



Wigan Council
Equality & Diversity
Annual Report 2008.

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Introduction.

Wigan Council's Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2008 outlines this year's achievements and progress in relation to the Equality Scheme. The first section of this report covers our legal duties around producing an Equality Scheme. The next section then outlines the work the council has been doing as a service provider, in relation to education, as an employer, and as a procurer / when dealing with other organisations. The last section of the report shows our performance in the last year and forms some conclusions. Appendix C shows our updated Equality Scheme action plan for 2009.

Wigan Council Equality & Diversity Structure.

For Wigan Council providing fair and equitable services and employment practices are important areas for change and continuous improvement. The council's model includes community cohesion, equality and diversity and social inclusion, all three areas are seen as being important and are viewed as having significant overlap. In the past year the Council has re-structured and has allocated additional resources to equality and cohesion work which reinforces this commitment to improvement.

Wigan Council continues to have structures that ensure that equality and diversity runs throughout the organisation, from senior management to front line staff and back again.

This Annual Report for 2008 outlines the progress we have made in the past year in embedding equality practices as a service provider and procurer, a provider of educational opportunities and as an employer.



Equality Scheme.

Produced and published an Equality Scheme.

In December 2006 Wigan Council produced a single Equality Scheme and 3 year action plan, to encompass the race, disability and gender legal duties. A single scheme was innovative at the time and is now considered best practice. This new generic approach has led to greater understanding and commitment to improve within this area of work. Copies of the Equality Scheme are available from www.wigan.gov.uk/r/equalityscheme.

Consultation on the Equality Scheme.

The council held workshops prior to the launch of the Equality Scheme (December 2006) with members of the black and minority ethnic community, with members of disability groups from the community and voluntary sector and the council's 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.

In December 2007 we consulted stakeholders on their views on the Equality Scheme and Annual Report, the progress we've made to date and our plans for the future. This included consulting on our employment targets. The consultation included community organisations, partners and the workers forums. It was also made available via the council's homepage on both the intranet and internet. We responded to the outcome of the consultation by revising and updating our scheme.

Training on duties of the scheme.

Over the past 2 years the council has developed its training package further with a wide variety of training aids to promote equality and diversity and provide the relevant knowledge and understanding needed in relation to specific jobs, different roles (front line services, support services), and different levels of seniority. Training needs are identified through annual staff appraisals which ask specific questions about equality and diversity.

Our training programme includes:

- Training all staff to the duties of the equality scheme through the staff magazine and intranet.
- Having an IT based equality and diversity training course available for all staff who have access to a computer.
- An equality & diversity board game.
- An equality and diversity training programme for elected members and senior officers.
- A two-day course for managers called “Transforming Services through Equality & Diversity”.
- Specific training relevant to individual roles e.g. deaf awareness.
- A new competency based programme for front line staff that considers skills, knowledge and awareness in key areas including equality

Regularly review the scheme.

Our Diversity Champions (service directors) group has explicit responsibility for the Equality Scheme and Annual report and provide ongoing monitoring of the Equality Scheme.

Wigan Council reviewed the Equality Scheme at the end of year 1, and have updated and revised the Equality Scheme action plan at the end of year 2 (Appendix C). The scheme itself is next due for review during 2009.

The council’s cabinet periodically monitor the Equality Scheme and Annual Report. Following a review of the council’s Overview and Scrutiny function, from 2009 the new Building Stronger Communities select committee will also have responsibility for scrutinizing the council’s progress in relation to equality, diversity and community cohesion, including the Equality Scheme and Annual Report.

Wigan Council as a Service Provider.

Public access to information.

Lack of information can be a disadvantage and prevent people from accessing services. Wigan Council aims to produce information in accessible and user friendly formats so that all members of the community are aware of and can access services.

