



# Equality Scheme

December 2006-December 2009

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**This document will be available in  
alternative languages and formats upon  
request.**

## Foreword

We are very pleased to have the opportunity to commend Wigan's Equality Scheme to you. Although it has been produced in response to changes in legislation, it builds on important work that is already a high priority. The elimination of discrimination, the promotion of community cohesion, social inclusion and valuing the diverse needs and skills of everyone are at the heart of the Borough's as well as the Government's agenda. These aims are critical to future economic and social development as well as being ethically right and socially just.

This scheme will focus on the current and pending requirement for local government to produce disability, gender, and race equality schemes. The Council supports the development of the Equality and Human Rights Commission as a single body that will have the capacity to deal with the varied aspects of a person's identity. The Council has taken the position of producing a single Equalities Scheme in line with the government's position on creating this single equality commission. This Equality Scheme encompasses and highlights all our legal requirements. We welcome the opportunity which this Equality Scheme gives us, to set out our policies, procedures and aims and the actions we will take to achieve them.

Our Equality Scheme must be a working document, which is central to everyone in whatever role within the Authority. We all need to check our knowledge and awareness of others and become used to considering the impact of what we do and how this affects other people.

The challenge is a serious one, and will often be difficult, but we are confident of rising to it and achieving excellence across equality and diversity agenda.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Smith".

**Councillor Peter Smith**  
Leader of the Council



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Redfearn".

**Joyce Redfearn**  
Chief Executive

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>1.0 Introduction and Background Information</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 Introduction	4
1.2 About the Council	5
1.3 Wigan Borough Profile	6
1.4 Workforce Profile	11
<b>2.0 Requirements of the Equality Legislation</b>	<b>12</b>
2.1 Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000	12
2.2 Disability Discrimination Act 2005	14
2.3 The Equality Act 2006	17
2.4 Guiding Principles of the Equality Legislation	18
<b>3.0 Commitment to the General Duties</b>	<b>20</b>
3.1 Eliminating discrimination and harassment	20
3.2 Promoting equality of opportunity	21
3.3 Promoting good relations, positive attitudes, taking account of need and encouraging participation	21
<b>4.0 Methods for Meeting the Requirements of the Equality Legislation</b>	<b>22</b>
4.1 Equality Scheme and Equality Policies	22
4.2 Links to the Equality Standard for Local Government	22
4.3 Structures of Equality and Diversity and Partnerships	25
4.4 Training	25
4.5 Involvement and Consultation in Drawing Up The Scheme	25
4.6 Assessing Functions and Policies: Relevance Reviews	26
4.7 Monitoring Policies: Impact Assessments	26
4.8 Monitoring Educational Opportunities and Achievements	27
4.9 Workforce Monitoring	28
4.10 Equal Pay Policy and Equal Pay Review	29
4.11 Procurement	29
4.12 Annual Report	30
4.13 Contacting Us	30
<b>Appendix 1: Equality Scheme Action Plan</b>	<b>31</b>

## **1.0 Introduction and Background Information**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The Council is dedicated to improving services and employment practices for all in a way that meets and is sensitive to the needs of all sections of the community. In striving to make the necessary changes to ensure continued improvement, the Council will provide community leadership in championing equality and diversity and equality of opportunity; challenging all forms of discrimination and contributing to making the Council's Vision and Values a reality for all.

In addition to meeting its obligations under the various pieces of equality legislation, tackling discrimination, preventing harassment, and promoting equality are key to achieving the Council's vision of:

"Building the future together – a place where people matter and you can afford to live the kind of life you want."

It is also about;

- Helping people reach their full potential
- Building strong communities
- Creating places where people want to live

Wigan Council will support the delivery of the Vision

- Strong Community Leadership – through a network of partnerships
- Effective Governance – ensuring good systems and processes exist for managing the Council and making key decisions
- Excellent Services – making sure the Council is always improving

The Council's values are:

- setting high standards
- being open and honest
- focusing on performance
- leading by example

The Council believes that the equality and diversity agenda is a vital, integral part of working that underpins all aspects of our Vision and Values. It will be through the effective implementation of this agenda that the Council will achieve its vision and values. Work will be undertaken at both the corporate and departmental level, and in our partnership arrangements.

Wigan Council takes its obligations under the various pieces of equality legislation seriously. The Council has adopted a seven social identity model which includes the following areas: age, class, disability, gender, religion or belief, race, and sexuality. This framework allows the Council to consider many forms of recognised potential discriminations and disadvantage that people may face and deliver more effective services and employment practices to resolve these problems. This commitment is further outlined in the Comprehensive Equal Opportunity Policy, available from:

<http://www.wigan.gov.uk/Services/CouncilDemocracy/PoliciesPlans/EqualOpportunities/EqualityDiversity.htm>

## **1.2 About the Council**

Wigan Council is made up of 75 Councillors: Labour 41, Conservative 15, Community Action 6, Liberal Democrats 4, Independent 9 (as of May 2008). The Council has adopted the model of a Leader and Cabinet system, supported by Policy Panels, with an Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## **1.3 Wigan Borough Profile**

Wigan lies on the Northwest boundary of the Greater Manchester conurbation, adjoining the local authorities of Bolton and Salford in Greater Manchester; the districts of Chorley and West Lancashire; St Helens in Merseyside; and Warrington in Cheshire. The Borough is the largest in Greater Manchester by area, at 77 square miles.

