

Annual Equality Report

Equal People, Different Needs

2015-16

Other formats are available.
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Futures Park, Bacup.

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Introduction

We can only provide an effective service to our community if we recognise the diversity within our communities and enable our workforce to meet the needs and concerns of that diversity.

Equality and fairness underpin the work and ethos of the Council at all levels. We have and continue to strive to achieve fairness in all of our services.

The Council's Annual Report on Equality and Diversity is one of the ways in which the Council makes visible the extent to which it is meeting its obligations to recognise diversity and promote equality. It reflects our work with and within our diverse internal and external communities as well as reporting key equality data/information.

The Council has made significant progress in embracing and progressing equality but recognise there is also more work to be done and we will continue to strive towards excellence.

As an employer our aim is to develop a diverse workforce and ensure that our workforce can work with dignity and respect, free from any type of discrimination or prejudice.

As a service provider our aim is to provide the best possible services to meet the needs of our different customers and ensure that our customers are treated with dignity and respect, free from any type of discrimination or prejudice, in the delivery of our services and decision making.

Summary

As a public body we are required to publish equality information which demonstrates compliance with the Equality Duty. This report contains information¹ about:

- The protected characteristics of our workforce (where disclose/available)
- The protected characteristics of our communities / customers (where disclosed/available)
- An overview of our equality-related activities

We recognise that a proportion of the data we actively collect relates to small numbers of people, particularly when disaggregated by protected characteristic. Where the number people with a particular protected characteristics is fewer than 10, in line with best practice and guidance sought, we have either replaced this number with an asterisk (*), have obtained permission or have determined that no individuals can be easily identified.

¹ Based on information that has been disclosed and or that is publically available.

Equality Framework for Local Government

The Council continues to undertake a robust and proportionate approach to equality and diversity, adopting the ethos and principles of the Equality Framework for Local Government.

As part of the Council's on-going commitment to meeting the needs of our different customers and delivering quality services we have been designated as '**an achieving authority**' under the Equality Framework for Local Government through an independent assessment.

This means that we are seen by the community and partners as making a real difference and providing positive outcomes for local people. This is based on our understanding and knowledge of our communities by working with them and engaging – which has helped the Council to provide responsive services that tries to acknowledge and meet the different needs our communities, and ensure that our decision making is informed.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 states that everyone has the right to be treated fairly and equally. The Act has two main purposes. It brings together and simplifies all of the existing discrimination law, and strengthens the law to further support progress on equality.

In the exercise of its functions (including any functions carried out by an external supplier/organisation), the Council must have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.**
- **Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**
- **Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**

These are often called the three main aims of the 'general duty' and are detailed in the [Equality Act 2010 Section 149](#) .

The Equality Duty is supported by two **specific duties** which require public bodies to:

- **Publish equality information** at least annually.
- **Set and publish equality objectives** at least every four years.

Equality Objectives

In 2012 the Council set three underpinning equality objectives, this annual equality report reflects the commitment to these.

- Ensure community engagement and consultation is effective
- Embed equalities throughout the Council
- Improve data and analysis in relation to equality and customer information.

Further information on the context behind our equality objectives can be found on the [Council's website](#):

There are also a series of business plan level actions and performance indicators that are equality related. These are set out in our Business Plan and will be reported on via our Quarterly Performance Reports which are published on our website.

Community Population Profile

The Council actively use existing data and intelligence sources such as, Census, Office of National Statistics, Neighbourhood Statistics, Lancashire Profile, JSNA (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment), the Index of Multiple Deprivation and so forth to understand the local profile/make up of our neighbourhoods/communities where available.

Utilising the 2011 Census data and other key publically available data sources the Council has produced a [Borough Profile and a set of Ward Profiles](#), which has been published on our website and circulated to key community groups. These have been received very positively in terms of assisting community group with evidence for funding bids etc.

Workforce Profile²

Rosendale Borough Council, as per the period of reporting, employs 169 full time equivalent employees (162 full time, 6 part time and 1 casual). Equality monitoring is undertaken at the selection and periodically thereafter. The council is shortly going to be undertaking a review to update our equality monitoring data.

Appendix 1 of the Report Appendices sets out the data that has been disclosed.

Of those that did disclose information, some highlights are:

- In terms of gender diversity, the majority of the workforce is male; 63% male and 37% female.
- 1.7% of our employees have disclosed that they have a disability.

