

Kent County Council

Executive Summary

Annual Equality and Diversity Report April 2016 to March 2017

Useful information

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alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk

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

Phone with Text relay: 18001 03000 414141

Or write to: Kent County Council, Diversity & Equality Team, Room 2.70, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XQ

Equality policy and local context

Policy

In 2016, KCC published the Equality and Human Rights Policy and Objectives 2016-2020. It has been aligned to the Strategic Statement and Commissioning Framework for Kent County Council (KCC), as the two documents set out the organisations priorities and approach to delivering outcomes for the people of Kent.

We recognise the diverse needs of our community and are committed to promoting equality of opportunity and diversity in employment, commissioning and service delivery.

We value diversity and believe it is essential to provide services which work well for all residents and staff. The services KCC designs and delivers, on its own or with partners, should focus on allowing people, families and communities to be independent. We will treat people with dignity and respect and help people to be safe and socially included. We will support and enable people to make informed choices, so that they will have control over their lives. We are committed to working with all statutory partners, businesses and the voluntary sector to ensure the best possible outcomes for those who live in, work in and visit Kent.

We will challenge discrimination and encourage respect, understanding and dignity for everyone living, working and visiting Kent. This will be achieved through our influence in the community, strategic planning, and commissioning and policy development in employment and in service delivery.

As a public sector organisation we follow the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act 2010, to protect individuals from discrimination against people on the basis of their protected characteristics. The characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnerships
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion and Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

With a resident population of just over 1.54 million, Kent (excluding Medway) has the largest population of all the English counties. The following information is taken from the 2011 Census and the mid-year population survey.

- 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 the national average.

- The 2011 Census recorded that 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%).
- People living in urban areas make up 74% of the Kent population but only occupy 23% of the total land area in Kent.
- The Mid-year population survey notes that 51% of the total population of Kent identify as female and 49% as male.
- Significantly in terms of future challenges, Kent has an ageing population with the number of 65+ year olds forecast to increase by 57.5% between 2015-2035.
- Kent has a greater proportion of young people aged 5-19 years and people aged 45+ years than the England average.
- There is no single quantifiable measure of the number of disabled people in Kent (or the UK), because identifying as disabled relies on an individuals' self-perception; but it is estimated that 17.6% of Kent (excluding Medway) residents are disabled people.
- 1434 Civil partnerships were formed between 2006-2015 in Kent. This dataset only relates to civil partnerships that are formed within Kent. It does not necessarily provide a true reflection of the number of Lesbian Gay and Bi - sexual people living in Kent.

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/about-the-council/information-and-data/Facts-and-figures-about-Kent>

KCC Equality Objectives

KCC published its previous equality objectives in September 2012. The objectives covered the period between 2012-2016. The Equality Objectives for the council were:

- Working with all our partners to define and jointly address areas of inequality;
- Promoting fair employment practices and creating an organisation that is aware of and committed to equality and diversity and delivers its - PSED;
- 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;
- Improving the quality, collection, monitoring and use of equality data as part of the evidence base to inform service design delivery and policy decisions;
- Providing inclusive and responsive customer services through;
- Understanding and responding to the impacts on people when KCC is doing its work.

Equality Objectives 2016-2020

Each Directorate was asked to provide equality information and to demonstrate how they complied with equality legislation between 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017, and what performance measures they have in place to achieve the KCC Equality Objectives

Performance against the equality objectives in 2016-2017 has been reported to Directorate Management Teams (DMT) and Cabinet Committees between June and September 2017. Evidence submitted suggests that overall the council has made good progress on the processes and procedures that are needed to mainstream equality into core business.

The progress made against the existing objectives has helped KCC to develop new policy and practices that help to improve equality outcomes for protected groups in Kent. In addition to this, they have contributed towards the evidence base in developing new directorate based Equality Objectives.

Examples of activity undertaken in 2016-2017 are summarised below.

Children, Young People and Education Directorate (CYPE).

Education and learning has the potential to improve the wellbeing and life chances of all children and young people, especially the most vulnerable groups in our communities including those protected by the Equality Act 2010.

