

Updates from the Equality & diversity strategy 2014-17

There were many actions on the plan which have all been worked on by officers across the authority. Some have been progressed further than others while other actions are ongoing and will continue to be worked on as services change, new policies are introduced or services are being provided in a different way that could impact on various protected groups.

1.1. Tackling and prosecuting Blue Badge fraud and abuse

Blue badge fraud is on the increase due to the pressures of parking in the city. The authority is very proactive in ensuring that people that legitimately have a disability with a blue badge are able to park when undertaking their day to day activities and that they are not put at a disadvantage. For the lifetime of the strategy there has been 60 successful prosecutions for Blue badge fraud.

1.2. Ensure Equality impact assessments (EIA) are carried out and their actions are integrated into service plans

A new EIA process has been embedded across the authority. Any decision making reports going to committee are required to have an EIA attached. This is to make sure any potential impacts the recommendations could potentially have on protected groups and are taken into account and where possible remove, minimise barriers or mitigation put in place.

Using this process ensures members have the information on any potential impacts and can make an informed decision on the recommendations that are proposed. This process also provides a mechanism for members to continuously scrutinise at point of decision.

1.3. Complete a review of disabled access to polling station venues in the city

1.4. Stations are as accessible as possible. We have ramps for each location where we are aware these are required. All Polling Stations are visited on the day by our Inspectors. Tablets were introduced which allows the Inspectors to photograph each station and upload back to the Elections Office for review. Presiding Officers at each Polling Station also complete a log regarding any access issues and these are monitored and actioned for future elections as necessary.

We have also incorporated a specialised element of training for poll clerks and presiding officers relating to people that are blind or have a visual impairment to ensure these individuals have the help required for them to

vote as there had been issues in the past. We also undertook a mystery shopper exercise where a number of people with a visual impairment went into their polling station to report back any issues. There was only positive feedback received from the individuals and no one had any problems voting.

1.5. Expansion of shared lives through promotion of recruitment of shared lives carers

This is to enable people to be more independent and have less institutional models of support. The service has been part of a NHS England project looking at the expansion of Shared Lives for people with health - related care and support needs.

We have increased the promotion and publicity for the service and worked with teams in Health and Social Care to raise awareness.

We currently have 34 Shared Lives households supporting 40 people with support needs.

1.6. Development of prepaid cards

In 2013 there was a pilot to introduce prepaid cards. This proved successful so individuals that are eligible for funding for their care prepaid cards have now been implemented fully.

1.7. The 4U project

The 4U Youth Group exists and continues to grow in the city to support young people between the ages of 11 and 19yrs who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender variant, any other minority sexuality or gender identity, or those who are questioning their gender identity / sexuality. At present there are 37 young people that attend this group but numbers are expected to rise in the following years due to more awareness of this topic.

They have an experienced, skilled youth team who offer a weekly youth group. They meet in a safe, secure and supportive environment. Each week they run activities which are designed to help to improve self-esteem, give young people a social outlet in which to make new friends and to provide information to support them as they grow.

1.8. Ensure our mandatory E&D training reflects new legislation & government

We update our online E & D course annually or more frequently if there are legislative changes. We have also run ad hoc training courses on the completing Equality Impact assessments and the reasons we undertake EIAs for staff and members.

1.9. Monitor staff perceptions of equality via staff surveys and values at work.

Since the start of staff surveys we have incorporated questions on carers as we know there are a lot of staff that have caring responsibilities. We want to ensure we are supporting those individuals which could include flexible working to enable the individuals to continue to work.

These surveys are completed on an annual basis that includes equality monitoring information although more work needs to be done on this as the workforce data does not reflect the diverse workforce that we have or the community we serve.

1.10. Increase the number of fully accessible bus stops and super low floor buses

In 2016 all bus stops were fully accessible and all buses, First Bus and Stagecoach in Portsmouth are SLF/accessible to disabled people.

1.11. English National concessionary travel pass and scheme

The National concessionary travel pass was introduced in 2014. From 2014-2017 22,838 travel passes were issued on age grounds and 5,347 travel passes were issued on disability grounds which equates to 28,185 travel passes that were issued to enable disabled people and older people to get around the city.

1.12. Deliver adaptations under Disability facilities Grants (DFG)

Since 2014-17, 649 grants have been given under this scheme to improve the accessibility of housing for disabled people. Each year there has been a year on year increase in DFGs although from 2016-2017 there was only an increase of 5% compared to 2014-15 where there was a 17% increase.

1.13. Develop the Telecare service to enable more people to benefit from assistive technology

In 2016 there were 307 people that received Telecare and 369 people in 2017 which is an increase of 17%.

