

Wycombe District Council

Equality Framework



Contents:

Revisions Page

SECTION 1: Policy and Vision (including link to Corporate Plan)

SECTION 2: Equality Scheme

Appendix 1: Current Legislation

Appendix 2: Guide to Wycombe District Council's Protected Characteristics

Appendix 3: Equality information published by the council

Revisions

This Equality Framework was produced in May 2012 and will be reviewed as necessary but at least bi-annually.

Document Version	Modified Date	Modified By	Section and Text Revised
1.2	Jan 13	C Hook	Section 1, Page 4, Reference to Equality Action Plan
1.3	Mar 13	C Hook	Useful Contacts, chaplaincy service added
1.4	Oct 13	C Hook	Document review: Change of wording from Corporate Action Plan to Corporate Equality Action Plan Change to reflect new EA schedule is based on Service Financial Plans not Transformation programme Change of wording from Impact Assessment to Equality Assessment LGBT Mental health contact added BCC and Partners LGBT Forum contact added Change of wording regarding Training Change of location and wording regarding Consultation Change of definition of marriage
1.5	Dec 13	C Hook	Addition of a LGB contact
1.6	Dec 14	C Hook	Update of contacts' details Removal of low income text and relocation of contact details within Useful Contacts page When to do an EA paragraph added to 'How to assess the impact of services' section
1.7	Jan 16	V McSwiggan	Document review: Change of wording and update of Procurement process. Updates to Part 2 – The Process to reflect current procedures. Updated definition of harassment. Change of wording from Impact Assessment to Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) throughout. Update of contact details throughout.
1.8	Apr 17	V McSwiggan	Updating of terms relating to 'gender reassignment'. Replacement with 'transgender' or 'gender identity' as required. Removal of reference to Corporate Governance Group (COG). Updated training section.
1.9	July 18	C Herries-Smith	Updated terminology for protected characteristics 'sex' and 'gender re-assignment'

			to be in line with statutory terminology
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SECTION 1: Policy & Vision

The Context

Wycombe District Council (WDC) seeks to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 which prohibits all forms of discrimination. The Act replaced numerous pieces of discrimination legislation and statutory instruments plus guidance and statutory codes of practice, as well as replacing the former public sector duties on race, disability and gender equality. In doing so it seeks to strengthen and extend the law to support progress on equality.

Within the Act a local authority has a further requirement to meet the needs of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that WDC needs to show it is acting fairly and equitably and is transparent in its decision making.

Appendix 1: Current Legislation provides more detail about the Act and what is required.

Our Equality Commitment

WDC serves diverse residents, with people from a range of backgrounds and experiences enhancing the life and development of the District. The Council has a community leadership role in embracing diversity and enabling equality.

The Council has identified three areas where it wants to make changes and improvements during 2015 - 2019. These priorities, branded as the '**three Ps**' are included in its corporate plan.

They are:

People – Cohesive communities

Place – Regeneration & Infrastructure

Pounds – Value for money services

The Corporate Plan can be found at

<https://www.wycombe.gov.uk/uploads/public/documents/About-the-council/Wycombe-DC-Corporate-Plan.pdf>

The Equality Objective

WDC's equality objective is 'Changing the way we work to ensure equality and accessibility for everyone every day.'

To deliver this objective requires the Council to work towards the following aims:

- Preventing inequality by focusing on equitable and fair outcomes even if this means treating people differently;
- Understanding the needs of customers;
- Being accessible to all local people and communities;
- Improving accountability to local people;
- Improving satisfaction and trust;
- Meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 for customers, staff and job applicants;
- Meeting the legal requirements to make reasonable workplace adjustments for disabled people and providing services to the same standards, making any necessary changes to avoid discrimination.

This framework is developed from the Council's Corporate Plan and supports the achievement of its priorities.

