

religion or belief marriage and civil partnership
protected characteristics disability rights
Equality sexual orientation everyone
disadvantage **Human Rights**
Diversity age gender
race committed
gender re-assignment socio-economic disadvantage
opportunity pregnancy and maternity

LeicesterShire
Equalities Forum:
our strategy for progressing
the equality, diversity and
human rights agenda



Promoting equality, diversity and
human rights across the sub-region
through partnership working

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Please Note:

The term Leicester Shire is used frequently within this document.
By Leicester Shire we mean Leicester and Leicestershire collectively.

Foreword

Welcome to the LeicesterShire Equalities Forum (LSEF) Equality and Diversity Partnership Strategy.

This strategy explains how we will work together to promote equality, diversity and human rights across the sub-region of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. It also outlines how we, as a forum, intend to tackle discrimination, reduce inequality and foster good relationships for all stakeholders through partnership working.

The LSEF is a forum made up of representatives from various organisations across the sub-region who are responsible for progressing the equality and diversity agenda. Member organisations include:

- Blaby, Harborough and North-West Leicestershire District Council's
- Charnwood, Hinckley & Bosworth, Melton and Oadby & Wigston Borough Council's
- HM Young Offenders Institution and Remand Centre Glen Parva
- Leicester City Council
- Leicestershire County Council
- Leicestershire Constabulary
- Leicestershire Ethnic Minority Partnership (LEMP)
- Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service
- National Offender Management Service East Midlands
- NHS Leicestershire County and Rutland Primary Care Trust
- Rutland County Council

The aim of the forum is to support the delivery of the equality, diversity and human rights agenda within statutory bodies, the voluntary and community sector and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP's). In addition to this, the forum is encouraging greater partnership working on common issues; devising, developing and disseminating equality, diversity and human rights best practice and responding collaboratively to relevant government consultation.

The LSEF has agreed to produce this strategy, which draws together current working practices across each of the various partner organisations, to create a more consistent approach to partnership working on equalities and to heighten the equality, diversity and human rights agenda by implementing a positive approach to shared working and allocation of resources.

Section 1: Introduction, Vision and Values

Introduction

This Partnership Equality and Diversity Strategy is a means of recognising and documenting the aims and ambitions of the LSEF. The strategy sets out the equality and diversity priorities and objectives which the partnership intends to focus on over the next three years in order to progress the equality, diversity and human rights agenda.

We are committed to equality of opportunity for everyone and particularly the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, gender re-assignment, human rights, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and socio-economic disadvantage.

This strategy describes how each of the partner organisations within the LSEF will progress the equality, diversity and human rights agenda within the partnership arrangement. It identifies how - through working in partnership - we will all better achieve our corporate and strategic aims and values.

It presents a way forward for all the partner organisations within the LSEF to measure the impact of their activities to make Leicester Shire and Rutland cohesive communities where people treat each other with respect.

Vision and Values

The vision of the LSEF is that Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland is a place where all people are treated with equity and fairness. This does not mean that all people across the sub-region will be treated the same, but means that the forum will ensure that individual needs are recognised and met.

The LSEF values the contributions that individuals and groups of individuals bring to community life within Leicester Shire and Rutland and wish to continue to build strong relationships between different people.

The LSEF believes everyone should be able to access public services and no individual should be excluded due to disadvantage or discrimination.

The key vision of equality across the partnership is underpinned by the ambitions of;

- people achieving their own potential and enjoy a good quality of life
- everyone can access and use services, facilities and information
- there is public influence over decision making and planning
- there is in-depth understanding of the diverse range of communities

- Leicester Shire and Rutland is a strong, safe and inclusive community
- people have trust and confidence in us as a partnership
- everyone has their voices heard and have the opportunity to be engaged and involved in decisions that affect them

By challenging inequalities and celebrating diversity we can make Leicester Shire and Rutland a stronger, safer and more inclusive community where people can have a good quality of life.

