

Equality Policy

Introduction

The borough of Runnymede has a population of approximately 82,600 residents.¹ In the 2001 census, 88 percent of the population described themselves as 'white British', two percent 'white Irish' and six percent 'other white'. A further five percent were from minority ethnic groups (mixed race, asian, black, Chinese or 'other'). The ward with the greatest ethnic diversity was Englefield Green East, where 15 percent of the population were from a black or minority ethnic (BME) background.² The Englefield Green East ward is particularly influenced by Royal Holloway College. Strode's College, in Egham, also has significant numbers of students who travel into the borough.

Figures from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) for mid-2006 estimate that the non-white population of the borough had increased to eight percent, with 83 percent of the population estimated to be 'white British', two percent 'white Irish', and seven percent 'other white'. Until the next census it is not clear how this population is distributed, although the largest non-white ethnic groups were identified as Indian and Chinese.³ ONS statistics show no net migration into the borough in 2005/06, but 2005/06 National Insurance registrations (of 920 people or just over one percent of the borough's population) show the main immigrant groups as Polish and South African.

The Council's Place Survey, undertaken in 2008, indicates that the proportion of the population from a black or minority ethnic group is highest in the wards of Virginia Water (16 percent), Chertsey Meads (14 percent), and Englefield Green East (11 percent).⁴

Primary Care Trust figures show that eight per cent of students at LEA schools in Runnymede do not speak English as a first language.⁵ 100 children from traveller families are registered at schools in the borough.⁶

13 percent of the borough's population declared either a long-term limiting illness,⁷ or that they were full-time, unpaid carers. North Surrey Primary Care Trust figures (2002) indicate that four percent of the borough's population claimed disability allowance, whilst two percent claimed Income Support.

It is estimated that less than one percent of the borough's population live in same-sex households, although this can only be used as an indication of the number of people in same-sex relationships.⁸

¹ Office of National Statistics mid-year estimate, 2007

² Census data, 2001 (percentages do not equal 100% due to rounding)

³ ONS data [mid-year 2006 estimate](#)

⁴ Place Survey 2008. Considered to be accurate within 9%, based on a sample of 1391 respondents.

⁵ PCT joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2008

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⁷ National Centre for Health Outcomes Development 2001 (ibid)

⁸ 2001 census data (ibid)

Legislation

Equality legislation makes it illegal to discriminate on the basis of gender, disability, race, nationality, religion, belief, sexual orientation or age. The Council has positive duties to promote equality between races, tackle barriers experienced by people with disabilities and promote gender equality. The Council's legal duties in relation to equality are defined by the following legislation

- ❖ the Equal Pay Act 1970
- ❖ the Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- ❖ the Race Relations Act 1976
- ❖ the Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- ❖ the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. This gives the Council a general statutory duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and promote good relations between people of different racial groups. There are also specific statutory duties relating to the field of employment.
- ❖ Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- ❖ Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- ❖ Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- ❖ The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 gives the local authority a duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination against people with disabilities and to promote equality of opportunity, encouraging the involvement of people with disabilities in putting together and monitoring the scheme and including the option of more favourable treatment, where appropriate.
- ❖ The Equality Act 2006 introduced a gender equality duty, which came into force in April 2007. It requires public authorities to promote gender equality and eliminate sex discrimination. Instead of depending on individuals making complaints about sex discrimination, the duty places the legal responsibility on public authorities to demonstrate that they treat men and women fairly. The duty encompasses policy making, services delivered to the public and employment practices such as recruitment and flexible working.

The legal requirements are designed to have an impact on employment, policy development and service delivery across the Council's sphere of influence, in order to reduce and eliminate barriers that different groups and individuals might experience in accessing employment or services. The work undertaken to investigate and eliminate such barriers is expected to be proportionate to the identified need.

Vision

Individuals and groups can experience a range of barriers that prevent them enjoying the same quality of life as their peers. The Council aims to ensure that its services are equally accessible by everyone who needs them, irrespective of gender, race, disability, religion, belief, sexual orientation or age. This has been the Council's stated aim since the adoption of the Equal Opportunities policy in 1995 and is integral to normal working practices.

This Equality Policy sets out how the Council aims to identify whether policies and their implementation create barriers for any particular group and what measures could be taken to minimise these barriers.