Responsibility and Accountability

- The Cabinet has collective responsibility for overseeing achievement of this Framework and accounting for progress.
- The Cabinet Member for Community is the lead for the Framework's development.
- It is the responsibility of the Strategic Management Board to make sure that actions are in place to deliver this Framework.
- The overall implementation of the Framework will be monitored by the Strategic Management Board, supported by the Equality Champions Group.
- Heads of Services have an essential role in delivering this policy. They are to be proactive in developing a service led approach to achieving equalities and to ensure that staff are adequately trained to meet the requirements of this Framework.
- Every service has at least one Equality Champion, who supports the development of service specific action plans.
- Every manager and employee has a role to play in implementing the plans.

SECTION 2: Equality Scheme

Part 1: Components of the Scheme

There are various components to the Equality Scheme. The Council's duties to address the equality needs of all residents are met through this Scheme.

1. Protected characteristics

Protected characteristics refer to groups of people who might experience particular forms of discrimination, whether or not the discrimination is intentional. This can be in terms of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief (including no belief)
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Further Guidance on the characteristic is given in 'Guide to Wycombe District Council's Protected Characteristics' in **Appendix 2**.

2. Partnerships

Working with partners in the statutory, voluntary and business sector is a feature of the Council's work. It is also an essential part of promoting the general well-being of Wycombe's citizens.

The Council has a number of key partnerships and as a part of these it will:

- Act as an equality champion;
- Promote equality matters in partnership work;
- Work to ensure that the partnership performance management framework assesses whether outcomes address inequalities;
- Work to ensure partnerships engage fully with local people taking due account of differing viewpoints.

3. Procurement

Since 2015, legislation regarding the procurement process which Public Authorities must follow has changed. The Government's Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) which bodies are required to use incorporates questions on equality & diversity which can be used as required.

A PQQ will only be used when the contract is above the EU thresholds and PQQ's are no longer permitted for contracts below these thresholds. Instead, suitable assessment questions (which may be taken from the prescribed PQQ) can be asked in relation to the tender/contract awarding process if relevant. WDC will endeavour to ask the most suitable questions to ensure that the procurement process is compliant with equality legislation.

4. Training

Diversity training aims to increase the cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills of participants with the intention of increasing inclusion and service relevance. The Council provides training for all new staff via a compulsory Induction programme covering Equality & Diversity; as well as targeted programmes on disability awareness and other areas. E learning modules on diversity and equality are also available. Both in-house and external providers are used as appropriate. Following elections, an induction programme incorporating Equality training for Members is held.

To meet the individual needs of different people various formats of training are available such as E-learning which offers the convenience of the delegate being able to work at their desk at a time that suits them. The Council's E-learning system 'E-train' conforms to disability guidelines and incorporates screen readers for the visually impaired. Courses are assessed before being made available to staff to ensure that they are suitable for those staff with a disability. Subtitles for E-learning will be requested and provided if available. Where it is not possible to provide them training will be available in an alternative format.

5. Service Information

Key to all these components is a knowledgeable workforce which can deliver a tailored service to its customers.

6. Engagement

In March 2012 our Engagement Strategy and Standards was approved by Cabinet. The five Engagement Standards now in place to ensure the Council is clear, open and transparent when engaging with people are:

1. **When to engage:** 'Formal engagement will take place at a stage when there is scope to influence the decision being taken by the council'.

2. **How long to engage:** 'The length of time given for engagement will depend on the scope of the proposal, the target audience and any statutory guidelines applicable to the service concerned'.
3. **Being clear:** 'Information will be clear about the process, what is being proposed and what is not being proposed; the scope to influence, along with the expected costs and benefits of the proposal'.
4. **Giving people the opportunity to engage:** 'Engagement exercises will be designed to be accessible to, and clearly targeted at, those people the exercise is intended to reach'.
5. **Giving feedback:** 'Responses will be analysed carefully and clear feedback will be provided to participants following the engagement exercise within a published timescale.'

7. Research and monitoring

The Council uses all information at its disposal, including census, labour force surveys, workforce reports, government reports and deprivation indices.

Monitoring is an ongoing process of analysis, questioning, investigating and learning. The Council monitors in order to benchmark performance, gain greater knowledge and understanding of who uses services, what barriers they may experience in trying to take up services and what needs to change to better meet residents' needs.

