



Part 9

Melton Borough Council Single Equality Scheme

(Updated Dec 2015)

2016-2020



EQUALITY
FRAMEWORK
FOR LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
ACHIEVING

This is the Melton Borough Council's Single Equality Scheme 2012 – 2016 and covers our legal duties as required by The Equality Act 2010.

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1. Introduction

This Single Equality Scheme sets out the Council's objectives and approach to promoting equality and diversity, good relations and in tackling discrimination and harassment. It recognises that specific actions are needed to address different equality issues whilst also acknowledging many people experience more than one type of disadvantage or discrimination (multiple discrimination).

The Scheme outlines, in a holistic way, the commitment of the Council to promote equality in everything that it does – whether this is providing services, employing people, developing policies and communicating, consulting or involving people or procuring goods and services. To this end, it explains the Council's statutory responsibilities as prescribed under Equalities legislation.

The scheme is about long-term commitment and continuous improvement, and for this reason responsibility for implementing the scheme lies with the Council's Equality Steering Group, all members of the Council, the Council's elected members and officers of the Council.

2. National legislative Context

The law rightly protects people from unfair discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of their:

- ❖ Age
- ❖ Disability
- ❖ Gender reassignment
- ❖ Marriage and civil partnerships
- ❖ Pregnancy and maternity
- ❖ Race
- ❖ Religion
- ❖ Sex
- ❖ Sexual orientation.

Under the Equality Act (2010) the Council has a general duty to promote equality. The duty requires public bodies to be proactive in embedding equality in policies, commissioning, decisions and service delivery, and keeping them under review.

In summary the Equality Duty requires the Council in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Fostering good relations means tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

Specific duties of the Equality Act 2010

There are specific duties that local authorities are required to meet that came into force on 10 September 2011, which help us work towards meeting the general duty. These are:

❖ Publishing information

We had to first publish information by 31 January 2012 showing how we are complying with the general equality duty, and from then on each year. This has to include information about

- our workforce
- how our policies and practices affect groups of people who share one of the protected characteristics listed on page 3 of this scheme

To make it easy to find our information there are dedicated pages on our website with detailed published information and further links to other internal or external pages:

Workforce Monitoring Information:

http://www.melton.gov.uk/info/200041/equality_and_diversity/721/workforce_monitoring_information

Equality analysis:

http://www.melton.gov.uk/info/200041/equality_and_diversity/714/equality_impact_assessments

Information about the Borough:

<http://www.lsr-online.org/>

<http://www.lsr-online.org/melton-borough.html>

Equality in employment:

http://www.melton.gov.uk/info/200272/jobs_at_melton_borough_council/627/equalities_monitoring

❖ **Set equality objectives**

- The Equality Act 2010 stated that we must by 6 April 2012, and thereafter every four years or sooner, prepare and publish one or more equality objectives that we aim to address. The 4 broad Equality Objectives for 2016-2020 are

- *Ensure that we engage, consult and communicate in appropriate and accessible ways and empower under-represented groups and individuals to participate in society and at work*
- *Ensure services are accessible, responsive and appropriate for all our community*
- *Instil confidence within the community to report, tackle and prevent discrimination, bullying, harassment and hate incidents experienced by people in relation to their protected characteristics*
- *Be recognised as an employer of choice for people from all communities ensuring fairness and equality of opportunity for all*

Carers of older people or disabled people are not listed as a protected characteristic under the Act but are covered from discrimination and harassment “by association”.

We recognise that some people may experience multiple discrimination and our legal responsibilities towards them under the legislation overlap. The Council will seek to identify where groups or individuals face particular disadvantage and consider how services and employment practices can best respond. Through this policy we aim to ensure good equality practice for everyone.

3. Profile of the Borough

Location

Melton is a largely rural borough which covers an area of 185 square miles. The area, which is dominated by farming and agricultural estates, lies in the north east of Leicestershire with half its population living in the market town of Melton Mowbray. The rest of the population is spread over more than 70 villages in the surrounding rural area; this includes the larger settlements of Bottesford, Asfordby, Long Clawson and Waltham.

