



Ashfield District Council

Race Equality Scheme

July 2006

Summary

Welcome to Ashfield District Council's revised Race Equality Scheme. This Scheme follows on from the Authority's first Race Equality Scheme, which was first published in 2002.

The Race Equality Scheme is essentially a Strategy with an Action Plan for achieving race equality, which will run for 3 years from May 2006 and outline how the Council will meet its duties under the Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

The Scheme is in three parts:

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Part 1 A strategy for driving improvements in race equality within the business of the Council.	3
Part 2 The statutory list of the authority's policies, services and functions detailing their relevance to race equality.	10
Part 3 The main priorities and proposals set out in a 3 year action plan.	19

PART 1

1. Introduction

The Council is committed to ensuring that individuals and groups are not discriminated against on the grounds of sex, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or racial origins, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, trade union activity, age, political or religious beliefs, or because they live with HIV/AIDS.

Discrimination can take a number of different forms:

Direct Discrimination

Treating an individual less favourably than another

Indirect Discrimination

Applying a condition or requirement which one group of people have greater difficulty in complying with than another and that condition or requirement cannot be justified

Harassment

Can take many forms including violence and threats of violence, abusive or insulting words or behaviour

Victimisation

Treating a person less favourably because they have pursued or may pursue their rights

Institutional Racism

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

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a duty on the Council to promote race equality in everything the Council does. The Council must have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
- (b) promote equality of opportunity;
- (c) promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

The Act requires the Council to formally set out how it intends to meet this duty by producing and publishing a Race Equality Scheme.

2. The Council's Aims and Objectives

The Council's mission is to be recognised, by 2007, as a good Council that is ensuring the provision of the comprehensive range of services necessary to continue the regeneration of Ashfield as a more prosperous, healthier, fairer and safer community.

In support of the mission, the Council set out four Strategic Aims that clarify and focus on the key areas for activity:

Economic

to develop a prosperous, dynamic, competitive economy staffed by a highly skilled and motivated workforce.

Environmental

to make Ashfield a more environmentally friendly, attractive and safer place to live work and visit.

Social

to help our communities thrive in a spirit of civic pride, tolerance and respect.

Personal

to help develop opportunities for all individuals to live longer, healthier and more fulfilling lives, particularly by helping them to take greater personal responsibility

In addition, one of the Council's eight core values is:

'Ensuring Equality and valuing Diversity – To promote equality of access and to treat all people fairly by tackling all types of discrimination.

The Council sees achieving equality of opportunity for all its residents as essential if it is to accomplish this aim.

Whilst it is recognised that Ashfield has a relatively small black and ethnic minority population, the Council must ensure that this small element of its community is not invisible, silent or ignored. Nor will the Council allow it to be assumed that simply because the black and ethnic minority population of the District is relatively small there is little or no racial discrimination within Ashfield.

The Council's Aim:

The Council is determined to promote race equality in employment, in the provision of its own services and to influence partner organisations to adopt best practice in terms of race equality.

The Council's Corporate Objectives in this context are to:

- monitor its activity in terms of the employment and progression of its workforce;
- provide quality services which means that we will monitor the race equality of the services provided;
- insist that partner organisations and contractors from the public, private and voluntary sectors embrace best race equality practice.

The Council is committed to:

- Eliminating unlawful racial discrimination;
- Promoting equality of opportunity across all its services, functions and policies;
- Promoting good relations between people of different racial groups by encouraging understanding and raising awareness;
- Ensuring the active involvement of all members of the community regardless of ethnic origin;
- Ensuring equality of access to all services and resources.

The Council recognises that different groups and communities may have different needs which may require the Council to vary the way it provides its services to meet those needs.

3. Organisational Structure and Decision Making

Elected Members, Chief Officers, Heads of Service and employees are all responsible for ensuring the aims and objectives set out in this Race Equality Scheme are achieved.

The 2006 revision of the Race Equality Scheme will be considered and ultimately adopted at a full Council meeting.

