

St. Helens Borough Council Equality Monitoring Report 2019/20

**Eliminating discrimination,
harassment and victimisation
Advancing equality of opportunity
Fostering good relations between
people within a diverse community**



St. Helens
Council

The logo for the Equality Framework for Local Government, featuring three blue wavy lines above the text.

EQUALITY
FRAMEWORK
FOR LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
ACHIEVING

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

St. Helens Borough Council publishes Service Equality Monitoring Reports annually. They provide the evidence required by the Specific Public Sector Equality Duty 2011, which requires public bodies to set measurable equality objectives and to publish information about their performance on equality annually.

St. Helens Borough Council has set three measurable equality objectives:

- To ensure Equality Impact Assessments inform 100% of Delegated Executive Decisions and Key Decisions.
- To maintain a 90% achievement rate in service equality access targets for protected characteristics.
- To publish information relating to employees and customers who share protected characteristics.

The Annual Equality Monitoring Report 2018-19 presents an analysis of the following areas:

- Service delivery
- Equality monitoring
- Equality impact assessments
- Employment equality performance
- Equality training
- Support for schools

The Equality Monitoring Report 2019-20 identifies the following key findings:

1. The Council achieved its equality objective on service access with 94% of service equality access targets (44 of 47) being met or improved upon (90% target)
2. The Council achieved its equality objective for to ensure Equality Impact Assessments inform 100% of Delegated Executive Decisions (100% target)
3. Gender Pay Gap analysis demonstrated that there was **no median gender pay gap at St. Helens Borough Council**, during 2020.

These are the key areas for improvement

Service equality targets were not met in 3 service areas. Where this occurs services must develop appropriate actions for improvement.

- Carer Services saw a slight percentage drop in the percentage for Carers from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Groups from 2.04% in 2019 to 1.9%. This is just below the lower acceptable target percentage of 2%.
- Direct Payments and Self-Directed Support saw a slight fall in service users from BAME groups. The percentage fell from 1.99% to 1.95%, this is just below the lower acceptable target percentage of 2%.
- Children Social Care EHAT (Early Help Assessment Tool) has seen a reduction in the percentage of recorded Minority Religions from 0.56% to 0.38%. This is below the lower acceptable target percentage of 0.5%. 'Religion Not Stated' recorded on the EHAT system is unacceptably high at 90%.

The Equalities Officer will work with Service Managers to identify appropriate actions for improving representation and service access.

INTRODUCTION

St. Helens Borough Council publishes Service Equality Monitoring Reports annually. They provide the evidence required annually to demonstrate the Council is complying with the duties of the Equality Act 2010.

Equality Act 2010, Public Sector Duty

The Public Sector Duty of the Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies, in the exercise of their functions and decisions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

This means that public bodies must use appropriate information and carry out sufficient analysis to assess the impact that their decisions, policies, service and contract delivery arrangements will have on people with characteristics protected under the Act. Public bodies must ensure that appropriate steps are taken to address or justify any adverse impact identified.

The Equality Act 2010 identifies nine protected characteristics. They are as follows:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (ethnicity)
- Religion
- Sex (gender)
- Sexual orientation

Comprehensive Equality Policy Objectives

St. Helens Borough Council's Comprehensive Equality Policy Objectives are based on the Public Sector Duty of the Equality Act 2010. They are:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between people within a diverse community

In this way, actions that contribute to the achievement of Corporate Equality Objectives also provide the evidence required to demonstrate that St. Helens Borough Council is meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Equality Act 2010, Specific Duty 2011

The Specific Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies to set measurable equality objectives and to publish information about their performance on equality annually.

Measurable Equality Objectives

St. Helens Borough Council has set three measurable equality objectives:

- To ensure Equality Impact Assessments inform 100% of Delegated Executive Decisions and Key Decisions.
- To maintain a 90% achievement rate in service equality access targets for protected characteristics.
- To publish information relating to employees and customers who share protected characteristics.

Publication of Information to Demonstrate Compliance

Since 2006, St. Helens Borough Council has published Annual Equality Monitoring Reports. These reports contain sufficient information on impact assessment, equality monitoring and outcomes to demonstrate:

- (i) Compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty across Council functions and decisions
- (ii) Progress against measurable equality objectives

Demonstrating compliance with the Public Sector Duty of the Equality Act 2010

Since 2003, St. Helens Borough Council has demonstrated compliance with equality legislation by using the following three mechanisms to implement its equality objectives within its business and management processes.

1. Equality Impact Assessments - must be used to demonstrate that the Council has given “due regard” to the Public Sector Equality Duty within its decision-making, commissioning, employment, procurement and service delivery functions.
2. Equality Monitoring - equality profiles must be used appropriately within consultation, complaints and other monitoring process to demonstrate equality of opportunity in access, quality and outcome across service delivery and employment.
3. Procurement Equality Standard - must be used within the Council’s procurement functions to ensure that contract bidders demonstrate that they give “due regard” to the Public Sector Equality Duty within their employment practices.