The CYPE Vision and Priorities for Improvement - 2017-2020 is the key strategic plan for Children, Young People and Education in Kent. The Plan sets out shared goals and includes a range of ambitious priority improvements up to 2020. These ambitions and strategic priorities for Children, Young People and Education are based on a rigorous analysis of current performance and challenging expectations for future improvements. Progress made against each equality priority is detailed below each objective:

Narrow the achievement gaps for all groups, including Free School Meals (FSM) pupils, learners with SEND, and Children in Care:

While there is very positive year on year improvement in pupil outcomes in Kent, our biggest challenge is to achieve more progress in narrowing achievement gaps, especially for those supported by the Pupil Premium.

Many aspects of education in Kent continue to improve, including more good and outstanding schools and better standards of achievement at the end of Primary education and at GCSE. The system as a whole has moved on significantly but some groups of children and young people are still being left behind, and these are our biggest challenges. Our achievement gaps for Pupil Premium pupils, Children in Care and learners with Special Educational Needs are still too wide and their outcomes are not good enough. Going forward it is a key priority for us to raise attainment at all key stages and narrow achievement gaps, particularly for vulnerable learners.

These gaps are proving hard to close. Gaps in Kent are wider than the national gaps at every stage of education and, following the national trend, they become greater as children get older. This means that too few pupils are helped successfully to catch up, and even where Free School Meals (FSM) pupils achieve the expected standard at an early Key Stage too many fall behind and do not achieve the expected standard at the next Key Stage.

The Government's new term for narrowing the achievement gap is Diminishing the Difference. We have produced two toolkits, for Primary and Secondary Schools, that bring together some of the most effective approaches to Diminishing the Difference. These were shared at a Pupil Premium conference held by the Authority and attended by 200 schools at the beginning of February 2017. In addition, a summary of good practice was shared with all schools.

Increase post 16 – 25 participation and employment opportunities for the most vulnerable groups:

In the last year we reduced the number of NEETs in Kent to under 5% for the second year running (rolling three month average for November, December and January) January 2016 – 5.0%, January 2015 - 4.7% and January 2014 - 5.8%. The Target was 3.5% NEETs for January 2016. In January 2017 the NEET percentage was 3.0%. Our NEET figures are still too high and too many 16-18 year olds are either not participating in education or training or they do not have the right options, support and provision to ensure they achieve success.

By 2017, we aim to ensure there will be no more than 2.5% of young people aged 16-17 (years 12 and 13 age group) who are NEET and there will be full participation in education and work based training for this age group with year on year reductions in the NEET figures to no more than 1% by 2020.

Ensure more vulnerable young people are able to access progression pathways post 16, including the offer of an apprenticeship.

In the last year we improved employment or progression for vulnerable learners, through a range of projects managed by the Skills and Employability Service. Professional sponsored support for 32 young people to undertake Assisted Apprenticeships, in preparation for full Apprenticeships; and 28 SEND young people placed onto the pilot Supported Internship Programme. 40 places are available for vulnerable learners looking at moving into Assisted Apprenticeships, with a greater onus on the employer financially supporting the learner with professional support from the Skills and Employability Service.

Increase access to early years for the most vulnerable including the two-year old offer of free provision for the most disadvantaged.

In the last year we delivered the 'Free for Two' scheme in Kent with take up having increased to a maximum 70% in December 2016, as part of the Government's policy

for Free Early Education places for disadvantaged two year olds. Work will continue to promote and support take up by eligible children and families. We also established a project to ensure the delivery of the Government's policy of 30 Hours of Free Childcare for the 3 and 4 year old children of eligible parents, with effect from September 2017.

Drive down exclusions from schools to zero.

In the last year we developed support to manage challenging behaviour in Primary schools and reduce rates of exclusion. We have put in place better quality assurance and monitoring systems to ensure that the eight Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) Primary school hubs deliver the support that meets local needs and results in a reduction in permanent exclusions.

In February 2016, we piloted a single digital point of access for inclusion and attendance providing information about prevention and statutory support. We have had particular success in reducing permanent Primary school exclusions by 38% (47 in 2014-2015 to 16 in 2015-2016).

