

Maldon District Council: Equality and Diversity Update

Fourth Edition: January 2015



Contents

1. Introduction	Page 2
2. Protected Characteristics	Page 2
3. Our Population	Page 2
4. Our Employees	Page 3
5. Our Customers and Due Regard to the Equality Duty	Page 5
6. Forthcoming Equalities Initiatives	Page 8
7. Conclusion	Page 8
8. Review Date	Page 9

The Equality Act 2010 [Specific Duties] Regulations 2011 brought a requirement for local authorities to publish equality information by 31st January 2012 and for that information to be refreshed at least annually.

Public authorities covered by the specific duties must publish information to demonstrate their compliance with the general equality duty.

The information must include information relating to people who share a relevant protected characteristic who are

- *Its employees (for authorities with more than 150 staff)*
- *People affected by its policies and practices (for example, service users)*

This is the Council's fourth edition of equality information.

1. Introduction

The Public Sector Equality Duty included a requirement that all local authorities publish equality information by 31st January 2012 and refresh that information at least annually. The Council has therefore published the appropriate document annually with this being the fourth version.

Gathering and using equality information helps the Council to understand the composition of its community and analysing trends can help the Council to understand the effect of its policies and practices. Making use of all that information therefore helps the council to identify if there are any steps that need to be taken to meet the aims of the Equality Act 2010.

This document includes the information required for publication by the Public Sector Equality Duty, plus information on the initiatives and work that the Council has carried out to meet the three aims of the Equality Duty. Those aims are

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- To foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

2. Protected Characteristics

These equality aims apply to the eight protected characteristics*

- Age
- Disability
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Sex
- Gender Reassignment
- Religion or Belief
- Sexual Orientation
- Race

* Marriage and Civil Partnership is also a protected characteristic but only for part of the Act.

3. Our Population

According to the 2011 census 61,629 people live within the Maldon District.

The population of the District is an older one with 28% of the population aged 60 and almost 9% of the population aged 75 and over compared with just 20% aged under 18. A full breakdown of the District's population (taken from the 2011 census) was published in the 2014 Equality document available at

http://www.maldon.gov.uk/downloads/file/1837/the_public_sector_equality_duty_and_equality_information_january_2014

There are challenges associated both with having an ageing population and being a rural District. Issues such as access to health care, public transport and services can impact on residents. Slow broadband speeds or poor access to the Internet can deny access to alternative services. Poor Internet access can also deny residents from accessing some financial savings such as discounts and reductions in bills. The Council therefore seeks to address issues like these and many others through its work and plans for the future.

4. Our Employees

The Equality Act requires that the Council must publish information on its employees each year in its annual equalities summary. Therefore the following section outlines relevant information about the Council's workforce.

It's important for the Council to understand the demographics of its workforce. Doing so helps the Council to make appropriate strategic and planning decisions when drawing up policies and procedures regarding its workforce and to act appropriately according to equalities. It also helps the Council to monitor whether the workforce is representative of the population of the District.

The publication deadline for the document is 31st January each year so it is not possible to produce information for the full financial year at the time of publication. The statistics used below are those available at the time of preparation, which is for Quarter 2 for each of the years (July – September).

Staffing

Total Number of Staff

	July – Sept 2013		July – Sept 2014	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Full time	68	85	65	82
Part time	10	60	15	61
Total	78	145	80	143
Total	223		223	

Age

	July – Sept 2013		July – September 2014	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
16-25	5	16	7	18
26-35	14	31	13	29
36-45	16	33	15	30
46-55	24	44	25	44
56-65	18	20	18	21
65+	1	1	2	1
Total	78	145	80	143

Ethnicity

	July – Sept 2013	July – Sept 2014
Asian Other	1	1
Any Other	0	0
Black Other	1	1
British	212	217
Chinese	2	2
Other	1	1
White Asian Mixed	1	1
White Black Mixed	0	0
White Other Mixed	1	1
Unknown	3	0

Salary

	July – September 2013		July – September 2014	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
£10-£15,000	6	15	4	10
£15-£20,000	20	19	21	24
£20-£25,000	11	56	14	56
£25-£30,000	6	23	8	24
£30-£35,000	11	13	10	12
£35-£40,000	10	10	10	10
£40-£50,000	7	5	6	4
£50-£60,000	6	1	6	2
£60,000+	1	3	1	1
	78	145	80	143

Recruitment

The Council is one of the largest employers in the District. Recruitment campaigns and advertisements attract candidates from around the local area (the District) and from the wider community.

