



North West Leicestershire
District Council

**Comprehensive Equality and
Diversity Policy**

2008 - 2011

Contents

Introduction	page 4
What are our aims?	page 4
How will we deliver our commitment?	page 4
The Equality Standard for Local Government	page 5
Equal Opportunities and the Law	page 6
Social Inclusion and Community Cohesion	page 7
Who is the Equality Policy for?	page 9
Managing conflict and competing demands	page 10
Making the best use of resources	page 11
Accounting for performance and service quality	page 11
Publishing the results	page 12
Assessing existing policies and functions	page 13
Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's)	page 13
Service Delivery	page 14
Employment and Training	page 14
Consultation	page 15
Accessible Communications	page 16
Comments and Complaints	page 17
Procurement	page 17
Equality policies/ Statement:	page 18
Action Plan	page 29
List of Consultees	page 49

Foreword:

As a Council we recognise that discrimination and exclusion can hinder and prevent people from living and contributing fully to the community and society in which they live and work.

This Policy together with our current Race Equality Scheme and Disability Equality Scheme sets out how we together with our partners will work to eliminate discrimination, exclusion and promote equality of opportunity through our role as community leader, service provider, employer and purchaser of goods and services.

By promoting equality, valuing diversity and combating unfair treatment of people based on their race, disability, gender, age, religion/belief or sexual orientation, we aim to improve the quality of life for all who live, work, learn and enjoy leisure time within the district.

This policy contributes to our commitment to developing safer and stronger communities. As well as complying with our legal duties, we have set out improvement actions within the action plan that will make real, positive changes to the communities of the district.

We will keep local people informed of the progress we are making in delivering the Scheme and the action plan through the production of an annual progress report.



Councillor Rowena Holland
Lead Member for Equalities & Diversity



Christine Fisher
Chief Executive

Introduction

This comprehensive document sets out our commitment to creating an environment in which everyone in North West Leicestershire can take a full part in the social, cultural and economic wealth of the district. It also sets out our commitment to promoting equality and diversity among our residents and staff. Our Comprehensive Equality and Diversity Policy link directly to our Council Delivery Plan which sets out our priorities for action to improve the quality of life for everyone living and working within the district. ([insert hyperlink to Council Delivery Plan 2007 – 2010](#))

What are our aims?

We want to see a strong community spirit and good community relations in North West Leicestershire.

We will endeavor to put in place a range of actions to get rid of prejudice, discrimination and victimisation within the communities we serve and our workforce. We will endeavor to develop and promote policies and systems, which make sure that the districts communities and our workforce are not discriminated against or bullied for any reason, including reasons associated with their gender, age, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religious belief.

How will we deliver our commitment?

We have committed ourselves to achieving Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government by March 2009 and are working towards achieving Level 5 by March 2012. We will monitor and review the situation at the end of March 2009. The Equality Standard for Local Government is a nationally - recognised framework, which we will use to measure our progress in achieving equality and diversity on behalf of our community and workforce.

The Council recognises that people may experience discrimination and be disadvantaged for many reasons, including but not limited to:

- race or ethnic origin
- religion or belief
- disability
- age

- gender
- sexual orientation

North West Leicestershire District Council acknowledges that it has a moral obligation as well as a legal duty to meet all statutory and other duties with regard to the equality and diversity strands.

This Comprehensive Equality and Diversity Policy forms the basis of our commitment to equality in access to services, service provision, employment and community leadership. It sets out how the Council will endeavor to go beyond legal legislation and requirements by working in partnership with statutory and voluntary organisations, businesses within the district and residents of the district to drive the equality and diversity agenda in North West Leicestershire. As a Council we will deliver our commitments through developing and strengthening our approach to community engagement and involvement as part of service and policy planning and decision making process.

The Equality Standard for Local Government

In 2006, North West Leicestershire adopted the Equality Standard framework for Local Government. The Standard is designed to enable local authorities to mainstream equalities into service delivery and employment, ensuring that discriminatory barriers preventing equal access to services are identified and removed.

The standard was revised in 2006 following a major review and now encompasses and addresses the six equality strands:

- age,
- disability,
- gender,
- race,
- religion/belief and
- sexual orientation.

There are five levels in the Equality Standard, indicating how advanced the organisation is in achieving continuous improvement in the equalities field. They are:

Level 1 Commitment to a Comprehensive Equality Policy

Level 2 Assessment and consultation

Level 3 Setting equality objectives and targets

Level 4 Information systems and monitoring against targets

Level 5 Achieving and reviewing outcomes

The Council declared that it had achieved Level 2 of the Equality Standard by the end of March 2007. The Council recognises that with the introduction of the National Indicator set from April 2008, the Equality Standard will be retained as a local indicator due to some of the new indicators having are 'direct' equality dimensions, i.e NI 3, the increasing civic participation indicator, being drawn from the qualities PSA as is NI 140, fair treatment by local services etc.

Equal Opportunities and the Law

As a Council we will endeavor to eliminate all discrimination, both direct and indirect, against everyone regardless of individual circumstances, in the promotion of our services and in the employment of our workforce.

This policy has been developed within a framework of existing legislation and codes of practice.

The relevant Acts of Parliament relating to equal opportunities policy have been considered and taken into account within this document (this list is not exhaustive):

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (and 1979 and 1986)
- Race Relations Act 1976 and Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Employment Act 1989
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Working Time Regulations 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Employment Relations Act 1999
- Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Equality Act 2006 (the Gender Equality Duty)

- The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 and
- the contribution of future equalities legislation to provide equal opportunities for everybody.

Social Inclusion and Community Cohesion

Equality and diversity is based not only on ethnicity and race but also on age, disability/ability, religion/belief, gender, sexuality and other factors e.g low income. In many cases it is the obstacles to accessing a service that perpetuates the perception of one group being favoured over another. To bring about social inclusion and community cohesion we need to improve the quality and responsiveness of services to communities, increase resident participation by enhancing the role of community groups, and strengthen and develop local leadership.

At North West Leicestershire, it is recognised that inequality and social exclusion go hand in hand. People and community groups who are excluded often feel lonely, discriminated against, rejected and powerless.

