



Kent County Council

Equality Strategy

2010 – 2013

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Executive Summary

As a major employer, purchaser, and provider of services KCC is committed to:

- promoting equality and social cohesion in Kent
- valuing diversity and combating unfair treatment and to creating a place noted for its safety
- Championing openness and community spirit.
- advancing equality of opportunity;
- fostering good community relations;
- eliminating unlawful discrimination in service delivery, procurement and employment

We members and officers of KCC firmly believe that everyone who lives or works in the County should be able to fulfil their potential and deliver solutions for themselves, regardless of social circumstance or background, gender, gender identity, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, or religion or belief.

Equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination is a fundamental right, which we will promote by exercising leadership and commitment.

We believe we will achieve this through our roles as:

- Community leader;
- Service provider;
- Commissioner of goods and services;
- Employer;

The principles of understanding and respect for others are central to what we believe.

Our objectives for effective partnership with the community are:

- advancing equality of opportunity;
- promoting positive attitudes towards different groups and good relations between them,
- celebrating and respecting the variety of lifestyles, cultures and religions in Kent;
- encouraging access to, and participation in community and civic life;

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- working with partner organisations to improve the quality of life for everyone in Kent, and to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment;
- listening and responding to the views of our communities through public consultation and participation
- supporting people who experience unnecessary disadvantage on account of their social circumstances

Our objectives for responsive and accessible services are:

- To provide services which are accessible to all people within the community, based on their needs and choices
- To provide clear, meaningful information about council services in ways that are accessible to all and meet diverse needs
- To work with partners in consulting and communicating with all sections of the community including in formats suitable for those with sensory impairments on service needs and provision
- To monitor take-up and evaluate services including using trends from the Complaints Procedure, to ensure they do not discriminate or exclude.
- We aim to measure our achievement in providing responsive and accessible services by reaching and maintaining 'Excellent' status, the highest level of the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG).

Our objectives for equal and appropriate treatment in employment are:

- To aim to employ a workforce that reflects the diverse community of Kent
- To provide fair access to learning and development opportunities, encourage and support staff in fulfilling their potential
- To provide a safe and accessible working environment that values and respects the identity and culture of each individual and that is free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- To involve and communicate effectively with members of staff and staff groups
- To provide fair and transparent pay and reward systems.

Our objectives for fair and inclusive procurement are:

- To ensure good procurement practice is shared and adopted across KCC.
- To provide training for all staff involved in procurement to ensure understanding of, and compliance with corporate Procurement and Equality Strategies.
- To devise and implement methods of assessing potential new contractors' performance on equality and diversity in their previous operations and activities.

- To take clear and consistent measures in all service units to ensure non-compliance with the Council's policy will lead to cessation of trading or contract termination

We will achieve these objectives by:

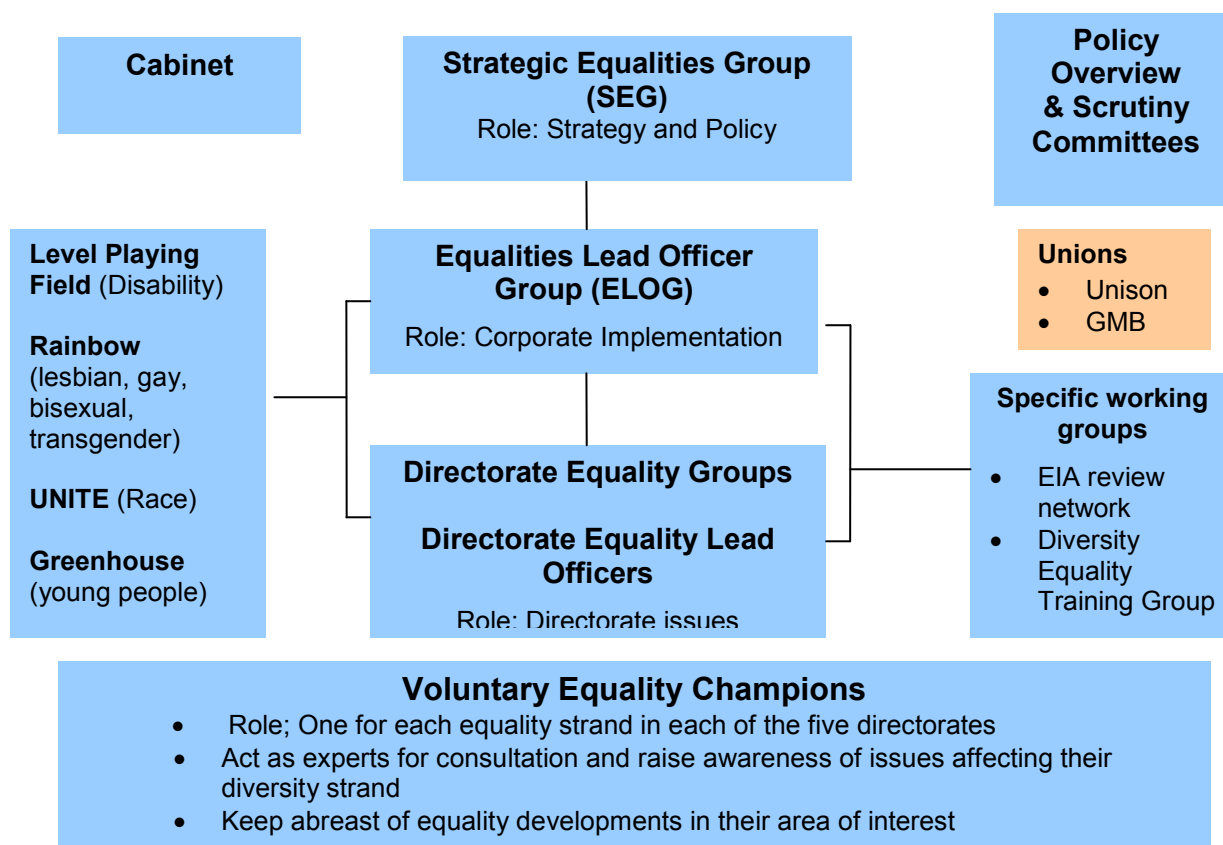
- Building diversity considerations into our business and people-management processes, including business, resource planning and policy development, consulting with all sectors of the community, ensuring attention is given to groups whose views may have been under-represented in the past.
- Not tolerating inappropriate or offensive language or behaviour towards staff or service users.
- Providing flexible services and employment practices that respond to the needs of all sections of the community.
- Providing training and development opportunities. Staff are expected to be equipped with the appropriate awareness, knowledge and skills to respond positively to the range of diversity needs as identified in this policy.
- Ensuring our services, employment opportunities, and communication are physically, practically and culturally accessible.
- Identifying and promoting good practice, and challenging practices that may lead to discrimination.
- Monitoring the impact of our policies and taking appropriate action to address any discriminatory practice.
- Actively supporting diversity staff groups.
- Implementing and monitoring recruitment and retention processes which are non-discriminatory and which increase accessibility of employment opportunities from all groups in the community.
- Enforcing our staff disciplinary procedure when considered necessary.

Responsibilities and Structure of Equality in KCC

- The Cabinet has collective Member responsibility to provide a constructive framework to ensure that this policy is successfully applied across all KCC services and within the organisation as an employer. A Cabinet Member holds the Portfolio for Equality and Diversity.
- The Corporate Management Team (CMT) is responsible for implementing the policy within their directorates and has a corporate responsibility for council-wide activity.
- The Strategic Equalities Group (SEG) consists of cross-party Members and senior lead officers from every directorate. It promotes and leads our diversity and equality values and objectives.
- The Equalities Lead Officer Group (ELOG) consists of directorate lead officers, staff group representatives and diversity specialists. It agrees actions to meet our equality objectives and monitors service and employment equality action plans.

- Our Directorate Equality and Diversity groups each produce annual action plans, which set out how they will meet KCC’s objectives.
- Our equality champions promote KCC’s equality values and objectives throughout the council and with external agencies and partners.
- Managers have specific responsibilities for communicating the importance of, and implementing, our Equality and Diversity policy. They are expected, as part of their work to take positive measures to address inequality and to promote equality of opportunity for all, and to take action to ensure that staff reach their full potential. Managers will treat all staff fairly, with respect and dignity, and investigate all incidents of discrimination or harassment.
- While managers have specific accountabilities, equality is also the responsibility of each and every employee. All members of staff are personally responsible for observing and conforming to our equality policy.
- All those providing goods and services on behalf of the Council are expected to share our commitment. The Council will monitor its activity to make sure this happens and take decisive action against those found to be in breach of our equality and diversity policy.
- We have one part time and five full time roles whose work is dedicated to furthering KCC’s equality and diversity agenda.

The Equality and Diversity Structure in KCC



1. Introduction

This Equality Strategy sets out how KCC promotes equality and tackles unfair discrimination in Kent. It incorporates our single equality scheme, which describes our plans in relation to disability, gender, gender identity, race, age, sexual orientation and religion and belief.

We have produced our strategy in response to the Equality Act 2010 around the priority areas identified in the EFLG. It underpins other key plans and strategies, including those listed under section 9 of this report.

What we've achieved so far

KCC has already achieved Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government. Our goal is to achieve the highest rating within the new national framework, known as the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG).

To achieve Level 3 we sought and acted upon the views of those who live, work for and visit Kent. We have learnt from reviews of services and examined information from inspections on our key performance measurements so that we know what we are doing well and where we need to improve. During this process, we have engaged and consulted with representative groups from within the county.

Where we're aiming next

The EFLG is the new benchmark for good practice for Local Authorities and has been adopted as the overarching approach by KCC. It takes into account the changing role of local authorities and is related to other performance frameworks such as the Customer Service Excellence standards. It focuses on being simplified, proportional and relevant and also provides a common performance framework for compliance with our legal duties.

Our target is to become an 'Excellent' authority under this new framework. To achieve an EFLG rating of Excellent by 2011 Kent County Council is engaged in consolidating and building on its achievements.

KCC has set itself a time –frame for achieving the level of Excellent which would be guided by a self assessment programme.

An 'excellent' authority

What will characterise KCC as an 'excellent' authority?

- We provide outstanding customer services and our staff show that they are knowledgeable, well-trained and equipped to understand and cater for the particular needs of individual customers from all backgrounds.

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- Our Officers and elected Members have a reputation for championing equality and ensuring that the issues relevant to our communities are embedded in strategic plans and in the delivery of services.
- We work with all strategic partners and the third sector organisations/groups to achieve defined equality outcomes;
- We have good evidence of the diversity profile of our communities based on national and local data that is regularly reviewed,
- We are able to measure progress on equality outcomes and to break down data on relevant performance indicators. In this way we will be able to demonstrate real outcomes that have improved equality in services and employment. We can identify the changing nature of our communities and their expectations, then prioritise our activities and explain our decisions.
- We have in place improving satisfaction and perception indicators from all sections of the community.
- We use equality impact assessments to review all major new changes in policy, while monitoring all relevant data on service access against each equality strand.
- We ensure that community engagement activities are fully representative of customers and residents from all backgrounds, and there are forums for stakeholder groups to share experiences and evaluate progress.
- We can demonstrate that all parts of the authority can show tangible progress towards achieving outcomes which address persistent inequalities. Members, Officers, key stakeholders, and community groups understand equality issues and their relevance for our services.
- We continue to implement action for equal pay outcomes and demonstrate progress on under-representation, flexible working, access to training and development; we will also promote an inclusive culture based on respect.
- We review our equality strategy and public duty equality schemes every three years and will seek to continue to innovate and meet challenges.
- Our achievements make us a model of good practice for other local authorities and agencies and we work with others to share best practice.

