

Leicestershire County Council's

Equality Monitoring Policy

November 2010

Introduction and purpose

Equality, diversity and community cohesion are integral to the work of Leicestershire County Council and are embedded in the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy.

The County Council is committed to ensuring that it understands its customers and operates fairly and equitably in both employment practices and service delivery. We will tackle all forms of discrimination and promote equality and diversity at every opportunity.

Equality monitoring is:

- good practice
- central to the principle of ensuring continuous improvement
- a vital part of the effective performance management of our organisation
- a fundamental requirement of the Council's Equality Impact Assessment process – details can be found on CiS or the County Council website.
- a process that is used to collect, store and analyse data about age, disability, ethnic background, gender, religion or belief and sexual orientation of service users or potential service users, employees or potential employees. It also forms a basis for setting objectives and targets by providing a baseline on which to measure change.

It can tell us about:

- our staff and service users and their potential needs
- which groups are using our services and how satisfied they are with them
- who works for the County Council and whether we are recruiting a diverse workforce representative of Leicestershire.

This data can then be used to:

- highlight possible inequalities
- investigate their underlying causes; and
- remove any unfairness or disadvantage.

Why collect and analyse equality monitoring information?

One reason why we need to collect equality monitoring data is to understand our customers so that we design and deliver services that meet their needs. Equality monitoring also enables us to monitor the representativeness of our workforce. We need to equality monitor to:

- **ensure our policies are effective** – unless we know who is, and more importantly who is not using our services and what people think of them, we cannot tell if we are achieving our aims of providing services that are appropriate and accessible to everyone. Monitoring is a way of identifying if any policies are adversely affecting people from other communities.
- **assist service planning** – monitoring is vital for planning, targeting and measuring development in service provision. It can show inefficiencies in the way we organise services and indicate new opportunities to meet people's needs.
- **value diversity** – ensuring our workforce reflects the community it serves is central to the development of services that respond to local needs.

- **reveal any discrimination** – stopping unfair treatment of a person or group on the basis of prejudice.
- **comply with the law** – there is a legal duty to take account of equality issues when planning and delivering services and developing policies.
- **meet the criteria for accessing financial and other resources from external sources** – many funding organisations now require assurance from bidders that they meet equalities and diversity requirements and standards.
- **provide information for inspections** – the Government requires evidence that we know who our communities and customers/service users are. The Equality and Human Rights Commission will monitor how effectively we are meeting our equality duties.
- **improve service quality** – challenging inequality will improve the quality of our services because it ensures we are delivering them in the most appropriate way to meet the needs of all Leicestershire residents.
- **achieve standards** – we are obliged to provide information for performance reasons about the provision of our services. It is therefore vital that equality monitoring is embedded in our performance management framework. Achieving the highest standards is also crucially important to the achievement of the ‘excellent level’ of the Equality Framework for local Government
- **provide moral and ethical leadership** and ensure that the concept of equality of opportunity is made real through anti-discriminatory practice. Equality monitoring is a practical step towards achieving this.

Things to consider prior to implementing equality monitoring:

The first and most important question to ask is what is it that you are looking to find out or prove with the information being collected.

The following questions may prove useful to ask yourself depending upon your reasons for equality monitoring:

- what information will be useful and will lead to improvements in service planning for different sections of the community?
- what will the information tell us about our users and about our service?
- how often can the data be collected and analysed?
- who is using the service?
- are different communities accessing the service differently?
- who are most/least satisfied with our service?

You will also need to consider

- what methods will be used to collect the information?
- what resources are available for this work?
- will the data help to set meaningful equalities targets?

You will need to consider whether to use equality monitoring questions alongside service specific questions to better understand how people use the service and how satisfied they are with the service they receive. It is important for you to think about what you want the exercise to achieve – do you just want to know the profile of your service users or do you want to gain specific information about people’s perceptions, satisfaction levels, needs and requirements.

Monitoring questions – how to use and why?

It is imperative that equality monitoring informs service design or delivery and/or policy development. Questions can be asked alongside service specific questions.

Equality monitoring should become part of an existing process whenever possible. The frequency of monitoring will vary depending on what’s being monitored and can be:

- a snapshot - a one off exercise,
- periodical, regular monitoring, or
- ongoing, continuous monitoring with regular reviews.

It is good practice and recommended by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and a requirement of the Equality Framework for Local Government that monitoring is undertaken for all the equality ‘strands’.

Some further information is provided below on why equality monitoring should be undertaken and how it should be done:

- **Age**

People are more likely to feel positive about an organisation if they are treated fairly and with consideration regardless of their age. We must also ensure that our services are designed to meet the needs of people from all age groups. The Council must assess all policies to ensure they do not discriminate directly or indirectly on the grounds of age.

Some services will expect to have a higher proportion of older or younger service users, e.g. youth services or adult social care. However, many other services will need to measure the age of service users to ensure that people of all ages have access to their service.