1.14. Improve methods of consultation to understand customers and their needs and give feedback

The consultation process has been improved by ensuring before any consultation goes forward the Portfolio holder needs to agree this first to ensure they are kept informed on what is happening and pointless consultations are not undertaken.

A Citizens panel has been created so we can inform them what consultations are available and invite them to participate. Although, we do

not know the demographics of this group so this will need to be revised so we can develop a more diverse group to be able to use as a consultative body and ensure they are representative of the city where possible.

1.15. Develop opportunities for awareness of funding streams (internal & external) for community groups and endorse them conditionally on groups evidencing their commitment to equalities

The city council introduced the Portsmouth Lottery in 2016 in response to the increasing pressures on local authorities' community funding budgets. The lottery was established to offer a new way to help the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), in the city, particularly smaller organisations, to gain access to new funding streams.

Portsmouth City Council residents are the main recipients of the funding and organisations who apply for funding must operate within the Portsmouth city limits, providing facilities, activities or services for the benefit of Portsmouth residents. Organisations can apply for grants of up to £2,000.

Since January 2017, 38 local organisations have received funding totalling £58,846. The Lottery panel has a good understanding of needs within the city and is particularly keen to support smaller groups in the city, where relatively modest amounts of funding can help to make a tremendous difference. Some of these groups have never applied for funding before and may not have all the procedures and structures in place that are required to enable them to be eligible to apply. In these situations the panel will offer advice about how to strengthen their applications and groups are supported in developing their policies and procedures. This not only enables them to be eligible for Portsmouth Lottery Funding, it also ensures that they are compliant with the relevant legislation, operating appropriately and being in a stronger position to apply for other funding.

1.16. Alleviate poverty and break the cycle of deprivation

1.16.1. A full needs assessment for tackling poverty in Portsmouth was completed by PCC and published in January 2015

1.16.2. A refreshed Tackling Poverty Strategy for Portsmouth (2015-20) was approved by the Health and Wellbeing Board in September 2015

1.16.3. Portsmouth's full Equalities Impact Assessment process includes a requirement to have regard to the Tackling Poverty Needs Assessment and Strategy and the impact a policy could have on those vulnerable to poverty

1.16.4. The Holiday Lunch Club was launched in 2016 as a partnership to provide free meals to children at PCC's Adventure Playgrounds and has been developed into the

Holiday Food and Fun project

- 1.16.5.** Multi-agency work led by PCC to engage and support families affected by the reduced Household Benefit Cap in 2016
- 1.16.6.** PCC supported a partnership bid to the Big Lottery Fund by Advice Portsmouth, Roberts Centre and King's Church, to deliver the Circles of Support project 2016-21, which places outreach workers in foodbank settings to help people resolve their crisis situation and increase their social network to prevent future crises
- 1.16.7.** The Local Energy Advice Partnership was launched in January 2017, offering free home energy visits to residents at risk of fuel poverty, helping people to make their homes more energy efficient and reduce the amount they spend on energy
- 1.16.8.** Street Support Portsmouth was launched in October 2017 to provide a platform for any agency supporting homeless people in Portsmouth to promote the help they offer, and inform the public how they can help

1.17. Equality impact assessments

The council has a well-established Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process which assists compliance with the Equality Duty. The process requires that a preliminary EIA, if relevant, should be undertaken at the initial stage of (re)design / development of a policy, strategy, project or service. If the preliminary EIA identifies a potential negative impact on any of the groups protected under the Equality Act 2010, a full EIA should be undertaken before any final decision is made. The full EIA should take into account results of any public consultation and any other relevant local and national information available, including any effects of similar initiatives elsewhere in the UK.

- 1.18.** In 2018, 86 Equality impact assessments were completed, 79 were preliminary, 6 full and 1 was a preliminary EIA that was going onto a full EIA. A full list of the EIAs that were completed are in Appendix 1.
- 1.19.** EIAs that were not part of a committee report will be published on the council's website.

2. Summary

A lot of good work has been achieved through the lifetime of the strategy. We know there is much more to do to enable people from all protected characteristics to access our services, improve the accessibility of the environment and ensuring our staff are informed about our diverse city and training given so they can deal with our customers in an appropriate manner.

The embedded EIA process has proved successful and will continue to be the

mechanism to scrutinise decisions being made and ensure equality analysis is undertaken.

The Equality & diversity strategy 2019-22 has been refreshed and consultation has been undertaken, this will be presented to the Resources decision making committee to be adopted for the next 4 years in line with our equality objectives.