### **Economic Overview of the Borough**

The population of the Borough is 305,400 (Population Estimate ONS 2004). Wigan has seen a huge shift in its socio-economic structure, which reflects the change in other similar towns. Traditionally, the population has engaged in two dominant industries - coal mining and the textile industry. This has now been replaced by newer industries such as light engineering, food processing and mail order. Currently, employment is now dominated by distribution, hotel and catering (including retail) (24.8% in 2002), public administration, education and health (24.3% in 2002) and manufacturing (18.9% in 2002).

The demise of the coal and textile industries brought unemployment and dereliction to large parts of the Borough, with 622 hectares of land designated as derelict in the 1993 Derelict Land Survey.

There has been an overall improvement in unemployment rates within the Borough, with rates reducing from 16.1% in 1985 to 3.1% in April 2004. In 2002, 41,000 people were economically inactive in Wigan. However, unemployment rates varied substantially between wards, with some wards having high unemployment rates in excess of 6%. In the National Index of Deprivation, Wigan is ranked 9<sup>th</sup> nationally (out of 354) in employment deprivation, and the 40<sup>th</sup> most deprived on the basis of income. Regionally, the unemployment average was 3.5% in April 2004.

### **Health & Social Deprivation in the Borough**

In general, people living in Wigan experience very poor health compared to people in other parts of the country. An independent survey revealed this is due to a complex range of inter-related socio-economic factors. Some 56% of the Borough's population live in areas in the most deprived 20% in England for health deprivation and disability. 94% of the Borough's population live in areas in the most deprived 40% in England (Indices of Deprivation 2004).

As identified in the Denham & Cattle reports into the summer disturbances in Oldham, Bradford and Burnley in 2001, accessibility to good housing, employment and tackling deprivation are key factors in maintaining good race relations and community cohesion.

### **Wigan Population Profile**

In mid-2003 Wigan had an estimated 303,800 residents and 125,096 households compared to 301,415 residents in 2001 (2001 Census). Wigan's resident population has stayed relatively stable over the period, 1991-2004 with a decrease by 0.06%, compared to a decrease of 0.34% in the North West but an increase of 4.1% nationally. The proportions of residents moving into and out of the borough are fairly low. The proportion of residents who moved into the area from the rest of the UK is 2.19% compared to 4.0% nationally.

Though the population figures have been estimated to remain steady, there will be an increase in those retiring from jobs. There will also be an anticipated increase of the minority ethnic population with the arrival and dispersal of asylum seekers and refugees by central government.

### Age Profile

Age	No.	%
0 - 4	17,554	5.8
5-14	40,297	13.4
15-19	18,675	6.2
20-34	60,214	20
35-44	44,623	14.8
45-64	76,618	25.4
65-74	24,032	8
75+	19,404	6.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>301,417</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: 2001 Census, ONS

### Disability Profile

The 2001 Census category of limiting long-term illness has been used to determine the size of the disabled population profile in Wigan. This category includes all ages and the data states that 67,308 people (which is 22.33% of the population) have a limiting long term illness.

Of those people who are economically inactive, 21,002 are permanently sick/disabled (people aged 16-74), which is 27.3% of the economically inactive population.

Data from the North West Public Health Observatory (<http://www.nwpho.org.uk/selectdata/>) states that the rate for claimants on Disability Living Allowance is 55.9% above the North West regional average. Also the rate for claimants on Incapacity Benefit & Severe Disablement Allowance is 62.21% above the regional average.

### Gender Profile

The gender profile shows 49% of the population is female and 51% is male.

Gender	No.	%
Female	147,862	49%
Male	153,555	51%
<b>Total</b>	<b>301,417</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: 2001 Census, ONS

## Religion Profile

Within Wigan the largest percentage of people declaring a religious belief stated they were Christian at 86.85 %. The second largest group stated that they had no religion at 6.88%. Other non-Christian faiths are all under 0.5%.

Religion	%
Christian	86.85
Buddhist	0.09
Hindu	0.17
Jewish	0.03
Sikh	0.02
Muslim	0.33
Other Religions	0.09
No Religion	6.88
Religion not stated	5.55

Source: 2001 Census, ONS

## Profile by Ethnicity

Within Wigan, the proportion of people from minority ethnic backgrounds was 0.8% in the 1991 Census, and is now 1.3% in the 2001 Census. This is partly due to the arrival of new refugee groups and the increase in population of the existing minority ethnic population in Wigan.

There are however, established minority communities from a diverse range of backgrounds and cultures, specifically Pakistani, Irish, Bangladeshi, Indian, Chinese and Ukrainian established in Wigan. In addition, there are a number of Eastern European families who have settled in Wigan as migrant workers and historically as asylum seekers.

Regionally, authorities have an average of 8% minority ethnic population against a national average figure of 6% (2001 Census).