The latest exclusion data for Kent indicates that the number of exclusions reduced significantly in the 2015-2016 academic year. Countywide, the number of permanent exclusions has been significantly reduced from 105 to 66 compared to the same period in 2015, with 727 fewer fixed-term exclusions, reducing from 10,723 to 9,996. This reflects good practice in many schools, supported by Local Authority (LA) services, in identifying and providing appropriate help for vulnerable pupils with challenging behaviour and other learning needs.

In order to disseminate the good practice and effective processes that have been adopted by many schools in Kent, we have produced the first Kent Exclusion Guidance for Schools and Governors.

The work of the Pupil Referral Units and other Alternative Provision has also played a key role in working with schools to identify alternatives to exclusions, providing appropriate support for children with challenging behaviours.

Increase the proportion of pupils in receipt of the Pupil Premium attending selective education.

In the last year KCC undertook a Select Committee Inquiry into Grammar Schools and Social Mobility (report published in June 2016) in order to improve the representation of children from disadvantaged backgrounds in grammar schools, if suitable for their abilities. The report made a number of recommendations which were agreed by County Council and progress in implementing these recommendations is being monitored.

Many of the recommendations have been cited by the new Government in bringing forward their selective schools' proposals contained within the DfE consultation document 'Schools that Work for Everyone'. All Grammar and Primary schools received a copy of the Select Committee report and were encouraged to implement

the recommendations. Sound progress in the nine months since the publication of the report has been made and more will be made in the forthcoming year.

In terms of increasing fair access to Grammar schools, a significant proportion (more than 50%) of Grammars in the County have now introduced some form of prioritisation within their admission arrangements for disadvantaged pupils in receipt of the Pupil Premium.

Where appropriate, fewer young people become young offenders.

Youth Justice is now embedded across the work of the Early Help and Preventative Services. The central Youth Justice Service focuses on court disposals, and the Early Help Units focus on out of court disposals. The annual statutory Youth Justice Plan for the county outlines the key priorities and performance targets for the year.

In the last year, there has been more effective working of the Youth Justice Board, to ensure all agencies contribute to the reduction in youth offending, and re-offending, and young people are helped towards positive destinations through education and training.

In 2015-2016 the number of first time entrants into the Youth Justice system fell to 426, which meant that the target of 615 was exceeded. This compares with 614 in 2014-2015 and 709 in 2013-2014.

Ensure more Children in Care (CiC) are able to access progression pathways post 16, including the offer of an apprenticeship where appropriate, and fewer CiC become young offenders.

Early Help and Preventative Services are committed to keeping Children in Care out of the Criminal Justice system wherever this is possible. From April 2016 a new process has been implemented between Early Help and Kent Police, which means that any complex cases are discussed at a multi-agency panel. These cases include all CiC as well as cases where there is gang involvement or other issues of concern. The aim is to ensure a well informed decision is made which delivers the most appropriate outcome and support to both the victim and the offender.

Progress has been made in expanding local learning and skills opportunities in all districts available on the Ready to Work website for young people looking to re-engage in learning, who are NEET, and looking for apprenticeships or employment with training. These programmes offer alternative pathways and have facilitated young people's access to over 63 training providers and colleges.

Specialist Children's Services (SCS)

Children and youth participation

SCS has begun to employ and embed a child centred approach which ensures that children and young people are at the core of the services that we offer. Children from

minority communities, including disabled children have been consulted and included in most of our activities.

Young people have been recruited and trained through the 'Recruit Crew' programme to work alongside HR and managers as active members of recruitment panels. The Recruit Crew programme provides accredited training where young people are trained in recruitment and selection procedures as potential interview panel members. 15 young people have been trained to date including 6 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC). They have been involved in 50 recruitment and selection processes so far.

A 'Take Over Challenge Day' was organised by the Young Adult Council (YAC) members. This involved a number of young people undertaking the role of the then Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services, Peter Oakford. As part of feedback Cllr. Oakford, shared that it was very refreshing to sit in a group of young people asking questions about his job. Young people also felt a sense of reassurance that Kent as a county cares about their lives and their future as active citizens of their communities.