To make this happen, we need an in-depth understanding of the needs of citizens in Leicester Shire and Rutland, so we can ensure everyone has access to the most appropriate services, facilities and information. We also need to ensure that the workforce, within each of the organisations of LSEF members are supported through fair employment practice and that it is representative of the make-up of the local community.

Section 2: Scope of this strategy

Who Does This Strategy Apply To?

This strategy applies to:

- Employees, including temporary staff
- Citizens/ members of the public
- Contractors and sub-contractors
- Councillors
- Users of public services, including potential users
- Visitors to any of the partner organisations
- Volunteers

What is Equality?

Equality is about respecting everyone and not treating an individual or group of people unfairly. It is about giving people equality of access to services and taking steps to enable people to fulfil their potential. Equality is not about treating everyone in the same way, but it recognises that individuals' needs are sometimes best met in different ways.

What is Diversity?

Diversity is about what makes us all unique – our individual differences; recognising and valuing the traits that make us all who we are. Having a wide range of people living and working within Leicester Shire and Rutland is a positive attribute which we should celebrate.

What is Community Cohesion?

Community Cohesion is something which must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together. A key contributor to community cohesion is integration, which is the process whereby new residents and existing residents learn to adjust to one another.

An integrated and cohesive community is based on three foundations:

- People from different backgrounds having similar life opportunities
- People knowing their rights and responsibilities
- People trusting one another and trusting local institutions to act fairly

Section 3: National and Local Context

What are Human Rights?

Human rights are fundamental rights of an individual. They are the basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled, often held to include the right to liberty, freedom of thought and expression, and equality before the law.

This strategy recognises a number of key objectives that will support and promote partnership working on priority equality and diversity areas for the sub-region. The outcomes of this strategy are consistent with those outlined in the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and in the various equality and diversity policies, schemes and strategies of members of the LSEF.

Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP's)

Each of the local authorities within the LSEF leads on an LSP. The aim of each LSP is to bring together all of those people and bodies whose work impacts on the lives of local people.

Membership of each LSP varies but tends to include; local councils, public service providers and statutory agencies, businesses, voluntary organisations and the local community, with the aim of improving public services.

Equality, diversity and human rights are a priority for each LSP with an aim to being inclusive and ensuring everyone has the same life opportunities.

Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and Local Area Agreement (LAA)

Each LSP has developed an SCS which sets out a range of priority issues or outcomes. The three LAAs (one each for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland) outline how these will be delivered and how the progress will be measured.

There a number of LAA performance indicators across the sub-region that are relevant to equality, diversity and community cohesion.

Organisational Equality and Diversity Policy, Schemes and Strategies

Each of the member organisations within the LSEF publishes their own equality and diversity policy, scheme, strategy or equivalent document.

Equalities legislation requires public services to have race, gender and disability equality scheme. Some organisations have incorporated all three schemes into a single equality scheme/ strategy/ policy. As long as the scheme is embedded within the organisation and that progress is measured regularly, there is some flexibility as to how the scheme is constructed.

This strategy encompasses these schemes and identifies where it would be most productive and efficient to work in partnership on the equality and diversity agenda.

Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG)

All local authorities within the partnership are committed to working towards the levels outlined in the EFLG. The framework recognises the importance of fair and equal treatment in local government services and employment and has been developed as a tool to enable local authorities to mainstream equalities throughout the organisations.

All organisations within the LSEF, other than local authorities, are committed to working towards a measurement framework appropriate for their organisation, with regards to the equality and diversity agenda.

The EFLG provides a coherent framework for each local service area to work with elected members, staff, communities and local partners. The framework helps to meet the current legal obligations under the law and to minimise duplication.

There are three levels which form the Equality Framework for Local Government:

- **Level 1** - Developing
- **Level 2** - Achieving
- **Level 3** - Excellent
- The EFLG has five main areas of performance:
- **Theme 1** - Knowing your communities and equality mapping
- **Theme 2** - Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- **Theme 3** - Community engagement and satisfaction
- **Theme 4** - Responsive services and customer care
- **Theme 5** - A modern and diverse workforce.