### Ethnic Groups in Wigan in 2001

<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>%</b>
White British	97.59
White Irish	0.58
Any Other White	0.54
<b>White Sub Total</b>	<b>98.70</b>
White and Black Caribbean	0.14
White and Black African	0.07
White and Asian	0.13
Other Mixed	0.10
<b>Mixed Sub Total</b>	<b>0.43</b>
Indian	0.23
Pakistani	0.13
Bangladeshi	0.02
Other Asian	0.06
<b>Asian/Asian British Sub Total</b>	<b>0.44</b>
Caribbean	0.06
African	0.10
Other Black	0.01
<b>Black/Black British Sub Total</b>	<b>0.18</b>
Chinese	0.16
Other Ethnic Group	0.09
<b>Chinese or Other Ethnic Group Sub Total</b>	<b>0.25</b>

Source: 2001 Census, ONS

#### 1.4 Workforce Profile

The following data excludes schools i.e. teachers and school support staff. The size of the workforce for the Council is 7,029. In terms of gender 73.3% of staff are female and 26.7% are male.

A total 1.31% has stated that they have a disability. It has been recognised by the Council that many members of staff with a disability do not wish to declare this information. Corporate Personnel have been working to build staff members' confidence in declaring their disabled status.

## **2.0 Requirements of the Equality Legislation**

### **2.1 Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000**

#### **Background**

Following the murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993, an inquiry was set up by the Home Secretary in 1997 to investigate matters arising from his death. The inquiry also identified lessons to be learned from the investigation of the racially motivated crime.

The report from the inquiry was published in 1999, and although many of the recommendations were specific to the police, the underlying theme was that racism could only be addressed and reduced by taking a co-ordinated approach to prevent the growth of conscious, unconscious and institutional racism in UK society.

The report stated that it was the duty of every institution to evaluate their policies and procedures to guard against discrimination and that it was not simply the police services that needed to tackle “institutional racism”.

A definition of institutional racism is :

**The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.**

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 is the Government’s legislative response to the inquiry report. It came into force in April 2001 and places general and specific duties on public authorities to promote race equality and prevent unlawful racial discrimination.

#### **Definition of racial group**

“A group of people defined by their race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins”.

## **General Duties**

The General Duty states that public authorities must have due regard for the need to: -

- Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good race relations

Public authorities must consider racial equality in the day-to-day work of policy-making, service delivery, regulation, procurement, enforcement and employment practice. They must consider carefully the weighting which they attach to racial equality in proportion to its relevance to a particular function, and they must ensure that they know how all their policies and services affect race equality.

The general duty is supported by a series of specific duties, which are not ends in themselves but provide the steps, methods or arrangements for public authorities to follow to help them to meet the general duty.

## **Specific Duties**

- To publish a Race Equality Scheme, and review this every three years.
- To publish a statement of the functions and policies which the Council has assessed as relevant to its performance of the duty, and review this every three years.
- To deliver the objectives of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act.
- To monitor its workforce by reference to racial groups, and published this annually.

The Race Equality Scheme must include arrangements for:

- Assessing and consulting on the likely impact of proposed policies on the promotion of race equality.
- Monitoring policies for any adverse impact on the promotion of race equality.
- Publishing the results from the above assessments, consultation and monitoring.
- Ensure public access to information and services provided by the Council.
- Training staff about the general and specific duties.

## **2.2 Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (Disability Equality Duty)**

### **Purpose of the Act**

The disability equality duty focuses on organisational change and not individual adjustments. Public bodies such as local councils should be taking an increasingly proactive approach to disability equality. One of the central aims of the Act is to mainstream disability into public sector policies, practices and procedures. This is in line with the Councils Comprehensive Equal Opportunity Policy and the established commitment and work towards the Equality Standard for Local Government. The Act provides a framework for addressing institutional disability equality discrimination, which is similar to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

### **Legal definition of a disability**

“Anyone with a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect upon his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”

### **General Duties**

Every public authority must have due regard to undertake the following:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
- Eliminate harassment that is unlawful under the Act
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- Encouraging participation by disabled persons
- Taking steps that take account of disabled person’s disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

Similar to the Race Equality Duty, this duty aims to put disability equality at the heart of policymaking, service delivery, regulation and enforcement, and employment practice. However, the Disability Equality Duty is broader and has six requirements to meet the general duties. The Disability duties are more far-reaching than the Race Duty in that the council must also seek to eliminate harassment of disabled people, promote positive attitudes and participation, and is able to use positive action in favour of disabled people in order to produce an equitable outcome.

For example, when recruiting for vacancies, giving a guarantee to interview every disabled applicant who meets the minimum job requirements would be

classed as positive action. Therefore this new duty is a move away from merely 'reasonable adjustments' or responding to individual complaints. It requires the council to adopt a proactive approach to mainstreaming disability equality into all decisions and activities. The duty does not introduce any new rights for disabled people, but rather a framework within which the Council should operate.

The duty to promote disability equality covers everyone who is protected by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, including people who have:

- Learning difficulties
- Mental health conditions
- Mobility impairments
- Visual impairments
- Hidden impairments
- Long-term debilitating illness as defined within the Act, and
- Those who are deaf or hard of hearing.