St. Helens Borough Council uses training, corporate standards, and one to one support to ensure that staff, management and elected members understand the Comprehensive Equality Policy and their responsibilities.

Areas covered with this report

The Annual Service Equality Monitoring Report is the publication in which St. Helens Council sets out how it complies across its functions with the duties in the Equality Act 2010. It presents an analysis of the following areas:

- Service delivery and achievements
- Equality monitoring
- Equality impact assessments
- Employment equality performance
- Equality training
- Support for schools

SERVICE DELIVERY

St. Helens Borough Council monitors the following elements of service delivery in order to demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Duties of the Equality Act 2010.

- To ensure that services are accessible
- To ensure that service information is accessible to all
- To monitor service delivery, consultation and complaints to determine equality of access, quality and outcome.
- To ensure that staff have relevant training to meet the duties
- To publish the results

Access and Accessibility

The Corporate Customer Care and Accessibility Policy sets out the Council's approach to ensuring high quality, accessible, services that meet the needs and expectations of residents and service users. This policy outlines the key standards for customer contact and how they will be delivered.

Equality Access is taken into account in the Equality Impact Assessment process which looks at reasonable adjustments, access to translation and interpretation etc. to ensure services and information are accessible in relation to the nine protected characteristics (age, sex, gender reassignment, disability, race, sexual orientation, religion, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity) and other relevant areas such as carers, lone parents, people with autism, and people disadvantaged by deprivation.

Actions to address 'access' issues identified through Equality Impact Assessment are integrated into appropriate improvement plans.

The Council has a number of officers with a "disability access" remit within the following service areas: Asset Management, Architects, Building Control, Building Surveyors, and Engineering. These staff ensure fair access for all by incorporating (i) the Equalities Act 2010 access and reasonable adjustment duties, (ii) current Building Regulations, and (iii) associated best practice, within all projects and services.

Physical Access and Accessible Information

- All Council access points are designed to ensure there are no barriers related to disability, age, or language. All staff will be trained and supported to recognise where additional support may be needed and be aware of resources available to provide this.
- Translation and Interpretation arrangements are in place, which cover the needs of Disabled people. These include British Sign Language, Picture Symbols, Large Print, Braille and Audio Tape.
- The Council's Small Venue Hire Guidance includes details of the accessibility of each venue for people with physical and sensory disabilities and restricted mobility.
- Buildings and facilities used in the consultation and scrutiny processes are chosen to meet the needs of all potential users.
- The Council's Contact Centre / One Stop Shop at Wesley House is fully accessible: with accessible signage, wheelchair access, loop hearing aid system, staff who can use British Sign Language, access to translation and interpretation services, Minicom, fax, email, text, website and telephone.

Headline Events Promoting Awareness, Inclusion and Cohesion

Boccia at Queens Park Health and Fitness – May 2019

Queens Park Health and Fitness Centre furthered its credentials as an inclusive leisure centres with the inclusion of a Boccia court. Boccia is a precision ball sport, related to bowls, which is contested at local, national, and international levels by athletes with physical disabilities. It was originally designed to be played by people with cerebral palsy but now includes athletes with other severe disabilities affecting motor skills. In 1984, it became a Paralympic sport and in 2020 has 75 national sport organizations countries worldwide. The Boccia Court (in Green in the photo below), support local players.



Refugee Week Art Exhibition – June 2019

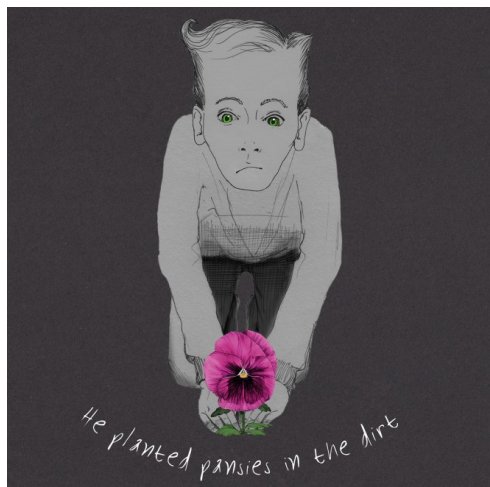
On the 25th June 2019, Moss Bank Library hosted an exhibition of local resident artwork for Refugee Week. All the pieces on view were crafted by residents from the borough's refugee, asylum seeker and resettlement community, and were the outcome of a project designed by artists Claire Weetman and Rebecca Ainsworth that explored and interpreted the St Helens local archives with participating residents, bringing together their experiences and ideas to create a new unique artwork.



HOMOTOPIA PANSY BOY EXHIBITION - – November 2019

As part of the 2019 St Helens Homotopia Festival, St Helens Library Service organised a series of events by artist, writer, and designer, Paul Harfleet. Using a combination of photography, original illustration and drawings made in St Helens' Libraries, Paul Harfleet shares a unique exhibition informed by The Pansy Project, which involves planting pansies at the site of homophobic incidents across the UK. This simple action is designed to operate as a gesture of quiet resistance; some pansies flourish and others wilt in urban hedgerows:

The exhibition included a series of events around the borough libraries such as author Book Reading, the planting of pansies at sites of homophobic incidents, and an artists' talk about Paul's life, work, and his activism.