The expectation is that all local authorities within the LSEF will continue to commit to working towards the appropriate level of the Equalities Framework for Local Government and other organisations will continue to work towards their respective measurement frameworks. When all organisations have reached the highest levels of their frameworks this will further create a consistent and coherent approach towards equality and diversity across the sub-region.

Section 4: Partnership Working

To take forward the partnership working agenda in the sub-region, the LSEF bid to the Improvement and Efficiency Partnership East Midlands / Leicester Shire EIP to develop an equality and diversity project. The project provides a selection of activities that will enable the LSEF to optimise the impact of its work around equality and diversity. This includes the formal recognition of the work each member organisation is doing to embed equality outcomes in accordance to the requirements of the Equality Framework for Local Government and other appropriate measurement frameworks.

The Improvement and Efficiency Partnership East Midlands / Leicester Shire EIP aims to improve the capacity and performance of local public services in the East Midlands. This will be achieved through creating imaginative, energetic and effective public services, shaping places and building stronger communities whilst achieving collaborative, efficient, improved services through partnership working.

The equality and diversity project developed by the LSEF will run from October 2009 to October 2011 with an aim to achieve the outcomes mentioned above by providing practical support and guidance. Further co-ordination of work in this area will ensure that better outcomes are achieved for all and that the Leicester Shire and Rutland area is at the forefront of activity around equality, diversity and human rights.

This strategy will support the work of the equality and diversity project developed by the LSEF, throughout its duration, in order to oversee the implementation of a number of initiatives and achieve the desired outcomes.

The following initiatives will be undertaken:

- A **partnership wide audit** of the LSEF membership to establish priorities, capacity and commitment to achieving Excellence against the Equalities Framework.
- A **Democratic involvement** project which will involve developing a programme of initiatives to develop youth involvement in the democratic process.
- **Member and officer training** covering a range of knowledge and experiences across each of the equality strands.
- Developing a robust **Communication and Information** protocol which will include a Partnership Communication Strategy and the development of pro-active and innovative approaches to sharing information.
- Development of common standards for promoting access to information and services.
- Development of a shared **Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit**
- **Tracking inequality trends** which involve Hate Incident Monitoring Projects in both the City and the County.
- **Commissioning Pot** for additional projects across the partnership which can add value to the project.

Section 5: Implementing Equality and Diversity across the Partnership

As mentioned in section three of this strategy, each of the member organisations within the LSEF publish, their own equality and diversity policies, schemes, strategies or equivalent documents.

These documents are the way in which individual organisations identify which functions and policies are relevant to equality and will be the channel through which partnership aims and objectives are implemented.

Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's)

It is important that as a partnership, we meet the needs of all communities across the sub-region. In order to ensure that our policies and functions do not disadvantage any particular individual or group of individuals, each organisation undertakes Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's).

The purpose of these assessments is to determine the impact a policy, service or other function has on different groups of people, to ensure equality and promote good relations.

Part of the legal responsibility of public bodies is to undertake EIA's on all new policies, functions, procedures and practice and to review progress on those existing ones every three years.

Each public sector authority across Leicester Shire and Rutland is currently responsible for how they manage that process, but we aim to develop a shared EIA toolkit in the future for consistency across the partnership.

Procurement and Commissioning

All organisations within the LSEF partnership require their contracts to meet the requirements of equalities legislation, whilst also aiming to promote equality and diversity through the commissioning process.

All organisations within the partnership have a strategy for procurement and commissioning or a policy in which they document these requirements. Some of these organisations belong to the Welland Procurement Unit (WPC) which provides a shared procurement service for the member councils of the Welland Partnership.

All contractors are required to comply with equalities legislation, and this includes a standard clause in contracts. Where equality is a core requirement within a contract additional requirements to promote equality are built into contract specifications and contracts.

All member organisations within the LSEF will continue to improve contract monitoring procedures to ensure that contractors are delivering equality requirements. We will use the forum to work in partnership, either via information sharing or sharing a joint approach in order to build consistency across the sub-region.

