

Equality and Diversity Strategy for Portsmouth

2010-2013 Summary

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Contents

- Introduction..... 4**
- Equality and diversity 5**
- Single Equality Scheme 6**
- Headlines within each strand of the Strategy 8**
 - Ethnicity..... 8
 - Gender..... 8
 - Age..... 9
 - Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender 9
 - Disability 9
 - Religion or belief 9
- Priorities for action and performance management 10**
 - Priority 1 10
 - Priority 2 10
 - Priority 3 10
 - Priority 4 11
 - Priority 5 11

Introduction

This summary aims to give a clear overview of the draft equality and diversity strategy for Portsmouth and the approach that we will take to equality and diversity over the next three years. The full version of the draft strategy is available on our website at www.portsmouth.gov.uk/equality/index.html

Our equality & diversity strategy does not stand-alone. It is part of a set of plans we have put forward with our partners. These plans work towards a shared goal as set out in the Vision for Portsmouth 2008-18, the overall community strategy for the city. This aims to make Portsmouth:

'The premier waterfront city, with unrivalled maritime heritage – a great place to live, work and visit'.

Priority 9 clearly puts equality and diversity on the local agenda and several others also recognise its importance.

"Celebrate the many diverse and different communities within Portsmouth and work together to create an inclusive city for everyone"

Other priorities that are clearly linked to equality and diversity include priority 3, 4 and 10. The full version of this document is available on our website at www.portsmouth.gov.uk/living/8277.html



Equality and diversity

We are committed as an organisation to ensure that our approach to equality and diversity primarily focuses on our customers to ensure that our services meet people's needs, both now and in the future.

For us, this means all our customers in all our communities. We are working towards making our services more accessible by planning ahead and taking action based on listening to and involving our communities. Our aim is to have a workforce that is reflective of the communities in Portsmouth and is open to new ideas, ways of working and diversity

We have re-visited our equalities objectives and those for the city, based on:

- Checking our progress against our previous equality & diversity strategies (2006-2009)
- looking at the latest information that we have about outcomes for different communities in the city
- results from a range of surveys that have been carried out changes in various diverse groups in Portsmouth and the law

Our draft strategy looks at how we approach equality and diversity and gives a summary of the diversity of our workforce. It also includes our new Single Equality Scheme (SES) action plan, which replaces our existing equality schemes for race, gender, and disability.

The equality & diversity strategy is one way in which we are working towards our priorities. We have recognised for some time the importance of promoting equality and diversity. This is reflected in a number of other strategies including:

- Portsmouth Racist Crime Strategy 2009-12
- Domestic Abuse Strategy 2009-12
- Portsmouth City Sexual Violence Strategy (for safeguarding adults) 2009-13
- Joint Commissioning Strategy 2008-2011

In addition to these, we are linking this work to our developing:

- Ageing Population Strategy
- Anti-Poverty Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy

Further details of these strategies can be found in the full draft document.

As well as tackling specific issues, we need to ensure that the values of the equality agenda are built into all of our activities. To make sure this happens, all relevant council strategies must include an Equalities Impact Assessment before they are approved to ensure that they consider equality, social exclusion and community cohesion. All of our services and functions are reviewed through a three-year rolling EIA programme. In addition all relevant changes to services, policies and strategies are required to have an EIA before we ask for members to approve them. Our aim is to make sure that all the different needs of visitors and residents are recognised and addressed in our daily work and that this approach is used consistently across all services.

All of our services are required to publish 3-year business plans. These are updated every year. Under our 2010 business planning guidance, all services are required to:

- Publish a list of the equalities impact assessment that they have completed and those they are planning to do in the future
- Look at the current and future needs of their customers
- Identify people who do use services, those who do not and looking at why this might be
- Respond appropriately to the findings of recent customer surveys, including the valuing diversity survey
- Identify actions to be taken by the service to help them improve delivery across all equalities strands.

The council has a small central team of experts on equalities issues. Their aim is to support and advise services on best practice and legal issues, as well as monitoring the equalities impact assessment process.

All of our recruitment and human resources policies are designed to comply with current equality law and ensure that our practices are not discriminating against anyone. We monitor the diversity of our workforce and we recognise that there is work needed to promote a more diverse workforce in the future. This will be addressed through our people management strategy 'workforce matters'.

Single Equality Scheme

Our single equality scheme incorporates the actions from our previous disability equalities scheme, our gender equality scheme and our race equality scheme. The new scheme sets out our key actions on promoting equality with regard to age, disability, gender (including transgender), ethnicity, religion or belief and sexual orientation, (as well as socio economic deprivation). It covers a three-year period, complimenting and aligning our actions with our refreshed equality and diversity strategy. In line with the Equality and Human Rights Commission guidelines, our overall aim is to ensure that everyone has the right not to be treated less favourably by us as a local authority, because of their age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, transgender status or their disability, gender or race.