On 14th March 2005 the Executive Board of North West Leicestershire District Council agreed to 'mature the Anti - Poverty Strategy into a Social Inclusion Strategy that acknowledged that poverty is a fundamental cause of social exclusion but also addressed wider issues of social exclusion'. The North West Leicestershire Social Inclusion Strategy, adopted in February 2006 was first developed in response to tackling social exclusion and inequality. Embedded within the strategy is a commitment to:

- Improving access to services for isolated rural communities and for people from priority neighbourhoods and groups at risk of social exclusion;
- Increasing the number of people from priority neighbourhoods and from priority groups who have the confidence, knowledge and skills to participate in community activity;
- Increased participation in decision making by people who live in priority neighbourhoods and from priority groups.

The local government White Paper "Strong and Prosperous Communities", published in October 2006, aims to give local people

and local communities more influence and power to improve their lives. The main principles of the White Paper are to give local people and local communities more influence and power to improve their lives. To enable this to happen within the district of North West Leicestershire, the Council recognises that it needs to change the way it delivers services and work with local partners to respond more flexibly to local needs.

Social inclusion and cohesion is about developing and maintaining positive and productive relationships between the many different communities that make up our society. It also about recognising the impact on society as it changes and responding to it.

The national interpretation of community cohesion (“different communities living parallel lives”) concentrates on cultural and religious differences becoming a cause of tension in a large multicultural urban setting, which results in communities becoming fragmented and increasingly isolated, “living parallel lives”. This in turn is compounded by new migrants who when they arrive in the country gravitate towards districts and areas to live near those who share their background, culture and beliefs.

The latest Community Profile 2005 data for North West Leicestershire, shows that the 2.6% (2,247 persons from a population of 87,461 [mid-year 2003] of the district population are of Black Minority Ethnic (BME) origin.

Figures released by the Department of Works and Pension show that during 2005 - 2006, North West Leicestershire had 470 registrations of National Insurance Numbers to overseas nationals, this figure dropped slightly to 380 during 2006 - 2007.

Overseas Nationals Allocated a National Insurance Number living in North West Leicestershire by Country of Origin, 2004/05 to 2006/07

2004/05		2005/06		2006/07	
Poland	40	Poland	200	Poland	170
Philippines	30	Slovak Rep	40	Slovak Rep	40
				Philippines	30
India	20	Philippines	40	India	20
Slovak Rep	20	South Africa	20	Australia	10
		India	20	Rep of Lithuania	10
				France	10
				South Africa	10
				China Peoples Rep	10
				Czech Rep	10
				Rep of Latvia	10
				Hungary	10
				Rep of Ireland	10
				Nepal	10
				Sri Lanka	10
				Thailand	10
ALL	220	ALL	470	ALL	380

Note: only includes country of origin with more than 10 registrations per year
Source: Department of Works and Pensions

Though these increases are considered be a fairly low percentage in numbers, these increases may bring tensions between different communities and the Council recognises that it needs to respond effectively to this challenge and to take a lead in ensuring that all groups are able to work and live alongside one another and have equal access to its services.

It is a challenging agenda, but promoting and fostering positive equalities and social inclusion must be successful and is vital with regard to the building Stronger and Safer Communities.

Who is the Equality and Diversity Policy for?

This Comprehensive Equality and Diversity Policy is a public statement of our policy and social justice position. Specifically as a Council, we confirm that equality and diversity is at the core of all that

we do, and that we will work positively and consistently to achieve the commitments within this document.

All Council Members, Council employees and other partners or organisation's working or acting on behalf of the Council are responsible for the implementation of the policy. They have a responsibility to work within the terms of the Comprehensive Equality and Diversity Policy and work towards the elimination of discriminatory attitudes and practices in their working environment and in the services that they provide.

This policy in particular, is targeted at managers, team leaders, Heads of Service and members of the Corporate Leadership Team to assist them to fully meet the aspirations set out in the equality statement and to fully realise the equality objectives of the Council. All supporting documents, codes of practice, legislative information, monitoring and training will be aimed at allowing employees, from members of the Corporate Leadership Team through to front line staff, to fully implement the policy effectively, both in terms of service delivery and employment practice.

Equally, the Council's Equality Statement and Comprehensive Equality and Diversity Policy is of vital importance to the residents who reside and businesses who operate in the district. The statement and policy are a clear sign and statement of the Council's commitment to promoting equality and social inclusion against which the Council can be held accountable.

Managing conflict and competing demands

The Council has a role in emphasising the connections between individuals and the importance of community and collective interests. This means easing tensions and resolving conflicts that may arise between individuals, groups, or communities with different objectives and priorities. It also involves maintaining a focus on agreed priorities in the face of competing demands for resources and being prepared to take difficult decisions, for example, when consensus is not easily reached.

Making the best use of resources

The Council has an important role in ensuring that its financial resources are used effectively, and that risks associated with the allocation of resources are properly managed, from the planning stage through to procurement and delivery of services.

The Council as a two tier authority does not provide all the services delivered within the district. Many of these services are delivered either through other public sector organisation's i.e Leicestershire County Council, Leicestershire and Rutland Primary Care Trust or through local voluntary organisation's.

Accounting for performance and service quality

The Council is accountable to the community for the quality of the services provided and the outcomes achieved. As a Council we will therefore endeavor to ensure that appropriate high service standards are set and that quality assurance and quality control systems are implemented.

The Councils Stronger Corporate Action Team (Stronger CAT) plays a key role in implementing and driving all equality, diversity and social inclusion work across the Council. The membership of the Stronger CAT is drawn up from all the service areas of the Council. These Stronger CAT members act as the Equality and Diversity Leads (champions) for their service area.

Membership of the Stronger CAT:

- Stronger CAT Sponsor - Chief Executive
- Neighbourhoods Manager – Project Manager
- Head of Policy and Performance
- Head of Neighbourhoods and Communities
- Policy and Performance Officer
- Commercial Services Manager
- Performance and Business Support Manager
- Senior Human Resources Advisor
- Sustainability Team Leader
- Business Development Manager

The Stronger CAT has the following objectives for 2008 onwards:

- Enhanced level of service delivery in priority neighbourhoods through involvement with Neighbourhood Action Teams and Neighbourhood Forums.
- Improved service delivery for the priority target groups of gypsies and travellers, disabled people and people with mental health difficulties
- Improved service delivery through the completion of Service Equality Impact Assessments in identified priority service areas (this includes completing EIA's retrospectively for previous years)

Publishing the results

We recognise the importance of not only communicating our clear commitment to equality, diversity and social inclusion but also the importance of keeping local people regularly informed of the progress being made and the outcomes being achieved. This includes opportunities for local people to take part in this work and help contribute to the improvements that the Council is seeking.