Data Collection, Recording, Monitoring and Reporting

It is important that we collect information on the diverse groups of people who use our services so that we can ensure that we treat people fairly across the partnership. Regular monitoring is essential in order to:

- Monitor the impact of services and policies on different groups
- Better understand the needs of different groups
- Check that the partnership is making progress towards meeting its targets on tackling discrimination and promoting equality

Each of the member organisations of LSEF has an individual approach to equality data collection, analysis and monitoring. **We will use the forum as an opportunity to share the information collected and how it is used to improve service delivery.**

Employment monitoring is also essential. All organisations within the LSEF collect and monitor their individual workforce data to check whether any equality group is being disadvantaged by employment practices or procedures. Positive action measures may be used to try and address this if needed.

Communication and Consultation

The LSEF has a communication strategy which aims to achieve an effective, transparent and consistent approach to communications across the partnership.

The strategy provides the opportunity to:

- develop and support a two-way approach to communication
- raise the profile of equality, diversity and human rights
- increase the engagement of LSEF members in partnership working through information sharing and integration
- endeavour to ensure that all communications will be readily accessible and available to all stakeholders
- to present, monitor and update all communications in a clear, simple, user friendly and organised way
- communicate through coordinated, appropriate and accessible channels to all stakeholders
- proactively listen to the needs and views of stakeholders and prioritise our responses accordingly.

Equality and Diversity Learning and Development for Staff and / or Elected Members/ Councillors

All organisations across the partnership have equality and diversity learning and development objectives for both staff and / or elected members. The aim is to provide the skills they need to enable each of the organisations within the partnership to promote equality and diversity and to actively tackle discrimination.

Learning and development in each of the organisations across the partnership includes training such as:

- specific courses covering some of the protected characteristics, e.g. religion or belief, sexual orientation, race and disability
- an introduction to equality and diversity
- Specific equality and diversity courses for Managers, e.g. Managing Diversity
- Equality Impact Assessment training
- Hate Incident Monitoring awareness raising events

As part of the RIEP Equality and Diversity Partnership programme, a partnership equality and diversity conference will take place which will provide an opportunity for staff to develop their learning in relation to the equalities agenda. Staff from all organisations within the partnership will have the opportunity to take part in this conference.

The LSEF aim to continue the organisation of an annual partnership equality and diversity conference for all staff or, if this is not feasible, use the conference as a starting point to deliver further training which will be included in individual training plans.

To date elected members from some organisations across the partnership have undertaken equality and diversity learning, but not all. This has taken place in various forms and is not consistent. Therefore, as part of the RIEP Equality and Diversity Partnership programme and working in conjunction with the REIP Member Development programme, **we will provide training to all elected members across the partnership.**

Each organisation will be required to build upon this initial training to provide further learning and development opportunities in the future - either individually or as a shared initiative.

Equality and Diversity in the Workplace

Across the partnership **we are aiming to promote and support diversity in the workforce.** This includes:

- supporting and working with staff networks across each of the organisations on the equalities agenda
- ensuring that women, disabled staff and ethnic minority staff are represented within senior positions within the workforce in each organisation and that this is consistent across the partnership
- eliminating harassment and bullying in the workplace
- supporting men and women in creating a flexible work life balance

Section 6: Partnership Equality and Diversity Priorities and Objectives

The LSEF have developed a set of priorities and objectives which have been grouped into six key areas, that are in line with the five criteria within the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) and a further area which concentrates on the development of the forum itself. These are:

1. Knowing your community and equality mapping
2. Place shaping, leadership, partnership & organisational commitment
3. Community engagement and satisfaction
4. Responsive services and customer care
5. A modern and diverse workforce
6. LeicesterShire Equalities Forum

Within these six key areas there are a number of objectives which are a priority for the LSEF. Key objectives and priorities include:

- a coordinated, partnership focused approach to equality, diversity and human rights across all organisations within the partnership, with common aims and objectives
- maximum progress by all 10 local authorities in embedding equality and diversity within employment, service delivery and procurement; ensuring enhanced equality outcomes and demonstrating progress in delivering the new Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG)
- better information about, and awareness of, all communities in Leicester Shire and Rutland to inform service design and delivery and ensure that services are tailored to the communities that we serve
- better knowledge transfer and sharing of information across the partnership to inform our understanding of local communities and support effective sharing of good (and bad) practice across the area
- greater awareness of equality and diversity issues and enhanced skill levels amongst both members and officers
- greater engagement of all staff and members on equality and diversity activities, through embedding equality, diversity and human rights considerations in our governance processes
- clearer overall strategic direction and agreed equality, diversity and human rights outcomes as a sub-region
- more joined up engagement of priority stakeholder groups through a range of mechanisms and

good practice through our engagement and consultation process

- more effective and quality assured Equality Impact Assessments for all key policy and strategy documents and of service delivery across the area leading to improved quality of life for all
- common approaches, informed by customer insight, to improving access to information and services and ensuring fair treatment by local services
- tackling discrimination and harassment and providing support to those who experience this e.g. domestic violence
- more effective and consistent responses to hate incidents and enhanced level and quality of interventions
- address the disadvantage and inequality that individuals may experience due to their age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion/ belief, sexual orientation, socio-economic status
- use the LSEF as a forum to raise issues at a national level
- more effective communication with stakeholders
- develop and promote good practice guidelines for equality and diversity policies
- develop and promote good practice guidelines for equality and diversity policies

These are not the only means of measuring whether the LSEF is reducing inequality across the partnership, but they do reflect the priorities to be tackled across the sub-region.

Section 7: Making this Strategy Work

The LSEF is responsible for overseeing the delivery of these priorities and the associated action plans. The forum will lead and co-ordinate the delivery of the strategy by:

- producing twice yearly monitoring reports against the action plan to monitor progress
- identifying and disseminating good practice regarding equality and diversity across the sub-region to increase efficiency and provide value for money
- ensuring the partnership stays abreast of emerging developments in equality, diversity and human rights

An annual report will be prepared, as a formal reporting mechanism, for key members within the LSEF to report back to their individual organisations with updates from forum meetings together with the progress and status of the partnership and to allow organisations to assess the progress being made and to embed existing and new equality initiatives into their work.

The LSEF will publish this annual report on the forum website showing progress across all areas of equality work, especially in relation to this partnership strategy and associated action plan.

The strategy will be reviewed after three years in 2013. The review will include an evaluation of how we have met the general equality duties and our specific duties under the legislation. It will be revised and updated in light of the progress made and to respond to changes.

Partnership Equality and Diversity Action Plan (2010-2013)

As part of this strategy we have developed a Partnership Equality and Diversity Action Plan which lists a number of actions for the LSEF to deliver in order to fulfil the priorities and objectives set by the forum. This action plan will last the duration of this three year strategy (from 2010 to 2013) and will be monitored for progress, twice yearly, through the production of monitoring reports.

The twice yearly progress monitoring will occur at the LSEF meetings and the expectation is for all LSEF members to take ownership of the progress monitoring and report back to the relevant strategic board within each organisation, to ensure they are involved in assessing progress being made.

Please see Appendix A for a full version of the Partnership Equality and Diversity Action Plan.

Appendix A

Partnership Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2010-2013

Action	Outcome	Leads	Achieved By
1. Knowing your community and equality			
1.1 Develop a partnership Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Toolkit and ensure the shared EIA toolkit is signed up to and implemented in each of the partner organisations.	All member organisations sign up to and roll out the shared EIA toolkit and in doing so create a positive effect in identifying and reducing inequalities across the sub-region	Suzanne Kinder (RIEP Equality and Diversity Manager)	December 2010
1.2 Develop a thorough understanding of the needs of LeicesterShire through targeted research; such as equalities mapping and an equalities needs analysis.	The equalities mapping and needs analysis of the sub-region will identify areas of inequality. Each organisation to use this evidence to set priorities in service planning and delivery	Suzanne Kinder (RIEP Equality and Diversity Manager)	December 2010
		Sally Edwards (Equality and Diversity Manager, Leicestershire County Council)	
		Joelle Bradley (Research Manager, Leicestershire County Council)	
2. Place shaping, leadership, partnership & organisational commitment			
2.1 Aim to achieve a consistent standard of equality and diversity practice across the sub-region, particularly in working toward the Equality Framework for Local Government or any other measurement framework used by organisations within the LSEF.	All Council's in the sub-region commit to working towards the appropriate level of the Equalities Framework and other organisations commit to working towards their respective measurement frameworks. When all organisations have reached the highest levels of their individual frameworks this will further create a consistent and coherent approach towards equality and diversity across the sub-region.	LeicesterShire Equalities Forum	December 2013