The Council has developed a new policy framework for Language and Other Formats which has three key principles;

- Services need to include an assessment of likely language and other format needs within their Equality Impact Assessments and regularly update these. Setting priority languages across the Borough for all services is not effective – services need to assess and understand the particular needs of their particular customers.
- Services need to record which of their customers are accessing interpretation and translation services regularly and be able to effectively signpost and support them with opportunities to learn English. Where a relationship between customers and the service needs to develop, interpretation should be seen as a short-term tool.
- Services need to review their standard communication methods and practices and ensure that they are designed to be accessible to most if not all. Services need to standardise their approach to official documents – materials used to promote a service should not be automatically translated or modified.

An implementation plan is in place to support services in moving to this way of working which includes, for instance, training on needs assessment through a competency based customer care training package and an assessment of ESOL provision in the Borough.

Monitoring policies.

The council monitors all its policies (existing policies, and new or changed policies) to ensure that the council's decisions and activities promote equality of opportunity, do not disadvantage groups on the basis of their social characteristics (age, class, disability, faith, gender, race, sexual orientation) and promote positive attitudes and good relations between groups. The assessments help identify where services and policies might improve and change to resolve potential problems or issues.

The impact assessment process as outlined within the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 had been amended to be a two stage process (Partial and Full).

- Full impact assessments are carried out when new or changes to policies or services have significant implications for the borough or the Council.
- Partial equality (impact) assessments (which incorporate relevance reviews, service needs assessments and assessment of existing policies) are carried out on a three year cycle which links into the service planning cycle. This assessment is then reconsidered and a further section of the assessment completed when new policies/services or changes to policies/services are developed.

To ensure quality and consistency assessments are quality checked by the Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion Team. The actions and targets are mainstreamed into service plans and monitored alongside service plans by senior management. These actions and targets are also monitored corporately by the Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion Team.

Wigan Council completed 82 equality impact assessments in 2007-2008 and Wigan Leisure Culture Trust (WLCT) completed a further 13. We are currently in the process of publishing these. You can view them by visiting www.wigan.gov.uk/r/equalityimpact.

We are now looking to further streamline and mainstream our equality impact assessments to include cohesion and sustainability. We are also reviewing our policy framework to ensure that all existing policy has been effectively assessed.

Equality monitoring of service users.

Wigan Council recently carried out research to understand the characteristics of its residents in order to tailor its services to their needs. These are based on estimates. The council will set up ways in the future to measure the **actual** population's characteristics.

- Approximately 4.5% of the local population are from black or minority ethnic groups, with 2.4% of these being White Irish or White Other. This compares to the regional average of 8% from black or minority ethnic groups.
- In recent years our Borough has welcomed asylum seekers and migrants from a range of countries, especially from Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East. The presence of these migrants is a new element in the cultural diversity of our Borough.
- 21.6% of the local population have a long term limiting illness.
- 4.82% of the local population have a long term limiting illness and are able to work.
- 49.4% of the local population are female and 50.6% are male.
- (Data is based on 2001 Census data and estimates of recent migration based on 2001-2006 national insurance data.)

The council is producing an equality monitoring guide to introduce a common set of profiling questions for customers and consultees. We have started to introduce equality monitoring of service users and are comparing this to the profile of the borough population to ensure there is fair access and equal treatment of all. The council is looking to develop data collection further to cover a larger range of services and to monitor a wider variety of characteristics.

Monitoring Educational Opportunities and Achievements.

To meet the Disability, Gender and Race Equality Duties, it is essential that aspects of school life are monitored to identify whether there is an adverse impact on children and young people with disabilities, from different genders and from different ethnic groups.

Wigan Council collects and monitors all statutory educational achievements from Foundation Stage Profile at age 4/5, to Key Stage 4 at age 16 based on ethnicity, gender and special educational needs (SEN). The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) publish this data at council level. Further reports are made available to schools and partners and are available to the general public on request.

Wigan Council currently collects data on pupils who have special educational needs (SEN). The definition of disability under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 is different from the eligibility criteria for SEN provision. This means that information based on SEN categories will not include all those pupils who are disabled, and may include some pupils who are not disabled. Schools will be in a position to gather information on disability if the DCSF amends the school CENSUS to cover disability as well as Special Educational Needs.

