

Kent County Council

Executive Summary

Annual Equality Report April 2013 to March 2014

Useful information

This document is available in a range of formats and can be explained in other languages. To ask for an alternative version, please email diversityinfo@kent.gov.uk

[Kent County Council Equality and Diversity Team,](#)

Phone: 01622 223487

Phone with Type Talk: 18001 01622 223487

Or write to: Kent County Council, Diversity & Equality Team Room G37, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XQ

Foreword by Paul Carter, Leader of Kent County Council

Despite a continuing, difficult financial climate at the Council we remain committed to shaping our services to achieve fair and equitable outcomes for all our residents, no matter what their background.

We demonstrate our commitment by embedding equality throughout the organisation to consider the needs of all communities in the delivery and commissioning of our services.

We lead by example to influence our partners, contractors, local businesses and residents, and by embedding equality as an integral part of our policies and programmes.

In addition, we believe the following principles are important:

- Focus on outcomes rather than process
- Focus on prevention
- addressing underlying causes rather than symptoms
- Focus on evidence based policy and practice

As we face significant reductions in our resources while demands on our services increase, it is not surprising that we are focused on supporting the most vulnerable groups living in Kent: children, older people and vulnerable adults.

The changing population, combined with the limits on finances, mean that we need to be increasingly creative about how we respond to the needs of residents. One way we will do this is by promoting greater independence and resilience for local people.

This means a major shift in how we organise and conduct our business. With this in mind we are integrating our equality objectives into our Strategic commissioning plan and outcomes framework for KCC, and further embedding equality monitoring into the performance framework

Paul Carter
Leader, Kent County Council

Equality policy and local context

Policy

At Kent County Council we recognise the diverse needs of our community. We value and celebrate diversity, and believe it is essential to provide services which work well for all our customers and staff. We are committed to working with our statutory partners, businesses and the voluntary sector to ensure good outcomes for those who live in, work in and visit Kent. **We will achieve our vision through our roles as:** community leader; service provider; commissioner of goods and services; and employer. We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity and diversity through: our employment opportunities and standards; service delivery; and working practices. We will ensure that our services do not unfairly discriminate against any of our customers, so that everyone in Kent has the opportunity to reach their full potential. We manage equality and diversity through:

- Community Mapping (aiming to understand our community through social demographic data, customer data and feedback)
- Leadership, Partnership & Commitment – Working together
- Community Engagement – Listening to our Community
- Customer Service – Delivering Excellence
- Modern and Diverse Workforce (inclusive recruitment and retention, maintaining fair employment practices, and developing a ‘diversity aware’ workforce)

Context and background

With a resident population of just over 1.46 million, Kent has the largest population of all the English counties. The following information is understood from the 2011 Census.

- 93.7% of all Kent residents are of White ethnic origin – this includes those who are White British, as well as other identities such as Irish, Eastern European origin etc. Kent also has Gypsy, Roma and Traveller populations greater than national average.
- 6.3% of Kent residents are classified as Black or Minority Ethnic (BME). This proportion is lower than the national average for England (14.6%), although has risen from the previous census and is anticipated to rise over time.
- People living in urban areas make up 71% of the Kent population but only occupy 21% of the total land area in Kent.
- 51.1% of the total population of Kent is female and 48.9% are male.
- Significantly in terms of future challenges, Kent has an ageing population with the number of 65+ year olds forecast to increase by 43.4% between now and 2026.
- However, Kent also has a greater proportion of young people aged 5-19 years and people aged 45+ years than the national average.

- There is no single quantifiable measure of the number of disabled people in Kent (or the UK), because identifying as disabled relies on individuals' self-perception; but it is estimated that 20% of UK residents are disabled people.

Further information on social, demographic and economic aspects of Kent can be found on our website, on the Kent Facts and Figures page.

http://www.kent.gov.uk/your_council/kent_facts_and_figures.aspx

Progress on our Objectives 2013/14

In 2012 the council identified the objectives set out below. Each council directorate is responsible for the publication of its performance data; information and data about on-going, regular service provision is presented to relevant Cabinet Committees and can be found on the KCC Website:

Objective A - Working with all our partners to define and jointly address areas of inequality.