Parts of the borough are affected by deprivation, and the 2010 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) suggest that though all local authorities within Leicestershire have moved up the rankings between 2007 and 2010, suggesting that they became more deprived overall, the borough of Melton experienced the greatest change in ranking, moving up 43 places (295th to 252nd). [IMD rank is out of 354 local authorities in England.]

Greater Wymondham, Croxton Kerrial, Eaton and Belvoir, Somerby, Twyford and Knossington, Greater Frisby-on-the-Wreake, Gaddesby, Great Dalby and Burton Lazars are areas within the borough affected by deprivation which is associated with barriers to housing and services (Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2010).

Melton Egerton East and Melton Craven West are areas within the borough affected by deprivation which is associated with crime (Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2010).

Summary of demographics

Based on the 2011 Census data, the population of the Borough is 50,400 an increase of 2,534 since 2001(5.3 %), whilst the population in Leicestershire has increased from 609,678 in 2001 to 650,500 in 2011. This represents an increase of 6.7%.

Population by Sex and Age range

AGE IN YEARS	MALES	FEMALES	AGE IN YEARS	MALES	FEMALES
0-4	1,382	1,404	50 TO 54	1,801	1,847
5 TO 9	1,321	1,364	55 TO 59	1,742	1,615
10 TO 14	1,533	1,500	60 TO 64	1,831	1,831
15 TO 19	1,554	1,430	65 TO 69	1,337	1,449
20 TO 24	1,307	1,228	70 TO 74	1,086	1,063
25 TO 29	1,237	1,300	75 TO 79	759	972
30 TO 34	1,279	1,313	80 TO 84	545	743
35 TO 39	1,458	1,538	85 TO 89	315	548
40 TO 44	1,948	2,084	90+	95	305
45 TO 49	2,148	2,124			

- In 2011, there were 321,400 males (49.4%) and 329,100 females (50.6%) in Leicestershire, whilst the 2011 figures for Melton show there were 24,678 males (49%) and 25,658 (51%) females.
- The number of people in 2011 aged over 60 in Leicestershire grew by 33,900 since 2001 (from 126,000 to 159,900). In Melton, the number of people aged over 60 grew by 2,743 from 2001 to 2011 (10,176 to 12,919).

Population by Ethnicity

- The BME population of Melton in 2001 was 1,522 or 3.2% of the population. The largest ethnic groups were Other White (613 people), Irish (308 people) and Indian (209 people);
- In 2011 the BME population of the borough is 2,515 or 4.9% of the population. The largest ethnic groups are Other White (1,194 people), Indian (277) and Irish (264);
- There has also been a significant rise in the number of people who identify themselves as Other Asian from 23 people in 2001 to 134 people in 2011 and Black British from 5 people in 2001 to 39 people in 2011 a change of 680%;

- In 2001, 37,913 (79%) of the population identified themselves as being Christian, the 2011 Census figures put the number of people identifying themselves as being Christian at 34,239 (68%);
- The largest non-Christian religious group in 2001 was Hindu (0.3% of the population) although a large minority, over 20%, stated they have no-religion. In 2011, the largest non-Christian religious group was Hindu (0.4%) with 24% stating that they have no religion.

Profile of Melton Borough by Religion/Belief – 2001 and 2011

	All Residents	Buddhist	Christian	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Other religion	No religion/religion not stated
2001 Census	47,866	42	37,913	162	28	41	18	83	9,579
2011 Census	50,376	110	34,239	211	11	41	46	171	15,547
Change between 2001 and 2011 Census	2,510	68	-3,674	49	-17	0	28	88	5,968

Health and provision of unpaid care profile

- In 2011, 42,241 people described their health as being either good/very good. While the number of people who describe their health as very bad has fallen from 2,999 (2001 Census) to 1,840 in 2011.
- In Leicestershire, 539,607 people described their health as being either good/very good, whilst the number of people who described their health as very bad fell from 44,838 in 2001 to 28,020 in 2011.
- According to the 2001 Census data, 9.9% of the population in the borough provided unpaid care to a relative or neighbour. The figures from the Census 2011 show that this figure has risen to 10.1% of the population providing unpaid care to a relative or neighbour.