Wigan Council is aware of national trends in the performance of pupils with different characteristics. For example, girls generally perform better than boys. Wigan Council seeks to reduce these inequalities in performance and does this by comparing the achievements of pupils in Wigan borough to similar pupils in similar schools nationally.

Appendices A and B show the latest performance information for ethnic groups in Wigan provided by the Fischer Family Trust (FFT). FFT models the progress between the key stages. The information is based on a three-year period, so that small in-year variations are eliminated.

In the case of Key Stage 2, the DCSF has not yet released the 2008 data for analysis, because of the problems encountered this year. The Key Stage 4 data though is regarded as being reliable although it is still provisional and may change as the results of the re-marking of pupils' scripts are incorporated.

The FFT analyses show the performance of ethnic groups, comparing local with national results. The value-added model isolates the factors relating to each ethnic group. So, for example, Chinese pupils usually achieve very much higher results than other ethnic groups. So if their results are shown as "green" in Wigan, this means that the difference locally is even greater than is usually the case. The reverse is the case, for example, for Black Caribbean pupils.

Wigan Council as an Employer.

Equal pay.

In the summer of 2006 we undertook an equal pay audit. The audit identified a number of areas of concern. In addressing pay inequalities the council has held discussions with the relevant trade unions and invited employees to road shows to explain the situation. The council has paid compensation to over 2,000 employees and removed the main pay element which was the source of the inequality.

While addressing past inequalities we are working in partnership with the trade unions to introduce a new fair and equitable pay and grading scheme which should address any remaining pay inequalities. We have undertaken over 2000 evaluation interviews using the NJC job evaluation scheme, which is a validated scheme in relation to equal opportunities. Using this data we are currently in the process of determining a new pay and grading scheme and we are working to develop revised conditions of service to eliminate equalities which have been identified in the current terms and conditions.

Once the new pay and grading scheme is implemented a further equal pay audit will be undertaken and repeated biannually.

Workforce monitoring.

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 require the council to monitor their workforce. The council uses the Corporate Personnel Management Information System together with supplementary systems to monitor its workforce in terms of ethnicity, gender, disability and age. The council plans to refresh the data it holds and monitor class, faith, sexual orientation, and transgender from Spring 2009. The Council is looking to develop its IT systems to allow easier analysis of its workforce. The following workforce data excludes schools i.e. teachers and school support staff and is correct as of 31 October 2008.

Workforce profile of Wigan Council staff by disability. The total number of employees for Wigan Council is 6,339. Of these, 100 employees have declared themselves disabled as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. This is approximately 1.6% of the total workforce. This is an improvement of last year which was 1.4%, although this is still substantially less than the percentage of the borough population estimated to have a disability and able to work, which is 4.8%.

The council believes that the actual percentage of disabled employees may be significantly higher. Under reporting may be partly due to a tradition of employees not wanting to declare themselves disabled and partly due to the large percentage of employees who have not provided the information. We do not know the disability status of 1,376 members of staff which is 21.7% of the workforce. There are significant variances between services which the council is investigating. The number of unknowns is substantially higher in relation to disability than ethnic origin. In response to this the council has re-worded the question about disability status to try to overcome this.

Table 2: Percentage of departmental employees by disability 2008.

Department	Disability.		
	No	Unknown	Yes.
Adult Services	10.0%	22.3%	2.0%.
Business Support Services	94.0%	4.1%	1.9%.
Chief Executive Services	91.0%	6.7%	2.2%.
Children & Young People's Services	74.8%	23.2%	2.0%.
Environmental Services	83.5%	15.2%	1.2%.
MetroFresh	64.5%	35.2%	0.3%.
Total (2008)	76.7%	21.7%	1.6%.
Total (2007)	81.3%	17.4%	1.4%.
Borough population able to work	95.2%	0.0%	4.8%

Workforce profile of Wigan Council staff by ethnicity. In terms of ethnicity 85% of the workforce is known as white, with 13.5% unknown or not given. Currently the council does not produce reports which break down further the 'white' category but this is something we expect to address in the coming year.