We are achieving this through the implementation of our key strategies and plans, such as: Vision for Kent; Bold Steps and Bold steps for Education; the Kent Children and Young People's Joint Commissioning Board Strategy; and 'Mind the Gap' (Health & Wellbeing Strategy).

This year Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, Education and Young People's Services, Growth, Environment and Transport and Strategic and Corporate Services including Finance, Policy and Human Resources have reported on their progress on equality to their Cabinet Committees. Examples of their achievements can be found on pages 6 to 14 along with the link to the more detailed report at the end of each section.

Objective B - Promoting fair employment practices and creating an organisation that is aware of and committed to equality and diversity and delivers its Public Sector Equality Duty.

Progress on this objective is set out on page 14 Kent County Council's Workforce.

Objectives C and D

Objective C - Improving the way KCC listens to and engages with its employees, communities and partners to develop, implement and review policy and to inform the commissioning of services; and

Objective D - Improving the quality, collection, monitoring and use of equality data as part of the evidence base to inform service design delivery and policy decisions.

These two objectives relate to an organisation-wide need to have a better understanding of who our communities and customers are and how that may affect their needs and demands for our services, and a need to ensure that what we communicate may reach all residents. Examples of where progress has been made on this include:

Equality Impact Process – We revised the equality impact assessment process in 2013/14 to make it easier to embed equality analysis into mainstream working practices. Over 100 equality impact assessments were completed last year as a result of restructures or changes to service provision. We publish these with the decision record. Controls have been put in place to ensure that procurement, consultation and decisions do not take place without equality analysis.

About You - We collect information from service users on their protected characteristics in an 'About You' form. This ensures we have enough evidence to inform decisions. There are five formats of this form including two 'easy read' versions for people with a learning disability.

Consultation - The planning of any consultation is underpinned by equality impact analysis. This helps the council to identify groups who may be affected by decisions, and the most effective methods for communicating and engaging with them. Consultation documents are available in alternative formats, and 'Easy Read' documents are produced as a matter of course if target groups include those with a Learning Disability.

We are making good progress in ensuring that the voices of vulnerable young people are heard and that we understand their journey. Quality assurance surveys, focus groups and exit interviews take place with children in care and care leavers, and the Young Lives Foundation has been commissioned to develop a new survey to understand more fully what it is like to be a child in care. Some specific work has been undertaken to ensure that disabled children and their families are involved in the commissioning of all new services.

We started recording all complaints about potential discrimination in our quarterly monitoring reports from 2013. The authority is identifying these complaints and taking further action where appropriate. Although we do not uphold every complaint we receive, it is good to see that people feel they are able to complain if they feel they have been discriminated against. We are updating the Customer Services Strategy to include equality objectives and outcomes for service users.

Web Access

At KCC, we have facilities on our website to help- people with access requirements. We have the languages and formats page that points people to:

- ask an English-speaking friend to ring the Contact Centre if they need something explained to them in their language; or

- Request our information in an alternative format
- http://www.kent.gov.uk/website_information/languages.aspx

We also promote a link to a page where site visitors can download BrowseAloud. This programme speaks the content on a web page. It can be useful to

- People who have dyslexia,
- People with learning difficulties
- Anyone with mild visual impairments
- People whose first language is not English and whose knowledge of English is limited. BrowseAloud is available at:
http://www.browsealoud.com/page.asp?pg_id=80004

Our new inclusive communication standards state that we must post alternative text files in Word or HTML on our websites alongside PDF versions. A wider choice of formats means there's a better chance of people being able to read our information. These standards also give guidance on how to make information including web content accessible to as many people as possible and we ask all our staff and external partners and contractors to use them.

We completed the 'Easy Read' project in March 2014. It reviewed the council's approach to producing easy read materials for people with a learning disability. All staff in our Learning Disabilities teams have now been trained in the production of information in Easy-read. Extensive easy-read guidance is available for all staff on our Intranet and included as an appendix to our inclusive communications standards (link to follow)

Objective E - Providing inclusive and responsive customer services

This objective is about how we use the approaches outlined above to achieve improved and more equitable outcomes for residents. Examples of how this has been achieved are included on the following pages:

Education and Young Person's Directorate

We are operating in a more diverse education system with greater freedoms and autonomy for schools, colleges and other education and learning providers. In terms of equality and diversity we made the following specific progress in 2013/14:

Kent's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy, launched in January 2014, anticipates the statutory changes for children and young people aged between 0-25 with SEN (Special Educational Needs) and or who are disabled and their families and carers. We are creating more capacity in mainstream schools to support pupils in their local communities, through the development of SEN resourced provisions in a number of schools. In this way, we are embedding the Kent Core Standards in every school. In addition, we are ensuring that there is good access to

workforce development and training through the specialist support available at the Local Inclusion Forum (LIFT).

