**“What’s it got to do with you?”**

**Equality and Diversity Monitoring**

**Question - What is the Equality Act 2010?**

**Answer** - The Equality Act 2010 brings together over 116 pieces of legislation into one single Act. Combined they make up a new Act that provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance opportunity for all.

**Question - What is Equality Monitoring?**

**Answer** – Equality Monitoring is the process used to collect, store and analyse data about people’s protected characteristics which can be used to:

* Understand who is accessing council services and whether this is representative of the local community;
* Equality monitor performance to identify if there is any difference in experience between different groups;
* Identify trends;
* Highlight possible inequalities or gaps;
* Investigate the underlying causes of inequalities; and
* Seek to put actions in place to redress any unfairness or disadvantage.

**Question - Why is the Council monitoring equality and diversity?**

**Answer** – Monitoring will help us to check whether our policies, procedures or organisational culture potentially discriminates against any underrepresented groups.

Without monitoring there is no reliable way of knowing:

* Whether discrimination is taking place;
* Whether policies to prevent or tackle discrimination are working; and
* When we should amend policy or practice to cater for social change.

Information from equality monitoring will help us to ensure fair access to employment and services. Monitoring can also help us find out why and how discrimination takes place.

**Question - Who is being monitored?**

**Answer** - As a council we monitor:

* Service users;
* Non users;
* Customers; and
* Staff.

The workforce monitoring involves all staff who work for the council.

**Question - What is being monitored?**

**Answer** - As a Local Authority we have a legal obligation under the Equality Act 2010 to monitor customers and staff on their:

* Age
* Disability
* Ethnic Origin (Race)
* Religion, Belief or non-belief
* Gender
* Gender Identity
* Sexual Orientation

After consultation we have decided **not to** monitor gender identity and sexual orientation at this time. As part of our commitment to Equality and Diversity, we take our responsibility for monitoring seriously and believe the Council should meet and exceed, where possible, the minimum legislative requirements.

**Question - What will the Council do with the information? Will it be shared with anyone else?**

**Answer** - Any information that you provide will be treated in complete confidence, held securely on the Council’s systems and will not be shared. In line with the Data Protection Act 1998, any statistical reports that are produced will be anonymous and detail will not be published if it is possible to identify a person. The information will be used to inform workforce planning and employment policies. If you would like to personally discuss any of the aspects raised by our monitoring of the workforce please contact Gwen Forkin Workforce Development Practitioner (0151 443 3759)

Issues raised by enquirers will be kept as confidential; however anecdotal commentary may be used in reports which are generated as a consequence of similar concerns raised by multiple enquiries.

**Question - Do I have to complete the equal opportunities monitoring form?**

**Answer** - We are required by law to ask for equality and diversity information but you are not obliged to provide it. If you do not want to tell us, then you can tick the box to say you “prefer not to say”; however we would encourage you to provide us with this monitoring information to help us to support your needs and to help us to ensure that our services are fair and equitable for all.

**Question -** **Where will the equal opportunities monitoring information be published?**

**Answer** - Equality statistical monitoring information in the form of an annual report will be available on the council’s website.

**Question -** **Where can I find out more information about equality monitoring?**

**Answer** - The Commission for Equality and Human Rights website has more information on this subject. In addition the Stonewall organisation has published a plain English guide to why you should complete equality monitoring forms entitled “What’s it got to do with you?” This guide is available at <http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at_home/3460.asp>

**You want to know what!?**

It can seem nosy but we’re not when we are asking these questions. In the majority of instances we ask you to complete a form yourself rather than asking you the question face to face. These questions are asked of everyone and the equalities information provided will never be used in a personally identifiable way. It will only be used to make services better and target resources in the areas that need it most.

**Stand up and be counted**

It’s quite natural and sensible to be protective of your personal information. But if we don’t know who’s out there we can’t be expected to get it right. If you; our residents and our staff don’t fill in the forms or update the information then you may find no one’s thought about your needs.

When you fill in forms with personally identifiable information on it, sections on race; sexual orientation etc. will always be dealt with separately. Your personal information is about you – the rest is statistics!

The data from the national census, which details the make-up of local communities, is also used to support a better understanding of who is likely to be using the services and the requirements of those people.