

Hertfordshire County Council

EQUALITY STRATEGY

2016 - 2020



Making a positive mark on Diversity



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If you would like help understanding this information, for example, if you would like to request it in an alternative format, please contact equalities@hertfordshire.gov.uk

ARABIC

إذا كنت تود المساعدة في فهم هذه المعلومات، يرجى الاتصال على

equalities@hertfordshire.gov.uk

BENGALI

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HINDI

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ITALIAN

Se desiderate aiutarci a comprendere quest'informazione vi preghiamo di contattare
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MANDARIN

若您对于本信息有任何疑问，请联系 equalities@hertfordshire.gov.uk

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Jeżeli potrzebują Państwo pomocy, aby zrozumieć niniejsze informacje, prosimy skontaktować się z
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Eğer bu bilgileri anlamak için yardıma ihtiyacınız olursa, lütfen bu e-posta adresinden
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URDU

اگر آپ اس معلومات کو سمجھنے میں مدد پیش کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو براہ مہربانی equalities@hertfordshire.gov.uk پر
رابطہ کریں۔

INTRODUCTION

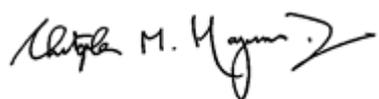
Following on from and building on the 2013-15 Equality Strategy, this new strategy (2016-20) demonstrates our continued commitment to tackling inequality and promoting diversity.

In this new strategy we have used updated Census 2011 data, analysis and learning from progress of our 2013-15 objectives, and other evidence and feedback to help inform our new objectives. As our previous strategy did, the **Equality Strategy 2016-20** aims to communicate our vision and key priorities for equality and diversity across Hertfordshire and within our workforce, to ensure we meet statutory requirements and provide a framework to measure progress and success.

Hertfordshire County Council is committed to achieving diversity and equality of opportunity both as a large employer of people and as a provider and commissioner of services. In practice this means both working to ensure that Hertfordshire is free from discrimination, but also doing what we can to positively promote equality and diversity across the delivery of services and within our workforce.

Legislation places a public duty on Hertfordshire County Council with which we must comply but we strive to go beyond our duty to ensure that our practice in diversity and equality is embedded in everything we do. Against a background of tough economic times and a changing demography we need to be even more aware of the diverse needs of communities and how we can support them.

We recognise that all people are individual, and that their needs can be complex and varied. This strategy sets out how we aspire to achieve real and lasting progress for diverse groups and individuals alongside everyone else in Hertfordshire over the next four years, but represents only a small portion of the work we will do day-to-day on this agenda.



Cllr Chris Hayward
Executive Member with responsibility
for Equality and Diversity



Jenny Coles
Director of Children's Services
Chair of the council's Diversity
Board

VISION

Our commitment

Our services

We will promote diversity and equality in everything we do to improve the quality of life for everyone living in, working in and visiting Hertfordshire - to create a county of opportunity for all.

Our workforce

Hertfordshire County Council is an organisation where diversity drives innovation, progression is based on talent and there is a culture of fairness, respect and equality of opportunity for all staff.

We aim for our workforce profile to reflect the demographic make-up of Hertfordshire; in every service and at every level; ensuring that we are better able to connect with the needs of the people of Hertfordshire.

Principles for change - our aims and values

As a service provider we will:

- Promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination in the planning, commissioning and delivery of our services.
- Equip our County Councillors to understand and engage with all of Hertfordshire's diverse communities.
- Work with our partners, service providers and contractors to create a fairer Hertfordshire where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.
- Recognise and celebrate the diversity of our local communities to foster good community relations, being sensitive to the particular needs that arise from that diversity.
- Empower all our residents to build resilient communities.
- Lead by example and embed equality in everything we do as an integral part of our policies and practice.

As an employer we will:

- Ensure a strong and consistent leadership commitment toward equality and diversity from managers and County Councillors.
- Recognise that all people are individual, and that their needs can be complex and varied.
- Develop a culture that enables and values the full involvement of all, embedding and promoting the principles of equality in our policy and practice.
- Improve our workforce profile to better represent the community we serve at all levels.

BACKGROUND: Why do we promote equality and diversity?

Hertfordshire County Council's Equality Strategy 2016-20 is a four year strategy that sets out our commitment to promoting equality and diversity across all services and within our workforce. We will monitor and review our objectives on an annual basis. Whilst the equality agenda is supported by legislation, it is not just about meeting our legal obligations; it is about making our services and procedures reflective and supportive of the diverse needs of our local community.

The Equality Act (the "Act") came into force in October 2010. Legislation around the nine protected characteristics places public duties on Hertfordshire County Council with which we must comply. The groups protected under the law are:

- age,
- disability,
- gender reassignment,
- marriage and civil partnership,
- pregnancy and maternity,
- race,
- religion and belief,
- sex, and
- sexual orientation.

Carers are also a key consideration for Hertfordshire County Council and are protected under the Act by association with protected groups. Hertfordshire also recognises the equality implications for those living in poverty.

Under the Act, public bodies are subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty which requires us to have due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups.
- Foster good relations between people from different groups.