The Council will assess the likely impact of policies and strategies via Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's).

Part 2: The Process

The way in which the Council ensures it achieves its Equality Objective is as follows:

Equality Champions Group (ECG)

The group consists of an Equality Champion for each service area and works on equality issues at its quarterly meetings. The Champions support individuals within their service areas when undertaking Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) and progress the resultant actions.

Senior Management Board (SMB)

The group receives the ECG minutes plus an annual report on progress and key issues. They consider and approve the annual Corporate Equality Action Plan showing the planned equality work for the year.

Chief Executive (CE)

The Chief Executive is responsible for all staff and the application of equal opportunities within the Council.

Annual Review

The Equality Champions Group meets quarterly. Each year three meetings focus on service level equality issues. The fourth meeting also considers the planned Equality Assessments for the coming year which are linked to the annual service area plans. This ensures equality is encompassed into day to day work. The Corporate Equality Action Plan is renewed annually.

New Plans and Strategies

A checklist has to be completed prior to any decision being made by the Council. The checklist asks for confirmation that equality issues have been considered and an Equality Impact Assessment completed if appropriate.

How to assess the impact of services

A self-auditing process is used to ensure that the Council is consulting with local people and assessing the likely impact of its services, policies and decisions

There is an ongoing schedule of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) which is based on our Service Financial Plans and any additional or ad-hoc EIA's are included as necessary. Functions and services across the Council have been assessed previously, and there is a rolling schedule of reviews as required. The EIA will be carried out by a team of staff from within the service and other appropriate members, plus support from the relevant Equality Champion. In addition the Policy Officer is sometimes involved. The EIA will result in a proportionate Action Plan. This process is monitored by the Equality Champions Group and referred to the Senior Management Board (SMB) as required to ensure that issues identified are addressed and actions completed in a timely manner.

An EIA will be completed when there is a change or review to policies or procedures. The completion of Stage 1 of an EIA will determine if a full assessment is needed.

The EIA process has four stages

Stage 1 - Scope the assessment

The assessment is scoped to fit the defined service area and its policies. It is possible to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment on any aspect of the Council's work and the focus may be policy; strategy; service; major project; or a group of services/policies.

Stage 2 – Information Gathering & Data Collection

In most cases the assessment will use existing data sources. Additional data may be collected if needed or additional consultation carried out. This will be the decision of the team. There may be data gaps at this stage and the collection of new data could be one of the actions emerging from the assessment, to be included in the action plan. At this stage the team need to:

- Decide and identify the quantitative and qualitative data and management information that is needed;
- Ensure there is information that allows all perspectives to be taken into account;
- Identify and document any gaps in data and explain how these will be addressed. The team may decide to collect new data or consult with other agencies/focus groups/local residents.

Stage 3 – Impact Assessment & Analysis

The EIA is likely to generate actions and performance indicators that will drive improvement in delivering equitable services. Possible findings might include:

- An adverse impact or impacts in one or more areas;
- Systems or processes that are likely to cause an adverse impact across one or more areas;
- Unmet need within one or more groups.

Evaluation is about using monitoring and other data to assess service delivery, and aims to answer agreed questions and to make a judgement against specific criteria. To make a robust assessment data must be collected and analysed systematically, and its interpretation considered carefully.

In general, questions asked will include:

- What were the key issues that needed to be addressed?
- What actions have been completed?
- Did they achieve the intended purpose?
- Are there any persistent inequalities that still need addressing?
- What changes or benefits have met the needs of particular service users?

Stage 4 – Equalities Improvement Plan (including continuous monitoring)

If an assessment demonstrates an impact (adverse or otherwise) then the service will consider any possible actions to remedy the situation. The purpose of these actions will be to:

- Improve the quality of data/research so that there is a clearer understanding of impact;
- Identify suitable measures to reduce and/or mitigate the impact;
- Develop good equality practice.

It is important to ensure that any strategy/service/policy has a built in monitoring framework. This Stage will enable the Officer to consider how such monitoring will take place and how the data obtained through the monitoring will be used to ensure that any measures and actions taken were sufficiently thorough.