How we developed the Strategy

In 2006 we undertook a range of important steps to develop the Strategy. These included:

- **Understanding the views of diverse groups in Kent** - overall, the views of over 1000 individuals and community groups helped to shape the priorities and actions in the Strategy.
- **Collecting and analysing a range of key data and evidence on local trends** - this included Census information, residents' satisfaction surveys, performance management indicators and recent national research.
- **The involvement of staff** - through briefing sessions, themed groups and an online questionnaire.

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- **Engagement with the voluntary and community sector** - the views of voluntary and community groups will continue to play a key role in the development of the Strategy.

A summary of who was involved in developing the Strategy is included at Appendix 3.

Review 2009-2010

In 2009-2010 when this strategy was being reviewed it was circulated to a number of community groups and their representatives for comment, including representatives of different abilities, religions and beliefs, gender, race, and sexual orientation. In addition an Officer went out to engage with members of the community in the different districts and consult them about the document. It also has been circulated widely to staff groups and equality representatives within the council along with our partners.

2. Our Statutory Schemes

The Equality Act will come into force in October 2010. When making strategic decisions about how to exercise their functions, Public Authorities including central government departments, local authorities and NHS bodies, will then be required to have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way which is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio economic disadvantage.

The whole idea behind the measure is to increase opportunities for the disadvantaged within society and to narrow the gap between the rich and poor. In addition, under the Equality Act, the equality duties have been merged to form a single Public Sector Equality Duty. The general duty will require Public Authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

(A) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct which is prohibited by or under the Act;

(B) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

(C) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The new duty will cover all discriminatory practices relating to the seven diversity strands, including gender reassignment. Age is to be covered but only in respect of people over eighteens.

The Act retains the existing structure which involves a general duty on all public authorities to have due regard to the need to promote equality. To do this there are specific obligations to carry out monitoring and impact assessments and to produce written equality schemes and equality impact assessments (which we call Equality impact assessments). The only protected characteristics not covered under the public sector equality duty are marriage and civil partnership.

The new statutory duty covers race, disability, and gender, as before but also includes age, sexual orientation, gender identity and religion or belief. It replaces the three existing, separate duties with a single more effective framework.

Appendix 2 to this strategy is the new Statutory Scheme in full and Appendix 3 is the action plan which accompanies it.

This will mean that we can address multiple issues more effectively, under one umbrella. The Act will strengthen the law by banning age discrimination in the provision of goods, facilities and services and it will tackle unjustifiable age discrimination where this has negative consequences.

It will also ensure that public bodies report on equalities issues such as gender pay and ethnic minority and disability employment in their organization as KCC already does. It will also extend the scope for positive action and the enforcement of the Act and will allow tribunals to make wider recommendations in discrimination cases.

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Our current structures are focused towards a single scheme that covers all elements of inequality. This will ensure that Kent County Council is free from discrimination in all its forms and that equality is made real for everyone living, working in, and visiting Kent.

Publicity

The Act also includes powers for ministers to require public bodies to report on equality issues, but does not contain details of these duties. However, it is envisaged that from 2011, public bodies with over 150 employees will be required to publish annual details of their:

- Gender pay gap
- Ethnic minority employment rates
- Disability employment rates

We will want to go further than this and publish a wider range of the available information for example in relation to age and sexual orientation as a way to demonstrate what progress we are making towards a workforce reflective of the people of Kent.

Procurement and contract Issues

A broad legal framework within the Equality Act 2010, sets out the Council's responsibilities for ensuring that public money is spent on fair practices that support equality of opportunity and enable full access to services for everyone in the county. The legislation covers the main equality strands in relation to age, disability, gender (including equal pay), race, religion or belief, gender identity, marriage, civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity and sexual orientation.

We have a duty to ensure that all existing and new contracts, policies procedures and services, undergo an equality impact assessment. Equality impact assessments are a key element of risk management planning; they will highlight any potential issues in advance and provide robust evidence of good practice.

Where a contractor is carrying out a public function on our behalf, we will ensure that their work complies with all equalities legislation.

This means that we will continue to build appropriate equality considerations into the procurement process, to ensure that all procured functions meet statutory requirements, regardless of who is carrying them out. Equality considerations are currently built into the corporate procurement guidance in a document called 'Spending the Council's Money'.

As the Equality Framework for Local Government states: we need to be able to demonstrate that procured/commissioned services are delivering our equality related objectives.

If a proposed contract is highly relevant to equality, we will make it a core requirement in the contract.

3. Mapping – knowing our communities

Kent's unique challenges

Kent faces unique challenges because of its proximity to mainland Europe and because of major ports situated in the county. Community mapping is a way in which we can map trends and provide services that people within Kent need.

Diverse communities

'Diversity mapping' is a term used for collecting information about communities and individuals which we can use to help us develop the kinds of services that will be valued by those who use them. Information collected includes not only people's race, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age but also other relevant demographics such as socio-economic, health and education status, transport and location. To be of value the data we collect needs to be translated into action.

Our current diversity mapping information (for example as published in *The People of Kent and the Older people of Kent*) is drawn from traditional sources such as the UK Census but also directly from Kent communities through individual and collective consultation and through partnership with other agencies such as the Health Service. These publications and the data, on which they are based, give an accurate and detailed picture at a very local level in relation to the age, gender and socio-economic status of people in Kent.

Kent's geographical position means that it has a constantly changing population of minority ethnic communities entering the country from its ports, many of whom may settle in Kent. Many of our BME residents continue to choose to live in two distinct areas, Gravesham and Dartford. However, we also have a growing population of workers and residents from other countries and ethnic backgrounds developing communities in the County. We are committed to meeting the needs of all of these in the development of public services. The corporate tool now in place for all services and partners to use in respect of mapping people's national and racial backgrounds as well as religion and belief is MOSAIC Origins.

Similarly, the data from the Department for Work and Pensions on the take-up of Disability Living Allowance and other relevant benefits provides the cornerstone of our knowledge of disabled adults in Kent. This is complemented by the more detailed needs analysis undertaken within our Adult Social Services Directorate in partnership with the NHS.

For disabled children and young people detailed needs analysis is undertaken by the Kent Children's Trust.

More work is required during 2010/11 to provide the best equivalent data in relation to sexual orientation. This is not readily available via nationally collected statistics and we will work with our staff, partners and both local and national voluntary organisations to build an accurate picture of Kent.

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All our existing diversity mapping tools can be accessed via www.kent.gov.uk

Disadvantaged groups

The Supporting Independence Programme (SIP) works with partners across the public and voluntary sectors to help the most disadvantaged groups in Kent, including ex-offenders and seasonal workers. SIP also works with young people who have low educational attainment, people with health problems and disabled people to enable them to lead full and independent lives. The strategy's aim is to make everyone feel they can play a full part in the life of the county.

The role of this programme and related initiatives becomes more significant in relation to the over-riding socio-economic objective of the Equality Act 2010.

Addressing potential issues

Local issues and trends change all the time, and are influenced by a whole range of factors, many of which are outside the Council's control. We continue to work to map trends effectively so that we can target activities appropriately. This will increasingly be linked to the wider customer profiling work based on the use of the MOSAIC information system. Currently, activities are focused on the following key areas:

Developing and sustaining local relationships

- Through our Supporting Independence Programme, tackling the root causes of inequality and making a real difference to the lives of people living in Kent's most disadvantaged communities
- Through the Kent Gateways programme providing integrated access to the widest possible range of public services in person, by phone and via the internet. Understanding customer needs and supporting their choices are fundamental to the Gateway programme and show the mainstreaming of diversity principles.
- Partnership working and intelligence sharing (for example Kent Crime View and the Public Health Observatory)
- Using mapping exercise, consultation and involvement to achieve shared outcomes for communities for example to support Local Regeneration Partnerships.

4. Leadership, Partnership & Commitment– Working together

The new performance framework (EFLG) is designed to give local authorities and their partner's greater freedom to determine local priorities and shape the future of an area.

Under the Equality Act 2010 local authorities have duties relating to gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and religion and belief. The experience of customers and the need to reduce inequalities and improve accessibility is at the centre of the new assessment framework.

We know that strategic leadership is key to improving equality outcomes and that it needs to be:

- Expressed in the local vision of place and strategic plan.
- Central to the delivery of priorities that impact on inequality.

This is reflected, for example in the Kent Partnership framework *'Living Later Life to the Full'*.

It is increasingly important for authorities to work in partnership with other public service providers and the voluntary sector to identify inequality and work to achieve equality outcomes

Kent County Council works with a wide variety of partners and stakeholders such as Kent Police, health authorities and local businesses, in order to improve quality of life for local people. Partnerships vary enormously in size and remit, but one of the most important is the countywide Kent Partnership, which is responsible for overseeing Kent's community strategy, the *Vision for Kent*. The Partnership is made up of representatives from the private, public, voluntary and community sectors, including race equality councils. It has a key role in encouraging community leadership, supporting new initiatives and helping to ensure the effective delivery of services. Its Working Groups lead on Public Health, the Kent economy, outcomes for children and young people and on supporting safer and stronger communities.

The Partnership is involved with a number of important pieces of work to promote greater equality in the county, such as the Kent Compact. The Compact aims to create a new approach to partnership between the County Council and the voluntary and community sector. In addition to establishing a robust framework of engagement, the Compact ensures via monitoring and analysis that local organisations have fair and equal access to Kent County Council funding streams. It also ensures that where possible organisations are supported to acquire funding to build capacity and prepare and deliver projects. In addition, the Compact requires all partnership bids to Kent County Council funding streams to demonstrate, where appropriate, that meaningful consultation with organisations working with diverse groups has occurred.

In addition to this, Kent Equalities Network brings together major public service organisations to promote good practice on equalities and hosts events to engage

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local communities in dialogue with public services collectively. An example of this was the 2009 Disability Hate Crime conference and the recommendations flowing from it.

Within KCC we will ensure that business and service planning facilitates the setting of outcome-focused equality objectives and targets. We will need to -

- Review our engagement and participation strategies and ensure that we actively engage with the full range of people in communities.
- Extend and improve engagement with the full range of partnerships and external stakeholder groups to include all equality strands.
- Include service users in determining target outcomes across all equality strands.
- Ensure our current equality planning structures are accessible and support full engagement of partners as 'critical friends', as part of our consultation and involvement strategy.
- Regularly review the corporate equality policy statement and the equality planning framework to ensure their effectiveness.
- Ensure that work is seen to be done on equality plans in all service areas and that this is regularly and consistently reported on and monitored.
- Develop training programmes about equality and diversity which are appropriate and relevant for senior managers and elected Members across all equality strands.
- Secure the engagement of the Strategic Equality Group, on an annual basis, in the review of Corporate and Directorate level action plans.

5. Community Engagement – Listening to our Community

KCC like most local authorities recognises the importance of community engagement and participation. We have moved far beyond simple consultation exercises, important as they can be, to find ways of actively involving communities. However we recognise that, communities of place are not always synonymous with communities of interest, and it is important to us have structures in place that involve both in corporate decision making, service planning and workforce planning.

Key areas for action:

- Examine our consultation and involvement processes to ensure consultation is meaningful and timely.
- Develop clear links to establish a 'golden thread' between the Vision for Kent and the equality strategy.
- Maximise and effectively utilise the resources offered by the internal self-organised groups such as the staff groups and the Impact Assessment review network in scrutiny of employment policy and service design and delivery.
- Review the consultation and engagement strategy to ensure that we are engaging with the widest possible range of community groups.
- Highlight targets that will improve service outcomes for users as opposed to specifying when internal procedures will be carried out.

