

# **Shropshire Council** **Annual Service User Diversity Report 2018 to 2019**

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## **A. Introduction**

### Our county and its people

If you are looking for Shropshire on a map of the United Kingdom, you will need to look to the middle of England on the map, and then to the far west of Birmingham, just next to Wales. For our communities and businesses, travel to work patterns across our porous borders indicate large numbers travelling for work to the West Midlands, to the South and East, and North and North West, to Cheshire, Staffordshire and Manchester and beyond, as well as into Wales.

Shropshire is the second largest inland county in England, after Wiltshire, and one of the most sparsely populated counties. Shropshire is approximately ten times the size of all the Inner London Boroughs put together (31,929 hectares; source: ONS Census 2011), with just one person per hectare (1.00 persons; 320,274 population; source: ONS mid year estimates 2018), for a terrain covering 319,736 hectares.

Shropshire has a demography in which the percentage of the population that are aged 65-84 is 21.1%, which is significantly higher than the England average of 15.7%. This is national data from the ONS Census 2011 and mid year estimates for 2018.

Around 34% of Shropshire's population lives in villages, hamlets and dwellings dispersed throughout the countryside. The remainder live in one of the 17 market towns and key centres of varying size, including Ludlow in the south and Oswestry in the north, or in Shrewsbury, the central county town.

The county is quite literally exposed to extreme weather conditions, with roads that are liable to flooding, and a lack of viable alternatives leading to congestion and lengthy diversions. The physical terrain poses practical challenges for digital and physical infrastructure, as well as the high service delivery costs and access issues associated with a dispersed and ageing population, and related concerns around rural isolation for communities and businesses across sectors.

All inhabitants expect equitable access to services, facilities, learning and training opportunities, and support and advice mechanisms, including online. However, the reality is that digital connectivity remains an issue for the county as for other rural counties. This is despite the positive efforts being made through our Connecting Shropshire programme in partnership with BDUK and the Marches LEP covering Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, and Herefordshire.

Shropshire is a relatively affluent location, albeit with pockets of deprivation, but in terms of access to services, it is amongst the most deprived localities in the country.

This is measured through the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 2019), which was released on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2019. This updates the IMD2015.

The IMD is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas (Lower Layer Super Output Areas or LLSOAs) in England . LLSOAs are a statistical geography created by the Office for National Statistics for the Census. They are areas consisting of a minimum of 1,000 to a maximum of 3000 population. There are, in all 39 separate indicators spread across 7 distinct domains of deprivation, which are weighted and combined to calculate the overall index of deprivation (IMD).

This is an overall measure of deprivation experienced by people living in an area and is calculated for every LLSOA in England. All LLSOAs are then ranked according to their level of deprivation relative to other areas.

The higher the rank the more deprived an area is, so an area with a rank of 100 is more deprived than an area with a rank of 200. The IMD also contains two supplementary indexes Income Deprivation Affecting Children (IDACI) and Income Deprivation Affecting Older People (IDAOPI)

There is no definitive threshold of deprivation and the IMD measures deprivation on a relative not absolute scale, so a neighbourhood ranked as 100 is more deprived than an area ranked 200, but this doesn't mean that it is twice as deprived. There are 32,844 small areas (LLSOAs) in England with an average population of 1,500, where one is the most deprived and 32,844 the least. In Shropshire there are 193 LLSOAs with an average population of 1645

A snapshot analysis of the IMD2019 has been prepared by the Performance, Intelligence and Insight Team to give an initial overview of the results for Shropshire. This is available on the Council website. Reports have also been prepared for the Overall IMD and each of the seven Domains.

Shropshire has become slightly more deprived since 2015 with an increase in the average score from 16.7 in 2015 to 17.2 in 2019, an increase of 0.5. Shropshire is the 174th most deprived local authority in England out of a total of 317 lower tier authorities (rank of average score). This measure shows Shropshire has become relatively more deprived compared to other areas since 2015. Lower tier authorities include non metropolitan districts, London Boroughs, unitary authorities and metropolitan districts. Note in 2015 there were 326 lower tier local authorities whereas there are 317 in 2019.