Sexual orientation profile

Although there is no reliable national survey data for sexual orientation, using Stonewall estimates of around 5% of the total population, there are an estimated 2520 people who are lesbian, gay or bisexual living in the borough. The Census 2011 records 62 registered same sex couple (civil partnership) households living in the borough.

Hate crime and domestic violence/incidents

In 2010-2011 Melton saw a fall in domestic incidents reported to the police of 1% and a fall in domestic offences of 35%. 74% of all domestic incidents were classified as violence against the person, whilst 58% of domestic offences were alcohol related.

During the same period (2010 -2011) 185 cases from the borough were discussed by Leicestershire a Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). Of the total 185 cases 50 were referred from the police while 134 were referred from Independent Domestic Violence Advisors.

Figures for hate crime and hate offences show that in 2010-2011 there were 26 hate offences and 5 hate incidents recorded in Melton. These include racial, religious, homophobic, transphobic, age, disability and gender incidents. 69% of all these incidents were recorded as violence against the person and 15% were criminal damage offences. Although the number of hate incidents reported is relatively small there is one area identified as having more than 10 offences, Melton Craven West. This area is in the top 10 areas identified in Leicestershire as having the highest levels of hate offences and incidents.

Qualifications and Economy

- Between 2001 and 2011 the number of 18 year old and over in the borough not in employment has increased from 418 to 473. In Leicestershire this figure has risen from 13,489 to 18,179.
- In terms of qualifications, there has been a drop in the number of people with no qualifications in the borough from 9,485 (2001) to 8,808 in 2011. Whilst in Leicestershire, the number of people with no qualifications has also dropped from 125,964 to 117,739.
- The number of long term unemployed males has risen from 82 to 208 (an increase of 154%, whilst the figure for females has risen from 91 to 171(88% increase).
- Leicestershire showed an increase of 111% of males being long term employed, whilst the figures for females was 104% (Census 2011)

4 Governance

The Single Scheme was considered and approved by full Council in October 2011. Delegated authority was granted to the Corporate Director to consider and include as appropriate any amendments as required to the scheme. The current scheme covering the 2016-2020 was reviewed in November 2015 and amended to reflect new and revised equality objectives. A new action plan to support these objectives was produced.

Progress against the scheme and separate action plan developed will be monitored by the Council's Equality Steering Group and the appropriate scrutiny committee.

An annual report on the progress made in meeting its duty to promote equality and diversity will be produced and presented to the Council's Equality Steering Group and to the appropriate scrutiny committee.

5 Council's Commitment to each Protected Characteristics

Equality for People of all Ages

The Council is committed to eliminating age discrimination and will do all that it can to promote greater social inclusion for people of all ages and will work to develop the right conditions for it's employees of all ages to develop and contribute.

To achieve this objective the Council will:-

- Ensure services are delivered in a way that takes full account of the rights and needs of all including young and older people;
- Provide services for young people, and older people to meet their particular needs including the provision of targeted services for youth groups and older peoples' groups;
- Support and encourage initiatives which are set up and run by young people and by older people, and which promote social inclusion and equality of opportunity;
- Develop access to decision making arenas that take account access needs of young and older people (venues, time, support and formats);
- In policy development, service planning and delivery, the Council will ensure people do not receive a different quality of service due to their age;
- Will work towards ensuring that young people and older people are effectively represented in any consultation undertaken;
- Will work towards implementing procedures (where applicable) which ensure young and older people have their views taken into account separately from those of families and carers;
- The Council will continue to ensure that arbitrary age discrimination is removed and job-related criteria are adhered to.

Disability

The Council is committed to eliminating discrimination against disabled people attempting to remove the barriers which disabled people face in accessing services and encouraging disabled people's right to an independent life.

In carrying out all of its duties the Council will seek to ensure that people with disabilities are free from prejudice and discrimination in their everyday lives.