The views and involvement of local people

KCC must ensure effective communication is an essential part of our day-to-day business. It is particularly important to get communication right when engaging with diverse communities, because inaccessible or inadequate information is a major factor in exclusion. It prevents people from making informed choices about the important matters in their lives.

Effective communication is also crucial to community cohesion, because it enables strong relationships to be maintained with groups working within the community. This enables issues to be addressed as they arise, and demonstrates that the Council understands and values the contribution of different communities.

We have an excellent history of consulting local residents about a wide variety of issues, and provide numerous opportunities for local people to get involved with service planning and development. This includes a Citizens' Panel, and numerous working groups supported by different Directorates, such as discussion forums with disabled people, and a Traveller liaison group. In addition, there is a network of 12 Local Boards across Kent, attended by Councillors and covering each district

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council area. Local Boards provide a regular forum for community debate and consultation on local issues and services.

During 2010 KCC will be adopting a Comprehensive Engagement Strategy, moving beyond its current commitment to consultation to actively involve customers and residents on issues and decisions that they can play a role in shaping. This strategy will also commit KCC to improving our links with community organisations representing residents from different diversity backgrounds. These links have been good in some services and with some communities, but not supported consistently across the organisation – for example in working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender groups.

Up-to-date information about the policies and services we are consulting on is always available on www.kent.gov.uk.

Stretching our performance through partnerships

Organisations represented on the Kent Partnership have signed up to a Local Area Agreement – Kent Agreement 2 (KA2) – which includes targets to improve sexual health and reduce teenage pregnancy in the County.

Reducing teenage pregnancy is a key factor in preventing health inequalities, child poverty and social exclusion. Girls from the poorest backgrounds are ten times more likely to become teenage mothers than girls from professional backgrounds. Infant mortality rates for babies born to mothers under the age of 18 are twice the average. Babies born to mothers under 18 are at high risk of growing up in poverty and experiencing poor health and social outcomes.

KA2 is a formal agreement between the KCC, local partners and central Government, setting out challenging outcomes and targets over a three-year period. What is new about this way of working is that it moves away from a 'one size fits all' national approach to making improvements, to one where priorities and targets are decided locally. This allows us to target resources wherever they are needed most.

How we communicate with the public

We employ a range of communication methods designed to address a wide variety of access issues. These are summarised below.

Each of our publications and the web pages on which they can be found give details of how to request information in alternative formats or languages. This includes formats such as audiotape, CD, BSL, Braille and large print, and as computer files in accessible electronic formats such as mp3. Information can also be made available in easy-to-read formats for people with learning difficulties or poor literacy skills.

We have a Standard on Interpreting and Translation (which also applies to British Sign Language and other alternate formats), which in essence means that a person's language will not be a barrier to receiving a service. We also have a Service Level Agreement with Top Temps Interpreting to ensure that appropriate linguistic support is provided where necessary.

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We are currently engaged in a range of initiatives to enhance how we communicate as a Council:

- A new website content management system has been established, to help make our websites and intranet more accessible and usable for disabled people. We are also investigating effective ways of making our web-based information more accessible in languages other than English.
- Guidelines have been produced for staff to enable them to understand how to communicate well with our service users and colleagues. These show how to respond to requests for information in formats other than standard print and languages besides English.
- Textphone services are available to enable d/Deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing and speech-impaired people to communicate easily with us.
- Kent Sensory Services has worked to produce a contract with the Royal Association for Deaf People for KCC and partners to access consistent and excellent interpreting services (such as speech to text reporting or British Sign Language) for d/Deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing people. This includes the innovative 'SignVideo' project within Gateways.
- We regularly communicate with staff on key employment issues in a variety of ways, such as KNet (the staff intranet), focus groups and road shows.

Key areas for action:

- Ensure the public website has clear links to equality and diversity from other areas besides “Jobs and Careers”, including “Community and Living” and “Council and Democracy”
- Quality assure and continuously update the impact assessments on the external website and ensure that the data is kept up to date
- Review website and hard copy publications to ensure that they provide consistent opportunities for external stakeholder engagement.
- Publish a wider range of equality action plans in a variety of methods/formats which include/engage citizens, so that we communicate effectively, both with people who use the internet and with those who do not have access to it.
- Review the nature and extent of groups and organisations with which we engage, to ensure they are representative and inclusive, looking at good practice from other councils, including improved engagement with d/Deaf, deafblind and blind and partially sighted people in Kent
- Demonstrate through monitoring and effective evaluation how well our language and support mechanisms are meeting the needs of communities in Kent.

6. Customer Service – Delivering Excellence

Responsive services and customer service excellence

Service provision remains the central function of Kent County Council. This strategy will support the work we are doing to personalise services and improve service access to meet the needs of people from different backgrounds.

So that we can achieve this aim we need to:-

- Acquire greater cultural understanding on the part of KCC as a service provider and commissioner, grounded in the diversity mapping and customer profiling referred to earlier in this strategy.
- Make appropriate use of equality impact assessments (EIA) to ensure that KCC understands the impact of service provision on different communities.

Procurement

In the field of procurement, there are also a number of key areas for action:

- Develop a robust system to ensure that there is appropriate monitoring to demonstrate compliance with existing corporate guidance on procurement throughout in all our work.
- Ensure good procurement practice is shared and adopted across KCC.
- Revise procurement pre-qualification (PQQ) to correspond more closely to our general equality and diversity objectives, without introducing additional bureaucracy.
- Provide training for all staff involved in procurement to ensure understanding of, and compliance with corporate procurement and equality strategies.
- Devise methods of assessing potential new contractors' performance in their previous operations/activities.
- Adopt a clear and consistent approach to deal with instances in which non-compliance with the Council's policy will lead to cessation of trading or contract termination.

What are Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)?

Equality impact assessments make good business sense.

Understanding the needs of service users is an important part of service delivery, because providing services which are inappropriately designed is inefficient. By

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targeting resources where they will be most effective we can maximise our impact and deliver more competitive, value for money services which benefit everyone.

Equality impact assessments are a way of rigorously checking all council policies and services, to ensure that they are easily accessible. They provide a clear system of quality assurance, and help us to focus on meeting the needs of service users in relation to age, disability, gender, gender identity, religion and belief, race and sexual orientation. Accountability for ensuring that EIAs are completed lies with the Unit or service lead officer or manager.

We have developed our own, evidenced-based system of impact assessments, which has been approved by Diversity in Action in Local Government (DIALOG), now Local Government Improvement and Development (LGID).

The key elements of the EIA process are:

- Build effective external scrutiny or challenge into the equality impact assessment process, enhancing the role of the Policy Overview Committee.
- Take a new approach to the Equality impact assessment programme, conducting assessments at service level, to ensure a coherent and joined-up approach.
- Make full public consultation an integral part of a full impact assessment.
- Systematically conduct full impact assessments on key HR policies and procedures, incorporating experiences of the different equality strands.
- Strengthen the overall approach to disability issues when conducting equality impact assessments by addressing the 'participation in public life' element of the Public Sector Duty, where this is relevant.
- Incorporate into the relevant business plans clearly identifiable actions arising from impact assessments.

What happens during an Equality Impact Assessment?

There are two stages to equality impact assessments in Kent:

- **Stage 1** is a **screening and prioritisation** exercise using a 'screening tool'. The screening tool asks a range of questions to help assess the practical impact of our policies and services, and find out whether everyone has similar access to them. We will be asking service users to 'reality check' our initial findings, to help make sure that we are being thorough and robust, as and when appropriate.
- **Stage 2** involves **full consultation and engagement** with diverse groups on barriers to services, key issues and priority and objective setting.

The results of Equality Impact Assessments are published here - www.kent.gov.uk/diversity.

7. Modern and Diverse Workforce - A Great Place to Work

As a major employer in Kent and the county's largest employer, KCC is committed to creating a dynamic workforce that is diverse, responsive to its customers and that understands Kent communities. Our goal, to make and keep KCC a great place to work, embodies our belief in equal treatment and our conviction that diversity enhances organisational performance. We strive through progressive employment practice to meet the needs of all our staff, to listen to their views and to respond to their feedback.

Growing a diverse workforce

Addressing under-representation and building for the future are central to our recruitment, reward and workforce strategies. Our workforce needs to reflect our community in its diversity, people working for us need to understand their customers to provide excellent service and, as an organisation, we need to plan well for the future.

We are reviewing how we access and support under-represented groups in both the wider workforce and the leadership group:-

- By investigating and addressing the barriers for each group
- Through advertising, recruitment and selection
- through routes to employment in KCC
- By developing our understanding of the local labour market

We are working in partnership with local and nationally recognised bodies and other organisations to improve our standards, share best practice and to communicate our commitment to equality in employment.

Our workforce monitoring, starting at the point of application to the point a person leaves us, is being further enhanced to inform our priorities, help us formulate targets and the focus of policy development.

KCC is developing its approach to talent management so that future talent pools will include diversity strands which aim to identify and support emerging leaders.

Maintaining fair employment practice

Creating an environment in which people are and feel treated fairly and with respect demands more than minimum legal compliance. Our terms and conditions, policies and procedures are reviewed and impact assessed regularly to ensure they remain inclusive and fair.

We have implemented a single pay structure and have completed the initial phase of our equal pay audit. This work, focused on mainly gender originally, has continued and been extended to include race, age and disability. Our initial audit indicated we are a fair employer in terms of gender and pay and we continue to

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monitor to ensure we maintain this position. We are also developing our reward package so that our wider benefits appeal to all sections of our workforce and encourage applications from a wider cross-section of the Kent population.

Our approach to flexible working is well established and we are working to further extend and encourage its use across the Council.

Harassment and grievances are monitored as are other incidents involving staff and considered along with data from our Dignity and Respect information line, FirstCall, to identify and respond to any trends.

Our Dignity & Respect Policy & Guidance, published in 2007 and re-launched in May 2010, describes how we expect our staff to be treated by those they work for and with and what steps we take to protect them. We are striving to embed the principles of dignity and respect into all aspects of working life through raising awareness, training at all levels and through the way we respond to feedback and complaints.

Developing a diversity aware workforce

We have a comprehensive and expanding selection of training available to staff from generic awareness training such as 'Diversity in Action' to more specific training on recruitment and selection, leadership, customer care and in professional areas which includes reference to discrimination law and equalities best practice. Developing areas include our training in managing and understanding mental health in the workplace, equality impact assessment training and managing change.

To further embed equalities into every aspect of our services and employment we are investigating ways in which we can enhance our selection and induction processes to reinforce our commitment to diversity at the point at which people join us or move into management positions.

Listening to our staff

Our existing diversity staff groups provide an invaluable source of feedback and information on issues concerning disabled, black, minority and ethnic, young, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people. We are exploring the potential for new groups and other ways of better engaging with people who work for us so that our approach to employment takes account of all perspectives and we understand our staff's interests, needs and concerns.

8. Performance and review – How we know we're getting it right

Monitoring performance on the Equality Strategy

The Equality Strategy and progress on the action plan will be reviewed on an annual basis, by the Council's Strategic Equalities Group. In addition, residents and employee forums will play an important role over the course of the year, in assessing our progress and making suggestions for improvements.

This process will be integrated with the monitoring of KCC business plans, not additional to it.

