

**From:** Peter Oakford, Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services

**Andrew Ireland, Corporate Director for Social Care, Health & Wellbeing**

**To:** Children's Social Care & Health Cabinet Committee

**23 September 2014**

**Subject:** Annual Equality and Diversity Report

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Electoral Division:** All divisions

**Summary:** This report sets out a position statement for services within Social Care, Health & Wellbeing regarding equality and diversity work and progress on KCC Equality objectives for 2013/14.

**Recommendation(s):**

Note current performance

Continue to ensure that equality governance is observed in relation to decision making

Note the proposed changes to Equality Objectives and agree to receive revised objectives

Agree to receive this report annually in order to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

**1. Introduction**

1.1 Publication of equality information is compulsory in England for all public authorities. Proactive publication of equality information ensures not only compliance with the legal requirements, but also greater understanding by the public of the difficult decisions an authority faces, and why it takes those decisions. Gathering equality information and using it to inform decision-making can also enable authorities to achieve greater value for money in the services they deliver through better targeting of services.

**2. Financial Implications**

2.1 There are no financial implications in producing an annual report.

**3. Policy Framework**

3.1 Advancing equality and reducing socio-economic inequalities in Kent contributes towards Council's Medium Term Plan, 'Bold Steps'. The Equality Objectives were developed drawing on the council's. As such the objectives correspond with existing council priorities and the objectives support the

aims of, helping the Kent economy to grow, putting the citizen in control and tackling disadvantage.

- 3.2 The council published its equality objectives in 2011/12. Each service was asked to provide equality information and to demonstrate how they complied with equality legislation between 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014, and what performance measures they have in place to achieve the KCC Equality Objectives.

#### **4. Key Achievements**

- 4.1 Key achievements for Specialist Children's Services division in Social Care, Health & Wellbeing directorate have been:
- 4.2 The collation of views from children and young people about their experiences to inform key strategies and the Kent Pledge to children in care. This has led to members signing up to the Pledge which 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. This culminated in a presentation to full council on the 17 July 2014.
- 4.3 For disabled children and their families who may need significant adaptations to enable them to stay in their homes, the Home Support Fund Policy has been rewritten to provide them consistency with disabled adults.
- 4.4 For Public Health, the focus has been on using the council's new commissioning responsibilities and Equality Impact Assessments to improve the quality of services for all sections of the Kent community. Examples include:
- 4.5 Sexual health services identified a need that the service be adapted in order to provide better bespoke access to Young People and 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 and to provide universal services in a more accessible and supportive way. This will include improved use of digital communications, better outreach and ensuring facilities are located where there is most need/demand.
- 4.6 When developing a new service specification for infant feeding services a need was identified in West Kent has demonstrated a need to target work with white women as well as offer a universal service, as this cohort was least likely to continue with breastfeeding. Also it was identified that outreach work was needed to help men support their partners. Both of these needs were included in the service specifications for the recently tendered service.
- 4.7 A report on what has been achieved in 2013/14 can be seen in Appendix 1.

#### **5. Governance**

- 5.1 In 2012 governance arrangements were agreed to ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) following an internal audit. Governance is based on decisions having an EqIA at both Departmental

Management Team and Member levels. If decisions are taken without full equality analysis the authority is open to potential Judicial Review

- 5.2 KCC continues to use EqlAs to capture and evidence our analysis on the impact of our decisions and policies on the People of Kent. The Equality Act abolished the need for EqlAs but is clear on the need to undertake equality analysis in order to demonstrate that due regard has been paid to our Equality duties and KCC evidences this by way of an EqlA. EqlAs assess the impacts and or needs of policies, procedures and services on staff, Members and customers.
- 5.3 It has also been noted that there is no process in place regarding Officer decisions under delegated authority to ensure that Officers making decisions can evidence compliance with the Equality Act and the PSED. Arrangements are now being reviewed to ensure that all decisions have the outcomes of an equality analysis as part of the reports

## **6 Future reporting**

- 6.1 It is proposed that KCC revises and consults on its equality objectives during 2014/2015. The objectives will be incorporated in to the new Strategic Commissioning Plan and the accompanying Outcomes Framework so that KCC can embed equality monitoring in to the core performance framework.
- 6.2 This will result in greater compliance in relation to the delivery of organisational priorities and core services. Critically outcomes will be monitored through core performance management frameworks which will result in greater efficiency and accountability in relation to the delivery and outcomes of the objectives and services to customers. Performance monitoring is to be reported to the relevant Committees and this will meet the statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010.
- 6.3 Duplication will be reduced through streamlining KCC's equality duty by including public information within other published reports.

## **7 Legal Implications and Risk Management.**

- 7.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) requires the Council to publish its Equality Annual Report each year.

## **8 Equality Impact Assessment**

- 8.1 There is no requirement to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment because this paper reports performance monitoring on the previous year's work and internal governance arrangements.

## **9. Conclusion**

The annual report has been able to identify progress on the relevant equality objectives. The Directorate can demonstrate that it provides accessible and usable services but it needs to continue to improve its governance arrangements and review how it communicates and provides information with service users.

## 10. Recommendation(s)

**Recommendation(s):** (select relevant wording from below)

**The Children's Social Care & Health Cabinet Committee is asked to:**

Note current performance.

Continue to ensure that equality governance is observed in relation to decision making.

Note the proposed changes to equality Objectives and agree to receive revised objectives.

Agree to receive this report annually in order to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

## 11. Background Documents

11.1 Kent County Council Equality Objectives.

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/corporate-policies/equality-and-diversity/equality-and-diversity-objectives>

## 12. Contact details

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