As shown above, the District has a predominantly White/British population and therefore you would expect to see a high proportion of candidates who fall into that category. However as the recruitment process can attract people from further afield we could see that trend affected.

The Council monitors the ethnic background, gender and disability of both candidates and recruits to new roles to identify whether there are any trends. Again, due to the timing of the publication of this report, the statistics below compare the date for the second quarter of both 2013 and 2014.

Ethnic Background of Candidates

	July – Sept 2013		July – Sept 2014	
	Applied	Appointed	Applied	Appointed
White British	238 (95.97%)	13 (100%)	102 (87.93%)	13 (100%)
Asian/Asian British	0		1 (0.86%)	
Black/Black British	0		4 (3.45%)	
Chinese/Chinese British	0		0	
Mixed	5 (2.02%)		0	
Other	4 (1.61%)		0	
Not Disclosed	1 (0.40%)		9 (7.76%)	

The 26 positions recruited to during the two quarters were all filled by White British candidates. This isn't surprising given the high proportion of applicants who fell into this category.

Gender

	July – Sept 2013		July – Sept 2014		
	Applied	Appointed	Applied	Appointed	
Male	144 (58.06%)	4 (30.77%)	Male	37 (31.90%)	5 (50%)
Female	104 (41.94%)	9 (69.23%)	Female	73 (69.93%)	5 (50%)

The two quarters show a differing picture when looking at the proportion of candidates by gender. In 2013 16% more men applied for roles than women, but 69% of the roles were filled by women. Conversely, in 2014 38.03% more women applied for roles than men, but the split for appointments was exactly half.

If there was a consistent bias in favour of any one gender that would be a cause for concern. In this case however, the Council has trained all managers regarding recruitment and has policies in place to ensure equality. The overall composition of the workforce and the fact that the picture is reversed over

the course of the two quarters indicates that there is equality and fairness and that there is no gender bias.

Disability

July – Sept 2013		July – Sept 2014	
Applied	21 (8.47% of candidates)	Applied	3 (2.59% of candidates)
Appointed	2 (15.38% of appointments)	Appointed	0

Recruitment is always managed fairly within the Council with sound recruitment practices and without any bias. An example of this can be seen within the period July – Sept 2013 where the number of newly recruited staff with a disability was vastly higher than the proportion of disabled candidates would normally indicate.

Age

July – Sept 2013			July – Sept 2014		
	Applied	Appointed		Applied	Appointed
16-25	54 (21.77%)	3 (23.08%)	16-25	36 (31.03%)	3 (30%)
26-35	45 (18.15%)	2 (15.38%)	26-35	34 (29.31%)	3 (30%)
36-45	58 (23.30%)	3 (23.08%)	36-45	13 (11.21%)	2 (20%)
46-55	63 (25.40%)	1 (7.69%)	46-55	16 (13.79%)	1 (10%)
56-65	24 (9.68%)	4 (30.77%)	56-65	5 (4.31%)	1 (10%)
65+	1 (0.40%)	0	75+	0	0
Not disclosed	3 (1.21%)	0	Not disclosed	12 (10.34%)	0

The statistics show a good spread of applications and appointments across the age ranges. There are however less appointments in the 46-55 age range than you would expect purely by looking at the statistics. This seems to be the case especially in July-September 2013. To check whether this is any form of trend the following quarter (October – December 2013) has been examined. That quarter shows that 28.89% of candidates who applied for roles were aged between 46-55 but 57.13% of the candidates appointed into roles were within that age group. We can therefore be sure that there isn't any bias during the recruitment process and that there is no discrimination by age.