Parr Library Multi Faith Event – December 2019

On the 5th December 2019 representatives from the local Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Hindu faith communities joined the then Deputy Mayor of St Helens, Paul McQuade and Mayoress Mrs Sally Johnson, to celebrate the bringing together of diverse and different cultures through songs, readings, and refreshments - and the lighting of candles.

Highlights included the lighting the Christmas Tree, carols sung by Holy Spirit RC primary school choir, the birth of Jesus and the importance of Mary in the Quran, and Maoz Tzur and other Hebrew favourites sung after lighting the St Helens Chanukah Menorah.

Faith Leaders included the Reverend Emma Howarth from Mission In The Economy, Rabbi Abel of the Princes Road Synagogue in Liverpool; Islamic scholar and chaplain Imam Sufyan of St Helens Mosque, and the Reverend Gill Hitchen, curate of the Parr Parishes.

Holocaust Memorial Commemorations – January 2020

In late January and early February 2020, St.Helens Council Libraries hosted the 'The Promise' exhibition of Heinz Schloss' paintings from The Jewish Museum London. The exhibition tells the story of Eva Schloss who as a young girl survived internment in Auschwitz. After the war Eva visited the home in which her brother and father had hidden – they had perished tragically only weeks before liberation – and discovered over thirty paintings by her brother hidden beneath the floorboards.

The formal Holocaust Memorial Commemoration ceremony took place in St.Helens Town Hall on Monday 27th January 2020. The keynote presentation 'Stand Together' was given by Steve Baker from the Remembering Srebrenica Trust, which told the history of the Bosnian Muslim genocide in Srebrenica, in 1992. The commemoration included a Candle Lighting Ceremony led by the then Mayor of St Helens Councillor Janet Johnson, and music, poetry, song, and drama performed by students from St Julie's, Rainford Brook Lodge, Sutton Manor, and Rivington Primary Schools, and Cowley International, Haydock High, Mill Green, De La Salle Secondary Schools.

EQUALITY MONITORING

Equality monitoring is used to demonstrate equality of opportunity. Equality of opportunity is defined in terms of achieving a proportionate level of employment or service level access, quality, and outcome for different groups across the strands of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, and religion. It can be measured by monitoring service level access, satisfaction, complaints, or outcomes:

- Equality of access – can I get in?
- Equality of quality – will I be respected as an individual?
- Equality of outcome – will the answer always be no?

The Council’s Corporate Standard for Equality Monitoring ensures the same methods and definitions are being used by all Services when collecting equality information for use within performance and service level monitoring. Key to equality monitoring is the collection of service user equality profiles – age, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation and religion - and the analysis of results by equality profile to identify issues for particular groups.

Equality profiles are integrated within:

- Complaints Process
- Service level equality monitoring reports

Service Level Equality Access Monitoring

The Council undertakes service level equality access monitoring to demonstrate that people have an equal opportunity to access services. Services define an appropriate equality profile of potential service users using census data or other demographic statistics. The equality profile covers relevant age, gender, disability, race, religion and sexual orientation percentages. Each service can then set realistic percentage targets for the proportion of service users they might expect to access their service. These are set for age, gender, race etc., based upon the percentage equality profile of their potential service users. Where the actual percentage equality profile of services users matches the targeted percentage profile, the service can reasonably demonstrate equal opportunity in its service access.

Service Level Equality Access Monitoring Report, March 2019

The following table shows the number of service level equality access targets set for the period April 2019 to March 2020. The targets are broken down into disability, race, gender, and religion.

Corporate Results	Disability	Race	Gender	Religion	Total
Targets not met	0	2	0	1	3
Not met but improving	0	1	0	0	1
Targets Met	5	11	14	13	43
Targets Set	5	14	14	14	47

“Targets met” – the number of targets where the actual percentage of services users matched the target percentage

“Targets not met but improving” - the number of targets where the actual percentage of services users did not match the target percentage but the percentage access for the targeted group did increase.

“Targets not met” – the number of targets where the actual percentage of services users did not match the target percentage and the percentage access for the targeted group did not increase.

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Service Level Equality Access Monitoring Results April 2019 to March 2020

In line with the Specific Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2010, St.Helens Council has set the following Measurable Equality Objective in relation to Service Equality Access Monitoring:

Target: To maintain a 90% achievement rate in service equality access targets for protected characteristics.

In total, 47 “service equality access targets” were set across the Council.

79% (37) of the “service equality access targets” were met.

13% (6) of the “service equality access targets” were not met but protected characteristic representation did move towards the target percentage.

9% (4) of the “service equality access targets” were not met and protected characteristic representation did not move towards the target percentage.

Performance Indicator	Target	Outturn	Comment
To maintain a 90% achievement rate in service equality access targets for protected characteristics	90%	94%	This is a slight improvement to the outturn for 2019/20, which was 91%. The 94% outturn represents 44 out of 47 service equality access targets set.