The Council set out its intention to achieve level 2 of the Equality Standard in 2004/05 and received validation of that level in June 2006. The Council emphasised its commitment to equality by setting an aim to achieve level 3 of the Equality Standard in 2008/09.

The following principles are included in the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Plan ("Making a difference"):

"To ensure the Council is sensitive to the needs of all in Runnymede in ensuring access to our services"

"In all that we do, Runnymede Borough Council will seek to ensure that our services are accessible by and responsive to all people who need them. Our service-based Equality Impact Assessments will play a crucial role in achieving this."

Promoting Equality

Impact assessment

The Race Relations Act Amendment Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Equality Act 2006 impose statutory duties to undertake impact assessments in relation to ethnicity, disability and gender. The DDA duty was strengthened in the Disability Discrimination Act 2005.

In achieving Level 2 of the Equality Standard and as part of its duty to promote equality, the Council set out its plan to assess all Council policies and functions for their potential impact on equalities. To this end, the Council has undertaken equality impact assessments (EIAs) in most areas of service over the past 3 years. These EIAs form the basis of departmental equality objectives. A revised schedule for reviewing service EIAs is shown at appendix 1.

A similar assessment process is being applied to all new policies and strategies as they developed, ensuring that consideration of equality issues becomes part of the process of policy development.

An impact assessment should show the extent to which services are accessible to all members of the community they are designed to reach.

The main elements required to assess the impact of a policy on equality are:

- ❖ The extent to which the service is accessed by a population profile that reflects the background population in the borough (or the target group).
- ❖ Whether the policy or practice reduces/enhances the service received by one minority group
- ❖ Whether the policy or practice clearly discriminates against one or more minority groups (as compared with the majority of residents).
- ❖ What the reasons for the impact are, eg. language, physical access, communication medium, dress codes, diet, cultural belief.

Officers and Members will not always know what the impact of changes to service will be, so the participation and consultation arrangements outlined on page 6 give guidelines for involving external groups in understanding the impact of existing services and new policies or practices.

Equality impact assessments are reviewed and challenged by the Council's Equality Working Group before being published on the Council's website, or being presented to Members for decision-making.

If policies are found to have a negative impact on particular groups of people, this must be stated and taken into account when a decision about agreeing them is taken. Committee reports will note any potential impact on equality that arise from the impact assessment process by attaching the EIA as an appendix to the main report, so that Members are able to take equality issues into consideration in making their decision.

Equality objectives and monitoring

Where Equality Impact Assessments demonstrate that more information is required about whether everyone can access services, or that policies, services, or their implementation prevent people from using them, the Council will develop corporate and departmental equality objectives to address the deficiencies. This will be done proportionately, bearing in mind that some policies and practices impact the public and staff much more directly than others.

Departmental Equality Action Plans commit each department to achieving objectives drawn from EIAs and those drawn from the requirements of this Equality Policy, and set out when, where and how these objectives will be achieved.

Progress towards equality targets will be monitored by departmental management teams and fed back through departmental representatives to the cross-departmental Equality Working Group for scrutiny. Departmental Equality Action Plans will be reported to the Directors' Management Team on a quarterly basis and to service committees when progress against their Service Plans is reported.

Objectives include:

- ❖ Identifying where service provision does not appear to reflect the demographic profile, or where there is insufficient data to establish this.
- ❖ Monitoring the impact of changes to any policy or service on minority groups.
- ❖ Examining complaints to identify the extent to which they relate to minority groups and the complainants' satisfaction with the way in which they are dealt with.
- ❖ Removing any barriers that people experience in trying to access services.

Staff will be trained to carry out monitoring and where possible existing systems will be used. Training will be provided to develop best practice in conducting an impact/needs assessment for proposed policies.

For some services equality issues may only become apparent over a generation or more. For that reason EIAs are reviewed every three years and should contain trend information showing how successfully services are meeting the needs of the whole population.

Access to Employment, Information and Services

As an employer the Council is taking steps to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or is disadvantaged by conditions which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance.

The Council is committed to ensuring that whenever possible all members of the community have access to the services it provides and to information about them.