Elected Members will provide leadership through Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny and other Committees. It is intended that a race equality statement will be included in all agendas to ensure Elected Members are fully informed of existing or potential race equality issues when making decisions.

4. Arrangements for Assessing the Impact of Policies and Proposed Policies on the Promotion of Race Equality

Assessing the Impact of Existing Functions and Policies

All existing functions and policies will be reviewed in light of the duty to promote race equality. This will be achieved through a programme of Equalities Impact Assessments, which will be undertaken in line with the Council's agreed methodology. Statistics, data, surveys and research will be amongst the methods used, together with consultation with appropriate groups and individuals.

The findings and recommendations of all Equalities Impact Assessments will be reported to the Council's Extended Management Team. If changes are required and if necessary, amendments to policy or service delivery will be taken to Council for approval.

The Council's methodology for carrying out Equalities Impact Assessments will be reviewed for effectiveness.

Proposed Policies

Where new policies are proposed, it will be the responsibility of the Chief Officer, or relevant Head of Service proposing to implement the new policy, to assess what impact the policy may have on the promotion of race equality.

5. Consultation

The Council already consults with the community using the following means:

- General surveys carried out by MORI;
- Customer Satisfaction Surveys;
- Public Meetings.

The Council will review the effectiveness of such methods and consider whether adaptations and/or new methods of consultation are needed to ensure all sections of the community are fully consulted. The Council recognises that new methods may need to be developed in order to reach some groups which are not consulted effectively through existing methods.

6. Monitoring

Employment

A monitoring system for employment issues is maintained by the Personnel & Establishment Section. Monitoring in employment covers recruitment, training, promotion, disciplinary and grievance procedures and termination of employment.

The Personnel & Establishment Section will analyse the data gained and identify any issues which arise. The results of monitoring and any recommended action will be reported initially to Extended Management Team and then to Personnel Committee on an annual basis. Personnel Committee will be responsible for considering and approving any action deemed necessary as a result of problems highlighted through the monitoring process.

Services, Function and Policies

The Council intends to implement effective monitoring systems in relation to service provision, functions and policies. The Council currently uses a variety of methods for monitoring services. In the interim, each Head of Service will continue to use their existing monitoring techniques and ensure appropriate adaptation of these to specifically monitor services, functions and policies in respect of racial equality.

Each Head of Service will report the results of monitoring racial issues and also details of compliance with the Action Plan to Extended Management Team.

The Chief Executive will report annually to Council on whether the targets set out in the Race Equality Scheme Action Plan have been achieved.

7. Publication of the Results of Assessments and Monitoring

An annual report will be published in "Ashfield News" which is a newsletter delivered to all properties in Ashfield and is available in large print, audio, Braille and other languages on request. The report will contain the results of the monitoring carried out in respect of service provision, functions and policies, employment and implementation of the Action Plan. The report will also be published on the Council's website www.ashfield-dc.gov.uk

8. Public Access to Information and Services

The Council currently provides information to the public in a number of ways, such as:

- Local Newspapers - Chad, Hucknall Dispatch
- Ashfield News
- Radio
- Internet - www.ashfield-dc.gov.uk
- Public Meetings
- Leaflets
- Corporate Plan

The Council is committed to making information available in large print, audio, Braille and other languages. This commitment is stated in the Ashfield News, and increasingly in other key publications, in the following community languages:

- Kurdish
- Cantonese
- Urdu
- Gujarati
- Polish

Council employees have access to the following services to assist them in the provision of Council services:

- The 'Language Line' offers an instant telephone translation service covering 150 languages
- On-Site Interpretation Services by prior arrangement
- Translation of Documents into other languages including Braille and British Sign Language.

The Council will continue to evaluate the most appropriate and effective ways of ensuring public access to information and services.

9. Publication of the Race Equality Scheme

A summary of the Race Equality Scheme will be published in the "Ashfield News" and in a leaflet format. A full copy of the Scheme will be available on the Council's Website. The Race Equality Scheme will be made available to all employees via the Council's internal intranet site. A full copy of the Race Equality Scheme will be placed in each of the Council's receptions and at libraries.