Publicising the strategy

The Strategy will be available online, in all libraries in the county and on request from the Improvement and Engagement Team.

The Strategy will be available in alternative formats including CD and audiotape, Braille, large print and easy read. It will be available on request in alternative languages.

Over the next six months we will use a range of tools to raise awareness about the Strategy and our work more generally to promote equality and tackle discrimination. We are committed to ongoing developmental work on the Strategy with those who live and work for Kent, particularly around our supporting objectives and actions.

Members of the Strategic Equalities Group, the Equalities Lead Officer Group and our Equality Champions have responsibility for raising awareness about the Strategy with employees, service users and partners.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Our Key Strategic Documents

'Towards 2010', produced by Kent County Council, provides the strategic framework for the Equality Strategy. Towards 2010 is the Council's key document, which sets out a vision for the future of the county and the main challenges to be addressed along the way. A number of other important plans, strategies and initiatives will also help to achieve our vision for Kent. These include:

- Our **Equality and Diversity Policy Statement**, which sets out the Council's overall aim to promote equality, value diversity and combat unfair treatment.
- The Community Strategy, the **Vision for Kent**, details how the Council will work with key partners in Kent to improve the economic, environmental and social well-being of the county over the next 20 years.
- **Regeneration Framework** (and related strategies for Skills, Transport, Housing, Living Later Life to full and the Environment)
- The Council's **Comprehensive Engagement Strategy** ensures that diverse groups such as young people, refugees and asylum seekers and Gypsies and Travellers are not forgotten.
- The **Kent Children and Young People's Plan 2008-2011** explains how the Council will work with other key partners in the county to improve the lives of children and young people.
- The **Kent Anti-Bullying Strategy 2006-2010** sets out how the Council and other key agencies will tackle bullying, and make the lives of children and young people safer and happier.
- The **Kent Youth Justice Plan** explains how the statutory youth offending partnership agencies (Social Services, Health, Education, Police and Probation) will work together to prevent offending by children and young people.
- The Council's **Active Lives 2007-2016** document is a 10 year vision for Adult Social Services, produced with older people and people with disabilities.
- The **Kent Local Area Agreement** was agreed by partners to, amongst other things, improve sexual health and reduce teenage pregnancy in the county.
- The **Kent Crime and Disorder Strategy** explains how the key agencies in Kent will work with individuals and communities to make the county a safe place to live work in and visit.
- The **Kent Rural Delivery Framework** establishes clear regional rural priorities and effective and targeted delivery mechanisms for services across the county.
- **We are the People of Kent** and **We Are the Older People of Kent** are documents which describe the demography of the County.

Appendix 2 - Kent County Council's Single Equality Scheme

All residents in Kent have the right to live without discrimination and harassment. Kent County Council is working to ensure that all of the county's inhabitants are treated with fairness and respect and that no-one suffers inequality because of their race, disability, gender, gender identity, religion or belief, age or sexual orientation.

We are looking at our services, policies and procedures using equality impact assessments to ensure that we are responsive to the needs of the communities that we serve and the people we employ, this means being accessible and inclusive to all. The internal scrutiny board which reviews impact assessments contains staff from all five directorates with expertise or experience of issues relating to the separate strands and links up with KCC's diversity staff groups.

We are also looking at the make up of Kent in terms of race, disability, gender, gender identity, religion and belief, age and sexual orientation and identifying areas where inequalities currently exist. By doing this we can make a difference through targeting services and working in partnership with other local authorities, community organisations and employers.

A legal duty to give due regard to socio-economic inequalities will become law in October 2010 – this will give added momentum to initiatives already being undertaken in the county to tackle the challenges that we currently face.

This document outlines some of our achievements over the past three years, the challenges that we face and the priorities that have been identified for improvement and to keep at the top of our agenda. The action plan at the end incorporates actions at corporate, directorate and service level.

The legal framework for this document is contained in the Equality Act 2010¹. 2010 is the first year that we have extended our equality scheme to cover Age, Sexual Orientation, and Religion and Belief, therefore we hope to build on our achievements in these areas and develop new priorities with the help of people with these protected characteristics.

¹ This can be found at the government office of public sector information's website: http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2010/ukpga_20100015_en_1,

Equality for Disabled People in Kent

What do we mean by “Disability”?

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as ‘a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’.

Disability in Kent

Kent’s population is expanding, particularly in the growth areas of Ashford and Kent Thameside. As a result of this, we are seeing substantial year-on-year increases in demand for services for disabled people, particularly mental health services and services for people with learning difficulties. Some other key facts include:

- The number of people with physical impairments accessing County Council social services has increased by some 12 per cent over the last five years, outstripping population increases.²
- Of the 1,329,718 people who live in the geographical area that is known as the Kent County Council Area (which covers the whole of the county but does not include Medway), 17.3 per cent of the population consider themselves to have a long term limiting illness.³ Overall, the Council supports 33,200 disabled and older people to continue living in their own homes.⁴
- The County Council currently supports over 3,200 people with a mental health condition.⁵ Compared to the South East as a whole, the Kent County Council Area has a larger proportion of residents with a limiting long-term illness who say their health is ‘not good’. (8.0 per cent compared to 7.1 per cent)⁶.
- Kent Adult Social Services are supporting around 3,550 people with Learning Difficulties.⁷ However, recent research shows a much more substantial prevalence of people with a Learning Difficulty (4,500 people) and this is expected to increase by 46.9% in the next 15 years.⁸

The following numbers are those disabled people who access Kent’s Adult Social Services:

- Number of people aged 18 to 64 with Physical Disability: 4,431
- Number of people aged 65+ who are frail and in receipt of service: 20,290
- Number of people supported with a Mental Health condition: 2,233
Service offered but "disability" not recorded: 3,797

² Kent Adult Social Services, management data April 2007

³ 2001 Census, Office for National Statistics (ONS), © Crown Copyright

⁴ RAP P2S, 31 March 2009

⁵ Op cit.

⁶ 2001 Census, Office for National Statistics (ONS), © Crown Copyright

⁷ RAP P2S, 31 March 2009

⁸ Centre of Disability Research, April 2008

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This does not account for the people in the county who consider themselves to be disabled but are not currently using Kent's Adult Social Services provision.

Disability within the Council

KCC has specific actions and targets in place aimed at improving the representation of disabled people in its workforce which is currently quite low. We are also planning to change the way we monitor disability to recognise the breadth of conditions that can be classified in this way and so we have a clearer understanding of the numbers of people we employ who have a disability.

We monitor existing employees and applicants for jobs and training by disability. Monitoring by disability is also undertaken on grievances, disciplinary action, performance appraisals and employees leaving the Council. This is an important way of identifying trends and issues, to enable inequalities to be addressed and action taken to remove barriers and promote equality of opportunity. We monitor all diversity strands throughout the recruitment process, and take into consideration any potential negative impact when we develop our employment policy or practice.

What have we achieved so far?

We are involved in an extensive range of projects to promote disability equality and tackle discrimination. Over the last three years, we have achieved some real outcomes. These include:

- A Kent Based Sign Language Service which has been established through public partnership involving Kent County Council, Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue Service and the Kent Mental Health Partnership Trust. This service will ensure the provision of interpreting services for d/Deaf and deafblind people in Kent through the Royal Association for Deaf People. The benefits of the service include improved access to interpreters at short notice, the provision of local interpreters and specialist training. This service was developed with the involvement of the Deaf Community in Kent and a strategy is in place to extend the service to other public service providers within Kent.
- Kent Libraries and Archives are working with a range of partners and community groups to make their services welcoming and relevant to all. For example all districts across the county work with their local District Partnership Groups where they promote library services and Time2Give Volunteering opportunities.
- Groups of adults with learning disabilities use the libraries as social meeting spaces and for activities like the Biblio Hour at Sevenoaks Library and the more informal groups at Dartford Library.
- Easy Access collections can be found in town centre libraries and include Books Beyond Words, a series aimed at adults who understand pictures better than words. The stories are told through colour pictures and address

the emotional and difficult events of life such as illness and bereavement. Libraries and Archives also provide Bag Books, multi sensory books for children with profound and multiple learning disabilities.

- Libraries and Archives have also developed a series of Best Practice Guides including Services to Adults with Learning Disabilities, Services for Visually Impaired People and Services for people with Dyslexia.
- Kent Adult Education has been working with adults with learning disabilities to develop information for them that is easy to read and understand. Students on Independent Living Skills courses have helped to develop an information leaflet for disabled students and a new short version of the Student Charter.
- The Country Parks unit (Environment, Highways and Waste Directorate) set up a project for groups of BME elderly and disabled from the KASS Asian Day centres in Dartford and Gravesend to visit Shorne Country Park, to raise awareness and gather feedback. Country Parks also noted some compliments including:

I am disabled and without the motorised trampers at Shornewoods Country Park my life would be very different. A big 'thank you' from my husband and I for giving us a lifeline. We cannot begin to even tell you how much it means to us. With sincere gratitude.

- Grants have been made through Kent Highway Services for the installation of dropped kerbs. These have been sited following consultation with the Swale Access Group over need and locations.
- In September 2009, in partnership with Kent Police, Medway Council and the Crown Prosecution Service, we ran a conference on tackling disability hate crime, entitled "Know Your Rights, Right The Wrongs". Disabled people, both individuals and from local support organisations, contributed to the presentations and were involved in workshops along with service providers, giving us clear actions we could take to combat hate crime in the county. In April 2010 we published the conference report and aim to run follow-up events to check how those actions have been implemented, and the outcomes that have resulted.
- A Disability Equality event in July 2009 for 78 staff in Libraries and Archives included personal perspectives from disabled people and another event is planned for 2010.
- Ongoing Work Placement Programme for Disabled People.
- Two Ticks accreditation has just been achieved for the 8th year running (2010/11).
- KCC continues to be accredited by the 'Mindful Employer' scheme - which means we are positive about mental health in the workplace. We held a Mental Health conference in 2009 – an awareness event provided for Managers/staff and SME from across Kent

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- Aids Awareness and Mental Health Awareness Days are recognised and publicised to all staff in the organisation
- We are committed to ensuring that all of our web standards (both technical and content) are written with the needs of people with disabilities in mind. Our website has in place a downloadable BrowseAloud facility which allows people with print impairments, including visually impaired people and those with dyslexia to listen to pages. We also have standards on the use of imagery which covers the need to be inclusive in how we represent people with different impairments throughout the website and in our printed publications. We have put in place standards that cover the need to provide transcriptions or interpreting services for video and audio clips. KCC have commissioned an independent accessibility study as part of the first phase to improve accessibility of our new website.
- A number of Council Member grants have been made available to community projects which promote disability equality, for example:
 - MCCH - Well gardening for people with learning needs £750
 - East Strokes Group - Transport project £500
 - Tenterden Disabled in Action - Garden project £2,000
 - Canterbury Oast Trust/Harrington college for the Disabled - IT equipment £3,000
 - Appledore Parish hall - Disabled access £3,800
 - Folkestone Rugby Club - Stair Climber £800
 - MIND - shop project £940
 - Cheriton scouts - Disabled Access £200
 - Folkestone and Hythe Theatre - Hearing Loop £1,000
 - Skillnet- Speak up project for special needs £1,524
 - National Autistic Society - Play equipment £2,000

Swale Members have made various grants to the Hope Street Centre, Sheerness, in support of providing Information Technology sessions aimed at community members with mental health issues. To date some 60 plus members have benefited from the ongoing work.*
- More of KCC's achievements on Disability can be obtained from the Improvement and Engagement Team
- Production of our Diversity ' Together Making the Difference' DVD. Used within Elected Member/Manager training, Induction sessions and diversity in action training.
- 'Expect Respect' poster and policy statement distributed to all customer facing offices as well as staff areas.

