

## Equalities Annual Report 2009-10

The council aims to provide excellent services to everyone. This means taking positive steps to meet the needs of all our customers and continuously improving what we do.

### *Making connections, changing perceptions*



This report gives an update on the work Southampton City Council has been doing to implement its Equality Scheme during 2009-10 and help achieve better and more equal opportunities for everyone – regardless of race, gender, religion and belief, impairment, sexual orientation, gender identity or age. In this summary we give statistics and examples of equalities work to show how the council is:

- continuing to improve services for all customers;
- complying with equalities legislation;
- meeting national standards in equality and diversity work and performing well in independent inspections.

## The legal framework

It is part of our responsibilities as a council to publish a written Action Plan (called an Equality Scheme) in which we set out how we will best meet our legal obligations to:-

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, hate crime and harassment;
- positively promote equality of opportunity;
- encourage and foster good relations;

in all that we do - as a service provider, an employer, a purchaser of goods or services from others and as a community leader and partner.

In 2009-10 we revised our Equality Scheme following consultation with our partners, our customers, our staff, Trades Unions, local specialist agencies and people who have experienced the effects of inequality. Three priority objectives were identified as a focus for our future equality actions, to drive change and achieve improved outcomes for everybody:-

- (i) to eliminate discrimination, hate crime and harassment being experienced on any grounds eg. race, gender, impairment, homophobia etc;
- (ii) to tackle long-standing issues of inequality and disadvantage experienced in education, employment, health, housing etc.
- (iii) to promote greater equality and increase people's participation in communities and across communities

You can view the Equality Scheme 2009-12 and a more detailed action plan on the three priority objectives above on our web site [www.southampton.gov.uk](http://www.southampton.gov.uk).

## How have we been getting on?

The Government requires all local authorities to report against a set of standards and National Indicators that help us objectively measure and compare our performance on equality issues.

Indicator	Description	2005-06 actual	2006-07 actual	2007-08 actual	2008-09 actual	2009-10 actual
BV 11a	Top 5% of earners who are women employees	41.3%	43.2%	45.3%	53.8%	51.1%
BV 11b	Top 5% of earners who are from an ethnic minority	3.5%	4.0%	4.4%	5.4%	3.4%
BV 11c	Top 5% of earners who have declared an impairment or long-term health issue	2.4%	2.4%	1.3%	1.4%	1.3%
BV 16a	The % of Disabled employees	1.6%	2.8%	2.4%	2.3%	3.3%
BV 17a	The % of employees from BME communities	4.5%	4.9%	5.1%	5.0%	4.7%

Both BV11a and BV16a continue to exceed our published targets. In 2009-10 the process to collect the information for BV16a was improved so that employees are able to update their own profile record at any time. We believe this will give us a more responsive and accurate staff profile. We will continue to monitor the position and once we are confident that these figures are more representative, the targets will be reviewed accordingly.

However, the figures for both BV11b and BV11c show a reduction and are slightly under our published targets. (As the number of employees in these profile groupings is relatively small, one or two people leaving can make a significant change to the percentages.) There is also a slight reduction in the figures for BV17a which is again just under our published target. We are committed to attracting and retaining a diverse workforce and will be reviewing our recruitment strategy and policies again in 2010-11 to ensure we continue to have fair, open and robust processes in place.

There is no National Indicator to measure the age profile of our workforce but we do monitor by age as part of our good recruitment practice. In 2009-10, 13.5% of the workforce was under 30 years old and 36% were over 50 years old. The staff turnover rate of 8.5% is below the national average. However, we know that those employees who are over 50 are more likely than younger employees to remain until retirement age, which means we need to take positive action to replace and retain skills for the future. With our partners in the Skills Development Zone, we have made good progress on our Equality Scheme actions (Priority Objective 2) in recruiting young people not currently in education, employment or training (NEET) into apprenticeships. The apprenticeship opportunities are across all areas of work within the council and will last for 12 months. Each young person will be supported to achieve an NVQ Level 2 during that time. Ten young people began their placement in January and the target is for a further 30 apprenticeships to be placed during 2010-11.

In addition to equality monitoring at every stage of our recruitment process, we also collect equality monitoring information about staff in respect of retention. This includes reason for leaving, promotion, disciplinary action, grievance action and dismissal. This monitoring information is regularly analysed and whilst no issues have been identified for concern, the information will also be part of the 2010-11 review of the recruitment strategy and policy.

