



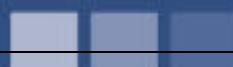
Corporate Equality Scheme

2009 -2012

Draft version 1.7



“Listening Learning Delivering”



Alternative formats and languages

South Kesteven has a rich and diverse culture - a community made up of people from different cultures, with differing backgrounds, beliefs or experiences. This diversity is one of the things that make South Kesteven such a great place to live and work.

To ensure all residents of South Kesteven have access to our information material, our information is available in a range of different languages and formats, including large print, Braille, audio tape and computer disc.

To request a document in a specific language or format, you can ring us, email us or fax us on:

01476 40 61 27 communications@southkesteven.gov.uk
 01476 40 60 12

Large print, Braille, audio tape or computer disc

This information can be made available in large print, Braille, on audio tape or computer disc. If you, or someone you know, might benefit from this service, please contact us.

□□□□ / Cantonese

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Website: www.southkesteven.gov.uk

Our website can convert text into speech using ReadSpeaker. ReadSpeaker is a system that reads website pages out loud so you can listen to the content and information on each page.

If you have any comments or suggestions on this Generic Equality Scheme please write to:

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FOREWORD

I am pleased to introduce South Kesteven District Council's Corporate Equality Scheme (2009 -2012). The scheme sets out how the Council meets its statutory duties to promote race, disability and gender equality under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000), the Disability Discrimination Act (2005) and Equality Act (2006). It replaces and builds on our previous Equality Scheme that covered the years 2005 to 2008 and also addresses our commitment to age, sexual orientation and religious and belief equality in recognition of existing legislation and in anticipation of additional future duties in these areas.

The Council has recently reviewed and updated its corporate priorities to reflect the issues that, we believe, are important to the people of the district. It is very important that our commitment to equalities and diversity is reflected in our priorities. Part one of the scheme sets out our Equalities and Diversity strategy and shows how we will build equalities and diversity into our mainstream policies, strategies and work programmes.

The scheme is very much a working document and we will work hard to ensure we achieve our ambitions and deliver on our commitments. We will report annually on our progress and achievements. I am grateful for the help and support of partner and community organisations who have contributed to the scheme and who will help in the delivery.

Whether dealing with our own staff or with members of the public, we aim to treat everyone with respect and we aim to be an organisation that values and celebrates diversity. We want to ensure that we provide services that reflect the needs of all members of the community.

We have developed this Corporate Equality Scheme(2009 – 2012) and present it as part of our commitment to the continuous improvement of our services for all people within the district.

Councillor Mrs Linda Neal

Leader of the Council

SKDC CORPORATE EQUALITIES SCHEME 2009 -2012

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PART ONE:

SKDC's Equalities and Diversity Strategy

- **Community Profile; South Kesteven district**
- **The Council's vision statement and corporate priorities**
- **The Council's commitment to Equalities and Diversity**
- **How the Council manages it's commitments to Equalities and Diversity**
- **The Local Government Equality Standard and Equality Framework**
- **Equality Impact Assessments**

1. Community Profile

Profile of South Kesteven District

Location

South Kesteven is located in the southwest corner of Lincolnshire, incorporating the towns of Grantham, Stamford and Bourne and an area known as the Deepings with over 100 villages and hamlets covering 365 sq miles of countryside. The administrative headquarters are based in Grantham and the area is one of the fastest growing districts in the UK. The population of the area is estimated by the Office for National Statistics to be 130,100 for 2006, which is an increase of over five thousand since the Census 2001. There was a 14% increase in population between the Census' 1991 and 2001, compared to 4% for the East Midlands and 2.5% nationally. The gender split in 2001 was 49% male and 51% female.

Economy

Whilst Grantham has had a long association with the engineering industry, the manufacturing base in all areas continues to expand and diversify along with food processing, cold storage, distribution, agriculture, local government and the NHS, tourism and the service sectors. The unemployment rate for South Kesteven is 1.6% (Apr 2008) as compared to 2.5% (Apr 2008) for the East Midlands. The number of VAT registered businesses as at the beginning of 2007 was 4,805 which is an increase on the previous year of 4.22% and has increased year on year for the past ten years or more.

There are a number of major development plans within the district. These include; Grantham for growth, the Bourne Retail area and Northfield Industrial Estate in the Deepings.

Communications

The area lies approximately 100 miles from London, which is an hour away by train from Grantham and within easy reach of Nottingham, Lincoln and Peterborough by road and rail. The district is skirted to the west by the main A1 traffic artery with the A15, A16 and A52 main road connections to other parts of Lincolnshire and the East Midlands. Whilst there are bus services between the major settlements and the many rural villages, the frequency of the services leaves the

population heavily reliant on their cars for transport. The Census 2001 showed that 37.2% of South Kesteven's households have more than one car as compared to the national figure of 29.4%.