- Robust Equality and Diversity training programme delivered across KCC, including bespoke programmes e.g. equality impact assessments
- Easy Read Application Form
- Talent Management Programme available to staff groups members from Rainbow, Greenhouse and Level Playing Field
- Met our target for employing more disabled people in our leadership group

The challenges

The challenges that are likely to have a direct impact on disabled people's experiences of life in Kent include:

- Disabled people are 29 per cent less likely to be in work than non-disabled people with otherwise similar characteristics, such as age, ethnicity, educational qualifications and family composition.⁹
- Young disabled people aged 16 are twice as likely not to be in any form of education or training as their non-disabled peers. This increases to three times as likely at age 19.¹⁰
- 40 per cent of Bangladeshi people and 32.5 per cent of Pakistani people aged 50 to 64 report a limiting long-standing illness, compared to 27 per cent of the general population in this age range, within the KCC area.¹¹
- An accessible public transport system is vital to empowering many disabled people to take part fully in society. However, for many disabled people public transport presents an insurmountable number of barriers.¹²
- Due to the recession there is 'likely to be increased demand for and use of support programmes for disabled people.' This is because employment opportunities will have decreased. At the same time however, budget cuts may mean that availability for these measures is scarce.¹³

Our top disability priorities for the next three years

We want to promote disability equality and tackle discrimination in a range of priority areas over the next three years these include:

- Carrying out equality impact assessments on all new and updated policies, procedures, practices and services. Disabled people sit on our EIA Review Network, the panel which scrutinises impact assessments as they are

⁹ *Fairness and Freedom: The Final Report of the Equalities Review, 2007*

¹⁰ *My School, my family, my life: Telling it like it is*, produced by The University of Birmingham, School of Education and commissioned and funded by the Disability Rights Commission, March 2007,

¹¹ *Census*, Office for National Statistics (ONS) © Crown Copyright, 2001

¹² *Disability Rights Commission 2006*

¹³ *The Equality Impacts of the Recent Recession* EHRC research report 47 2009

carried out. Ensure disabled members of the public are also involved in the impact assessment process where relevant.

- Continue to explore opportunities for working jointly with partner agencies to build confidence amongst victims of hate crime and signpost to appropriate support, building on lessons learned at the “Know Your Rights, Right The Wrongs” conference 29 September 2009, and the recommendations for actions published in the conference report (issued April 2010).
- Future evidence gathering exercises need a more representative sample. A longer period of time to respond to involvement surveys; providing surveys in more accessible, individualised formats; making sure that support is available to help individuals answer questions. Strategic targeting of ethnic minorities and people with mental health difficulties must take place. The views of children and their carers (some of whom are also disabled) must be covered.
- Continue to improve the means by which we communicate with disabled people, including people with sensory impairments and learning difficulties; widely promote Kent’s new sign language interpreting service and raise awareness of the presence and importance of accessibility guidance now built into our communications guidelines; seek to provide more information in easy-read and plain English and investigate the possibility of adopting a robust and consistent means of providing more of our information in alternative formats on request.
- Whilst moves have been made to improve transport there is much to be done. Without good, reliable, accessible and appropriate transport, disabled people cannot participate in community life and many will continue to feel socially isolated. Kent County Council needs to continue to focus activity in relation to helping to change this situation.
- Buildings need to be checked over by disabled people. Even better, disabled people should be consulted for advice before and during building work. Disabled staff were consulted and involved when the accessibility of buildings in Strategic Headquarters was being assessed in 2007-8. This approach to building access needs to be adopted throughout Kent.
- Service openings need to be flexible enough so that disabled people can socialise and participate in leisure and educational activities, particularly at night and at weekends. It is still true that many activities targeted towards disabled people, such as countryside access events, only take place during regular office hours, thereby excluding disabled people with jobs.
- Disabled people should be consulted before, during & after decisions are made. The benefit of forming a Kent Panel on Disability should be explored.
- Continue to seek new and effective mechanisms to continue to increase the percentage disabled staff in our leadership group, through programmes such as our new talent management scheme.
- Employability Agenda – we are developing routes into employment for young people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups.

Gender Equality in Kent

What do we mean by “Gender”?

The term ‘gender’ refers to the different roles and expectations of men and women in society. Gender roles can be affected by a variety of factors such as education or economics, and vary widely within different cultures.

Gender roles and expectations are often identified as factors hindering the equal rights and status of men and women, with adverse consequences that affect life, family, socioeconomic status and health. For example, although girls generally outperform boys in schools, they are 30 per cent less likely to be in work than men with otherwise similar characteristics, such as age, ethnicity, educational qualifications and family composition.¹⁴ Similarly, men are around 25 per cent less likely to visit their GP than women, which has implications for their long-term health and well-being. For this reason, gender is an important element of planning services.

What do we mean by “Gender Identity”?

Gender equality also takes into account the needs and experiences of transgender people. The Equality Act 2010 protects people who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone the process of gender re-assignment by changing their physiological or other attributes of sex.¹⁵

This means that the law protects people who choose to live as members of the opposite sex without intending to undergo medical gender reassignment as well as those who have. Transgender people often experience significant harassment and discrimination on grounds of their identity.

Gender in Kent

The 2008 Mid-year population estimates show that there are similar numbers of men and women in the Kent County Council Area - 49 per cent and 51 per cent respectively out of a population of 1,406,600. The exact number of transgender people living in the County is not currently known. The proportion of boys and girls under 16 living in the County is also evenly balanced, at 51 per cent and 49 per cent respectively. However, the gender split amongst older people is very different, with significantly more women over the age of 75 (61 per cent) than men (39 per cent). Some other key facts include:

- Women in the KCC area are significantly more likely to be ‘economically inactive’ as a result of looking after the home/ family, than men (13.3 per cent compared to 0.8 per cent) (the term ‘economically inactive’ means people who are not working because they are full-time students, are retired or are unable to work due to long-term sickness or disability).¹⁶

¹⁴ *Fairness and Freedom: The Final Report of the Equalities Review, 2007*

¹⁵ The Equality Act 2010,

¹⁶ *Census*, Office for National Statistics (ONS) © Crown Copyright, 2001

- Similar numbers of women and men in the KCC area have a limiting long-term illness (17 per cent and 16 per cent respectively).¹⁷
- Life expectancy at birth is higher for females than males. In the Kent County Council area male life expectancy is 78.8, above the national average of 77.5 but below the South East average of 79.2. Female life expectancy is 82.1 in the Kent County Council area, above the national average of 81.7 but below the regional average of 83.0.¹⁸
- There were 9 times more female than male lone parent families with dependent children in the KCC area as at the 2001 Census (28,225 as compared to 3,145).
- In 2008 the conception rate for women aged below 18 years old in Kent was 36.7 per 1000 females under 18, which is below the national average of 40.6 per 1000.¹⁹
- Young women between 16 to 19 years of age are far less likely than young men to take part in physical activity or sport (50 per cent compared to 72 per cent). Similarly, women aged between 25 and 29 are also less likely than men to participate in sport (66 per cent compared to 78 per cent).
- Women in Kent (18 per cent) are significantly more likely than men (11 per cent) not to have access to a car.
- Overall, girls in Kent schools out-perform boys in terms of educational attainment. Boys' under-achievement is most apparent at Key Stage 4. Significant gaps in attainment are evident in certain subjects with girls outperforming boys, although at Key Stage 3 there is no longer a gender gap in mathematics and science. In English at Key Stage 3 the gender gap was 12 per cent, which represents a continued reduction and is smaller than the national average. Boy's writing improved in 2005 at Key Stage 3. In Kent this is most marked in primary writing assessments.
- In the Kent County Council area, more men (12.5%) than women (11.6%) occupy professional positions, and more men (18.4%) than women (10.3%) are employed in higher and lower managerial and professional occupations.²⁰
- Men in the Kent County Council area (17.7%) are more likely than women (8.3%) to be self-employed.²¹
- The majority of Kent's part time workers are women, who make up 87 per cent of employees. Of all economically active females, White British women (24 per cent) are more likely to work part-time, compared to all other ethnic groups (18 per cent).²²

¹⁷ Census, Office for National Statistics (ONS) © Crown Copyright, 2001

¹⁸ *Life Expectancy at Birth* The Office For National Statistics, 2006/08

¹⁹ Office for National Statistics (ONS).

²⁰ *Annual Population Survey Jul 2008-Jun 2009*

²¹ *Annual Population Survey Jul 2008-Jun 2009*

²² Census, Office for National Statistics (ONS), © Crown Copyright 2001

- 27 per cent of women in Kent work within 2km from their home, compared to 16 per cent of men.²³
- 11.2% of working age women in Kent have no qualifications compared to 12.2% of males.²⁴
- Between January 2009 and December 2009 there were 4 reported cases of transphobic hate crime.²⁵ It is estimated that as much as 90 per cent of hate crime goes unreported, because victims are either too frightened to report it, or feel it will not make any difference.

Gender within the Council

Kent County Council currently employs more women than men (around 75% of our staff are women), the majority of whom are working part-time.

Kent County Council monitors existing employees and applicants for jobs and training by gender. Monitoring by gender is also undertaken on grievances, disciplinary action, performance appraisals and employees leaving the Council. This is an important way of identifying trends and issues, to enable inequalities to be addressed, action taken to remove barriers and promote equality of opportunity.

What have we achieved so far?

We are involved in an extensive range of projects to promote gender equality and tackle sex discrimination. Over the last three years, we have achieved some real outcomes. These include:

- In 2009, in an initiative, led by the Council's gender champions, (with support from the council's personnel and development team), a Maternity and Adoption Leave survey was carried out. Staff fed back their experiences of returning to work having taken leave for these reasons and personnel processes were changed in light of their feedback
- Since 2007 a range of interventions surrounding the prevention of domestic violence have been established – these are: MARACs (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences) to address re-offending, Public Protection and "drop in units" in most police areas across Kent, and the introduction of Independent Domestic Abuse Advocates (IDVAs) in every district.
- Following a successful pilot, our Personnel committee introduced Contractual Maternity Support Leave (formerly known as paternity leave) for employees on Kent Scheme and Soulbury conditions of service. This new benefit is for employees, male or female, who are responsible for a child's upbringing. It allows them to take up to two week's time off work on full pay, to support the mother or adoptive parent at the time of the birth, or when a child is placed for adoption. Previously, only the statutory provision of £123.06 per week applied.

