

Equality Scheme

June 2016



Purpose of this Equality Scheme

This scheme sets out the steps we will be taking over the coming years to proactively promote equality through our roles as a service provider, community leader and employer.

It also outlines how we meet the Equality Act 2010 in terms of both the general duties and the specific public sector duty.

A strong commitment to equality and diversity does not only have a strong moral argument, and legal obligations, but it also makes good business sense. As an organisation that is committed to understanding and shaping services around customers' needs, we need to be able to recognise and adapt to the diverse nature of our customers.

This Equality Scheme will set out;

- Our ten equality Strands, and an understanding of the community of Chorley
- Our processes for embedding equality and diversity
- Our commitments to meeting the general duty and the specific public sector duty
- An Action Plan for 2016/17

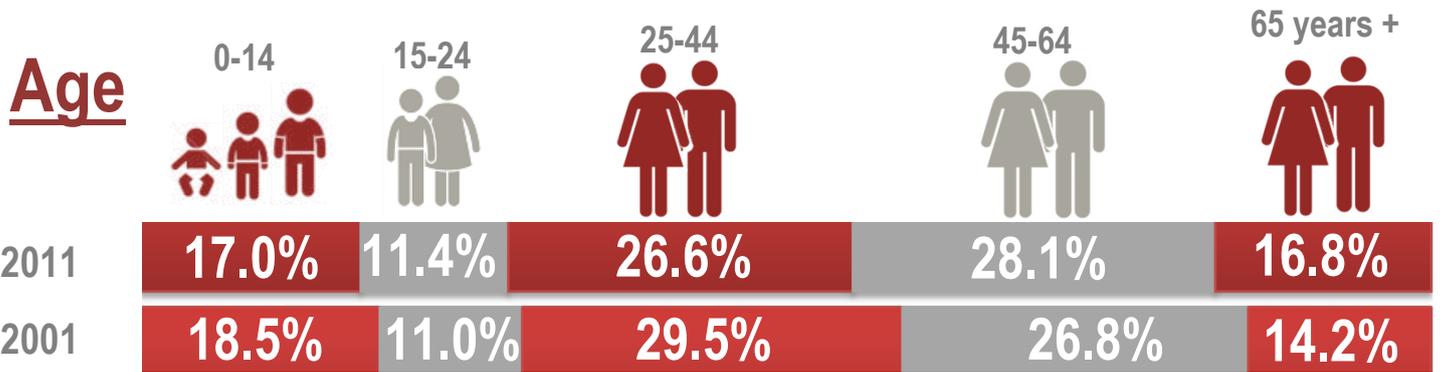
Our Equality Strands

We have identified ten equality strands. Each strand refers to a group of customers who share a similar characteristic, which is protected. These groups may need additional support or consideration in service delivery or policy development. The ten strands are:

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

All of the strands, except rurality, are protected by law through the Equality Act as people who have protected characteristics. Chorley Council has chosen to recognise rurality as an equality strand because of the issues that people living in rural areas can face when accessing services. As well as making sure that we meet the duties set out in the Equality Act, this scheme will ensure that we make consideration of the particular needs of different customers and residents.