In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) all EIA's are published on the corporate webpage for public scrutiny.

Ad Hoc & Additional Equality Impact assessments

Everyone can be involved. If anyone sees a way that the Council works that is creating an adverse impact on an individual or group then please do an Ad Hoc Equality Assessment. Details are on the Equality and Safeguarding page of WySpace (via the Corporate tab).

Publishing of Equality information

In line with the PSED supporting the Equality Act 2010 local authorities are required to show transparency in both decision making and in the services they provide.

See **Appendix 3** for a list of, and links to, information published by WDC.

WDC Contact

Policy Officer (part-time)

Tel: 01494 421495

Email: equality@wycombe.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Current Legislation

The Equality Act came into force 1st Oct 2010 with the aim of harmonising and simplifying the law, making it more effective and modernising it. Under the Equality Act (2010) conduct prohibited is:

- Direct discrimination - treating people less favourably than others on the grounds of a protected characteristic.
- Harassment – unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. In deciding whether harassment has occurred the following must be considered; the perception of the person; the other circumstances of the case and whether it reasonable for the conduct to have that effect.
- Discrimination arising from disability, including that arising from association with a person with a disability.
- Discrimination arising from gender identity (such as trans gender).
- Pregnancy and maternity discrimination.
- Indirect discrimination – applying a provision, criterion or practice which disadvantages people with a protected characteristic which is not justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- Discrimination arising from being perceived as having one of the protected characteristics.
- Failure to make reasonable adjustments.
- Victimisation – treating people less favourably because of something they have done under, or in connection with, the Regulations, e.g. made a formal complaint of discrimination or given evidence in a tribunal case.
- Causing, instructing, inducing and aiding discrimination.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

Specific requirements affecting Local Authorities came into force in April 2011 and are called the Public Sector Equality Duty. The aim of the Duty is to assist public bodies to meet the requirements of the Act, and requires them to consider all individuals when carrying out their day to day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. The PSED states that a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have **due regard** to the need to:

- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under this Act,
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share a protected characteristic.
- c) Foster good relations between persons who **share** a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Also, a person who is not a public authority but who exercises public functions must, in the exercise of these functions, have due regard to the matters mentioned above.

In order to meet these requirements public authorities are required to:

- Show transparency by publishing data on equality in relation to their workforce and services they provide;
- Set equality outcome objectives informed by the evidence and data they publish.

To meet these requirements WDC publish all completed Equality Assessments (EIAs) on our website thereby showing how decisions were reached, along with other equality related information and data. Consultations that are undertaken are also published on the website.

Our Equality objectives are included within our published Corporate Equality Action Plan.

A list of information published and where to find it can be found in **Appendix 3**.

Appendix 2

Guide to Wycombe District Council's Protected Characteristics

Wycombe District Council (WDC) are committed to achieving equality for all people living and working within the District to ensure that all have true freedom of choice to be able to fully participate in public life irrespective of their differences or needs, and without fear of harassment or discrimination. WDC are committed to ensuring everybody is treated with respect and courtesy and their specific needs are taken into consideration, which may mean treating people differently. WDC has nine protected characteristics, all of which are statutory requirements.

By using the Public Sector Equality Duties and Equality Impact Assessments we are able to embed equality considerations throughout our activities, as well as supporting the design and delivery of personalised and responsive public services.

1. Age

Definition

Age discrimination legislation currently applies in employment, vocational training, further education and higher education. Age discrimination legislation does not currently apply to goods and services (although Human Rights law may give some protection in these areas).

Age discrimination occurs if you have been treated less favourably on the basis of your age, without justification. This may be because you are considered too young or too old. Legally, the test for many potential cases of age discrimination is whether the discrimination can be said to be 'justified'. Unlike most other types of discrimination, justification can be used lawfully as a defence for direct age discrimination, as well as indirect age discrimination.

Legal Summary

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations were implemented in October 2006 and outlawed unjustified discrimination on the grounds of age in all aspects of employment and vocational training. The Equality Act 2010 means there is no default retirement age, however in some circumstances age discrimination can be justified.