To achieve this objective the Council will:-

- Involve people with disabilities in decisions through the programme of Equality Impact assessments and the local access group;
- Involve and engage local people with disabilities and take into account their specific needs in planning and delivering services;
- Design, plan and provide services to enable people with disabilities to maximise the control over their own lives;
- Consider the full range of access (includes the built environment) to services and improve the access to services, utilising the experience, views, creativity and expertise of people with disabilities;

- Work to provide information in plain English and make available that information, on request, through a range of media and in a range of formats [including, where appropriate, the provision of materials in symbols, large print, Braille, British Sign Language video or audio description] and offer alternatives to verbal communication so people with disabilities enjoy equal access to information and services;
- Handle sensitively allegations of discrimination and harassment providing appropriate support to the alleged victim(s) in accordance with organisational policy and procedure;
- Ensure recruitment and selection is carried out in line with current equality legislation, but also within the spirit of this scheme and national best practice;
- Where possible to ensure reasonable adjustments are made so applicants with disabilities and existing employees who are or become disabled are treated fairly and with proper consideration of their abilities;
- To take a proactive role in encouraging and enabling disabled people to gain employment with the Partners;
- Make all reasonable efforts to help employees who are or become disabled remain in the Councils' employment;
- Manage employees fairly and appropriately, ensuring there is no discrimination on grounds of the persons' disability in terms of work allocations, consultation and communication, development and training opportunities, employee appraisals, granting of leave, service reviews or grievance and disciplinary matters.

Sex equality

The Council is committed to eliminating sex discrimination and enabling women, men and transgender people to participate on an equal basis in social, cultural, political and economic life.

The Council will ensure that in carrying out their duties, women, men and transgender people are protected from unlawful discrimination and treated with respect and fairness.

To achieve this objective the Council will:-

- Ensure employees are able to work in an environment that values them as individuals and are free from sexual harassment or discrimination;
- Confront unlawful discrimination and promote gender equality through learning and development;
- Ensure all their employees know and understand that acts of sexual harassment or discrimination against other employees or customers are unacceptable and will be dealt with in accordance with the organisation's Disciplinary and Harassment Procedure;
- Recognise, that while women have the greater responsibility for childcare and providing unpaid assistance to older people, disabled people and for people who are ill, male and transgendered employees should also be supported in their responsibilities;
- Where operationally viable, support and enable flexible working to help employees who wish to do so balance their lives inside and outside work;
- Ensure all information, publicity and advertising over which each Council has control and or influence is non-sexist, and uses positive images and language to counteract the effects of sexism and promote gender equality;

- Endeavour to challenge sexist attitudes, structures and practices of external organisation's or partners;
- Undertake job evaluations, carry out a pay and grading review as required to develop fair employment and equal pay policies;
- In policy development, service planning and delivery, the Council will ensure that people do not receive a different quality of service due to their sex;
- Manage employees fairly and appropriately, ensuring there is no discrimination on sex grounds in terms of work allocations, consultation and communication, development and training opportunities, employee appraisals, granting of leave, service reviews or grievance and disciplinary matters.

Race equality

The Council is committed to eliminating discrimination against people on the grounds of their race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, and cultural background.

To achieve this objective the Council will:-

- Ensure BME communities are involved in planning services, and that their specific needs are considered in consultation processes;
- Give consideration to advertising and promoting services in the local BME media and in areas with higher concentrations of BME people as appropriate;
- Monitor use of services by race to ensure equality of access, and use the data to develop services which are appropriate to the needs of the whole community;
- Ensure recruitment is carried out in line with current legislation, but also within the spirit of this scheme and national best practice;
- Ensure employees are given appropriate and have access to training in anti-racist practices;
- Ensure service users, employees, consultants, contractors, suppliers, and partners [including those in the voluntary and community sectors] are able to work and deliver services free from racial harassment and discrimination;
- Endeavour wherever possible, to ensure all information, publicity and advertising over which the Council has control and/or influence is non- prejudicial and uses positive images and language to counteract the effects of racial discrimination such as Islamophobia or Antiziganism;
- Handle allegations of racial discrimination and harassment with sensitivity, giving appropriate support to the alleged victim[s], in accordance with organisational policy and procedures;
- Manage employees fairly and appropriately, ensuring there is no discrimination on racial grounds in terms of work allocations, consultation and communication, development and training opportunities, employee appraisals, granting of leave, service reviews or grievance and disciplinary matters.

Religion/Belief or Non-belief equality

The Council is committed to eliminating discrimination because of their religion or belief. The Council will strive to provide fair access to service provision and employment and will not discriminate on the grounds of religion or belief or non-belief.