Understanding our Community



Gender

50.1%
Male



49.9%
Female

Rurality

69.1%* URBAN

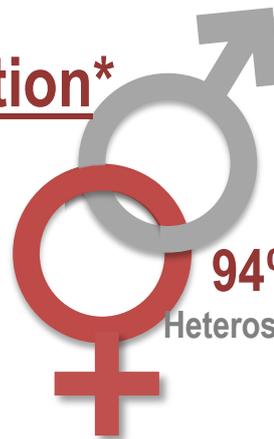


30.9%* RURAL



Sexual Orientation*

94%
Heterosexual

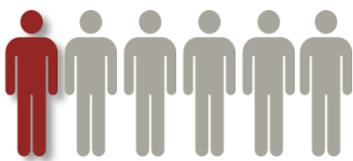


6%
Homosexual

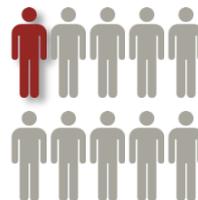


*Percentage of the population

Disability



1 IN 6 PEOPLE
have a long-term health problem or disability



1 IN 10 PEOPLE
day-to-day activities are limited a lot



1 IN 20 HOUSEHOLDS

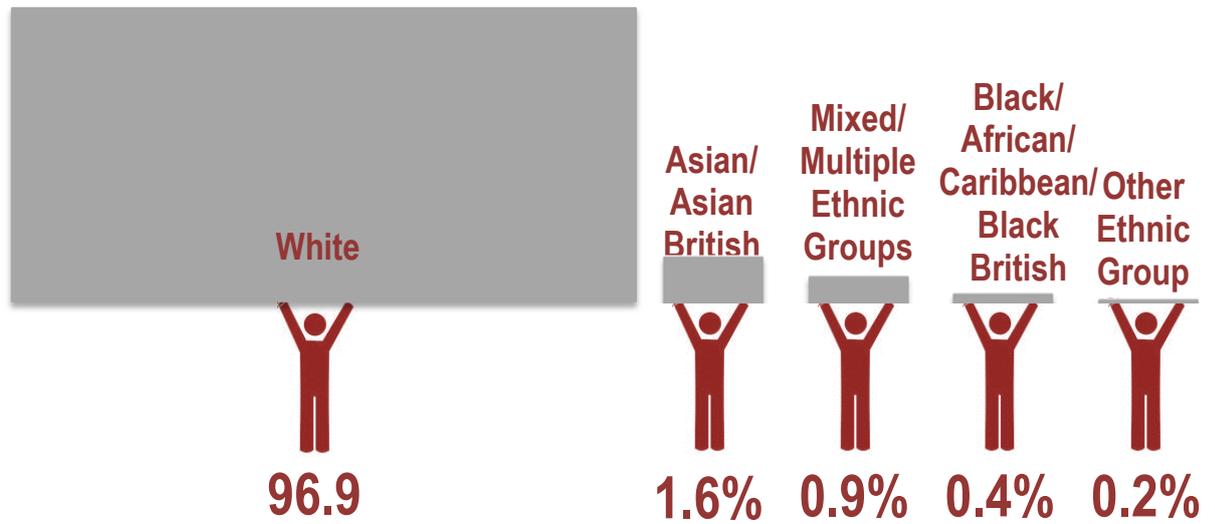
Have at least one person with a long-term health problem or disability
With dependent children

4 IN 20 HOUSEHOLDS

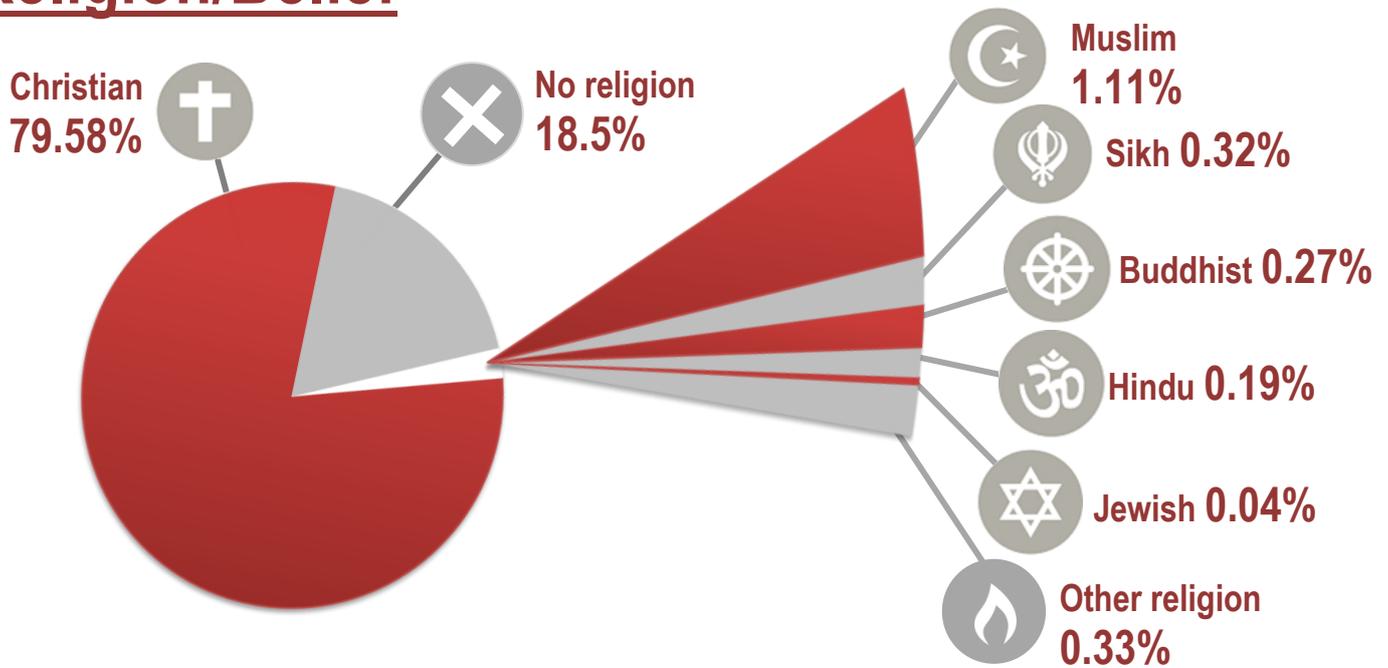
Have at least one person with a long-term health problem or disability
With no dependent children

