

Chesterfield Borough Council Position Statement

Public Sector Equality Duty

31st January 2012

How we decided what data to publish about our services and workforce

In deciding which services to publish information about, Chesterfield Borough Council, Bolsover District Council and North East Derbyshire District Council developed a joined up approach. We felt that this would make it easier for us and other organisations to compare information across the North Eastern Derbyshire area.

Guidance produced in December 2011 by the Equality and Human Rights Commission advises that Councils should consider the following when deciding what to publish data about:

“When publishing information, consider providing relevant, proportionate information which is broad enough to give a full picture of performance across your functions and that demonstrates how you have used this information to have due regard to all three aims of the duty, for all relevant protected characteristics.

Your information will usually fall into two main categories:

*1) **information to identify equality issues.** Examples of this include equality monitoring information about employees or service users, information about the effect of your activities on people with different protected characteristics or any engagement you may have carried out.*

*2) **information about steps taken to have due regard** to the aims of the general equality duty. For example, any records you have about how you had due regard in making certain decisions, information that was considered in that decision-making (including engagement), consideration of steps to mitigate adverse impacts, or details of policies to address equality concerns.”¹*

We collectively decided to publish information about the following services which have the greatest impact on the public, and are therefore most relevant:

- Housing Services, including: Private Sector Housing, Home Improvement Agency, Housing Operations, Housing Solutions Centre, Homelessness, Services for Vulnerable People, Neighbourhood Management
- Planning
- Leisure facilities and sports development
- Street cleaning, grounds maintenance and parks and open spaces
- Tourist Information Centre
- Arts and markets
- Cultural facilities (eg. Museum, Pomegranate Theatre)

¹ Equality information and the equality duty: A guide for public authorities, Equality and Human Rights Commission, (2011)

- Licensing
- Waste and recycling
- Community Forums
- Community Safety
- Our Website
- Customer Services and Revenues
- Complaints
- Workforce profile
- Councillors profile

We also discussed this with Links CVS and Chesterfield Law Centre to make sure they agreed with our approach.

In addition, we decided to publish our Equality Impact Assessments so that we could show how we have due regard to the aims of the general equality duty when we make decisions about our services and policies.

How we plan to address the gaps in our information

We are addressing any gaps in information which were found during the process of collating our information using a gap action plan. A summary of the actions we intend to take is included in the 'Information about CBC policies and services' table at <http://cbci.cbc.local/default.aspx?CATID=1281>. Implementing this action plan will help us to meet the aims of the general equality duty.

Citizens' Panel

Some of the information used to demonstrate that CBC is meeting the aims of the general equality duty has been collected via the Citizens' Panel. The Citizens' Panels in Derbyshire are operated as a partnership between Derbyshire County Council and the District and Borough Councils. Panel members are recruited by a postal questionnaire, and are asked to take part in regular surveys and focus groups. The county council has responsibility for running two surveys a year and the district or borough councils may also run two surveys a year.

There are eight district based panels in Derbyshire, with 1000 residents on each panel. This creates a county panel of 8000 residents. Previously, newly recruited panel members were not asked to disclose their religion or sexual orientation. However, as the panel is refreshed on a rolling basis, newly recruited panel members are asked to disclose this information, and we are developing a full set of information about our members. Following the release of Census information in 2012, further refreshing of the panel will take place to ensure membership is reflective of the communities, and this will also enable us to capture any missing information.

Sensitive Information

CBC does not routinely ask people under 18 years for information about their sexual orientation, therefore, any consultation which is targeted at younger groups will not include this within the equalities monitoring. CBC is beginning to collect information about the sexual orientation of the workforce; however, we understand that not everybody wishes to disclose this information to their employer. According to

Stonewall, the Department of Trade and Industry uses a 'reasonable' estimate of 5-7% of the population are lesbian, gay or bisexual. This would mean that around 7035 people in the Borough are lesbian, gay or bisexual. (Chesterfield has an estimated population of 100,500 [2009, ONS Mid Year Population Estimates.]

We understand that transgender employees and members of the public may not wish to disclose this information to their employer/Council. Therefore, CBC is part of the Derbyshire Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Forum which brings together individuals, community groups, organisations and businesses together in order to raise the profile and provide solutions to the issues and needs of our LGB&T community. The forum is an opportunity to learn from experiences and share best practice as service providers and employers. We are also a partner in delivering the Derbyshire LGB&T Forum's Action Plan.

Where response rates to questionnaires are low and it would be possible to identify individuals, this information is not published. CBC aims to be clear about why we collecting the information and how it will be used in order to create a culture where employees and members of the public feel comfortable to complete monitoring.

Workforce Information

The information published on the CBC website relates to employees of Chesterfield Borough Council, and does not include information about employees working for our private public partners, for example, Kier and arvato.

Our Objectives

We are currently developing an Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy and refreshing our Corporate Plan, which includes the Council's vision, aims and objectives. The Corporate Plan will include the Council's overarching objectives in terms of equality and will be available in April 2012. We will be consulting on the objectives within the Equality and Fairness Strategy in April 2012. Until then, our current Equality Objectives can be found in the existing Corporate Plan (2011-2014).