



# Strategic Equality Plan

2012 -2016



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**Flintshire County Council**  
**Strategic Equality Plan**  
**2012 – 2016**

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## Foreword

Welcome to Flintshire County Council's first Strategic Equality Plan. We are pleased to publish this plan which details the objectives, actions and targets that will be undertaken during the next four years and identifies the evidence base and rationale on which the objectives are based. For the first time we have worked in partnership with all the public bodies across North Wales and have identified high level regional as well as local equality objectives. Working in partnership to identify common equality objectives and focus activity on tackling specific areas of inequality will benefit all sections of the North Wales Community. Our objectives are based on the following:-

- Health
- Education
- Employment
- Personal Safety
- Representation and Voice
- Access to information, services and environment

In producing this plan we will meet our statutory Public Sector Equality Duties under the Equality Act 2010 to advance equality, eliminate unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment, and foster good community relations in our employment, policy, procurement and service delivery functions.

The Strategic Equality Plan replaces and builds upon the progress we have made through the previous Equality Schemes. The Strategic Equality Plan alongside the Diversity and Equality Policy and Welsh Language Scheme sets out the Council's commitment to equality. The Strategic Equality Plan is integrated across the ten Council improvement priorities.

Involving a wide range of people from diverse backgrounds in the development of this Plan has been critical in helping us to identify the changes that we need to implement to make a real difference to the people who live, work and visit Flintshire. We have valued the contributions from everyone who has participated.

If you would like to become involved and contribute to continuing to identify priorities that will reduce inequalities in Flintshire, please contact us.

Colin Everett  
Chief Executive

Cllr Arnold Woolley  
Leader, Flintshire County  
Council

## **Flintshire County Council - Strategic Equality Plan 2012-2016**

### **1. Introduction**

#### **1.1 Legislation**

The Equality Act 2010 brought together existing equality legislation and introduced protected characteristics of:-

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The Act introduced the public sector equality duty which places a General Duty on public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;  
And
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Devolved public bodies in Wales have specific duties which include setting and publishing equality objectives and developing a Strategic Equality Plan (SEP). This is Flintshire County Council's first Strategic Equality Plan setting out regional equality objectives and local equality objectives and the steps we will take to achieve them. The purpose of the plan is to address inequalities to make a real difference to the lives of people across the protected characteristics who live and work in Flintshire. Welsh language is addressed through the Council's Welsh Language Scheme.

#### **1.2 Community Profile**

Flintshire is a semi-rural Welsh county in North East Wales. It borders Cheshire to the East, Wrexham to the South and Denbighshire to the West. According to the Annual Mid Year Population Estimates, the population of Flintshire has grown from 142,036 in 1991 to 149,709 in 2010.

## Age

The Welsh Assembly Government's Statistical Directorate 2006 based local authority populations projections for 2009-2031 indicate that in 2015 there will be a population of 153,677 and of that 62,232 will be aged 50 plus, which equates to approximately 40% of the total population. These projections also indicate that there will be 42,616 people aged 24 and under, equivalent to approximately 28% of the population.

## Disability

Disability is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as a physical or mental impairment which has a long term and substantial effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. This also includes severe disfigurement. The exact numbers of disabled people living in Flintshire is not known; the following tables provide some limited information.

Table 1 Flintshire Disability Register 2004/05

Persons deaf with speech	88
Persons deaf without speech	50
Persons hard of hearing	292
Persons blind	391
Persons partially sighted	349
Persons in general classes	4,264
Total number of persons	5,416

Source: WLGA Data Unit (as at 31 March 2005)

Table 2: Flintshire: Register of persons with learning disabilities on 31st March 2005

Total persons aged 16-64	410
Total persons aged 65+	20
Total persons	430

Source: WLGA Data Unit (March 2005)

## Race

There is a low percentage of people from a non-white background (this has grown from 0.5% in 1991 to 0.8% in 2001 as identified in the 2001 Census).

