

Cheshire East Council Single Equality and Inclusion Scheme 2010-2013

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1. Introduction Chief Executive and Portfolio Holder for Performance and Capacity

Cheshire East Council is committed to providing high quality, customer focused services for all people living in, working in or visiting the Borough. We are determined to further develop our Equality and Inclusion agenda to meet our statutory responsibilities, provide quality customer services and to promote Equality throughout our corporate aims and objectives. Our aim is to deliver “**Inclusion for All**”.

Our Commitment and Vision

The Council's Single Equality and Inclusion Scheme will support and supplement the Council's corporate priorities, as set out in our Corporate Plan. This Scheme is a working document and will also act as the Council's Corporate Equality Policy.

Cheshire East is committed to providing high-quality, customer-focused services for all people living in, working in or visiting the area. Promoting fairness and providing equality and inclusion is one of our important values, and relates to:

- Accessing the Council's services
- Accessing employment opportunities with the Council, or with its contractors who supply goods or services to the Council
- Accessing voluntary work supported by the Council
- Developing policies and plans that impact upon communities and individuals

2. Equality Framework

Underpinning Equality Principles

Cheshire East Council's new equality framework is based on the principles that:

- “A more equal and inclusive society protects and promotes equality, real freedom and opportunity in a way where people can value and realise their potential.
- “A more equal society recognises people's different needs, situations and goals, and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and be.”
- “A more equal society does not constrain growth or prosperity. On the contrary, by focusing on those groups who experience persistent disadvantage because of factors beyond their control, a more equal society uses scarce resources efficiently, increases the level and quality of human capita, and creates more stability, all necessary to growth and prosperity”

Put simply it is about what we as a Council can do to create a fairer society and recognises that:

- Equality is an issue for us all
- We don't all start from the same place
- To create a fairer society we need to recognise different needs.

2.1 Managing Equality and Inclusion at Cheshire East

The Leader of the Council and Chief Executive provide leadership and promotion of equality and inclusion throughout the Council.

Corporate Management Team (CMT) will be accountable for the implementation and enforcement of this Scheme. This will strengthen the Council's commitment to the Scheme, as it will be owned centrally and not by just one section of the Council. The ethos of the scheme will be thread through all corporate plans and policies and will be apparent in all Council activities.

Heads of Services and Service Managers implement Equality Impact Assessments and Equality Schemes in their respective service areas and support staff enabling them to contribute towards the delivery of key objectives in the scheme.

Equality and Inclusion Team co-ordinates the Fairness and Inclusion Group, update equalities policies to reflect current legislation and monitors relevant performance indicators, action plans.

Corporate Equality Group (CEG) Equality Champions help raise the profile of equality and inclusion among all employers of the Council. Within this role the CEG will:

- Inform services about key issues affecting the Council in relation to equality and inclusion
- Review, monitor and report progress on dealing with equality and inclusion issues
- Influence and ensure equality and inclusion are embedded into the culture of the organisation
- Steer and advise services in relation to the implementation of our duties under equality legislation

Fairness and Inclusion Group (FIG) will be set up to oversee the progress of the Equality Impact Assessments. The group includes members of staff from all the Council's divisions, a representative from the unions and identified Equalities Champions.

The FIG will meet quarterly to:

- Review Equality Impact Assessments.
- Monitor the progress of equality action plans and report annually.

Human Resources Team ensures HR policies reflect current legislation and best practice and provides appropriate training and development to Members and employees.

Staff uphold the aims and principles of the scheme and act as an internal consultation group.

Unions are consulted on equality issues and have the responsibility of representing the views and concerns of staff on equality issues and supporting the continuous improvement of equalities procedures and policies.

Community Groups and Partner Organisations offer feedback and information to support the development of equalities policies.

Cheshire East Annual Equality and Inclusion Conference offers a means of celebrating achievements, consultation and feedback for employees, customers, partners and stakeholders in the support and development of Cheshire East's equalities policies, procedures and functions.

2.2 Revised Single Equality and Inclusion Scheme (SEIS) 2010 - 2013

The Single Equality and Inclusion Scheme (SEIS) is a public commitment showing how Cheshire East Council intends to meet the duties placed on it by the equality legislation. The SEIS is relevant to all activities of the Council and to employees. These areas of activity include, for example, employment, education, and housing, the provision of services and the policies and procedures that govern them. Employees and Cheshire East citizens should all be afforded the opportunities to achieve their potential without prejudice or discrimination.