The Council has implemented various measures to ensure access to information and services. These include:

- Internal promotion of agencies able to interpret or translate information for people who have difficulty in reading or understanding written or spoken english.
- Co-location with the police and library in 2008, enhancing access to services for local people.
- Independent monitoring of the website to ensure and improve accessibility.

Participation and Consultation arrangements for service development and equality impact assessment

The Council is committed to improving consultation in order to improve service delivery. The Borough's demographic profile means it is sometimes difficult for services to identify minority groups who are able to advise them about the impact their service may have.

Service/policy development: As part of the process of developing new policies and processes that will affect residents, staff or others with whom the Council works, officers will consult interested groups to assist in assessing the impact of the proposed changes. This must be done whenever changes in service delivery or new policies are being proposed. Consultation may be undertaken through the Council's Equality Working Group, which includes staff and representatives from community groups, or through service-specific focus groups, consultative groups, advisory groups, surveys or face-to-face meetings. A Residents' Panel is maintained and provides a representative sample of the population to consult through surveys. In developing the Council's Local Development Framework officers will use the approach adopted in its Statement of Community Involvement.

Equality impact assessment: The equality impact assessment process commits service managers to considering the impact on equality of access of any new service or policy. The Council's expectation is that when an equality impact assessment is being undertaken or when changes to a service are proposed, officers will approach individuals or groups who are able to comment on any barriers to taking up the service. Barriers may include physical access, the language or format of information about a service or the way in which a service or process is promoted, offered or taken up.

The Equality Working Group (EWG) further challenges this process and provides service managers with the opportunity to seek the views of groups who do not use the service. The views of various equality strands are represented on the group by the following organisations:

- Age – Age Concern Runnymede
- Gender – Unison
- Sexual Orientation – Unison
- Disability – Runnymede Access Liaison Group

- Ethnicity – Bridge, Gypsy and Irish Traveller Groups
- Religion/Belief – Islamic Welfare Association of West Surrey, Inter-faith group

Prior to consideration of an equality impact assessment by the EWG, interested parties will be contacted with the details of impact assessments to be considered, so they can offer their comments or come along to the meeting to contribute to the discussion.

In addition there are other groups in the Borough who are available for consultation. Appendix 2 gives a list of groups and individuals who have been involved in developing the Equality Policy or can be contacted for advice and input into policy development and service delivery. Service managers should make use of this list when conducting equality impact assessments to ensure that their service is reaching minority groups.

Service managers must consult relevant groups and individuals as early as possible in the process of change and assess the results so that account may be taken of any issues they raise.

Measures of Achievement

The following measures will be employed to assess progress against the Council's equality vision:

- ❖ Outcomes against the departmental targets established as the result of equality impact assessments will be reported to the equality group, Directors Management Team and to service committees on a six monthly basis.
- ❖ Results of consultation on a regular basis to test the views of those who live, work in or visit the Borough.
- ❖ Performance indicators on employment in relation to gender, ethnicity, disability age, sexual orientation, religion and belief.
- ❖ Measurement against the legal requirements and tests, particularly those produced by the Commission for Equality and Human Rights and Audit Commission. The Commission for Equality and Human Rights is the successor body to the Disability Rights Commission, Commission for Racial Equality and Equal Opportunities Commission and was established by the Equality Act 2006.
- ❖ The number of racial incidents recorded by the Police and the Council.

Publication of assessments, consultations and monitoring

To demonstrate its commitment to promoting equality, the Council will publish annual reports of:

- ❖ Impact assessments undertaken
- ❖ Results of consultation
- ❖ Results of monitoring

In its capacity as employer, the Council will publish the results of its employment monitoring annually in the **Annual Pay and Workforce Plan** and on the Council's website (www.runnymede.gov.uk).

Depending on the importance of the subject and its relevance to equality, reports will be published in one or more of the following ways:

- ❖ By inclusion on relevant Council or service committee meeting agendas
- ❖ On the Council website (www.runnymede.gov.uk)
- ❖ From the Council Offices reception and other public service points

Information in languages other than English, and in Braille and audio format may be available on request. The Council has contact with agencies for transcription of information into formats suitable for people with disabilities.