More than 20 schools, early years settings and colleges are participating in a multi-agency pilot working towards externally accredited Inclusion Awards which will establish a culture of inclusive practice for other providers to follow from 2015. We have undertaken public consultation to increase capacity to support Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Behavioural Emotional and Social Needs (BESN) at Furness and Goldwyn Special Schools. We also have consultation plans in place to increase unit places for speech & language impairment, ASD and satellite provision attached to special schools for severe and complex needs.

The capital programme to expand the number of places in Special schools has already rebuilt or refurbished 14 schools in Kent. Investment continues to bring similar transformation to the remaining 10 schools. This programme will result in an additional 500 Special school places in the County

Free early education became a statutory entitlement for eligible two-year-olds from 1 September 2013, with the local authority having a duty to secure provision. Around 20% of two-year-olds were eligible for free early education from September 2013. The programme will be extended from September 2014 to include around 40% of two-year-olds. We were given a target to secure 3,095 Free for Two places by September 2013 with an increase to 6501 places by September 2014. Nationally, this was the second largest target). We achieved the target to develop 3095 places by September 2013 and have since continued to make progress on the target of developing 6501 places.

In 2013, 177 Primary schools and 43 Secondary schools narrowed the Free School Meal (FSM) achievement gaps. We are taking active steps to disseminate this best practice. All Senior Improvement Advisers (SIAs) and Heads of Service are clear which schools demonstrate best practice and which schools need to improve and they will match support. All SIA's, Area Education Officers (AEO's), and Heads of Service will submit case studies of schools in their districts that have significantly narrowed the gap

The January 2013 and 2014 data shows that participation for Year 12 vulnerable learners has increased by 3.1%. This modest improvement is encouraging as it reflects the impact of the increased focus on supporting vulnerable young people by KCC, in particular through the 14-24 Skills and Employability Strategy, the SEN Review, the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) review, the reorganisation of Preventative services through KIASS and Troubled Families

A full report on what has been achieved in 2013/14 can be found in the final item of the Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee, Wednesday, 24th September, 2014:

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s48567/Final%20Item%20D1%20-%20Annual%20Equality%20and%20Diversity%20Report.pdf>

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s48561/Item%20D1%20-%20Appendix%20-%20Annual%20Equality%20and%20Diversity%20Report.pdf>

Growth, Environment and Transport Directorate

The Growth, Environment and Transport Directorate has a good equality record with their Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) being used as good practice examples across the authority.

The Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) service has asked contractors to deliver a 'meet and greet' service, with assistance available to customers for the lifting and carrying of waste. Contractors running the HWRCs are also required to comply with the access scheme for customers. In addition, service information is made accessible to customers through a range of formats for example Easyread, Braille, and alternative languages when requested.

Over the last year adults with learning disabilities have made 1,529 visits to Libraries to attend activities. A key aim of the service is to ensure that they feel comfortable and secure in attending regular library activities. For example they attend events such as Talk Times, author events, Knit and Natter sessions, Time2Give volunteering, IT session and the Six Book Challenge -over 80 adults with learning disabilities received a certificate after completing the challenge (50 adults in 2012-2013.)

Meet and Practice English Conversation groups are held in 7 libraries for people whose first language is not English. People meet up once a week to practise English in an informal and relaxed setting. The marriage script has been rewritten to be totally inclusive of all couples. In the Jewish and Muslim faiths, burial has to take place within 24 hours of death. A duty registrar is available 24 hours a day to register the death to issue appropriate paperwork for a funeral to take place.