When looking at the other two main measures of deprivation (rank of average rank and rank of proportion of LLSOAs in most deprived 10% nationally) these show Shropshire has also become slightly more deprived relative to other local authorities since 2015, however the rank is out of 317 authorities and in 2015 the rank was out of 326 authorities.

Compared to 2015, 33 LLSOAs had become more deprived in 2019, 19 had become less deprived and 141 had remained the same. This is a net change of 14 LLSOAs becoming more deprived. The largest net changes can be seen in the Income Domain where there was a net increase of 30 LLSOAs becoming more deprived also in the Barriers to Housing and Services there is a net change of 40 more LLSOAs had become more deprived and in the Income deprivation Affecting Children Sub-Domain there is a net change of 41 LLSOAs becoming more deprived.

In the Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Sub-Domain there is a net change of 13 LLSOAs becoming less deprived and in health a net change of 25 LLSOAs becoming less deprived.

Whilst all seven domains help us to consider impacts in equality terms for our communities, it is pertinent from a social inclusion angle to note that the domains include Barriers to Housing and Services, Health Deprivation and Disability, and Income and further analyses of these will be an area of focus to help us in equality policy development.

### The legislative framework in which we operate

The **Equality Act 2010**, together with the Human Rights Act 1998 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, forms a framework of protection for equality, diversity, social inclusion and human rights.

Shropshire Council seeks to ensure that, like other public authorities, it is compliant with the **Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)**.

This **Duty**, as set out in the Equality Act 2010, may be described as the duty on a public authority, when carrying out its functions, to have what is called **due regard** to three equality aims.

These equality aims are listed below.

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advancing equality of opportunity;
- Fostering good relations.

As a local authority, we must comply with both a general equality duty and with specific duties, as set out in the Act.

- To demonstrate full compliance with the general duty, we are required to publish annual information about our workforce and service user diversity.
- To demonstrate full compliance with the specific duties, we are required to publish one or more equality objectives which we think we should achieve.

The frequency for these objectives to be published is a minimum of every four years. The **Equality Objectives Action Plan 2016/2020**, approved by Cabinet in 2016, enables positioning of the Council to assist in efforts to meet its PSED, seek to demonstrate good practice in so doing, and facilitate timely links with other corporate policy and strategy development

The regulations also specify that a listed authority must publish its equality information and equality objectives in a manner which is accessible to the public and may publish this information within another published document. Our diversity reports are on the Council website, along with the equality objectives action plan for 2016 to 2020. These are in the section on “equality, diversity and social inclusion”, along with further background and complementary information about this policy area.

We have set out our corporate equality actions across the following three areas, and are reporting on them accordingly:

- Publish equality and diversity information more visibly;
- Collect and analyse equality and diversity data more proactively;
- Work jointly with partner organisations on equality-related issues.

The Equality Act describes a number of **Protected Characteristics** groupings ie characteristics that people may share. Local authorities such as ourselves and other public sector organisations are obliged under the Public Sector Equality Duty to have due regard to the needs of people in these groupings in our decision making processes. The nine groups are, in alphabetical order:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender reassignment;
- Marriage and civil partnership;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Race;
- Religion and belief;
- Sex;
- Sexual orientation.

## **B. Action areas in 2019**

### Social inclusion

As in previous years, we are taking a closer look at specific Protected Characteristics in this report.

Whilst there are nine national Protected Characteristics with regard to groupings of people in the community, as set out under the Equality Act 2010, the Council has a tenth one, around social inclusion

Given that the **Equality Objectives Action Plan 2016/2020** is due to be reviewed in 2020, and a new four year plan prepared for councillors to consider, it is timely to conclude this cycle with a look at social inclusion in its broadest sense.

We are therefore going to look at each of our three corporate action areas to illustrate aspects of our work in Shropshire around promoting social inclusion.

### What we mean by this in Shropshire.

The social inclusion category is intended to help the Council to think as carefully and completely as possible about all Shropshire groups and communities, including people in rural areas and people that may be described as vulnerable, for example due to low income or to safeguarding concerns.

The grouping encompasses members of the armed forces, whether serving or veterans; children and young people who are or were looked after by the local authority, including those who have left the care of the local authority and are making their way in the world; and households who for whatever reason are finding life to be difficult. This may be a rural household, for whom issues as diverse as fuel poverty, loneliness, lack of access to services and facilities and lack of opportunities for training and employment may be affecting their physical and emotional well being.