Training

Council staff are responsible in varying degrees for making sure that the Council meets its duties under equalities legislation. Particular duties apply to staff in Personnel, Housing and to functions including procurement and property management. All staff are responsible for meeting the requirements of equalities legislation as it affects their service area, which includes assessing the extent to which services are accessed by people from minority groups and what the reasons are for non-use of services.

Heads of Service and specialist staff are responsible for assessing the impact of their policies and practices on equality and will receive training in doing so. It is expected that departmental management teams will include equalities as a standing item on meeting agendas and that equalities will be incorporated into service planning and review.

According to their level of need, all staff will be provided with sufficient training to equip them with the knowledge and skills to perform these duties. As a minimum, all staff will undergo general awareness training on equality and disability, which will subsequently form part of the induction process for new staff.

Training will also be provided for elected Members. Where appropriate, training will be made available to other partner organisations.

Action Plans

The Equalities Working Group is responsible for developing and monitoring this strategy via departmental Equality Action plans.

This document was agreed at:

Directors' Management Board 22 nd August 2005
Corporate Management Committee 8 th September 2005
Council 20 th October 2005
Reviewed and progress noted: January 2007
Updated and progress noted:	January 2008
Updated and revised at DMT	March 2009
Corporate Management Committee and full Council	April 2009

FUNCTIONS FOR IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Once completed these impact assessments will be available on the Council's website: www.runnymede.gov.uk. Choose "E" from the "A-Z" and then "Equalities"

2009/10**April – June 2009****Administration & leisure**

Access to leisure centres	
Youth council	
Asset management (property services)	
Property letting (property services)	
Management of cemeteries	(Review 2005/06 EIA)

Finance

Benefits	(Review EIA from 2005/06)
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July – September 2009**Chief Executive's**

Recruitment	(Review EIA from 2005/06)
Grievance & disciplinary	(Review EIA from 2005/06)
Anti-bullying/harassment	

Technical Services

Local Development Framework (core strategy)	
Taxi licensing	
Licensing of premises	

October – December 2009**Housing & Community Services**

Tenancy management	(Review EIA from 2005/06)
Allocations	
Homelessness	
Departmental service standards	(Review EIA from 2005/06)
Nuisance procedure	(Review EIA from 2005/06)
Racial Harrassment	(Review EIA from 2005/06)
Respect	(Review EIA from 2005/06)
Succession	(Review EIA from 2005/06)

2010/11**April - June 2010****Administration & Leisure**

Electoral Services	(Review EIA from 2008/09)
Community halls	
Chertsey Museum	

Finance

Council tax/Local taxation	(Review EIA from 2008/09)
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July – August 2010

Housing & Community Services

Bus pass scheme	(Review EIA from 2007)
Day centres	(Review EIA from 2007/08)
Meals service	(Review EIA from 2005/06)
Community alarm	
Runnymede Care & Repair	(Review EIA from 2008)

September – December 2010

Technical services

Building control	(Review EIA from 2006/07)
Development control	(Review EIA from 2006/07)
Refuse collection	
Inspection of food premises	(Review EIA from 2007/08)
Planning enforcement	(review EIA from 2005/06)
Community Safety – CCTV	(Review EIA from 2007/08)

2011/2012

April – June 2011

Administration & leisure

Parks & open spaces	(Review EIA from 2006/07)
Allotments	(Review EIA from 2006/07)
Playscheme/splash	(Review EIA from 2006/07)
Sports development	(Review EIA from 2006/07)
Cemetery management	(Review EIA from 2006/07)
Arts Development	(Review EIA from 2006/07)

July-September 2011

Finance

Benefits/Council tax fraud/enforcement	
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Technical Services

Parking services	
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Cross-departmental

Grants to voluntary groups	(Review EIA from 2009)
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2012/13

Sustainable Community Strategy	(Review EIA from 2009)
Communications Strategy	(Review EIA from 2009)
Procurement Strategy	(Review EIA from 2009)

APPENDIX 2

PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTATION

The Council's equality and diversity policy has been developed on the basis of consultation with local interested groups. Some of this consultation has been initiated in order to develop the equality policy or get feedback about specific service impact assessments. However, much of it is based on consultation arising in the day-to-day work of service areas.

As a relatively small local authority Runnymede needs to work towards embedding consultation from different exercises into all policy areas.

The following groups are in regular contact with various sections of the authority or can be contacted by service managers for input into developing services or equality impact assessments.