10. Training

Chief Officers and Heads of Service have received a synopsis of the legislative background and the duties placed on the Council, they have also been made aware of the requirement to implement the Race Equality Scheme.

The Council will ensure that all Elected Members and employees receive awareness training regarding race equality generally and the Race Equality Scheme specifically.

11. Complaints

The Council's corporate complaints procedure is used for all complaints received by the Council. The procedure will be reviewed as a result of the duty to promote race equality.

The Council will take complaints of any form of discrimination and any reports of incidents of racial inequality very seriously. It will deal with perpetrators of discrimination or racial inequality where it is in its power to do so and will also endeavour to ensure that cases are publicised so raising public awareness.

PART 2: The Council's Functions & Policies

This section lists the Functions and Policies that the Council has assessed as 'relevant' to the general duty to promote racial equality. Relevance is defined as "having implications for or affecting." Functions are defined as "the duties, powers and services of the Council including regulation and enforcement." Policies are defined as "the formal and informal decisions made in carrying out the Council's including 'custom and practice.'"

Service, Policy or Function	Does it relate to...			Is there evidence or reason to believe that different ethnic groups could be differently affected?
	...eliminating unlawful discrimination	...promoting equality of opportunity	...promoting good race relations?	
CHIEF EXECUTIVE DIVISION:				
Advice at Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny and other Committee Meetings	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Democratic Services	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Electoral Registration	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Elections	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Council Constitution	Yes	Yes	Yes	
COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC PROMOTION DIVISION				
Planning Policy & Projects				
Project Development	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Local Development Framework	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Open Space Strategy	Yes	Yes		
Regeneration				

Service, Policy or Function	Does it relate to...			Is there evidence or reason to believe that different ethnic groups could be differently affected?
	...eliminating unlawful discrimination	...promoting equality of opportunity	...promoting good race relations?	
Economic Regeneration Strategy	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Optimising external funding opportunities	Yes	Yes		
Business support	Yes	Yes		
Cultural Services				
Community development – including services targeted at older and young people	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Community centres (Function & Policies)	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Arts development	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Heritage & Tourism Development	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Country parks and associated visitor centres	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Passport to Ashfield Services				
Cultural Strategy	Yes	Yes	Yes	
INWARD FOCUS DIVISION				
Organisational Development Unit				
Best Value	Yes			
Consultation	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Corporate Training & Development	Yes	Yes		
Corporate Plan	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Research into socio-economic data to assist policy development	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) Statement	Yes			

Service, Policy or Function	Does it relate to...			Is there evidence or reason to believe that different ethnic groups could be differently affected?
	...eliminating unlawful discrimination	...promoting equality of opportunity	...promoting good race relations?	
Scrutiny & Policy				
Scrutiny Function	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Data Protection & Freedom of Information Acts Registration (Function & Policies)	Yes			
Equalities Policy	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Legal Services				
Legal Notices & Agreements (Road Adoption, Planning Obligations, Planning Notices, Highways Notices etc)	Yes			
Communications				
Corporate Communications Strategy	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Guidance on document layout and formatting	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Personnel & Payroll				
General Personnel Advice on Procedure & Legislation	Yes	Yes		
Recruitment & Selection Procedures	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Disciplinary Procedure	Yes			
Grievance Procedure	Yes			
Redeployment Procedure	Yes			
Elimination of Harassment and Bullying at Work Policy	Yes			
Sickness Absence Procedure				

Service, Policy or Function	Does it relate to...			Is there evidence or reason to believe that different ethnic groups could be differently affected?
	...eliminating unlawful discrimination	...promoting equality of opportunity	...promoting good race relations?	
OUTWARD FOCUS DIVISION				
Leisure Strategy				
Management of Contract with SLM to run the Council's leisure centres				
Sports Development	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Catering Service				
Neighbourhood Renewal (Function & Policies)	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Community Partnerships				
Support to Ashfield Partnership (LSP)	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Community Strategy	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Support to Ashfield Partnership Against Crime (CDRP)	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Crime, Disorder and Drugs Strategy	Yes	Yes	Yes	
HEALTH & HOUSING DIVISION				
Private Sector Housing				
Private Sector Housing (Function & Policies)	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Housing Grants (Function & Policies)	Yes	Yes		
Empty Homes (Function & Policies)	Yes			
Care and Repair Agency	Yes	Yes		