Understanding our Community

Race

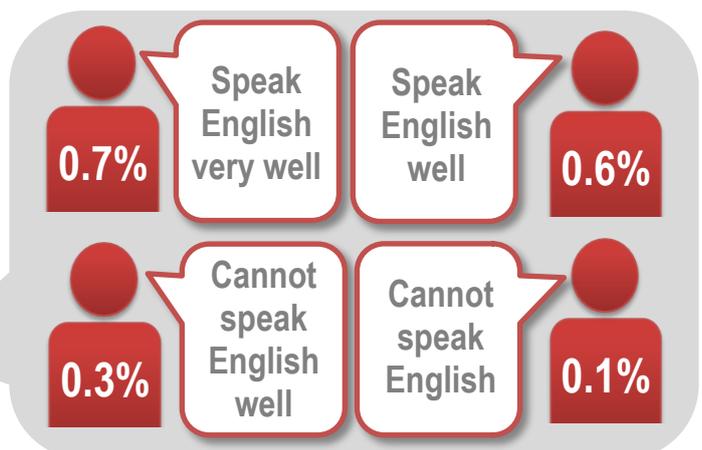


Religion/Belief



English as a Main Language

Percentage of the population aged 3 and over



Our Legal Duties

The Equality Act 2010 imposes duties on all public bodies, including the Council. There is the general equality duty and the specific public sector duty. The boxes below give some summary information about what the duties mean. This scheme supports the Council in complying with these duties.

The General Equality Duty

When exercising its functions (for example, making policies or delivering services), the Council must give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Act explains that having due regard involves; removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics; taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people; and, encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low. This may involve treating some people more favourably than others.

The Specific Public Sector Duty

As well as complying with the general duty, the Council must also comply with some specific duties. These are:

1. Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty, at least annually; and,
2. Set and publish equality objectives at least every four years

We must publish new equality objectives at least every four years and refresh the information we produce to show our compliance with the equality duty annually.

Our Equality Objectives for 2016-2020 can be found at **Appendix A**.

Ensuring equality issues are considered in our services

Chorley Council already does much to ensure that the needs of particular customers and residents are met, and that equality and diversity are considered in service delivery and policy making. This section outlines how we ensure that the needs of groups with protected characteristics are always considered.

The Equality Framework for Local Government

The Equality Framework for Local Government comprises of five performance themes:

- Knowing your communities
- Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- Involving your communities
- Responsive services and customer care
- A skilled and committed workforce

In addition, it has three levels of achievement which are:

- Developing
- Achieving
- Excellent

As a council, we use the Equalities Framework for Local Government as a tool to review and improve our performance for people with characteristics which are protected by the Equality Act 2010.

Integrated Impact Assessments

Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA) assess the possible impact that a proposed policy, function or service may have on different groups within Chorley. Anyone who is designing or changing a service, or developing or changing a policy or procedure, is responsible for carrying out an impact assessment. Directors have overall responsibility for ensuring that impact assessments are undertaken and acted upon.

Policy and Communications can provide support to anyone carrying out an assessment, to make sure there is consistency across the organisation.

All new policies, functions or services will have to undergo an IIA as part of their development process. Existing assessments should be updated at least every two years.