To help keep local people informed we will:

- Share results with designated consultation groups;
- Report publicly to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee every six months on progress with the implementation of our Comprehensive Equality Policy;
- Publish information on our progress in local newspapers, and through "Vision" our council newsletter which is distributed to every household in the district;
- We will also publish information in our staff magazine, "Inner Vision" which goes to every member of staff;
- Produce a report of our progress against the Equality themes which are contained within the Comprehensive Equalities Action Plan and make this available on the council website and in all council owned buildings;
- Publish information on the Council website about the Council's work to progress its overall equalities agenda;
- Ensure our reception centers are able to provide leaflets, documents on Council services and information on new initiatives in community languages upon request;
- Results of the Equality Impact Assessment's (EIA's) undertaken

will be published on the Council's Internet and Intranet website, with full details of the EIA's being provided upon request.

Assessing existing policies and functions

Building on the statutory requirement focused on addressing inequalities, the Council has decided that all current key equalities strands will be addressed through the Equality Impact Assessment process. These are Gender, Ethnicity, Disability, Age, Religious Belief and Sexual Orientation and "other categories" i.e priority neighbourhoods, poverty. NWLeics took the decision to incorporate the category of "others" within the assessments as it recognises that there could be additional factors could have significant impact on how services and policies may be delivered.

Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's)

An Equality Impact Assessment is an analysis of a service or policy to ensure that it is appropriate and accessible and does not, however unwittingly or unintentionally, disadvantage or discriminate against any group.

Over-view of the EIA process

The following sets out the five key stages in the overall process:

- 1 Once every three years a "test of relevance" is undertaken of all policies and functions;
- 2 An Equality Impact Assessment is carried out for each policy and function that are rated as "high" in the test of relevance above, and for any new Policies and Functions;
- 3 The Stronger CAT is the officer group responsible for approving, monitoring and evaluate completed EIA's;
- 4 Each completed Equality Impact Assessment will be made available in summary format via the Council's web site, and made available for formal inspection as required. A more detailed version of the impact assessment will be available on request;
- 5 Actions arising from each EIA's will be reflected in the Council's Comprehensive Equality and Diversity Action Plan, and SMART Plans (as appropriate).

Service Delivery

The Council is committed to working towards ensuring that all its customers have equitable access to services they need. In particular, as service providers, it will:

- Ensure that Council services are accessible and equitable;
- Ensure that equality considerations are integrated into all relevant areas of service planning, management and delivery;
- Ensure that information about services is offered in appropriate formats and languages;
- Ensure that the Council's commissioning, purchasing and grants provision policies and procedures are equitable;
- Ensure that the Council's resources and subsidies are targeted to promote equality of access;
- Improve the monitoring of service take-up and complaints;
- Assess the impact of proposed policies and changes to existing policies;
- Improve the Council's awareness and understanding of the needs of different groups in the district through effective community profiling, consultation and involvement;
- Train staff through induction and specific training sessions to ensure that they are aware of the CEP and their own responsibilities, and are able to apply it to their own area of work.

Employment and Training

The Council is committed to all aspects of equal opportunities in employment, including fair employment and equal pay policy. In particular, the Council will:

- Promote opportunities to ensure that the Council's workforce is diverse and representative of the local community;
- Ensure that Council jobs are accessible to people from all sections of the community;
- Ensure that all applicants for posts are aware of our equalities policies and of their right to be treated with dignity and respect;
- Ensure that employees are treated equitably in all areas of employment, including career development, pay, training and promotion;
- Address harassment and bullying in the workplace;

- Improve consultation with staff from the groups covered by the policy;
- Continually review human resource policies to assess their impact on the groups covered by the policy;
- Monitor recruitment, promotion, training, grievances, disciplinary procedures and exit from employment;
- Carry out an Equality Impact Assessment on all proposed new policies, and proposals that significantly change existing policies;
- Work with our Trade Union partners in addressing the Council's goals in equalities.

Consultation

NWLeics recognises the crucial role that all service users and employees play in helping to shape our services and the way they are delivered. Involvement of people, either as a member of a particular community, an employee or as an individual service user is essential in ensuring that services remain responsive and are accessible by all.

Effective consultation is key to promoting equity in the provision of our services. We will continue to use a variety of appropriate consultation methods, such as surveys, questionnaires and focus groups, to ensure that the needs and requirements of service users who may be disadvantaged due to discrimination or social exclusion are properly represented. Consultation is key to ensuring that the Council is proactive in its approach to local democracy.

The Council's Consultation Strategy ([insert link to NWLeics Consultation Strategy](#)) recognises that effective consultation is key to promoting equity in the provision of Council services whilst consulting with customers, service users and stakeholders should form an important part of decision making and service improvement within the Council.

The Council will endeavor to continue to undertake a formal survey of employee satisfaction, opinion and attitudes on a bi-annual basis. The strategy also recognises that specific staff groups can play an important part in assessing the needs and opinions of employees. It will therefore endeavor to bring together and develop appropriate staff focus groups. The Council currently has one existing staff group

at the time of writing this policy; this group focuses on Disability issues.

Accessible Communications

Accessible communications are important in promoting equality in the provision of our services. All new external Council documents and leaflets now display an “Equality - inclusion of availability” statement. This commits us to providing information on request in a number of different formats or community languages, or even going through a document personally with someone to help them understand. Alternative formats also include large print, Braille and audio.

We will ensure that public meetings and events are accessible. This will include providing, upon request, an alternative format for written documents, hearing enhancement systems, level access, accessible toilets, adequate emergency exit procedures and where feasible transport to and from the venue.

We will endeavor to provide Interpreters (includes sign language interpreters) where we have received prior notification that these are required. Invitations and publicity for all such events will clearly state the appropriate booking systems to request any facilities or services required.

To ensure that we provide and deliver a high quality Interpretation and Translation service, we have developed a Corporate Translation and Interpretation Guidance for our officer’s use.

