

Race Equality Scheme

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Suffolk Coastal District Council (The Council) is committed to equality of opportunity including equality of access to employment and to the services we provide. One of our core values is “Valuing all People” and our aim is to ensure our services are accessible by all at the right place and at the right time.
- 1.2. The Council recognises that some people may be prevented from participating fully in our community because of a variety of reasons: these may include unfair treatment or exclusion on the basis of their age, race, gender, disability, faith, language, skin colour, sexual orientation, socio-economic background or some other personal characteristic or circumstance. This scheme specifically sets out to address the needs of people from diverse ethnic backgrounds.
- 1.3. The first Race Relations Act was introduced in 1965, prohibiting discrimination on racial grounds in places such as hotels, public houses, restaurants, theatres, public transport and any place maintained by a public authority. The Race Relations Act 1976 outlawed race discrimination in employment, housing, training, education and the provision of goods, facilities and services. In addition to making it unlawful to discriminate against anyone on the grounds of race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin, the 1976 Act gave local authorities a duty to promote race equality in carrying out their functions.
- 1.4. As a direct result of the tragic murder of Stephen Lawrence on 22 April 1993 the Home Secretary set up the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry in July 1997. The Inquiry’ found that racism is endemic in British society. Inevitably public authorities will reflect the society in which they serve.
- 1.5. One of the key findings of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry was that it was possible for an organisation to be committed in principle to equal treatment of all citizens but for the organisation to fail to ensure that this commitment was acted upon. As a result organisations can become “institutionally racist”. The Inquiry defined institutional racism as:

“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.”

Institutional racism persists because of the failure of organisations to openly and adequately recognise, and address its existence and causes, by their values, policies,

practice and leadership. Without recognition and action to eliminate such racism it can prevail and thrive as part of the ethos or culture of the organisation.

- 1.6. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 established a statutory requirement for all public authorities to address institutional racism.

2. The Duty to Promote Race Equality

- 2.1. Section 71(1) of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act imposes a general duty on public authorities carrying out their functions to have due regard to the need to:-

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

- 2.2. The Council will consider the impact of the duty on its policies and service delivery by:

- Identifying which functions are relevant to race equality.
- Prioritising these functions according to their importance, or likely importance, for race equality.
- Assessing all relevant functions and policies for their impact on race equality.
- Considering and making changes to policies where this is necessary to meet the general duty.

- 2.3. In addition to the above general duty, regulations issued under the 2000 Act require public authorities to undertake a number of specific duties. These are to:

- Assess and consult on the likely impact of its proposed policies on the promotion of race equality.
- Monitor existing policies for any adverse impact on the promotion of race equality.
- Publish the results of these assessments, consultations and monitoring.
- Ensure public access to information about services.
- Train staff in connection with the general and specific duties.
- Racially monitor the numbers of staff in post and applicants for vacant posts.
- Racially monitor staff who receive training, benefit, or suffer detriment, as a result of performance assessment procedures, are involved in disciplinary or grievance procedures, and who cease employment.

- 2.4. This Race Equality Scheme forms part of our Services for All Policy, and does not stand alone. It is also linked to other Council policies and procedures, in particular our Disability Equality Scheme, Gender Equality Scheme, Equal Opportunity in Employment Policy, and our performance management system (our Balanced Scorecards).

- 2.5. This Scheme will be delivered through the Services for All three year action plan. These actions will be managed with existing resources and the activities will be proportionate to the needs of the district. Essentially the focus will be to ensure that providing Services for All is integrated into the general management of the Council rather than it being a separate initiative

3. The Council's Functions and Policies

- 3.1. In order to ensure that all the Council's functions and policies are reviewed, a comprehensive list of all the Council's services is given below. In identifying those services which particularly need to be included in this Race Equality Scheme we have focused upon those with a public interface, in particular those with a significant element of discretion and/or enforcement. These services are highlighted below.