The assessment involves assessing the policy, function or service against the following:

- Equality Strands
- Health
- Sustainability
- Reputational impact

Each assessment requires an action plan to be compiled from any actions identified through the assessment. These actions will be incorporated into organisational business planning to ensure they are undertaken and completed.

How the Council Monitors Progress

All **Committee and Council reports** include details on equality implications of proposed recommendations, so that elected Members are aware of them when taking decisions.

Policy and Communications maintains an officer oversight and is accountable for ensuring implementation of the Equality Scheme. Human Resources and Organisation Development monitor and provide information about staff make-up, recruitment and other workforce related issues.

Roles and Responsibilities - The Executive Member for Resources has responsibility for equality and diversity. The Director of Policy and Governance is the lead Chief Officer from the management team. However, all elected Members and senior officers are responsible for ensuring that equality and diversity principles are reflected in all functions of the Council.

The tasks contained within the **Action Plan** will be monitored for progress on a six monthly basis; this performance review will be led by the Performance and Partnerships Team.

Sources of Support and Information

Policy and Communications ensures that information about customer groups is available for staff to use to inform integrated impact assessments. This includes population profiles which ensure that the specific needs of our customers and communities are accounted for when planning and delivering services.

The **Equality Forum** invites representatives from groups from all strands of diversity to participate in discussions about new policies and Council activities and raise any concerns with regards to policies and service delivery. Any member of the community is welcome to attend and take part in meetings.

In terms of **Staff Training**, Equality and Diversity (Knowing Your Customers and Communities) is built into the Council's induction process, with all new staff receiving training on equality and diversity and the Council's objectives and processes. Specific training is given as required, including one-to-one training sessions on integrated impact assessments.

Processes

Equality and Diversity is built into the following organisational processes:

Annual Service Assurance statements are required to be produced yearly; these statements ask services to outline, amongst other things, how they have considered equality and diversity in their service delivery and require them to report on their completion of Integrated Impact Assessments over the year.

Procurement and Contract Management: The process of undertaking equality assessments is built into the procurement and contract management guidance to ensure that the equality and diversity implications of contracted out services is fully addressed.

In terms of **Project Management**, the requirement to undertake an integrated impact assessment is built into our Project Management Toolkit. For **Performance Management**, there are some key performance indicators that are built into our monitoring of services and monitoring of the workforce that are measured and reported – more information is in the Council as an employer section of this Scheme.

Processes for Embedding Equality and Diversity

Sources of Support and Information

Equality Forum
Borough Profile Information
Organisational Development
Equalities Framework for Local Government

Processes

Committee Reports
Project Management
Procurement and Contract Management
Performance Management
Equality Scheme

Outcome

Equality is built into all Council policies and functions

The Council as an employer

The Council is committed to equality of opportunity at all stages of employment. This includes advertising jobs, the recruitment and selection process, appointment, promotion, training and development, disciplinary proceedings, grievance and complaints procedures. All Human Resources policies are reviewed and developed with due consideration to the implications of legislation, specifically the Equality Act 2010, and best practice relating to the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity, along with other equality and social inclusion issues.

Recruitment and Selection

The Council recognises its specific and general duties under the Equality Act 2010, in relation to our arrangements for monitoring of employees and potential employees. Equal Opportunities monitoring of applicants, shortlisted and successfully appointed candidates takes place at all stages of the recruitment and selection process. Monitoring covers the following areas and is taken from the equal opportunities monitoring form of the Council's application form:

- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Religion and Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Caring Responsibilities

Positive action measures will be taken where it is found, through monitoring of the work force and the recruitment and selection process, that there is under-representation of certain groups. Positive action measures may include the provision of training targeted at people from specific groups so that they may gain appropriate experience and skills to give them an equal opportunity in competing for jobs.

Pre-employment health-related checks; The Equality Act 2010 limits the circumstances when we can ask health-related questions before we have offered an individual a job. Consequently, the council will only ask a candidate to complete a pre-employment health questionnaire when a job offer has been made. The council will not ask health-related questions during the recruitment process unless it is to help us to decide whether we need to make reasonable adjustments, decide whether an applicant can carry out a function that is essential to the job, to monitor diversity among job applicants, to take positive action to assist a disabled person or if the post has an occupational requirement.

Training and Development

Staff from under-represented groups within the Council will be encouraged to participate in training and development initiatives. All employees will be given equal access to training and development opportunities that are identified via the Performance Reviews and PDP's.