Social Profile of the Community

South Kesteven is one of the fastest growing districts in the UK. It is a mix of urban and rural communities. The average house price is £185,739 (Mar 2008), an increase of 4.3% over the past year. Most housing is detached or semi detached.

The employment rate (2007) was 76.7% as compared to 76.3% for Lincolnshire with median average gross weekly earnings by residence of £441.10 and £405.90 respectively. Much of the employment within the district, however, is low paid with low skill levels. Average incomes are distorted by very high incomes of those commuting out of the district.

There are high achieving schools in the district with 5 secondary schools achieving a 90%+ pass rate for 5 GCSE A*-C grades in 2006 which represented 69.4% of all pupils.

South Kesteven tends to lose many of its young people particularly of college age, when they move away for education and job reasons and then do not necessarily return. We would appear to be starting to attract people of the middle age groups, including families with young children rather than the older residents. There are about 13,000 people aged between 16 and 25 and about 5,300 people aged 80 or over living in the district.

98.4% of the population in 2001 were classified as "white" with the remaining 1.6% from ethnic groups such as Asian, African, Caribbean and Chinese. This means there about 2,000 non-white residents in the district. In addition there is, more recently, a growing population of residents from EU countries such as Portugal and Eastern Europe, in particular Poland.

There are two hospitals in the area, one in Grantham with an A&E dept. and the other in Stamford without an A&E facility. The census 2001 showed the overall health of the population to be good with 4.1% described as permanently sick or disabled as compared to the national rate of 5.5%. This means there are about 20,000 disabled people with 'limiting long term illness'. The life expectancy rate for

females is 82.4 years and for males it is 78 years (2007) which is higher than that for the East Midlands.

The number of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people is not known, however based on national research by Stonewall and HM Treasury, the estimated number of LGBT people living in the district is about 8,500.

Figures from the 2001 census show that 82% of the local population are of Christian belief with over 900 people recorded as Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh (i.e. less than 1% of the total).

The Indices of Deprivation 2007 shows that only one lower level Super Output Area of 1,397 people or 1.1% of the district's population falls into the bottom 10% of the most deprived areas in the Country. By contrast there are 18 lower level Super Output areas in the top 10% least deprived.

Geography

As at Mar 2008 there were approximately 56,376 households within the district with an average of 2.4 persons per unit. Grantham town is the largest of the settlements with approximately 15,718 households. Stamford has approximately 8,901, Bourne approximately 6,017 and the Deepings approximately 5,535, leaving almost 21,500 households spread over the rest of the 350 sq miles of the district.

There are four leisure centres and four libraries each based in the main towns with a mobile library to serve the rural community. Grantham and Stamford also have an arts centre with theatres and tourist information centres.

There are over 600 buildings classed as Grade II and 100 of these are Grade II*, being of particular importance.

Crime and Anti Social Behaviour

The district enjoys a generally low crime rate which is below the average for Lincolnshire and remains statistically one of the safest in the country. The total number of incidents recorded in 2006/07 was 5,517 which was an increase on the previous year. The British Crime Survey comparator offences per 1,000 population records an indicator of 43 as compared to 63 for East Midlands. Criminal damage accounts for 1 in 4 of all crimes and violent crime is just under 1 in 5. The

crime that creates most concern to people is domestic burglary but that only accounts for 1 in 20 of all crimes. More than half of all victims are under 34 years old and just 7% of victims are over 65 years old, although this older age group represents 17% of the total population. Young people are therefore more likely to suffer from crime than older people, but older people are disproportionately more fearful of crime. Victims of crime mainly live in the Grantham and Stamford areas and these concentrations of people also correlate with the concentrations of residency of offenders. This implies that most crime (not including business crime) is committed locally and is not the result of travelling criminals. From 1st April 1999 to 31st December 2005 there were 10 ASBO's issued by the courts in South Kesteven.

Sources of information:

Office for National Statistics and Census 2001

Dept. for Communities and local Government

Dept. for Transport

Dept for Trade and Industry

Home Office

Lincolnshire Research Observatory

Annual Survey Hours and Earnings

Audit of Crime and Disorder

Indices of Deprivation 2004

Taylor Associates

The Council's vision statement and corporate priorities

The Council's vision statement is to provide brilliant services to our customers

The Council's corporate priorities are;

- Customer First – Putting the customer at the heart of what we do
- Quality Living – Protection and improvement of our environment, improvement of health and well being and working with our partners to create communities where people are safe and feel safe
- Open for Business – Develop strong, vibrant and inclusive communities with a strong economy
- Quality Organisation – A Council delivering brilliant services – further improve performance and satisfaction levels, transforming the business and gaining value for money

The Council's commitment to Equalities and Diversity

We recognise diversity as a key strength to the South Kesteven district in the realisation of our vision and corporate priorities but we also acknowledge diversity as a source of challenge in managing the complexity of needs and related issues that can arise.