There is a small but regular group of Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers living in the area. There is one Council owned permanent site and three privately owned sites for the Travelling community. Another privately owned site has been granted temporary planning permission for five years. A profile of unauthorised encampments has highlighted the frequency and pattern of stopping off points.

Although an Irish community is identified in the Census (0.6%) there are also established Italian and Polish communities not identified in the Census. In addition, since 2004 more people from Eastern Europe are coming to work and live in Flintshire. These tend to be based in the Deeside and Flint areas and are employed in specific sectors, for example, food industry and the

social care sector. The main group of migrant workers are Polish. Data is available on migrant workers from the Worker Registration Scheme and National Insurance Number applications, however it is recognised that this is not an accurate representation.

Table 3: Ethnic profile of Flintshire.

<b>Ethnic Groups</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
White British	145,158	97.7%
White Irish	884	0.6%
White Other	1,358	0.9%
Mixed (White & Black Caribbean or African, White and Asian, Other)	526	0.3%
Asian (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Other)	271	0.2%
Black (Caribbean, African, Other)	97	0.1%
Chinese (Chinese, Other)	300	0.2%
Total population	148, 594	

*Source: Office of National Statistics – Census 2001*

### Languages

A joint audit with partner agencies has established that over 30 different languages are spoken in Flintshire, in addition to British Sign Language, English and Welsh.

### Welsh Language

The 2001 census showed that 21.4% of the Flintshire population possessed at least one Welsh language skill, 17.01% of residents regarded themselves as Welsh speaking and a further 4.4% reported that they understood Welsh.

### Welsh Identity

According to the 2009 Annual Population Survey, 44.6% of Flintshire residents consider themselves as Welsh compared to 65.1% for Wales as a whole.

### Religion

Flintshire is a largely Christian community, with only small groups of other identified religions represented within the population. 79.2% of the population are Christian, which is considerably above the Welsh average (71.9%) and the UK average (71.6%).

Muslims form 0.1% of the population compared to 0.3% in North Wales, 0.7% in Wales as a whole, 3.0% in England and Wales and 2.7% in the UK. Buddhists are the other major religion recognised in Flintshire forming 0.1% of the population. (Census 2001)

## **Sex**

The Local Government Data Unit (30 June 2010) reported that 49% of the population in Flintshire is male and 50.7% are female.

## **Sexual Orientation**

The Census 2001 did not collect details of sexual orientation of UK residents, however, Government actuaries estimate 6% of the population is lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB). A social group for the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgendered (LGBT) community meets regularly in Flintshire. Membership is drawn from across North Wales

## **Number of civil partnerships**

The number of civil partnerships formed in the UK by same-sex couples was 6,385 in 2010 compared with 6,281 in 2009. This represents a very small increase of 1.7 per cent between 2009 and 2010. The total number of civil partnerships formed in the UK since the Civil Partnership Act came into force in December 2005, up to the end of 2010, is 46,622. Details of Civil Partnership (CP) Ceremonies conducted in Flintshire are below:-

	<b>Number of CP ceremonies conducted</b>	<b>Notice of CP</b>
<b>2008/09</b>	5	12
<b>2009/10</b>	10	15
<b>2010/11</b>	7	23

## **Gender Reassignment**

Data is not available on the numbers of transgendered people in Flintshire. However, a social group for the LGBT community is based in Flintshire and is well attended. In addition a support group, Unique, has been established for several years to support the trans community from across North Wales. This group meets on a regular basis in the county of Conwy.

### 1.3 The Council

Flintshire County Council has 70 Councillors that represent 57 electoral divisions in Flintshire and are democratically elected every four years. Of the elected members 49 are male, 21 are female. There has been an increase in female elected members; prior to 2008 elections there were just 13 female elected members.

The Council employs 8,569 people delivering services from various sites around the county with the main administrative centre at County Hall, Mold. Services include arts, council tax, education, housing, leisure, libraries, planning, refuse services, social services, trading standards and transport.

#### Profile of workforce

The following tables provide a more detailed breakdown of the Council's workforce.

