renaissance and the Community and Voluntary Sector, acknowledging the importance of promoting equality of opportunity for all people. In addition, the agreed undertakings by the Voluntary and Community Sector include putting in place and adhering to policies for promoting best practice and equality of opportunity in all matters related to volunteers and service provision. Further to this, roles and responsibilities which embed equality are being developed. Renaissance will sign up to these when they are finalised in 2008.

The Council have put in place a Partnership Guidance Manual that makes it clear that a certain standard of conduct is expected and each partnership is expected to develop its own ethics, standards and culture. Council representatives within the partnership are also subject to Codes of Conduct, such as Equal Opportunities Standards, Dignity at Work, Confidential Reporting and so on.



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# Employment

## The Council as an employer

The Council is one of the largest employers in the borough and has committed itself to the highest standards of equality and diversity related policies and practices, some of which are detailed below. The Council is also committed to working towards ensuring that its workforce is reflective of the diversity of the borough's residents.

### Equal opportunity policies

The council has a range of employment related codes of practice and equal opportunities policies:

- Codes of Practice in employment, promotion and training
  - Avoidance of Age Discrimination
  - Disability Equality
  - Racial Equality
  - Religion and Belief Equality
  - Sex Equality
  - Sexual Orientation Equality
  - Transsexual Equality
  
- Equality and Diversity Policies
  - Aids / HIV policy
  - Dignity at Work Policy
  - Equal Opportunities Policy
  
- Service Codes of Practice
  - Disability Equality
  - Sex Equality

These policies are developed in line with the appropriate regulations and legislation in consultation with employees and Trades Unions.

The council is reviewing all of its HR policies to ensure they fully embrace the spirit of equality and diversity, and ensure the codes of practice have been fully developed. As part of this the new People Strategy has had a full equality impact assessment carried out on it and fully supports the spirit of equality and diversity through five high level goals:

- Developing the organisation; achieving excellence in leadership and management.
- Becoming a modern and diverse employer, supporting flexible working practices, with the ability to recruit and retain a diverse workforce, representative of the community.
- Developing internal effectiveness and capacity, ensuring that HR has the skills and resources to help Stockton achieve its objectives

- Developing workforce skills and capacity to ensure we have employees with the right skills, qualifications and competencies at all levels of the organisation
- Providing a safe and healthy working environment and engaging with our employees with effective two way consultation.

There are a number of high level actions under these key goals and detailed actions will be developed within these. The council is also committed to reviewing the complexity of applications, considering the need for positive action and will work with key stakeholders on this. There is a clear commitment to consider the barriers that discriminate against individuals then developing counter measures for job advertising.

### **Equal opportunity information**

We regularly collect equalities data from our employees and potential employees via:

- Regular data matching on employee data held by the authority
- Equal opportunity forms issued with application forms for jobs within the council

This information is analysed at least annually to tell us:

- The ethnic breakdown of the workforce
- The percentage of the workforce which considers themselves to have a disability
- The age profile of the workforce
- The gender profile of the workforce
- The pay profile of employees by ethnicity, age, gender and disability
- The ethnicity, age, gender and disability profile of those applying to work in the council compared to those appointed

All information is broken down into service areas as well as being available council wide. There is a commitment to interrogating data linked with training, discipline, length of service, promotion and reasons for resignation.

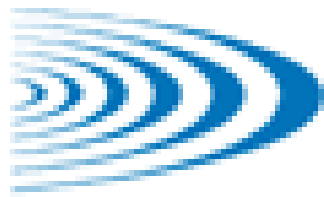
We are seeking ways to improve our data collection and analysis to include areas such as take up of training opportunities by ethnicity, age, gender and disability, the sexual orientation of our employees and the impact of our absence management policy on different groups of staff. In addition, we regularly carry out staff surveys and will check the feasibility of developing staff forums to help understanding of the experience of working for Stockton Council. There are also new IT systems in place to allow accurate processing of this data and build up a good quality workforce profile.

It is vital that the Council is leading the way in terms of diversity in employment and as such has developed a series of objectives and targets to continually improve its Human Resources policies and practices which can be found appended to this scheme. In addition, to ensure the workforce is reflective of the population, research is being carried out to look at the ways different groups of people access and search for jobs. As a result of this,

actions are being put into place to make recruitment exercises appeal to all sections of the community. A local labour market assessment of deprived areas has been carried out and will be reported in 2008. Following the report, work will be carried out to assess what data can be used to assess the profile of the workforce more widely. This will be compared to where particular groups of people sit within the structure of the authority.