Contacts

Wycombe Youth Action: 07519154798, website: www.wycombeyouthaction.co.uk

BCC Youth Services: 01296 382583; email: youthspacebucks@buckscc.gov.uk, website: www.buckscc.gov.uk/education/youthspace

Age UK Buckinghamshire: 01296 431911; website: www.ageuk.org.uk/buckinghamshire

Youth Enquiry Service (YES): 01494 437373; website: www.youthenquiryservice.org.uk

Action4Youth: 0845 600 9731; email: office@action4youth.org; website: www.action4youth.org

2. Disability

Definition

A person has a disability if s/he has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. Examples include progressive illnesses such as cancer, diabetes, multiple sclerosis and heart conditions (from point of diagnosis); hearing or sight impairments; a significant mobility difficulty; and mental health conditions or learning difficulties. People in these circumstances and some others (such as people with a facial disfigurement) are likely to have rights under the Equality Act 2010 to protect them from discrimination. However, only the courts can say if a particular individual is defined as disabled under the legislation.

Legal Summary

Discrimination occurs when a disabled person is treated less favourably than other people because of their disability, unless there is a justifiable reason (the main justifiable reason is on health and safety grounds). Someone who is not disabled cannot use the Equality Act in this way if they believe they received less favourable treatment than a disabled person.

Employers and service providers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments so that a disabled person can take up a job, carry on working or make use of a service. The failure to make a reasonable adjustment will be regarded as less favourable treatment on the grounds of disability. Examples of reasonable adjustments include providing special equipment, changing working practices and procedures and adapting premises. All organisations are required to ensure that services open to the public should be fully accessible to disabled people. The Equality Act also covers how information about an organisation's services is presented and whether its formats are accessible to disabled people.

The Act places a duty on all public authorities to have due regard, when carrying out their functions by taking into account a disabled person's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons. They also have a duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination and unlawful harassment of disabled people and improve the equality of opportunity for disabled people. Public authorities are also required to give due weight to the need to promote disability equality in relation to all policies and practices including planning, policy making, service delivery, regulation, inspection, enforcement and employment. Organisations should take particular care to ensure that they do not make judgements on impairment of either staff or applicants but ask questions about needs and requirements and how these can be met.

Contacts

Carers Bucks: 0300 777 2722; website: www.carersbucks.org; email: mail@carersbucks.org

3. Sex

Definition

According to the World Health Organisation, 'sex' refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women, so male and female are sex categories.

'Gender' refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women, so masculine and feminine are gender categories. Gender is related to how we are perceived and expected to think and act as women and men because of the way society is organised, not because of our biological differences.

Aspects of sex will not vary substantially between different human societies, while aspects of gender may vary greatly. Some examples of gender characteristics are: 1) In most countries women earn less money than men for similar work, 2) In Vietnam, many more men than women smoke, as female smoking has not traditionally been considered appropriate, and 3) In Saudi Arabia men are allowed to drive cars whilst women are not.

Legal Summary

The Equality Act 2010 supersedes the Equal Pay Act 1970, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, and the Equality Act 2006. It protects both men and women against discrimination.

4. Gender Reassignment

Definition

The term 'gender reassignment' used in the Equality Act is now considered by the transgender community to be outdated and it is recommended that the term should be replaced with terms such as 'gender identity' or 'transgender'. It is important to note that within the Equality Act the definition of gender reassignment was extended to remove the need for the process to be conducted under medical supervision reflecting the fact that many trans people, while living permanently in their acquired gender, do not in fact undergo any medical or surgical procedures.

However, the definition still requires an individual to at least "intend to undergo" a process of reassigning his or her sex. Some trans people have pointed out that prior to forming such a clear intention they may express some ambivalence about their birth gender, which may be reflected in their behaviour or appearance. Others may never form an intention to transition as such, but may not feel comfortable defining themselves clearly in terms of either male or female. However, a positive step is that direct discrimination is now defined as less favourable treatment 'because of' a protected characteristic. There is no requirement for the claimant to fit within a defined category; what matters is **the reason** for the less favourable treatment. If an employer thinks that someone intends to transition and treats them less favourably because of that, then that will amount to discrimination whether the claimant actually has formed that intention or not. Similarly, harassment, under the new definition in the Equality Act, need only be 'related to' a protected characteristic in order to be unlawful.