(NWLeics Translation and Interpretation Guidance:

<http://www.nwleics.gov.uk/equalities%5Fand%5Fdiversity/>)

Our web-site “NWLeicestershire Online” is reviewed and scrutinised annually by a number of government associated agencies and organisation’s for accessibility and usability. In the last report from the Society of Information Technology Management(www.socitm.gov.uk) the Council’s web site was awarded a very favourable score of 4 out of 5 for usability, accessibility, information content and currency .

The Royal National Institute of Blind People (www.rnib.org.uk) report has brought a number of accessibility issues to our attention which the website manager will be addressing over the coming year. The Council recognises that it needs to build on and maintain the high

standards set by the RNIB and is looking to provide an alternative electronic method of communicating the contents of the Council's web-site for those residents who are without hearing or sight.

Comments and Complaints

We will encourage customer comments regarding our services and maintain clear, transparent, fair and sensitive procedures for dealing with complaints. Comments and complaints are encouraged, in that customers are no longer required to formally write to the Council to complain. Instead, any form of communication is accepted as official, be it via email, telephone or face-to-face.

If we receive feedback that any of our services are not being fairly provided we will listen to any criticisms received and act upon them; provide clear information about where, and to whom customers should complain; use complaints to tackle inequalities and improve equality awareness in delivering our services.

We adopted and launched our corporate Service Standards; together with our comments and complaints feedback system called "Have your Say" which sets out how to complain in writing, by telephone or email.

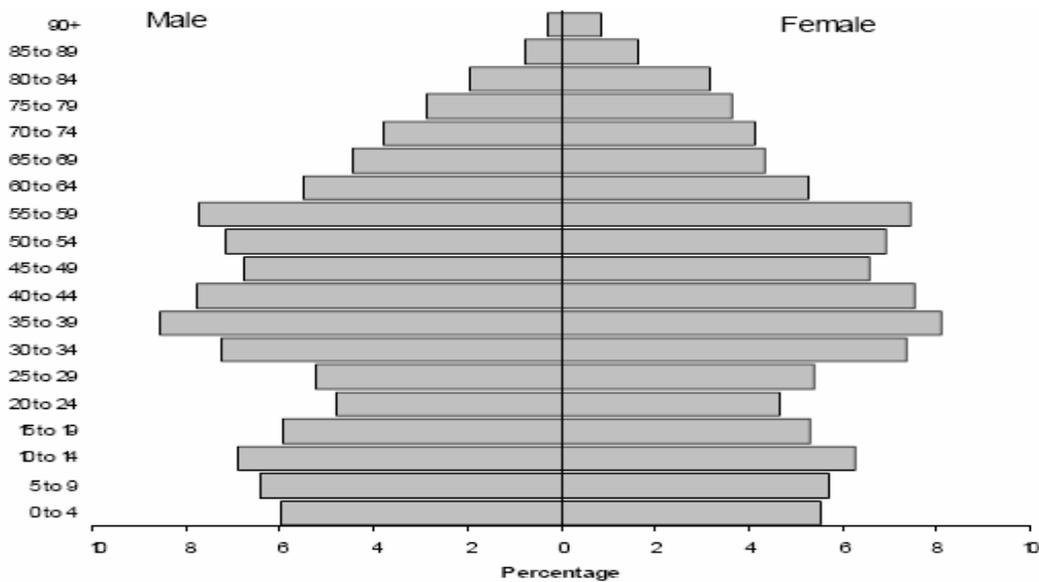
Procurement

The Council's Corporate Procurement Strategy adopted in April 2007, sets out the Council's commitment to promoting social benefits and equality of opportunity for service users, businesses and Council staff alike. To further assist with the delivery of the Procurement strategy, the Council has in place a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire which includes a requirement for Equality compliance

AGE EQUALITY

Ageism is the discrimination against people based on assumptions and stereotypes about their age. Whilst stereotypes are based on 'perceived' notions of an individual's ability and potential e.g people over 50 may be considered to be economically unproductive, less able or willing to change, more difficult to train and a less worthwhile investment.

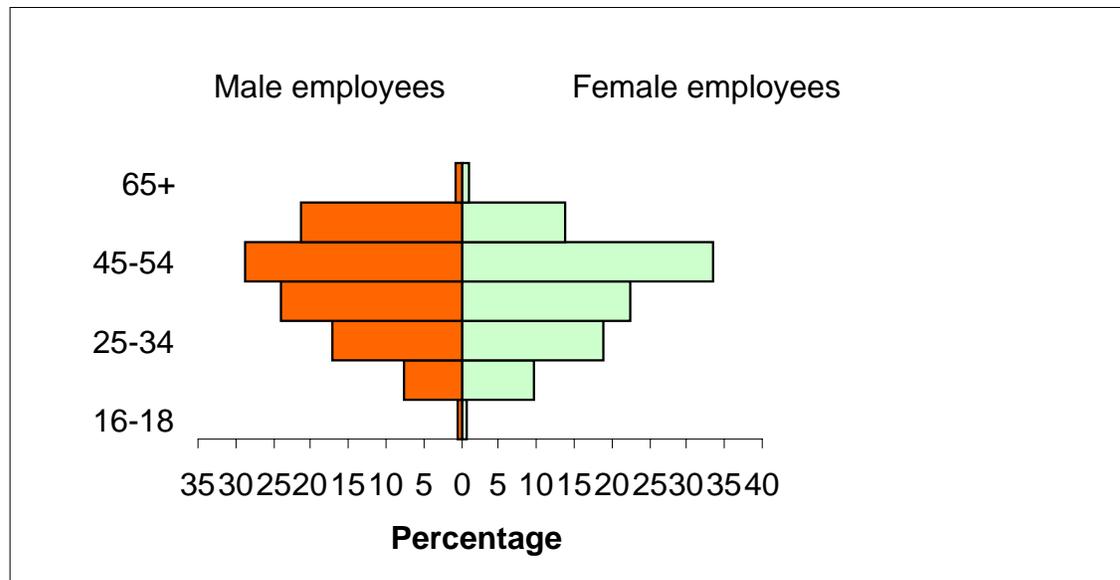
Profile of North West Leicestershire District - 2003



Source: ONS

Council Employees – April 2007 to November 2007

North West Leicestershire council employee numbers can be broken down as follows:



Ageism can be directed at individuals of any age, but is often targeted at younger or older people. What is meant by “young” and “old”? Definitions of ‘young’ and ‘old’ tend to change over time according to social, political and economic factors. For example, an individual may be considered ‘too old’ to work by 45, if unemployment levels are high, or a young person may not be considered responsible enough to be offered a good job purely due to their age rather than merit. Acting on negative stereotypes of age leads to discrimination and disadvantage.