² Please note that data is based on those that have chosen to respond and disclose information. Not all respondents have chosen to disclose information in relation to all equality monitoring questions.

- 1.77% of employees identified as Asian or Asian British Pakistani.
- 31% of our employees are aged 50-59 years.
- Those aged 19-24 years account for only less than 6% of our workforce.
- The majority of the Council's workforce declared themselves as heterosexual (76.33%) thought the other 23/77% preferred not to disclose.
- The majority of our workforce is Christian (46.74%). Identification of 'no religion or belief' accounted for 18% of people choosing to disclose this information.
- 71% of staff who chose to disclose their gender identity information, identified as 'living in the gender that they were given at birth' the rest preferred not to disclose.

Councillor Profile³

Equality monitoring is undertaken when new Councillors are elected / re-elected as part of their induction process. Appendix 1 sets out the latest data available. It should be noted that a number of Councillors have chosen not to disclose equality information. Of those that did disclose information, some highlights are:

- In terms of gender diversity, 52% of our elected Councillors are female and 38% are male with 8.3% preferring not to disclose. A majority of female Councillors remains.
- 89% of our Councillors identify as 'White'. Black and other ethnic minorities remain underrepresented within the profile of the Borough's elected Councillors. 11% preferred not to disclose their ethnicity.
- The majority of our Councillors are aged 60-69 years (47%).
- The majority of our Councillors are heterosexual (80%). Based on the information disclosed, gay, lesbian and bisexual people are underrepresented amongst Councillors. Nonetheless 5.4% of councillors disclosed they were gay, lesbian or bisexual.

Employment Monitoring Information

We embed monitoring at the various stages of employment as appropriate.

In terms of recruitment and selection during April 2014- March 2015, the majority of applicants were White British. This is broadly representative of the local population profile. This trend is also the case for successful applicants.

Shortlisted application data shows that more males were shortlisted than females during this period. Successful selection data during this period shows that the majority of successful appointments were male, White British. 1 successful appointed applicant identified themselves as being disabled during the 2015-16 recruitment period.

³ Please note that data is based on those that have chosen to disclose information. Not all respondents have chosen to disclose information in relation to all equality monitoring questions.

All employees recorded as disabled were able to access training and development opportunities during 2014-15. The levels of equality data that is available / disclosed is too small to publish for some of this data.

In terms of sickness related absence warning monitoring, the levels of equality data that is available / disclosed is too small to publish.

In terms of termination⁴ of employment/leaving the council, there were 37 employees during 2014-15, more males (20) than females (17). Although there was a broad split across age bands, there was a slight majority of those aged 60-69 years. The majority were White British and heterosexual. The levels of equality data that is available / disclosed is too small to publish for some data.

There have been no employee grievances or complaints in relation to discrimination during this period.

See Appendix B for further details, where available/disclosed.

Flexible Working

The Council's commitment to enabling and supporting flexible working is set out in its Flexible Working Policy. The Council already considers requests for flexible working from all staff and we recognise that the ability to achieve a work-life balance is an important factor in helping us retain staff while continuing to meet the business need.

The Council also has a flexible working system for the majority of staff which enable them to manage their family life and external commitments within core business hours (7.30am-7pm) in addition to formal requests for flexible working arrangements.

Reasonable Adjustments Made for Employees

There have been no (formal or informal) for adjustments to employees working environment in relation to disability during this period.

Employment and Equal Pay

Key messages:

- Of the staff that live within the borough 32% are in BB4 postcode and 21% are in OL13 postcode areas.
- Average basic pay for females is £24,006pa
- Average basic pay for males is £23,348 pa
- Overall average is £23,590 pa

See Appendix B for breakdown of pay related data.

⁴ Termination here covers all aspects on an employee leaving the council's employment, resignation, compulsory redundancy, voluntary redundancy, dismissal etc.

Awareness Raising /Training & Development

As an employer, the Council has a proactive approach to training and development in order to meet the needs of different learners, and we recognise that it is critical for our staff to have the skills and knowledge to help eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equal opportunities and value diversity. The Council's Organisational Development Plan is one element of the organisation's delivery mechanisms to fulfil its equality commitments.

Equality and Diversity – promoting understanding and respect

On an ongoing basis the Council continues to promote and raise awareness internally and externally of key equality and diversity and health and wellbeing related events, celebrations and campaigns. general briefings and information sheets, hints and tips for promoting and encouraging equality and diversity which have been received positively.