### **Results of the Equal Pay Review**

Following a job evaluation exercise, as part of the Single Status Agreement, an implementation date for a new pay and grading structure was agreed for 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008. The Council ensured that their new pay and grading structure was non discriminatory and an equalities impact assessment was undertaken on the Agreement. By August 2007, 1,143 posts were evaluated and scored, totalling 6,688 employees. The effect on employees was that 65% would have an increase in their basic salary, 24% would remain unchanged and 11% would suffer some detriment. Once the scheme is finalised, further work and analysis on pay scales, gender splits and so on will be established. This will allow detailed equality objective setting relating to pay.



**Stockton-on-Tees**  
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# Appendices

## APPENDIX ONE

### Risk Management

Failure to deliver against the Single Equality Scheme is a risk for the Council, not least because we will be not be meeting our statutory duties but also because we will be failing the residents of Stockton in terms delivering services to meet their diverse needs.

The risks associated with this strategy are managed by the Council through its usual risk management procedures and have already been subject to the standard risk assessment protocols. Further, through the ongoing performance management of this strategy, outlined in the next section, any risks will be identified at an early stage and managed accordingly.



## APPENDIX TWO: Performance and review

The Single Equality Scheme is subject to the Council's usual rigorous performance management arrangements. The actions highlighted in the various action plans are written into the Service Improvement and Business Unit Plans for the relevant services. Progress on the actions is reported to Cabinet on a bi-annual basis. Not only does this ensure that these targets are subject to ongoing performance management and monitoring but also serves to ensure that work on equalities is embedded across the authority. The Corporate Diversity Working Group oversees the data collected and considers the progress against action plans before making recommendations. The group also co-ordinates their work with the corporate Consultation working group.

The Council also maximises the opportunities provided by PI data to both benchmark our services against those of other high performing authorities but also to demonstrate year on year improvement in key equalities areas.

The ongoing involvement of both employees and the community is a vital aspect of this scheme and through both its internal mechanisms as well as community consultation activities; the Council will ensure this happens. The Disability Advisory Group for example will have a crucial role to play in the ongoing development and monitoring of the disability equality scheme. The level of data analysis and the work of the Diversity Team, facilitates good understanding of the local community. Based on this, and extensive consultation the local indicators in the action plans have been developed. Community scrutiny of these actions has begun to strengthen this arrangement.

## Appendix Three: List of Applicable Functions

### Resources

#### Finance

- Accountancy Support
- System Development & Support
- Financial Planning
- Risk Management & Insurance
- Internal Audit
- Procurement
- Income Collection & Banking
- Acquisition, Disposal, Valuation & Estates Management
- Creditor Invoice payments

#### ICT

- Business Analysis
- Service Centre
- Desktop Services
- Systems Services
- Members' ICT Services
- Information Security Management
- Information Governance
- ICT Policies & Standards
- ICT Training
- Customer Liaison

#### Children, Education and Social Care

- School Improvement
- Governor Support
- Sports Development
- Pupil Attendance
- Pupil Exclusions
- Tees Valley Music Service
- SEN Assessment & Monitoring
- Educational Psychology Service
- Education Other Than At School
- Specialist Learning Support
- Safeguarding Services
- Children Looked After

#### Human Resources

- HR Advisory Service
- Recruitment
- Sickness Absence support
- Payroll
- Transactional services
- Health & Safety
- Training & Organisational Development
- Training and Employment Services

#### Taxation & Admin

- Council Tax and Business Rates Administration
- Customer Service Centre
- Administration
- Couriers
- Design & Printing Services
- Land Ownership, Gazetteer and Records
- Reception

- Adult Education
- Museums
- Arts
- Stockton International Riverside Festival (SIRF)
- Community Transport
- Client Financial Services
- Customer Care and Complaints
- Community Care Services
- Residential/Day/Home Care
- Integrated Learning Disabilities

- Children in Need
- Sure Start
- Connexions (Locality)
- Emergency Duty Team
- First Contact
- Youth Offending Team
- Pupil Admissions
- Teenage Conception Strategy
- Review Unit
- Youth Service
- Involvement and Participation
- Libraries