We have continued to survey our staff to gather their views on working for the council. For example how well we communicate with staff, how well we develop our staff and their ideas for potential improvements. In 2009-10 we achieved a 46% response rate. This has increased from the surveys in 2007-08 (33%) and 2008-09 (43%). This increase is due to staff seeing how the information is used positively to improve service, work satisfaction and staff retention. The analysis of the information has also included reference to staff profile of age, race, impairment and gender. This has shown us that the spread of employees who replied in relation to the current make up of the workforce is consistent with previous years. Key findings from the survey help inform our Workforce Strategy and have been incorporated into our Equality Scheme.

The equal pay system was implemented in 2003 and we have committed in our Equality Scheme (Priority Objective 2) to continuing to ensure equalized pay within the workforce. Therefore we have completed another in-depth equal pay audit in 2009-10.

We are committed to tackling discrimination, hate crime and harassment in all of our functions and leading by example (Priority Objective 1). Our 'Dignity at Work' policy is designed to protect staff from discrimination/harassment from colleagues or the public and in 2009-10 two cases have been reported for investigation.

We believe partnership working really does make a difference and will continue our effective work with Southampton Safe City Partnership to maintain a safer city for employees, residents and visitors.

Indicator	Description	2005-06 actual	2006-07 actual	2007-08 actual	2008-09 actual	2009-10 actual
LAA 5a	The number of incidents of hate crime and harassment reported to the authority	n/a <sup>*</sup>	1465	1562	1665	1488 <sup>†</sup>
LAA 6c	The % of racial incidents reported to the local authority that resulted in further action	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
LAA 5a	Reduce the percentage of repeat victims of harassment incidents	n/a	n/a	7.94% <sup>‡</sup>	3%	2.7% <sup>§</sup>

We also seek to improve our customer service by carrying out a satisfaction survey with people who have reported incidents of harassment to us.

The trend has been for a year on year increase in the reporting of incidents of hate crime and harassment from the public. We, and our partner organisations, believe this has been more because of an increased public confidence in reporting, rather than a significant rise in the actual number of incidents occurring.

It is too soon to say whether the drop in overall reported incidents for 2009-10 will be a sustained trend. This figure masks a fluctuating rate of incidents within particular groupings. For example we have seen a drop in reported incidents on the grounds of sexual orientation, a small increase in race reports and a greater increase in the

\* Prior to 2006-07 only Racist incidents were recorded.

† There was a sharp fall in the number of graffiti incidents reported which means that reports for all types of hate crime and harassment, other than graffiti, has slightly increased.

‡ This is a new indicator with LAA – not monitored previously.

§ Continued good multi-agency working has meant that there was another decrease in the number of repeat victims.

reported incidents from people with impairments. The latter reflects the work with the Learning Disability Partnership Board and other agencies.

However, as another positive example, we have seen a reduction in exclusions from Southampton schools for bullying/harassment by 51% compared to 2008-09.

We want to provide good value, high quality services and continue to improve accessibility for all our potential customers (Priority Objectives 2 and 3). We have increased the range of ways in which we collect ideas and comments from customers to help us better measure customer satisfaction. We also continue to monitor our performance against national and local indicators, for example:

Indicator	Description	2005-06 actual	2006-07 actual	2007-08 actual	2008-09 actual	2009-10 actual
PAF C32	Older people helped to live at home per 1000 population aged 65 or over	N/A	93.37	98.53	97.53	110.19
PAF D54	The % of items of equipment and adaptations delivered within 7 working days (BV 65)	N/A	89.12%	89.33%	85.54%	85.46%
NI 136	People (all ages) supported to live independently through social services	N/A	N/A	N/A	3,272	3,554*
LAA 9E3	The % of older people with mental health needs being supported to live at home	N/A	N/A	58.00%	72.10%	72.98%†

In 2009-10 we have seen a continuance of the faster rate of improvement in GCSE results from students in priority neighbourhoods/communities than compared to the rest of the city. In measuring the achievement of 5+ A\*-C GCSE including English and Maths, there has been a 9.3% improvement rate between 2007-09 for priority neighbourhoods/communities compared to a 4.6% improvement rate for the rest of the city.

We also completed a new maximum number of adaptations using the Disabled Facilities Grant in any one year - 217 grant-funded adaptations completed at a total cost of £2 million.

We have maintained our programme of staff training on equality issues for 2009-10, which underpins the provision of excellent customer service to everyone. Targeted staff training was the top issue raised unanimously throughout our consultation on the Equality Scheme and has been reflected in our detailed equality action plan (Priority Objective 3).

\* Estimate as the denominators have not yet been published by the NHS Information Centre.