These include, but are not limited to:-

- Bowel Cancer Awareness Month
- Active Spaces Walks
- Credit Union Awareness / Promotion
- World AIDS Day
- International Women's Day
- International Day of Disabled People
- Human Rights Day
- Love Your Liver' Month
- Cancer Talk Week
- National Bug Busting Day
- Promoting cycling
- Tinnitus Awareness Week
- World Cancer Day
- Safeguarding awareness
- Downs Syndrome Awareness
- Awareness of religious / cultural festivals/celebrations

Also, the equality pages of our website provide signposting for the public.

Equality Impact Assessments

[Equality Impact Assessments](#) (EIAs) are a structured and transparent way for the Council to fully understand the implications of our decisions and whether they are detrimental or discriminatory by considering the impact on protected equality groups within our community, fostering good relations and protection of human rights. This process is integrated into the Council's policy development and decision making framework.

During 2015-16 there have been no equality challenges or judicial review action related to the EIA processes that have informed the Council's decision making.

EIAs are published with the relevant reports which are published on our website on the [meetings pages](#).

Engagement and Consultation

The Equality Duty requires the Council to have an adequate evidence base for its decision-making. A key reason for the Council to engage is to help us understand how

our policies affect (or will affect) people who use our services, which can be used to inform and improve decision making.

The Council takes a proportionate⁵ and relevant approach to engagement and consultation activity. The Council's approach is to identify what information it already has available and will seek to determine where the gaps in evidence and understanding are, what it is seeking to find out and from whom, in order that the engagement activity is focused and relevant.

Rossendale Citizen's Panel is an active database of people within the community that the Council can consult with via surveys on key issues throughout the year giving people in the community that are interested in being consulted on specific issues the opportunity to submit their views via the internet or by post. This is open for anyone to join at any time. We also publish consultations on our website (digital by default with alternative formats available on request) and where appropriate in some cases undertake consultation events/drop in sessions in the borough.

We also have Neighbourhood Forums through which people can get involved in their local areas.

Rossendale Borough Council Compliments and Complaints

We aim to learn from both complaints and compliments that are made about issues related to equality or discrimination, or from particular groups within the community. However, we recognise that there are certain difficulties in collection of equality data in situations of complaint for robust analysis. The Council's complaints and compliments, including reports of discrimination complaints by staff or customers are recoded formally via the Council's feedback and complaints system. This data is reported quarterly as part of the Council's Performance Report, published on the Council's website.

The Council received **142 Compliments** during the financial year 2015/16.

The Council received **86 Complaints** during the financial year 2015/16.

The Council received **3** Ombudsman complaints during the financial year 2015/16.

None of the complaints received related to equality/access or discrimination.

No equality information was disclosed or collected in relation to these figures during 2015-16.

Providing Accessible Information

Online - www.rossendale.gov.uk

The Council's website makes it easier for communities to access timely and useful information that is relevant to them and are able to undertake many council services

⁵ Ensuring compliance with the Council's Best Value Duty and Duty to Inform, Consult and Involve.

online it also has improved compatibility with new web browsers and compliance with the latest web standards and accessibility guidelines.

The Council's website has been designed to comply with W3C [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) (WCAG) as well as [government standards](#). All pages on this site reach level 'A' conformance from the WCAG, with most pages reaching level 'AA' conformance

The accessibility function pages allow the user to adapt the website to meet their needs; settings can be saved for their next visit. The website also utilises a responsive design that automatically shapes itself to fit to the screen of the device it is being viewed on.

The Council is committed to improving the website and increasing the number of its services that are available online for those that are able to access them on 2016/17.

All public council meeting documents are published on our website and can be requested in hard copy and alternative formats as required in line with our Equality Policy.

Social Media – Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

The Council has increased its use of social media as a means of informing and engaging with our communities in a proportionate and appropriate manner, as well as a tool for promoting and awareness raising of local events and activities. The number of people our posts and tweets reach is increasing. Residents also use social media as a means of asking questions and positive feedback has been received in relation to dealing with these in the format.

Face-to-face

Our One Stop Shop (OSS) walk in centre for the public is located at Futures Park, Bacup, which is also where the Council's main office and the Council Chamber are based.

It is accessible on a main public transport route with onsite parking. The OSS is Council's main face to face contact centre for the community. Face to face meetings with a council officer from specific team/departments are also available by appointment / request if needed.

Translation / interpretation for face to face meetings (or via telephone) are available on request as needed.