We are therefore committed to understanding, identifying and responding to the equalities and diversity issues that are raised by the vision and corporate priorities and ensure robust management and decision making arrangements are in place to demonstrate our commitment in practice.

How the Council manages its commitments to Equalities and Diversity

We are committed to making a difference and having a positive impact on the lives of local people and visitors to the district. Table 1 (pages 14-18) sets out our priorities and the outcomes that we want for local people. It also identifies some of the key equality and diversity issues that we will need to manage. Each of the issues is managed through the delivery of key council strategies or policies as shown.

The Council's Corporate Equality Group leads the Council's Equality and Diversity strategy. The group is chaired by the Chief Executive and membership includes all Strategic Directors and Corporate Heads, the Cabinet champion for Equalities and Council's Equalities and Diversity Project Officer.

Diagram 1 (page 19) shows the relationship between the Council's Corporate Equalities Group and the Equalities and Diversity Implementation Team responsible for progressing delivery and implementation plans and monitoring results and progress. All Council services are represented and involved in this work.

The Local Government Equality Standard and Equality Framework

The Council is committed to raising its performance in the management of equalities and diversity and subjecting itself to open and external assessment against accepted standards of best practice. The Council was assessed at Level 2 of the Local Government Equality Standard in 2006. With the planned introduction of the Local Government Equality Framework in 2009, the Council is reviewing its options regarding future assessment arrangements under the new framework. It is committed to achieving continuous improvement in its assessment against agreed national standards.

Equality Impact Assessments

The Council is required under law to gather and take into account information on how its policies and practices affect equality in the delivery of services and in the workplace. We are therefore committed to conducting Equality Impact Assessments to help us to understand how our services impact on local people. We will involve local service users in these assessments and use the results to seek continuous service improvement.

SKDC - DRAFT DIVERSITY & EQUALITY STRATEGY

THIS IS IMPORTANT TO US	THIS IS WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE	TO ACHIEVE THIS WE WILL NEED TO MANAGE THE FOLLOWING EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ISSUES...	...THROUGH THE FOLLOWING POLICIES, STRATEGIES AND WORK PROGRAMMES	THIS IS HOW WE WILL MONITOR OUR PROGRESS AND COMMUNICATE THIS
CUSTOMER FIRST				
Putting the customer at the heart of all we do	Excellent customer service and customer / community access to services	<p>Ensuring that all people can access our services</p> <p>Ensuring our staff understand the different cultures and service needs of local community groups and individuals including potential physical, language and geographical barriers that may exist</p> <p>Ensuring we communicate and engage with people, particularly regarding corrective action being taken to improve services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer Access Strategy People Strategy IT strategy Consultation and Engagement Strategy Communication Strategy 	<p>We will monitor customer and service user feedback and analyse results against recognised equalities criteria and report on actions taken and communicate this on at least an annual basis.</p> <p><u>National performance indicators</u></p> <p>NI 140: Fair Treatment by Local services</p> <p><u>Local performance indicators</u></p> <p>SK 132: (biennial) percentage of customers who are satisfied with each aspect of the service they have received</p> <p>SK 133: (biennial) Percentage of customers that are satisfied that their enquiry was dealt with on first contact</p> <p>SK162/08: Percentage of customers that feel informed by the council about the services we provide</p>

				SK163/08: (biennial) Percentage of customers that think the council offers value for money
QUALITY LIVING				
Protection and Improvement of our environment.	A clean and safe environment in our towns and villages.	Working with the Police and other partners to better understand and respond to differential patterns of crime and anti-social behaviour affecting young people, migrant communities and elderly and vulnerable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place Survey and crime and fear of crime surveys. 	Data will be analysed to identify particular groups to better inform actions and reported at least annually.
Improvement of health and well being.	Improved health and well being.	Ensuring that all group and individual reports of crime and anti-social behaviour are treated sensitively and sympathetically and monitored against recognised equalities criteria.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place Survey and crime and fear of crime surveys. • We will do more to celebrate community events and support particular groups and encourage fair reporting of crime and anti-social behaviour. 	<p>As above</p> <p>We will promote local events and report at least annually on what people have told us and actions we have taken in response</p>
Working with our partners to create communities where people are safe and feel safe.	Vibrant cohesive communities.	Ensuring consistent standards of street cleanliness in all parts of the district Understanding Fuel Poverty and the impact on the health of the elderly and taking action to address negative impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents Survey 	<p>Data will be analysed to identify any inconsistencies and reported at least annually.</p> <p>Data will be analysed and actions taken and communicated at least annually</p> <p>As above</p>