It is important to note that the Act does not prohibit or restrict positive action in favour of disabled people in any way. This is because under the Act only disabled people are protected against discrimination, and not those who are not disabled.

Wigan Council supports the social model of disability. The Council accepts that the current structure of society and the environment and attitudes of people are factors that disable people. The Council recognises that disabled people have needs, wants and aspirations and are judged by their ability.

The general duty is supported by a series of specific duties, which are not ends in themselves but provide the steps, methods or arrangements for public authorities to follow to help them to meet the general duty.

### **Specific Duties**

- To publish a Disability Equality Scheme, and review this every three years.
- To monitor its workforce by disability.
- As a Local Education Authority monitor the educational opportunities available to and achievements of disabled pupils and students.

The Disability Equality Scheme must include a statement of:

- The ways in which disabled people have been involved in the schemes development
- The methods for assessing the impact/likely impact, of its policies and practices/ proposed policies and practices, on equality for disabled persons
- The steps proposed to fulfil the general duty within the period of time covered by the scheme
- Arrangements for gathering information on the effect of its policies and practices on the
  - recruitment, development and retention of its disabled employees
  - educational opportunities available to, and achievements of, disabled pupils and students
  - services it provides and those other functions it performs take account of the needs of disabled persons
- Arrangements for making use of such information to assist in achieving the general duties
- Arrangements for regularly reviewing the steps proposed to fulfil the general duty
- Arrangements for reviewing, preparing, and publishing subsequent Disability Equality Schemes

## **2.3 The Equality Act 2006 (Gender Equality Duty)**

The Equality Act 2006 amends the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and places statutory obligations on public authorities such as local councils. The Gender Equality Duty comes into force in April 2007. The Council will have to take action to eliminate sex discrimination and harassment and to promote equality for women and men.

### **Definition of unlawful sex discrimination**

Unlawful sex discrimination is defined as direct and indirect discrimination against women and men, in employment and education; in goods, facilities and services and in the exercise of public functions; and includes the following area:-

- harassment, sexual harassment and discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity leave;
- discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment in employment and vocational training;
- direct and indirect discrimination in the employment field on the grounds that a person is married or a civil partner;
- victimisation.

### **General Duties**

In carrying out its functions the Council must have due regard to:

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

The general duty is supported by a series of specific duties, which are not ends in themselves but provide the steps, methods or arrangements for public authorities to follow to help them to meet the general duty.

### **Specific Duties**

- To prepare and publish a Gender Equality Scheme, showing how it will meet its general and specific duties and setting out its gender equality objectives.
- Consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap.
- To gather and use information on how policies and practices affect gender equality.

- To consult stakeholders (i.e. employees, service users and others, including trade unions) & take account of relevant information.
- Assess the impact of its current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality.
- To implement the actions set out in its scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so.
- To report against the scheme every year and review the scheme at least every three years.

## **2.4 Guiding Principles of the Equality Legislation**

### **Obligatory**

The duties of the legislation are legally binding and achieving these duties should be made a central part of any policy or service. Mainstreaming these responsibilities into current working activity is seen as the best approach.

### **Relevant**

Equality (whether this be disability, gender, or race) will be more relevant to some functions than others. All functions will need to be considered and a decision made as to whether they are relevant to each equality group.

### **Proportionate**

The weight given to a function should be in proportion to its relevance to promoting equality. Highest priority should be given to those functions and policies that have the greatest potential to affect an equality group. Where changing a function or proposed policy would lead to significant benefits to an equality group, the need for such a change will carry added weight when balanced against other considerations.

### **Complementary**

Each piece of equality legislation outlines a number of different general duties. Within each piece of legislation the general duties are complementary and may sometimes overlap. However they are separate and distinct and public authorities should find ways of meeting them all.

### **Effectiveness**

The actions taken should deliver the required outcomes and lead to greater equality.

### **Involvement**

Relevant people inside and outside the organisation should be involved in providing information and identifying the equality priorities.

### **Transparency**

Information on decision-making processes, priorities, actions and progress must be made widely available through appropriate channels and in a variety of formats

### **3.0 Our Commitment to the General Duties**

#### **3.1 Eliminating discrimination and harassment**

The Council is committed to ensuring that it has eliminated all forms of unlawful discrimination and harassment in its policies and in the ways it puts them into practice. The Council's Vision and Values underpins its approach to Equalities and Diversity, which includes a clear commitment to anti-discrimination and unlawful harassment. This is embodied in the Comprehensive Equalities Policy, which covers both employment and service delivery, and the councils Dignity at Work Policy.

The Council has also made a very strong commitment to addressing all hate crime in our community. The Council continues its strong and focused commitment, and has a dedicated Hate Crime Co-ordinator. The Hate Crime Sub-Group has developed and launched a multi language information help line which signposts victims of hate crime to the appropriate support agency. (0800 0191 456)

Through the adoption of the seven social identity model the council has increasingly evolved from an equal opportunities focus to also addressing equality and diversity – recognising the differences between people, whether this is by age, class, disability, gender, race, religion / belief or sexuality.