### Progress across our three action areas

The following case studies focus on our overall approach towards equality, diversity and social inclusion, in terms of how we seek to meet the obligations placed upon us in ways that will support us in open and transparent decision-making and behaviours, to the benefit of service users and communities.

In so doing, they set out to complement the Council's continued efforts to maintain a visible presence on the Council website about equality, diversity and social inclusion, both as a reference source on activity and as guidance on practical assistance.

- I. *Publish equality and diversity information more visibly*
  - i.) Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessments (ESIAs)

As part of collecting and analysing equality data to help with service area policy decisions, staff are advised through means such as mandatory online training that they may find that they need to produce or help with a document called an equality impact assessment.

We call our approach an Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA). These ESIIAs tend to be completed to accompany reports to Cabinet about a proposed service change, but may also be carried out at any time by a service area as an internal stock take or screening of likely positive or negative impacts in equality terms for a potential service change. A standard template is used for this purpose to aid consistency.

### **It is a legal requirement for local authorities to assess the equality and human rights impact of changes proposed or made to services.**

In Shropshire, our approach is to think as carefully and completely as possible about all Shropshire groups and communities. We demonstrate equal treatment to people who are in these groups and to people who are not, through having what is termed 'due regard' to their needs and views when developing and implementing policy and strategy and when commissioning, procuring, arranging or delivering services.

We can all help to do this by engaging with service users, members of the public and other organisations, and by collecting equality information that is accurate and up to date. This can then go into ESIIAs as evidence, and should make it 'easier' and more transparent for everyone to see that decisions are being thought about in terms of likely equality and diversity impacts.

We could alternatively develop a policy or working practice however we like: but if it is not grounded in equality evidence it may not be a sound policy and it could even mean that the Council is open to legal action.

The use of ESIIAs is continuing to grow, using the standard template revised in 2018, which now includes provision for service areas to record wider societal, economic and environmental impacts that may be predicted or anticipated for a service change, and is enabling us to more visibly record where ESIIAs have been carried out at timely stages in the development of service policy or strategy.

For example, the Council's Local Plan Partial Review has now been through four formal stages of public consultation, with a screening ESIIA carried out at each stage.

ii.) Publish press releases that promote equality and social inclusion

In 2019, the Council has published a range of press releases that either draw attention to positive action in service areas, such as in adult social care, or that highlight particular initiatives or projects with regard to equality, diversity and social inclusion.

Examples of these include:

- Cherry tree ceremonies to mark Holocaust Memorial Day, 27<sup>th</sup> January 2019;
- Cherry tree ceremony to mark Anne Frank's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2019 ;
- Holocaust Concert of Music and Readings, 16<sup>th</sup> October 2019;
- Wear Red Day, 19<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

These have picked up on the Protected Characteristics of Age, Race, and Religion or Belief

Additionally, the Council issued press releases to seek views from local town and parish councils and from the wider community, with regard to the proposed removal of 75 BT payphones across the county, for which there was a formal 90 day consultation period that ended on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2019.

The Council, as Local Planning Authority, has the right of veto over such removals provided that local views have been sought, as well as the right to consent to withdrawal of telephony in order that local parish or town council may adopt the kiosk itself. The Council also has the right to Consent to removal of the service and kiosk altogether.

A number of these payphones were in areas of rural isolation and/or social need, and in locations where there are continuing concerns over the adequacy of mobile phone coverage. The Council was also mindful that the ageing population, particularly in rural areas, includes households who may not have a mobile phone.

As the Council was very keen to ensure that as many people as possible had chance to comment on a matter that could exacerbate social isolation, every opportunity was

sought to highlight this proposed change by an external service provider and seek views. There was also the possibility of positive impact for people with disabilities, as parish and town councils may adopt a payphone kiosk in order to install a defibrillator for public use.

The Council was able to report to the Secretary of State for Culture and advise BT, in compliance with Ofcom requirements, that the number for which the Council's final view as Local Planning Authority was to consent to removal of the service and the kiosk stood at 14, with a further 12 where the local community wished to adopt the kiosk. This was an update on the provisional view, in which we declared that the number for which we were minded to give consent to removal altogether stood at two, and that the number where the local community wished to adopt stood at ten.