- Service
- Welfare Rights
- Adult Protection
- Direct Payments
- Integrated Mental Health Services
- Supporting People
- Drug Action Team
- Strategic Planning
- Integrated Commissioning
- Partnership Development

### **Development and Neighbourhood Services**

- Business Support
- Performance management
- Service Reviews and Inspection
- Records Management
- Waste Awareness, Promotions, Marketing and Research
- E-Government
- Systems Development and Support
- Information Governance
- Registration of births, deaths and marriages
- Bereavement services and advice
- Annual Events
- Enforcement Wardens
- Environmental Health
- Licensing
- Trading Standards
- Care Call
- Concierge
- Contaminated Land
- Car Parking
- Emergency Planning
- Community Safety
- Emergency Planning
- Care For Your Area (street cleansing, refuse, recycling, parks and grounds)
- Catering and Cleaning
- Highways
- Heating Ventilation & Electrical Contracting
- Waste Management
- Fleet Management

- Housing Advice and Homelessness
- Registered Social Landlord Investment
- Private Sector Housing
- Grants and Adaptations
- Voluntary and Community Sector Support
- Traffic Management and Road Safety
- Public Transport
- Concessionary Fares
- Blue Badges
- Design Consultancy
- Building Services
- Energy Management
- Highways and Bridges
- Civil and Structural Engineering
- Street Lighting
- Traffic Manager Role
- Environmental Policy
- Architects and Quantity Surveying
- Building Services
- Planning Policies and Plans
- Local Development Framework
- Development Control
- Building Control
- Physical Regeneration
- Markets and Town Centre Management

- Parks and Countryside
- Housing Benefits
- Housing Strategy

**Law and Democracy**

- Electoral Services
- Community engagement
- Scrutiny
- Democratic support

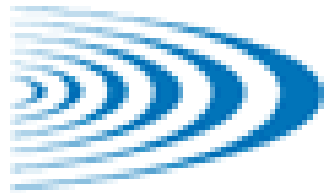
**Policy, Performance and Communications**

- 
- Research and Consultation
- Performance improvement
- Communications

- Economic Development
- Funding Advice
- Business Support and Development
- Stockton Middlesbrough Initiative

- Member support
- Civic Services
- Legal Services
- Local Land Charges Service

- Diversity
- Local Strategic Partnership (Stockton Renaissance)



**Stockton-on-Tees**  
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# **Consultation Summary:**

## **Race Equality**

**(Existing disability and gender  
consultation summaries can be accessed  
via [www.stockton.gov.uk](http://www.stockton.gov.uk))**

## **Race Equality Scheme**

### **Executive summary of consultation**

### **BME Viewpoint consultation**

### **Consultation with BME Forum**

### **BME 'Tell Us What You Think' Event**

## **Key Summary findings:**

### **'BME' Viewpoint Consultation Sessions**

A number of consultation sessions were held with members of BME Viewpoint panel. The purpose of the sessions was to gauge opinion on accessing council services.

#### **Translation issues**

Translation should only happen where there is a real need due to cost implications. In documents, present one sentence in the six most frequently spoken languages (Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, French, Punjabi, and Urdu). Despite concerns over quality of professional interpreters and the level of training, only use professional interpreters rather than friends and family.

#### **Telephone Interpreting**

Initially a three way telephone interpretation system to set up face-to-face meetings with people who need interpretation. Confidentiality and impartiality should be part of the training within workshops for interpreters. Issues have been raised about time delays on Language Line, use of the correct dialects and the informal aspect of telephone conversations. A pilot scheme is to be set of initial contact. Suggested locations for this pilot scheme included Municipal Buildings and Citizen's Advice Bureaux as well as various leisure and recreational facilities. This would also be useful for doctors, colleges, schools, police and taxi offices.

#### **Welcome Signs**

Put up welcome signs with different languages underneath. This would enable service users to more easily identify their interpreting needs and would be welcoming.

#### **Transport issues**

**Buses** – There is no regular service and certain routes are real unreliable. Some users find the service expensive and that the stops are too far apart.

**Cycling** - Cycle tracks were viewed positively but there were concerns over safety and places to safety lock bikes in the town centre; safe and dry storage would help with most issues.