**Table 4: Profile of workforce by gender as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011**

Gender	Total	%
Female	6,404	74.73%
Male	2,163	25.24%
unspecified	2	0.02%
Total	8,569	

**Table 5: Profile of workforce by disability as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011**

Disabled	Total	%
No	4,830	56.37%
Not known	3,554	41.48%
Yes	185	2.16%
Total	8,569	

**Table 6: Profile of workforce by ethnicity as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011**

Ethnicity	Total	%
BME	28	0.33%
Not recorded	3,281	38.29%
Not stated	3	0.04%
White	5,257	61.35%
Total	8,569	

**Table 7 Profile of workforce by age as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
16-24	657	7.67%
25-34	1,419	16.56%
35-44	2,052	23.95%
45-49	1,230	14.35%
50-54	1,116	13.02%
55-59	1,067	12.45%
60-64	695	8.11%
65-69	246	2.87%
70-74	52	0.61%
75 and over	35	0.41%
Total	8,569	

## 2.0 Equality Objectives

2.1 The statutory equality duties require public bodies to set equality objectives in relation to the protected groups. Objectives should be evidenced based and outcome focussed to address the most significant areas of inequality leading to improvements for both employees and customers. The equality objectives should meet the three parts of the general duty. We must also publish an objective to address gender pay difference. The action plan to meet our equality objectives is set out in Appendix 1.

We developed our objectives using a variety of approaches:-

- Working collaboratively with other public sector bodies across North Wales to undertake regional and national research and consult with stakeholders on regional objectives
- Working with local stakeholders from protected groups to identify key issues for them
- Identifying local issues through reviewing data and involving services

2.2 **Regional Equality objectives** - Flintshire County Council worked with other public bodies across North Wales to develop regional equality objectives. The public bodies included:-

- Six North Wales Local Authorities
- Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB)
- North Wales Fire & Rescue Service
- Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust
- National Parks Authority and
- North Wales Police

Appendices 2 and 3 describe the approach and research that was undertaken to identify regional equality objectives.

The regional objectives are:-

1. Reduce Health inequalities
2. Reduce unequal outcomes in Education to maximise individual potential
3. Reduce inequalities in Employment and Pay
4. Reduce inequalities in Personal Safety
5. Reduce inequalities in Representation and Voice
6. Reduce inequalities in access to information, services, buildings and the environment

Each objective is underpinned by specific action areas; individual organisations are responsible for identifying the action areas to which they will contribute. The action areas that Flintshire County Council will contribute to are set out in our action plan. We have also set more specific local equality objectives which link to the high level regional objectives.

## 2.3 Developing local equality objectives

### **Involving stakeholders and people from across the protected characteristics**

In developing the Strategic Equality Plan and to assist in the identification of equality objectives, an involvement group had been established. This comprises members of:-

- Encompass (a community LGBT group)
- Flintshire Disability Forum
- Unique (North Wales Transgender group)
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Employee Network (LGBT)
- Older Peoples Network
- Women's Employee Network

Other members included individuals from across the protected characteristics:-

- Disabled people
- Gypsy/Travellers
- Older people
- Men/Women
- Transgendered community

This group was involved in developing a questionnaire which was distributed to a wider network of individuals and groups from across the protected characteristics.

In addition to the questionnaire two workshops were facilitated with the involvement group to identify priorities. Similar priorities were identified through both workshops.

### **Information Gathering**

We also reviewed the data we held on the profile of Council employees and customers. We found limited data was available about the profile of customers and employees and where available did not cover all of the protected characteristics.

A review of local and national assessments and reports included:-

- Attainment levels of pupils
- Census 2001
- Flintshire Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment
- Data Unit Wales
- Hate crime figures for Flintshire
- Needs Assessments
- Reports from Equality and Human Rights Commission

2.4 The priorities identified locally are as follows:-

- Access to services- all members of the community can access services, in particular housing.
- Training - all staff and elected members are trained in order to meet the equality agenda
- Contractors and service providers who deliver service goods and works on behalf of Flintshire County Council adhere to the equality agenda
- Employment – there is pay equality for men and women and the make up of employees reflect the local community
- Voice - opportunities for all staff to have a voice in the workplace and customers to be involved in shaping services
- Hate Crime - greater numbers of people reporting incidents and reduction in incidents

Our specific local equality objectives to meet these priorities are set out in the next section. There are a number of objectives relating to children and young people reflecting the Council's duty and commitment to its corporate parenting role.