A total of 3 service equality targets were not met. These covered 3 service areas. Where this occurs services must develop appropriate actions for improvement.

- Direct Payments and Self-Directed Support saw a slight fall in service users from BAME groups. The percentage fell from 1.99% to 1.95%, this is below the lower acceptable target percentage of 2%.

The Council’s Equalities Officer continues to work with Senior Management in Adult Social Care Services to understand if there is any underlying barrier affecting the percentage of BAME accessing this particular service.

- Children Social Care EHAT (Early Help Assessment Tool) has seen a reduction in the percentage of recorded Minority Religions from 0.56% to 0.38%. This is below the lower acceptable target percentage of 0.5%. ‘Religion Not Stated’ recorded on the EHAT system is unacceptably high at 90%.

Children’s social care services have recently undertaken extensive equality training which has improved the recording of race and religion data across all service areas. The Council’s Equalities Officer will continue to work with the Early Help Team and the wider Early Help Partnership to reduce the percentage of “Religion Not Stated”, which will improve the recording of Religion data for this particular area of partnership working.

- Carers Service: Carer Services saw a slight percentage drop in the percentage for Carers from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Groups from 2.04% in 2019 to 1.9%. This is just below the lower acceptable target percentage of 2%.

This is an unusual outcome, which the council will continue to monitor to identify if the results indicate a trend.

Complaints and Satisfaction

Peoples’ Service Department Complaints Report

The Peoples’ Service Department produces an Annual Complaint Report, which include a section on the equality analysis of complaints. The 2019-20 report showed no evidence to indicate that any complaints were linked directly or indirectly to the prohibited conduct of discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Impact Assessment of policies, decisions, and service delivery arrangements

The Council's Corporate Standard for Community Impact Assessment (CIA) includes the Council Equality Impact Assessment tool. This supports officers to demonstrate they have given 'due regard' to the Public Sector Duties of the Equality Act 2010 when designing and developing proposed policies, decisions, commissions, or service delivery arrangement.

"Due regard" means a substantial, rigorous, and open-minded consideration of the duty. "Due regard" requires analysis of relevant materials (including the outcomes of consultation and needs assessments).

The amount of 'due regard', i.e. the degree of consideration or attention demanded, will depend on the circumstances of the proposal. The greater the potential impact, the greater regard must be given. Due regard must therefore entail:

- The collection and consideration of data and information in relation to the people directly and indirectly affected by the decision, policy or proposal;
- Ensuring that the data and information are sufficient to enable the Council to assess whether the decision might amount to prohibited conduct, might impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity, or impact the promotion of good relations, and;
- If there is an impact, proper appreciation of the extent, nature and duration of that impact.

Where a proposal has an adverse effect on, or disproportionately disadvantages people with protected characteristics, the duty requires the Council to take positive steps to mitigate or address that impact. This has to be done before the Council or responsible Members can make a decision or agree a proposal.

Cabinet Key Decisions

St. Helens Borough Council Cabinet is the principal decision-making body of the Council. It is made up of the Leader of the Council and the nine Cabinet Portfolio Holder Members. The Council's business is divided into nine portfolio areas. Portfolio Holders are responsible for portfolio areas, making day-to-day decisions that affect their area of responsibility.

Delegated Executive Decisions

Cabinet delegate some decisions to the relevant Portfolio Holder in conjunction with the appropriate Strategic Directors.

Target: To ensure Equality Impact Assessments inform 100% of Delegated Executive Decisions and Key Decisions

Performance Indicator	Target	Outturn	Comment
To ensure Equality Impact Assessments inform 100% of Key Decisions	100%	100%	Over the Council Year 2019/20 there were 17 Cabinet Key Decisions. Equality implications were considered for all 17, which equates to 100%.
To ensure Equality Impact Assessments inform 100% of Delegated Executive Decisions	100%	100%	Over the Council Year 2019/20 there were 165 Delegated Executive Decisions. The Equality Impact was considered for all decisions, and the Council's Equality Officer was consulted on each one.

Some Good Practice and Service Improvements from Equality Impact Assessment from April 2019 – March 2020 (This is not a complete or exhaustive list)

Healthwatch St Helens

Healthwatch St Helens is the independent Health and Social Care advice and advocacy service commissioned by St Helens Council's. The Service contract was recommissioned in 2019. The Commissioner used an equality impact assessment to improve references to inclusivity, diversity, and accessibility within the contract specification.

The Contract Service Principles stated that Healthwatch would be an 'inclusive' and 'representative' organisation, which finds ways to work with the many different patient and service user representative groups across the borough, including young people, disabled people, older people, people with mental health problems, carers, people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, the Traveller community, people who are isolated and the armed forces community

The Service Delivery section of the contract set explicit accessibility requirements for the service to actively seek the views and experiences of local people, including 'seldom heard' groups, be accessible to all people, delivered at appropriate venues and locations throughout the borough, and to ensure translation and interpretation arrangements are in place.