Cheshire East Council has adopted and developed a singular approach to equality and inclusion, bringing together existing Disability, Race and Gender equality agendas and aligned them with key legislative requirements, guidance and principles outlined in the new Equality Act 2010. This Act brings together discrimination law introduced over four decades through legislation and regulations. It replaces most of the previous discrimination legislation, which is now repealed. The Act covers discrimination because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. These categories are known in the Act as **'protected characteristics'**.

This Single Equality and Inclusion Scheme (SEIS), action plan and Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidance were all subject to public consultation between 1 May and 11 July 2010. The comments and suggestions from the consultation were reviewed and considered, along with the new legislation and requirements have resulted in constructive changes to the scheme, action plan and EIA template and guidance.

The Council has identified a total of 10 Protected Characteristics that will form the main focus of this SEIS 2010-2013. However, if during the lifespan of this scheme, any other Protected Characteristic is identified as being significantly or disproportionately disadvantaged in terms of accessing services or opportunities, the Council will take all reasonable steps to redress this.

The Ten Protected Characteristics for this scheme are:

- Age
- Carers
- Disability
- Gypsy Travellers
- Race
- Religion and/or Belief

- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Socio-Economic Disadvantage
- Transgender

2.3 Revised Single Equality and Inclusion Scheme Action Plan

We have further developed and revised our (SEIS) action plan as a result of the comments and suggestions made from the consultation and new legislative requirements and guidelines. This three year action plan will focus on seven areas:

- To have a modern and diverse workforce
- To foster community engagement and satisfaction
- To have a responsive service and excellent customer care
- Understand our community
- Embedding and promoting equality within partnerships, procurement and commissioning
- To have an effective performance framework and demonstrate continuous improvement and leadership
- Attaining the Equality Framework for Local Governments' (EFLG) "Achieving" level within the lifespan of this 2010 – 2013 Scheme.

The action plan which is a 'live' document and therefore subject to update and review, sets out how the Council will implement its equality and inclusion agenda. It brings together the work which is currently being done across the Council, together with setting out priority areas where further work needs to be done.

2.4 Equality Impact Assessments Guidance

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a method that enables local authorities to examine proposed or existing policies, procedures and functions in order to identify and eliminate (or minimise) any negative impact these may have on any particular group or groups of people. Equality Impact Assessments also help to identify any unmet needs.

To reflect Cheshire East's commitment of ***"Inclusion for All"***, we will assess all the protected characteristics outlined in both the Council's SEIS and 2010 Equality Act. When undertaking EIAs the Council will ensure that the procedure is easier to use and more effective in the assessment of the likely impact of our policies, procedures and functions on all our clients, staff, suppliers and community representatives. Service managers and relevant officers will undertake (EIA) training. The outcomes resulting from the Council's EIA's will be published.

2.5 Involvement and Consultation

To ensure the successful delivery of any EIA's the Council understands the significance of qualitative data collection. This very important aspect of the assessment process will need the active involvement and consultation with different groups of people, the organisations representing them, people from across the Council, service users, strategic partners and voluntary and community organisations, including specialist groups.

2.6 Equality Framework for Local Government

The Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) builds on and recognises the work that councils have already undertaken under the old Equality Standard for Local Government. It is based on three levels of achievement, 'Developing', 'Achieving' and 'Excellent'.

2.7 Training & Development

Equality and Inclusion training and development will be available for all employees and councillors and will be fully integrated into the councils learning and development program, with additional training available based on job requirements.

3. Legal Framework

3.1 Equality Act 2010

The new Equality Act is the most significant piece of equality legislation for a generation. It will simplify, streamline and strengthen the law. It will give individuals greater protection from unfair discrimination. It will make it easier for employers and companies to understand their responsibilities. And it will set a new standard for public services to treat everyone, no matter what their background or personal circumstances, with dignity and respect.

3.2 What has changed?

A new single Equality Act will be implemented in stages from October 2010 and will pull all the current Acts and Regulations into one single Act (except the Human Rights Act). It will also strengthen equality law by:

- Introducing a new public sector duty to consider reducing socioeconomic inequalities;
- Putting a new integrated Equality Duty on public bodies;
- Using public procurement to improve equality;

- Extending the scope to use positive action;
- Protecting carers from discrimination;
- Clarifying the protection for breastfeeding mothers;
- Strengthening protection from discrimination for disabled people; and
- Protecting people from dual discrimination - direct discrimination because of a combination of two protected characteristics.