The Council will:

- Ensure that services are delivered in a way that takes full account of the rights and needs of all including young and older people;
- Provide services for young people, and older people to meet their particular needs including the provision of targeted services for youth groups and older peoples’ groups;
- Support and encourage initiatives which are set up and run by young people and by older people and which promote social inclusion and equality of opportunity;

- Develop access to decision making arenas that takes account of access needs of young and older people (venues, time, support and formats);
- In policy development, service planning and delivery, the Council will ensure that the people do not receive a different quality of service due to their age;
- Endeavour to comply with EU Employment Directive of 2006 (2000/78/EC), which makes it illegal to discriminate on age in employment and occupation;
- In preparation the Council will work towards ensuring
 - That arbitrary age discrimination is removed and job-related criteria are adopted;
 - That the use of age and age related criteria is challenged (when used) in every aspect of employment and decision-making, for example advertising, short-listing, recruitment, selection for training, career development, promotion, retention and re-training;
- Will work towards ensuring that young people and older people are effectively represented in all consultation that the Council undertakes with the voluntary sector and groups in the community ;
- Will work towards implementing procedures which ensure that young and older people have their views taken into account separately from those of families and carers.

DISABILITY EQUALITY (existing Disability Equality Scheme)

This section consists of the Council's Disability Equality Scheme (DES) which was adopted in July 2007 (prior to the development of this over-arching Comprehensive Equality and Diversity Policy). The DES can be downloaded from the Council's website at:

http://www.nwleics.gov.uk/equalities_and_diversity/

To effectively integrate our DES into this Comprehensive Equality Policy, we will revise and refresh it in line with the timetable agreed for the Comprehensive Equality and Diversity Policy. Improvement actions on disability equality are also included within the Comprehensive Equality and Diversity action plan (found at page xx).

As this Comprehensive Equality and Diversity Policy is the over-arching Equality Policy, once the current councils Disability Equality Scheme expires at the end of March 2010, this section will be further developed and will be the document for reference.

GENDER EQUALITY (includes Transgender)

The Council recognises gender equality in both its workforce and service delivery. It will work to ensure that men and women are represented proportionately at all levels within the workforce, and that service reflects the needs of both genders.

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (1986) and the Equal Pay Act 1970, makes it unlawful to discriminate in employment, and in the provision of goods, facilities or services either by refusing them or by providing them on less favourable terms to one gender or the other (this includes people who have either undergone gender re-assignment or are in the process of).

The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations came into force during 1999. Gender Reassignment is the process, undertaken under medical supervision, to reassign a person's sex by changing physiological or other characteristics. It includes any part of this process.

The regulations, made under the European Communities Act, extend the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 to cover discrimination in employment and vocational training on grounds of gender reassignment. They give a wide definition to 'gender reassignment' that provides protection against discrimination by employers at all stages of the gender reassignment process, including where an individual indicates an intention to start gender reassignment or having undergone gender reassignment.

There is no definition of when sex changes, or any test for when the process can be regarded as complete. This may create problems in determining the scope of genuine occupational qualifications exemptions. But the regulations do provide for leave of absence in the same way as for sickness or injury.

The Council recognises that services should be delivered in a way that takes full recognition of the fact that most women, including Disabled women, still have the greater caring responsibility and are generally the gender which provides unpaid assistance to older people, disabled people and for people who are ill.

The Council will:

- Recognise that women and men can experience sexual harassment and that any council employee who experiences or is subjected to sexual harassment is unacceptable and will be dealt with in accordance with the Councils Disciplinary and Appeals Procedure;
- Recognise that while women have the greater responsibility for childcare and providing unpaid assistance to older people, disabled people and for people who are ill, male employees should also be supported in their responsibilities;
- Ensure that gender equality awareness is included as part of induction training. Where necessary, make additional provision for such training in order to address issues, including the impact of gender inequality on the organisation, policy and activities of the Council, its employees and others acting on its behalf;
- Ensure that all information, publicity and advertising over which the Council has control and/or influence is non-sexist, and uses positive images and language to counteract the effects of sexism and promote gender equality;
- Endeavor to challenge sexist attitudes, structures and practices of external organisation's or partners that the Council works with;
- Endeavor to undertake job evaluations and carry out a pay and grading review as part of that process to develop fair employment and equal pay policies;
- In policy development, service planning and delivery, the Council will ensure that the people who it comes into contact with, do not receive a different quality of service due to their gender.

RACE EQUALITY (existing Race Equality Scheme)

This section consists of the Council's Race Equality Scheme (RES) which was adopted in March 2007 (prior to the development of this over-arching Comprehensive Equality and Diversity Policy). The RES can be downloaded from the Council's website at :

http://www.nwleics.gov.uk/equalities_and_diversity/

To effectively integrate our RES into this Comprehensive Equality and Diversity Policy, we will revise and refresh it in line with the timetable agreed for the Comprehensive Equality and Diversity Policy. Improvement actions on race equality are also included within the Comprehensive Equality and Diversity action plan (found at page 29).

As this Comprehensive Equality and Diversity Policy is the over-arching Equality Policy, once the current councils Race Equality Scheme expires at the end of March 2009, this section will be further developed and will be the document for reference.

RELIGION, BELIEFS AND FAITH

This equality statement recognises that employment and service delivery procedures and practices should not be based on the assumption that everyone is or should belong to a specific faith, religion or belief.

People who follow their chosen religion, belief or faith may face and experience discrimination when trying to gain access to job opportunities, training, education, promotion and mainstream service.

The statement recognises that everyone has the right to follow their own chosen religion, belief or faith and that discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief is unacceptable. There is a need to confront and challenge the effects of discrimination and disadvantage by encouraging the participation of people from differing religions, and faith communities in reviewing, planning and developing services.