Where the Council did not hear back from a local community, following press releases, contact with the local parish or town council, and publicity through the Shropshire Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly, a decision was reached on behalf of the local community. This was based on: analysis of previous call usage and previous concerns noted, including operability of telephony; assessment of the location eg rural, eg known to attract numbers of visitors, eg in an area of social need; and continuing concerns for the Council over mobile phone coverage issues in our large rural county.

The overall impact in equality and social inclusion terms should be positive for the Protected Characteristic groupings of Age and Disability, and for Social Inclusion.

## *II. Collect and analyse data more proactively*

Service areas need to ensure that due consideration is given to collection of equality data, in ways will be proportionate and non-intrusive, in order that greater insight may be gained into the needs and aspirations of communities and businesses in Shropshire. This is particularly so when carrying out surveys and engagement work. This information then becomes source material evidence for ESIIAs, to help in the assessment of the likely negative or positive impact of service changes or policies and any mitigating measures to mitigate or enhance such impacts. It is reported to Cabinet accordingly alongside committee reports, to aid decision making processes.

The information is also used in development of corporate strategy and policy, drawing upon ESIIAs, survey and engagement work through the Feedback and Insight Team, local policy imperatives such as around climate change, and national policy drivers such as the Government's Industrial Strategy, 25 Year Environment Plan, Clean Growth Strategy, and current developments around Brexit now that a new Government is in place.

In the service user diversity report for 2018-2019, we featured a case study on our work with the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), as an example of joint working at subregional level, in which efforts to promote and sustain economic growth were inextricably and rightly linked with efforts around preserving and enhancing the natural environment and supporting and working with communities as well as businesses.



In this, we commented upon points made to Defra that future research projects should be based on the LEPs' and Combined Authorities' Local Industrial Strategies and Strategic Economic Plans. We said that this would enable the following policy imperatives to be addressed:

- Recognise and work with the physical geography of an area;
- Take account of factors that impact upon rural deprivation and how these differ from and/or echo those for urban deprivation, including demographic changes such as an ageing society and social mobility across age groups;
- Factor in the rural and urban interdependencies on transport for communities and businesses, including commuting patterns and supply chain trade routes.

A place-based approach towards future research requires not only an implicit recognition that different policies and strategies will apply to different geographies, demographics and administrations, but also an explicit recognition of the interplay between the five foundations of productivity identified in the Industrial Strategy as "the essential attributes of every successful economy".

By way of reminder, these foundations are, in alpha order:

- Business environment (support for specific sectors and SMEs)
- Ideas (R&D, innovation)
- Infrastructure (broadband, energy, transport)
- People (skills and education)
- Places (tackling regional disparities)

#### Community and Rural Strategy for Shropshire

In Shropshire, the production of a Community and Rural Strategy, drawing on these policy imperatives, was agreed through Council Motion in May 2019. Officers have been working since then to pull together evidence and insights about the diverse communities of Shropshire, and reached the point where it was timely to hold two workshops in the late autumn/early winter of 2019.

A first workshop was held with people from town and parish councils and with people from the Shropshire Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly, on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2019. It had a focus on community views to complement, corroborate and inform our evidence base.

In a subsequent Shropshire Council councillor workshop, held two weeks later on 26<sup>th</sup> November, the focus was on development by councillors of potential priorities, based on the knowledge and insights that we have gained to date. The table work was focussed on priorities accordingly.

The member workshop considered key messages from the community and town and parish council workshop, alongside the evidence base, and used them in arriving at potential priorities against the cross-cutting themes.

The themes we are using are:

**Red:** quality of life and communities

**Orange:** isolation and hidden need, and digital and physical access to services

**Yellow:** employment and productivity

**Green:** older people and retirement

**Blue:** young people and life chance

**Violet:** households and housing

There were six tables, as we combined the tables we had for 13<sup>th</sup> November on hidden need and digital connectivity, and isolation and physical connectivity. The topic area had been separated into two strands due to the high numbers (more than 55) who were taking part, and the desirability of helping everyone to participate in comfort and to feel they were in position to contribute their views accordingly.