Economic Development identified and evidenced variations in the distribution of wealth in different parts of Kent. They used this evidence to inform how they would distribute economic development activities across the county. Examples in 2013/14 include the preparation of the Kent and Medway Economic Review, which provided the basis for Kent's contribution to the Strategic Economic Plan. This evidence has helped KCC to identify areas where investment is required to overcome economic

disparities at sub-county level, and to ensure that KCC enables growth in locations where the market will not deliver alone. In practical terms, this means a particular focus on East Kent and North Kent.

Kent Highways work closely with Highway contractor Amey to run an apprenticeship scheme which encourages greater numbers of young people into work. Working with Kent Police KCC ensures that our Driver Diversion Courses are accessible with reasonable adjustments made on request.

In Environment Planning and Enforcement, the Country Parks service maintains easy access paths and provides *trampers* at several of its sites to allow greater physical access in the parks. It also provides engagement activities for schools which are accessible for all children including those with Special Educational Needs. In Thanet partnership work with the District Council delivered the “Footprints in the Sand” Project. This project focused on encouraging disadvantaged children to use and understand the beach. Again partnership with Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and contractors work was undertaken to enlarge and improve the Coldharbour Caravan Site. This has resulted in a site that been welcomed by residents and the Gypsy and Traveller communities. A key feature of the development was to ensure disability access in utility blocks and communal spaces.

A full report on what has been achieved in 2013/14 can be found at Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee Wednesday, 17th September, 2014

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s48402/Annual%20Equality%20and%20Diversity%20Report.pdf>

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s48403/Appendix%201.pdf>

Growth Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee
Tuesday, 16th September, 2014

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s48358/Item%20D3%20-%20Annual%20Equality%20and%20Diversity%20Report.pdf>

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s48359/Item%20D3%20-%20Appendix%201%20Annual%20Equality%20and%20Diversity%20Report.pdf>

Adult Social Care

A key challenge in Adult Social Care has been to gain a better understanding of the diversity of our service users. Whilst the service works on a personal basis with many clients and has an understanding of an individual’s care needs, we recognise an ongoing need to better understand the broader patterns of experience to help us

plan our resources for the future. we publish achievements in adult social care in our Local Account Annual Report 2013-14. The report illustrates how, during that year, we worked hard to:

- keep vulnerable adults safe;
- monitor the quality of services;
- enable people to regain their independence and remain at home;
- reduce the number of permanent admissions to residential care;
- support more people through a person-centred process and receive a personal budget;
- support more people with a learning disability into employment;
- use surveys and other feedback to look at what we are doing well and what needs further work;
- work with health to plan and provide joint services.

Some examples of these achievements are highlighted below to show how adult social care work covers the nine protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership sex and sexual orientation where relevant to the service provided.

The Ladder to the Moon programme is about engaging and increasing the wellbeing of residents with Dementia. It provides training that enables health and care organisations to develop active, creative, vibrant care services that incorporate creativity and the arts. The programme has recently commenced at Ashley Gardens Care Home in Maidstone and will run for a period of 12 months. Ashley Gardens will submit feedback to KCC on a monthly basis. Reports so far, indicate that the programme has had a positive impact on residents at the home.

We have developed a carers information booklet, called the, 'Kent Wide Carers' Publication'. It includes information on a wide range of topics and services that are available to carers. It can be found at local public access points such as GP surgeries, hospitals, gateways and via our website. We ran a big marketing campaign during Carer's Week 2013, to promote awareness of whom carers are and support them to identify themselves as carers so that they can be informed of the support services available. Carers' organisations have exceeded their target to identify new carers in 2013-14.

Making Safeguarding Personal-Over the last year we have reviewed our processes to make sure the person is fully involved. Kent was one of 46 councils that took part in a national pilot project last year. It aimed to ensure individuals are at the centre of safeguarding activity and have the opportunity to discuss the outcomes they want to see, at the beginning of the process. Through follow up discussions, we can then

see to what extent these have been met and provide reports to boards that are meaningful and include the experiences of the individual.

The main findings (also reflected by other councils) are better practice, through greater understanding between the individual and professionals. Clear direction was achieved by working towards the outcomes the individual wanted. We found that the language used was important because 'adult abuse/protection' was better understood by service users than the term 'safeguarding'. We discussed with people at the beginning of the process what outcomes they would like to see. As a result of this happening and outcomes being recorded, we fully or partially achieved 100% of these by the end of the process. Where outcomes had not been discussed achievement rates were lower at 60%.