3.3 The Human Rights Act 1998

Public authorities have a duty under the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA) to act compatibly with rights under the European Convention for the Protection of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms (the Convention). It is unlawful for public authorities to breach Convention rights in any area of their activity, including service provision or employment and work-related activities. Organisations not in the public sector have a duty to act compatibly with Convention rights only in relation to functions of a public nature that they may carry out. The public functions covered by this Code are functions of a public nature under the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA).

4. Procurement

We have published guidance to ensure that contractors and suppliers meet our legal requirements to promote Equality and Inclusion. This will also cover the need to ensure that contractual arrangements are accessible to small and medium sized enterprises and the voluntary sector. Potential contractors and suppliers are required to provide information on their approach to Equality and Inclusion and evidence that they have relevant systems in place for legal compliance.

In simple terms the aim of the Council's procurement process is to ensure that council contractors represent all business sectors/communities within Cheshire East, that they all have an equality agenda, and that contractors demonstrate and implement their agenda through policies, statements and actions.

The Council will consider Positive Action and Reasonable Adjustments as a way of promoting and attaining a more diverse contractor base.

5. Partnerships

All partnership working arrangements that the Council participates in will be subject to EIA to ensure that there are no adverse impacts on a particular community as a result of the partnership activity or governance arrangements.

6. Monitoring

Cheshire East Council has a legal duty to ensure that its services and employment are provided fairly, but without effective equality monitoring the Council will not know whether its equality policies are working. Equality monitoring can help all services to ensure that they are reaching and

offering equality of opportunity to all individuals and groups, and can help us to make changes based on facts and not assumptions. To achieve these obligations the Council has adopted the following to ensure monitoring is captured:

6.1 Three Year Single Equality and Inclusion Scheme Action Plan

Equality and Inclusion Groups and Teams will monitor the overall progress of actions and report on an annual basis, through the **Cheshire East Equality and Inclusion Annual Conference** where achievements, opportunities, outcomes and development will be presented to Members, Partners, Stakeholders, and Employees, Business Sector, Communities and their support groups. Opportunities for consultation and feedback will assist in measuring the levels of success against actions and timeframes.

6.2 Service Standards and Performance Management

We want to deliver services to a clear standard. Performance indicators measure the achievement of these standards. Performance indicators also allow us to see how we compare with others and identify areas that require improvement.

The Council's *workforce profile data at 31/03/2010 shows that performance is good in some areas and very poor in others. The Council employs 6,650 non schools staff, of this 1.22% are from ethnic minority groups but only 0.88% are represented in the top 5% of earners. Employees with a disability make up 0.98% of the workforce with 0.57% represented in the top 5% of earners. Encouragingly women make up 53.42% of the top 5% of earners. This information identifies the key areas for improvement in workforce representation, and is monitored by the Corporate Management Team and Cabinet each quarter. Actions have been included in the Action Plan to improve the diversity of the Council's workforce.

**The data is that which is currently available on the Council's workforce profile, but it should be noted that there are significant information gaps in the profile due to the amalgamation of workforce information from the previous constituent authorities. A key action in the attached Action Plan has been developed to ensure that the workforce profile information is accurate for Cheshire East Council.*

6.3 Equality Impact Assessments

Issues arising from Equality Impact Assessments feed into the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan and are monitored regularly by the Equality Team and by (FIG) on a quarterly basis.

6.4 Equality Monitoring

This guidance provides best practice advice with regards to the monitoring of Cheshire East's employees and customers to ensure everyone has opportunity and inclusion in relation to employment and access to services. Equality monitoring also applies to businesses and other service providers seeking to work in partnership with the Council.

It is becoming increasingly important for us to monitor who our customers are, and to find out why certain people are not using our services. If we know who our customers are, we will know if for example black and minority ethnic people, disabled people, older people, people belonging to different religions, and people of different sexual orientations are using our services and equally importantly if they are not.

Equality monitoring in employment enables us to ensure that our workforce reflects the diversity of Cheshire East and highlights areas for improvement when it does not. In relation to procurement equality monitoring enables us to ensure that contracts are delivered in a way that promotes opportunity for all providers.