The Flood Risk Management Strategy

The Flood Risk Management Strategy sets aims to reduce flood risk to allow for better residential, business and infrastructure continuity following a flood event. The impact assessment identified that there were clear equality implications arising out of the Local Flood Response Plan, which is part of the Emergency Plan Processes. This ensured that the Local Flood Response Plan took into account the needs of the following vulnerable groups (i) older people, (ii) disabled people (including people with conditions such as dementia, and learning disabled and autistic people) and (iii) people that may not speak or read English.

Our St Helens Community Grants

Our St Helens' Community Grants were introduced in 2019 to support community and not for profit organisations to deliver projects to support St. Helens' refugees, asylum seekers, and vulnerable migrants, by addressing any of the following themes:

- Language
- Health and Wellbeing
- Communications, Culture and Social Connections
- Hate Crime

Projects supported included Café Laziz, based at Central Link Children's Centre and The Bike Shed. Café Laziz provides volunteering opportunities to support people from the refugee and asylum seeker community to gain skills and experience in catering. The Bike Shed provides opportunities for refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants to be involved in the renovation of bikes for community use. The bikes are donated from a variety of sources, including Merseyside Police Service Evidence Disposal Unit.

Polling District and Polling Places Review

The Polling District and Polling Places Review is carried out periodically to ensure that each ward has the appropriate polling station allocation to meet election duties. The impact assessment provided the following evidence to demonstrate how equality is integrated within the election process.

Each Polling Station location is chosen to ensure maximum accessibility for the public and staff. Each polling station must be at an easily identifiable suitable location and venue. Access issues include: being a well-known location, accessible car parking, effective lighting, signage, and ease of access to the building, accessible toilet facilities, access to lift (if appropriate), railings, seating etc.

Where there are no suitable venues in the location the Council will supply Mobile Polling Stations. The Mobile Polling Stations make full advantage to aids and adaptations such as ramps to ensure equality of access.

Electoral services provide a wide range of tools to support disabled people in carrying out their rights to vote, e.g.

- Large print polling material
- Tactile voting template for ballot paper
- Voting by Proxy
- Disability Accessible Polling Stations
- Postal Voting
- Voters are offered support and assistance in completing postal ballot pack

0-19 integrated Healthy Child Programme

The 0-19 integrated Healthy Child Programme was re-commissioned in early 2020. It includes the following services: School Nursing, Health Visiting, Support for Mothers, the Family Nurse Partnership, School Screening, Childhood Immunisations, and support for Vulnerable Children.

The impact assessment identified that a higher priority will be provided to vulnerable families or those at risk, many of which are defined by characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010 such as: pregnancy, young mothers, young carers, families where English is not their first language, and families who maybe in crisis for a variety of reasons including mental health and disability.

The Service Specification included distinct support packages and a range of interventions for the following vulnerable groups:

- Children in need of help and protection
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Asylum Seekers and Refugees
- Travelling and Gypsy Families
- Children with additional needs, including those with disabilities.

Council Tax Debt Recovery Policy

The Audit and Financial Monitoring Overview and Scrutiny Panel undertook a review of the collection of Council Tax arrears. The Panel used an impact assessment to consider how the needs of people who share protected characteristics were taken into account within the Council Tax debt recovery process and to examine the effectiveness of the safeguards to protect vulnerable debtors within the Council Tax system. The key equality recommendation was the development of agreed definitions of 'vulnerability' and "vulnerable person" in relation to Council Tax Recovery.

The resulting definition of vulnerability included reference to the following areas that link to protected characteristics:

- Race (e.g. people who speak English as a second language, asylum seekers, refugees, etc.), where the council will provide appropriate guidance and support (including translation and interpretation on request) to ensure people have equality of access to information and understand the options they have within the debt recovery process, and
- Disability (e.g. mental health conditions, severe or long-term illness, learning disability, cognitive impairment, and sensory impairment), where the council will make reasonable adjustment to ensure people have equality of access to services and information, and understand the options they have within the debt recovery process.

Within the context of debt collection, St Helens Council defines a vulnerable person as "Someone who, due to their health or something that's happened within their life, finds it more difficult to deal with their financial affairs and requires appropriate adjustments to be made within the debt recovery process to engage and maintain their financial obligations."

There remains an obligation on a vulnerable person to pay debts due to the local authority. However, mitigations are available for vulnerable people in the form of adjustments to the recovery process. When making an adjustment to the recovery process the Council will consider each case on its own merits based on the information available at the time. Examples of adjustments include:

- To use the person's preferred method of contact where possible – e.g. post, e-mail, large print; or telephone.
- To seek an appointee to act on behalf of the person where there are unable to manage their own affairs effectively.
- To place a temporary hold on debt recovery – e.g. to enable an outstanding benefit claim to be processed or to allow an individual to seek debt advice.
- To promote and apply relevant discounts or exemptions.
- To signpost the person to relevant support services – e.g. benefit maximisation check, free debt advice or services within social care.
- To agree an affordable repayment arrangement whilst considering other obligations and priority debts.
- To minimise fees and charges by seeking deductions from benefits or earnings as an alternative to more expensive recovery methods.
- To review cases before they are referred to a Debt Recovery Agency, Certified Enforcement Agent (bailiff) or when further enforcement action is undertaken, e.g. bankruptcy.
- Request that cases are returned from a Debt Recovery Agency or Certified Enforcement Agent (bailiff) or are transferred to a dedicated Welfare Team.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Ensure that all sections of the community have access to information about all Council services and access to the service they require

The Council has a set of agreed Standards that cover Customer Access Points (Planning Reception, Wesley House Contact Centre etc.), e-government and website. These include response times for phone calls and emails and other correspondence, as well as a zero tolerance approach to discrimination and harassment of Council Staff and Customers.

