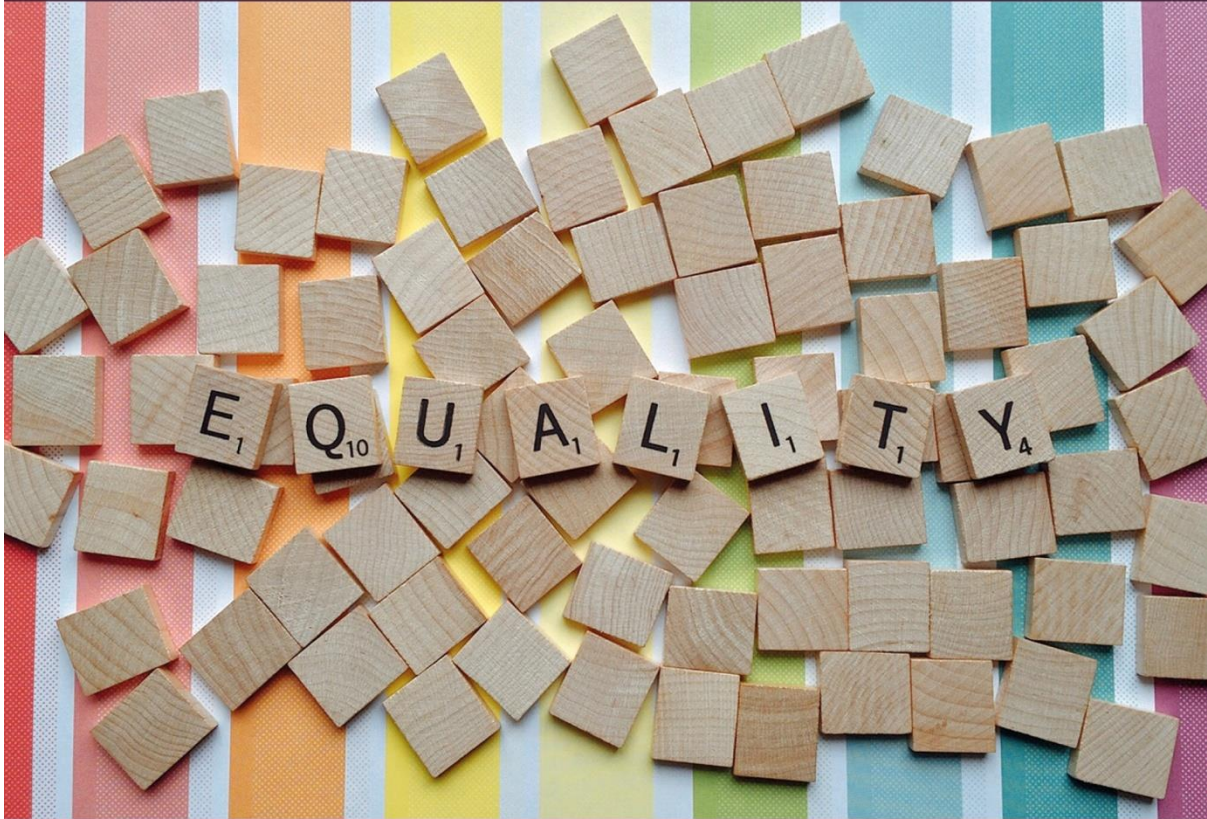




Melton
Borough
Council

Helping people | Shaping places



Equality Scheme 2020/24



If you require this information in an alternative format please contact 01664 502502 or email: contactus@melton.gov.uk

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1.0 Our Commitment to engagement

Engagement is about effective communication with our residents, service users and employees. At Melton Borough Council we are committed to continuing this communication in delivering the actions in this scheme.

We asked for your views on the Equality Scheme and our new Equality Objectives.

During September and October we engaged with a number of community and voluntary groups representing people who are protected by equality law. We also published an online questionnaire to gain the views of our residents, service user's and our employees on the new Equality Scheme.

In addition, people (as well as the groups previously mentioned) were invited to comment on our new Equality Objectives together with the actions to deliver them. We are required to set one or more Equality Objectives every four years. This is to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (see section 6.2). For the period 2020 until 2024 we have set four. These were originally based on good practice guidance by the local Government Association which we have changed slightly to reflect our priorities.

The consultation, together with our own data and priorities has shaped the Equality Scheme, Equality Objectives and Action Plan.

1.1 Our New Equality Objectives

- Engage and communicate in appropriate and accessible ways
- Develop and support a diverse workforce (being recognised as an employer of choice)
- Ensure services are in place or commissioned which are inclusive and responsive
- Foster good relations with and within the community (understanding difference and celebrating diversity)

1.2 Foreword:



Councillor Alison Freer-Jones
Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Access and Engagement

I have pleasure in introducing Melton Borough Council's new draft Equality Scheme which sets out what we will do over the next four years to make Melton a place where people get along with one another and treat each other with fairness, dignity and respect. We want people to feel happy living in the local area.