Hate crime / incidents and domestic abuse reporting

Rossendale Council knows that hate crimes and incidents can have a serious impact on victims and their quality of life. It also has a negative impact on the community which is why we are committed to working in partnership to tackle incidents and crimes motive by prejudice and hate.

There are various internal and external systems in place to record this information; Internally during 2015-16 there were no reported cases of discrimination. Externally, within the community, where the Safer Lancashire database MADE record this information.

In relation to domestic abuse, the Council has invested in domestic abuse service provision via a pan Lancashire commissioned service, delivered locally, and will continue to look at ways it can best support domestic abuse support services in future.

Service Delivery Monitoring

Customer satisfaction and equality monitoring is also undertaken within service areas. This varies across services as and where considered appropriate or necessary to do so.

Appendix B (3) set out customer satisfaction and associated equality data where it is available.

Summary of our work during 2015-16

We could not possibly fit everything we do with our communities here in this report, but the following pages provide a good example of the breadth of work we have been involved in.

Affordable Warmth 2015/16

Although reduced in funding again, the Council in partnership were still able to run this scheme during 2015-16 on a smaller scale. Only a very limited number of warm packs were delivered by St Vincent's this year in emergency situations only.

Help included;

- Boiler Servicing and Repairs
- Temporary heaters and gas fire repairs
- Draught proofing and Radiator Reflectors
- Emergency Top Up Cards (provided by Rossendale Citizen's Advice Bureau)
- Warm Packs
- Electric Blanket testing & replacement

St Vincent's provided boiler repairs and replacements and the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) provided help with fuel poverty and emergency top up cards.

In total we were able to help approximately 63 people this year in receipt of housing benefits or pension credit guarantee. Mostly these people were helped with boiler repairs and replacements but did have the option of help with draught proofing and/or electric blanket replacement. Other referrals came from home visits and referrals from elected members who came across problems in their constituency.

Supporting young people to get into work

Local activity and support has been delivered throughout the year by our partners at Lancashire's Young People's Service (YPS). We continue to monitor NEETs through the Children's Partnership Board. Further information on the wider work and services of the YPS can be found on the YPS website: www.lancashire.gov.uk/yps.

The Council does support an Apprenticeship scheme which is very successful.

Promoting Democracy with Young People

In 2015/16 the Council carried a local competition with schools around the anniversary of the Magna Carta to raise awareness of democracy.

MASH

Rossendale Borough Council continues to support / be part of the MASH, a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, one project within the overarching Lancashire Improving Futures programme. Further information can be found on the website:

Neighbourhood Forum Grants – Making a difference to local priorities

The Borough's four Neighbourhood Forums are also a key means for the Council to support local priorities. We have a Neighbourhood Forum grants scheme to help address issues identified by the local communities. The Council provided £20,000 during 2015-16 to the Neighbourhood Forums which was allocated in grants of up to £500.00 to the following areas:

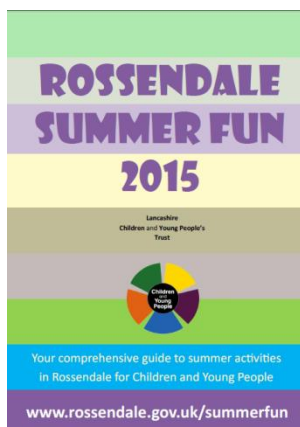
- Bacup - £5373.00
- Whitworth – £ 1272.00
- Haslingden - £ 4607.00
- Rawtenstall - £ 8738.00

The Council continues to support the four Neighbourhood Forums and to work with local communities to tackle issues and priorities locally. Through availability of small neighbourhood forum grants the Council has been able to continue to support community groups to deliver a range of projects that will improve the quality of life for people in the local area and make a difference locally.

Rossendale Community Fund – supporting families, children and young people

In October 2015 the Council launched a new fund aimed at supporting projects that help families and children and young people to engage in community activities and learning.

In 2015/16 a total of £10,455 was awarded to 11 local groups and organisations in grants of up to £1000.



Summer Fun 2015

The Council successfully coordinated and produced another Summer Fun brochure in partnership with the Rossendale Children and Young People's Trust, to promote and raise awareness of local activities and schemes for children and young people during the summer holidays of 2015. These were distributed to schools, libraries and children's centres, GP surgeries, children's social care and health lead professionals, as well as advertised via the Council's website, the local press and posters displayed in community facilities.

Other Equality Data

For other equality data/information please see separate document – Appendix B.