Service, Policy or Function	Does it relate to...			Is there evidence or reason to believe that different ethnic groups could be differently affected?
	...eliminating unlawful discrimination	...promoting equality of opportunity	...promoting good race relations?	
Pest Control (Function & Policies)	Yes			
Travellers Issues	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Commercial				
Commercial Food Premises Enforcement (Function & Policies)	Yes	Yes		
Health and Safety Enforcement	Yes	Yes		
Infectious Disease Control				
Public Conveniences	Yes			
Licensing (Function & Policies)	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Commercial Non-Food Premises Enforcement (Function & Policies)	Yes	Yes		
Housing Strategy				
Housing Strategy (Function & Policies)	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Homelessness (Function & Policies)	Yes	Yes		
Housing Allocations Policy	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Environmental Protection				
Air Quality Management (Function & Policies)	Yes	Yes		
Noise Pollution Control (Function & Policies)	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Environmental Protection (Function & Policies)	Yes	Yes		
Dog Control Service (Function & Policies)	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Environmental & Health Coordination	Yes	Yes	Yes	

Service, Policy or Function	Does it relate to...			Is there evidence or reason to believe that different ethnic groups could be differently affected?
	...eliminating unlawful discrimination	...promoting equality of opportunity	...promoting good race relations?	
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & AUDIT DIVISION				
Procurement (Function & Policies)	Yes	Yes		
LAND & PROPERTY DIVISION				
Development Advice & Control				
Planning (Function & Policies)	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Planning Enforcement (Function & Policies)	Yes			
Energy Policy	Yes	Yes		
Building Control				
Estates				
Property Management including Lettings	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Right to buy	Yes	Yes		
Markets (Function & Policies)	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Building Services				
Car Park Management	Yes			
Home Energy Efficiency	Yes	Yes		

Service, Policy or Function	Does it relate to...			Is there evidence or reason to believe that different ethnic groups could be differently affected?
	...eliminating unlawful discrimination	...promoting equality of opportunity	...promoting good race relations?	
Land Charges	Yes			
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES DIVISION				
Engineering Services				
Cesspools, Septic Tanks and Private Drains				
Flood Control and Water Course Maintenance				
Highways Maintenance	Yes			
Street Management & Cleansing	Yes			
Information Signs	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Transport				
Taxi Tests	Yes	Yes		
Waste Management & Recycling				
Domestic Waste Collection	Yes			
Trade Waste Collection	Yes			
Clinical Waste Collection				
Bulky Items Collection	Yes	Yes		
Waste Minimisation/Recycling	Yes	Yes		
Skip Service	Yes			

Service, Policy or Function	Does it relate to...			Is there evidence or reason to believe that different ethnic groups could be differently affected?
	...eliminating unlawful discrimination	...promoting equality of opportunity	...promoting good race relations?	
Policy on exemption from placing out a wheelie bin	Yes	Yes		
Policy on provision of larger wheelie bins	Yes	Yes		
Cemeteries & Allotments				
Cemeteries (Function & Policies)	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Closed churchyards				
Parks and open spaces (Function & Policies)	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Outdoor recreation	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Allotments	Yes			
REVENUES & IT DIVISION				
Information technology				
Council Website	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Revenues				
Local Taxation (Function & Policies)	Yes			
Housing and Council Tax Benefits (Function & Policies)	Yes	Yes		
Prevention of Fraud and Overpayments (Function & Policies)	Yes			
Customer Services	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Customer Contact Centre	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Concessionary Travel Scheme	Yes	Yes		