**Walking** – The main issue with walking was safety, especially at night. Better policing, more community wardens and better provision of street lighting helped people feel safer.

**Road Safety** - In general there were no great concerns about road safety but there were some issues that could be improved such as making speed restrictions more clear, more zebra crossings and speed bumps and better use of pavement build outs and central refuges.

**Traffic Management / Air Quality** - There were concerns over pollution but also recognition that traffic is not the only cause of pollution. Parking is not an

issue in the town centre but can be in residential areas due to the restrictions of residential permits.

**Highway and Footpath Maintenance** - In general the current road works to make improvements were viewed positively. However, it was noted that they are often timed badly and take a very long time to complete.

**Taxis** - Opinions were varied; issues raised included price, reliability and driving standards.

**Trains** – In general trains were viewed negatively with problems such as bad links with other public transport, poor timekeeping, and price, lack of information and poor lighting and personal safety issues.



## **Key Summary findings:**

### **Consultation with Parkfield & Mill Lane 'BME' forum (Harmi Awaaz which means Our Voice)**

The 'BME' forum Harmi Awaaz was set up in 2005, in partnership with local residences, Stockton borough council officers and the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder programme. The remit of the forum was to offer support and guidance to local BME residences living in the town centre wards of Parkfield & Mill Lane. The findings have been addressed, though contacting various different services and incorporating the issues into the race action plan.

#### **Issues**

- Lack of culturally sensitive counselling services
- Lack of health education and poor access to health services
- No leisure activities for BME women
- Need more preventative work around alcohol and drug abuse
- Anti-social youths and lack of youth facilities
- BME children underachieving at school and lack of after school clubs
- Lacking training opportunities and ability to gain employment
- Better opportunities for women and improved access to child care
- Housing issues and problems with rubbish

#### **Solutions**

- Better integration between different communities
- More cultural awareness
- Better health / leisure opportunities
- Reduce racist remarks on the streets/in school
- Tackle discrimination issues
- Knowledge around drugs and the effects for everyone
- Education programmes for young people & adults
- Park facilities and events & activities
- More young people services
- Increased involvement of the press media & press
- Job opportunities for young people & adults
- Penalties for antisocial behaviour
- Better consultation on community issues such as housing and health

## **Key Summary findings:**

### **A 'Tell us what you think' open to all BME residents**

A 'Tell us what you think' event was held in September 2007 to provide direct access to council staff to discuss issues and experiences. This event was used as an opportunity to promote council services, as well as providing a forum for BME communities to share their experiences and expertise to help improve future service delivery.

The event gave officers the opportunity to hold discussions with BME residents to determine what could be done to improve access, and anticipate and respond to specific needs.

The information was gathered throughout the day into the following 3 main categories.

- Positive experiences of using council services
- Negative experiences of using council services
- How the council could make things better

Information gathered on the day linked to developing leisure facilities, developing cultural and interfaith activities, improving promotion of a number of services, ensuring queries are dealt with in a timely fashion, supporting planning services, drugs prevention, affordable English language courses, family learning, independent living and providing more library resources.

# Race Action Plan

(Existing disability and gender action plans can be found at [www.stockton.gov.uk](http://www.stockton.gov.uk))

**Race Equality Action Plan**

This race action plan has been developed following:

- **Consultation via Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council BME viewpoint panel**
- **Consultation with Parkfield & Mill Lane BME forum, Harmi Awaaz**
- **Consultation through a 'Tell Us What You Think' event open to all BME residents**

It highlights in detail the key actions that the council will take as part of achieving its overall equality objectives in and around the issues of Race and Faith. The actions included in this action plan are also included in the council's service plans and Heads of Service will be held to account for their achievement through the council's performance management framework. Progress against the action plan will be reported annually by the responsible services.

In practice, this will mean making sure that the general and specific duties of the 'Race Relations Amendments Act' of 1976 is central to the way we carry out any business or function.