A Corporate Translation and Interpretation Service is in place and Council publications carry information on how to access translations to ensure all disabled groups and people with different language needs can access Council information.

Provision includes foreign language interpreting and translation, Braille translation, British Sign Language interpreting, audio transcription and large print translation.

Evidence of the removal of barriers, improvements in service accessibility and reasonable adjustments which have come about as a result of the Customer Service and Accessibility Policy, Service Level Equality Monitoring and Equality Impact Assessment include:

- The Corporate Customer Services and Contact Centre is fully accessible: interpretation service, disabled access, public hate crime reporting centre, loop system, staff who can use British Sign Language, Minicom, fax, email, text, website and telephone
- The Council's Small Venue Hire Guidance includes details of the accessibility of each venue for people with physical and sensory disabilities and restricted mobility
- Buildings and facilities used in the consultation and scrutiny processes are chosen to meet the needs of all potential users
- The Council has portable loop systems available for meetings
- Translation and Interpretation Service is available to all department services (including foreign languages, British Sign Language and Braille)
- Information on how to access translation is included on Council publications
- The use of appropriate language and inclusive images in all departmental publications and service information leaflets
- The Council's website provides online service information and information in different community languages
- The Council uses various tools to make its website accessible to people with sensory and physical impairments

EQUALITY IN EMPLOYMENT

As a major employer and provider of services, St. Helens Borough Council promotes equality of opportunity in recruitment and employment. The Council's policy is to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of the characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010.

The council also ensures that people are not disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot reasonably be shown to be justifiable.

St. Helens Borough Council promotes a welcoming environment where individual dignity is respected. When necessary the Council will take action to ensure that unwanted behaviour linked to the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 is challenged and where necessary sanctions are used to support the duty to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation from the workplace.

The Council maintains a baby welcome policy, makes reasonable adjustments to remove barriers affecting disabled employees, has developed gender reassignment guidelines, and all reviews of employment policies and procedures are informed by equality impact assessments.

All disciplinary, disciplinary and capability cases are monitored to ensure that investigations and proceedings are free from any discriminatory practices.

The Council monitors the workforce to evidence that there is equality of opportunity in employment, and to identify and respond to issues that arise. We include a summary of the outcomes of monitoring below.

Where a disabled employee, or an employee from a black or minority ethnicity, leaves employment, their termination is investigated to ensure that it did not arise as a result of harassment, victimisation or discriminatory practice.

Employment Equality Monitoring Performance Indicators March 2020

All employment indicators are affected by

- (i) Appointments, which are undertaken in accordance with fair and equitable practice
- (ii) Terminations, which are largely beyond the Council's control, and
- (iii) Reduced recruitment due to the current financial climate

Performance Indicator	Target	Outcome	Comment
Indicator - CS-04 - Percentage of the top 5% of earners that are women (excluding schools based staff).	50%	61.63%	An increase from the outturn figure for 2018/19, which was 59.82%. The 61.63% outturn figure represents 151 female employees in a group of 245.
Indicator - CS-05 - Percentage of top 5% of earners from black and minority ethnic communities (excluding schools based staff).	2.3%	2.45%	Improvement from the outturn figure for 2018/19, which was 2.23%. The 2.45% outturn figure represents 6 BAME employees in a group of 245.
Indicator - CS-06 - Percentage of the top paid 5% of staff who have	4.6%	4.08%	A decrease from the outturn figure for 2018/19, which was 4.91%.

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Performance Indicator	Target	Outcome	Comment
a disability (excluding schools based staff).			The 4.08% outturn figure represents 10 disabled employees in a group of 245.
Indicator - CS07 - Percentage of authority employees declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act definition of disability (superseded by the Equality Act)	3.2%	4.09%	Improvement from the outturn figure for 2018/19, which was 3.22%. The 4.09% outturn figure represents 247 disabled employees in a group of 6045.
Indicator - CS-08 - Percentage of authority employees from minority ethnic communities as a percentage of the total workforce (including schools based staff).	1.2%	1.39%	Improvement from the outturn figure for 2018/19, which was 1.25%. The 1.39% outturn figure represents 84 BAME employees in a group of 6045.

GENDER PAY POLICY STATEMENT SUMMARY – MARCH 2020

From 2017, any organisation that has 250 or more employees must publish and report specific figures about their gender pay gap.