As community leaders we realise that fairness is essential to delivering our services and employment practices. We acknowledge the importance of having robust processes in place to achieve our equality aims and duties. However, it is much more than this so we have also set a number of ambitious targets to achieve real positive outcomes for local people.

The scheme covers inequality in terms of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. It also covers those groups who are socially or economically disadvantaged and recognises that, for example, carers, gypsies & travellers, ex-service personnel, asylum seekers and refugees, are also distinct groups that may experience inequality and discrimination.

Ultimately, as an authority we want to ensure that the values of 'fairness, dignity and respect' are embedded within the hearts and minds of our workforce, partners and the communities we serve.

Thank you to everyone who helped to develop this scheme.

2.0 Governance & delivering the outcomes

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for implementing the Equality Scheme which is approved by Elected Members at Council.

Elected Members and Officers all have responsibilities for ensuring that the aims and objectives are achieved.

The Council has established arrangements to take forward equality and diversity, including an Equality Steering Group. This Group is responsible for providing advice to the Senior Leadership Team in relation to the impact of existing and future EU, UK and Scottish legislation, policies and practices on equality and diversity and the promotion of equality and fairness in service delivery and employment. They will promote equality and diversity within the Council by assisting in the dissemination of information and staff engagement generally in the equalities and diversity agenda.

Service Managers are responsible for ensuring that equality policies, practices etc., are followed. They also ensure that Equality Impact Assessments are carried out, that sufficient information is gathered to inform services on the effects that policies and activities have on equality groups and ensuring the assessments are carried out in-depth and to a high standard.

Where relevant, Equality Impact Assessments will go to the Check and Challenge Equalities Group for additional scrutiny. This is to ensure that assessments are of an acceptable standard and reflect the different equality group's perspectives.

Service Managers will also identify staff who require equality and diversity training and release staff to attend such training. In addition, elected members shall undertake mandatory Equalities training in accordance with the Member Development Programme.

The Human Resources and Communications Manager is responsible for collecting equalities data on staff and monitoring staff in post and applicants for employment.

An annual progress report on the Action Plan will be produced by the Equalities Steering Group to the Scrutiny Committee.

2.1 Delivering the outcomes

The scheme is supported by an action plan which is based on four agreed equality objectives and a number of actions to deliver them. As noted, we used the results of the engagement exercise together with our own data and priorities as a way of meeting the objectives.

Some of the information we use to shape our priorities is based on the local population census data. However, as the last census was in 2011, we have decided not to use the information this time. The next census will take place in 2021 and we will analyse the results together with any further and relevant monitoring data available for our services. We have included a link below where you can find out more about the 2011 census should you wish to do so.

http://www.melton.gov.uk/downloads/file/4647/equalities_data_for_melton_borough_-_2011_census

3.0 Purpose of the scheme

The scheme outlines how Melton Borough Council aims to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in the delivering of our services, supporting our communities and developing our workforce. It also sets out the Council's aims and objectives, governance, performance management arrangements, vision & values and legal obligations.

4.0 Background

'Equality is about fairness'

Melton Borough Council has a moral and legal duty to demonstrate fairness to our community, service users and staff. We aim to ensure our services are accessible to everyone and that our employment practices are barrier free and provide equal opportunities for prospective and current employees.

Compliance with the general equality duty (see [section 6.0](#)) is a legal obligation and it also makes good business sense. As the Equality and Human Rights Commission suggests "an organisation that is able to provide services to meet the diverse needs of its users should find that it carries out its core business more efficiently. A workforce that has a supportive working environment is more productive. Many organisations have also found it beneficial to draw on a broader range of talent and to better represent the community that they serve".

At a time of increasing financial pressures on local government services a number of challenges lie ahead. At Melton, we believe that equality is central to everything we do and we will continue to target resources to meet our equalities commitments.

The UK is also going through a period of uncertainty due to Brexit, consequently some things in this scheme may be subject to change.

5.0 Vision & values

Melton Borough Council is committed to delivering meaningful and lasting improvements for local people, by adopting and developing good equality and diversity practice and demonstrating high levels of corporate and social responsibility.

These commitments are reflected in the new Corporate Vision which sets out what the Council wants to achieve on behalf of the community.

The Corporate Vision is:

“We are ambitious for Melton’s future. We want to enhance the quality of life for everyone by enabling more homes to be built, attracting quality jobs and supporting strong and prosperous communities.”

To support the council’s vision, a number of priority themes have also been agreed. These are found at: www.melton.gov.uk/corporateplan

Central to this vision, are our values which are embedded in all aspects of service delivery and partnership working:

We Care: Valuing others and developing ourselves; committed and passionate about what we do.

We Innovate: Ambitious, creative and resourceful; responding positively to challenges.

We Achieve: Taking responsibility and seeking excellence; always proud to serve.