Action	Outcome	Leads	Achieved By
2.2 Publish the partnership equality and diversity strategy and implement the strategy across each of the organisations who are members of the LeicesterShire Equalities Forum.	All organisations who are members of the LeicesterShire Equalities Forum implement the strategy to develop consistency and further advance partnership working across the sub-region.	Suzanne Kinder (RIEP Equality and Diversity Manager)	July 2010
2.3 All members of the LSEF encouraged to attend the quarterly LSEF meetings and to be an active participant.	Further strengthen the forum and deliver the vision and values as set out in the Partnership Equality and Diversity Strategy.	LeicesterShire Equalities Forum	Quarterly meetings March June September December
2.4 The LSEF will support organisations in their self assessment against the Equality Framework for Local Government	Use other organisations within the partnership for means of informal peer assessment and contribute to the formal peer assessment of Council's in order for the appropriate level to be achieved.	LeicesterShire Equalities Forum	December 2013
3. Community engagement and satisfaction			
3.1 Make links with the Community Cohesion agenda with the Equality and Diversity agenda.	Develop a consistent approach across the partnership to ensure the Community Cohesion and Equality and Diversity agenda complement each other.	LeicesterShire Equalities Forum Community Cohesion leads from each organisation	December 2013
3.2 Ensure communications are effective and adhere to the communications strategy. Implement the communication plan.	All communications across the partnership, internally and externally, are clear and transparent.	Alpa Parmar (RIEP Equality and Diversity Communications Officer) Leicester Shire Equalities Forum	October 2011
3.3 Maintain the LeicesterShire Equalities Forum webpage, as an out-facing form of communication, including relevant policies and strategies as part of this.	Relevant, timely information, including equalities plans and schemes, is easily accessible.	Alpa Parmar (RIEP Equality and Diversity Communications Officer)	October 2011

Action	Outcome	Leads	Achieved By
3.4 Promote the use of appropriate language and positive images of people in all partnership communications and publications.	All publications audited to ensure they contain positive imagery of people, such as same sex couples and families.	Alpa Parmar (RIEP Equality and Diversity Communications Officer)	October 2011
4. Responsive services and customer care			
4.1 Actively promote the importance of reporting all hate incidents.	Continue to support and promote the Hate Incident Projects within the City and the County across the sub-region. Measured by the number of reported incidents.	LeicesterShire Equalities Forum	On-going
5. A modern and diverse workforce			
5.1 Review equality and diversity training in each of the partner organisations to establish best practice and build some consistency.	Training to be delivered via the RIEP programme to officers and members across the partnership around Equality and Diversity.	Suzanne Kinder (RIEP Equality and Diversity Manager) LeicesterShire Equalities Forum	June 2011
5.2 Hold an annual Partnership Equality and Diversity Conference or build upon the initial training undertaken via the RIEP Equality and Diversity Programme.	Training delivered via the RIEP programme to officers across the partnership around Equality and Diversity in the form of a partnership Equality and Diversity Conference.	LSEF members either continue to hold a conference or build upon the initial training to deliver within their own organisations.	Suzanne Kinder (RIEP Equality and Diversity Manager) LeicesterShire Equalities Forum
5.3 Undertake capacity building/ training with members to ensure they understand their community leadership role with regard to equality and diversity.	Training will be delivered via the RIEP programme to members across the partnership around Equality and Diversity.	Suzanne Kinder (RIEP Equality and Diversity Manager)	March 2011