The ‘Age’ question can be asked in a number of ways. One way of asking this question is by grouping or banding a range of ages together. This is often preferred where it is anticipated that respondents may be sensitive about revealing ages or where an overview of age groups is required quickly. However, it can be restrictive in terms of re-grouping categories (e.g. if ages are not evenly spread between originally specified groups) or if a more detailed analysis of age is required.

It is worth noting that individual ages can then be re-grouped into appropriate age ranges if required.

Date of birth may be more appropriate to ask if you want to calculate ages at different times (e.g. **current** age) or if surveying school pupils to determine year group.

- **Disability – monitoring of impairment**

This additional monitoring information will tell a service whether they are attracting people with different types of impairment. For instance, you may be attracting physically disabled users but not those with learning disability. Monitoring of impairment will allow you to capture this information and helps to inform service improvement.

Some people may feel sensitive about disclosing certain disabilities; therefore consideration should be given to confidentiality.

- **Ethnicity**

Ethnic monitoring plays a key role in identifying whether Council services are attracting people from all our diverse communities. It is also important in helping us to eliminate racial discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and promote good race relations between people of different racial groups.

Some forms may only require a basic set of equality monitoring questions. Also, if it is anticipated that only a very small number of responses will be achieved which would only allow a very limited analysis of the data by demographic categories, then a simple version may also suffice here. In cases where a simple overview is sufficient you could use the main ethnic monitoring headings, as below:

White
Mixed
Asian or Asian British
Black or Black British
Other ethnic group

The type and level of data analysis required will help you to identify whether you can ask this shortened version of the equality monitoring questions.

If you are unsure about which ethnicity question to ask, please speak to one of the contacts listed at the end of this policy.

- **Gender & Gender identity**

Gender is defined as either female or male on the Council's monitoring forms. Guidance relating to the 2001 National Census states that people should tick the gender they feel describes them, irrespective of the sex on their birth certificate.

The Council recognises that transgender people can face discrimination and it is committed to monitoring gender identity.

- **Religion or belief**

The Council's religion or belief monitoring category is used to capture individuals' religious or philosophical beliefs. Monitoring of religion or belief helps us to ensure that we are taking the needs of religious and faith groups, secular groups, or those who have no religion, into account when designing and delivering services. It also helps us to assess whether our equality and diversity policy is working to the benefit of all local people.

- **Sexual Orientation**

It is important for the Council to know if its services or employment practices are having an unequal impact on our local lesbian, gay and bisexual community. Monitoring of sexual orientation should not be seen as an additional monitoring category and should be addressed alongside more established equality issues such as disability, gender and race.

Monitoring of sexual orientation is a sensitive issue. A number of people may not be willing to disclose their sexual orientation and will be reluctant to share their sexual orientation with you, particularly if they do not understand why this information is being asked.

In some cases, you will need to explain that the information will be used to ensure that local services are not having an unequal impact on different equalities groups, that the information will be confidential, and that it will be stored separately to any other paperwork they are asked to complete.

The environment in which the monitoring of sexual orientation is carried out is likely to influence people's responses. Therefore, full consideration should be given to ensuring confidentiality.

- **Socio-economic status**

The simplest way of estimating socio-economic disadvantage is through the collection of postcode data. This data can then be matched to other datasets about neighbourhoods. It may be necessary to explain to people that their postcode will not be used to identify them individually or used to contact them in the future. For further information, please contact the Research Team (contact details are on page 8).

- **Others**

If the consultation intends to gain further understanding of the specific needs of communities then additional monitoring questions may be required to fully answer the research questions being posed.

You might decide that it is very important for your service to monitor additional areas, for example:

- single parents
- number of children
- if someone is a carer
- county of birth
- economic status
- marital status
- household income

If you need help with how to ask these questions, or would like to see wording used in previous surveys, please speak to one of the contacts listed at the end of this policy.

The following statement, or something similar, should precede all equality monitoring questions:

Leicestershire County Council is committed to ensuring that its services, policies and practices are free from discrimination and prejudice and that they meet the needs of all sections of the community.

To enable us to check that what we are providing is fair and effective, we would be grateful if you would answer the questions below. You are under no obligation to provide the information requested, but it would help us greatly if you did.

Data Protection: Personal data supplied on this form will be held on computer and will be used in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you provide will be used for statistical analysis, management, planning and the provision of services by the County Council and its partners, Leicestershire County Council will not share any personal information collected as part of this survey with its partners. The information will be held in accordance with the Council's records management and retention policy.

At Appendix 1 there is ONE standard set of Equality Monitoring Questions ('About you') – covering all equality stands. It is recommended that these questions are used for all consultations to enable consistency in data collection and analysis. In order to achieve a consistent authority-wide approach to equalities monitoring, it is expected that all monitoring will conform to these agreed standards. It is expected that officers will work with clients and client groups to explain the value of and reasons for monitoring. Assumed sensitivity to monitoring for particular equalities groups would **not** usually be considered a sufficient reason for not monitoring for these categories.

Exceptions

There may be exceptional cases where the type of research or consultation dictates the need for some flexibility.