### 3. Meeting our objectives

#### 3.1 Objective 1- Reduce Health inequalities.

##### Steps we have already taken to achieve this objective:-

- Implemented a Managing Unauthorised Encampments Protocol- visits are undertaken to all unauthorised Traveller encampments; information about the specialist Health Visitor is circulated and if requested arrangements are made for the Health Visitor to visit the site. Travellers on permanent sites are supported by officers to register with a local GP if assistance is needed.
- Promoted gender specific sports to both men and women and provided “taster” sessions to increase take up of non –traditional sports activities, for example, women’s football
- Service users and support staff are encouraged to attend Health Promotion events, for example, Motiv8 for people with Mental Health and substance misuse problems.
- Through using person centred / recovery approaches in the care plan and service delivery plan service users are encouraged to follow better lifestyle choices. Examples of this include male service user joining slimming world and making significant improvement to their food choices and necessary weight loss,
- Introduced the Actif Plus 1 card, which allows a service user to be supported to access Leisure Services without being charged admission.
- Training is in place in Social Services for Children to support independent living/ nutrition for care leavers.
- Learning Disability services work closely with secondary services such as opticians to improve access. Produced a leaflet for **Accessible Dentists in Flintshire** (this was shared in draft for comment with the Learning Disability Planning Group before being finalised).
- Joint drug and alcohol team is now operating satellite clinics in G.Ps across Flintshire which has enabled this group of service users to have better access to their GP.
- Mental Health service now offers a service to Deaf people and offer prompt joint assessments with Health visitors to new mothers who are depressed.
- Targeted work with the Polish community has resulted in improved access to our Mental Health and Substance Misuse services.

### **Our local equality objectives:-**

- Service users from all protected groups make healthy lifestyle choices
- Adults with a learning disability have a health check
- Looked After Children have access to health care
- All older people who receive social care are treated with dignity and respect
- All Transgender and Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual people are treated with dignity and respect when receiving social care

### **3.2 Objective 2 - Reduce unequal outcomes in Education to maximise individual potential**

#### **Steps we have already taken to achieve this objective:-**

- Addressed the underachievement of boys in both primary and secondary schools improvement plans.
- Pre-admission meetings are held with families of new pupils who need English as a Second Language (EAL) support to gather information on the child's background before they start school. A working party was set up to develop protocols for working with children from the English as a Second Language Service who may need additional support from other services.
- Introduced "Respecting Others" guidance on anti bullying for schools.

### **Our local equality objectives:-**

- The gap in educational attainment levels of boys and girls at all key stages is reduced
- Young people access increased opportunities for employment
- The educational attainment levels of Looked After Children improves
- Vulnerable young people i.e. NEETS (Not in education, employment or training) and young offenders have access to increased opportunities for training and skills development
- Children and Young People feel safe at school

### **3.3 Objective 3 - Reduce inequalities in employment**

#### **Steps we have already taken to achieve this objective:-**

- Gained and maintained Two Ticks Positive About Disability Two Ticks is a recognition given by Jobcentre Plus to employers who have agreed to take action to meet five commitments regarding the employment, retention, training and career development of disabled employees.
- Joined the Stonewall Diversity Champion Programme
- Information on Keeping in Touch Days (KIT) and employee rights are circulated to employees when they notify Human Resources that they are pregnant or will be adopting. They are circulated with the vacancy bulletin whilst on maternity leave to ensure they do not miss out on any job opportunities. In case of those employees whose partner is pregnant or is the nominated partner, they are also provided with information about their rights and entitlements.
- Offer a Childcare Voucher scheme which enables staff to sacrifice salary in return for child care vouchers, which can then be used to pay childcare costs. Staff benefit because the amount they pay is exempt from tax and national insurance, therefore reducing the costs of childcare.
- Extended the flexible and agile working periods available to staff to allow for greater flexibility in working times, thus improving employee's ability to manage their work / life balance responsibilities outside of the workplace. We are also running a pilot project removing core hours in the "Revenues and Benefits" service to inform policy development and enable more agile working. We have also promote flexible retirement.
- Offer Springboard workshops to female employees; Springboard is a Women's personal development workshop.
- Offer reasonable adjustments in the workplace to enable Disabled employees undertake their roles effectively.
- Have put in place a detailed Single Status project plan which will address equal pay.