The Mind of My own (MOMO) was piloted last year to enable young people to give effective feedback on the services. The MOMO Express App specifically designed for children and young people with learning disabilities will also be rolled out in 2017.

Fostering and Adoption Services, Child in Care, Disabled Children Services and Leaving Care

The Kent Corporate Parenting Service recently launched the 'Open Your Heart' Campaign with the aim of recruiting 200 foster carers for Kent's children. This is open to all members of the Kent community who are ready to provide a safe and loving home for our looked after children. These events have so far attracted a good number of potential applicants from BME and other protected groups.

The new Lifespan Pathway within the Disabled Children, Adult Learning Disability and Mental Health Division went live from 1 April 2017. This will ensure children, young people and adults with a disability have better transition at all stages, help young people achieve their ambitions and improve their outcomes.

The new Pathway Plans - Assessment and Plan - have been made into Easy Read versions by the Young People's Team to help communicate effectively with young people/young adults with additional and complex needs. There was extensive consultation with young people in the development of the Pathway Plans, and some staff from the Disabled Children's Service tested them out with disabled young people, leading to modifications to the final versions.

The short break service continues to support children and young people who access their services in a person centred way, ensuring those with specific physical and learning needs are appropriately supported.

The introduction of the National Transfer Scheme has seen a decrease in our UASC population in Kent. The UASC service has also been restructured in order that more

time and resources are targeted at those who remain living in Kent. The service reported good improvements in the outcomes of the UASC cohort, providing quality care and meeting their identified needs. Where language needs were identified, easy access and quality support were provided by the commissioned interpreting services which continue to improve.

Independent Review Officers (IRO) and Child Protection Conference (CPC) services

The IRO service continues to make progress in ensuring consultative processes are fully accessible to disabled children and those children in care who are non-English speakers, including UASC. Young people continue to be provided with IRO contact cards. The YAC and the IRO service have produced a short video where young people are sharing their experiences of being in care. The aim is to encourage other young people particularly those from a minority background to become more involved in their individual care.

The Child Protection (CP) service has engaged positively with young people. The service recently introduced a young people only conference. This is a unique and innovative way of running CP conferences where young people lead on the preparation and convening of the conference. Feedback from young people has been good, those being involved in the pilot phase said they felt listened to and keen to ensure their views are taken into account.

Learning and Development

With the changing population in Kent, particularly due to the movement of families from London boroughs and other European families from mainland Europe, Social Workers are now dealing with more complex child protection issues than ever before. Some of these include issues around families with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF), Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and child care related matters involving families living abroad.

As a result, we have updated and provided specific guidance and procedures for Social Workers to fully equip them with the required information which enables them to exercise their duties effectively when dealing with children and their families under these circumstances.

The Practice Development Officers (PDOs) carried out a series of training events over the past year in which Social Workers have been trained and supported at district and service levels. Specific policy and guidance briefings were organised with Child Protection Chairperson Independent Review Officers, front line Social Workers on working with Foreign Authorities, UASC, NRPF, Child Sexual Exploitation, Private Fostering and section 20 of the Children Act (1989).

In November 2016, the Safeguarding Unit in collaboration with the Training and Development team organised the Equality and Diversity development day.

The aim of the day was to raise awareness and provide skills to address Human Rights and Equality issues in practice across Kent. The workshops considered areas

relating to: Asylum and Immigration, Male victims of Domestic Abuse, Modern Day Slavery, PREVENT and Radicalisation, Race and Ethnicity, Religion, Sexuality and Mental Health.

Policy and Practice development

Key policies were developed during the reviewing period to ensure that our practices and procedures are in line with the Equality Act 2010.

For example, the UASC policy was updated to include recent Home Office guidance on dispersal and the National Transfer Mechanism scheme rolled out in July 2016. This has helped to decrease our UASC population as well as ensuring that we are meeting the needs of those who are currently in our care.

The NRPF policy has been reviewed and updated. We have strengthened our links to the NRPF network, the Home Office and the counter fraud department. This has given the Social Workers good knowledge and confidence in carrying out their duties in a fair and judicious manner.

A new transgender policy and guidance has been developed to comply with our Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), providing clarity for Social Workers when supporting children, young people and their families who may be going through a gender transition.