5. Our Customers and Due Regard to the Equality Duty

The Council has a number of established services that have a direct impact on the community and which are good examples of how the Council pays due regard to the Equality Duty. These include services such as Crucial Crew (designed to help young people meet the challenges they might face as they become young adults) and the Fright Night Fish and Chip Supper (designed to bring older and younger people together at Halloween to foster good relationships and to avoid older people feeling intimidated by Trick or Treaters).

These are established events that happen annually but there are also specific areas to highlight where particular progress has been made in 2014.

Promenade Park, Maldon

This is a much loved community facility of over 23 hectares that includes green space, riverside views and refreshment opportunities. It is a valued destination for all ages for picnics, dog walking and relaxation but it also provides so much more. The park provides young people with fun and entertainment through its Splash Park, Play Galleon and other children's facilities. Adults can get involved in the weekly 5K Parkrun that is held there as well as enjoying the riverside walks, sports courts and football pitches. The riverside walks, wildlife and green space appeals to people of all age groups whilst the amphitheatre and open air stage host events that appeal to all age groups.

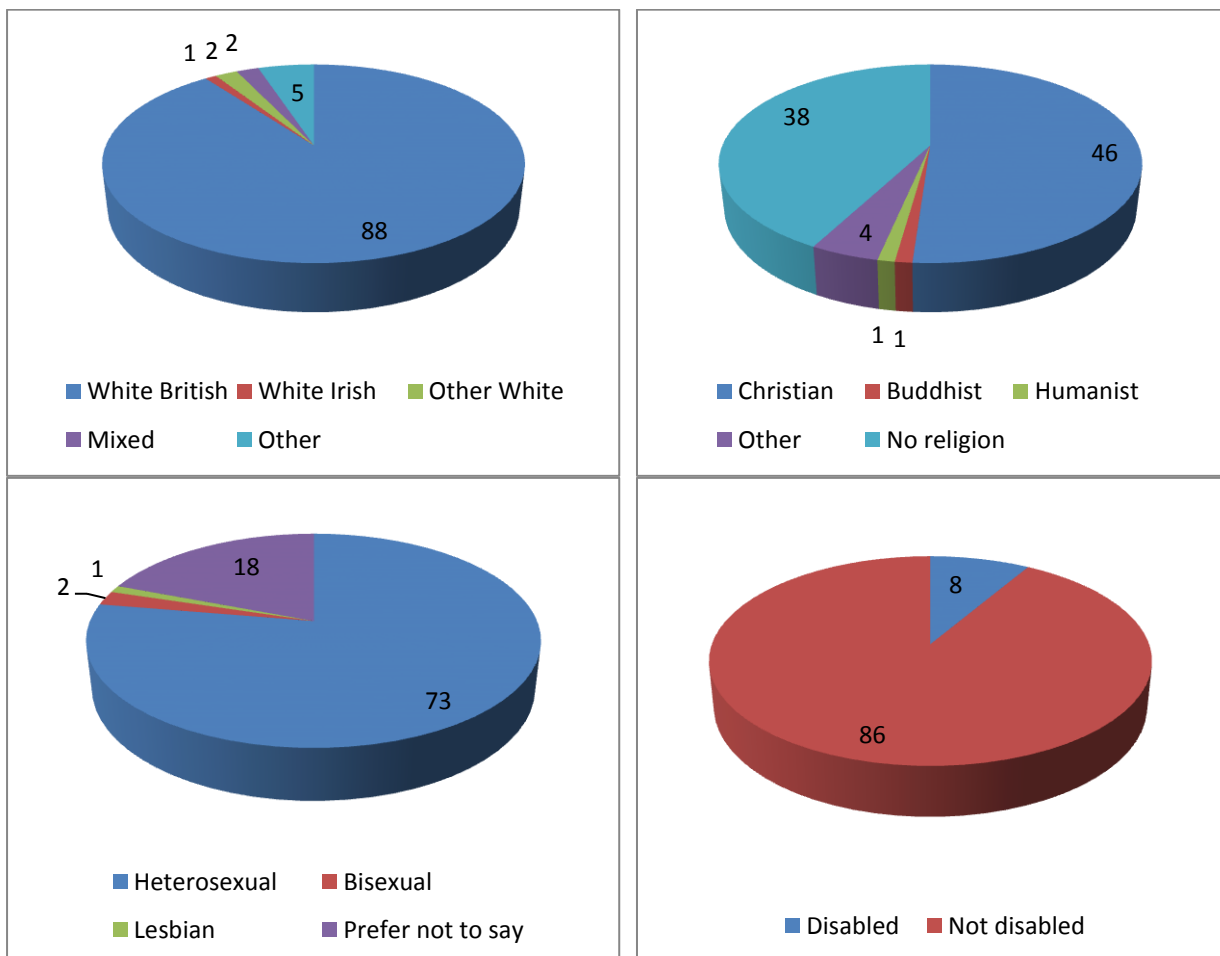
Promenade Park therefore provides recreation, health and wellbeing opportunities for people across the District. This is a much loved and well used facility and it is important that the park is inclusive and accessible to all. This is an approach that is embedded into the work of the Council and is reflected into the results that are seen. For example, the Park includes a 'Changing Places' listed disabled access toilet that is equipped with a ceiling hoist, changing bench and shower. There are designated disabled parking spaces within the park itself. The Splash park is accessible for children with disabilities and the parks itself is fully accessible. Furthermore, if there are further improvements to the park's facilities in the future they will be designed for maximum community use.

