

**REPORT FOR: PERFORMANCE AND
FINANCESCRUTINY
SUB-COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting: 9 December 2015

Subject: Equality & Diversity Annual Report
2014/15

Responsible Officer: Alex Dewsnap
Divisional Director Strategic
Commissioning

**Scrutiny Lead
Member area:** Performance Lead Member –
Councillor Primesh Patel

Policy Lead Member –
Councillor Stephen Wright

Exempt: No

Wards affected: All

Enclosures: Equality & Diversity Annual Report
2014/15

Corporate Equality & Diversity
Performance Targets 2014/15

2014/15 Equality Data Appendices
Overview

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the key work undertaken in Harrow to meet our Corporate Equality Objectives in 2014/15, our performance against the related targets that we set ourselves, and what areas will be prioritised in 2015/16.

Recommendations:

Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee is asked to:

- Note the progress made against our Corporate Equality Objectives in 2014/15.
- Comment on the priorities selected for 15/16 and the wider approach to equality and diversity set out in the report.
- Suggest any improvements or changes in approach for Equality & Diversity work in Harrow in future.

Section 2 – Report

Introduction

1. Harrow is one of the most ethnically and religiously diverse boroughs in London with people of many different backgrounds and life experiences living side by side. It is the richness of this diversity, and the positive impact that it has on the borough and the community, that helps make Harrow such a great place to live, work and visit. The borough's diversity is something to value and encourage and this report highlights the Council's commitment to maintaining and building on our strengths by ensuring equality and diversity is integral to everything we do.
2. Harrow's diverse population generates a range of needs and expectations all of which the Council has to understand in order to provide appropriate services. As resources become scarcer, it is even more important to understand the community, their needs and aspirations and to be able to provide the right services at the right time

Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty

3. The Equality Act contains a range of rights, powers and obligations to help the drive towards equality. Section 149 of the Act introduced a new Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
4. The PSED covers Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race (this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality) Religion or Belief (includes lack of belief), Sex and Sexual Orientation.
 5. It also applies to Marriage and Civil Partnership but only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination.
 6. The PSED is supported by specific duties which are intended to help public authorities to meet its requirements. Public authorities covered by the specific duties are required to:
 - Publish by the 31st January each year information to demonstrate their compliance with the general equality duty; and
 - Prepare and publish, at least every four years, one or more equality objectives – last published February 2015.

Why the Equality & Diversity Annual Report 2014/15?

7. The Equality & Diversity Annual Report replaces two documents that have been produced annually in recent years, 'Our Harrow, Our Story' and the 'Annual Equalities Progress Report'.
8. The purpose of the annual report is to support effective work planning and ensure accountability to multiple audiences (including the public) through:
 - a. Setting out explicitly how we define success for each of our Corporate Equality Objectives.
 - b. Setting out where we have made progress towards the Objectives and what we need to prioritise in the next year (or more) to meet the Objectives in future.
 - c. Setting out how we have performed against the Equality & Diversity related targets that we set ourselves for 2014/15.
 - d. Publishing equality related datasets as appendices, thereby meeting the requirements of the 'specific duties' set out above.
 - e. Describing and explaining how we approach Equality & Diversity in Harrow, for any interested party to understand and critique.

Financial Implications

All costs are contained within existing budgets.

Performance Issues

Harrow's performance in 2014/15 against the Equality & Diversity related performance targets is contained within the appended reports.

Environmental Impact

There are no direct environmental impacts of this decision.

Risk Management Implications

There are no direct risk management implications of this decision.

Equalities implications

The level of progress made against our Corporate Equality Objectives is set out in the Equality & Diversity Annual Report.

The areas for prioritisation to meet our Corporate Equality Objectives in the future are set out clearly in this report. Making sure that these are the most relevant things to choose and appropriately ambitious has significant equalities implications.

Confidence that we are in a strong position to deliver effectively against the priorities articulated is an important factor in the extent to which we will promote greater equality in future. Exploring this is not a key purpose of the report, but this may be an area that Members will wish to discuss.

Council Priorities

The 'Equality Objectives' support all the Council's Corporate Priorities.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Not required for this report

Ward Councillors notified:	NO
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Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Edward Smith, Policy Officer, 020 8424 7602

Background Papers: None