These duties include the need to:

- Have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination & harassment
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between minority groups
- Consider the needs of our diverse communities when designing and delivering public services

The full single equality scheme document details how we have developed our priorities and sets out an action plan for 2010-2013.

Our single equality scheme is being developed alongside our updated equality and diversity strategy. Both are being developed and shaped by the needs and priorities of our communities. The council's new equality scheme for 2010-2013 is in line with legal changes under the Equality Act 2010 and has a more comprehensive scope as it includes previous schemes. This Act will provide the basis of simplified equalities guidance for employers, service providers and public bodies. The key provisions of the Act are:

- A new equality duty on public bodies. The new duty covers race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion / belief, pregnancy / maternity and gender re-assignment, as well as people experiencing deprivation. We will be required to consider the needs of these groups when designing and delivering services to everyone.
- Using outside services (public procurement) to improve equality
- Introducing gender pay and equality reports to help us to ensure that our workforce is reflective of our community to help us to identify any inequalities
- Extending the scope to use positive action when recruiting new staff
- Introducing the key concept of 'discrimination by association', extending protection against discrimination to people who are associated to a person in one of the equality strands.

The full version of the strategy includes information about how we have prepared it, the sources of information we have used, and those we consulted with during the process. This included our 'Picture of Portsmouth', which looks at the population in Portsmouth, focusing on the six equality 'strands' mentioned in the Equality Act 2010 (Ethnicity, Gender (including transgender), Age, Disability, Sexual orientation and Religion or belief). The information collected was from:

- Office for National Statistics data
- our own management information
- informal research
- feedback from communities
- information from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)
- the 'valuing diversity' survey for Portsmouth
- the 2007 indices of multiple deprivation
- the 'Speaking Out 3' survey – a survey of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities in Portsmouth.
- Safer Portsmouth Partnership – mapping work on religion or belief within the city.

One of the actions that we will take through this strategy and our single equality scheme will be to try to get more accurate information about our customers. This information will be used to shape how we plan our policies and services.

Our fairness and equality group and strategic directors' board agreed the approach to equalities in our strategy prior to Cabinet approval in June 2010. After this formal consultation is taking place. Our residents and stakeholders have also informed the development of this strategy through surveys and engagement activities.



Headlines within each strand of the Strategy

Ethnicity

Portsmouth's total population is 197,700 people (2007 data). Over 86% of the city's population view themselves as being 'white British'. There are a number of different BME communities in Portsmouth, including; Bangladeshi, African, Chinese, Indian and Filipino.

The highest concentrations of BME communities are in the south and west of Portsmouth, with significant Bangladeshi, Indian, and Chinese communities in Charles Dickens, Cosham, Fratton, Nelson, and St Thomas. There are significant Irish communities in Cosham, Nelson, Paulsgrove, and St Thomas.

The valuing diversity survey highlighted issues around perceptions of safety, community involvement and employment for some areas of the community.

Gender

There are more women than men in Portsmouth. The 2007 mid-year estimates show a total of 99,400 females living in Portsmouth and 98,300 males.

The highest number of women in the city are living in Cosham, Drayton and Farlington, Hilsea, Baffins and Charles Dickens wards.

The population of the city is expected to increase by 2.5% between 2009 and 2015. This increase is expected to be higher among males (3.2%) than among females (1.8%).

There are almost 20% more women over 50 in the city than men.

There are over 40% more women over 80 than men.

The least deprived wards (Drayton and Farlington) and the most deprived wards (Charles Dickens) also have the highest number of women living in them.

Some of the work that we are planning includes taking action on pay gaps, the causes and consequences of violence against women and girls and discrimination against transsexual and transgender people. This is in line with recent equality and human rights commission guidance and in response to EIAs.



Age

Portsmouth has an above average number of people aged 18–29. All other age groups are roughly at or below the national average. The population aged 45–59 is significantly smaller in Portsmouth than in England and Wales as a whole.

The highest numbers of 18-29 year olds are in Paulsgrove, Charles Dickens, and Halsea. Central Southsea and St Jude have the lowest proportion of young people.

Information from the anti-poverty strategy show that, based on the 2007 Indices of Deprivation, 25.5% of Portsmouth's children (0 to 15 population) are in a family experiencing income deprivation.

The largest proportion of over 60s is in Drayton and Farlington, where over 30% of the population are within this age bracket.

The highest percentages of over 60s are in Charles Dickens, St Jude, St Thomas, and Eastney & Craneswater.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender

Official statistics on these communities in the UK are hard to come by. This is for a number of reasons. A study by the government in 2005 concluded that there were over 3.5 million gay people in the UK (6% of the population), which would amount to several thousand people in Portsmouth.