Employers must report their data to government on-line and publish their gender pay gap data and a written statement on their public-facing website.

The 2020 report below was calculated using a specific reference date of 31st March 2019, published in March 2020.

Gender Pay Indicator	Women	Men	Pay Gap	Comment
The median hourly rate across the Council. (The hourly rate in the middle of the highest and lowest hourly rates)	£10.65	£10.65	0%	As at 31 st March 2019 the median hourly rate across the Council was £10.65: the median rate for both men and women was also £10.65, meaning there is still no median gender pay gap, as was the case in the previous year.
The mean hourly rate across the Council. (The sum of all the wages of female or male employees divided by the respective number of employees of each gender.)	£12.20	£12.98	6.0%	As at 31 st March 2019 the mean hourly rate across the Council was £12.44: For women the rate was £12.20 and for men the rate was £12.98, meaning there was still a mean gender pay gap of 6.0%. This is was a 2.7% reduction from the previous year's mean gender pay gap of 8.7%

The Council does not pay bonuses so is unable to report this.

EQUALITY TRAINING

Our Equalities and Diversity Training Strategy “Meeting the needs of the Community – Understanding and Managing/Valuing Diversity” has the following aims to ensure that:

1. Staff managing and delivering services are trained to provide an appropriate and informed response to all service users, in order to advance equality of opportunity and eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
2. Staff managing and delivering services are clear about their responsibilities to promote equality in accordance with Council Policy.
3. Managers have the knowledge and capacity to discharge the Council’s duties around equalities specifically the requirements to monitor service provision and take up, carry out impact assessments and report the outcomes of this work to be able to make appropriate changes to service provision.
4. Managers are equipped to manage a diverse workforce and implement the Council’s Equalities Policy and related Human Resource policies.
5. Staff have a clear understanding of the relationship between the various elements of equal opportunities legislation and their tasks and responsibilities.
6. Equality issues are fully understood and taken account of in the Council’s Human Resource policies in particular recruitment and selection practice and procedures, disciplinary, capability and grievance procedures and bullying and harassment.
7. All new staff joining the Council are provided with an understanding of the Council’s policies around equal opportunities and understand how these are translated into procedures and codes of practice

Training members and officers is designed and delivered around roles and responsibilities.

Member Training

Equality within Member Codes Of Conduct – Covers the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Duties and how these relate to the Members Codes Of Conduct, focusing on protected characteristics, prohibited conduct (including unconscious bias), and the meaning of respect and its relationship with dignity

‘Due Regard’ within Decision Making - Covers the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty; including the meaning of ‘due regard’, the purpose of impact assessment, and Member decisions making responsibilities.

Officer Training

Welcome to St Helens (Induction) Equalities - An introduction to the duties of the Equality Act 2010 focusing on harassment, discrimination and victimisation, and setting the expectations of behaviour when working for the council, by exploring the meanings of the terms respect and dignity

Equality Training for Officers who draft decisions – covers the Public Sector Duty of the Equality Act 2010, protected characteristics and the types of discrimination, harassment and victimisation that are unlawful under the Equality Act 2010, the meaning of ‘Due Regard’, the purpose of Equality Impact Assessments within the design and development of policy, service design and delivery, commissioning, and decision-making.

Equality Awareness Training for Staff – covers the characteristics protected by equality legislation, the meaning of discrimination, harassment and victimisation, the meaning of respect and dignity, the standard of conduct required by for a respectful environment, and the link between equality, conduct and the “The Seven Principles of Public Life” identified by the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life

Equality & Care Planning Training for Social Care Assessment and Review Staff - covers protected characteristics, discrimination, harassment and victimisation, the importance of diversity and its relevance in supporting anti-oppressive principles within person centred care planning, and reaffirms the role of accurate recording of personal data in order to support social justice and well-being within person centred care planning

Equality and Diversity for People who Work in Care – covers the protected characteristics, forms of discrimination, the meanings of equality, diversity and inclusion means, non-judgemental practice and the Equality sections of the Skills for Care and Skills for Health Code of Conduct, for Healthcare Support Workers and Adult Social Care Workers

Online Equality Refresher Training - Using online scenarios to refresh staff awareness of the duties of the Equality Act 2010 focusing on protected characteristics, harassment, discrimination and victimisation, and the importance of respecting dignity.