From a methodology angle, the task was to spend twelve minutes with each group, as they moved from table to table in a world cafe style format, with a view to asking them two questions:

*What do they see as priorities*, based on what they heard in Tom Dodds's presentation with regard to the data that SC has collated, the analysis of results from the community survey held earlier this year, and feedback from Lois Dale re what people said about this theme at the VCSA/SALC workshop.

*Which one do they see as the most important?* This was to be asked just before the group gets up and moves to the next table.

### Overall messages

A key message from participants at both workshops was around working together, across organisations and cross borders, and around making the most of the assets that we have, eg facilities eg village halls.

Allied to this was a key message about working across age groups and geographies, recognising commonalities such as isolation and loneliness for young people and old people alike, and practicalities such as skills support, and looking at how we can work together to help the communities that we serve.

### Emerging priorities

These were put forward by councillors who took part on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2019, who numbered around thirty, and were supported by senior officers. The **priorities** may usefully be summed up as being around **access** and **connectivity**, and the Council's role as an enabler in this regard.

There will also be further work to look at the intelligence and insights at a place plan level which will make further linkages with the Council's place shaping approaches.

This will include further reference to the Government's Industrial Strategy and the Local Industrial Strategy for the Marches, and to the issues that the Rural Services Network has emphasised to Government as being essential to address, if there is to be a levelling up of opportunity between rural and urban areas of the country.

### III. Working more jointly

In this report, we are focussing very much upon the baseline engagement work that has informed the development of the Community and Rural Strategy thus far. This was drawn up and implemented by the Feedback and Insight Team, Information, Intelligence and Insight, Shropshire Council.

During August, Shropshire Council asked the VCSA and SALC to feed into a wider engagement project to obtain feedback on rural issues and to help inform the development of this Strategy. The Rural Survey was launched on the 29th July and closed on the 25th August 2019. The survey was open for 4 weeks and was sent out to VCSA members, Shropshire Association of Local Councils, Town and Parish Councils and specific council staff.

The survey was promoted via the following methods:

- An email to all VCSA members requesting that they complete the survey.
- Promotion to VCS Assembly members via the weekly VCSA newsletter and direct emails.
- Direct emails to certain members of Shropshire council staff.
- An email to all SALC members requesting that they complete the survey.

The survey was completed by a total of 106 people from a variety of organisations and resulted in a considerable amount of feedback.

All survey respondents were asked what type of organisation they represented. This enables a better understanding of which parts of the sector provided their opinions. Of all respondents, 37 of the 106 (35%) were from town or parish councils, 25 (23%) were from voluntary sector organisations, 36 (34%) did not answer this question and the remaining 8 (8%) were a mix of community groups, private sector business and others.

Among other questions, survey respondents were asked the question "What support would be useful to your organisation?" Comments that were made included the following themes:

- Cheaper running costs
- People feel valued
- Prevents isolation

- Good for the local community
- Local knowledge
- Transparency
- Improved well-being
- Supports ageing population
- Equality of access
- More volunteers in rural areas

### Issues and trends over the last twelve months

Survey respondents were asked if they were seeing any new issues or trends within their local area and through their work that they wanted to highlight for consideration within the rural strategy evidence base. The main themes that arose were around an ageing population, Brexit, dementia, drugs / crime, exploitation, lack of affordable housing, lack of public transport, over development of rural areas and social isolation and loneliness. Many of the comments were detailed and covered a number of different points

### Opportunities for the future

Survey respondents were asked the question “Can you identify any opportunities for the future that could be considered for the Rural Strategy?”

There were 39 responses to this question and the emerging themes of the responses covered:

- Increased funding
- Collaboration
- Improved communication
- Affordable housing
- Links with communities
- Increased opportunities for volunteers
- Improved relationship with statutory services

### Summary

The overall feedback received was comprehensive, with considered comments and constructive suggestions and examples. Some of the main messages included:

- A commitment to supporting local people and to work in local communities to make a difference. Survey respondents would like to have a greater say and have more influence within local decision making.
- Significant concerns about rural challenges and the impact of changes within local communities. Top issues included transport and travel, affordable housing, increasing health and care needs (including mental health), social isolation and loneliness and a loss of rural services (e.g. youth provision).