For example:

- it was decided to omit a question on sexual orientation from the 2011 Census due to its potential effect on response rates. However, very few local consultations need to achieve such high response rates. In some cases, it may be justifiable to consider whether the inclusion of a question about sexual orientation will affect the response rates to the extent that the data can not be used for its original purpose, an example of this would be the Place Survey. If you are unsure about whether or not to ask this question, please seek guidance from the Research Team (contact details are on page 8). <http://www.ons.gov.uk/about-statistics/measuring-equality/equality/sexual-identity-project/consultation-info.pdf>.
- where questions are asked face to face and there is felt to be a compromise to confidentiality, for example, where the location of interview is in presence of others, it may be that questions about sexual orientation and transgender are excluded. Again, if you are unsure please speak to the Research Team.

- children and young people under 18 should not be asked questions about sexual orientation or transgender unless it is relevant to the service, e.g. a young gay person has been made homeless due to their sexuality.
- as with all data collection, questions should not be asked unless the information is intended to be used. Therefore sufficient numbers of returns would be needed in order to analyse the data. As a general rule at least 100 respondents from a sub group would need to be returned in order to analyse this sub group. Sometimes groups can be aggregated **at the analysis stage only**, e.g. 'white' and 'non-white', to increase numbers.

If you are unsure about confidentiality issues or response rates, please speak to one of the contacts listed at the end of this policy.

It is important to note that the usefulness of **analysing** monitoring information is dependent on being able to get a sufficient number of replies for the results to be meaningful. If a sufficient sample of responses is not possible, other means of consultation (other than a questionnaire) may be more appropriate for gathering the information required, such as focus groups or interviews.

Acting on the results of equality monitoring:

It is essential that where information is gathered it is properly analysed and that the analysis is used to inform and improve policy development or the delivery of services.

If the data collected reveals that a) the service is not being used equitably by everyone who is eligible to receive it, and/or b) that there is under-representation of a particular group in a consultation exercise or responses to a survey, it will be important for further investigation and/or consultation to explore why this is the case and what action needs to be taken to address this.

Equality monitoring forms part of all fundamental performance reviews, service planning and reporting processes. **Service areas will need to report quarterly on how they are embedding equality objectives and performance indicators in service plans.**

For further information or advice please contact:

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Standard Version - About you - Example

Please note: For most questions, you will need to select just one from each category. In terms of Gender, both questions should be asked. For Disability, one or more questions can be asked.

Gender

Q1 Are you male or female?

Male

Female

AND

Q1 Do you identify as transgender? For the purposes of this question 'Transgender' is defined as an individual who lives, or wants to live, full time in the gender opposite to that they were assigned at birth

Yes

No.....

Age

Q2 a What was your age on your last birthday? Please write in below:

OR

Q2 b How old are you?

Under 16.....

16-19

20-29

30-44

45-59

60-74

75 and over

OR

Q2 c What is your date of birth? (dd/mm/yy)

Health, illness and disability

Q3 a Do you have any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity?

Yes

No.....

OR

Q3 b Do you have a long-standing health problem or disability that affects your day-to-day activities, which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months Please include problems which are due to old age.

Yes, limited a lot

Yes, limited a little

No

Source: Census

AND/OR

Q3 c Do you have any of the following long-standing conditions? Please include problems which are due to old age. Please tick all boxes that apply.

Deafness or severe hearing impairment.....

Blindness or severe visual impairment

A condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, lifting or carrying.....

A learning difficulty (e.g. Dyslexia)

A learning disability (e.g. Downs Syndrome)

A long-standing psychological or emotional condition

Other, including any long-standing illness

No, I do not have a long-standing condition

Ethnicity and Identity

Q4 a What is your ethnic group? Please choose one section from a) to e) and then tick one box only to show your ethnic group

a) White

English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British

Other British

Irish.....

Gypsy or Irish Traveller.....

Any other White background

b) Mixed

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other Mixed background.....

c) Asian or Asian British

Indian.....

Pakistani.....

Bangladeshi.....

Chinese

Any other Asian background

d) Black or Black British

- Caribbean.....
- African
- Any other Black background.....

e) Other Ethnic Group

- Arab.....
- Any other.....

Source: Census 2011

OR

Q4 b What is your ethnic group? Please tick one box only

- White
- Mixed.....
- Asian or Asian British
- Black or Black British.....
- Other ethnic group.....

Religion or belief

Q5 What is your religion? Please tick one box only

- No religion
- Christian (all denominations)
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Any other religion.....

Source: Census 2011

Sexual Orientation

Many people face discrimination because of their sexual orientation and for this reason we have decided to ask this monitoring question. You do not have to answer it but we would be grateful if you could tick the box next to the category which describes your sexual orientation:

Q6 What is your sexual orientation?

- Bisexual.....
- Gay.....
- Heterosexual / Straight.....
- Lesbian.....
- Other (please tick and specify below).....

Note: Use with statement above

Note: Do not ask under 18's

Postcode

Q7 **What is your full postcode?**

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