At KCC, we support more than 4,000 adults with learning disabilities out of a total of around 28,000 who live in Kent have a learning disability and are supported by KCC. The publication *Adult Learning Disabilities in Kent -review 2013* captures the work we and our partners, do for people. Our partners include Kent Community Health Trust and Kent and Medway Partnership Trust. The service also works to make learning disability part of everyone's planning, with services that are inclusive and personalised.

We recently invested in a project to review the Easy Read information provided by the council to make it more understandable and familiar. The Easy Read project is one of the ways the council is helping people with a learning disability by presenting information to them in a way which is easier to understand. It spent six months working with service users, staff and partner organisations to produce targeted information for people with learning disabilities - not a 'one size fits all'.

KCC has new guidelines on how to write Easy Read, an image bank to help support the information, templates for staff to use and a cheat sheet of difficult words to avoid when producing letters, care plans and personal information for clients with learning disabilities.

Following a period of review the Kent and Medway Partnership Trust (KMPT) have launched a new county wide service which they provide on our behalf. An AMHP (Advanced Mental Health Professional) is either a mental health social worker or a Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN) who has been trained to carry out assessments under the Mental Health Act. The new Kent AMHP Service is a 24 hour dedicated service supported by mixed role AMHPs who will be on the rota a week at a time to the service and whilst based in the Community Mental Health Teams (CMHT).

The service is based at St Martins Hospital, Canterbury and Priority House, Maidstone, working closely with colleagues in the Acute Service and Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment (CRHT). It will deliver a more responsive and flexible service, managing the demand for mental health assessments across the county.

The role we play in improving health and wellbeing has become more prominent. The new Health and Wellbeing Board has brought together organisations to coordinate and oversee the development of integrated approaches to the

commissioning of services. At KCC, we have a lead responsibility for a range of local public health improvement and prevention work. Addressing health inequalities and ensuring access to public health information is now our responsibility. Healthwatch will be the consumer voice for health and social care. Through these arrangements, the voices of people at risk of discrimination and inequalities will be heard.

A full report on what has been achieved can be found at Adult Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee Friday, 26th September, 2014

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s48659/D5%20-%20Adults%20Annual%20Equality%20Report.pdf>

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s48681/D4%20-%20Appx%20-%20Local%20Account%20v2.pdf>

Children's Social Care Services

Children's Social Care Services gather comprehensive equalities data to inform individual service and support care planning, and provides aggregated data to assist in challenging and improving the total service. Information on the cultural backgrounds of looked after children is used to inform planning for foster carer recruitment and other placement procurement. Information is also used to monitor access to services and the flow of children through care pathways from referral through assessment, to child protection 'section 47' investigations. In addition, it is used in assessing and comparing the characteristics of children with an active 'child in need' plan.

The collation of views from children and young people about their experiences informs key strategies and the Kent Pledge to children in care. This has led to members signing up to the Pledge. It includes a clear commitment to take into account young people's background and beliefs, including ethnic and cultural needs, and any needs because of a disability.

For disabled children and their families who may need significant adaptations to enable them to stay in their homes, we have re-written the Home Support Fund Policy to give them parity with disabled adults.

A full report on what has been achieved can be found at Children's Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee Tuesday, 23rd September, 2014

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s48592/Item%20D3%20-%20Annual%20Equality%20Report.pdf>

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s48593/Item%20D3%20-%20App%201%20-%20SCHW%20Equalities%20Annual%20Report%20Return%202014.pdf>

Public Health

The Public Health Division ensure that all there strategy development, projects, programmes and commissioned services undertake Equality Impact Assessments before development, to embed equality into all that they do. In the past year examples of this include:

The Equality Impact Assessment for the development of a new Postural Stability Service identified two potential challenges: that the service may need to work harder to reach out to individuals from other ethnic minority communities; and a possible issue in relation to location of services such as church halls, creating a possible barrier for individuals with a particular religion or belief. To address these, we adjusted The service specification to ensure that harder to reach ethnic minority groups are proportionately represented, and to make a range of venues available in each locality. The service specification is currently out to tender and a new service will be in place by January 2015.