It is likely that less favourable treatment based on the behaviour or appearance of someone who does not feel comfortable being defined by either gender or who is in the initial stages of considering transition would amount either to direct discrimination or unlawful harassment.

Legal summary

The Equality Act 2010 includes gender reassignment as a protected characteristic.

Whilst only a very small proportion of the population will undergo a transition in their lives, those that do can be highly vulnerable to discrimination both in the workplace and in wider society.

Contacts

Mind (Wycombe) for the LGBT community with mental health issues: 01494 448279; website: <http://wycombemind.ord.uk>; e-mail: enquiries@wycombemind.org.uk

Stonewall - www.stonewall.org.uk

5. Marriage and civil partnership

Definition

Marriage is legally recognised in the forms of both civil and religious union and is open to opposite sex and same sex couples. Conversion of civil partnerships to marriages is also possible.

Legal Summary

The Act protects people who are married or in a civil partnership from direct and indirect discrimination and victimisation in employment.

Contacts

www.buckscc.gov.uk (Information on registrars, civil weddings, fees and charges)

www.gov.uk/marriages-civil-partnerships (government information on marriage & civil partnerships)

6. Pregnancy and maternity

Definition

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection from maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Legal Summary

The Equality Act 2010 provides women protection from pregnancy and maternity discrimination at work and outside of the workplace in areas including higher education and service provision.

Pregnancy and maternity-related discrimination can occur outside of the workplace if a woman is treated unfavorably because of her pregnancy, if she has given birth (within the past 26 weeks) and, in particular, because she is breastfeeding.

Pregnancy and maternity-related discrimination can occur in employment if a woman is treated unfavorably because of her pregnancy, pregnancy-related illness, she is on compulsory maternity leave (2 weeks (or 4 weeks if she is working in a factory)), or she is exercising her right to take ordinary or additional maternity leave.

Contacts

NCT: www.nct.org.uk/branches/high-wycombe

NHS: www.nhs.uk/services (search for pregnancy and maternity) and www.buckhealthcare.nhs.uk/birthchoices

7. Race and ethnicity

Definition

It is unlawful for a person to discriminate on racial grounds against another person. The law defines racial grounds as including race, colour, nationality (including citizenship) or ethnic or national origins.

Legal Summary

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination in relation to employment, education, housing and the provision of goods, services and facilities. This covers direct and indirect discrimination, as well as harassment and victimisation, both as an employer or as a provider of other services. The Act also permits organisations to take certain steps in pursuit of positive action.

8. Religion and belief

Definition

You have the right to hold your own religious beliefs or other philosophical beliefs similar to a religion. You also have the right to have no religion or belief. Generally a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition. Under British anti-discrimination and human right legislation, you are also entitled to practise your religion or belief, express your views and get on with your day-to-day life without experiencing threats or discrimination.

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful for someone to discriminate against you because of your religion or belief (or because you have no religion or belief):

- in any aspect of employment;
- when providing goods, facilities and services;
- when providing education;
- in using or disposing of premises, or
- when exercising public functions.

Legal Summary

European Union (EU) Employment Directives were designed to end discrimination and harassment in employment and vocational training at the work place, faced by people because of their religion or beliefs.

The Equality Act 2010 defines discrimination as prejudice that someone might face because of their religion or belief (including a philosophical belief), through both direct and indirect discrimination. This Act also covers the handling of harassment in the workplace.

There is recognition in the Act that there may be very specific circumstances in which holding certain religious or other beliefs will be a Genuine Occupational Requirement (GOR). There are likely to be only very limited circumstances where a GOR would apply. For example, a Catholic care home might be able to show that its carers should be Catholic because their work will involve them meeting a client's spiritual needs.