The Council recognises that faith communities are not homogenous. Different communities and individuals in the communities have different needs and these needs should not be defined by stereotyping or presumptions.

The Council will:

- Work towards enabling employees at all levels in the workforce to feel safe in being open about their faith, religion or belief systems;
- Take positive steps in conditions of employment to respect and take accounts of the rights of employees to follow the observances of their chosen faith, religion or belief system;
- Make provisions for religious awareness training in existing diversity training courses;
- Endeavour wherever possible to ensure that all information, publicity and advertising over which the council has control and/or influence is non - prejudicial and uses positive images and language to counteract the effects of religious discrimination such as Islamophobia or Anti-Semitism;
- Work with partners through the NWLeics Race and Hate Crime Group to effectively record and respond to and reduce the

number of hate crime incidents against people who belong to a particular religion, belief or faith group within the District;

- In policy development, service planning and delivery, the Council will ensure that people do not receive a different quality of service due to their religion, belief or faith;
- Endeavour to comply with The Human Rights Act 1999 which protects the right of individuals to follow the faith, religion or belief of their choice;
- Endeavour to comply with the EU Employment Directive of 2003 (2000/78/ EC) as this makes it illegal to discriminate on grounds of faith, religion or belief in employment or occupation;
- In preparation the Council will work towards ensuring that religious discrimination is challenged in every aspect of employment and decision-making;
- The Council will also ensure that discrimination against a person because of their faith, religion, or belief will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Harassment and Grievance Policy.

SEXUALITY EQUALITY

This equality statement recognises that employment and service delivery procedures and practices should not be based on the assumption that everyone is or should be heterosexual.

Lesbians, gay men and bisexuals experience discrimination because of attitudes and practices. Lesbians, gay men and bisexual men and women who are open about their sexual identity, and also people who are not open about their sexuality but are assumed to be lesbian, gay or bisexual people, may face discrimination when trying to gain access to job opportunities, training, education, promotion and mainstream service.

The statement recognises that everyone has the right to define their own sexual identity and that discrimination on the grounds of sexual identity is unacceptable. There is a need to confront and challenge the effects of homophobia and disadvantage by encouraging the participation of lesbians, gay men and bisexual people in reviewing, planning and developing services.

NWLeics recognises that the lesbian, gay and bisexual communities are different. That these communities and individuals in the communities have different needs which should not be defined by stereotyping or presumptions.

The Council will:

- Implement improvement actions and work towards enabling lesbian, gay and bisexual employees at all levels in the workforce to feel safe in being open about their sexual identity;
- Take positive steps in conditions of service to take accounts of the rights of lesbian, gay and bisexual employees, including recognition of their needs as partners, having partners, and as parents and carers;
- Ensure that anti-homophobia awareness is included as part of induction training. Where necessary, make additional provision for such training in order to address issues, including the impact of homophobia on the organisation, policy and activities of the Council, its employees and others acting on its behalf;

- Endeavour wherever possible to ensure that all information, publicity and advertising over which the council has control and/or influence is non-homophobic and uses positive images and language to counteract the effects of homophobia and promote equality for lesbians, gay men, bisexual men and women;
- Work with partners through the NWLeics Race and Hate Crime Group to effectively record and respond to and reduce the number of homophobic incidents within the District;
- In policy development, service planning and delivery, the Council will ensure that people do not receive a different quality of service due to their sexuality or sexual orientation;
- Encourage the organisation's it funds to develop and implement lesbian, gay and bisexual equality policies;
- Endeavour to comply with the EU Employment Directive of 2003 (2000/78/ EC) as it makes it illegal to discriminate on grounds of sexuality in employment, plus comply with The Equality Act 2006;
- In preparation the Council will work towards ensuring that homophobic discrimination is challenged in every aspect of employment and decision-making, for example advertising, short-listing, recruitment, selection for training, career development, promotion, retention and re-training;
- The Council will also ensure that discrimination against a person because of their sexual identity (or an assumption about their sexuality) will be dealt in accordance with the Council's Harassment and Grievance Policy.

Comprehensive Equality and Diversity Action Plan

The Equality Standard is split into four main areas, and this action plan has been designed to reflect this:

- 1 Leadership and Corporate Commitment
- 2 Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny
- 3 Service Delivery and Customer Care
- 4 Employment and Training

	Commitments	Responsible Officer	Action required	Evidence	Target/Date	Cross-ref to Equality strands
1. Leadership & Corporate Commitment						
1.1	To implement the Comprehensive Equality and Diversity Policy	Policy and Performance Officer	Prepare Equality and Diversity Policy plus corresponding action plan, and all other elements of the Policy Completion and adoption of Comprehensive Equality and Diversity Policy and action plan by Council	Increased awareness of equality, diversity and social inclusion across the Council	September 2008	ALL

	Commitments	Responsible Officer	Action required	Evidence	Target/Date	Cross-ref to Equality strands
1. Leadership & Corporate Commitment						
1.2	To provide assistance in the implementation of the Policy at a corporate and service level	Stronger CAT members	Guidelines and advice to be developed and disseminated through the Strong CAT	Increased awareness of equality and the implementation of the Comprehensive Equality Scheme	September 2008 and onwards	ALL
1.3	Raise the standard of equality , diversity and social inclusion across the Council	Policy and Performance Officer with Stronger CAT members	Strong CAT and the appropriate Scrutiny Committees to scrutinise our equality work The Policy will be reviewed every 3 years	More effective and responsive equality policy across the Council Revised and current Policy in place Continued updates to the Policy as required by either legislation or as identified	September 2008 and onwards	ALL

	Commitments	Responsible Officer	Action required	Evidence	Target/Date	Cross-ref to Equality strands
1. Leadership & Corporate Commitment						
1.4	BVPI 2a: The level of the Equality Standard for Local Government reached	Policy and Performance Officer	To implement specific actions in line with the standard requirements Undertake annual review and reassessment to check progress towards achieving Level 5 by March 2012	Internal audit and external verification by IDEA at level 3 and Level 5	Level 3 March 2009 Level 4 March 2011 Level 5 March 2012	ALL
1.5	To continue working in partnership with the North West Leicestershire Partnership in Safer Communities in monitoring complaints of	NWL Partnership in Safer Communities with Safer Communities Manager	Roll out of RESPECT action plan Encourage the reporting of hate and race crime Monitor the number of incidents within North West	Performance indicators (NI 23,24) inform future decision-making	Annual Partnership reports	RACE, DISABILITY, GENDER, RELIGION