- Changes causing concern currently include an ageing population, Brexit, rural development, rural crime and the loss of services and support leading to social and rural isolation.
- Another key message from survey respondents is that organisations working to support our local communities are facing their own challenges. Changes include increasing health and mental health needs leading to an increase in demand for services, increasing costs of rural service delivery (including workforce costs and a loss of funding), growing pressure on local infrastructure, a need for more preventative services and a lack of clarity concerning how organisational and sector challenges can be addressed.
- A recurring theme through many comments was a fear of what will happen in the future as community activists and volunteers age and new volunteers are not coming forward to take their place.
- There is a suggestion throughout responses that organisations recognise the challenges that Shropshire Council faces, but they do not feel well supported by the organisation as a local leader and influencer.
- The support organisations need varies, but many comments reflect the need to maximise the use of local buildings and resources, avoid duplication, better share information-based resources, maximising skills and expertise and invest more time in genuine collaboration and co-design. The comments are reflected within these opportunities which also include comments on the importance of communication and meeting the needs of future generations including overcoming disadvantage and poverty, providing affordable housing, youth facilities and investment in local partnerships and volunteer led action.

### **C. Concluding Remarks**

We hope that you have found this report to be interesting and useful, and look forward to taking this and other opportunities to continue to report on progress in meeting our local equality objectives, and in so doing serving to aid achievement of the national equality aims.

These equality aims are listed below in final reminder of this shared endeavour, and are followed by a table that sets out the Protected Characteristic groupings and our additional one around social inclusion.

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advancing equality of opportunity
- Fostering good relations

This annual service user diversity report forms part of efforts to continue to increase the depth, breadth and focus of the evidence base about the people who live and work in Shropshire. This helps the Council to maintain its strategic and service area level data in order to be positioned to meet ambitions around public sector reform, asset management, and devolution, and challenges including emerging impacts of Brexit, the quest for fair funding for rural authorities, and the changing demography of the county.

Together with its sister report on workforce diversity, these tandem reports set out to share information and statistics about the diversity of Shropshire Council's service users and communities, and to complement each other. This is not least as the workforce is largely drawn from local communities who therefore experience the services of the Council in their day to day lives.

The sister report includes information that, in February 2019, Shropshire Council achieved the Disability Confident Leader Level 3 Award (this scheme replaces the Disability Symbol Two Ticks initiative). The Disability Confident scheme aims to help employers make the most of the opportunities provided by employing people with disabilities. As a disability confident employer, Shropshire Council can demonstrate that it is taking action to attract, recruit and retain disabled talent and remove any barriers that may prevent workplace inclusion for disabled people and those with long term health conditions.

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. Apprenticeships are delivered by both 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. Apprenticeships are delivered by both 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.

The Council is a member of the National Apprenticeship Diversity Champions 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

Shropshire Council continues to work to encourage employees to declare equality information, so we have a more accurate picture of the diversity of the workforce to enable us draw on the different talents, experiences and perspectives of our employees from different backgrounds and cultures. The implementation of Business World, the Council's new ERP system, provides increased functionality for employees to update their own personal details and should assist in improving the quality of our workforce equality data.

**Table one: this is a table to show the ten groupings of people whose needs Shropshire Council thinks about in particular in its decision making processes**

*Main definitions source: Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)*

<b>Protected Characteristic</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Age	Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).
Disability	A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
Gender reassignment	The process of transitioning from one gender to another.
Marriage and civil partnership	In England and Wales marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman but now includes a marriage between a same-sex couple. [1]. This is also true in Scotland where relevant legislation has been brought into force. [2]. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).
Pregnancy and maternity	Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.
Race	Refers to the protected characteristic of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

<b>Protected Characteristic</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Religion and belief	Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.
Sex	A man or a woman
Sexual orientation	Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.
Social inclusion <b>(additional grouping in Shropshire)</b>	Families and friends with caring responsibilities; people with health inequalities; households in poverty; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities; people considered to be vulnerable, ie having complex needs and/or requiring additional support

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[1] Section 1, Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013; [2] Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014.