²³ *Census*, Office for National Statistics (ONS), © Crown Copyright 2001

²⁴ *Annual Population Survey* Jan 2008-Dec 2008

²⁵ *Kent Police Business Information Unit* 2010

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- The Council has embarked on a programme to raise awareness of Transgender issues and the need to have advice and guidance available for managers and staff. This is now available to staff on our intranet.
- In 2009 and again in 2010, the authority celebrated International Women's Day by acknowledging the achievements of women working in senior positions in the authority. Work shadowing opportunities with senior women managers are now offered during March of each year.
- Personnel and Development now follow up on Graduate trainees at KCC to track career success by Gender, and monitor the take up of Carers Leave by Gender.
- A project run by SILK (Social Innovations Lab for Kent County Council) focuses on the day-to-day challenges fathers face in spending time with their children and looks at how they could be supported. The team worked with a group of fathers from a Sure Start centre in a series of workshops. Using the design process and tools, a wide range of service solutions were created, one of them being the 'Go Card'™; a community card which links parents to local activities and services at a reduced rate, and indirectly connects them with the Sure Start centre. This project was nominated for a Brits Design award in 2009.
- We have standards on the use of imagery which cover the need to be inclusive in how we represent people of different genders throughout the website and in our printed publications.
- We have increased the number of sexual health outreach workers who play a key role in reducing teenage conceptions and early intervention work, engaging with vulnerable young people most at risk of teenage pregnancy.
- Recent under-18 conception data for 2008 has shown a reduction in Kent's teenage conception rates. Kent County has a 12.8% change in rates since 1998.
- There has been an improvement in the attainment of boys at Key Stage 4 moving from 45.7% to 48.8 % of boys achieving 5 or more A-C grades at GCSE between 2006/07 and 2008/09.
- Transgender issues now included in all diversity training,
- ' Springboard ' Women's Development Programme to provide for a women's personal developmental programme , 09/10
- Highways Apprenticeship Scheme actively promoted to both younger men and women – attracted approximately equal nos. - 5 men and 3 women.
- Regular equal pay audits are undertaken to ensure Council pay is fair
- Targets reached for leadership group for women

The challenges

Local issues and trends change all the time, and are influenced by a whole range of factors. Although many of these changes are outside the Council's control, they are likely to have a direct impact on life in Kent. These include:

- Women make up nearly half of Britain's workforce and the proportion is growing. Girls and young women are excelling and outperforming boys in education, but this is not translating into earnings for many. Women are still working predominantly in lower paid areas – cleaning; catering; caring; cashiering; and clerical work – which is one of the reasons why their full-time pay is 25% less than full-time men. A key fact in this is their need to accommodate career interruptions through childbirth and care, and flexible working thereafter, into their careers.²⁶ At the current rate of progress, it will take until 2085 to close the pay gap between men and women.
- Occupational segregation between men and women is predicted to be a key factor in a major skills shortage in the future. While jobs are forecast to shrink in the next decade in manufacturing and heavy industry, three in four of the one million new jobs predicted by 2012 will be service sector jobs in education, health, personal and social care or retailing.²⁷
- In times of recession relationship breakdowns as a result of lay offs are likely, especially in households where income is low. This has particular risks to women financially as they tend to suffer a greater loss of income through family break up.²⁸
- Men also bear the brunt of reduced income after recession related unemployment. This may be coupled with limited housing opportunities and reduced mental health. 'Higher suicide rates are anticipated as a consequence of the recession.'²⁹ It is also 'known that men are three times more likely than women to commit suicide'³⁰.
- Women with children under the age of 11 are more than 40 per cent more likely to be out of work than men.³¹ Overall, women are 23 per cent less likely to be in work than men with otherwise similar characteristics, such as age and ethnicity, level of educational qualifications and family composition.
- Domestic violence is a major issue for many families. It accounts for a quarter of all violent crime, has the highest rate of re-offending of any type of crime. One in four women experience domestic violence at some time in their lives and two women are killed each week by violent partners or former partners.³²

²⁶ *Fairness and Freedom: The Final Report of the Equalities Review, 2007*

²⁷ *Fairness and Freedom: The Final Report of the Equalities Review, 2007*

²⁸ *The equality impacts of the current recession*, Equality and Human Rights Commission Research report, p28, 2009,

²⁹ *The equality impacts of the current recession*, Equality and Human Rights Commission Research report, p28, 2009,

³⁰ Samaritans

³¹ *Fairness and Freedom: The Final Report of the Equalities Review, 2007*

³² Women's Aid, 2007

- Although the majority of lone parents in Britain are women, some men are bringing up children alone or share responsibility with former partners. Stereotyping about parental roles can mean that men's different needs and experiences are overlooked when support services are designed. This includes ensuring that men have full access to flexible working arrangements.
- The challenge of meeting the target of a 50% reduction in teenage pregnancies by 2010 (compared with 1998) will require total commitment on the part of all key agencies in Kent working with young people. Early parenthood often has long-term consequences for women and both preventing early pregnancies and supporting young parents to participate in education and employment are crucial if these long-term consequences are to be minimised.
- Men and women make different use of public transport. They have different access to private transport, different patterns of commuting and employment, and different child-care and other family responsibilities. Women are the prime users of public transport, especially buses.

Our top gender priorities for the next three years

To promote gender equality and tackle discrimination, activity will be targeted in a range of priority areas:

Priority areas for action

- Carry out equality impact assessments on all new and updated policies, procedures, practices and services, ensuring that the differing needs of men and women are addressed robustly. Ensure that feedback on gender requirements within the community are carried through from the consultation and engagement process to inform proposed changes to our policies and procedures.
- Continue to explore opportunities with Kent Police and other specialist agencies to build confidence among victims of domestic violence, supporting people to report incidents and signpost them to appropriate support. Building on the initiatives to establish Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences, drop in units and Independent Domestic Violence Advocates.
- Explore how best to ensure that gender issues, and particularly the experiences of women, better inform local transport planning.
- Continue to tackle health inequalities in young people, to reduce the rate of teenage pregnancies in line with the national interim target of a reduction of 15%, and increase physical exercise in girls and young women.
- Continue to work with schools to tackle boys' under-achievement.
- Continue to seek new and effective mechanisms to continue to increase the percentage of the top 5% of female earners in the County Council.
- Continue to explore new ways to address occupational segregation

Race equality in Kent

What do we mean by “Race”?

Although the term ‘race’ has no exact legal definition, a racial group is any group that can be defined on racial grounds, for instance, in relation to race, skin colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins. A person can fall into more than one racial group; for example, a Nigerian may be defined by race, skin colour, ethnic or national origins and nationality.

All racial groups are protected from unlawful racial discrimination under the Race Relations Act 1976(RRA)/ The Equality Act 2010. Romany Gypsies, Irish Travellers, Jews and Sikhs are also recognised as constituting racial groups.³³

What do we mean by “racial discrimination”?

Under the Race Relations Act, 'racial discrimination' means treating a person less favourably than others on the grounds of his or her race. The law applies only to people's actions, not their personal opinions or beliefs. This means that it is against the law to refuse to provide someone with a service because of his or her race.

Generally speaking, a racial incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person. Racial incidents include verbal racist abuse, threatening or intimidating remarks about a person's race, racially motivated assault and racially motivated damage to property.

Between January 2009 and December 2009, 1449 race hate incidents were reported to Kent Police. It is estimated that as much as 90 per cent of hate crime goes unreported, because victims are either too frightened to report it, or feel it will not make any difference.

Race in Kent

Of the 1,646,900 people who lived in Kent in 2007, 107,400 (6.5 per cent) belong to a Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) group. Within the geographical area that is known as the Kent County Council Area (which covers the whole of the county but does not include Medway), 87,700 people (6.3 per cent) classify themselves as BME. This figure is significantly lower than the percentage for England as a whole (11.8 per cent) and slightly lower than the figure for the South East (8.0per cent). In contrast, 31 per cent of the population of London are from an ethnic minority.³⁴

As Figure 2 below shows, the majority of Kent's Minority Ethnic population is concentrated in North Kent and Medway. Within the Kent County Council Area,

³³ It should be noted that although Jews and Sikhs have been defined as a racial or ethnic group for the purposes of the Race Relations Act, Jews have not wanted to be, and Sikhism is a religion.

³⁴ 2007 Mid-year Ethnic population estimates. Office for National Statistics (ONS) © Crown Copyright

North Kent has the greatest concentration of people from a BME background. Gravesham Borough has the highest proportion (12.9 per cent) of BME residents, followed by Dartford Borough with 9.6 per cent.³⁵

Many of these communities have lived in the county for 40 to 50 years, and have made a significant contribution to the economic and social well-being of the county.

Percentage of population of Black Minority Ethnic (BME) origin in Mid-2007
Kent and Medway

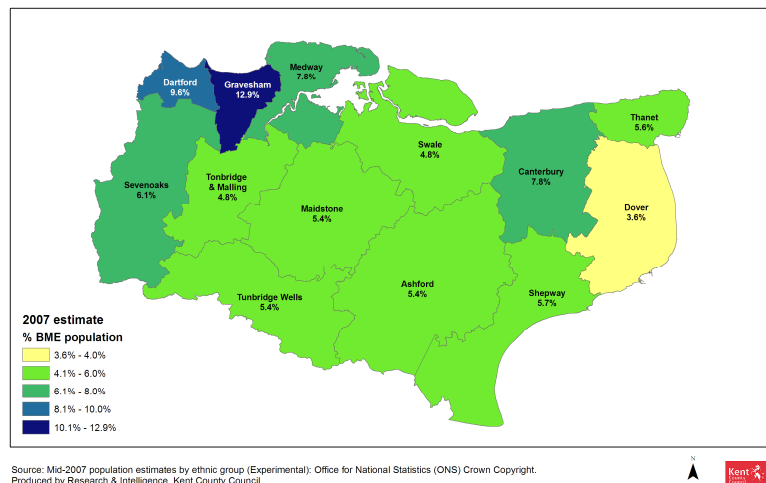


Figure 1: People from a BME background in Kent

Indian people account for the largest BME group in the Kent County Council Area, representing around 19,000 people (1.4 per cent of the total population). The category 'Other Black' represents the smallest group at 0.1 per cent, closely followed by Mixed White & Black African people (0.2 per cent).³⁶

Gypsies and Travellers

Around 8,200 (0.6 per cent) of the population in Kent is a Gypsy or Traveller. Probably less than half of that number lives in a caravan or mobile home. The Council manages eight publicly-provided Gypsy and Traveller caravan sites in Kent. Other councils in Kent manage a further nine. The county's 205 public pitches provide for nearly 300 caravans, and over 500 more caravans are on private sites with planning consent and tolerated sites in Kent. The Council works closely with Medway Council, all district councils and Kent Police when unauthorised encampments occur in the county.

Recently, the Council supported a Joint Select Committee with borough and districts councils across Kent, to strategically address the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers. As part of this work the Committee published its Select Committee Report, Gypsy and Traveller Sites, in April 2006. The report made a number of recommendations to coordinate partnership activity and address accommodation needs in the county.

³⁵ 2007 Mid-year Ethnic population estimates. Office for National Statistics (ONS) © Crown Copyright

³⁶ 2007 Mid-year Ethnic population estimates. Office for National Statistics (ONS) © Crown Copyright

Asylum and immigration

In the UK the term 'asylum seekers' denotes people who arrive from overseas and apply for refugee status, stating they are fleeing persecution, torture or war. While their applications are being considered by the Home Office, they are termed asylum seekers until their refugee status is confirmed. Those whose claims fail will have their leave to enter or to remain in the UK cancelled.

In the past, the Council has had to accommodate large numbers of asylum seekers, mainly due to the location of the major port of Dover in the East of Kent. In recent years, several major pieces of legislation were introduced³⁷ which led to the Home Office setting up the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) to take over from local authorities the role of providing support to adult asylum seekers and asylum seeking families. Support under the Children Act 1989 is provided by Kent County Council for unaccompanied minors arriving in the county from abroad and claiming asylum. The Home Office and the DfES provide grants to assist local authorities in carrying out these duties.