## Economic Regeneration and Transport

Equality objective – To remove barriers to training and employment ensuring equality of opportunity for all		
Key Actions	Who is responsible?	When will it be done?
Identify barriers to training and employment using the results of the skills audit.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development	Ongoing to March 2010
Support business start-ups including enterprises created by BME communities.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development	March 2008

Equality objective - To ensure the transport network is accessible to all sections of the community		
Key Actions	Who is responsible?	When will it be done?
Involve BME communities in transport planning.	Head of Technical Services	Ongoing LTP review
Improve accessibility of transport information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ maximise technology such as Real Time to provide up to date transport information.</li> <li>▪ provide easy to understand transport information in alternative formats &amp; Languages.</li> </ul>	Head of Technical Services	Ongoing  Ongoing
Conduct feasibility study around access to railway stations, incorporating needs of BME communities.	Head of Technical Services	Ongoing

## Environment and Housing

Equality objective - To provide a range of accessible environment, planning and housing services that meet the needs of local people		
Key Actions	Who is responsible?	When will it be done?
Promote recycling and the refuse collection assistance service to BME communities	Head of Direct Services	Ongoing
Improve promotion of direct services to BME communities, including highlighting key points of contact	Head of Direct Services	Ongoing to March 2011
Involve service users in planning and remodelling their homes	Head of Housing	Ongoing
Ensure a range of accessible promotional materials are produced for housing schemes	Head of Housing	Ongoing
Ensure that we are complying with the statutory CRE code of practice on racial equality in housing	Head of Housing	Ongoing
Involve BME communities at the design stage of new developments	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development	Ongoing up to March 2010



<p>Ensure that staff at all levels have undergone race, faith, belief and diversity training</p>	<p>All Heads of Service</p>	<p>Phased over 3 years up to March 2010</p>
<p>Improve promotion of services to BME communities, including highlighting key points of contact</p>	<p>Head of Planning</p>	<p>Ongoing to March 2011</p>
<p>Support BME residents through planning processes building control, in particular the limitations on extending / developing older housing stock in town centre locations</p>	<p>Head of Planning</p>	<p>March 2009</p>

## Safer Communities

Equality Objective - To provide a safe borough for all residents regardless of their age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender or disability		
<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>When will it be done?</b>
Better promote the issues around drugs to BME families and community leaders to help understanding and address the problems emerging in BME communities	Head of Adult Strategy	March 2010
More drugs preventative work with young people from BME communities including visits to Holme House Prison	Head of Adult Strategy	March 2010

## Children and Young People

Equality objective – To promote the physical and mental health and well being of all children and young people		
Key Actions	Who is responsible?	When will it be done?
Implement key actions of “Be Healthy” theme of Children and Young People’s Plan (CYPP) with due regard to the needs of young BME residents.	Head of Children & Young People Strategy	Ongoing to 2010

Equality Objective - To ensure that children and young people are not subject to bullying, accidental or deliberate harm because of their ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, disability, religion, or any other reason		
Key Actions	Who is responsible?	When will it be done?
Review anti-bullying strategy and develop an action plan, which takes account of the needs of children & young people from BME communities.	Head of School Effectiveness	Action Plan to be drawn up for 2008/09
Review offensive incident reporting mechanisms in schools	Head of School Effectiveness	By July 2008

Equality Objective - To provide children and young people with an inclusive environment that enables them to enjoy and achieve		
Key Actions	Who is responsible?	When will it be done?
Implement Play Strategy.	Head of Children's Strategy and Head of Direct Services	Strategy action plan implemented during 2008.
Establish Integrated Youth Support Service as part of roll-out of the Integrated Service Area project.	Head of Children's Strategy	July 2008.
Track the progress of BME pupils as part of school monitoring procedures.	Head of School Effectiveness	As part of annual cycle of school performance review.
Raise achievement and continue improvements in educational attainment across key stages for all children, including black minority ethnic groups and hard to reach children.	Head of School Effectiveness	As part of annual cycle of school performance review.

Equality Objective - To enable children and young people to make a positive contribution to an inclusive and cohesive society		
Key Actions	Who is responsible?	When will it be done?
Increase involvement of BME children and young people through further development of the PIC (Participation, involvement and consultation) network and the promotion of Stockton Youth Voice.	Head of Children's Strategy	As part of CYPP activity 2007-2010
Further develop the involvement of BME parents in service development and delivery and community life in general.	Head of Children's Strategy	Ongoing until 2010

Equality Objective - To enable children and young people to achieve economic well being through access to equal opportunities in training and employment		
Key Actions	Who is responsible?	When will it be done?
Increase the level of young BME residents leaving school who access further education, employment and training.	CESC / Connexions	Annual review of Connexions business plan.