By collecting monitoring information the Council is able to provide evidence that we are reaching the people that need our services. This will enable us to set realistic targets based on factual data, for example, how we are going to tackle under-representation and inequalities through service and/or equality action plans.

6.5 Complaints

The Council takes all complaints seriously. If anyone feels that the Council has failed to implement the Equality Policy in the service they receive, a complaints procedure is available and can be obtained by contacting the Council. A complaint can be made in a number of ways.

- Visit our website www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/customerfeedback
- Call us on 0300 123 5038
- Email us at letusknow@cheshireeast.gov.uk
- Complete the 'Let Us Know' form
- Write to us at: Let us Know, Customer Relations Team, Cheshire East Council, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach, CW11 1HZ
- Call and see us at any of our Customer Service Centres
- Fax us on 01625 504191

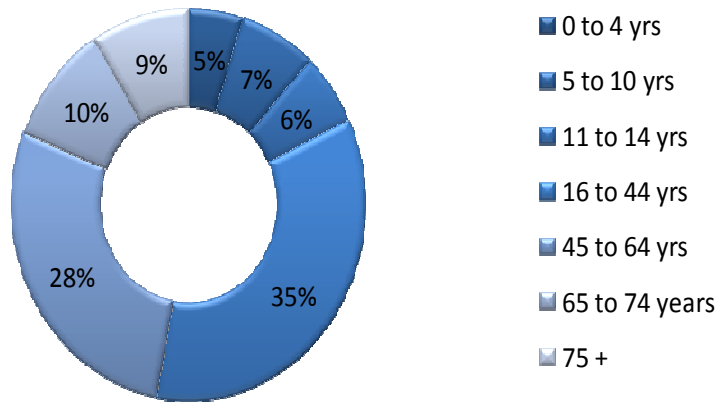
6.6 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment JSNA

Cheshire East's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment is a shared statement on the health and social care needs of people living in Cheshire East which the Council and Primary Care Trust have a legal duty to undertake, and use to develop and improve services.

The Joint Needs Assessment pulls together a range of needs assessment, and qualitative and quantitative data within a more joined up framework for commissioners to utilise, to develop and improve services. It is also a source of information for the local community and 3rd Sector organisations to find out more about health and social care.

7. What we know about our Communities

Cheshire East Population by broad age groups



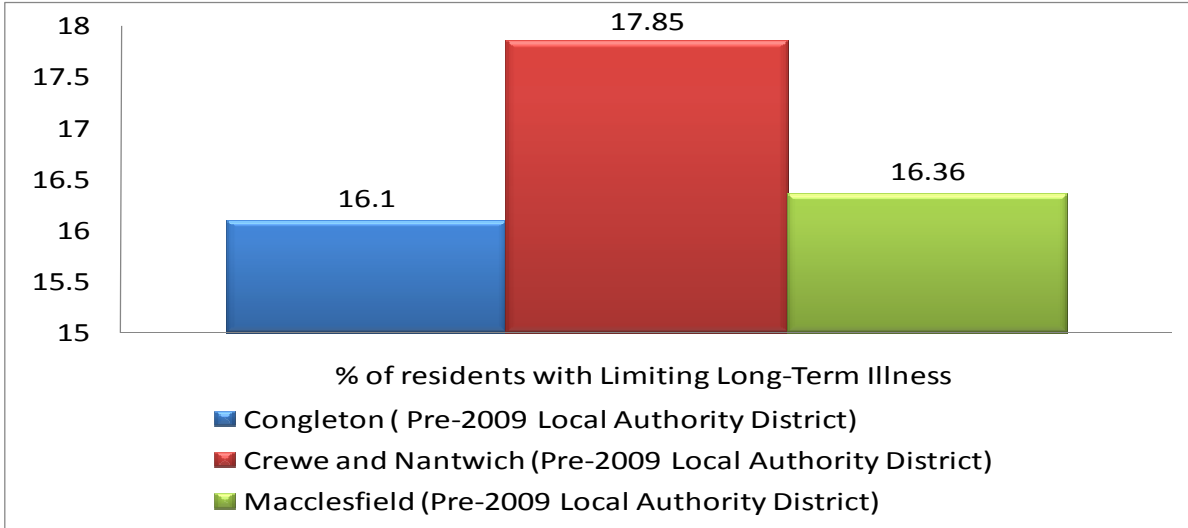
Age profile: 4% of our residents are aged 16-18, 6% are in the 19-24 age group, 33% are between 25 and 49, and 17% are between 50 and retirement age (male 65/ female 60). The other 40% are either 0-15 year-olds (18%) or of retirement age (22%).