For more information on Asylum and Immigration please contact:

Telephone: 08458 247 100 or Textphone: 08458 247905

Migration

- In 2008/09 the number of new National Insurance Number allocations to overseas nationals in the UK reduced by 6.4%, and in the Kent County Council (KCC) area reduced by 2.5% from the previous year.
- The total number of National Insurance Number allocations to overseas nationals in the KCC area in 2008/09 was 11,010. The South East had the 2nd highest proportion of all NINo allocations, equivalent to 11.3% of all allocations in the UK, a total of 77,870 allocations.
- 79.6% of the new migrant workers in the KCC area are aged 34 and under
- The top world area of origin for migrant workers in the UK and in the KCC area was the EU Accessions States
- The top country of origin of migrant workers in the KCC area was Poland accounting for 20% (2,200) of all new migrant workers.
- Canterbury has the highest proportion of new KCC area migrant workers with 14% of the KCC total. The lowest proportion is in Sevenoaks (4.5%)³⁸
- Nationally all ethnic groups are likely to see employment suffer until 2013 after which it is projected to rise again³⁹.

³⁷ 2004, The Asylum and Immigration Act.

³⁸ NINo Registrations 2008/09, DWP

³⁹ 2009, Equality impacts of the recession, EHRC Report 47 p179

Race within the Council

Around 4% of our staff are from a black, minority or ethnic background (BME) and we are working to improve the representation of BME communities in our workforce.

The Council monitors existing employees and applicants for jobs and training by racial group. Monitoring by racial group is also undertaken on grievances, disciplinary action, performance appraisals and employees leaving the Council. This is an important way of identifying trends and issues, to enable inequality to be addressed and action taken to remove barriers and promote equality of opportunity.

What have we achieved so far?

We are involved in an extensive range of projects to tackle racial discrimination, promote equality and good relations between different groups. Over the last three years, we have achieved some real outcomes. These include:

- Racist Hate Crime has been introduced as a part of each Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership annual assessment process. Local police & other public service staff (e.g. community wardens) have undergone core training around race crime & incidents & equality & diversity matters.
- Each year, as part of Black History Month celebrations in Kent, KCC have held the county's BME Achievement Awards ceremony. The event recognises the significant contributions made by individuals from BME communities to Kent life. The nominees are selected by the community as individuals who have contributed above the norm and successfully achieve the goal for the community in Kent.
- For the past three years Libraries and Archives have celebrated Gypsy Roma Traveller History month by hosting Traveller Awareness displays supplied by MCAS and promoting Romany Roots stock collections. Other initiatives also included IT sessions for the local traveller community at New Ash Green and Dave Arthur traditional traveller storytelling events at Ashford and Aylesham libraries.
- We have consistently met and subsequently increased our BME performance targets over the last three years. The end of this year saw an increase to 4.12% for our leadership group, just short of our 5.00% target'
- We have standards on the use of imagery for the website which covers the need to be inclusive in how we represent people of different races.
- We have promoted our language translation service throughout the website. We have provided text and videos in 10 different languages based on the most commonly requested and resident populations living in Kent. This points them to our Contact Centre who will direct their translation request to the relevant service, who will in turn contact the Kent Top Temps Language Interpretation Service.

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- We provide the ability to listen to pages through a downloadable BrowseAloud facility that helps people who cannot read English but can understand spoken English.
- Children Families and Education (CFE) has developed the reporting mechanism which schools can then use to indicate the specific focus of a bullying incident. This sits along side the statutory framework for reporting racist incidents in schools.
- CFE has worked closely with schools that were previously under-reporting racial incidents to get them to report incidents and respond to them positively. As a result, the rate of reported racial incidents in schools has risen between 2006/07-2008/09.
- 'ASPIRE' is a personal development programme undertaken by members of KCC's UNITE BME staff group. An 'Emotional Intelligence' development programme for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) staff commenced in spring 09.
- Talent management for BME, LGBT and disabled staff has been developed
- A number of Council Member grants have been made available to community projects which promote race equality, for example:
- Grants have been made over the past two years to support the publication of the Nubia Magazine. Nubia Magazine aims to inspire and celebrate the success of the BME community through the promotion of positive images and experiences. It also aims to create a forum for engagement that will promote community cohesion.
- Other recipients of grants include:
- Ashford International Community - BME Network £3,000
- Gurkha's Wives - English Classes - £500
- Malayalee Association - Office Project £300
- The Health Action Charity Organisation (HACO) received a grant of £1,000 to support African Communities in Swale. HACO is one of the National HIV Prevention Programme's partners working with African communities in England.
- Coaching & mentoring opportunities available to BME staff

The challenges

Local issues and trends change all the time, and are influenced by a whole range of factors. Although many of these changes are outside the Council's control, they are likely to have a direct impact on life in Kent. These include:

- The ethnic minority population of Britain is forecast to grow from nine per cent to about 11 per cent by the end of the next decade. Within particular ethnic groups, the highest increases will be among Black Africans, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. Services will need to have a robust

understanding of the needs of these groups and be able to respond favourably. Documents like that published by Kent Adult Social Services entitled 'Culturally Competent Care' will be ever more important.

- The numbers of people in ethnic minority communities who are aged over 60 are predicted to increase enormously over the next 10 years, from around 175,000 people today to nearly 1.8 million in 2016. Older people from ethnic minorities face particular inequalities. For example, they tend to have health and social care needs at a younger age than average, and have poor knowledge and understanding of available services.
- Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, with the same qualifications as White women, are 30 per cent more likely to be out of work. Despite high levels of economic activity, Black Caribbean women face high levels of unemployment, and obstacles to progression - particularly at senior manager level.
- Some BME groups are far less likely to use pre-school education for their children. 77 per cent of the three and four year olds among ethnic minority children use early years provision, compared to nearly 87 per cent of White three and four year olds.
- Although Mixed White and Asian heritage and Indian pupils are doing better on average than White British pupils, pupils from some minority ethnic groups are doing less well. For instance, middle class White British boys continue to out perform working class girls of Bangladeshi, Pakistani and mixed white heritage in a number of subjects. In addition, a large attainment gap exists between Gypsy/Roma and Travellers of Irish Heritage pupils and pupils from all other ethnic groups. In 2006, less than a quarter of Gypsy children achieved five GCSEs at A* to C grades in 2003, compared to a national average of just over half.⁴⁰
- Gypsies and Irish Travellers have the poorest life chances of any ethnic group, and significantly poorer health and more self-reported symptoms of ill-health than other UK-resident, BME group or economically disadvantaged white UK residents. The life expectancy of a Traveller or Gypsy is 10 years less than the average citizen. Gypsy and Irish Traveller mothers are 20 times more likely than mothers in the rest of the population to have experienced the death of a child.⁴¹

Our top race priorities for the next three years

To promote race equality, tackle discrimination and encourage good relations between groups, activity will be targeted in a range of priority areas.

⁴⁰ *Common Ground*, report of the Commission for Racial Equality, May 2006

⁴¹ *Common Ground*, report of the Commission for Racial Equality, May 2006

Priority areas for action

- Carry out equality impact assessments on all new and updated policies, procedures, practices and services, ensuring that the differing needs of people from different black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds are addressed robustly. Ensure that feedback on the requirements of people from BME backgrounds within the community are carried through from the consultation and engagement process to inform proposed changes to our policies and procedures.
- Continue to explore opportunities for working jointly with partner agencies, such as Kent Police and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, to build confidence amongst victims of racist hate crime and signpost to appropriate support.
- Having encouraged the reporting of and positive response to racist incidents in schools Children Families and Education should aim to reduce the number of racist incidents.
- Promote access to Health and Social care to Gypsy and Travellers through liaison with East and West Kent NHS Primary Care Trusts and arrange direct discussions between health professionals and Gypsy and Travellers.
- Set up a Kent-wide Gypsy and Traveller Forum.

Age Equality in Kent

What do we mean by Age?

Both older and younger people can face a degree of inequality. This is largely due to stereotypes and perceptions. Older and younger people make a significant contribution to community life. Therefore it is essential that we challenge those perceptions and stereotypes, in order to build mutual respect between people of all ages.

Age in the Council:

A large proportion of our staff fall within the 45-49 age bracket and until recently we had very few younger people working for us, a common challenge for local government. Specific initiatives designed to encourage young people into KCC roles have increased to improve the representation of younger people (under 30) to around 14.5%. We continue to employ a significant number of people age between 50 and 65 and some beyond our normal retirement age, 65.

Age in Kent

The population of Kent is currently just above 1.4 million. Kent has both a younger and older age profile than the national average but a smaller proportion of working age people. East Kent coastal districts have an older population profile, whereas West Kent districts have a younger age profile.

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Over the next 20 years Kent's population is forecast to increase by an additional 200,000 people (+14%). Kent's population is projected to grow and age faster than both the national and regional average.

The life experience of Kent's residents varies. Kent has some of England's most deprived neighbourhoods but also some of the country's least deprived. In some parts of Kent the two extremes are located alongside each other. Although the highest deprivation levels are not confined to one single area, residents living in the east of the county tend to be more deprived than those living in the west.

Affluent older residents who have retired after successful careers with active and fulfilling lifestyles are found in coastal locations but older people and pensioners on low incomes with high care needs are also found here. Children living in deprived families on low incomes with a heavy reliance on welfare tend to be found in urban locations, whereas children living in families in steady employment enjoying a prosperous lifestyle tend to be characteristic of new housing developments.

What have we achieved so far?

- 14-19 Education and Training: 14-19 education and training prepares young people for working life. Through innovative and vocational approaches to the curriculum more young people can gain the skills to make them employable and raise their aspirations.
- Kent County Council's role in planning and commissioning the 14-19 programme includes six routes; International Baccalaureate, A level/GCSE, diplomas, vocational courses, apprenticeships and foundation learning. These are delivered by schools, academies, further education institutes; work based learning providers and operational skills centres.
- Kent Active Mob scheme: It has been proven that the more active and independent older people remain, the longer they will stay healthy. Kent's Active Mob scheme gets groups of older people together to go on a variety of activities such as walks, fishing trips and art activities. Older people themselves can suggest new ideas for activities in their area.
- 'Take Our Young People to Work' - work experience programme has encouraged young people to participate in non-traditional job roles within KCC.
- Comprehensive research was undertaken between 2009 and 2010 to investigate ways of reducing job segregation within KCC – proposals have been made to the Equalities Lead Officer Group.
- Employees from KCC were supported to participate in the Young Local Authority of the Year in 2010 and won in the Young County Council of the year category.
- Kent County Council has a group for younger workers entitled 'Greenhouse' which focuses on supporting younger employees in their personal development by encouraging them to take on projects on the Council's behalf aimed at building confidence and succession planning. A project that is currently being planned is a conference for younger workers in Kent.

- Greenhouse achieved a Highly Commended Public Sector -Employer's Forum on Age Awards 2010.
- Age champions group – Older Workers Fair
- Increased numbers of younger people in our workforce by increasing the numbers of apprentices and developing our gap year and internship programmes.
- Completed a talent management programme for younger employees
- Guidance to managers on fair retirement process
- Together with our partners, Kent County Council offers a number of ways for people to keep their independence, including:
 1. helping people to stay in their own homes
 2. providing equipment for or adaptations to homes
 3. care and support services for those who are unable to live at home

The challenges:

Older People

- In 2006 we estimated there to be 173,000 one person households in the KCC area. Of these 77,400 were headed by a person aged 65+. Our current forecasts estimate that by 2026 there will be 265,700 one person households. Of these, 119,600 will be headed by somebody aged 65+. Therefore between 2006 and 2026, there will be an additional 42,200 one person households headed by someone aged 65+. This is equivalent to 54.5% increase⁴²

Younger People

- Half of all children are predicted to be obese by 2050 if they don't change their diet and exercise habits.