There is no requirement under the legislation for employers to provide time off or facilities for religion or belief or belief observance in the workplace. However, employers should consider whether their policies, rules and procedures indirectly discriminate against staff and if so whether reasonable adjustments might be made. Employers are not required to provide a prayer room. However, if a quiet place is available and allowing its use for prayer does not cause problems for other workers or the business, the organisation should agree the request.

The Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 made it unlawful to stir up hatred against people because of their religious beliefs or lack of them. These can include criminal acts, antisocial behaviour, abuse or harassment or display of written material that is threatening, abusive or insulting with the intention or likely effect of stirring hatred.

Contacts

Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB): 0344 2451289; website:
www.highwycombecab.org.uk

9. Sexual orientation

Definition

Unlawful sexual orientation discrimination happens when someone is treated less favourably due to their sexual orientation, their perceived sexual orientation, or the sexual orientation of those they associate with.

Bisexual - people who are attracted to both men and women.

Gay - a man who is attracted to other men.

Lesbian - a woman who is attracted to other women.

Heterosexual: attracted to members of the opposite sex.

Legal Summary

If you are discriminated against because of your sexual orientation in any of the following situations it is illegal and you may be able to take action – employment and training, education, goods and services, housing and any of the activities carried out by public authorities. It is also illegal to discriminate against someone because of the sexuality of someone they know, such as family or friends (associative discrimination), or because they are believed to be of a particular sexual orientation even if they are not.

Contacts

Stonewall : www.stonewall.org.uk

Debs (Dykes Enjoying Books and Socialising in Wycombe and Bucks) email: debs.group@hotmail.co.uk

Bucks County Council and Partners LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) Forum email: lgbt@buckscc.gov.uk

Mind (Wycombe) for the LGBT community with mental health issues: 01494 448279; website: <http://wycombemind.org.uk>; e-mail: enquiries@wycombemind.org.uk

Useful contacts

Citizens Advice Bureau (Wycombe) – 0344 2451289; website:
www.highwycombecab.org.uk

Bucks Voice - www.bucksvoice.net/directory

Benefits Information – www.dwp.gov.uk

Equality and human rights commission - www.equalityhumanrights.com

People's voices (Wycombe) - 01494 862489 www.peoplesvoices.org.uk

Thames Valley Police – 101 non-emergency, 999 emergency, 18000 textphone users,
www.thamesvalley.police.uk

Beaconsfield Advisory Centre - 01494 672987 www.beaconsfieldadvisorycentre

Samaritans (Chilterns)- 01494 432000 www.samaritans.org email: jo@samaritans.org

Lesbian gay, bi-sexual and trans-sexual consortium – 020 7064 6500
www.lgbtconsortium.org.uk email: admin@lgbtconsortium.org.uk

Action against homophobia and transphobia - www.homophobia.org.uk or
www.transphobia.org.uk

Appendix 3

Equality information published by the Council

1. Corporate Equality Plan (containing our current equality objectives);
2. Equality Framework (this document);
3. Translation and interpretation expenditure (showing Council expenditure on translation and interpretation by financial year);
4. Workforce Report (showing employee statistics by relevant groupings);
5. Equality employment statement (statement document concerning WDC equality in employment);
6. Pay policy (policy document concerning WDC pay policy);
7. Achievements against the requirements of the PSED (showing completed work against the PSED);

All of the above can be found at <http://www.wycombe.gov.uk/council-services/community-and-living/equality-and-diversity.aspx>

8. Hate crime information sheet (explaining what hate crime is and how to report it)
<http://www.wycombe.gov.uk/council-services/community-and-living/community-safety/hate-crime.aspx>
9. Consultation undertaken by WDC

Details of current (*and some recent*) consultations undertaken by WDC can be found at: <http://www.wycombe.gov.uk/news/consultations.aspx>

10. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) undertaken by WDC

All completed EAs can be found via the homepage at <http://www.wycombe.gov.uk/home-page.aspx> and then typing 'equality impact assessment' into the search box. You will then be able to choose the service/s you require.