Disability Groups

Mencap (Runnymede & Spelthorne)	01784 453404
Philip Southcote – school for children aged 11-16, with learning & other associated difficulties	01932 562326 www.philipsouthcote.co.uk
Freemantles – for children with autistic spectrum disorders (now based in Woking)	01483 545680
Meath School (ICan) – primary school for children aged 5-11 where severe & complex communication difficulties are the primary disability	01932 872302 www.ican.org.uk
Runnymede Access Liaison Group	Jonathan Fisher, Chairman 01784 43622. jlf@runnymede-court.com
North Surrey Partnership Board for physical, sensory & Cognitive Disability	Carol Pearson. Carol.pearson@surreycoalition.org.uk 01483 456558
White Lodge White Lodge works with disabled adults, children and their families to provide a creative, individually tailored service to meet their needs	01932 567131 www.whitelodgecentre.co.uk
Surrey Association for Visual Impairment	01372-377 701 http://www.surreywebsight.org.uk
Elmbridge & Runnymede Talking News	01784 435 622 http://www.users.waitrose.com/~earnt/earnt@waitrose.com
North West Valuing People Group	Mary Hendrick, Partnership Manager for disabilities Families directorate – SCC adult social care team. Tel: 01483 517953

RNID	0808 808 0123 www.rnid.org.uk
RNIB	0845 766 9999 www.rnib.org.uk

Religious organisations

Churches Together	Reverend Sue Loveday - Co-ordinator 01932 566920
Synagogues Staines & District Synagogue	Westbrook Road, Staines, Middlesex TW18 4PR 01784 462557 http://www.btinternet.com/~staines.synagogue/
North West Surrey - Weybridge	NW Surrey Synagogue, Horvath Close Oatlands Drive, Weybridge Surrey KT13 9QZ Tel: 01932 855400 www.nwss.org.uk
Shah Jehan Mosque, Oriental Road, Woking	Mohammed Farooq - Secretary The Shah Jahan Mosque 149 Oriental Road Woking, Surrey GU22 7BA Telephone (office): +44 (0)1483 760 679 office@shahjahanmosque.org.uk
Islamic Welfare Association of West Surrey	Arshad Gamiet - magamiet@googlemail.com
Inter-faith group	Contact to be confirmed

Minority Ethnic Groups

Gypsy and Irish Traveller Groups	Amanda Boyton 0208 5419465 Ann Wilson (Surrey Community Action and Surrey Gypsy and Traveller Relations Forum) 01483 459292, ext.202
BME population in Surrey (BRIDGE)	Rekha Savania at Surrey Community Action Telephone 01483 459292 ext 241 rekhas@surreyca.org.uk

Organisations relating to older and younger people

Age Concern	The Orchard, 01932 566040
Runnymede Youth Council	Natalie Clarke (RBC) 01932 425688

General organisations

Careline users	The Careline Team, Runnymede Borough Council, 01932 425865
Safer Runnymede Partnership	01932 425065
Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)	01932 842666
Runnymede Association of Voluntary Services (RAVS)	12-13 The Sainsbury Centre, Chertsey KT16 9AG. 01932 571122
Residents' Associations Runnymede Council Residents' Assoc Egham Residents' Association Egham Riverside Stroude Residents' Association Thorpe Ward West Addlestone Wentworth	Jenni Hill – jennihill@onetel.com 01932 568405 For Contacts see the Runnymede Directory: www.runnymede.gov.uk/informationandcommunication/runnymededirectory
Royal Holloway College	http://www.rhul.ac.uk/Contact-Us/
Surrey County Council - Childrens' Services - Adult services - Youth Development Service - Education department - Libraries	www.surreycc.gov.uk 03456 009 009
St. Peter's Hospital	Maria.Crosbie@asph.nhs.uk
Primary Care Trust	Tina.Gull@surreypct.nhs.uk
Local Strategic Partnership task groups: Housing Task Group Environment Task Group Community Learning Partnership Health and Social Care Task Group Runnymede Business Partnership Transport Group 2012 Olympics Task Group Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Single Group for Young People	Please contact James Cooper on 01932 425503 or james.cooper@runnymede.gov.uk for information about how to consult these groups.