Action	Outcome	Leads	Achieved By
6. Leicester Shire Equalities Forum			
6.1 Re-visit the terms of reference for the LeicesterShire Equalities Forum to ensure they are fit for purpose.	Revised Terms of Reference is more succinct and fit for the purpose of the LSEF.	LeicesterShire Equalities Forum	December 2010
6.3 Support the work of the Equality and Diversity RIEP programme in order to improve consistency across the sub-region and heighten the equality and diversity agenda.	The work of the Equality and Diversity RIEP programme will further develop partnership working in equality and diversity across the sub-region, creating a more consistent approach.	LeicesterShire Equalities Forum	October 2011

Appendix B

Protected Characteristics and Relevant Legislation

Equality Act 2010

This is the most recent of equalities legislation, which was introduced to simplify and modernise discrimination law.

The Bill harmonises and in some cases extends existing discrimination law covering the protected characteristics of age, disability gender, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

This gives public authorities a statutory general duty to promote race equality. The aim of the general duty is to make promoting race equality central to the way public authorities works. The general duty says that the body must have 'due regard' to the need to: -

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunity; and
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups.
- The Act also gives the Home Secretary power to place specific duties on public authorities to help them meet the general duties. Under the specific duties is the requirement to produce a Race Equality Scheme to: -
- Assess whether their functions and policies are relevant to race equality;
- Monitor their policies to see how they affect race equality;
- Assess and consult on policies that they are planning to introduce;
- Publish the results of their consultation, monitoring and assessments;
- Make sure that the public have access to the information and services that they provide; and
- Train their staff on these duties.

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005

This gives disabled people rights in the areas of: -

- Employment;
- Education;
- access to goods, facilities and services;
- buying or renting land or property, including making it easier for disabled people to rent property and for tenants to make disability-related adaptations.

The legislation imposes both general and specific duties on public authorities.

The General duties are to: -

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons.
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act.
- Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities.
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons.
- Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life; and
- Take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even when that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

The Specific Duties are that we: -

- Publish a Disability Equality Scheme that demonstrates how we intend to fulfil our general and specific duties.
- Involve disabled people in the development of the scheme and state how that involvement has occurred.
- Lay out our methods for impact assessment.
- Produce an action plan that demonstrates the steps we will take towards fulfilling our duties.
- State our arrangements for gathering information in relation to employment.

The Equality Act 2006

This Act had three distinct purposes. It: -

- Established the Equality and Human Rights Commission (see Section 8 of the E&D Scheme).
- Made discrimination unlawful on grounds of religion and belief in: -
- the provision of goods, facilities and services;

- the disposal and management of premises;
- education and the exercise of public functions; and Created the Gender Equality Duty for the public sector.

The Gender Equality Duty has two parts to it, the “general” duty and the “specific” duty.

The general duty places a legal duty on a public authority to: -

- eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; and promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

To “help meet its general duty”, the Council has a specific duty to: -

- Produce a Gender Equality Scheme identifying its gender equality goals and
- actions to meet them, which it will do in consultation with employees, other
- employers, and other stakeholders.
- Monitor and review progress.
- Review the Scheme every three years.
- Develop, publish and regularly review an equal pay policy, including
- measures to address promotion, development and occupational
- segregation.
- Conduct and publish gender impact assessments of all major policy
- developments, and publish its criteria for conducting such impact assessments.

The Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003

These Regulations make it unlawful to discriminate against workers, employees, job seekers and trainees on grounds of religion or beliefs or (from April 2007 under the Equality Act 2006) on grounds of holding no religion or belief.

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

These Regulations make it unlawful to discriminate against workers, employees, job seekers and trainees on grounds of sexual orientation.

The Civil Partnership Act 2004

This Act enables same sex couples to obtain legal recognition of their relationship and rights that are similar to those of married couples.

Gender Recognition Act 2004

This Act gives transsexual people the right to live in their acquired gender.

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

These Regulations make it unlawful to discriminate against workers, employees, job seekers and trainees on grounds of their age.

Equal Pay Act 1970, 1975, Amendment 1984

Makes it unlawful for employers to discriminate between men and women in terms of their pay and conditions where they are doing the same or similar work; work rated as equivalent; or work of equal value.