#### **Our local equality objectives are:-**

- Improve the quality and quantity of workforce data relating to protected characteristics
- Employees demonstrate an awareness of diversity and equality issues and the public sector equality duties
- There is no pay gap between men and women employed by the Council

### **3.4 Objective 4 - Reduce inequalities in Personal Safety**

#### **Steps we have already taken to achieve this objective:-**

- Delivered a series of training and awareness raising seminars including
  - “Building Safe Relationships” workshop to year 10 school pupils across five secondary schools. The “Building Safe Relationships” workshop aims to help young people develop “healthy” relationships.
  - “Freedom Programmes” to support women who have experienced abuse to increase their awareness of abusive behaviour and to identify unacceptable behaviour in a relationship.
  - “Butterflies – Right to be Safe’ Programme for children and teenagers who have experienced domestic abuse.
  - “Caring Dads” programme. Caring Dads is an NSPCC parenting programme which also challenges the abuse of fathers against their partners.
  - “Choose 2 change” programme for perpetrators of domestic abuse. Delivered “Choose2Change” Young Persons Pilot Project – working with groups of young people between the ages of 11 – 18 who are displaying abusive behaviours (or who are deemed at risk of using abusive behaviours).
- Flintshire Healthy Schools Scheme officers in partnership with North Wales Police Liaison officers deliver training to teachers on Internet and Mobile Phone safety.
- Developed a leaflet, with Age Concern, to inform older service users of where to seek help.
- Flintshire County Council’s Neighbourhood Wardens provide a target hardening service to all victims of domestic violence to keep survivors safe and to reduce the need to relocate. HomeSafe/Caveo Alarms- Caveo alarms are given to high risk victims of domestic abuse. These are monitored 24/7 by Carelink and are linked into North Wales Police control room.
- Set up MARAC meetings which is a forum for agencies to meet monthly to review high risk domestic abuse cases. This approach has led to a reduction in repeat incidents.
- A multi agency Domestic Abuse Project has been established under the Flintshire Community Safety Partnership. This project aims to raise the

profile of domestic abuse and develop and implement a co-ordinated response.

- Provided funding to Safer Wales, a charity encouraging victims of all hate crime to report through a third party. Flintshire County Council is a Third Party reporting centre for hate crime for Safer Wales. Flintshire Community Safety Partnership receives quarterly reports on hate crime and takes action to reduce incidents
- Flintshire Community Safety Partnership is funding via Welsh Assembly Government Community Cohesion grant a Tension Monitoring system which will be managed by Flintshire Neighbourhood Watch. Training has been provided to employees from across the Council and partner agencies in the how to identify and report community tensions.

#### **Our local equality objectives are:-**

- People do not experience hate related harassment or crime in the community.
- The LGBT Community, Disabled people, older people and people from a Black and minority ethnic (BME) feel confident in reporting domestic abuse
- Repeat incidents of domestic violence are minimised across all protected characteristics

### **3.5 Objective 5 - Reduce Inequalities in Representation and Voice**

#### **Steps we have already taken to achieve this objective:-**

- Established employees networks-a Women's Forum and Lesbian Gay Bisexual Employee Forum (LGBT) to ensure their views are represented in design and review of policies.
- Established a group of stakeholders from arrange of protected characteristics to review and inform Equality Impact Assessments.
- Representatives from Services regularly attend Flintshire Deaf Forum meetings to hear their views.
- Service user planning groups have been established in Social Services and a Tenants and Residents Association has been set up in Housing. The Learning Disability Planning Group has been involved in the production of a hospital chart which will help people gain an idea/ concept of the time of their stay in hospital (**My Stay in Hospital**). This

has been tested by a member of the Planning Partnership when she was admitted into hospital earlier this year.