		<p>Working with partners, including the Health Authority, to address recognised health inequalities within the district.</p> <p>Engaging hard to reach groups in local democracy and community based services and activities</p> <p>Ensure appropriate opportunities for young people and low income households in rural communities</p> <p>Ensure access to housing and benefits and promote choices for vulnerable people?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SAP ratings and fuel poverty NI?• Local Area Agreement?• Place Survey• Provision of affordable housing in rural areas• Housing allocations and benefits service, homelessness services	<p>We will develop our consultation and engagement network and communicate this at least annually</p> <p>We will monitor house price surveys and communicate availability of affordable alternatives</p> <p>We will record and analyse applicants and claimants by social, ethnic and other recognised criteria and report at least annually.</p> <p>National Performance Indicators</p> <p>NI 1: (biennial) Percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area</p> <p>NI 2: (biennial) Percentage of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood</p> <p>NI 3: (biennial) Civic Participation in the local area</p> <p>NI 4: (biennial) Percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality</p> <p>NI 8: Adult participation in sport and active recreation</p> <p>NI 17: (biennial) Perceptions of anti-social behaviour</p> <p>NI 21: (biennial) Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues by the local council and police</p> <p>NI 23: (biennial) Perceptions that people in the area treat one another with respect and</p>
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					consideration NI 37: (biennial) Awareness of civil protection arrangements I the local area NI 119: (biennial) Self-reported measure of people's overall health and wellbeing NI 138: (biennial) Satisfaction of people over 65 with both home and neighbourhood NI 139: (biennial) The extent to which older people receive the support they need to live independently at home NI 156: Number of households living in temporary accommodation NI 187: Tackling fuel poverty – Percentage of people receiving income based benefits living in homes with low energy efficiency rating
OPEN FOR BUSINESS					
Develop strong, vibrant and inclusive communities with a strong economy.	Revitalised local economy and communities	<p>Trends in financial exclusion and economic divergence (i.e. rich getting richer and poor getting poorer)</p> <p>Understanding diversity (across all equalities strands) issues in relation to business and employees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Development Strategy • Grantham Growth Point • Corporate Equalities Strategy • Healthy Communities Strategy • Employers 	<p>We will monitor and report at least annually on; NNDR VAT registrations, Business Losses, Inward Investments and new skills and new businesses</p> <p>We will also conduct regular surveys and other forms of information gathering with local businesses and partners e.g. Lincolnshire County Council, Business Link.</p> <p>We will direct help and support</p>	

		<p>Supporting everyone to acquire skills to improve employability or encourage entrepreneurship</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey Residents Survey • Place Survey • Economic Development Strategy • Local Area Agreement (skills and education and young people strand) 	<p>based on information derived from above and work with local businesses and partners to deliver this and communicate at least annually on achievements</p>
QUALITY ORGANISATION				
<p>A Council delivering brilliant services – further improve performance and satisfaction levels. Transforming the business and gaining value for money</p>	<p>An organisation that is customer - focussed, which values its staff, and which delivers brilliant services.</p> <p>To increase efficiency through the use of technology and working with others.</p> <p>To keep staff and members developed and motivated. To listen, consult and communicate well.</p>	<p>Valuing all our staff , their diversity of skills and experience and the contribution they can make to the Council's objectives</p> <p>Ensure we gain staff input to our service improvements</p> <p>Ensure we train and communicate well with the workforce and elected members on this Equalities and Diversity Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual staff survey and workforce profile analysis • People Strategy • Corporate Equalities Scheme • People Strategy 	<p>We will measure job satisfaction and commitment and analyse differences between groups in the workforce e.g. age, gender, ethnicity, pay grade. We will take necessary actions and report at least annually.</p> <p>The Equalities and Diversity Implementation team will report at least annually to the Corporate Equality Group on recommended changes to Council policies, practices and procedures necessary to achieve these priorities and outcomes</p> <p><u>Local performance indicators</u> SK151: Percentage of job applications received by age, gender, ethnicity, disabled.</p>