The total number of civil partnerships registered in the Portsmouth since December 2005 is 231, with 110 male and 121 female partnerships.

Information from the valuing diversity survey show that the majority of respondents from this community said that they did feel safe walking alone in Portsmouth after dark, but 46% of the community regarded hate crime (including racial hate crime) as a problem in the local area.

It is still not standard practice in many areas to gather information on the sexuality of service users, but through this strategy we will ensure that our equality impact assessments include the needs of this community.

Disability

According to the 2001 Census, 17% of the city's residents have a limiting long-term illness or disability.

Our own information shows that there are less people registered as physically disabled, visually impaired or hearing impaired in Portsmouth than those with a limiting long-term illness (which include over 14,000 people of working age and over 13,000 aged over 65).

When we look at information on deprivation it shows that some of the more deprived wards in the city (in this case Charles Dickens and Paulsgrove) also have higher levels of people claiming disability related benefits when compared to other wards areas.

Our work on disability has focussed on involving disabled people in the way we develop and run our services, as well as finding ways to improve employment opportunities for disabled people.

There is still work to be done on ensuring disabled access to council buildings and public transport, that the number of disabled people working within the council is reflective of the disabled community in the city and addressing the issues in the links between disability and deprivation

Religion or belief

There are a number of faiths practised in Portsmouth, partly because of the ethnic diversity in the city.

The main religion in Portsmouth is Christianity, although the city is also home to Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, and Jewish communities.

The valuing diversity survey identified that in general, the Muslim community and other non-Christian groups were more concerned than Christians about all aspects of community safety and reflects a very clear difference in the way that crime is perceived or experienced between the various faith communities in the city.

Priorities for action and performance management

Priority 1

Promoting fairness and diversity by tackling inequalities, disadvantage, and discrimination

Key actions include:

Carrying out meaningful equality impact assessments on all our functions and also when we make changes to our service, policies, and strategies.

Anti-poverty and regeneration strategies to tackle poverty and help break the cycle of deprivation.

Meeting housing need and to ensuring there is up-to-date information about Portsmouth's housing market.

Community cohesion - create a positive and welcoming place and a set of common values for the city that

Celebrate and respect our diversity.

Understand and address the issues raised by Muslim respondents to the valuing diversity survey, particularly the results around community safety and anti-social behaviour issues

Priority 2

Leadership and partnerships

Strategic leadership on equality and diversity is vitally important and we recognise that we cannot achieve its aims for the city in isolation. The Local Strategic Partnership will put forward improvement plans through the Community Involvement Partnership Board

Elected members, the Chief Executive and our senior management team will champion equality issues at the authority

The equalities forum for the city will aim to get each 'leader' from within their own organisation, to sign up to a shared commitment or pledge on promoting equalities

Actions will be monitored through:

- The fairness and equality group – a strategic level group that meets regularly to discuss equality issues
- Annual reviews of progress in delivering our single equality scheme (The council's business and service plans)
- Regular reports to elected members
- Says what will be monitored but not how/who

Priority 3

Employment and training

We are introducing a new people management strategy – 'Workforce Matters' in 2010. This will set out our strategic approach to recruitment, training and development. This includes a commitment to ensuring that we have a more diverse workforce in future and considering the use of positive action as outlined in the Equality Act to address under-representation of some communities in the council's workforce.



Priority 4

Service delivery and access

All of Portsmouth's residents have the right to expect easy access to services, advice, and information provided or funded by us. The new Equality Act places additional duties on the council to consider the needs of all of its communities in the design and delivery of services.

This will include:

- Our access strategy
- Business Planning
- Equality impact assessments
- Service participation
- Our communications
- Access to our buildings

Priority 5

Promoting community engagement

The council has a legal 'duty to involve' residents when making its decisions. We have an excellent record in community engagement and building on this will help us to ensure that we deliver better outcomes for all.

This will include:

A new community engagement framework this will aim to ensure that our services are relevant and easy to access. It will also focus on ways in which we can encourage people to become more involved in making local decisions..

- **Neighbourhood forums** – A review is currently underway to ensure that neighbourhood forums across the city are acting as an effective link between our consultation and democracy work.
- **Take Part** – The national Take Part Pathfinder is working to encourage people to become more involved in making local decisions that affect them.
- **New petitions scheme** – To help give local people more involvement in making decisions that affect them.

We will use national indicators to give us information on the effectiveness of a variety of community engagement mechanisms being used in the city.



Portsmouth
CITY COUNCIL

Customer, Community and Democratic Services
Portsmouth City Council
Civic Offices
Guildhall Square
Portsmouth
PO1 2AL

www.portsmouth.gov.uk

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264