A full report on what has been achieved in 2016-2017 can be found at:

Children and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee 7 September 2017
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=894&MId=7726>

Growth, Environment and Transport Directorate (GET)

The Directorate's approach to equality and diversity is carefully positioned to underpin GETs 's approach to customer insight and customer service. Extensive training, awareness raising of the PSED and its practical application in informing and improving delivery of GET services and programmes is successfully embedding its tenets within day to day delivery. A clear focus on equality and diversity data, and utilisation of that data, is at the heart of GET's equality and diversity approach.

GET brings together its Organisational Development and Equality & Diversity Groups on a quarterly basis to support the Directorate to work on fair employment practice and ensuring a diverse workforce. In 2016-2017 this joint group

- a) Positioned diversity as integral to the future workforce planning
- b) Delivered a peer review of national employers recognised as delivering 'Excellence in Diversity' to apply learning to GET's own organisational development approach, including staff groups

- c) Commissioned face to face equality impact assessment training for senior managers, to achieve leadership across the Directorate on this element of customer insight
- d) Analysed GET staffing data to understand how the protected characteristics of GET's staffing reflects the protected characteristics of Kent's population. This has informed a commission of the KCC Engagement, Organisation Design and Development Division to determine how the protected characteristics are profiled across GET's recruitment, leadership, leavers, Total Contribution Pay, Part-time, apprentices, cash awards and capability procedures
- e) Commissioned protected characteristic analysis within GET's 2016-2017 Employee Value Proposition monitoring, which now informs the work of both Groups

To inform the KCC Active Travel Strategy which GET has led, two stakeholder workshops were held in 2016-2017 ahead of a wider public consultation. The stakeholder workshops were subdivided into infrastructure stakeholders, education stakeholders (thereby ensuring the age characteristic was considered), health provider stakeholders, and older and disability stakeholders (thereby ensuring age and disability characteristics were considered).

To maximise the impact on young entrepreneurs, The Kent Foundation project collected equalities data about their Volunteer Business Mentors to maximise the diversity of the mentor pool to in turn provide the best match for the young entrepreneurs.

For the least mobile elderly or disabled customers, or those with young children or other carer responsibilities, the action plan that came out of the Mobile Library Service's EqlA, delivered an improved alternative offer from 2016-2017 onwards. The home library service involves volunteers visiting customers in their own home and delivering books for them to read. This ensures access to the service is maintained but that customers still keep a valued social interaction, in this case through a volunteer.

The libraries service works with West Kent Communities (part of West Kent Housing) to manage and deliver its extensive volunteer programme. From joint analysis of current volunteers; a proportionate lack of young people, especially young men, those from a BME background, and disabled volunteers was established. The service has since identified a new targeted and proactive approach to reach these particular groups, with a view to strengthening the diversity of service volunteers

A new process to deliver a greater number and more considered EqlAs was embedded within GET in 2016-2017, led by the GET Customer Service Programme in tangent with the KCC Corporate Lead for Equality and Diversity. The new process involves two formalised review points before an EqlA is 'signed off', as well as one shared online portal for all GET EqlAs within a wider KCC EqlA repository. The GET EqlAs are now available for quarterly analysis which enables the Directorate to identify and share best practice, common challenges, and projects and programmes where the EqlAs are outstanding.

By utilising 'About You' Libraries, Registration and Archives have engaged with many more members of the public who identify themselves disabled and are actively interested in the library provision/are registered members. However, actual Library membership which seeks to capture protected characteristic data shows disabled membership to be lower than is now believed. The Service is actively considering how to more accurately profile its membership, in order to better inform future service planning.

Volunteers supporting GET services have on a number of occasions in 2016-2017 been of a minority ethnic background with only developing fluency in English. Services including Countryside Partnerships have adapted the approach to their environmental and conservation tasks to ensure this protected characteristic (race) is fully included within any project. Trading Standards have within 2016-2017 and previous years also worked with customers (businesses) of a minority ethnic background with only developing fluency in English, and similarly have had to adapt their approach to ensure such businesses are able to understand and follow the advice, guidance and any investigatory processes applicable.