1.1% (73) employees describe themselves as being from a non-white minority ethnic group. The figures are a slight improvement from last year but continue to be below the borough population figure which is estimated at 2.1%.

There is little statistical variation in this pattern across service areas, but any variation could be obscured by the fact that there are significant pockets within the council where ethnicity is not known; these factors will be addressed when data is refreshed in Spring 2009.

Table 3: Percentage of departmental employees by ethnic origin in 2008.

Department	Ethnic origin %.							
	Asian	Black	Chinese	Mixed	Other	White	Not given	Unknown.
Adult Services	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.5	0.1	98.2	0.0	0.2.
Business Support Services	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.7	0.0	93.3	1.7	3.2.
Chief Executive Services	1.1	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	92.7	1.1	4.5.
Children & Young People's Services	0.4	0.0	0.1	0.8	0.1	71.6	4.1	23.0.
Environmental Services	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	88.3	7.8	3.2.
MetroFresh	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.1	77.5	3.2	19.0.
Total (2008)	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.1	85.3	3.1	10.4.
Total (2007)	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.1	84.9	3.3	10.7.
Borough population	0.5	0.9	0.2	0.4	0.4	97.6	0.0	0.0.

Workforce profile of Wigan Council staff by gender. The council employs more female than male staff. 71.7% female compared to around 26.9% male. The gender imbalance has re-aligned slightly in the last year with male employees increasing from 26.9% to 28.3%. Nationally 61% of public sector employees are female.

There are key differences when the data is considered by department. Those departments who employ people in traditionally female sectors of the caring professions, cleaning and catering (Adult Services, Children and Young People's Services and MetroFresh) have a higher percentage of female staff. This is most stark within Metrofresh who employ 87.7% female employees and only around 12.3% male employees.

Those departments which provide services in traditional male roles of decision making, accountancy, information technology and legal services (Chief Executive's department, and Business Support Services) employ a more balanced ratio of male to female staff compared to the council average (approximately 65% female to 35% male.) Environmental Services is the only department who employs more male than female staff, 72.1% male compared to 27.9% female.

Table 4: Percentage of departmental employees by gender.

Department	Gender.	
	Female	Male.
Adult Services	78.9%	21.1%.
Business Support Services	61.3%	38.7%.
Chief Executive Services	67.4%	32.6%.
Children & Young People's Services	82.6%	17.4%.
Environmental Services	27.9%	72.1%.
MetroFresh	87.7%	12.3%.
Total (2008)	71.7%	28.3%.
Total (2007)	73.1%	26.9%.
Public sector employee profile	61.0%	39.0%.

Applications for employment.

All job applicants are encouraged to complete a recruitment monitoring form as part of the application process. There were 2,995 monitoring forms returned and tracked in the period April 2007 to March 2008.

The council recognises the need to attract and recruit a more diverse workforce and a number of initiatives have been developed and implemented to support this.

The table below shows the profile of applicants for vacancies compared to those appointed. There is also a comparator column which shows the borough population estimated to have a disability and be able to work, the borough population estimated to be from a black or minority ethnic group, and the public sector employees by gender.

Due to the continued work of the council in trying to attract diverse applicants, this year we have seen some improvements in the ratio of applicants to appointments for both those with a disability and those from a black or minority ethnic group.

Table 5: Profile of applicants for vacancies compared to those appointed.

Social Characteristics		Applicant	Appointee	Comparator.
Disability	Yes	3.5%	3.0%	4.8%.
	No	96.5%	97.0%	95.2%.
Ethnic origin	Asian	1.3%	0.6%	0.5%.
	Black	1.6%	1.2%	0.9%.
	Chinese	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%.
	Mixed	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%.
	Other	2.5%	1.8%	0.4%.
	White	93.1%	94.6%	97.6%.
	Not Given	1.3%	1.8%	0.0%.
Gender	Male	29.0%	26.0%	39.0%.
	Female	71.0%	74.0%	61.0%.