Equalities and Diversity Management arrangements

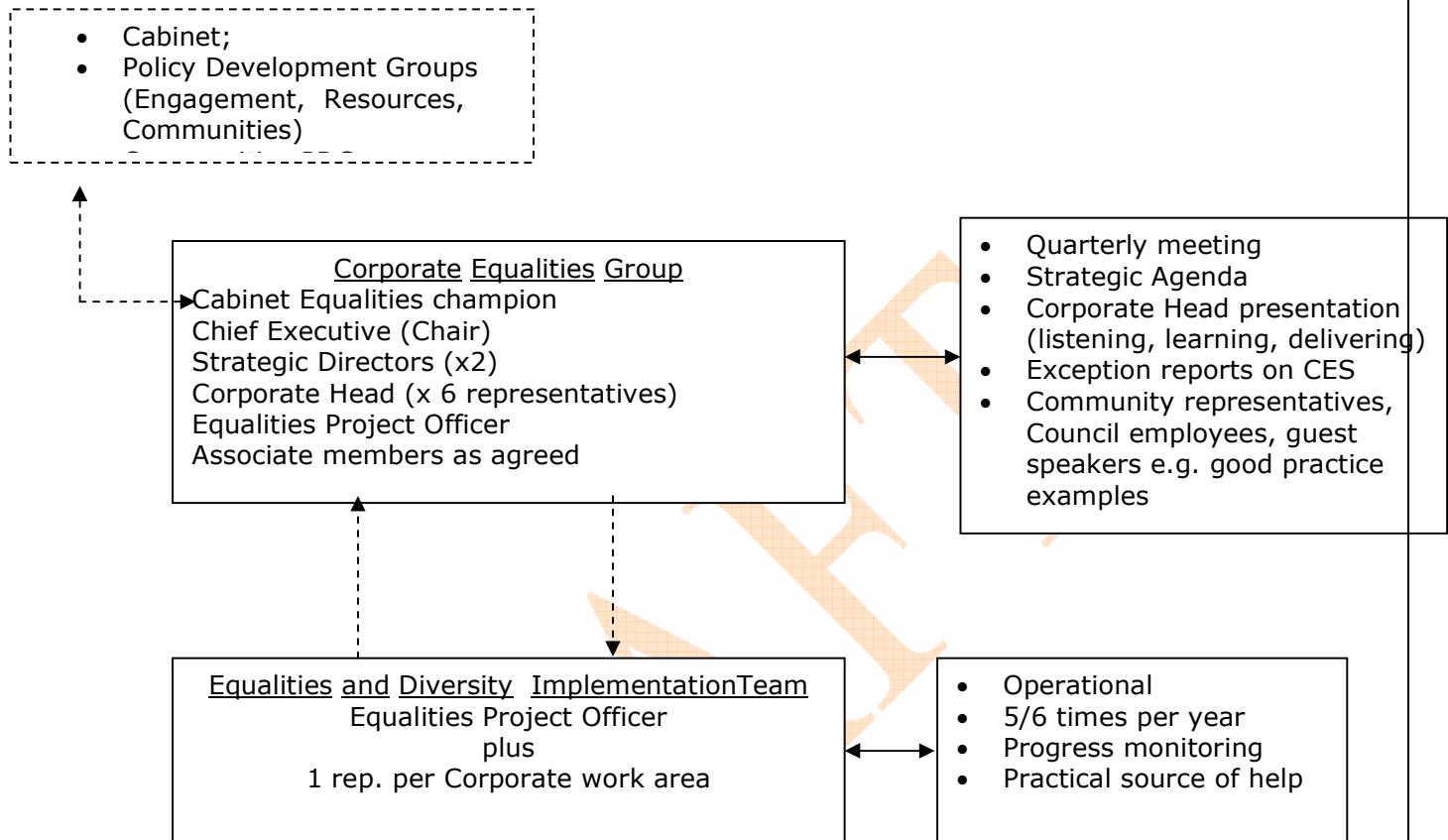


Diagram 1: SKDC Equalities and Diversity management arrangements

PART TWO:

SKDC'S Statutory Equality Schemes;

- **Introduction**
- **Race Equality Scheme**
- **Disability Equality Scheme**
- **Gender Equality Scheme**



Introduction

SKDC has a number of statutory duties and responsibilities to which it must comply. This includes requirements to publish and review statutory schemes that demonstrate how the Council will comply with specific legislation. Details of the legal requirements and the Council's response are set out in the following sections. Specific actions that the Council will take, along with timescales and persons responsible, are set out in an Action Plan that will be monitored and reviewed by the Equalities & Diversity Implementation Team and reported on annually.

Race Equality Scheme

Legal background

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a **general** duty on the council to have due regard to:

- Eliminating unlawful racial discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups

In addition to the **general** duty there are also a number of **specific** duties the council is required to do. These are:

- Produce and publish a Race Equality Scheme which demonstrates how the council intends to fulfil **general** and **specific** duties
- Assess and consult on the likely impact of our proposed policies on the promotion of race equality
- Monitor policies for adverse impact on the promotion of race equality
- Publish the results of our assessments and consultation exercises

- Make sure the public have access to information and services the council provides
- Train staff in the duties of the Act

Community Profile - Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Nos.
White	122,836
Asian	581
Black	192
Mixed	652
Chinese/Other	531
TOTAL	124,792

Source: 2001 Census

Since the 2001 census, there has been an overall increase in the community population to 131,000 (2008). This has included an increase in migrants from Eastern Europe. The overall population size is projected to increase to 151,000 by the year 2021, mainly through a net increase in internal inward migration but also through an ongoing projected net increase in international and cross border migration into the district.

How SKDC will respond to legal duties and responsibilities

South Kesteven District Council recognises that people may be discriminated against because of their colour, race, ethnicity or nationality. We are committed to challenging all forms of racial discrimination and we will ensure that our policies and procedures are developed to give people from all ethnic groups fair and equal access to council services and employment.

Where appropriate, we will consult with minority ethnic groups with regard to our provision of services and employment opportunities and take all reasonable steps to overcome any barriers identified.