- Membership on the participation groups in Social Services for Children consist of looked after children and care leavers. These groups are for hard to reach groups. Group membership representative of age and gender. Alongside the groups regular 'Speak Out' events to which all looked after children and care leavers are invited.
- Equality monitoring takes place with all new members of the tenant's participation group, data is collected on age, gender, ethnicity and disability. Support needs are identified to enable involvement. Those who have volunteered to join are representative, the majority are older people which is representative of our housing stock which is 40% sheltered. As part of the **Customer Involvement Strategy** for Housing there are a number of actions and campaigns to target younger people.
- The Community Cohesion Officer regularly attends Encompass (LGBT Community group); Open Door Project- One Community Project –a project to support new communities, and meets regularly with the Muslim community.
- Each school has a governing body that represents their local community and a Schools Council on which young people are represented.
- Local Travellers have been supported to attend a national Traveller Forum.
- Established a corporate list of groups /individuals from protected groups who wish to be involved in engagement and consultation activities.

**Our local equality objectives are:-**

- The profile of people who participate in public life and representative bodies, for example, school governors, Schools Councils, Tenants and Residents Associations and service user planning groups better reflects the make up of the local community.
- All protected groups are represented in consultation activities and equality impact assessments

### **3.6 Objective 6 - Reduce inequalities in access to information and services, buildings and the environment**

#### **Steps we have already taken to achieve this objective:-**

- Provide single sex swimming session to encourage attendance by women and women from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- Provide single sex mental health sessions to increase attendance by men.
- A corporate budget is in place to make sure that information is available in different formats and languages on request. A contract is in place with North Wales Deaf Association to provide a British Sign language Interpretation Service.
- Backdoor collections for bin bag/wheelie bin/ blue bags for any customers who have difficulty leaving refuse in the requested place.
- Mobile library service for people who have difficulties visiting libraries.
- The Shaw Trust reviewed our website to ensure that it is accessible.
- A standard criteria on accessibility is included in all contracts for computer software packages.
- Welcome Packs” for children and young people arriving in care have been revised and are age and gender appropriate; specific packs are now available for children, for teenage girls and a pack for teenage boys.
- Planning applications are reviewed by a member of Flintshire Disability Forum and comments on accessibility made on applications made to individual Planning Officers.
- A regional Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs assessment has been undertaken to ascertain the future need for Travellers.
- Offered a six hour UK accredited course for coaches, play leaders and instructors who provide sport or physical activity opportunities for disabled children or adults to increase knowledge on how to adapt sessions to include disabled people.
- A rolling programme of physical alterations to Council property continues. During the past 12 months the following buildings have undergone works to increase accessibility:-
  - Mold Town Hall
  - Broughton Youth Club

- Bryn Garth Youth Club
- Mold Leisure Centre (main entrance)

**Our local equality objectives are:-**

- Customers with protected characteristics can easily access information
- Customers with protected characteristics have equality of access to services, transport, the built environment and open spaces which the Council provides or manages.

## **4. Implementation**

### **4.1 Arrangements for identifying, collate and publishing information**

#### **Employment**

We currently monitor the profile of employees by age, disability, ethnicity, religion, sex and sexual orientation. Reports are published annually on our website and include profiles of:-

- the workforce
- levels of pay
- applicants submitted for jobs,
- applicants selected for interview
- successful appointments
- leavers
- incidents of bullying and harassment
- disciplinary action

#### **Schools**

We also collate data on the profile of school pupils by age, ethnicity, gender, language, in relation to:-

- attainment (key stages 2, key stage 3, 4 and 5)
- attendance
- exclusions
- free school meal entitlements

Data on attainment at specific key stages is published in the annual equality report. The data is collated as part of Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) and published by the Welsh Government.