† This Local Area Agreement (LAA) target was agreed with our partner agencies in 2007-08.

We have continued to raise staff awareness of equalities and customer care issues and of the council's equality legal duties. For example, 82 members of staff received training on Equality Impact Assessments during 2008-09 and 84 members of staff attended training on Integrated Impact Assessments during 2009-10.

### **How else can we demonstrate the progress of our equalities work to you?**

The statistical charts in this report can only give half the picture. Achieving our Equality Scheme objectives is about putting equalities into practice – working with real people, in real situations, to gain real results. The following are just a few examples from across our services.

- Work experience opportunities of one to two week placements, plus 60 days work shadowing in the council, has been agreed for people with Learning Impairments.
- More than 400 people from all backgrounds have taken advantage of our targeted work with our partners to support developing skills and employment opportunities (Job Centre Plus Family Adviser, the U Turn project in Woolston and Weston etc.)
- £180,000 of computer equipment was seized by Trading Standards investigating a counterfeit games scam. Most of the equipment was then donated to Jamie's Computers, a local charity providing training and employment opportunities for homeless and vulnerable people. The charity was able to sell the memory cards, USB adaptors and other items for legitimate use and raise money for its running costs.
- Over 250 Disabled People have attended professionally coached football sessions, which are run weekly at Chamberlayne Leisure Centre (part of the national Kick Start project).
- 'Street Sport' - free sessions of sport and dance, has hit seven neighbourhoods with more than 3,200 people of all ages enjoying the challenge of new interests and taking part in something together.
- The number of visitors to our swimming pools benefitting from the national free swimming initiative has continued to grow with more than 69,000 under 16's and nearly 21,000 over 60's taking part. (Note: these numbers include some repeat visits.)
- 'Lunch and Laughs' - an activity project run at Weston Court to tackle social isolation amongst older people, has been so successful it will be replicated across the city. Apart from the very popular 'lunch', the project has linked with other projects across the city eg. an IT project where younger people teach older people how to use computers, with the Junior Neighbourhood Warden Scheme and a Community Garden scheme where older people are teaching younger people new skills. Volunteers of all ages from 19 – 84 years old are getting involved and helping the project develop. An additional bonus has been the number of volunteers who have been able to use this experience to help them get back into paid work.
- Alcohol and substance misuse services are successfully working with more than double the number of young and vulnerable people they worked with in 2008-09. The ICE Bus (In Case of Emergency) has provided medical and welfare advice to 195 people since it began operating on 11 December 2009. We are working together with South Central Ambulance Services, Street Pastors, Police and local pub/club door staff to help keep people safe in the city at night and free-up essential frontline resources to deal with situations of more major illness and trauma.

- A playgroup, targeted at Polish and other EU families, is attended by bi-lingual volunteers and provides advice and information on housing, healthcare, education etc. More than 35 families have benefited from this approach, which provides early intervention work, helping people access relevant services at the appropriate time. They get a better experience/outcome - and we can avoid the costs of more intensive, longer-term services of a problem that has worsened.

A full report against each of the actions in our Equality Scheme will be published on our website [www.southampton.gov.uk](http://www.southampton.gov.uk) on an annual basis.

National Government regularly inspects our performance against set standards. There are particular standards that apply to work on equality and diversity and you can find more information about them on our website [www.southampton.gov.uk](http://www.southampton.gov.uk). Inspections, for example by the Audit Commission, can involve looking at written reports, visiting council services, interviewing councillors, customers, staff, representative agencies/groups and city residents. Below is an extract from the Comprehensive Area Assessment Organisational Assessment, December 2009.

Southampton City Council continues to perform well with equality issues, helping to ensure more vulnerable people are not disadvantaged. For example it has increased bus travel to hospitals and improved its system for reporting racial incidents. The council has also worked with landlords to improve the standards of houses. Adult Social Care is rated as performing well by the Care Quality Commission.

The council has improved access to services for minority groups, such as delivering training to Chinese restaurants on food hygiene. It has achieved level four out of five of the equality standard and has clear ambitions to deliver services fairly to all people in the area. This has helped ensure a better representation of women and minority groups among its staff and taking appropriate action on reported racial incidents. It has completed a project to ensure new migrants settle into the community, including delivering awareness sessions to fire service staff which led to new families taking up fire safety checks. This is helping to ensure better services for more vulnerable people.

To tell us more about your views on what we do and/or to find our more information about our equalities work please contact us:-

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Or use our on-line compliments, comments or complaints reporting form available at [www.southampton.gov.uk](http://www.southampton.gov.uk)