	Commitments	Responsible Officer	Action required	Evidence	Target/Date	Cross-ref to Equality strands
1. Leadership & Corporate Commitment						
	hate and race crime		Leicestershire annually			
1.6	Monitor and assess the delivery of EIA action plans in service SMART Plans and Directorate plans	Stronger CAT with Heads of Service	EIAs to be undertaken as per planned programme Appropriate and relevant action plans to be developed Summary of EIA's to be developed and made public	Actions identified through the EIA process are incorporated within individual service SMART Plans. Evidence of changes to service delivery documented Summary of EIAs to be made public	In line with the Service and financial planning cycle	ALL
1.7	NWLeics Equality and Diversity Monitoring toolkit implemented	Policy and Performance Officer with Heads of Service	Equality and Diversity toolkit developed and adopted by the Corporate Leadership Team	Corporate guidelines for collecting equality and diversity data are in place	May 2008	ALL

	Commitments	Responsible Officer	Action required	Evidence	Target/Date	Cross-ref to Equality strands
1. Leadership & Corporate Commitment						
			<p>All Services to review current monitoring systems and take appropriate corrective actions</p> <p>Corporate guidelines to be implemented when undertaking service surveys</p>	<p>Customer profile of service user known Equality Impact Assessments and actions are robust</p> <p>Evidence of changes to service delivery documented</p>		

	Commitments	Responsible Officer	Action required	Evidence	Target/Date	Cross-ref to Equality strands
2. Consultation, Community Development & Scrutiny						
2.1	BVPI 3: The % of citizens satisfied with the overall service provided by the local authority.	Head of Communication	Customer satisfaction survey	Internal audit of annual BVPI outturn	March 2008 and every two years thereafter	ALL
2.2	BVPI 4: The % of complainants satisfied with the handling of their complaint	Head of Communication	Customer satisfaction survey	Internal audit of annual BVPI outturn	March 2008 and two years thereafter	ALL
2.3	NI 1: Percentage of people who feel that NWLeics is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together	TBC	Undertake Customer satisfaction survey as per DCLG requirements	Bi-annual survey outturns	March 2009 and every two years thereafter	ALL

	Commitments	Responsible Officer	Action required	Evidence	Target/Date	Cross-ref to Equality strands
2. Consultation, Community Development & Scrutiny						
2.4	NI 23: The percentage of people who feel that people in their area treat them with respect and consideration	TBC	Undertake Customer satisfaction survey as per DCLG requirements	Bi-annual survey outturns	March 2009 and every two years thereafter	ALL
2.5	Develop specific groups to support the equality and diversity agenda	Human Resources Manager, Head of Communications, with Policy and Performance Officer	Review and re-energise the Staff Disability Focus Group Identify and bring together appropriate council staff as required Work with Partners to	Active and robust group in place Groups identified and used as a "sounding board" for policy / service development Groups identified and	April 2008 and on-going	DISABILITY AGE, RACE, SEXUAL ORIENTATION

	Commitments	Responsible Officer	Action required	Evidence	Target/Date	Cross-ref to Equality strands
2. Consultation, Community Development & Scrutiny						
			<p>identify and bring together appropriate community group as required</p> <p>Work with partners to develop external scrutiny group to scrutinise and monitor our equality and diversity work</p>	<p>used as a “sounding board” for policy / service development</p> <p>External scrutiny and monitoring undertaken of our equality and diversity work</p>		

	Commitments	Responsible Officer	Action required	Evidence	Target/Date	Cross-ref to Equality strands
3. Service Delivery & Customer Care						
3.1	BV 2b: The quality of the authority's Race Equality Scheme and improvement	Human Resources Manager	To implement actions which provide a high quality response to the race equality duty and improve year on year	Validation by Internal audit	March 2009	RACE
3.2	Ensure the Council continues to meet the requirements of the DDA (document M) and Disability Equality Duty	Property Asset Manager	Set up Asset Management Group Review and consolidate previously undertaken DDA audits of Council offices & conduct where required further assessment of DDA compliance	Assessment completed and reported to Corporate Leadership Team Detailed action plan developed to deliver improvements Yearly outturn against target	L/F/20 (BVPI 156): March 2009 – 66% March 2010 – 100%	DISABILITY

	Commitments	Responsible Officer	Action required	Evidence	Target/Date	Cross-ref to Equality strands
3. Service Delivery & Customer Care						
				set		
3.3	Outreach delivery of services through satellite sites around the district.	Customer Services Manager	Identify with other agencies, notably Police and County Council, opportunities to provide shared customer service facilities across the District	Key services taken to priority neighbourhoods Supports equality and diversity agenda Supports service focus in target areas	March 2009	ALL
3.4	Develop further the channels of communication open to customers to access services	Head of Communications E-Comm's Officer	Explore further use of SMS systems in key areas including housing and with young people	Customers able to access council services more easily using new media and channels	Work on-going	AGE
3.5	Ensure that equality	Procurement and Partnership	Inform and reiterate to major	Equality statements are	As required	RACE, GENDER,

	Commitments	Responsible Officer	Action required	Evidence	Target/Date	Cross-ref to Equality strands
3. Service Delivery & Customer Care						
	objectives are incorporated in procurement arrangements	Manager	contractors and strategic partners of their responsibilities and identify any relevant support needs they may have	considered and written into procurement contracts		DISABILITY
3.6	Ensure that equality objectives are incorporated in “partnership” arrangements – including LSP	All Directors with Heads of Service	Review and amend Terms of Reference/ Governance arrangements to ensure they reflect the Council’s current legal duties	Equality clauses written into contracts	As required	ALL
3.7	Ensure planned programme of impact assessments	All Directors with Policy & Performance Officer	EIA training sessions delivered on a regular basis EIA’s are carried	Number of attendees per session Quarterly target	March 2008 and onwards	ALL