## Healthier Communities and Adults

Equality Objective – To reduce health inequalities within the borough		
Key Actions	Who is responsible?	When will it be done?
Improve services for carers of people with mental health problems supported by “The Link” organisation for people of Asian Origin	Head of Adult Strategy	March 2009

Equality Objective – To improve quality of life for vulnerable groups through supported living arrangements and access to training and employment opportunities.		
Key Actions	Who is responsible?	When will it be done?
Ensure a fair access policy is in place for people who are eligible for existing SP services (especially BME groups)	Head of Adult Strategy	March 2009
Undertake needs mapping of BME groups in relation to the need for supported living services (to develop awareness of the needs of vulnerable people from BME groups)	Head of Adult Strategy	March 2009
Identify gaps in service provision to meet the need for culturally sensitive supported housing service provision for people from BME groups	Head of Adult Strategy	March 2009

<p>Work with the contracted Supporting People Providers / Independent Living service providers (Independent Sector) to raise the profile of their diversity responsibilities</p> <p>Review equality data collected on behalf of the CLG by the Supporting People Records Unit for 2008/09 and provide appropriate summary reports on data for Stockton-on-Tees services compared to regional and national figures</p>	<p>Head of Adult Strategy</p> <p>Head of Adult Strategy</p>	<p>March 2009</p> <p>June 2009</p>
<p>Review existing research data re: housing related support services and provide for <a href="mailto:stats@stockton.gov.uk">stats@stockton.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Expand the Supporting People Equality and Diversity subgroup to encompass and include Independent Living service issues</p> <p>Improve the Supporting People QAF self-assessment scores from providers relating to Core objective C1.5 Diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>Ensure analysis of data from the Supporting People Contract Compliance arrangements for BME Section 3 on</p>	<p>Head of Adult Strategy</p> <p>Head of Adult Strategy</p> <p>Head of Adult Strategy</p> <p>Head of Adult Strategy</p>	<p>September 2008</p> <p>December 2008</p> <p>March 2009</p> <p>June 2009</p>

Equality & Diversity

Develop service improvement opportunities with the Hindu Cultural Centre (Middlesbrough) for older Hindu's living in Stockton-on-Tees

Head of Adult Strategy

March 2009



## Stronger Communities

Equality objective - Promote community cohesion		
<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>When will it be done?</b>
<p>Promote participation in democratic processes by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Empowering and enabling people from BME communities to actively get involved in partnership groups (e.g. Stockton's BME Network).</li> </ul> <p>Continue to develop new cultural activities to promote community cohesion</p> <p>Develop more activities to promote interfaith relations</p>	<p>All Heads of Service</p> <p>Parkfield / Mill Lane neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Manager</p> <p>Parkfield / Mill Lane neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Manager</p>	<p>Ongoing up to March 2010</p> <p>March 2009</p> <p>March 2009</p>

Equality Objective - To effectively consult and involve all sections of the community		
Key Actions	Who is responsible?	When will it be done?
Provide consultation materials and methodology in a range of accessible formats and languages	Head of Policy and Performance	Ongoing
Continue to train council and partner employees in effective consultation techniques that take account of the needs of BME communities.	Head of Policy and Performance	Ongoing
Undertake a feasibility study for a BME Employee & partners forum.	Head of Human Resources and Head of Policy and Performance	August 2008

Equality Objective - To provide strong leadership which enables the principles of equality to be embedded across the Council		
Key Actions	Who is responsible?	When will it be done?
Roll out approach to Equality Impact Assessments.	Head of Policy and Performance	Ongoing

Equality Objective - To improve the accessibility of our services to all residents and employees		
Key Actions	Who is responsible?	When will it be done?
Review and develop Internet and Intranet facilities to maximise accessibility through a variety of different sources.	Head of Information and Communications Technology	Ongoing
Improve promotion of services to BME communities, including highlighting key points of contact	Head of Administration and Taxation	Ongoing to March 2011
Ensure customer calls queries etc are responded to within agreed timescales	Head of Administration and Taxation	Ongoing