Applications and attendance at training.

Between April 2007-March 2008, 33.2% of the workforce was nominated for training and 26.6% attended. The following tables show nomination and attendance at corporate training by ethnicity, disability and gender. When looking at the data the following needs to be considered:

- The figures used for nomination and attendance represent total training places, so an employee may be counted more than once if they are nominated for or attend more than one course.
- Percentages compare the number of employees within a sub category (e.g. Asian) who are nominated for, or who attended training, to the number of employees in the workforce within the sub category (e.g. Asian.)
- Care should be taken with this data due to gaps and small numbers in some categories.
- In the coming year the council expects to move to a new training database which will hold data about social characteristics and should overcome the difficulties of data matching which can cause a large number of “unknowns”.
- In the near future the council expects to be able to analyse training data by more than one category e.g. disabled women.

Table 6: Nomination and attendance at training by ethnic origin.

Ethnicity.	Total	Asian	Black	Chinese	Mixed	White	Other	Not Given	Unknown.
% nominated for training	33.2	31.8	63.6	25.0	66.7	32.0	0.0	18.8	46.1.
% who attended training	26.6	18.2	63.6	25.0	59.3	25.9	0.0	16.2	34.7.
% of those nominated for training who attended training	80.2	57.1	100	100	88.9	80.9	0.0	86.5	75.3.

Care needs to be taken when analysing this data due to the small numbers in ethnic origin categories.

Table 7: Nomination and attendance at training by disability.

Disability.	Total	Yes	No	Unknown.
% of employees nominated for training	33.2%	36.0%	33.5%	31.9%.
% of employees who attended training	26.6%	32.0%	27.3%	24.1%.
% of those nominated for training who attended training	80.2%	88.9%	81.3%	75.4%.

The data suggests that employees with a disability are slightly more likely to be nominated for training than other groups, they are also slightly more likely to attend training than other groups.

Table 8: Nomination and attendance at training by gender.

Gender.	Total	Male	Female	Unknown.
% of employees nominated for training	33.2%	32.1%	27.0%	N/A.
% of employees who attended training	26.6%	25.8%	21.9%	N/A.
% of those nominated for training who attended training	80.2%	80.4%	81.4%	75.3%.

The data suggests that male employees are more likely to be nominated for training and more likely to attend training compared to female employees. However due to difficulties in data matching we do not have data on employees gender for 14.4% of those nominated for training and 13.6% of those who attended training therefore this data needs to be treated with care.

Applicants for promotion.

The council's policy allows all candidates to apply for vacancies and has no formal promotion structure. Therefore no profile data currently exists to show how this was broken down by disability, ethnicity or gender. However the council is looking at ways to track employees' progressions through the organisation considering whether vacancies are filled externally, internally by redeployment or restructure, sideways moves or higher grade movements.

Profile of employees who benefit or suffer detriment as a result of its performance assessment procedures.

The facility to record this information has been developed within the Corporate Personnel System but is not currently being monitored. We expect to monitor this information in future years.

Profile of employees who cease employment.

Table 8: Workforce leavers by disability, ethnic origin and gender.

Disability		Ethnic origin		Gender	
Not disabled	60.8%.	White	79.0%.	Female	72.6%.
Unknown	38.5%.	Unknown	20.1%.	Male	27.4%.
Disabled	0.7%.	Ethnic minority	1.0%.		
Employees with a disability	1.6%.	Ethnic minority employees	1.2%.	Male employees	28.3%.

14.9% of the workforce ceased employment with the council between November 2007-October 2008. The data suggests that employees with a disability are under-represented in workforce leavers. However the disability status of 38.5% is not known. We expect to reduce this figure in the coming year. Workforce leavers by ethnic origin and by gender reflect the make-up of the council workforce.