Monitoring Equality in Employment

The Council also monitors and analyses data and information arising from:

- Bullying and harassment cases
- Disciplinaries
- Grievances
- Mediation
- Capability
- Early retirement
- Redundancy
- Settlement agreements

In addition, the Council monitors on a monthly basis the percentage of staff who consider themselves to have a disability and staff from BME backgrounds. The Council also has a facility to produce monitoring information on staff broken down by grade, age, disability, race and sex.

Monitoring these areas during recruitment, selection and promotion and in employment ensures that our services extend to those hard to reach and disadvantaged groups, that our processes are fair and within the remits of legislation, that people from all backgrounds are represented and have equality of opportunity and that we eliminate all forms of discrimination.

Action Plan for 2016/17

The below plan contains a series of actions which have been identified to improve our performance against our Equality Scheme. The actions contained within the plan have also been identified to strengthen our performance against the Equalities Framework for Local Government.

EFLG Theme	Action	By When?	By Who?
All	Ensure that we work towards applying the principles of excellence under the EFLG framework , reaching achieving in the majority of areas	March 2017	Organisation wide Policy and Governance overview
Knowing your communities	Undertake a review of our approach to data collection as a council, understand where our gaps are and address these gaps	August 2016	Policy and Governance
	Ensure equality monitoring is applied consistently across the organisation	September 2016	Policy and Governance Heads of Service
	Work with our partners to ensure plans and protocols are in place to collect, share and use equality information	March 2017	Equality Forum Local Networks Chorley Council
Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment	Publish Equality Objectives 2016/2020	April 2016	Policy and Governance
	Ensure that equality objectives are cascaded to all services and outcomes are measured	June 2016	Senior Officers Policy and Governance
Involving your communities	Map our consultation and engagement activity to establish any engagement gaps	March 2017	Senior Officers Policy and Governance
Responsive Services and Customer Care	Develop and implement an updated process for Integrated Impact assessments	March 2017	Policy and Governance
A skilled and Committed workforce	Roll out of equality and diversity refresher training for all staff and members, building in any new considerations	November 2016	Policy and Governance

Appendix A – Equality Objectives 2016/2020

Objective		Targets and measures	By when?
1	To ensure that the Council takes into account equality considerations and population trends when planning the delivery of its services	80% of impact assessments will be completed/reviewed.	April 2017
2	To improve outcomes for those who live in rural areas, reducing the effect of rural isolation across our borough	A 50% increase in the number of people attending digital access sessions. The number of people attending the sessions will be measured annually.	April 2020
		Develop and deliver a community transport scheme.	April 2017
3	To increase the satisfaction levels of our customers and make sure that everyone feels that they are able to engage and has the opportunity to do so if they wish	Less than 20% of customers dissatisfied, this will be measured through our monthly customer satisfaction survey.	April 2020
		85% of residents satisfied with the local area, this will be measured through our residents satisfaction survey.	April 2018
4	To improve relationships within our local communities, making sure that positive relationships are encouraged and established	60% of residents willing to work together to improve the local area as measured through our resident's satisfaction survey.	April 2018
		A 35% increase in the number of volunteering hours earned, measured through our Time Credits scheme.	April 2020

Objective		Targets and measures	By when?
5	To make sure that the age of our workforce reflects the local population as much as possible, and to continue to ensure that all of our employees feel they are treated fairly and with respect	<p>Increase the percentage of those aged 16-24 in the workforce by 25%; this will be measured through our employment data.</p> <p>Increase the percentage of staff feeling they are treated with respect and consideration by 5%, measured through our staff survey.</p>	<p>April 2018</p> <p>April 2018</p>
6	Chorley council will aim to promote the highest standards with regards to equality and diversity	<p>Reaching excellence in specific areas of the EFLG framework self-assessment, more information on the framework can be found below:</p> <p>http://www.local.gov.uk/equality-frameworks/-/journal_content/56/10180/3476575/ARTICLE</p>	April 2020
7	We will make sure that the needs of protected groups are taken into account when considering changes we plan to make to the local town centre	<p>Increase the percentage of consultation and engagement views and responses from communities across protected groups by 5%. This will be measured through the equalities monitoring information we collect when we consult with the public.</p> <p>Results of Integrated Impact Assessments</p>	April 2020