## Older Adults

Equality objective - To promote and enable independent living		
Key Actions	Who is responsible?	When will it be done?
<p>Maximise the use of libraries and promote their services for BME communities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Providing promotional facilities and functions e.g. meetings rooms, display spaces,</li> <li>▪ Internet access</li> <li>▪ Book Bus service to residential homes &amp; day centres</li> <li>▪ housebound service and hospital library service</li> </ul> <p>Encouraging BME participation in the Library Link</p>	Head of Arts and Culture	<p>Ongoing to March 2009</p> <p>Ongoing to March 2009</p> <p>Ongoing to 2010</p>

## Arts and Culture

Equality objective – to ensure that all residents have equal opportunity to participate in cultural and leisure activities		
Key Actions	Who is responsible?	When will it be done?
<p>Improve accessibility of adult education provision for BME communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide separate race / gender specific provision for learners where appropriate</li> <li>• Review and revise ICT courses and learner support facilities</li> <li>• Ensure that members of BME communities are not disadvantaged when registering or participating in adult learning activities</li> <li>• Improve the accessibility of information about adult learning opportunities e.g. providing materials in different languages and formats</li> <li>• Set up a system whereby officers and Tutors can access a telephone interpretation service</li> </ul>	Head of Adult Strategy	Ongoing until 2010
Improve promotion of all adult education courses to BME residents	Head of Adult Strategy	March 2009

<p>Provide affordable English language classes where possible and appropriate</p>	<p>Head of Adult Strategy</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Improve family learning offer for BME residents</p>	<p>Head of Adult Strategy</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>To support the growth, participation in and creative development of SIRF Community Carnival.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broaden the range of individuals and groups involved, specifically with regard to reflecting the cultural diversity within the communities of Stockton</li> </ul>	<p>Head of Arts and Culture</p>	<p>Carnival Arts Strategy and action plan implemented 2007 – 2009.</p>
<p>Promote the accessibility of the borough's events, parks and open spaces to BME communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and promote good relations between different racial groups using faith resource packages, cultural, educational and literary events</li> <li>• Provide events information in a variety of formats / languages and promote the use of the internet.</li> <li>• Review parks and countryside pathways network and maintenance programme to maximise access to leisure facilities.</li> </ul>	<p>Head of Arts and Culture</p> <p>Head of Arts and Culture</p> <p>Head of Arts and Culture / Head of Performance and Business Services</p> <p>Head of Direct Services</p>	<p>Ongoing until March 2009</p>

<p>Increase access and participation levels in leisure activities amongst under-represented groups, including young and old, disabled, girls and women and those people from BME Communities</p>	<p>Head of Regeneration &amp; Head of Arts and Culture</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and access barriers for under represented groups of people with low participation levels in sports and leisure</li> </ul>	<p>Head of Regeneration &amp; Head of Arts and Culture</p>	<p>March 2009</p>
<p>Improve privacy and accessibility of changing and showering facilities at all leisure venues</p>		<p>March 2011</p>
<p>Develop swimming facilities for BME women, including</p>	<p>Head of Performance and Business Services (Tees Active)</p>	<p>March 2009</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>offering women only sessions</li> <li>increasing visibility of female lifeguards</li> </ul>	<p>Head of Performance and Business Services (Tees Active)</p>	<p>March 2011</p>
<p>Implement the Equality Standard, Framework for Sport</p>	<p>Head of Performance and Business Services (Tees Active)</p>	<p>Ongoing to March 2011</p>
<p>Consult with BME and other communities on the feasibility of representing the borough's diverse communities and faiths within the Council's celebratory lighting displays</p>		





## Organisational Effectiveness

Equality Objective - To ensure our employment policies and practice are fair and equitable		
Key Actions	Who is responsible?	When will it be done?
Where reading and writing in English are not essential requirements of the job, ensure that recruitment materials can be accessed in different languages / formats to meet the needs of applicants.	Head of Human Resources	September 2008
Review equality related Human Resources Policies (format, application and effectiveness).	Head of Human Resources	Ongoing
Develop a more strategic approach to recruiting BME residents, including, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training programmes</li> <li>• Volunteer schemes</li> <li>• Support with applications</li> <li>• Improved marketing</li> <li>• Succession planning</li> </ul>	Head of Human Resources	March 2009
Promote the on-line application process to BME residents	Head of Human Resources	March 2009
Review applicants for posts as well as internal recruitment		

procedures to ensure they are equally promoted and accessed by all in addition to promoting and reviewing training.	Head of Human Resources	March 2009
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