#### **Services**

A profile of customers is collated by Social Services for Adults, Social Services for Children, Housing and Customer Services through the Council's complaints and comments system. This information is published in the annual equality report on our website. Residents' surveys, satisfaction surveys and consultation exercises also capture equality information.

All services have been asked to undertake a review of the equality information they collate and where it is published.

### **4.2 Arrangements for assessing impact**

To meet the specific duty all public authorities are required to set out the methods of impact assessments on policies and practices. This is to ensure that the needs and concerns of all protected groups are taken into consideration.

An equality impact assessment (EIA) screening tool and template for a full impact assessment have been developed. Rolling programmes of workshops

to support Directorates undertake EIAs have been implemented. Each impact assessment will be endorsed by the relevant Directorate. A group of stakeholders representing protected characteristics from both employees and members of the public review EIAs and provide feedback to authors. Actions from EIAs are included within Service Plans where they will be monitored. Summaries of EIAs which have a significant impact as agreed by the stakeholder group are published on our website.

All reports to Committee have an "Equality Impact" section, which has to be completed. The responsibility for completing this lies with the author of the report.

### **4.3 Arrangements for promoting knowledge and understanding and identify training needs of employees in relation to public sector duties**

This section sets out the Council's arrangements for ensuring employees have the knowledge, skills and attitudes to meet the general and specific duty. We recognise that some awareness raising/training will be generic which all employees will need to be aware of and other training will be more specifically related to individual job roles and will support them to implement the SEP.

Specific activities to support these arrangements include:-

- Provision of generic Diversity and Equality training course for all employees, which includes community visitors from across protected characteristics. Diversity and equality is included in the induction programme.
- Specific workshops on Equality Impact Assessments and are providing specialist training to HR on topics such as Transgender awareness, dealing with homophobic bullying. We also provide training to support initiatives such as Deaf Awareness Week.
- Employees have also been circulated with two employees' briefings on the Equality Act 2010 and one on the public sector equality duties.
- Resources are available on the Council's intranet including guidance for working with people from the protected groups.
- Pilot of an e-learning initiative to promote wider understanding
- To ensure employees are aware of the Strategic Equality Plan a series of employee briefings will be held in June and July 2012. This will outline the public sector equality duties.
- Training needs in relation to the public sector equality duties will be identified as part of the appraisal process. Managers will be provided with guidance as set out in the action plan under objective 3.

#### **4.4 How we will incorporate equality into Procurement**

When procuring works, goods or services from other organisations a public body in Wales must:-

- have due regard to whether it would be appropriate for the award criteria for that contract to include considerations to help meet the general duty
- have due regard to whether it would be appropriate to stipulate conditions relating to the performance of the contract to help meet the three aims of the general duty.

In some contracts equality will be a core requirement and this will be set out in detail within the contract. The Flintshire County Council Procurement Policy states its commitment to:-

- Users of all services
- Council core and policy objectives
- Compliance with service aims and objectives
- Continuous improvement
- Quality and equality
- Operational efficiency

Our Contract Procedure Rules include all the protected characteristics into the pre qualification questionnaire (PQQ) for tenders. Guidance is available for employees on the inclusion of equality considerations into specific contracts. Draft guidance is also available for contractors on what we expect from them when they provide goods, services, and works on our behalf. We will also be holding briefings for contractors to increase their awareness of our expectations regarding equality and contracts.

## **5 Monitoring and review**

Directorates will incorporate objectives and actions into their service plans to ensure actions are monitored at a service and Directorate level. A report describing progress to meeting the equality objectives will be published annually; relevant equality information will be published in this report. Progress will be monitored through the Corporate Equality Team, Stakeholder Group, Corporate Management Team, Executive and relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

The Strategic Equality Plan will be reviewed / re-published by April 2016 or earlier if monitoring indicates that the equality objectives need to be revised.

## **6. Publication**

The Strategic Equality Plan will be published on our website and will be available in English, Welsh and Easy Read. A summary will be available in British Sign Language DVD. Other formats and languages will be available on request.

Information on the profile of the workforce is published annually.