Public Health has a responsibility for sexual health services and a number of areas were identified for further action. For example with relation to disability work has been undertaken to ensure information and communication concerning the service fully meets the needs of people with disabilities. This has led to a change in some leafleted information. The comprehensive website which will be developed as a part of the new service will also seek to improve access to advice and services for people whose impairments may make it difficult for them to reach drop-in centres. Staff training is key to ensuring that service providers are aware of and sympathetic to the specific needs of disabled people. This training is now a requirement of the commissioning scope.

The Equality Impact assessment for the Sexual health services identified requirements to adapt the service to provide better bespoke access to Young People, and to ensure that universal services are provided in a more accessible and supportive way. The service specification for the recently tendered sexual health services defined a Young Persons' service as part of the revised programme. This will include improved use of digital communications, better outreach and ensuring facilities are located where there is most need/demand.

Corporate Services

The Strategic and Corporate Services Directorate has a role in equality compliance that covers every service that KCC provides. They fulfil an important role regarding equality governance and in the main provide the internal controls to help achieve compliance of The Equality Act 2010. Respective roles include:

- Finance ensuring equality analysis at an early point in the budget process to inform decision-makers
- Procurement ensuring there is equality analysis for every specification to cover any additional needs required to complete the contract and promotion of equality in procurement
- Governance and Law ensuring that decisions comply with 'due diligence'
- Human Resources responsible for promoting and ensuring the promulgation of equality and diversity issues in employment and ensuring that equality analysis is carried out on changes to staffing
- ICT provision of accessible and usable technology and systems
- Property & Infrastructure ensuring that buildings and equipment are accessible and usable.

Communication & the Consultation Team publish EqlAs allowing the public to comment on KCC's assumptions. The Equality Team give advice and guidance.

Kent County Council's Workforce

As the largest employer in Kent, KCC believes and recognises that the diversity of its workforce is one of its greatest strengths. KCC is committed to challenging inequality, discrimination and disadvantage for everyone who lives in, works in and visits Kent.

This section contains details of the makeup of the Authority's workforce, focusing on headline statistics, together with the progress on our Equality Objectives as at 31st March 2014.

Headline statistics:

- Currently 8,116.2 fte (non-schools)
- 76.7% of staff are female (51.1%*)
- 5.7% of staff are Black & Minority Ethnic (6.3%*)
- 4.2% have declared a disability (7.6%)

- 2.3% of staff are lesbian, gay or bisexual
- 53.8% of KCC's leadership group are women
- Sickness levels continue to improve to 6.84 days lost per fte
- The proportion of staff aged 25 or under has increased to 7.0%
- Average age of staff is 45.3 years
- 44% of staff are on grades KR6 or below (earning salaries up to £20,877)
- 40.3% of employees are aged over 50
- 2.1% of employees are aged over 65 (5.9%*)

The percentage of the workforce from minority groups has continued to increase in 2013/14.

The average age of the workforce remained static from the previous year at 45.3 years.

Note: figures in brackets with an asterisk are the percentage of the Kent population from those groups.

Personnel Committee Report on staffing figures:

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s46832/Item%205%20Annual%20Workforce%20Profile%20-%20report.pdf>

Fair Employment Practice – Promote fair employment practices

Disability Passport – The Passport which was developed by the Level Playing Field staff group continues to be mainstreamed within our recruitment and retention process. The document supports staff with a disability to access the adjustments they require to ensure they are able to do their job to the best of their ability.

Two Ticks – KCC is proud to display the Two Ticks symbol and during 2013/14 was accredited for the 11th year running by the Department for Work and Pensions for their achievements as a Two Ticks employer.

Equality Training – KCC continues to mainstream Diversity and Equality into their extensive range of training whilst providing focused training, including; Introduction to Equality & Diversity, Mindfulness, Equality & Diversity in Recruitment, and Mental Health First Aid. During 2013/14, 1146 staff completed the Introduction to Equality and Diversity and 269 completed Diversity and Equality in Recruitment.

Stonewall Diversity Champion – KCC recognises that people perform better when they can be themselves and is proud to be part of the Stonewall's Diversity Programme. As a gay friendly employer KCC is listed within 'Starting Out', the national guide for students and job seekers wanting to find a gay-friendly employer.