We will also work with our partner agencies and contractors to provide racial equality across our communities and to ensure that the needs and requirements of our ethnic minority groups are taken into account in developing strategies and policies.

In order to meet the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 we will:

- ❖ Monitor our services to establish whether any racial groups are under-represented and where necessary take positive action to improve this imbalance
- ❖ Undertake impact assessments on all existing and proposed policies and practices to establish whether there is a negative or positive impact on affected groups. Where there is any negative impact we will take action to minimise the effect.
- ❖ Continue to provide a translation service for our customers on request and ensure that all our customers are aware of this service, by attaching the appropriate alternative formats document to all council information.
- ❖ Seek to improve the level of engagement and two-way communication with representative groups and individuals who have specific needs or concerns in relation to race equality.
- ❖ Set targets and establish appropriate Human Resources policies and practices that reflect our commitment to being an employer of choice to all sectors of the local community.
- ❖ Tackle discrimination, harassment and bullying, and inform staff on how they can help to make this work in practice.
- ❖ Provide training for staff to equip them with the necessary skills to fulfil these requirements and provide advice and guidance.
- ❖ Promote our hate crime reporting procedures to ensure that people are aware they can report incidents.
- ❖ Deal promptly and systematically with any racial incidents or complaints in accordance with the council's hate crime and incident reporting procedure.

- ❖ Assess levels of new migrants arriving in South Kesteven and support community cohesion projects to develop understanding.
- ❖ Assess the accommodation and other needs of gypsies and travellers and provide appropriate support to meet these needs
- ❖ Produce and publish an annual report containing a summary of the progress made.

Disability Equality Scheme

Legal background

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 amended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 which included a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled people can access employment, goods and services and premises. The 2005 Act has introduced a statutory duty that requires public authorities to give due regard to:

- Promoting equality of opportunity between people with disabilities and other people
- Eliminating unlawful discrimination
- Eliminating harassment of people with disabilities that is related to their disability
- Promoting positive attitudes towards people with disabilities
- Encouraging participation of people with disabilities, even if this requires more favourable treatment for people with disabilities

In addition to the **general** duties there are also a number of **specific** duties that the council is required to do. These are:

- Produce and publish a Disability Equality Scheme demonstrating how we intend to fulfil our **general** and **specific** duties
- Involve disabled people in the development of the Scheme

The Scheme must include a statement of:

- The way in which the council involves people with disabilities in the development of the Scheme
- How we will undertake disability impact assessments on new and existing policies and practices
- How we propose to meet the general duty
- How we will gather information in relation to employment and service functions
- How we will make use of the information gathered, in particular in reviewing the effectiveness of the Action Plans and in preparing subsequent Disability Equality Schemes.
- How we will train our staff in the duties within the Act.

Each year the council is required to publish an annual report containing a summary of the progress made.

Legal definition of a disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines a disabled person as someone who has "*A physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities*" There have been amendments to the Act, resulting in a broader definition with HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer coming under protection from the point of diagnosis. The Act also provides protection for people with progressive conditions.

Community Profile – Disability / Limiting long term illness

People without a limiting long term illness	104,997
People with a limiting long term illness	19,795
Total Population	124,792

Source: 2001 Census

Note: 'limiting long term illness' is terminology used by the Office for National Statistics who are responsible for producing census information.

How SKDC will respond to legal duties and responsibilities

The council acknowledges that we have a general duty to ensure we are promoting positive attitudes towards people with disabilities. We recognise that people with disabilities are sometimes put into a position of disadvantage not because of their impairment or medical condition, but more often because of other people's attitudes or environmental barriers. By recognising this, we aim to ensure that in the provision and delivery of services to customers and in our role as an employer we promote a positive image and attitude towards people with disabilities

The council has consulted and involved disabled people and representative groups in the development of this Scheme. A range of methods were used including surveys to provide quantitative information and focus groups to provide qualitative information.

In order to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 we will:

- ❖ Consult with disabled people and our employees to ensure, where practical, the council adequately meets the needs of our disabled citizens.
- ❖ Make it easy for everyone to use our services and buildings.
- ❖ Ensure that all information provided is easy to use and understand and is available in alternative formats such as large print, Braille and audio CD.
- ❖ Train our staff to understand the issues faced by disabled people.
- ❖ Undertake impact assessments on existing and proposed policies and practices to establish whether there is a negative or positive impact and take action to minimise any negative effect.
- ❖ Monitor our services to establish whether people with disabilities are under-represented and where necessary take positive action to improve this imbalance.

- ❖ Deal promptly and systematically with any complaints, incidents or harassment.
- ❖ Promote our hate crime reporting procedures to ensure that people are aware they can report incidents.
- ❖ We will continue to carry out accessibility audits and ensure that we assess our premises to remove any barriers which might hinder access to our services and employment.
- ❖ Produce and publish an annual report containing a summary of the progress made.