Service	Functions
Legal & Democratic Services	Licensing Electoral Registration and Elections Revenue Grants Capital Grants Rights of Way
Finance & Central Services	Legal Services and Land Charges Street Naming and Numbering
Planning	Planning Applications Planning Advice Planning Enforcement Planning Appeals Dangerous Structures Building Control Inspections
Community, and Economic Services	Tourist Information Centres Sport, Leisure, Art & Culture Tourism Development and Resort Promotion Community Development Local Plans Community Safety and Emergency Planning Economic Development and Regeneration Rural Issues and Countryside Management Tree Preservation Orders
Health	Food and Safety Inspections Health & Safety Training Pollution Control/Enforcement Food and Safety Training Food Complaints/Advice Health and Safety/Inspections Accident Notification Infectious Diseases Notification Health Improvement Import of Animal & Non-Animal Products Certification of Animal Products
Housing and Benefits	Benefits Applications Housing Advice and Support Homelessness

Service	Functions
	Travellers Home Improvement/Renovation Grants Benefits Recovery Housing Policy and Enabling Private Sector Housing Council Tax NNDR
Customer & Strategic Services	Human Resources, particularly Recruitment Customer Services Communications Concessionary Fares
SCDC/Ipswich Partnership Internal Audit	Benefit Fraud
Suffolk Coastal Services	Refuse Collection Licensing Pest Control Dog Warden Service Abandoned Vehicles Private Water Supplies

4. Race Equality in Service Provision

4.1. Suffolk Coastal is a shire district local authority in the County of Suffolk. It is a mainly rural district covering 88,938 hectares. It has a population of 122,000 with 1.79% being economically active ethnic community members.

4.2. We will aim to:

- Provide appropriate, accessible and effective services to all sections of our community.
- Encourage participation in Council decision-making by all sections of our community, consulting about the likely impact of new policies on different racial or ethnic groups.
- Provide clear and accessible information about our services in a variety of formats and languages as appropriate.
- Ensure that all employees understand what race equality in service provision means.
- Review and monitor our services to ensure that they do not discriminate.
- Carry out impact assessments on new and existing policies to ensure that they don't adversely impact on people from different racial or ethnic groups.
- Challenge discrimination wherever it is identified.
- Ensure that all service users have equal access to our complaints procedure and that we act upon complaints.

5. Race Equality in Employment

- 5.1. The Council is committed to an active equal opportunity in employment policy from recruitment and selection, through training, development, appraisal and promotion to retirement for all employees. It is our intention to promote an environment free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Harassment is unwanted behaviour, whether physical, verbal or non-verbal, which is offensive, humiliating and viewed as unacceptable by the recipient.
- 5.2. Harassment of employees because of their race or ethnic background is a disciplinary offence, and may constitute gross misconduct, which could lead to dismissal.
- 5.3. Disciplinary action will be taken against any employee who is found to have committed an act of discrimination, and serious breaches of this policy will be treated as gross misconduct.
- 5.4. If any employee believes that he/she has been discriminated against for a reason relating to his/her race or ethnic background, they should use the organisation's grievance procedure.
- 5.5. Employees will be recruited solely on the basis of work criteria and the applicant's abilities and individual merit. We will monitor our recruitment process to ensure that recruitment decisions are made in an objectively justifiable way.
- 5.6. All employees will have equal access to training and opportunities for promotion and other aspects of career development based solely on their abilities.
- 5.7. All employees will have equal access to all employment benefits and facilities

6. Race Equality in Partnerships, Procurement and Contracting

- 6.1. The Council recognises its responsibility to encourage and work with partners and other groups to integrate equality and diversity into their policy-making, service delivery and monitoring arrangements. This includes any organisation that has a contract to deliver services on behalf of the Council.
- 6.2. Through our strategic partnering work we will ensure that significant partners, contractors and suppliers are aware of our policy on equality and diversity and are clear about their obligation to provide services that are free from discrimination.
- 6.3. We will ensure that our selection and tendering processes include race equality considerations.
- 6.4. We will provide training for relevant employees in race equalities issues for procurement.

7. Monitoring & Reporting

- 7.1. Regulation 5 of the 2000 act gives the Council specific duty to monitor employees by reference to racial groups and to publish the results of such monitoring annually. We will comply with this duty.
- 7.2. We will monitor and review the Services for All Policy and the Race Equality Scheme at least every three years to ensure that they remain up to date and relevant. We will keep the Race Equality Scheme distinct, but bring its review into line with the Services for All Policy.
- 7.3. The Race Equality Scheme Action Plan will be incorporated into the Services for All Action Plan. Actions specific to our duty to promote Race Equality will be identified as such in the plan.
- 7.4. We will monitor and review the Services for All Action Plan through the Services for All Working Group on a regular basis. The Action plan will cover the following areas:
 - Policy and Communication
 - Representation and Consultation
 - Employee and Member Development
 - Monitoring and Evaluation
 - Employment
 - Equality Standard for Local Government
 - Community Cohesion
 - Specific Service Area Issues
- 7.5. We will report annually on the performance and achievements under the Services for All Policy to Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny Committees, and publish the report on our website. We will identify specific performance and achievements under the Race Equality Scheme in that report.