Cheshire East has an age structure slightly older than that of England and Wales and has an aging population. 17% of the population were over 65 at the time of the 2001 Census. This had risen to 18% in 2007 and is forecast to reach 26% by 2026. (Cheshire East Population Forecasts).

The number of older people (aged 65+) has increased by 20% from around 54,200 in 1991 to 64,800 in 2007. The increase was greater in the Congleton area (29%) than in the Crewe & Nantwich (19%) and the Macclesfield area (15%). A higher proportion of older people living in income-deprived households live in the Macclesfield area.

Carers

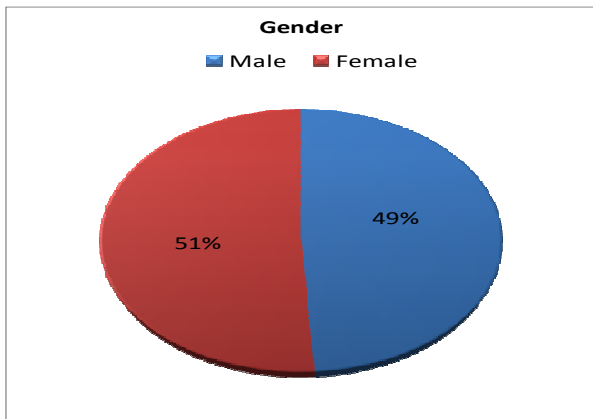
- Carers may be as young as 7 or 8 years, looking after a disabled parent or other siblings.
- Carers can be older people themselves, perhaps in their 80's looking after a partner or friend of similar age.
- Carers come from diverse cultural and religious communities.
- Carers live in diverse geographical areas, from urban towerblocks to remote rural areas.
- Carers have diverse relationships; they may be heterosexual, gay or lesbian.
- Anyone looking after a person with an illness or disability, whatever their situation, is considered a carer with equal rights to help, support, information and services.
- Every day another 5.5 thousand people take on a caring responsibility.
- One in eight adults are carers: around six million people!
- There are 5.2 million carers in England and Wales.
- Carers save the economy £57 billion per year, an average of £10,000 per carer.
- Over 3 million people juggle care with work.
- 125 million people provide over 50 hours of care per week.
- People providing high levels of care are twice as likely to be permanently sick or disabled.



Disability Profile: 31,600 (14.5%) of residents are disabled. All but 5,700 of these people (2.6% of all working-age residents) have a work-limiting disability.

Just over fourteen percent of the working age population in Cheshire East are disabled. This figure is lower than both the North West (19.6%) and England & Wales (18.2%).

It is also estimated that 21,700 (10.0%) of working-age people are both DDA and “work-limited” disabled (i.e. their disability restricts the sort of work they can do). A further 5,700 (2.6%) are DAA-only disabled and 4,200 (2.0%) are only work-limited



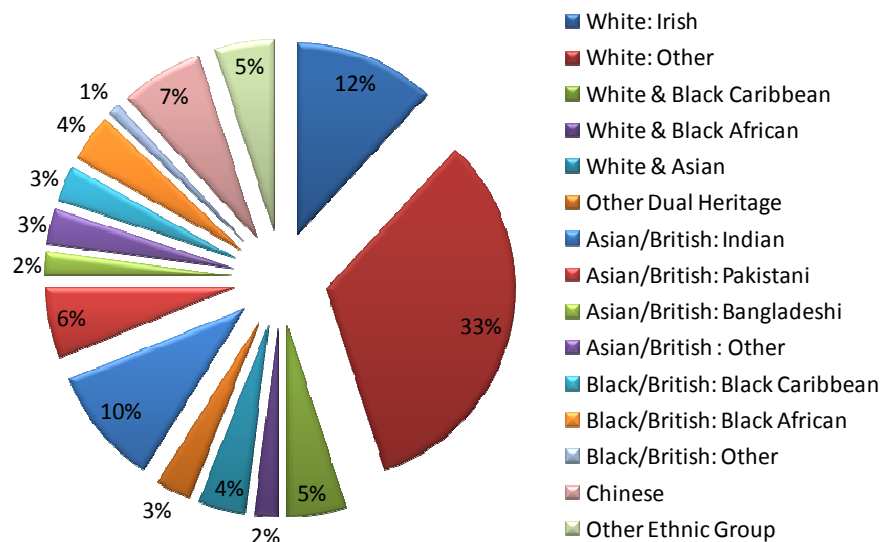
Gender Profile: Just over half (50.9%) of all Cheshire East residents are female. However, among residents of working age, the majority (52.9%) are male.