Profile of employees subject to disciplinary action.

Table 9: Employees subject to disciplinary action by disability, ethnic origin and gender.

Disability		Ethnic origin		Gender	
Not disabled	0%.	White	100%.	Female	61.5%.
Unknown	100%.	Ethnic minority	0%.	Male	38.5%.
Disabled	0%.				
Employees with a disability	1.6%.	Ethnic minority employees	1.2%.	Male employees	28.3%.

Only 13 employees were subject to disciplinary action between November 2007-October 2008. Therefore this data needs to be used with caution. There is a lack of data on employees' disability status. We expect to reduce this figure in the coming year. No employees from ethnic minorities were subject to disciplinary action in the past year, which is to be expected considering the ethnic minority employees make up only 1.2% of the workforce. Men were slightly over-represented in disciplinary action but due to the small numbers involved no firm conclusions can be drawn from this.

Profile of employees who make a formal grievance against the council.

The council is currently in the process of transferring grievance data from paper files to the Corporate Personnel System. The data below has been compiled from using the Corporate Personnel System and paper records but this may not yet cover all grievances. Therefore the data needs to be treated with caution. The council expects to be able to provide more complete data in the coming year.

Table 10: Employees who made a formal grievance by disability, ethnic origin and gender.

Disability		Ethnic origin		Gender	
Not disabled	100%.	White	93.9%.	Female	75.8%.
Unknown	0%.	Ethnic minority	6.1%.	Male	24.2%.
Disabled	0%.				
Employees with a disability	1.6%.	Ethnic minority employees	1.2%.	Male employees	28.3%.

From the data available the council received 33 grievances last year. Ethnic minorities are over-represented in those who take out a formal grievance against the council. Although the data needs to be treated with caution due to the small numbers involved and the possibility of the data being incomplete, the council will investigate this further, particularly in light of the higher turnover of ethnic minority employees as shown in table 8.

Equality, Other Organisations and the Procurement Process.

The council is fully committed to ensuring that it promotes and influences equality and diversity issues when dealing with other organisations.

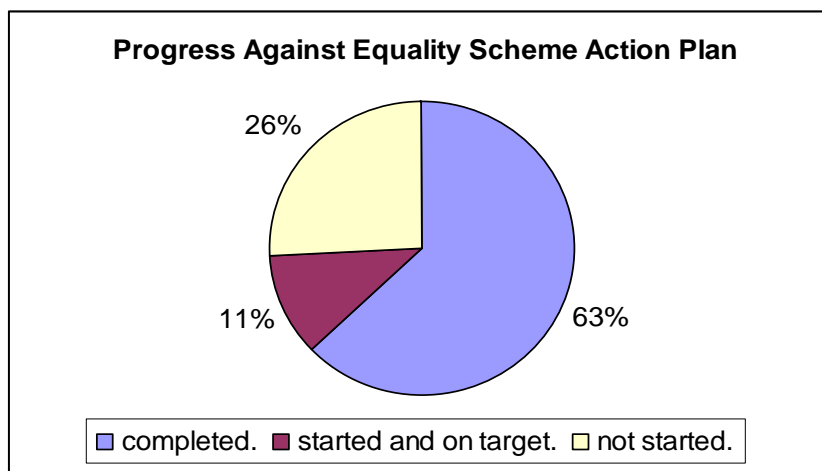
The council has a procurement process which has built in equality and diversity considerations, for example through its contract clauses. This ensures the council only deals with companies and other organisations that treat their employees and customers in a fair and equitable manner, in line with legislation.

The council has produced a number of resources for employees and businesses and other organisations so that they can meet these legal requirements.

Equality and Diversity Performance.

The following section presents the councils corporate performance on the equality and diversity indicators in 2007-08. Generally the council performance is improving in the majority of cases. Work is progressing to ensure performance continues to improve under a new range of indicators.