The Equality Scheme allows the Council, over the next three years, to review all its functions and policies to ensure that we eradicate, as far as possible, any unlawful discrimination and continue to challenge all forms of harassment.

### **3.2 Promoting equality of opportunity**

Since 2000, we have ensured that equality and diversity has a higher profile, both within the Council and within the community. The Council will promote equality of opportunity for all groups through its current management structures in particular through the employee worker forums, the departmental Diversity Champions, and the Senior Partnership Team (Equalities Board). It will do this also through our equality and personnel policies and through our working practices.

The impact assessment process outlined in section 3.7 will ensure that this promotion is mainstreamed into the council and will focus activity at the service level.

The work that the Council is doing to meet the Equality Standard is also ensuring that all Council services and employment practices are focused on promoting equality of opportunity.

### **3.3 Promoting good relations, positive attitudes, taking account of need and encouraging participation.**

The Council intends to further enhance the promotion of good relations between all groups through its promotion of equality and diversity; by its continued community cohesion work; through its partnership working with the LSP; the revision of the contracts and procurement arrangements, and through our leadership role as prescribed in the Local Government Act 2000. The Council will use its leadership role to influence positive attitudes and relations at every opportunity, through the processes outlined above both within the council and in partnership working.

The Council will take account of groups needs through our performance management systems; service planning process; by monitoring, reviewing, and assessing policies, functions and procedures and by effective action planning. This will also take place through the councils continued commitment to consultation as outlined in the corporate Consultation Guidance and through more systematic involvement of equality groups within the processes outlined above.

## **4.0 Methods for Meeting the Requirements of the Equality Legislation**

### **4.1 Equality Scheme and Equality Policies**

The equality scheme is a framework for meeting the requirements of the various pieces of equality legislation. The regulations allow the production of a comprehensive equality scheme so long as the requirements are met and they are transparent and accessible.

The Council will implement its, Disability, Gender and Race Equality duties through this single equality scheme and in the broader context of its Comprehensive Equal Opportunity Policy and Corporate Equality & Diversity Strategy.

### **4.2 Links to the Equality Standard for Local Government**

This standard aims to 'mainstream' equality/diversity issues by adopting a common approach to handling race, gender and disability equality issues. The Standard also has significant linkages with both the general and specific duties imposed on local authorities under the various acts. The standard aims to provide:

- A systematic framework for mainstreaming equality
- Integrate equality policy objectives with best value
- Provide a framework for the consistent improvement of performance

The standard itself consists of five levels:

Level one: Commitment to a comprehensive equality policy

Level two: Assessment and consultation

Level three: Setting equality objectives and targets

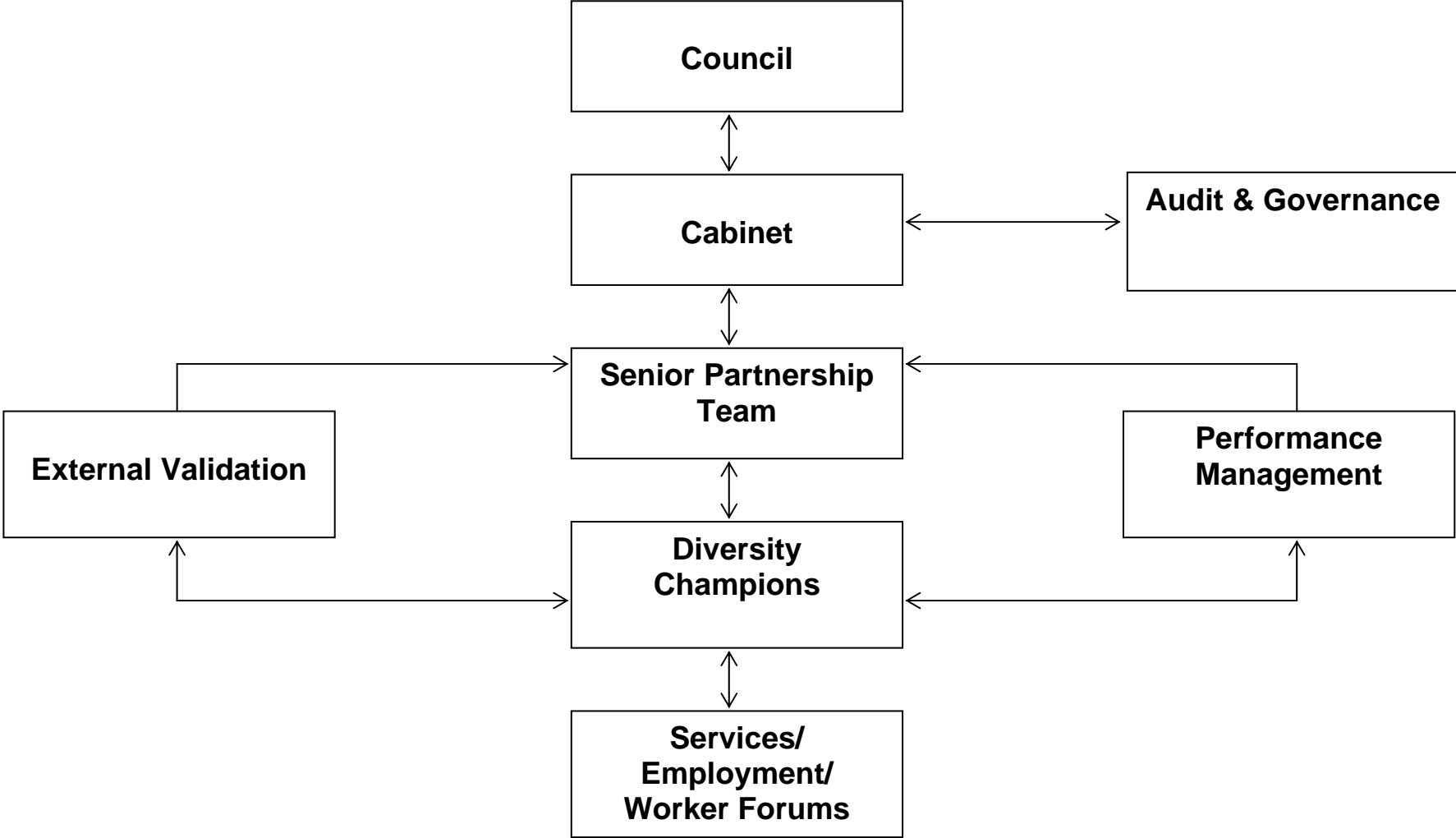
Level four: Information systems and monitoring against targets

