

Shropshire Council Equality Objectives Action Plan 2020 to 2024 APPROVED 06072020

Actions for 2020 to 2024

Overall Strategic Action A: publish more visibly

Key Action	By whom	By when	Commentary 2020
<p>1. Maintain online resource materials on equalities, diversity and social inclusion in one location on the external website at www.shropshire.gov.uk,</p>	<p>Rurality and Equalities Specialist; Digital Services Team</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>This is so that information is presented as logically and visibly as possible, with links to further material that may be helpful, including the website of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)</p> <p>The web location for content is badged: “equality, diversity and social inclusion”</p> <p>The focus is on the internet, for internal and external audiences alike, whilst Council efforts continue to aid digital inclusion and offer alternatives such as support and advice via telephone.</p> <p>The information includes ESIIAs, in order to help internal and external audiences to understand what is expected from these and why, and in order to show use made of these impact assessments in decision making</p> <p>Content is kept under review, as are signposts to other parts of the Council website. Further material is added every year around Holocaust Memorial Day activities, whilst the annual diversity reports form a visible reference for changes over time.</p>

Key Action	By whom	By when	Commentary 2020
<p>2. Publish and present contextual equality information in a range of ways and through local and national opportunities that arise, in order to visibly develop collective understanding about issues and needs, and to optimise use to be made in Council and service area policy and strategy development of all opportunities to aid understanding of equality, diversity social inclusion issues.</p>	<p>Commissioning Unit Manager; Performance Intelligence and Policy Team; Communications Team; Service Areas</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>This is an area for development in order to demonstrate visibly that the Council is seeking to learn about different equality issues for different groupings, through mechanisms including engagement with communities, and to share that learning with the wider general public.</p> <p>Current examples include area profiles shared with Members as community leaders and published on the website; Census profiles; and the annual service user and workforce diversity reports also published on the Council website.</p>
<p>3. Utilise appropriate communication channels including social media and face to face, in order to promote opportunities to foster good relations between people from diverse communities of place and interest and people with protected characteristics</p>	<p>Commissioning Unit; Customer Service Team; Digital Services Team; Communications Team</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Examples are collated and online presence utilised, including partner organisation websites. One example is Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD), which includes mini-site on the Council website, features on local media, and publicity and recording of activities on the national HMD Trust website, thereby raising the profile of Shropshire as a welcoming place as well as providing opportunity for young people to work with representatives of a range of faith communities.</p>

Overall Strategic Action B: collect and analyse more proactively

Key Action	By whom	By when	Commentary 2020
<p>1. Consolidate and draw upon service user and community profile evidence base and report back in annual service user diversity reports, using all opportunities that present themselves to add to the evidence base and utilise robust up to date data in decision making processes.</p>	<p>Commissioning Unit Manager; Rurality and Equalities Specialist; Performance Intelligence and Policy Team; Service Areas</p>	<p>Ongoing; linked to publication of data in the annual service user diversity report</p>	<p>The Unit proactively gathers intelligence from local and national sources and reports upon it to Members as well as publishing on website.</p> <p>Specialist officers additionally identify opportunities to submit evidence to UK Parliamentary Inquiries and to Government Departments in order to influence national policy. This is pertinent to our situation as a rural authority with physical and digital connectivity issues for a range of groupings.</p> <p>Service areas make use of ESIIAs in order to collate and present evidence about the communities, service users and stakeholders with whom they work, and demonstrate ongoing engagement with specific target groups.</p> <p>Comparison work into rural authority approaches utilises CCN and RSN resources, and opportunities to contribute to data collection through collective and collaborative working eg on fairer funding for rural authorities.</p>

<p>2. In specific reference to BAME communities, follow up on recommendations of the Runnymede Trust to the current Women and Equalities Committee Inquiry around the unequal impacts of Covid-19 for BAME groupings, and those within the Public Health England (PHE) June 2020 report <i>“Beyond the data; understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups”</i>; with regard to data collection and to liaison with faith communities and the voluntary and community sector.</p>	<p>Commissioning Unit Manager; Rurality and Equalities Specialist; Performance Intelligence and Policy Team; Feedback and Insight Team; interfaith forums; Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly (VCSA)</p>	<p>October 2020, and annual review</p>	<p>The Runnymede Trust has recommended action in this area, and the PHE has recommended action in this area as follows:</p> <p><i>“Research and data: to deepen our understanding of the wider socio-economic determinants, improve data recording of faith and ethnicity and greater use of community participatory research.”</i></p> <p>The Council will keep a watching brief on the progress of the inquiry, and opportunities to feed in information to sub inquiries.</p>
<p>3. Incorporate health and well-being assessments into equality and social inclusion impact assessments for service areas, in order to equip service area to have due regard to the three aims when considering and planning service changes, and to link in with climate change appraisals to form a coherent suite of materials.</p>	<p>Rurality and Equalities Specialist; Public Health Team; HR; Leap into Learning Team</p>		<p>Further development, publishing and promotion of these resources and guidance on carrying out Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessments (ESIAs) will draw upon best practice experiences of other authorities.</p> <p>Service areas make use of ESIAs in order to collate and present evidence about the communities, service users and stakeholders with whom they work, and demonstrate ongoing engagement with specific target groups.</p>