Progress against Equality Scheme action plan. This pie chart shows our progress against our 3 year Equality Scheme Action (after 2 years.)



Due to the substantial progress made against the action plan and the need to adapt to changing internal and external influences the plan has been updated for year three. The updated action plan is attached to this Annual Report as Appendix C.

Equality Standard for Local Government. In October 2008 we achieved level 3 of the Equality Standard. The work around the Equality Standard has proved to be an important driver for change.

Duty to promote race equality. Our target was 68.42%, we achieved 68.42%. Performance is on target. Performance is better than last year (57.89%). When we compare our 2007-08 results with all other councils in England we are in the mid range.

Disabled employees who are the top 5% earners. Our target was 1.6%, we achieved 1.73%. Performance is better than target. Performance is better than last year (0.53%). When we compare our 2007-08 results with all other councils in England we are in the mid range.

Ethnic minority employees who are the top 5% earners. Our target was 4.50%, we achieved 3.64%. Performance is below target. Performance is worse than last year (4.41%). Due to the relatively small numbers of staff involved fluctuations are expected due to staff turnover. When we compare our 2007-08 results with all other councils in England we are in the mid range.

Women who are the top 5% earners. Our target was 44.75%, we achieved 46.59%. Performance is better than target. Performance is better than last year (44.72%). When we compare our 2007-08 results with all other councils in England we are in the top quartile.

Disabled employees representation in the workforce. Our target was 2.00%, we achieved 1.67%. Performance is below target. Performance is the same as last year (1.67%). Due to the relatively small numbers of staff involved fluctuations are expected due to staff turnover. When we compare our 2007-08 results with all other councils in England we are in the bottom quartile. This is an obvious area for improvement for the council.

Ethnic minority representation in the workforce. Our target was 1.24%, we achieved 1.21%. Performance is within the target range. Performance is better than last year (1.01%). When we compare our 2007-08 results with all other councils in England we are in the mid range.

Racial incidents recorded. Current figures are not available. Data collection is under review as part of the refreshed cohesion reporting.

Employee survey 2008.

The employee survey undertaken in 2008 asked employees about their views on equality and diversity. Improvements from 2004 to 2008 can be demonstrated in most of the equality and diversity questions. The main area of improvement was better departmental communication of the equality and diversity work that had been carried out.

- 79% of employees agreed or strongly agreed that, “I believe that the council as an employer treats me fairly.” This is positive although there is a slight dip compared to previous years, (84% in 2006 and 81% in 2004.) This is perhaps due to the change in the way the question was worded or perhaps due to extensive re-organisation and job evaluation taking place at the time of the employee survey.
- 85% of employees agreed or strongly agreed that, “I am treated with respect and dignity at work.” This is a great achievement and an improvement on previous years, 83% in 2006 and 81% in 2004.
- Over three quarters of employees (76%) agreed or strongly agreed that “I feel the council sets a good example with its values and plans on equality and diversity.” This is comparable to previous years, 78% in 2006 and 75% in 2004.
- 88% of employees agreed or strongly agreed that, “I personally contribute to ensuring our values and plans on equality and diversity are achieved.” This is a new question and so there are no previous years with which to compare.
- 77% of employees answered yes to the question, “Are you aware of the diversity work that has been done in your department?” This is an improvement on the 2004 results of 68%.

Conclusion.

- 2007-2008 has been a year of good progress. The council achieved level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government. The work around the standard has proved to be an important driver for cultural change within the organisation.
- Over the past year we worked to our single Equalities Scheme and action plan which covers our race, disability and gender duties. The single scheme was innovative at the time and is now considered best practice. We are now looking to extend our scheme to include other equality areas such as age, faith and sexual orientation.
- We have made some progress in data collection and monitoring of employees and we have committed to further improvements in the coming year.
- Some progress has been made in terms of monitoring service users to identify areas for improvement and inform the strategic direction of the service, departments and council.
- Increased equality and diversity staff resources demonstrates the council's continued commitment.