Gender Equality Scheme

Legal Background

The Gender Equality Duty requires public authorities to take gender equality issues into consideration in a consistent manner. The Duty comes from the Equality Act 2006 which has amended the Sex Discrimination Act 1975. This means that the council has a **general** duty to:

- Provide equality of opportunity between men and women.
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment (on grounds of sex and of gender reassignment).

In addition to the **general** duty there are also a number of **specific** duties that the council is required to fulfil:

- Draw up and publish a Gender Equality Scheme identifying equality goals and actions the council will take to implement them
- Set out our objectives and plan to address the causes of any gender pay gap

- Gather and use information on how our policies and practices impact on our workforce and the delivery of our services in respect of gender equality
- Consult and take account of information which our stakeholders such as employees, trades unions, customers, or partners have provided to help develop our gender equality objectives.
- Undertake gender equality impact assessments on existing and proposed policies and practices
- Set out an Action Plan to meet the Duty.
- Report on progress each year against the Scheme.

Community Profile – Gender / Sex

Male	61,108
Female	63,684
TOTAL	124,792

SOURCE: 2001 Census

Note: 'Gender ' typically means biological and social differences between men and women. The census figures quoted are based on biological differences as reported on local census returns.

How SKDC will respond to legal duties and responsibilities

South Kesteven District Council acknowledges its duty to prevent discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender or gender reassignment. It is widely accepted that, despite over 30 years of legislation, men, women and transgender people can experience gender inequality in different ways. The gender equality duty gives us new responsibilities to make sure that we are looking to challenge these inequalities. Achieving gender equality requires us to take a proactive approach which means we need to identify not only the visible but also invisible barriers, discrimination or harassment which might be the result of gender differences. To enable us to achieve our objectives we recognise that we must challenge our current policies, practices and procedures to make sure we are questioning how our services are being delivered. It is equally important to us that under

scrutiny from our stakeholders we can demonstrate that we are promoting gender equality.

In order to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2006 we will:-

- ❖ Undertake periodic equality reviews of our workforce
- ❖ Carry out annual staff surveys to better understand the experiences of our workforce and take action to address any inequality or discrimination
- ❖ Review the training and development needs of all our staff and Members
- ❖ Ensure that men and women from all groups within the community feel effectively engaged in decision making
- ❖ Establish whether men or women are underrepresented in using our services and where appropriate take positive action to improve this imbalance.
- ❖ Recognise the needs of carers and support appropriate work arrangements to allow them to work effectively
- ❖ Undertake gender impact assessments on existing and proposed policies and practices to establish whether there is a negative or positive impact and take action to minimise any negative effect.
- ❖ Promote our hate crime reporting procedures to ensure that people are aware they can report incidents.
- ❖ Carry out an equal pay audit and address any inequalities found.

PART THREE: SKDC's response to other equalities legislation;

- **Introduction**
- **Age**
- **Sexual Orientation**
- **Religion or belief**

Introduction

Under recent legislation, the Council has a number of legal duties and responsibilities in a range of areas. Details of the legal requirements and the Council's response to both the legal and wider policy and service related issues that arise are set out in the following pages. Specific actions that the Council will take (along with timescales and persons responsible) are set out in an Action Plan that will be monitored and reviewed by the Equalities & Diversity Implementation Team and reported on annually.

Age

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (2006) introduced new requirements on the Council regarding its employment duties and responsibilities (including recruitment and retirement). We acknowledge that young people and older people have different needs of the Council both as an employer and as a service provider and if these are not always recognised and responded to, people can face disadvantage and discrimination. Phrases such as 'ageism' are sometimes used to describe this. We will work hard to ensure that we are sensitive to the needs of all people whatever age they are and that our services are responsive to the age related needs of all local people.

Community Profile - Age

Age	Nos.
16 - 25	12,854
75 +	9,806

Note: Source 2001 census

South Kesteven District Council will specifically try to meet the needs of young people and older people by:

- ❖ Challenging ageism by its employees, contractors, partners, other organisations and users of our services.
- ❖ Carrying out our duties under the law as it develops to stop discrimination and provide equality of opportunity.

- ❖ Undertake impact assessments on existing and proposed policies and practices to establish whether there is a negative or positive impact and take action to minimise any negative effect.
- ❖ Dealing effectively and consistently with any harassment and violence towards young people or older people.
- ❖ Support the formation of groups, networks and services for young people and older people as users of our services within South Kesteven.
- ❖ Carrying out our duties under The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.

Sexual Orientation

The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 outlaws discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services. We acknowledge that gay men, lesbians and bisexual people can face disadvantage or discrimination because of attitudes and actions based on hatred or the belief that heterosexual people are better or have more valid lifestyles. This is called homophobia. Additionally disadvantage and discrimination can be experienced by gay men, lesbians and bisexual people because of heterosexism, which is the assumption that everyone is heterosexual.