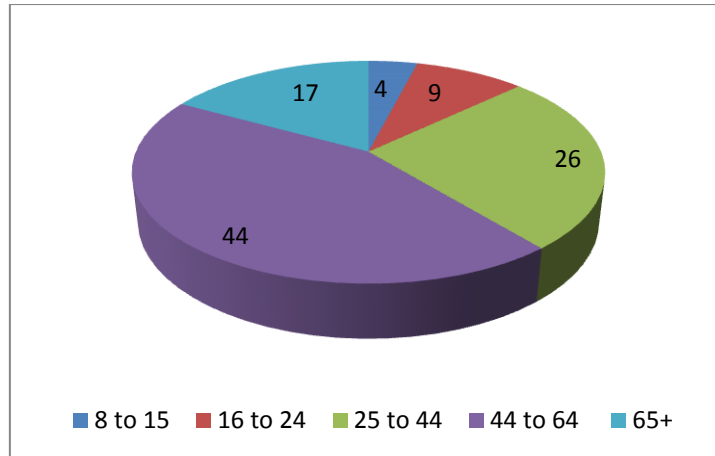
When a recent questionnaire was carried out (April/May 2014) to ask about possible improvements in Promenade Park, demographic questions were included within that questionnaire. Asking such questions is useful for two reasons. It helps the Council to determine whether the questionnaire has actually reached the right people plus it helps to get some understanding about the facility's users. This is very important in a service when other data is difficult to come by, as is the case in a free of charge and open to all service such as a park.

The data collected via the questionnaire about Promenade Park has shown that a mix of age ranges and community groups are being attracted to use the facility. The sample sizes were small but it can still be seen that there was a good spread of age groups using the park as well as people with different religions, races, sexual orientation and disabilities.

Although the figures were small, the outcome shown was very much in line with the make-up of the local community in Maldon and therefore reflective of the outcome that we would expect to see.

More work can always be done to make sure that services attract a diverse range of users, but in the case of the much loved Promenade Park the users already seem to be representative of the community.





Housing

The Strategic Housing Service delivers services that impact directly on people's lives through identifying and meeting local housing need, whether by preventing homelessness, providing new affordable homes or improving homes. It is therefore vitally important that the team keep equality at the heart of its work.