Examples of training modules that support staff working with vulnerable people, which are relevant to demonstrating “due regard” for people with protected characteristics, includes:

- Acquired Brain Injury - This course is mandatory for independent providers and staff within Peoples Services that work directly with people who have a brain injury.
- Alzheimer's Certificate - The programme is aimed at Care Workers, Domiciliary and Residential, Carers, Personal Assistants and anyone who cares for someone with Dementia.
- Dementia Awareness - mandatory for all staff within Adult Social Care and Health and independent providers who work with people with dementia. This course is also suitable for and relevant for all staff employed in a care setting.
- Deprivation Of Liberty Safeguards - understand the principles and application of the Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards.
- Dignity, Privacy and respect – for anyone new to working in a care setting and anyone who cares for someone who requires support. This is linked to the Care Certificate and includes the Common Core Principles of Dignity, valuing uniqueness, shaping care to support the individual, communicate in ways that are meaningful, respect how individuals may be affected when having personal care delivered, and recognise surroundings, possessions and environment are important to their sense of dignity. Promotes dignity through workplace cultures and challenges care that may reduce dignity of an individual. The Human Rights Act 1998, Mental Capacity Act 2005, The Equality Act 2010 and The Care Act 2014 are briefly explored during this course.
- Person Centred Thinking Skills and Approaches is for all staff who support people needing help with their care, including care workers, social workers independent providers and carers. It explores how to support people who receive care in taking control where able and supporting choice and inclusion and integration into the community and how to uphold their rights as an individual.
- Person Centred Support Planning for everyone who may be involved in producing an individual care plan with the person at the centre, co-production using internationally recognised tools.
- Space – a Service User Specific Programme for staff within the Supported Living Section of St. Helens Borough Council who work with Adults with a learning disability or complex and challenging needs.

DUTIES FOR SCHOOLS

Educational Institutions

All the governing bodies of educational establishments maintained by the Local Education Authority (LEA) are subject to the following duties.

The Special Educational Needs And Disability Act 2001

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 sets a duty on schools to plan to increase physical and curriculum access for disabled pupil.

Education Act 2002, Section 78

The curriculum for all maintained schools should promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and prepare pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

Education And Inspections Act 2006

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 inserted section 21(5) to the Education Act 2002 introducing a duty on the governing bodies of maintained schools to promote community cohesion from September 2007.

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 requires schools, in the exercise of their functions and decisions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The Specific Public Sector Equality Duty requires schools to set measurable equality objectives and to publish information about their performance on equality.

- Publish sufficient information to demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty across its functions annually.
- Prepare and publish equality objectives to demonstrate how the Public Sector Equality Duty will be met.

Equality Act 2010, Accessibility for Disabled Pupils

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 requires Local Authorities to prepare and maintain an Education Accessibility Strategy, with the outcome over a prescribed period of:

- a) Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the schools' curriculums;
- b) Improving the physical environment of the schools for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the schools;
- c) Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

The delivery of information must be:

1. within a reasonable time;
2. in ways which are determined after taking account of the pupils' disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents.

St.Helens Council's Education Accessibility Strategy

Arrangements for increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the schools' curriculums are set out within:

- Guidance For Schools: Meeting Additional Needs (January 2015)
- St Helens Council's Special Educational Needs and Disability - Local Offer

Arrangements for improving the physical environment of schools are set out within the Council's Programme of School Work, which is based on the assessment of all relevant built assets. Arrangements include contingency to make reasonable adjustments that meet unexpected or unforeseen access needs.

Arrangements for improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to non-disabled pupils, is covered in the following ways.

- Council Translation and Interpretation arrangements
- School Translation and Interpretation arrangements
- St Helens Information Advice and Support Service

St.Helens Council's Education Accessibility Strategy is part of the Council's Comprehensive Equality Policy.

Council Support Offer For Schools (Through Service Level Agreement)

During 2019-20 St.Helens Council offered the following support packages for schools

Equality Policy and Implementation Package

This package covers the following services and support

- Review and improve the School's Equality Policy to ensure it is up to date
- Audit the School against equality duties, the outcome of which is used to develop an equality monitoring, reporting and publishing process that provides the evidence required to demonstrate the school is meeting its statutory requirements.
- Briefing Governors and Senior Management Team on the Equality Duties, the schools position in relation to the policies and the actions required
- Training for staff on the equality duties and the meanings of the terms such as harassment, discrimination, victimisation and protected characteristics

Equality Policy Review Package

This package covers the following services:

- Review of the School's Equality Policy to ensure it is up to date
- Review of progress against the school's Equality Audit and Action Plan
- Briefing Governors and Senior Management Team the outcome of review

Additional Support

- General Equality Guidance and Advice
- Curriculum Equality Audit Tool Training
- Equality Impact Assessment - One To One Support
- General Equality Training for School Staff
- Reasonable Adjustment Guidance

PUBLISHING RESULTS

This document is published in line with the specific public sector duty under the Equality Act 2010 to publish information to demonstrate its compliance with the Public Sector Duty of the Equality Act 2010: to give due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good community relations within decisions, policy and service delivery

As well as this Annual Equality Monitoring Report, St.Helens Council publishes the following information:

The Council's decision-making processes are published upon the Council's website and Equality Impact Assessments for decisions that are not restricted are available on request.

In line with normal requirements related to information for the public, information produced will be available in different formats on request (large print, translated, in Braille etc.).

Your views are important to us

Comments concerning this document or St. Helens Borough Council's equality and diversity performance are very welcome.

You can send comments to us in the following ways

Email – contactcentre@sthelens.gov.uk

Phone - 01744 676 789

Or write to

Equalities Officer
Town Hall
Victoria Square
St. Helens
Merseyside
WA10 1HP