Community Profile – Sexual Orientation

Total Population	5%	7%	8%
124,792	6,240	8,735	9,983
Source: 2001 census	Estimated no. of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender people (see note below)		

Note: There is no accurate data on the numbers of men and women who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered (LGBT) in the South Kesteven district reflecting a national problem with accurate statistical analysis. Both Stonewall and HM Treasury concur that between 5 – 7% of the population of the UK are LGBT. Lincolnshire County Council refer to the 'hidden population' of transgender people and suggests that the overall figure for the County may be 8%. SKDC assumes the actual figure is somewhere within the range quoted.

We will meet the specific needs of gay men, lesbians and bisexual people. In particular we will:-

- ❖ Carry out our duties under the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007, which outlaw discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services (The Regulations are made under Part 3 of the Equality Act 2006.)
- ❖ Challenge heterosexism¹ and homophobia² by our employees, other organisations and users of our services.
- ❖ Deal effectively and consistently with any harassment, victimisation, discrimination and violence towards gay men, lesbians and bisexual people.
- ❖ Undertake impact assessments on existing and proposed policies and practices to establish whether there is a negative or positive impact and take action to minimise any negative effect.
- ❖ Promote positive images of gay men, lesbians and bisexual people and challenge attitudes that patronise or discriminate against them.
- ❖ Support the right of gay men, lesbian and bisexual employees and service users to be open about who they are. We will do this by creating an atmosphere and environment where it is safe for them to do so, by acknowledging that relationships between people of the same gender are equally valid to those between women and men, and by not assuming that employees or users of our services are heterosexual.

¹**Hetrosexism:** Discrimination against gay men lesbians and bisexual people based on assumptions, stereotypes and beliefs regarding the superiority of heterosexuality.

² **Homophobia:** This is the irrational fear of same-gender sexual relationships and those who practice them, which may result in judgemental, discriminatory or aggressive behaviour.

- ❖ Comply with the Employment Equality (Sexual orientation) Regulations (2003).

Religion or belief

The Equality Act (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2007 outlaws discrimination on grounds of religion or belief in the provision of goods, facilities and services. We acknowledge that people from various religious faiths or with strong religious or other beliefs can face disadvantage and discrimination, including institutional discrimination. We will seek to ensure that people can worship and express their religious and other beliefs freely, without fear of intimidation and that an individual's choice to practice their religion or belief is respected. We will respect the right of every citizen and employee to hold political and other beliefs, or be a member of a Trade Union if they wish.

However, we will not permit our employees to impose on others, their religious, political or other views or philosophies, where these seek to limit the dignity or rights of others, cause offence, or incite racial, religious or other hatred, whilst carrying out their employment.

Community Profile – Religion / Belief

Religion	Nos.
Christian	101,488
Buddhist	189
Hindu	236
Jewish	79
Muslim	307
Sikh	95
Any other religion	259
No religion	14,360
Religion not stated	7,779

Source: 2001 census

In order to support the rights of individuals to worship freely or hold beliefs, we will:-

- ❖ Carry out our duties under the Equality Act (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2007, which outlaw discrimination on grounds of religion or belief in the provision of goods, facilities and services. (The Regulations are made under Part 2 of the Equality Act 2006)
- ❖ Challenge religious and other intolerance by its employees, contractors, partners, other organisations and users of its services.
- ❖ Undertake impact assessments on existing and proposed policies and practices to establish whether there is a negative or positive impact and take action to minimise any negative effect.
- ❖ Deal effectively and consistently with any harassment, victimisation, discrimination and violence towards people practicing their chosen religion or belief.
- ❖ Provide suitable facilities for employees to pray and observe other religious needs.
- ❖ Justify the need for any particular style of dress to allow, where possible, employees to observe their religion.

APPENDICES;

1. Consultation
2. How to contact us

2. Consultation

The following groups, organisations and public authorities were invited to take part in the consultation and to comment on this document.

Afro-Caribbean Club	Integration Lincolnshire
Age Concern Kesteven	Inter Faith Forum
Alzheimer Society South Lincolnshire Branch	Kaleidoscope
Children's Centre Grantham (Formerly known as Sure Start)	Lincolnshire Association of People with Disabilities
Children's Services Team Manager (South Kesteven)	Lincolnshire Community Development Project
Churches Together in All Lincolnshire & Lincolnshire Chaplaincy Service	Lincolnshire Fire & Rescue
Deaf Lincs	Lincolnshire Gypsy Liaison Group
Equality Lincs (Formerly known as Lincolnshire Council for Racial Equality)	Lincolnshire Police: Community Police
Grantham College	Lincolnshire Police: Community Safety
Grantham Mind	Mencap
Grantham Polish Club	Sense East
Grantham Women's Aid	South Lincolnshire Blind Society
Home Start	South Lincs Community and Voluntary Service
Independent Advisory Group	South Kesteven District Council Tenancy Services Housing Consultative Group

2. How to contact us

South Kesteven District Council

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