

RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL
EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

2012 - 2016

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Runnymede Borough Council recognises the importance of ensuring equality of opportunity and rights amongst all residents within its Borough, and within wider society.
- 1.2 The Council is conscious that individuals and groups can experience a range of barriers which may prevent them from enjoying the same quality of life as others. The Council's vision is to bridge any gaps there may be between its communities and to enhance the quality of life of its residents by ensuring that its services are accessible by all, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion, belief, sexual orientation or any other characteristic that is protected under law.

2 EQUALITY ACT 2010

- 2.1 The Equality Act 2010 (the 2010 Act) identifies 9 different 'protected characteristics' being:
- (i) age;
 - (ii) disability;
 - (iii) gender reassignment;
 - (iv) marriage and civil partnership;
 - (v) pregnancy and maternity;
 - (vi) race;
 - (vii) religion or belief;
 - (viii) sex; and
 - (ix) sexual orientation.
- 2.2 The 2010 Act prohibits the direct or indirect discrimination of any person or group who has or shares a particular protected characteristic, where such direct or indirect discrimination occurs because of that particular protected characteristic.
- 2.3 Section 149 of the 2010 Act sets down a general duty for all public authorities. This duty requires that the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have 'due regard' to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people that do not share it; and
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- 2.4 As well as the general duty described above, the Council also has two further specific legal duties (the respective aims of which are to help the Council comply with the general duty). The two specific duties are :
- (i) Publication of information which demonstrates the number / percentage of the Council's employees and other persons who are affected by its functions (the residents of the Borough) who share a protected characteristic, which must then be reviewed and republished annually. This information can be viewed via this link to the Council's relevant webpage:

<http://www.runnymede.gov.uk/portal/site/runnymede/menuitem.053f3359a8f21168c4a81c10af8ca028/>

- (ii) Publication of one or more 'equality objectives', which must then be reviewed and republished no later than every four years. The Council's equality objectives for the period 2012 – 2016 are set out below.

3 THE OBJECTIVES

3.1 The Council has identified three key Equality Objectives for the period 2012 – 2016. These are:

Objective 1

The Council will take all necessary and reasonable steps to ensure that all of its services, facilities and publications are accessible by all.

This will help towards achieving the Council's vision for:

- Integration in all sectors of the community
- An inclusive and thriving Borough
- The elimination of inequality and discrimination

Objective 2

The Council will endeavor to employ a diverse workforce which reflects the community that it services and to treat all its staff equally and fairly.*

This will help towards achieving the Council's vision for:

- A diverse and vibrant workforce
- Equality of employment opportunity
- Ensuring the Council is sensitive to the differing and various need of the Borough

*In certain circumstances, the doctrine of fairness and / or the Act may actually require the Council to treat certain staff members *differently* from others.

For example:

- A and B both work for the Council;
- A has a disability whilst B is not a disabled person;
- The Council makes such adjustments to A's workspace as it considers appropriate to accommodate his particular working needs in view of his disability, which includes providing him with a larger monitor screen than B.

Objective 3

The Council will endeavor to improve its collection and collation of data relating to equality issues within the Borough.

This will help towards achieving the Council's vision for:

- Ensuring that it remains informed about the make up of its Borough
- Ensuring that it is remains aware of the various concerns and issues relating to equality matters amongst its residents
- Delivering a more efficient and focused service

Steps to be taken by the Council to meet the Objectives and how this will be measured

3.2 Clearly, the Council will need to implement and undertake (or where appropriate continue to undertake) a number of procedures and / or steps, to ensure that its meets is three Equality Objectives, and will need to identify processes against which it can measure whether it has met the relevant objective. These procedures, steps and processes are set out in the table below.

	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3
Description	All services, facilities and publications are accessible by all.	Employ a diverse workforce which reflects the community that it services and treat all staff equally and fairly.	Improve its collection and collation of data relating to equality issues within the Borough.
Steps	<p>Steps taken to meet this objective will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that all Council buildings / facilities have been reasonably adjusted for those with accessibility issues including disabled or elderly residents; • Accounting for language barriers by, as far as reasonably possible, providing alternative language options / facilities in respect of its services and publications; • Providing publications in Braille and ensuring that as far as reasonably possible, its buildings, services and facilities are equipped to assist the deaf / hard of hearing. • Assisting those with mobility issues and that are therefore unable to visit the Council offices / facilities in person by 	<p>Steps taken to meet this objective will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to comply with all relevant equality and employment legislation; • Ensure that the Council's employment interview processes and requirements in respect of specific posts, are the same for all, so as to allow for equality of opportunity, except where reasonable adjustments are justified for reasons such as disability or language issues; • Ensure that the Council continues to provide a sensitive and enjoyable place to work, and where appropriate, makes reasonable adjustments to cater for the differing needs of its staff; • Treat all staff equally and fairly, irrespective of sex, sexual orientation, race, religion, disability or any other protected characteristic that they may 	<p>Steps taken to meet this objective will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved cross departmental information sharing of data that relates to equality issues / protected characteristics, subject to any legal limitations or restrictions that may apply to such data sharing; • Increased number of information collecting / public consultation exercises; • Improved internal procedures for information gathering, recording and storage.

	providing quality and efficient alternative options for those services such as by phone or internet; and where possible and reasonably necessary, provide home visits.	possess or share.	
Measuring	The extent to which the Council has met this objective will be measured through the regular review of its services and through any complaints received.	The extent to which the Council has met this objective will be measured through the regular review of its work force and statistics produced from these reviews, as well as from any feedback received from existing or former staff, or candidates for employment positions within the Council.	The extent to which the Council has met this objective will be measured through the regular review of its information gathering procedures and through an assessment of the quality of its data when it comes to reviewing and updating its Equality Objectives in 2016.