Gender inequality can be understood in terms of difference in pay between male and female workers overall as a society or within similar designations. It can also be understood by looking at the proportions of both men and women who work in different parts of Cheshire East and/or Service Sectors

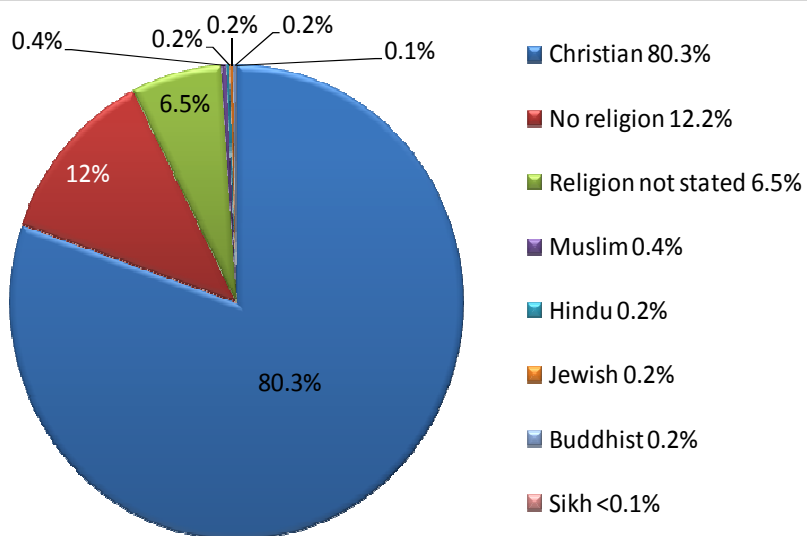
Pregnancy and Maternity matters can also impact on gender equality.

% of non - white British groups in (CE)2007

ONS Ethnicity Population Estimates



Cheshire East's population by Religion 2001 Census



Race Profile: The latest (2007) data suggest that around 13,200 (3.7%) of Cheshire East's residents are from non-white ethnic minority groups. Of these non-white residents, Asians (5,000, or 1.4% of the total population) form the largest group, followed by people of mixed race (3,300, or 0.9%). 2,000 residents (0.6% of the total population) are Black and 2,800 (0.8%) are Chinese or from other non-white groups.

Gypsy Traveller Community: The 2007 Cheshire Partnership Area Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and Related Services Assessment identified an additional requirement of between 37 and 54 pitches across Cheshire East over the period 2006-2016 plus 4 pitches for travelling show people (in the former Congleton area).

Migration: Since the 2004 EU expansion, there has been a large inflow of migrant workers from Eastern Europe (although evidence suggests a sharp decline in these inflows since 2006). There has been a particularly large flow of these migrants – mostly Poles - into Crewe & Nantwich, adding to Crewe's existing Polish community.

Religion and Belief: More than 80% of Cheshire East residents are Christian (Census 2001), higher than the national average. 3,275 people are from the Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim or Sikh faiths (Census 2001), but demographic changes since the last Census are expected to have increased this number.

Immigration from Eastern Europe, particularly Poland in the Crewe area, is expected to have also increased the numbers of Roman Catholics.

Many faith play important and similar roles as third sector and community support groups do in supporting the vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Sexual Orientation

Around six percent of the adult population are estimated to be lesbian, gay or bisexual. Across Cheshire East this equates to 17,700 adults. Between 2006 and 2008 there were 276 civil partnerships across Cheshire.

Research and evidence of LGBT Enterprise and business opportunities in the North West is limited. The LGF report 'Breaking the Cycle' reports that of the 68 registered LGB charities in the UK, only five are based in the North West.

Socio-Economic Disadvantage

Despite good overall quality of life, there are some areas where the experience is different. 6% of our population live in neighbourhoods classified as being in the 20% most deprived nationally, based on the 2007 indices of Multiple Deprivation. The majority of these neighbourhoods are in Crewe town, with the rest in Wilmslow, Macclesfield and Congleton towns.

