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City and County of Swansea

Equality and Diversity Review 2011/12 (Year ending March 2012)

Report – Summary Version

If you require this information in a different format, please contact accesstoservices@swansea.gov.uk, telephone 01792 636731 or write to:
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Introduction

This is a summary of the City and County of Swansea's Equality and Diversity Review Report for 2011-12. This is our first review under the new Public Sector Equality Duty and reflects the new reporting regulations for Wales, which were introduced in 2011.

Equality and Diversity Scheme 2009-12 – Final Review

The City & County of Swansea's first Equality and Diversity Scheme was adopted by Council in June 2009. The Scheme's final review report brings the Action Plan to a close and provides details of how the Scheme is being built upon (please visit www.swansea.gov.uk/equality for the full report).

Developing the Strategic Equality Plan (SEP)

This section provides a summary of the work undertaken to develop our first SEP. A more detailed report (entitled 'Engagement Report') has been developed and published at www.swansea.gov.uk/SEP.

The key groups involved in our SEP development were:

Our Equality Stakeholder Group - The group is made up of representatives from local community groups, as well as regional and national groups that represent the interests of people with protected characteristics.

Task and Finish Group - This group is made up of Council officers, representing each of the different service areas.

Equality Act Partnership Group - Facilitated by colleagues from the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), we brought together our equality colleagues from other organisations to share information and experiences.

Collection of Evidence and Equality Information

In response to the requirement for evidence-based Equality Objectives, the Access to Services Team undertook an evidence trawl. To keep such a large task manageable, the Team utilised the 5 key themes of the Equality & Human Rights Commission (EHRC) national report 'How Fair is Wales?' The full report is available at www.swansea.gov.uk/sep.

All service areas were also asked to provide details of the equality information they hold. The information received was collated and summarised into a full report, which is available at www.swansea.gov.uk/sep. We have developed an action plan to ensure that we continue to develop and progress in this area.

Consultation and Engagement

In terms of our consultation and engagement activities, these were varied and demonstrated our efforts to talk to as many people as possible about the draft SEP and Equality Objectives within a very short timescale.

Meetings and presentations - We attended a range of forums and meetings, giving talks and presentations to groups such as:

- Network 50+ Engagement Forum
- Equality Stakeholder meetings

- Councillor Forum
- Community groups.

Formal and informal engagement activities - We did our best to involve as many people as possible via:

- A web-based survey
- Informal drop-in sessions at our Central Library
- Other communication methods – we offered people the opportunity to email or write to us; designed for those who may not have felt comfortable speaking with us in person, attending meetings or completing a web-based survey.

Employment and Training Information

The information currently held on the workforce can be found in the full review report at www.swansea.gov.uk/equality. At the time of writing, work is underway on a staff profile survey, which will be undertaken in 2012/13 in order to improve the equality information we hold on our workforce.

Additional information

This section briefly details some of our other work (relevant to the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty) during 2011-12.

Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) - Work has begun on reviewing and updating our EIA process in response to the new Public Sector Equality Duty. All EIA reports continue to be published at www.swansea.gov.uk/eia.

Our EIA process has also been shared with a number of neighbouring authorities via our regional working. This has been very positive and enables us to continue to assess our process for its effectiveness, while sharing practice and support with others.

Consultation and Engagement - Our revised Consultation and Engagement Strategy was approved by Council this year:
<http://www.swansea.gov.uk/consultation>.

We have also done further work to develop our relationships with local community groups. For example, February 2012 saw the first meeting of the Swansea Bay LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) Forum. The Forum is run by the Council in partnership with South Wales Police and membership includes employees or volunteers from local and national organisations who represent the interests of LGBT citizens.

Harassment and Hate Incidents - The Council's Hate and Harassment Procedure allows victims (or witnesses) to report any incident that has been motivated by prejudice such as race, sexual orientation, age, etc. This is solely a Council procedure and does not include incidents reported to the Police or any other agencies.

There has been a general reduction in reported incidents over the past four years and a slight increase in 2011/12 (with 18 incidents being recorded). The

general reduction over this period could be due to increased awareness of alternative reporting mechanisms and the creation of South Wales Police's Hate Crime Team. We work closely with colleagues in South Wales Police and have developed a joint equality objective based on disability hate crime.

Regional and Partnership work - We initiated and supported the development of a Regional Equality Group, which has included establishing a community of practice to share information between group members and colleagues from further afield.

Regionally, we participated in a piece of work to provide our schools with guidance and templates to assist in the development of their Strategic Equality Plans. We then undertook further work locally to ensure that the templates were as user-friendly as possible for our schools in Swansea. This was followed by a presentation to all head teachers with the offer of support and advice.

Rainbow Mark Accreditation - The Rainbow Mark is an endorsed accreditation from the LGBT Excellence Centre Wales, which recognises that an organisation is meeting statutory requirements and best practice in engaging with the LGBT community.

The accreditation was first awarded to the Chief Executive's Directorate in 2010 and our ongoing commitment was acknowledged when the accreditation was renewed in May 2012.

Work with Older People - Activities have included three Health Social Care & Well Being Forums, one Engagement Forum, a Network 50+ newsletter and an event to mark Older People's Day.

Wales Interpretation & Translation Service (WITS) - We have (since 2011) a co-ordinated approach to all interpretation and translation, including telephone and face-to-face provision. In recent years, we have seen an increasing number of interpretation and translation requests, alongside a growing variety of different languages - during 2011/12 a total of 39 different languages were requested.

Change Fund - Through the Change Fund, 23 large and small voluntary organisations were financially supported to deliver services and projects across the City and County of Swansea. A number of these organisations work with (or represent) the interests of people with protected characteristics. Details are available at <http://www.scvs.org.uk/funding/bscdf.html>.

Concluding comments

As we focus on the year ahead, the first year of our Equality Objectives will be both a challenge and a new experience. We will also continue our work to achieve compliance with the new regulations. We look forward to being able to report on our progress in next year's review, as we complete the first year of our Strategic Equality Plan and assess our performance across the Council.