Immigration Act 1971

The Act rationalised migration legislation by making no distinction between Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth entrants.

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 helps people who have been convicted of a criminal offence and who have not re-offended since by enabling some criminal convictions to become 'spent', or ignored, after a 'rehabilitation period'.

Sex Discrimination Act 1975 Amendment 1982 and new Act in 1986

Offers protection against unlawful discrimination to both men and women by making sex discrimination unlawful in employment, vocational training, education, the provision and sale of goods, facilities and services, the management and letting of premises and the exercise of public functions.

Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment 2000. Amendment Regulations 2003)

Makes it unlawful for an employer to treat or fail to prevent the treatment of workers less favourably because of their colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins.

Employment Act 1989

Introduces amendments to the 1975 Act (above) where there is a need to override that Act in the interests of gender equality.

Disability Living Allowance and Disability Working Allowance 1991

Introduces these allowances as social security benefits.

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992

Primarily strengthened the requirements on employers to ensure safe systems of work, the need to carry out risk assessments and duties placed upon employees.

Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act 1993

An Act to make provision about persons who claim asylum in the United Kingdom and their dependants.

Race Relations Remedies Act 1994

Removes the limit imposed under the Race Relations Act 1976 on the amount of compensation which may be awarded at an Employment Tribunal.

Disability Discrimination Act 1995 Amendment in force from October 2004

Gives statutory rights for disabled people - see above for full details.

Employment Rights Act 1996

Consolidates enactments relating to a wide range of employment rights.

Asylum and Immigration Act 1996

Amends and supplements the Immigration Act 1971 and the Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act 1993 including putting the onus on employers to ensure that all their employees are not in breach of immigration rules.

Protection from Harassment Act 1997

An Act to make provision for protecting persons from harassment and similar conduct.

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Introduces new offences in order to deal with the problem of racist violence and harassment.

Human Rights Act 1998

Gives legal effect in the UK to 16 of the fundamental rights and freedoms contained in the European Convention on Human Rights.

National Minimum Wage 1998

Introduces the requirement that all workers, including women and ethnic minority workers, are to be paid at least the minimum national wages.

Employment Relations Act 1999

Ensures that the UK's system of employment law is based on fairness, flexibility and partnership.

Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

Makes various provisions about immigration and asylum, including about procedures in connection with marriage and the introduction of a national dispersal policy for asylum seekers to ease pressure on authorities in London and Kent.

Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999

Makes it illegal to discriminate against someone who intends to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment.

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001

Establishes legal rights for disabled students in pre- and post-16 education.

Racial & Religious Hatred Act 2006

Makes provision about offences involving stirring up hatred against persons on racial or religious grounds.

Working Time Regulations 1998 (as amended 2002)

Introduced limits on working hours and certain entitlements including rest breaks at work, minimum rest periods between working days and minimum periods of paid holiday entitlement.

Maternity and Parental Leave Regulations 1999 (as amended 2001)

Introduced a new regime of "family friendly" provisions.

Part Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000

Broadly make it unlawful for part-time workers to be treated less favourably than full-time workers.

Fixed Term Employee (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002

Broadly, to ensure that fixed-term employees are not treated less favourable than comparable permanent employees on the grounds that they are fixed-term employees unless this treatment can be objectively justified.

Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

Make it unlawful to discriminate and harass in employment and vocational training on the grounds of sexual orientation.

Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 (as amended 2004 and 2007)

Make it unlawful to discriminate against workers because of religion or belief.

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

Make it unlawful to discriminate against employees, job applicants and trainees on grounds of age and introduce a requirement an employers to give a minimum of 6 months notice of an employee's retirement date and gives employees a right to request working beyond normal retirement age.

If you require a summary of this information in an alternative version such as large print, Braille, audiotape or some help in understanding it in your own language please contact Suzanne Kinder;
Telephone: 0116 305 5692
Minicom: 0116 305 6048
Email: suzanne.kinder@leics.gov.uk

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www.leicestershiretogether.org/lsequalities
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