

Equalities – Service Delivery

As a public sector service, Peterborough City Council welcomes the introduction of the Equality Act 2010, and the opportunity that provides for us to share our current good work with the wider community. However, it is also a timely reminder that helps to identify why we do the work we do and how we make a real difference to people's lives. We need to identify any gaps and areas for improvement in promoting equality, to eliminate discrimination and build good community relations.

Our Human Resources Equality Report January 2012 sets out how we collect data and provides evidence of how our recruitment, training and development processes ensure we meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 in relation to employees of the city council and job applicants. But we need to do more. In this document we set out how we intend to ensure equality is embedded within all the services that we deliver or contract for our protected groups, and those particularly vulnerable, i.e. people living in poverty across the city.

We already work in partnership with the wider community and provide opportunities for scrutiny of our policies, plans and service developments. The Cohesion Board works with over 100 communities across the city. The work we are doing to empower residents through the Localism agenda is being led by the voluntary sector, through a corporate programme of service delivery. This year our Children's Services department were awarded 'Outstanding' for their work on equalities by Ofsted. We have appointed a Social Inclusion Manager, as the lead for all our equality work to ensure equality is systemically approached and routinely monitored. Responsibility for governance is held by the Director of Operations, which will ensure our service delivery is embedded across our neighbourhoods and communities teams and good practice cascades into multiagency teams. The new governance procedures for monitoring equality work across the partnership sit within our Corporate Governance Board.

We want to develop this good work further. Evidence tells us that people want more opportunities to be heard and get involved. We need to widen our engagement and participation plans to ensure everybody has the opportunity to influence what we are doing. We must find appropriate ways so all communities can participate equally to reduce disadvantage.

As a commitment to delivering equal services we are promising to deliver the following outcomes for the people of Peterborough -

- To find out exactly what we are doing now to stop disadvantage, promote equality and create harmony amongst communities.
- To review that work and the way in which we deliver equality.
- To have evidence of what's happening now to help track how we are doing going forward.

To achieve these outcomes we are setting the following objectives:

Objective 1: 'To undertake a full review of strategic functions, policies and procedures across the authority, to ensure we are acting lawfully but further than that providing best practice within our systems'

We will consider what causes particular groups in Peterborough to need protected status and then check that how we work promotes removal of such barriers as far as possible and does not create more barriers. We will work to stop disadvantage, showcase our commitment to equality and increase a sense of ownership of the local agenda across the whole community. To cement our commitment to improving and increasing our work on

equalities, this year will see equality champions identified in each department.

Objective 2: 'To establish corporate governance and partnership arrangements that ensure we deliver our equality duty'.

We will require all our partners to sign up to our equality commitments and through delivery of transparency and fair services we will improve our understanding and relations with all our communities.

Objective 3: Establish a quality assurance process that meets the recognised standards of Equality Quality Impact Assessments

If we are to get better we need to know where and how we are making a difference that our work is having a positive impact and that we are learning lessons on the way. To achieve this it is vital that we have a strong, robust way of monitoring our equality work on a daily basis. We need staff and partners trained in delivering equality. We need communities and partners holding us to account and we need to share evidence of how we are doing along the way. This objective sets out how we will achieve this.

We know we have a lot of work to do, but we also value the wonderful work that has been achieved with you to date, below are some examples of excellent work that we intend to build on for the future, across all our protected groups and further.

Case Studies

Our Neighbourhood Model ensures that local communities identify community priorities for action which impact on all residents, particularly the vulnerable and excluded groups, for example those living in poverty. To achieve this aim, this year the voluntary sector are making the recommendations on how funding is shared and services are delivered in local communities through our unique Voluntary Sector Commissioning Structure.

A Cohesion Strategy has been produced, in partnership with over 100 agencies and networks including interfaith and race. This will make Peterborough a more cohesive city by enabling everyone, regardless of race or background, belief or circumstances, to be respected and feel part of the community. The key priorities are:

- Tackling hate crime
- Youth engagement
- Improvement of access to services
- Promoting better understanding between Gypsies and Travellers

We have also begun work with the Disability Forum to deliver Peterborough's first Disability Strategy for disabled people living, working and visiting Peterborough. The strategy will ensure disabled people are involved in:

- All growth programmes and projects
- All building design and development
- Parking plans, improvement to service planning, design and access
- A citywide Disability Award Scheme

Our work in Children's Services has seen the introduction of the Young Inspector's Programme. This was launched by the Peterborough Children's Trust. Thirty young people from a wide range of backgrounds are being trained to inspect the services that children and young people use. The outcomes of inspections will be reported to the Children's Trust as well as the service itself, with recommendations about how to improve services for young people.