Level five: Achieving and reviewing outcomes.

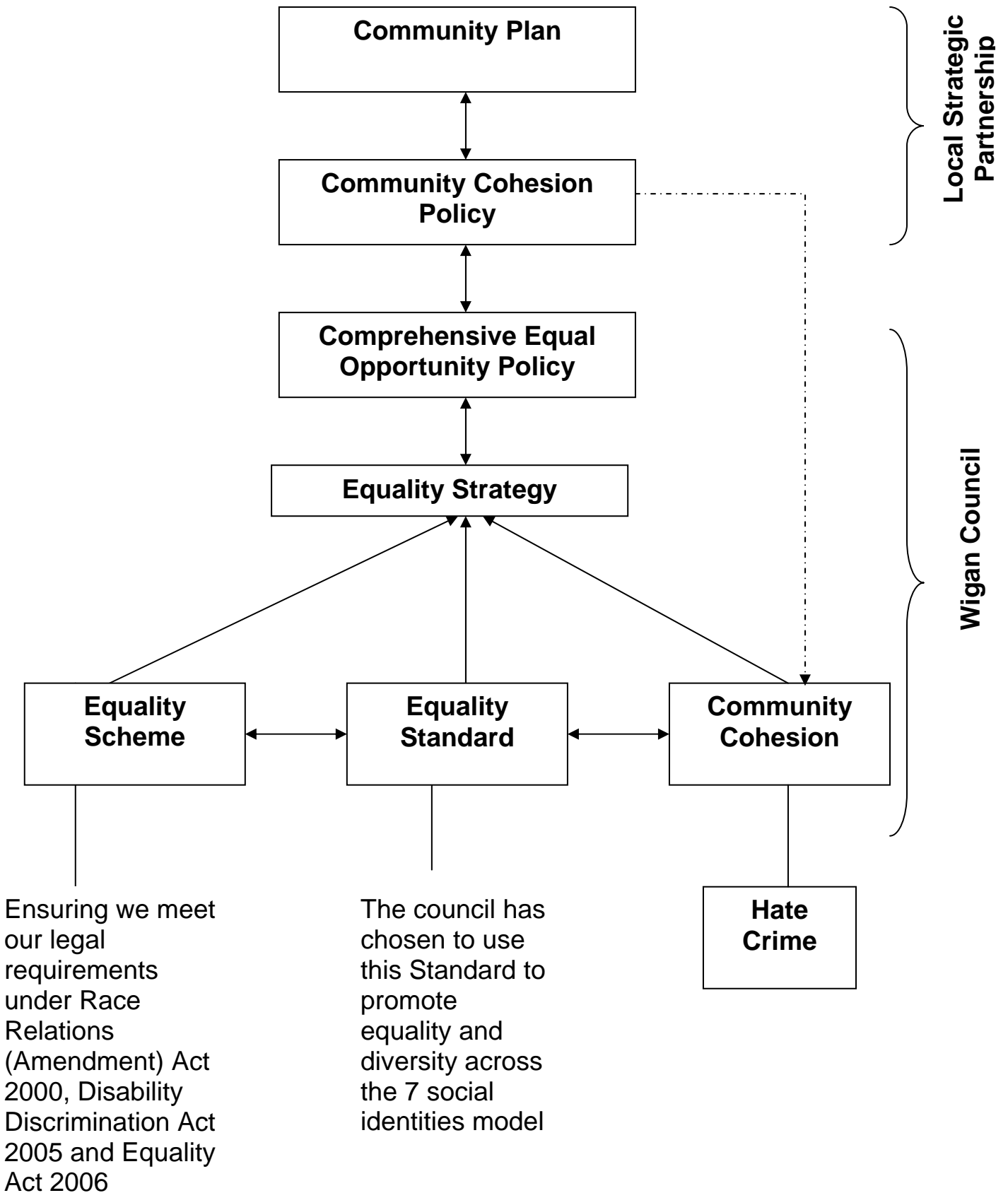
This Equality Scheme is linked to and compliments the Council's commitment to the Equality Standard for Local Government, which is the Council's main method of delivering equality and diversity.