A full report on what has been achieved in 2015-2016 can be found at:

Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee, 21 September 2017

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=831&MId=7546>

Growth Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee 6 September 2017 <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=833&MId=7556>

Adult Social Care Health and Public Health

The 2016-2017 Local Account published later in 2017 will describe the achievements, improvements and challenges of KCC Adult Social Care in the past year and sets out our vision for the future. The below provides a few examples of how the Directorate has worked toward meeting the PSED.

Transgender (Trans) equality has become an area of growing concern in KCC and nationally. Legislative changes through the Equality Act 2010, and a change in the wider social culture has led to greater awareness of the experience of Trans people in health, education, employment and society in general. During 2016 a Trans working group was established to actively consider addressing and advancing the equality outcomes of the Trans community in Kent. The Directorate policy team developed a guide which is designed to help staff in Adult Social Care to offer the best service they can to Transgender users of Social Care services.

Commissioning funded by the Older People Physical Disability Directorate (OPPD), supported Healthwatch to set up a physical disability forum. Historically, there had been a gap in the engagement of people with physical disabilities. The Forum, which is funded by Healthwatch and KCC has been set up to work with KCC and Health Commissioners to ensure that people who have a physical disability have a voice that can influence the priorities and direction of future commissioning.

It aims to give people both with a physical disability and those who care for them a strong collective voice and bring many organisations and groups together to create a network of support and influence for positive change. The forum identified a gap in provision and is now working to develop a new support offer, which will be a user led service to help promote people's independence and wellbeing.

Partners and providers attended The 'Hot Potato' events in July and September 2016. These events explored sensitive issues in relation to Dementia and how the range of Protected Characteristics could influence the carer and outcomes for people suffering from the condition. Areas such as Sexuality and Dementia, Learning Disability (LD) and Dementia, Mental Capacity Act and Best Interest Overview, the carer's perspective, and faith and spirituality were explored.

The 'Valuing People Now Support Contract and Facilitation Service' continues to provide support across all 12 Districts in Kent through the organisation and facilitation of The Kent Partnership Board and District Partnership Groups (DPGs) and to facilitate and support the engagement of people with learning disabilities and their families. Each DPG represents the local learning disability population – including people with complex needs, people with profound or multiple disabilities, people from black or minority ethnic communities, people who present challenges and people who are or have been offenders. From 1 April 2016 to 31 December 2016, 462 people with a Learning Disability attended the involvement group meetings.

The Learning Disability Partnership Awards took place on 13 September 2016 and were very successful with awards given out across a number of categories. The awards recognise the creative ways in which companies, services and people go the extra mile to help give people with a learning disability more choice, improved independence and access to their communities

The Autism Strategy which addresses the key requirements of the national strategy and sets out a plan for the future to improve the lives of adults with autistic spectrum conditions in Kent, was out for consultation. The consultation process ensured wider engagement with people with autism and their families and carers and the strategy has been revised in the light of this feedback. A key decision regarding the adoption of the strategy was taken by Graham Gibbens in February 2017.

Older People Physical Disability (OPPD) developed an overview on End of Life care, which sets out how the Division is working to implement End of Life against the Ambitions for Palliative and End of Life Care: A national framework for local action 2015-2020. By measuring current activity against the national framework, this has allowed OPPD to identify where there are gaps and develop an action plan.

There is on-going integration work with health services through the Kent's Integrated Care Pioneer Programme. During 2015-2016 the Pioneer team set up the Design and Learning Centre for Clinical and Social Innovation, which is working in a co-produced way to find innovative solutions to integrate services to meet the changing needs of our communities in Kent. The Design and Learning Centre works to address health inequalities and is currently testing a number of EU models of care - ESTHER and Buurtzorg.

The Accessible Information Standard guidance and policy was published, the document aims to provide more detail to make sure that service users who have a disability, impairment or sensory loss are provided with information that they can easily read or understand with support so they can communicate effectively with health and social care services. This in turn will ensure that people who use our services are fully engaged with our processes, are able to make fully informed choices and get the best service they can get to continue to be independent in their community.