In order to achieve this objective, the Council will:-

- Ensure Faith communities are involved in planning services and their specific needs considered in any consultation processes;
- Ensure employees are given appropriate and have access to training in Religion/Belief practices;
- Ensure recruitment and selection is carried out in accordance with the organisation's standards and best practice;
- Work towards enabling employees at all levels in the workforce to feel safe in being open about their faith, religion or belief systems;
- Ensure service users, employees, consultants, contractors, suppliers, and partners [including those in the voluntary and community sectors] are able to work and deliver services free from harassment and religious discrimination;
- Endeavour wherever possible, to ensure all information, publicity and advertising over which the Council has control and/or influence is non- prejudicial and uses positive images and language to counteract the effects of religious discrimination such as Islamophobia or Anti-Semitism;
- Handle allegations of religious discrimination and harassment with sensitivity, giving appropriate support to the alleged victim[s], within the context of the normal Council policy and procedure;
- Manage employees fairly and appropriately, ensuring there is no discrimination on religious grounds in terms of work allocations, consultation and communication, development and training opportunities, employee appraisals, granting of leave, service reviews or grievance and disciplinary matters;
- Acknowledge and publicly recognise cultural and religious festivals and holidays so that leave is not unreasonably withheld from employees who may wish to celebrate them.

Equality for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People

The Council is committed to eliminating discrimination, homophobic prejudice and harassment due to a person's sexual orientation.

The Council will ensure that in carrying out its duties, lesbian, gay and bisexual people are given fair and unprejudiced treatment.

In order to achieve this objective, the Council will:-

- Ensure policies, procedures and practices are not based on the assumption that everyone is, or should be, heterosexual;
- Acknowledge same sex relationships and ensure, partners have equal access to the services and benefits available to heterosexual couples;

- Encourage the participation of lesbian, gay and bisexual people in the decisions which affect their lives;
- Work with partners both from the statutory and voluntary sector to make communities safer and enable lesbian, gay, and bisexual people to live without prejudice or fear;
- Ensure employees are given appropriate and have access to training in Sexual orientation;
- Encourage a culture of openness about sexual orientation and ensure that lesbian, gay and bisexual employees have a safe and supportive environment in which to work;
- Ensure service users are aware that they do not have the right to refuse service from lesbian or gay employees;
- Ensure recruitment and selection is carried out in accordance with the organisation's standards and best practice;
- Handle sensitively allegations of discrimination and harassment providing appropriate support to the alleged victim(s) in accordance with organisational policy and procedure;
- Work to provide information and guidance to managers and employees on gender reassignment as well as on general appropriate language and behaviour issues which may affect people who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual;
- Manage employees fairly and appropriately, ensuring there is no discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation in terms of work allocations, consultation and communication, development and training opportunities, employee appraisals, granting of leave, service reviews or grievance and disciplinary matters.

Equality for People undergoing Gender assignment

The Council is committed to eliminating discrimination, harassment arising of, or based on their gender identity.

The Council will ensure that in carrying out its duties, transgendered, transsexual or individuals undergoing gender re-assignment are given fair and unprejudiced treatment.

In order to achieve this objective, the Council will:-

- Ensure employees are given appropriate and have access to training in Gender reassignment, Transgender, Bisexual and Transsexualism;
- Encourage the participation of transgender, bisexual and transsexual people in the decisions which affect their lives;
- Work with partners both from the statutory and voluntary sector to make communities safer and enable transgendered, bisexual and transsexual people to live without prejudice or fear;
- Ensure service users are aware that they do not have the right to refuse service from transgender, bisexual or transsexual employees;
- Ensure recruitment and selection process is carried out in accordance with the organisation's standards and best practice;
- Encourage a culture of openness and ensure that transgendered, bisexual or transsexual employees have a safe and supportive environment in which to work;
- Ensure that any employees who are undergoing or planning to undergo the gender reassignment process are treated with fairness and dignity;
- The Council will work as flexibly as possible and in line with its sickness and long term absence policy and allow employees undergoing either medical and/or surgical procedures related to gender reassignment time off from work.