PART 3 – RACE EQUALITY SCHEME ACTION PLAN

CORPORATE ACTION

ACTION	DATE TO BE COMPLETED	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE
1. Report the results of monitoring and progress in achieving action plan targets to Council annually.	Annually from summer 2007	Scrutiny and Policy Manager, Inward Focus Division
2. To carry out the corporate programme of Equalities Impact Assessments to cover all functions and policies listed in Part 2 of the Race Equality Scheme.	Ongoing	Scrutiny and Policy Manager & Equalities Officer
3. Publish annually the results of monitoring and assessments in the <i>Ashfield News</i> .	Ongoing from summer 2007	Scrutiny & Policy Manager, Inward focus Division
4. Review methods of consultation for effectiveness	Ongoing	Customer Services Manager, Customer, IT and Revenues Services Division
5. Audit adherence to the Corporate Communications Strategy and Guidelines	Ongoing	Corporate Communications Officer, Inward Focus Division
6. Review and evaluate effective ways of providing public access to information and services	Ongoing	Corporate Communications Officer, Inward Focus Division
7. Assess systems used to monitor service delivery for equalities purposes and implement a corporate approach.	March 2007	Scrutiny & Policy Manager, Inward focus Division
8. To fulfil the anticipated duties to promote access, boost registration and assist with voting and other measures contained within the Elections Bill	May 2007	Principal Administration Officer, Chief Executive's Division

ACTION	DATE TO BE COMPLETED	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE
9. Include a paragraph headed 'Equal Opportunities Implications' in all Council, Cabinet and Committee Agendas to ensure Elected Members are fully informed of existing or potential Equalities issues when making decisions.	September 2006	Principal Democratic Services Officer, Chief Executive's Division
10. Review the format of all contracts entered into by the Council to ensure compliance with the duty.	March 2007	Procurement Officer, Financial Management & Audit Division
11. Establish a method of monitoring compliance by contractors and partner organisations with the general duty.	March 2007	Procurement Officer, Financial Management & Audit Division
12. Train relevant staff to ensure that the Council fulfils its role as a reporting centre for the Common Monitoring Project	September 2006	Training Officer, Organisational Development Unit
13. Respond to any issues or patterns that arise from the data collected by the Common Monitoring Project	Ongoing	Officers as required
14. Provide a programme of training on equality and diversity issues to council employees	Ongoing	Training Officer, Organisational Development Unit
15. Review the Race Equality Scheme	June 2009	Scrutiny and Policy Manager, Inward Focus Division

ACTION	DATE TO BE COMPLETED	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE
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LAND & PROPERTY DIVISION

1. Review 'Planning Service Charter' for compliance with the duty to promote race equality.	March 2007	Area Development and Building Control Manager
2. Review 'Enforcement Charter' for compliance with the duty to promote race equality.	March 2007	Area Development and Building Control Manager
4. Establish a system for monitoring applications for planning permission to run hot food take-aways for racial discrimination.	March 2007	Area Development and Building Control Manager
5. Review the Council's 'Code of Practice and Procedures for Planning' for compliance with the duty to promote race equality.	March 2007	Head of Land & Property
6. Liaison with Travellers Groups	ongoing	Private Sector Housing Manager, Health and Housing Division

ACTION	DATE TO BE COMPLETED	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE
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COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC PROMOTION DIVISION

1. Ensure that the business support services offered meet the needs of businesses from all groups.	Ongoing 2006-2009	Regeneration Manager
2. Ensure that all promotional activity for the business services offered by the section is carried out in a manner that does not exclude any group.	Ongoing 2006-2009	Regeneration Manager
3. See Cultural Strategy Page 7 - Equal Opportunities Statement Followed by Objectives 1 + 2 + 3 + 5	Over period 2002 – 2006 (review planned 2006-07)	Cultural Services Manager
4. Letting of community centres and associated policy documents	(review planned 2006-07)	Cultural Services Manager

ACTION	DATE TO BE COMPLETED	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE
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NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES DIVISION

1. Consider the future provision of burial space for minority ethnic or religious groups.		Construction Services Manager
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