KCC continues to invest in Easy Read publications to make important and relevant information more understandable and familiar. Easy Read is one of the ways the council is helping people who may need information presented in a way which is easier to understand.

Public Health has continued to ensure that there is equity in accessing sexual health services through using equality measures as a part of their monitoring process, and new options for accessing services have been introduced during 2016-2017, including options for online testing for chlamydia and HIV. A customer insights study has recently been undertaken (and results currently being analysed) to understand the barriers that groups face in accessing services in Kent, and the findings will be discussed with service providers to reduce these barriers.

Over the last year school Public Health services have been recommissioned to ensure that health inequalities in early years and mental health are reduced. The new service has been split into two to better serve the age groups (primary and secondary) and focus on the particular needs of these groups, with the secondary service having a better focus on adolescent mental wellbeing.

The Release the Pressure campaign (which was identified by the Suicide Prevention Strategy as a key action) was developed to take account of the needs of men, and to address the high disparity between the number of male and female suicides. The campaign was delivered and has increased male callers to the telephone hotline by 75%, with over 500 men a month calling.

A full report on what has been achieved can be found at:

Adult Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee, 9 June 2017
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=896&MIId=7748>

Strategic and Corporate Services

The Business Intelligence division continues to provide publicly accessible updates on equality and diversity information on the people of Kent, including age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability and religion.

The team has also carried out numerous insight projects for Commissioners, Programme Managers, and Heads of Service, so that decision-making is better informed by a thorough understanding of service users and residents. The team champions the 'Analyse Phase' in commissioning as being the appropriate time to evidence equality and diversity considerations and impacts, which in turn, makes the completion of the Equality Impact Assessments (EqlAs) easier and better evidenced at "Plan".

Engagement, Organisational Design and Development (EODD)

The EODD function includes Customer Service, Communication and Consultation and provides an integrated approach to engagement, organisation design and development leading to improved customer service. Its purpose is to enhance KCC's business performance through its strategic and core services.

External Consultation

As a service Engagement and Consultation continues to work with partners internally and externally to assess the impact of the conversations our own and other organisations wish to have with customers. We have strengthened our advice to the business and improved our consultation planning documents to explicitly reference the completion of EqlAs at each stage of the process. This stresses the importance of exploring and assessing impacts and ensures appropriate time is given to hearing feedback from individuals and groups affected by change.

External Communications

Working with the ICT client, the External Communications team has ensured that Kent.gov has passed Phase 1 of SOCITM's 'Better Connected' Accessibility Test for 2016.

This achievement is a direct result of both the work carried out by the Accessibility Working Group on behalf of the Corporate Equality Group and Infrastructure to redefine KCC's approach to Digital Accessibility, and our partners in Agilisys/Digital Services who have worked tirelessly to make Kent.gov compliant with our recommendations. The 2016 'Better Connected' Accessibility Test incorporated the latest accessibility requirements based upon Central Government's 'Digital Inclusion' initiative as well as recommendations of the Business Disability Forum, and by meeting these standards KCC has demonstrated its determination to provide accessible services to the people of Kent. This also represents a significant milestone against both the Phase 1 & Phase 2 objectives of our current Accessibility Roadmap, as endorsed by the Corporate Equality Group (CEG).

The design team have ensured that printed material includes information on how to obtain documents in other formats and languages. Also imagery used in marketing campaigns is determined by the requirements of the service but wherever possible and appropriate, a mix of protected groups are represented to reflect the changing demographic of the county and service users. Examples in the last year include the fostering campaign; the adoption campaign and the apprenticeship campaign.

Internal Engagement

Working across the organisation we have strengthened our approach to supporting conversational practice, encouraging managers to share priorities and approaches through groups such as the T200. Using the data from the staff survey we understand more about the feelings and perceptions of different groups of staff.