	Commitments	Responsible Officer	Action required	Evidence	Target/Date	Cross-ref to Equality strands
3. Service Delivery & Customer Care						
	are adhered to and undertaken		<p>out as per planned programme</p> <p>EIA action plans monitored by Stronger CAT members</p>	<p>set for completed EIAs achieved corporately</p> <p>Actions identified as a result of EIA's undertaken are delivered as planned</p> <p>Equality targets and objectives are identified and incorporated into service SMART Plans</p>		
3.8	Ensure that each service area has approved and established monitoring and	Stronger CAT with Policy and Performance Officer	Develop and implement the Corporate Equality and Diversity Monitoring	<p>Corporate approach taken to monitoring by services</p> <p>Services better</p>	May 2008	ALL

	Commitments	Responsible Officer	Action required	Evidence	Target/Date	Cross-ref to Equality strands
3. Service Delivery & Customer Care						
	information systems in place		Guidance	aware of impact upon community in service delivery and service planning		
3.9	Making community and council events accessible for disabled people	ALL	Ensure all council run meetings are accessible (include on agenda papers, news briefings by asking people to let us know about special requirements)	Increase in the number of attendees to Council meetings and Council run events	July 2008 and on-going	AGE DISABILITY GENDER RACE
3.10	To develop leisure and cultural activities for older people	Head of Leisure and Culture with Sport & Physical Activity Manager	To undertake an audit of leisure & cultural activities for older people delivered by NWLDC To identify gaps in	Increase in the participation rates by the older community A healthier older community	March 2009 and on-going	AGE, DISABILITY

	Commitments	Responsible Officer	Action required	Evidence	Target/Date	Cross-ref to Equality strands
3. Service Delivery & Customer Care						
			<p>leisure & cultural activity requirements for older people</p> <p>To initiate activities/sessions where possible to increase range of opportunities for participation</p> <p>To promote the range of leisure & cultural opportunities available for older people</p>			
3.11	To listen and act upon the voice of Children & Young people	Childrens Services Co-ordinator	Appoint an elected member youth champion agree Job Description and develop annual work plan	A stronger voice for Children & Young People	July 2008 to March 2009	AGE, DISABILITY

	Commitments	Responsible Officer	Action required	Evidence	Target/Date	Cross-ref to Equality strands
3. Service Delivery & Customer Care						
			<p>Develop formal structure for Youth Council to engage with Positive Futures and Forest Way School</p> <p>Deliver annual Youth Conference</p> <p>Develop 2009/10 Youth Champion and Youth Council work plan</p>			
3.12	To co-ordinate the improvement of council services for migrant families by 2010/11	Head of Neighbourhoods and Communities with Neighbourhoods Manager	<p>To undertake research to identify the nature of migrants families and their needs</p> <p>To relate research</p>	Services for migrant families are accessible and support their identified needs	March 2009	RACE

	Commitments	Responsible Officer	Action required	Evidence	Target/Date	Cross-ref to Equality strands
3. Service Delivery & Customer Care						
			<p>outcomes to key issues for service areas</p> <p>Ensure issues are being picked up by services, CATs and LSP partners</p>			

	Commitments	Responsible Officer	Action required	Evidence	Target/Date	Cross-ref to Equality strands
4. Employment & Training						
4.1	L/HR/02: The percentage of Council employees who meet the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 disability definition.	Human Resources Manager	Action as stated at 4.7	Yearly outturn against target set	March 2009 –4.4% March 2010 – 4.5% March 2011 – 4.8%	DISABILITY
4.2	L/HR/03: The percentage of all Council employees from ethnic minority communities.	Human Resources Manager	A programme of Recruitment and Selection training will rolled out to all Officers Encourage all prospective candidates to complete and return our Equality and Diversity Monitoring forms	Yearly outturn against target set	March 2009 – 1.75% March 2010 – 1.9% March 2011 – 2.2%	RACE

	Commitments	Responsible Officer	Action required	Evidence	Target/Date	Cross-ref to Equality strands
4. Employment & Training						
			Actively encourage under-represented in the groups to apply for posts within the Authority.			
4.3	Provide work placements/experience/training opportunities for children & young people	Senior HR Advisor	Implement work placements etc policy. Review success of first 6 months of operation and change as required	Number of local young people experiencing work of the council	March 2009 and on-going	AGE
4.4	Ensure that all HR policies are appropriate and current	Human Resources Manager	HR policies are reviewed and updated as per HR service SMART Plan	HR policies are fit for purpose	March 2009 and on-going	ALL

	Commitments	Responsible Officer	Action required	Evidence	Target/Date	Cross-ref to Equality strands
4. Employment & Training						
4.5	Develop a programme of equality training to support the CEDP and ensure that the training programme is consistent with the Council's equality schemes	Policy and Performance Officer	Equality training incorporated into induction process Equality and Diversity learning and development training programme developed	All new employees aware of Council Equality Policies	September 2008	ALL
4.6	Demonstrate that the Council continues to be a fair and equal employer	Human Resources Manager	Systematically review data on equalities already captured to identify gaps and weaknesses and create a programme for action	Action plan in place	May 2008 and then annually	DISABILITY, GENDER

	Commitments	Responsible Officer	Action required	Evidence	Target/Date	Cross-ref to Equality strands
4. Employment & Training						
4.7	Maintain 'two ticks' status for the council	Human Resources Manager	Work in partnership with the Disability Employment Advisors (DEAs) to help support disabled employees	The percentage of Council employees who meet the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 disability definition: "Two ticks" retained by council	Annual performance outturn validated by Internal audit Annual report submitted to Disability Employment Advisors	DISABILITY

List of Consultees:

Action Deafness – Leicester
Age Concern Leicestershire & Rutland (Coalville Office)
Audit Commission - Leicestershire
Charnwood Racial Equality Council
Coalville and District Cerebral Palsy Society
East Midlands Housing Association
Elected Members of North West Leicestershire District Council
Employees of North West Leicestershire District Council
Government Office for East Midlands
Leicester Council of Faiths
Leicester Lesbian and Gay Action
Leicester LGB Centre
Leicestershire Centre for Integrated Living
Leicestershire District/ Borough Councils, City and County Council
Leicestershire Equality Forum
Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service
Local Government East Midlands
Mantle Arts, Coalville
Mosaic – Leicester
North West Leicestershire Council for Voluntary Services
North West Leicestershire Opportunities for People with a Disability Group
North West Leicestershire Safer Communities Partnership
Trade Unions of North West Leicestershire District Council