			<p>The current templates are available on the website and on the Council intranet, together with examples. A recent interim revision of these has factored in the need to take account of health and well being impacts.</p> <p>Guidance on equality, diversity and social inclusion approaches, and how to record these, was provided for all staff as part of mandatory online training, through a course package launched in autumn 2018. This is now due for a refresh.</p>
<p>4. Collect data about service user participation in service area activity and about participation by partner organisations and the wider community in service area activity and in public events including consultation opportunities</p>	<p>Commissioning Unit Manager; Rurality and Equalities Specialist; Performance Intelligence and Policy Team; Service Areas; Community and Voluntary Sector Assembly</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Collection of equality data at public events involves usage of a standard monitoring chart. The Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly (VCSA) utilises this at events, and feedback is used to improve both the form itself and the events themselves.</p> <p>Further work is required in this area, including with regard to service users and communities unable to participate in activity due to the Covid-19 pandemic eg closure of leisure facilities eg access to places of worship, or unable to access guidance and services online due to lack of digital connectivity and or to lack of digital skills.</p>

Key Action	By whom	By when	Commentary 2020
<p>5. Analyse internal information on workforce, and compare with good practice authorities, in order to identify and comment on trends and prioritise where the gaps may be in representation within the workforce of groups with Protected Characteristics.</p>	<p>Human Resources Team; Rurality and Equalities Specialist, Performance Intelligence and Policy Team</p>	<p>September 2016; reviews each year linked to annual workforce diversity report</p>	<p>Comparison work is maintained as a watching brief.</p> <p>Positive approaches towards recruitment and retention are reported upon in the annual workforce diversity report eg flexible working</p> <p>Eg In February 2019 Shropshire Council achieved the Disability Confident Leader Level 3 Award (this scheme replaces the Disability Symbol Two Ticks initiative)</p>
<p>6. Evaluate perceived effectiveness of communication methods for people experiencing or observing discrimination, harassment or victimisation, in order to ensure that service users and members of the public feel equipped to come forward where any such incidents occur, including perceived hate crime</p>	<p>Public Protection Team; Feedback and Insight Team; Communications Team; Shropshire Council Service Areas</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<p>Easy-to-understand hate crime reporting forms were developed through a joint agency hate crime reporting group.</p> <p>It is important to add that whilst the Reporting Group no longer exists, data is still collected by the Police and reporting by individuals is encouraged through processes promoted on the Council's website.</p> <p>This work area is an area for taking forward, given spikes in hate crime incidents attributed to Brexit and potentially to the Covid-19 pandemic</p>

Key Action	By whom	By when	Commentary 2020
<p>7. Establish current patterns of hate crime incident reporting, in order to help target inter agency efforts to collect and monitor such data, and to publicise reporting channels including online</p>	<p>Public Protection Team; Feedback and Insight Team; Communications Team; Shropshire Council Service Areas</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Research was undertaken through the Group to analyse levels of hate crime under reporting in the county. Progress reports were made to the Group.</p> <p>This work area is an area for taking forward, given spikes in hate crime incidents attributed to Brexit and potentially to the Covid-19 pandemic</p>

Overall Strategic Action C: work more jointly

Key Action	By whom	By when	Commentary
<p>1. Promote Holocaust Memorial Day, 27th January each year across the county and more widely</p>	<p>Commissioning Unit; Inter Faith Forums; Communications Team; Digital Services Team; Outdoor Recreation Team; libraries; primary and secondary schools and colleges..</p>	<p>January each year</p>	<p>Activities are focussed on work with primary schools and interfaith forums.</p> <p>There are now 12 trees in the HMD memorial cherry tree orchard being grown with schools across Shropshire</p> <p>Details about activities are published as press releases, as a mini-site on the Council website, and via the national Holocaust Memorial Day Trust website.</p> <p>The South Shropshire Interfaith Forum was also supported by the Council in a successful artwork project involving Syrian refugee families, which became one of the 75 Flames chosen for a national event in 2020 to mark the 75 years since the liberation of Auschwitz.</p>
<p>2. Continue to promote national events, in order to pool resources for maximum effect and increase understanding amongst the general public, service users and communities of the challenges faced by people with Protected</p>	<p>Commissioning Unit; Service Areas; Communications Team; other strategic and collaborative partnership working arrangements</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Commissioning Unit officers monitor calendar details of key dates and events, and arrange briefings and or press releases as appropriate, utilising LGA, EHRC and other national resources.</p>