Factors that influence inequality include:

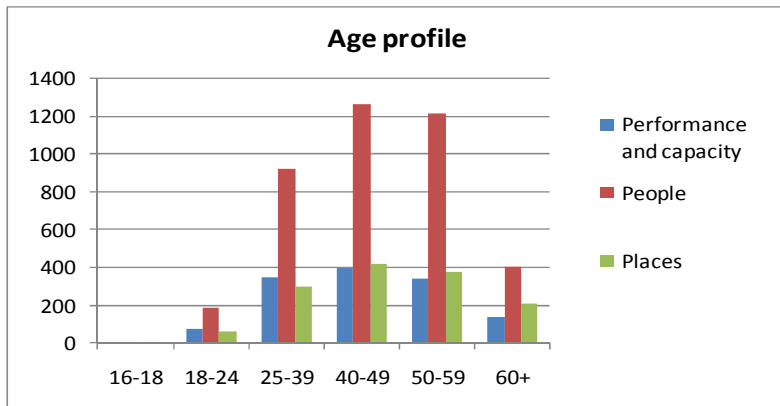
- Living in poverty
- Low income
- Caring responsibilities
- Bring up children on your own
- Refugees and people asking for asylum
- In receipt of benefit
- Homelessness
- Worklessness
- Cannot read & write or read & write well
- No legal status

Transgender People

The number of transsexual people in the North West by the end of 2009 is likely to approximate between 600-700 (and this excludes those not seeking gender recognition or reassignment). This is a conservative estimate in the absence of available data, and the real figure is likely to be higher.

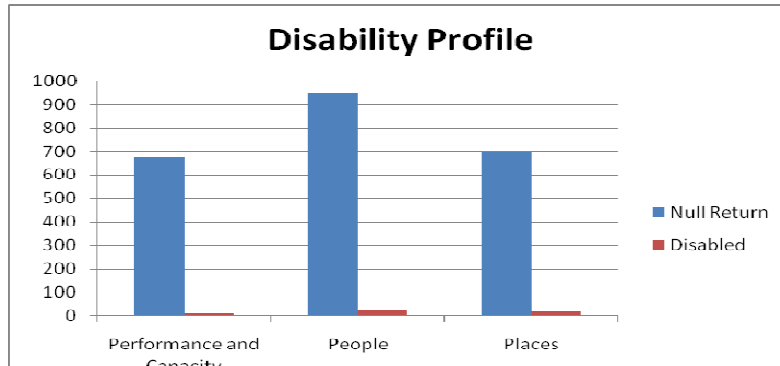
The number of transsexual people in Cheshire is likely to be around 100, assuming that the distribution of transsexual people mirrors the distribution of the population in the North West.

8. What we know about our Workforce



Age Profile

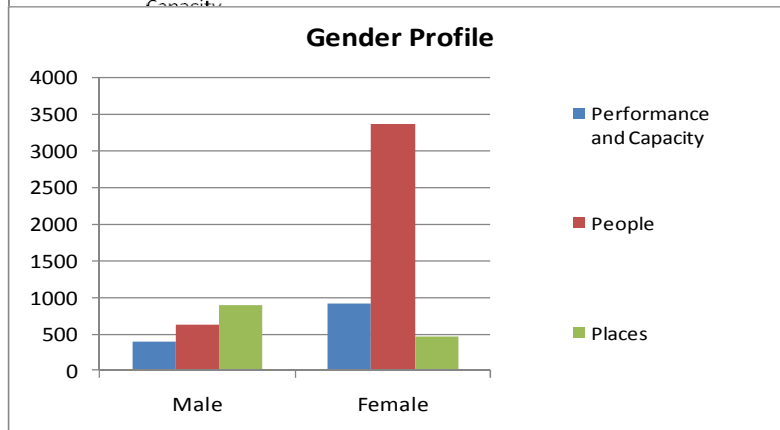
The graph demonstrates that employees between the ages of 25 - 49 represent 3,634 of the total workforce or 54.6%. This is proportionately higher than the 33% of 25 – 49 working age group of Cheshire East. Good data collection/intelligence and analysis will determine whether this may be at the detriment to the younger and older people of Cheshire East seeking employment within the Council.



Disability Profile

Despite displaying the Disability Two Tick symbol and committing to being a “Mindful Employer” the Council acknowledges the need to dramatically improve representation of this protected characteristic at all levels within Cheshire East Council.