6.0 Our legal obligations

6.1 The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination at work and society in general.

The Act covers 9 protected characteristics. These are:

- 1) age
- 2) disability
- 3) gender reassignment
- 4) marriage and civil partnership
- 5) pregnancy and maternity
- 6) race
- 7) religion or belief
- 8) sex
- 9) sexual orientation

Every person has one or more of these protected characteristics, so the Act protects everyone against unfair treatment. This applies whether the discrimination is actual or perceived and if it occurs directly or by association. More information about the protected characteristics can be found in the '[Glossary of terms](#)' – [Appendix A](#) at the end of this scheme.

6.2 The Public Sector Equality Duty

The Public Sector Equality Duty is part of the Equality Act and includes a general duty which is supported by specific duties.

The general duty requires public organisations, including Councils to think about how they can make things better for people from different groups (mentioned above as protected characteristics). This includes having 'due regard' to the following:

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

(For marriage and civil partnerships this protection applies only to the first duty).

Having due regard for advancing equality under Public Sector Equality Duty involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people connected to their protected characteristics.

- Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

The specific duties require public bodies such as Melton Borough Council to:

- **Publish relevant, proportionate information demonstrating their compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.**

This has to include information on:

Our workforce

Information can be found at the following link:

http://www.melton.gov.uk/info/200041/equality_and_diversity/721/workforce_monitoring_information

How our policies and practices affect groups of people who share one of the protected characteristics.

We demonstrate this through our Equality Impact Assessments which can be found on our website at the following link:

http://www.melton.gov.uk/info/200041/equality_and_diversity/714/equality_impact_assessments

- **Set specific, measurable equality objectives to meet Equality Duty. These objectives are delivered through a number of actions which can be found in the action plan and are reviewed every 4 years.**

We have set 4 equality objectives. These can be found in section 1.1 of the scheme

6.3 Human Rights Act

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world, from birth until death.

They apply regardless of where you are from, what you believe or how you choose to live your life.

They can never be taken away, although they can sometimes be restricted – for example if a person breaks the law.

Human rights are clearly defined and protected under British, European and international laws.

One effect of these laws is to oblige public authorities like Melton Borough Council, to treat everyone with dignity, respect and fairness.

The Human Rights Act 1998 is one of the most important pieces of legislation for public authorities. It also provides Melton Borough Council with a legal framework to help to ensure that our actions respect the human rights of those for whom they provide services.

The Act sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that individuals in the UK have access to. They include:

- Right to life
- Freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment
- Freedom from slavery and forced labour
- Right to liberty and security
- Right to a fair trial
- No punishment without law
- Respect for your private and family life, home and correspondence
- Freedom of thought, belief and religion
- Freedom of expression
- Freedom of assembly and association
- Right to marry and start a family
- Protection from discrimination in respect of these rights and freedoms
- Right to peaceful enjoyment of your property
- Right to education
- Right to participate in free elections.

More information can be found at the following link:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/human-rights/human-rights-act>

Appendices

Appendix A – Glossary of terms: The protected characteristics

1. Age

A person belonging to a particular age (for example 32 year olds) or range of ages (for example 18 to 30 year olds).

2. Disability

A person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

3. Gender reassignment

The process of transitioning from one gender to another.

4. Marriage and civil partnership

Marriage is a union between a man and a woman or between a same-sex couple.

Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).

5. Pregnancy and maternity

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 against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

6. Race

Refers to the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

7. Religion and belief

Religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

8. Sex

A man or a woman.

9. Sexual orientation

Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

Appendix B – Melton Borough Council's Equality Policy

http://www.melton.gov.uk/downloads/download/1176/equality_policy

Appendix C – Information about local and national equalities groups

Click on the relevant protected characteristic to find out more:

http://www.melton.gov.uk/info/200041/equality_and_diversity/267/equality_act_2010

Appendix D – Cross Partnership Outcomes Framework

This outcomes framework was developed by the Melton People Board to illustrate success indicators using a life course approach. It demonstrates a series of outcomes from pre birth to death that, if achieved, would show what success would look like over the longer term.

What would success look like for the Borough of Melton?			
		Improved school attendance, Good qualifications	Effective Parent/Child relationship Ready for parenthood, Good parenting skills, Aspirations for own children, able to deal with challenges in family & other relationships.
		Fewer Young people dropping out of college Wider range of	Increased social Mobility
Well Developed Brain Age	School Ready	Sound Aspirations - Career planning, Ability to get a home, Getting on the property ladder.	Effective retirement transition (not just financially), able to work if wanted, sufficient income for a good retirement, effective end of life planning.
Nursery Ready	Physical Literacy	Resilient Young People with a positive Social Attitude	Volunteering - "giving something back" sharing skills Positive Role Models,
Conception-2yrs	Early Years (2-25yrs)	Financial Independence	Later Years (50-100+yrs)
Good Physical & Mental Health (Low levels of obesity, substance misuse, teenage pregnancy). Reduced intergenerational dependence on state support. Less involvement in Criminal activity.			
Taking responsibility for own future, reflection and moulding your own destiny, and maintaining good work/life balance.			
Digitally & socially independent & responsible, Maintaining social relationships.			
Successful Transition into Work/ Further Education/Apprenticeship/ University			