Staff Groups – KCC's staff groups provide support and development opportunities for group members as well as advising on policy and practice to support our

commitment to promoting equality, valuing diversity and combating unfair treatment. As part of KCC's ongoing commitment to further capacity build our staff groups a 'Success Audit workshop' was delivered, ensuring that our staff group chairs continue to support high performing networks across the organisation. The groups are: Aspire (younger members of staff), Level Playing Field (disabled staff and carers of a disabled person), Rainbow (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender staff) and Unite (Black & Minority Ethnic staff)

Corporate Equalities Group – our established group, led by a Corporate Director, continues to champion and mainstream Diversity and Equality into key business priorities across KCC.

Routes into Employment

Work Experience – KCC continues to provide work placement opportunities for young people in Kent. Work placements vary in length and can be offered as a 'one off' or as part of a longer placement. During 2013/14, 88 young people were provided with placements.

Kent Apprenticeship Programme – through the Kent Apprenticeship Programme, KCC continues to employ apprentices throughout the Authority across all Directorates. A total of 88 apprentices were appointed in 2013/14. In terms of disability (5%) and ethnicity (7%) the profile of the apprentices exceeds the KCC profile.

KCC's Graduate Programme – offers opportunities across 3 streams, the organisation has a long tradition of employing people through its Graduate Programme with over 120 having been recruited through the scheme with 60 still in employment, from grade KR 9 to senior positions, including a Director.

GradsKent – GradsKent is managed by KCC's Skills and Employability Service. With a mission to increase graduate and skills retention in Kent, GradsKent has a registered pool of students and graduates looking for work across all sectors and locations. GradsKent works with internal and external employers, matching them with their skills and recruitment needs. In 2013/14, thirty two graduates were recruited within KCC through GradsKent. Around 70% of registered users are aged 25 or under, and 90% under the age of 35. Just over 40% of graduates considered are Black & Minority Ethnic, 2% declared a disability and 1.5% Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual or Transgender.

Listening to our staff – improving the way KCC listens to and engages with its employees

On-borders Survey –276 staff who were new to KCC took part in a survey which provided feedback on how they felt about KCC. It helped KCC to understand what

made staff wish to continue their employment with KCC or what caused them to be less engaged and looking to leave. Data was collected in a way that enabled us to understand, where the sample size allowed, what affected certain minority groups as well and enabled us to see if these were different to the whole population surveyed.

Growing a diverse workforce – improving the quality, collection, monitoring and use of our equality data

Self-service – during 2013/14 KCC enabled staff to enter and/or change their equalities data held on the council's staffing database through an on-line self-service tool. The information is confidential and enables the Authority to maintain an accurate and up to date profile of the workforce. We promoted this facility in 2013/14 asking staff to take the opportunity to either check the data held to either enter or change it. This helps KCC to ensure the data it holds is accurate and fit for purpose. The introduction of self service has seen a significant improvement in the number of declarations by staff.

Key challenges for 2014/15 and beyond

A major challenge for 2015 onwards is the limited availability of public finances, combined with an ageing population, and an increasing population of children and young people. The council will need to ensure it meets the needs of the people of Kent, on significantly reduced resources. This necessitates a major shift in how we organise and conduct our business, which will include promoting greater independence and resilience for local people. Owing to the demographics of the county and the nature of the services we provide, there will be significant changes affecting older people, children and young people and disabled people. However, we must take care not to overlook the needs of people with other protected characteristics. We are operating in a more diverse range of providers of public services. For example in the education system there are greater freedoms and autonomy for schools, colleges and other education providers. To effect the improvement in outcomes that we need to achieve for residents especially for those who are highly dependent on public services, we need to work in close partnership with a wider variety of public, voluntary and private sector providers. We also need to promote greater independence for people, with earlier and more preventative interventions where necessary. For example, in adult social care, we need to change the way we deliver our services now so we can continue to offer quality care and value for money in the future. We are committed to improving social care outcomes within the constraints of a challenging financial climate. By 2018, there will be a slight increase in older people, and demand on services will gradually increase. At the same time funding that councils can use to spend on services has been reduced. Current trends show that from 2018 to 2026 the population of older people will increase significantly. Kent County Council is working with many other organisations to provide joint services and funding to help people manage their own health at home and in the community.