Key priority areas for action:

- Involve older people in the development of major council initiatives and policies.
- Ensure older people are engaged in regeneration projects across the county.
- Make sure we use a wide (and appropriate) range of communication methods and approaches to inform older people about the services and opportunities available across the county.

⁴² South East Plan Strategy-based Forecasts (Sep'09): Lone person households by age of household representative Controlled to 2006 Mid Year Population Estimates and from then onwards the housing provision as set out in the Adopted South East Plan (as at May 2009)

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- Ensure that older people have full access to learning opportunities. Ensure that the social value of learning opportunities continues to be recognised, for example by working more closely with University of the Third Age, and by further promotion of the Council's Active Mob scheme.
- Promote the leadership role of older people in encouraging others to learn
- Work with our partners, including Kent Police, to make sure older people feel safe and secure, in their homes and in the county as a whole. Ensure that they are provided with appropriate information, advice and guidance in relation to staying safe and secure.
- Ensure older people have access to, and are provided with, information on sports and leisure activities.
- Through initiatives such as "silver surfer days", actively encourage more older people to come online,
- Remain willing to provide information over the telephone and in writing on request, to make sure that older people without computer access are not excluded from our services.
- Increase the visibility of the Council for young people for example, by promoting the work of Kent Youth Council, and involving its members in all areas of decision-making.
- Ensure that young people are involved in – and know about – council initiatives.
- Ensure communication happens in places and forums where young people will listen.
- Continue to encourage the involvement of more young people in projects and initiatives.
- Continue to provide information on job/employment opportunities in learning environments; make it available in a range of formats, so that opportunities are also open to young disabled people.
- Promote positive images of young people – encourage local media to focus less on "problem youth".
- In partnership with Kent Police, develop and promote better understanding between the police and young people; Increase young people's understanding of police procedure and of their community role.
- Ensure there is a continued emphasis on making sport and leisure schemes available for young people.
- Encourage more young people, especially young women, to take part in sport, especially in deprived areas where take-up may be low.
- To reduce the impact of poverty (generational and situational) on children's lives by tackling the underlying causes and mitigating the effects.
- To draw on and improve resilience in Children and Young People to help them make informed and healthy/safe choices and develop coping strategies. To include a focus on children and young people with emotional and/or mental health problems.

- To improve parenting by implementing Every Parent Matters and developing more effective multi-agency support and early intervention for families experiencing problems.
- To improve the quality and stability of housing provision for vulnerable children and young people through to early adulthood.
- Supporting vulnerable children to improve their life chances including improving the achievement and participation of young people in society

Equality for people with different Religions and Beliefs in Kent

Everyone should feel able to express their beliefs without fear of discrimination. Kent County Council respects the rights of individuals to practise their religion or hold religious or philosophical beliefs, without fear of intimidation, harassment or violence.

We will not tolerate unlawful discrimination on the grounds of religion or religious or philosophical beliefs, or because people do not have such beliefs. In the UK today, people of many different faiths and beliefs live and work side by side.

Providing services in a multi-faith society means that we all need to show goodwill and respect everyone's right of freedom to express their personal beliefs.

Religion and Belief in Kent:

Within the KCC Area, the majority of the population is of Christian religion (75.13%). The next largest religious group is Sikh with 0.6%. However, larger by far is 14.9% of the KCC population who state that they have no religion. Followers of Islam and Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism are also represented within the County.

Within the Council

KCC only began monitoring new starters and the existing workforce by religion and belief relatively recently so the staff figures by this strand of equality are incomplete. We aim to continue improve declaration rates in this area and the area of sexual orientation by encouraging staff to complete equality monitoring. All equality data is confidential and used to help us understand our workforce's needs and the degree to which it is representative of the community.

Key priority areas for action:

- Work with our partners to take all necessary steps to prevent, tackle and monitor hate incidents motivated by religious hatred; Work to record and deal with religious hate incidents as part of our hate incident procedures.
- Promote understanding and dialogue between different faith communities, and between faith and non-faith communities.

- Enable faith groups to work together with each other and community groups in wider partnerships.
- Acknowledge and celebrate religious festivals and other events that are significant for our communities.
- Develop more culturally sensitive services through consultation with employees and service users.
- Continue to promote a work environment where the cultural, religious and philosophical beliefs of all employees are respected.

Equality for people of all Sexual Orientations:

What do we mean by Sexual Orientation?

“Sexual Orientation is a combination of emotional, romantic, sexual or affectionate attraction to another person. In other words it’s about who you are attracted to, fall in love with and want to share your life with.”⁴³ The same protections apply to heterosexual people as well as those who are Lesbian Gay and Bisexual.

What do we mean by the terms Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual? The term ‘gay’ usually refers to a man who seeks a same sex partner. Some women also identify as ‘gay’ as opposed to lesbian. The term ‘lesbian’ usually describes a woman who seeks a same sex partner. The term ‘bisexual’ has been defined to mean “a changing sexual and emotional attraction to people, where gender may not be a defining factor”⁴⁴. This may result in the individual being attracted to both men and women.

Sexual Orientation in the Council

KCC started monitoring its new starters and existing workforce by sexual orientation relatively recently so we have an incomplete picture at present. We aim to continue improve our declaration rate in this area and that of religion and belief by encouraging staff to complete equality monitoring. All equality data is confidential and used to help us understand our workforce’s needs and the degree to which it is representative of the community.

What have we achieved so far?

- Kent County Council supports a forum for its LGB&T staff entitled the ‘Rainbow forum’ which has been running since 2003 and has been putting on events for LGB&T History month since February 2006. These are wide ranging – reaching out to the community in different areas of the County as well as working in partnership with other Local Authorities in the area. Members of Rainbow have actively networked across the organisation and encouraged services to reach out to the LGB&T community; services that

⁴³ Source Stonewall

⁴⁴ *Op cit*

have been particularly active have been Libraries, Fostering and Adoption and Registration services.

- In 2009 the Youth Service in partnership with LGB&T young people produced a curriculum resource pack highlighting LGB&T issues including bullying and how to access support; this was for use at Youth clubs and in schools.
- Members of Rainbow are involved in the Equality impact assessment review network: scrutinising policy, services and procedures and contribute as sexual orientation champions across the directorates.
- KCC were involved in planning and setting up the Kent Homophobic and Trans-phobic Reporting Line in partnership with Kent Police and continue to link to this on the Hate Crime pages.
- At least three specific LGB&TQ Youth Groups have been set up in the county.
- KCC supported for Thanet Pride 2010 alongside Kent Police and Fire and Rescue Services.
- On the International Day Against Homophobia in 2010, KCC re-launched its Dignity & Respect Policy Statement under a promotional campaign entitled 'Expect Respect'. The campaign restated KCC commitment and expectations of fair treatment for its staff and members of the public.

The challenges:

- Insufficient support networks and local groups in Kent, particularly in rural areas, to provide help and information to people who are Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual. This makes consulting with members of the LGB&T community particularly difficult.
- In Kent, between 1st January 2009 and 31st December 2009 there were 163 incidents of a homophobic nature reported to Kent Police. 41.1%* of respondents to a recent needs assessment survey of the LGB&T community in Kent and Medway, said they had experienced a homophobic incident, of these 58.5% went unreported to the Police⁴⁵. A high percentage of homophobic abuse may remain unreported. *Of 199 people surveyed
- Negative perceptions of the police still remain amongst some, particularly older members of the LGB community.
- LGB people often feel unsafe on public transport and other areas where people gather.
- Homophobia is still evident in the attitudes and behaviour of some healthcare staff.
- Lack of knowledge and awareness exists amongst healthcare staff about specific LGB health needs.

⁴⁵ Dye, Christopher, *Branching Out, Kent and Medway Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) needs assessment 2008*, The Metro Centre, March 2009,

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- Some LGB people do not seek appropriate treatment through fear of discrimination because of their sexual identity.
- The majority of LGB pupils or those questioning their sexual identity are bullied at school.
- Young people are particularly vulnerable to homelessness, especially during the 'coming out' process.
- Parents can need more help to understand their child's sexual orientation.
- Lack of LGB understanding amongst some third-party staff (e.g. assuming all clients are straight).
- Some LGB people living in care may hide their sexual identity through fear of discrimination or hostility from staff or residents.
- Some partners of LGB clients fear exclusion from key decisions and that their partnership status will not be recognised.

Key priority areas for action:

- Record and deal effectively with homophobic incidents as part of our hate incident procedures, in partnership with Kent Police and other organisations represented on Kent's Hate Crime and Incident Action Group.
- Work to develop awareness and understanding of the experiences and needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual people with our employees and the people of Kent.
- Ensure that awareness of LGB issues is covered as part of anti-bullying programmes in schools
- Work with partner organisations and our LGB/T staff group to continue to support and promote LGBT History Month events across Kent.
- Work to gather data on sexual orientation as part of E&D mapping to develop an accurate picture of Kent.
- Develop links with the LGBT community in Kent for consultation and engagement purposes.

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The Equalities Review, Fairness and Freedom: The Final Report of the Equalities Review, 2007

The University of Birmingham School of Education, My School, my family, my life: Telling it like it is, Disability Rights Commission, March 2007,

Office for National Statistics, Census, (ONS), 2001

National Insurance Number Registrations 2008/09, DWP research report 47 2009

Appendix 3

The Consultation journey of the Equality Act 2007-2010

Disability

Our arrangements for involving disabled people on the identification of issues and priorities in relation to the development of the Disability Equality Scheme are summarised below:

- Staff were engaged and consulted in developing actions and priorities for the employment elements of the Scheme (during April and May 2006) through a questionnaire using the Council's internal website (KNet) and council-wide emails, promoted through our disability champion network including our staff group Level Playing Field.
- Working with the Tizard Centre at the University of Kent, a postal survey was sent to approximately 1,000 disabled people (service users). Focus groups comprising 99 people were also held at three Active Lives events in Maidstone. In total 402 disabled people took part. The questionnaires were analysed by Tizard using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).
- Findings from the questionnaire and the focus groups have been used to develop the Action Plan attached to this Scheme.
- Directorates identified key priorities from their business plans, to be included in the Scheme.
- We co-lead a Disability Equality Scheme Partnership Working Group with Kent Police. This group is open to all public authorities within Kent, additional partners are:
 - Medway Council
 - Kent Fire and Rescue service
 - Kent Strategic Health Authorities
 - Most of the borough councils within the county

The group meets four times a year to share good practice and help each other to develop their schemes.

The Council is committed to ensuring continued involvement with disabled people on priorities and actions in relation to disability, through an active working group of volunteers. The working group will help ensure the Disability Action Plan is explicit and robust, and prioritised appropriately. Areas to be strengthened will also be identified and recorded, and this will inform all future development of this and future schemes.

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Disabled people will be involved on future updates of the Scheme at all key stages, to include identification of the issues and priorities, and the action plan.

Age, gender and race

- Over 100 residents, employees and community and voluntary groups were involved in the development of the Race Equality Strategy 2005/2008 (which now constitutes the Race Equality section of this Strategy)
- BVPI residents' satisfaction survey, postal survey of 1396 male and female respondents undertaken in September 2006, analysed and weighted in relation to age, gender and ethnicity.
- Employee questionnaire (made available on KNet) and staff groups (March 23 to April 23 2007)
- A focus group and two half day mini-depth interview sessions undertaken in March and April 2007, covering the cross-cutting issues of age, gender and race, involving 76 men and women in total.
- Key local voluntary and community groups in the county have been contacted updating them on the new Strategy.