In line with the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, Equality Act 2006, and Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 this equality scheme has been prepared by the Equality and Diversity Officer and members of the local community, agreed by cabinet and with the commitment and support of the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive.

**Diagram 1: Wigan Council: Equality & Diversity Organisational Structure**



**Diagram 2: Wigan Council: Equality & Diversity Model**



### **4.3 Structures of Equality & Diversity and Partnerships**

The structures outlined in figure 1 will be used to deliver the requirements of the Equality Scheme. It should be noted that there is significant overlap with the Equality Standard for Local Government and the requirements of equality legislation, existing structures and requirements of the Equality Standard will be used to achieve similar aims and requirements of the legislative requirements of the Equality Scheme.

The council views partnership working as an important aspect to ensuring wider ownership and delivery of equality and diversity. The council works closely and supports the Local Strategic Partnership as one its major partners. The council will also fulfil its partnership obligations under the scheme as part of the delivery of the Equality Standard requirements.

### **4.4 Training**

Training is viewed as one of the essential means of ensuring the high standards for equality and diversity are espoused within the Councils vision and values and the Councils Comprehensive Equal Opportunity Policy. The Council is reviewing equality and diversity training for the entire organisation; this will include elected members, senior officers, managers, and all other members of staff. The knowledge and skills required by staff will vary depending on their level and job role. Staff will be made aware of what the duties are, and why they are necessary, as well as being equipped with the necessary skills to implement the duties and carry out their jobs with due regard for equality and diversity.

### **4.5 Involvement and Consultation in Drawing Up The Scheme**

The Council has held workshop sessions with members of the black and minority ethnic community on the race equality section of the scheme in April 2005. More recently the council held two workshops on the Equality Scheme with members of disability groups from the community and voluntary sector and the Councils Disability Worker Forums. Consultation has also been carried out with Council employees via the intranet and with the general public by way of a web form on the Council's internet site.

This consultation is viewed as the beginning of a process that seeks to encourage and deliver more direct proactive involvement and participation between equality groups and the Council. It is envisioned that this enhanced level of involvement will be ongoing and a regular activity.

#### **4.6 Assessing Functions and Policies: Relevance Reviews**

All departments and service areas will undertake an assessment of relevance and priority of their functions, policies and procedures in relation to their duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006. This assessment and prioritisation will be known as a relevance review and will take place at the beginning of each scheme area once every three years.

#### **4.7 Monitoring Policies: Impact Assessments**

The Council will monitor its policies and services to ensure that the authority's decisions and activities do not disadvantage any groups, and promote equality of opportunity across Wigan Councils seven social identity model.

The Council uses an equality (impact) assessment process to monitor its policies and services. The impact assessment process meets all the requirements of equality legislation and the Equality Standard for Local Government.

The partial equality (impact) assessment process takes a function or services including its existing policies, new policies and changes to policies and considers whether it:

- Is relevant to the requirements of the equality legislation (relevance review)
- Promotes equality
- Contributes to inequality
- Takes account of the needs of different equality groups
- Promotes community cohesion

The process is also used as:

- A service planning tool
- A way to monitor the use of the equality procurement procedure

- A way to ensure services consider the way in which it will communicate with different equality groups

The equality (impact) assessment process is undertaken, consulted upon and action plans implemented over a three year period in line with the service planning cycle. Additional impact assessments are carried out when there are proposed changes to policies/services and when there is strategic or large scale change.

#### **4.8 Monitoring Educational Opportunities and Achievements**

The Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2005 require the council to monitor the educational opportunities and achievements of disabled pupils and students. The council will go further than this and monitor the educational opportunities and achievements of pupils and students according to gender and, where not inappropriate because of small sample size, ethnicity.

Schools already monitor the attainment of students with special educational needs. This cohort overlaps considerably with the cohort of students with a disability, but is not exactly the same. Some students with a disability do not have special educational needs, and some students with special educational needs do not have a disability.

The results of the monitoring will be published in the Equality Scheme Annual Report.

#### **4.9 Workforce Monitoring**

The Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and Disability Discrimination Act 1995 require the council to monitor their workforce. The council will go further than this and monitor its workforce using the seven social identity model (which includes race and disability.)

The council uses the Corporate Personnel Management Information System together with supplementary systems (excludes schools) and will use this to monitor the following aspects of its workforce:

- the numbers of applicants for employment, training and promotion

- the numbers of staff who receive training
- the numbers of staff who benefit or suffer detriment as a result of its performance assessment procedures
- the numbers of staff who are involved in grievance procedures;
- the numbers of staff who are the subject of disciplinary procedures
- the numbers of staff who cease employment each year

We have improved the collection of data by 40% over the last 2 years.

The results of the monitoring will be published in the Equality Scheme Annual Report.