Human Resources

KCC is committed to promoting equality and diversity and combating unfair treatment by providing a safe and accessible working environment with fair access to learning and development opportunities. The Council encourages and supports all staff in fulfilling their potential. This is achieved through a range of employment practices. The full Annual Workforce Profile Report is reported to the Personnel Committee and this information is published on www.kent.gov.uk

- Current total number of full time equivalent (FTE) (non-schools) 7632
- % of staff who are female 77.2% (51%)*
- % of staff who are Black & Minority Ethnic 7.2% (6.3%)*
- % of staff who have declared a disability 3.9% (17.6%)*
- % of staff who are Lesbian Gay or Bisexual 2.5%
- % of KCC's leadership group who are women 60.2%
- The % of staff aged under 25 or below 8.1%
- Average age of staff 45
- Current total number of FTE's on grades KR6 or below 2777 (non-schools staff earning salaries up to £21,296)
- % of staff aged over 50 39.6%
- % of staff aged over 65 2.7%
- Sickness level days lost per FTE 7.00

*The figures in brackets are the percentage of Kent's population from those groups.

Finance

The budget approved by County Council sets out the amounts to be delegated to individual directorates and their overall proposals about how this is planned to be spent.

An EqIA was carried out on the overall budget strategy and considers the impact of the major changes within individual proposals. All the individual proposals will be subject to their own separate EqIA, consultation and assessment procedures at the relevant time.

It is inevitable that some of the changes in the draft budget proposals will be viewed as having an adverse impact. In a time of reduced public spending to meet the government's deficit reduction targets it is inevitable the authority has to review the

way it provides services and we cannot carry on providing services in the same way as we have in the past. One of the aims of the transformation savings is to produce different or better outcomes for less public money. Policy savings will require some changes to KCC policy and are likely to have the biggest impact (and therefore most focus for EqIA).

Infrastructure

Over 2016-2017 the ICT Client has continued to develop and refine the Baseline Accessibility Requirements and Accessibility Maturity Model in partnership with the Business Disability Forum (BDF). KCC is also the lead member of the BDF Technology Taskforce's initiative to develop an 'Accessibility Roadmap' to allow partner organisations to reach the Digital Standard' accreditation. The ICT Client will act as Subject Matter Expert (SME) on Accessibility for the 'GET Digital' transformation programme, in order to ensure that new customer/staff processes are inclusive by design and inclusive by default.

Despite a change in management arrangements of the property element of the Infrastructure function, the group has continued to deliver equality outcomes in their day to day business, making a difference to KCC service users, staff and residents.

An example of this is in relation to the KCC Property Service Contract, the specification covers matters from where inequality may arise across KCC's estate. Delivery of this part of the specification requires the Compliance Team within GEN² undertaking surveys of corporate buildings and school premises to understand levels of accessibility, constraints, and what reasonable adjustments can be made to improve access to buildings.

This provides a good example of how KCC's non delegable PSED can continue to be delivered through commissioning and procurement arrangements.

Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance (SPRCA)

In 2015-2016 SPRCA was restructured. A key part of the change was the inclusion of the Equality Team within the corporate policy function. This has helped to further embed equality considerations in policy and business planning activity across KCC.

In addition to providing advice and guidance on equality impact assessments and other equality related matters, the team has led on the development of the new Equality and Human Rights Policy and Objectives for KCC. The policy and objectives have been completed and included in Business Plans across the organisation and will continue to be reported on annually.

Key challenges for 2017-18 and beyond

The inclusion of directorate based objectives demonstrates that not only is KCC not simply 'ticking boxes' on equality and diversity but highlights an increasing understanding and embedding of equality outcomes as a core and beneficial part of delivering the work of the organisation.

In October 2017, the Cabinet Office's Race Audit will be published. It is intended that the audit will help government "to understand and assess differences between ethnic groups" and challenge public services to "explain or change" the differences that are highlighted by the data. Policy decisions and legislative changes associated with the audit may also present challenges not only to KCC but also other statutory partners.

With an increase in commissioning and alternative delivery models at KCC, it will be important for the authority to consider and ensure the line of accountability for the delivery of the PSED remains strong. The PSED is a 'non-delegable duty' and although Section 149 (2) of the Equality Act states that "person who is not a public authority but who exercises public functions must, in the exercise of those functions, have due regard to the matters mentioned in subsection (1)", KCC is ultimately accountable for ensuring that those who deliver services on behalf of the authority understand how they will be measured and held to account.