We are also interested in understanding why employee monitoring is returning such high null responses when information about disability is requested and why disability is not proportionally represented in Cheshire East Council.

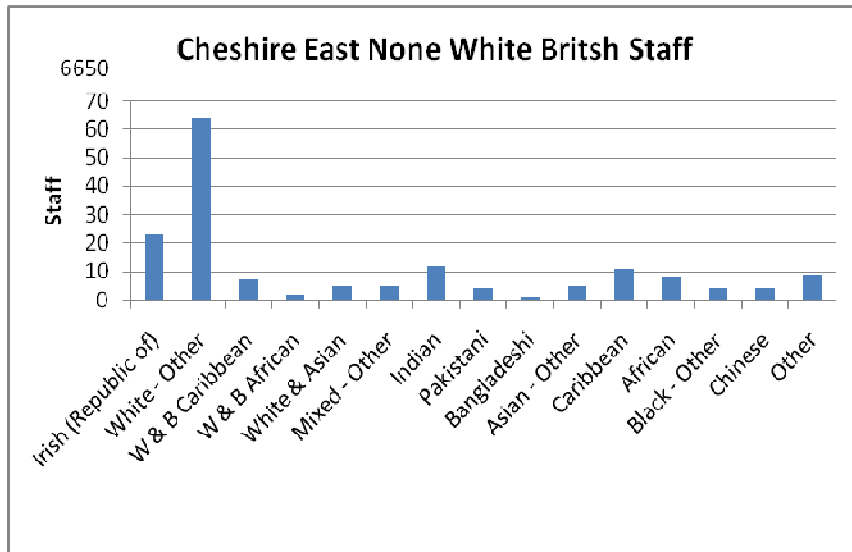


Gender Profile

Gender inequality can be understood in terms of difference in pay between male and female workers overall as a society or within similar designations. It can also be understood by looking at the proportions of both men and women who work in different parts of the country.

This graph demonstrates a high female presence within Cheshire East Council. There is also a significant female presence in Cheshire East Council top earners with 53.42%.

A gender profile by Service/Department will establish if this figure percentage is representative and proportionate throughout the Council.



Race Profile

Cheshire East Council Workforce Planning Data as at 31st Jan 2010. From this data we can see that 1.22% of the workforce are non-white this is disproportionate to the estimated 3.7% non-white population of Cheshire East.

The largest groups of non British were white Irish and white other. However the null responses which total 5.3% could significantly alter these dynamics. It highlights the importance of complete data collection.

Carers, Religion and Belief, Sexual Orientation, Transgender,

The Council is committed to developing a greater understanding of these groups, their differing needs and requirements in terms of achieving equality of opportunity either during or seeking employment with Cheshire East Council.

9. Conclusion

Cheshire East Council aspires to become an inclusive council and is seen to be putting the principles of equality and inclusion into practice. The information we have attained will enable the Council to:

- Identify gaps in data collection.
- Establish the purpose and aims of our policies, services or functions.
- Consider any information, data or research that is already available in relation to equalities and what this tells us.
- Make an assessment of the impact or effects on different Communities
- Consider whether there is anything which could be done to remove any adverse impact or effects, or to further promote equality, social inclusion or community cohesion
- Consult those affected and their support framework, for their views and ideas
- Identify any change and/or decide whether to proceed with any new policy, procedures, proposals, or changes to services
- Decide how to best monitor and review policies, services and functions and put forward proposals for any changes
- Where necessary, add the main equality objectives to service plans, action plans etc

- **Formulate an Action Plan to address inequalities, remedy data gaps, improve service delivery, community cohesion and delivery of the corporate objective “ inclusion for all”**
- Write up assessments, outcomes and publish these on the Council’s website.

Impact Assessment

This policy has been reviewed in accordance with Equalities Legislation on race, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, faith and belief and other protected characteristics.

Review and Assessment

This Equality Policy/Scheme may be amended by Cheshire East Council at any time in order to take into account changes in legislation and best practice.

Advice and guidance on the operation of this policy is available. For further information and advice on the implementation of the policy, or if this publication is required in an alternative format (for example, large type or electronically) please contact the Equality Team tel: 01270 685901 or email: equalityandinclusion@cheshireeast.gov.uk

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Co Policy Authors: Carol Haydon, Granville Thelwell
Date Last Reviewed: Monday, August 23, 2010