We currently monitor the disability profile of the workforce and have introduced a separate communication which educates, supports and encourages employees to disclose a new or existing disability. The information gathered will be digitally scanned and held within the Corporate Personnel System. We request information relating to disability, health, and equipment needed to assist with work. We will use this information within our focus groups and to inform our policies.

#### **4.10 Equal Pay Policy and Equal Pay Review**

Our strategic objectives on equal pay sit within the Council's Corporate Plan as a priority:-

- To identify and respond to inequalities in current pay arrangements.
- To safeguard the council from equal pay / value claims and minimise the financial / employee relations implications.
- To meet the National requirements of undertaking a pay and grading review across the whole council.
- To implement a new pay and grading scheme having regard to the major financial / employee relations implications.

The main outcome is to achieve a fair and equitable pay and grading scheme which recognises and rewards employees' contributions and that supports the development of the organisation.

The council undertakes equal pay audits and is committed to working in partnership with Trade Union / employee representatives to monitor and resolve any gender pay gap within the organisation.

The equal pay review, which embraces job evaluation, will be completed in 2009 and will result in a fair and transparent reward system. We will continue to review our reward system every 3 years. The results will inform the equality scheme annual report.

#### **4.11 Procurement**

The Council is fully committed to ensuring that it promotes and influences equality and diversity issues through its procurement process. Equality and diversity has been built into the procurement process within the Council. All relevant equality legislation has been considered and included. The Council has recently undertaken an extensive review of all procurement arrangements and process in line with requirements of the Equality Standard. The review has led to the enhancement of existing process and the production of a number of resources to support procurement officers and businesses meet these legal requirements.

#### **4.12 Annual Report**

The council will monitor the equality scheme on a bi-monthly basis through existing performance monitoring systems. The council will report on equality and diversity progress annually. The Council will publish an annual report which will be available each January on the council's internet site.

#### **4.13 Contacting Us**

If you have any comments, compliments and complaints you can make these by using the web form available from: <http://www.wigan.gov.uk/Contacts>

Alternatively if you have any questions or want to discuss anything further please contact the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy Officer at:

Chief Executive's Services

Wigan Council

Town Hall, Library Street

Wigan, WN1 1YN

Telephone: 01942 827714

## Appendix 1: Equality Scheme Action Plan 2009

<b>Action.</b>	<b>Responsibility.</b>	<b>Timescale.</b>	<b>Outcome.</b>
Agree forward plan for achieving excellent status within the Equality Framework for Local Government.	Diversity Champions.	Forward plan by Spring 2009. Excellent status by April 2011.	Excellent status achieved.
Develop a single framework that gives a simple and clear overview of the Council's approach to equality, diversity and community cohesion.	Equality and Cohesion Team (within Business Transformation) Diversity Champions.	Spring 2009.	Single framework in place that describes the council's values and principles in straightforward terms.
Review refreshed policy framework against specific and general duties.	Business Transformation.	Summer 2009.	Renewed commitment that all key policies meet the duties.
Establish a single performance monitoring framework aligned to the service planning cycle.	Diversity Champions.	Spring 2009.	Effective and timely monitoring taking place.
Review revised service planning guidance to ensure that it continues to appropriately address impact assessment.	Business Transformation.	Early 2009.	Service planning guidance supports the delivery of duty requirements.

<b>Action.</b>	<b>Responsibility.</b>	<b>Timescale.</b>	<b>Outcome.</b>
Embed equality monitoring and challenge role of new Building Stronger Communities Select Committee.	Business Transformation.	December 2009.	Select Committee agrees 2009 Annual Report.
Review Council's internet and intranet resources on equality and cohesion.	Equality and Cohesion Team.	Spring 2009.	Refreshed web resources in place and tested with users.
Review equality and cohesion training for councillors, managers and frontline staff.	People Services Diversity Champions.	Summer 2009.	Training needs assessed and programme in place to meet.
Improve collection of employee data monitoring and set corporate targets to reflect borough profile.	Diversity Champions People Services.	Set first phase targets by Spring 2009.	Plans in place to fill information gaps and targets set to reflect borough profile.
Review accessibility of Council communication material.	Equality & Cohesion Team Media & Communications Team Diversity Champions.	Autumn 2009.	Implementation plan for Language and Other Formats Policy embedded and reviewed.

<b>Action.</b>	<b>Responsibility.</b>	<b>Timescale.</b>	<b>Outcome.</b>
Review impact assessment process and agree support package with services.	Policy and Partnerships Team Diversity Champions.	Autumn 2009.	Revised guidelines in place for impact assessment that meets service and customer need and Council's statutory duties.
Review partnership approach to addressing victimisation.	Community Safety Team Policy and Partnerships Team.	Spring 2009.	Partnership approach to victimisation reviewed.
Agree effective partnership consultation and engagement processes with all social groups.	Local Strategic Partnership Policy and Partnerships Team.	Community Networking Programme (phase one) Summer 2009.	Effective consultation and engagement processes in place.
Review access by social group to the democratic process.	Equality and Cohesion Team Democratic Services.	December 2009.	Review complete and action to address unmet need agreed.