The team do just that, and some of the initiatives that have resulted this year include

- Setting a new policy to include the ability to increase the supply of affordable homes for older people (H2 Housing Mix). Two new homes have also been provided as part of a pilot to meet the needs of older people who want to downsize into a home that is better suited to their needs. These are particularly relevant initiatives in the Maldon District as there is a large older population and the general trend is for an ageing population.
- Establishing meetings with the Leaving and Aftercare Team (Essex County Council) to improve the arrangements for meeting the housing need of young people leaving care. The team have also agreed a protocol for joint working with Essex County Council Social Care to meet the needs of homeless young people. In this way the needs of younger people are not forgotten despite the overall ageing population.
- Agreeing with Nacro (crime reduction charity) the re-modelling of supported housing to improve the options for people suffering with mental ill health.
- Securing funding to maintain local supported housing for young mothers and young parents.

Community Safety

The Community Safety team undertake a number of initiatives designed to keep the district as a safe place to live that is free from harassment or victimisation. Two particular initiatives include

- Maldon District Council has been operating as a Hate Incident Reporting Centre since October 2014. Two members of staff have received extensive training from Essex Police in report taking and signposting for victims of crime.
- In partnership with Chelmsford City Council (a neighbouring authority), the Council runs an Independent Advisory Group to advise Essex Police on community tensions and also on any operations that the police may be putting into practice. The group comprises representatives from the Muslim and Jewish communities as well as BME groups, young people and people with learning disabilities.

6. Forthcoming Equalities Initiatives

As can be seen above, the Council has a number of initiatives that are aimed at meeting the aims of the Equality Duty. However there is always more that can be done so work is planned in 2015/16 to examine the Council's efforts to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty and where necessary to refresh its activities. These include

- Equality Framework: The Council will be examining the Equalities Framework for Local Government* with the aim of reaching the 'developing' level of the framework in the first instance. Doing so will help the Council to review and if necessary improve its performance with regard to equalities.

* The Framework has recently been reviewed as a result of the Public Sector Equality Duty Review.

- Equality Policy: The Council's Equality Policy will be reviewed and updated as part of the Local Government Equalities Framework preparations, to ensure that it provides an understanding of the standards that are expected.
- New HR System: The Council is working to install a new HR system which will give access to vastly improved HR information and data. The Council already has HR data (as shown above) but this is currently labour intensive to collect and consider. Having better access to improved data and reporting will enable improved information about staff and staffing (as required by the Public Sector Equality Duty), the ability to better analyse and understand trends and ultimately will allow the Council to have a better understanding of staff's needs.
- Two Ticks Scheme: The Council was previously accredited as a 'Two Ticks: Positive about disabled people' employer and still embeds those principles. Work will be carried out to refresh the Council's accreditation and raise the profile of this work.
- Building Accessibility: A review will be carried out of the Council's main Princes Road building to check its accessibility, especially of the 'back office' areas. The main public facing areas are accessible (although this will be examined at the same time) however the staff areas will be reviewed which is important as a large employer in the local area.
- Equality Group: A Council group will be used to consider equalities implications across the organisation.
- Training: Equalities training is currently something that is delivered within other learning opportunities (ie Safer Recruitment training) but a new programme of learning opportunities around equalities is being developed. This will include E-learning courses on equalities generally supplemented by specific training where it is needed.
- Website: The Council's website is being redesigned in 2015. This will of course include making sure that the website is accessible and that it meets the necessary accessibility standards. In addition it is planned that separate user testing will be carried out to ensure that the user experience is a good one and that there aren't any unexpected accessibility issues.
- Translation Services: The Council's provision of translation services will be examined during 2015 to ensure that it is fit for purpose and provides the services that the Council needs.

7. Conclusion

Maldon District Council has a very good understanding of its communities and especially of the fact that it has an ageing population which is a key factor for the future. The population isn't very diverse in terms of race although the 2011 census did show that picture to be changing. The Council is itself a large employer within the District with over 200 staff.

The Council has embedded equalities within its work. Equality analysis (in the form of equality impact assessments) is carried out when required and staff have a good understanding of their community and of their community's needs.

There is therefore a good understanding of equalities throughout the organisation although improvements can always be made. There are therefore plans for the future development of equalities throughout the organisation.

8. Review Date

This document will be reviewed annually – therefore an update will be published on or before 31st January 2016.