<p>Characteristics and people at risk of social exclusion.</p>			
<p>3. Evaluate perceived effectiveness of joint local events and initiatives and joint promotion of national events in helping service users and communities to feel better equipped to recognise discrimination, harassment and victimisation against groups and individuals, and to feel better able to know what to do next.</p>	<p>Commissioning Unit; Service Areas; other strategic and collaborative partnership working arrangements</p>	<p>October 2020</p>	<p>Evaluation of Holocaust Memorial Day involves elected Members, the South Shropshire Interfaith Forum and the Shrewsbury Interfaith Forum, who are linked into the VCSA (Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly); local primary schools, and local Members for the schools involved. this takes place on an annual basis ahead of the next year's events.</p> <p>This exemplar now needs to be replicated for other events such as Show Racism the Red Card, supported by the Council and Unite in 2019, and for future events or campaigns.</p>
<p>4. Share materials across sectors, in order to pool resources for maximum effect and increase understanding amongst the general public, service users and communities of the challenges faced by people with Protected Characteristics and people at risk of social exclusion.</p>	<p>Commissioning Unit; Communications Team; Shropshire Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly; other strategic and collaborative partnership working arrangements</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Explore feasibility of running joint sub-regional local events on specific topics, supported by officers in the Commissioning Unit to aid linkages across sectors and organisational boundaries eg mental well-being and employment, eg digital skills.</p> <p>This work area was not fully explored in the 2016 to 2020 period, and is an area for taking forward, adapting in order to maximise current and planned</p>

			collaborative arrangements across sectors and across borders.
5. Keep abreast of good practice in training and guidance on developing and maintaining good relations with groupings in the community, achieving progress towards the three national equality aims, ie.: eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and advancing equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations, and introduce this as part of Shropshire Council guidance, training programmes and briefings for officers and elected Members.	Human Resources Team; Rurality and Equalities Specialist, Performance Intelligence and Policy Team	October 2020; reviews to link to preparation of annual diversity reports	<p>This will aid Shropshire Council to meet its general equality duty under the Public Sector Equality Duty.</p> <p>Research is continuing to be undertaken into how other rural authorities, public sector organisations, the private sector, and the voluntary and community sector approach training and guidance.</p> <p>Training sessions were arranged for all Members in 2017, following elections that year. An online training module for all staff was developed as part of a mandatory package of training resources, rolled out in autumn 2018.</p> <p>Support for staff in understanding the PSED and in making use of ESIIAs for service changes, was incorporated into the online training module rolled out in autumn 2018.</p>

Key Action	By whom	By when	Commentary
<p>6. Keep abreast of good practice in training and guidance around discrimination, harassment or victimisation, including around recruitment, induction and retention, and where appropriate introduce this as part of Shropshire Council training programmes and briefings for managers.</p>	<p>Human Resources Team; Rurality and Equalities Specialist, Performance Intelligence and Policy Team</p>	<p>October 2020; reviews to link to preparation of annual diversity reports</p>	<p>Research is undertaken into how other rural authorities, public sector organisations eg NHS Foundation Trusts, the private sector, and the voluntary and community sector approach training and guidance.</p> <p>This is shared with Human Resources, to particularly aid in appointing officer training, linked to safeguarding; in one-off support and guidance; in induction of new employees and elected Members.</p> <p>There are additional courses for managers, delivered through HR, as well as an Equality Policy developed through HR and available on the intranet</p>
<p>7. Evaluate increased understanding amongst officers and elected Members about the challenges faced by people with Protected Characteristics and people at risk of social exclusion</p>	<p>Human Resources Team; Rurality and Equalities Specialist, Performance Intelligence and Policy Team</p>	<p>October 2020</p>	<p>Members were asked for feedback following attendance at workshop sessions held in July 2017, following elections held that year.</p> <p>Staff feedback is obtained on completion of the module on equality, diversity and social inclusion, as with all other modules within the online training package developed and introduced in autumn 2018</p>

			<p>Feedback has been positive in terms of views on content and approach, with practical suggestions made for improvement to technical operability as well as the sharing of perspectives based upon personal experiences.</p> <p>It is important to note that we do not have a gauge at present as to how well equipped staff or Members feel to deal with issues as they occur, a year and a half or more on from training, and that a stocktake would be timely.</p>
8. Support positive joint approaches towards recruitment and retention of young people in local businesses and within the Council	Human Resources Team	Ongoing, in line with corporate and partnership objectives	<p>Shropshire Council continues to promote the development of employees through its on-line learning system, making learning more accessible and flexible to all employees, and in addition through the apprenticeship framework.</p> <p>Apprenticeship are delivered by local and national providers and offer flexibility in the way they deliver training to meet the needs of the organisation. Shropshire Council continues to work with these providers to develop apprenticeships for the future, providing greater flexibility to all employees in accessing apprenticeships</p> <p>The Council is a member of the National Apprenticeship Diversity Champions</p>

			Network which commits to making a change to the diversity and inclusion of apprenticeships both internally and externally, improving social mobility while building a skilled, diverse workforce.
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