Leadership and monitoring equality issues

We are committed to achieving this by ensuring due regard is given to equality and diversity in everything we do. Many of the priorities and actions set out in the [Corporate Plan](#) and individual service plans are intended to do this, by giving vulnerable groups access to the services they need and treating everyone with dignity and respect. Our Integrated Plan aims to ensure services are targeted at those that need them most. This strategy sets out our workforce equality aspirations and has also been developed to further embed equality and diversity into the design and delivery of services and provide a clear focus for staff. It is intended to complement, rather than duplicate, the priorities set out in other plans.

The council's Diversity Board provides strategic leadership and direction on equality and diversity issues. It is chaired by a chief officer and attended by Departmental Group leads and senior officers from each service, and covers the work of Departmental Groups, Workforce Diversity Groups and discrete project Task and Finish Groups. Senior officers and Management Boards are responsible for the oversight and operation of the equality and diversity strategy and policies throughout their department's activities – both for staff, partners and service users.



See **Appendix 2** for Strategic Management Board and Diversity Board membership organisational charts

See here for **Additional information** on how [Hertfordshire Adult and Family Learning Service \(HAFLS\)](#), and [Hertfordshire for Learning](#) meet their equality duties.

Further relevant actions plans and strategies can be found in **Appendix 1**.

The Hertfordshire picture

Services are targeted at those that need them most. To do this, we use a wide range of data to inform us of Hertfordshire's changing demographic profile. This data is available on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment ([JSNA](#)) – a hub for community knowledge on the health and wellbeing needs of Hertfordshire residents. Since 2011, updated 2011 Census data for Hertfordshire was released. It can be viewed at county level and by district and borough by going to <http://www.hertsllis.org/>. Detailed data and needs analysis can be found in the JSNA. This represents a snapshot of some of that data relating to protected characteristics:

- In 2012, the population of Hertfordshire was 1,129,000. It is projected to increase over the next 25 years to 1,400,700 in 2037, which would represent an increase of 24%. Much of this growth is in groups that we would consider potentially vulnerable. There are 168,000 Hertfordshire residents aged over 65, and this is projected to increase to 300,400 (an increase of 79%) in 2037. The growing older population will bring increasing financial pressures and will change the model of care in particular for older people, people with disabilities and carers. Equality considerations for an increasingly preventative and early intervention approach will need to ensure accessibility and effectiveness of services to all target groups regardless of protected characteristics.
- People born overseas make up 13.4% of our population. 19.2% of Hertfordshire residents identified themselves in ethnic groups other than “White British”, which compares to 11.23% in 2001. In 2012, the percentage of new mothers in Hertfordshire who were born in a European Union country other than the UK was nearly 9%. The percentage of new mothers who were born outside the EU was nearly 25%.
- The latest school census indicates 26% of school age children are from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds compared to 21.8% in 2011 and 20.7% in 2010. Data on language and social and cultural considerations help policy makers tailor services to meet the needs of people from these groups.
- There are approximately 270,400 children and young people (aged 0 – 18 years) in Hertfordshire. This is predicted to rise to 297,300 by 2020 and 322,100 in 2037, an increase of 19%. 14.6% of children under 5 are deemed to be living in poverty within our county. This equates to 10,840 children.
- Over 58% of Hertfordshire residents identified themselves as Christian in the 2011 Census, nearly 3% as Muslim, nearly 2% as Hindu, nearly 2% as Jewish, 0.49% as Buddhist and 0.45% as Sikh. Just over 26% stated they had no religion.
- Around 10% of people in Hertfordshire have informal caring responsibilities for an adult or a child with a disability.
- Around 26,000 people have a Learning Disability.

We will continue to use Census and other data to target our resources at those communities, people and places that most need our intervention, ensuring services are delivered more efficiently and effectively.

Our workforce diversity profile

Every year we publish an annual report on the diversity profile of our workforce. This can be read [here](#). Some headlines for 2014/15 include:

- Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) employees represent 12.2% of the overall workforce, an increase of 0.6% from last year. This improves workforce representation and reflects the BME population of economically active Hertfordshire citizens (12.4%; 2011 Census).
- The number of employees in Council Departments declaring a disability is 5.5% (0.5% increase from March 2014), higher than the target of

5.0%. The 2011 Census indicated that 8.7% of the Hertfordshire population (Aged 16-64) declared themselves as living with a long term health problem or disability.

- The age profile of the organisation could be more diverse. Ages 20 to 29 have increased by 0.3% but still remains the least represented. Ages 25 to 55 have decreased by 0.7% to 68.9% and with people working longer, the over 55 age group has increased by 0.5% to 26.5%.

Equality framework

Hertfordshire County Council uses the Equality Framework for Local Government as a model to help us deliver our equalities duties. We are currently assessed as an 'Achieving council well on the way to Excellence'.

The objectives are grouped under the following themes to ensure our activity covers the range of council functions and allows benchmarking with other local authorities. The themes are:

1. Knowing our communities
2. Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
3. Community engagement and satisfaction
4. Responsive services and customer care
5. A skilled and committed workforce

Our annual equalities reviews set out our key achievements for each year since 2013 with examples and case studies against each theme. These are published here: <http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/your-council/hcc/resandperf/panditech/eandd/>

OBJECTIVES – what we want to do by 2020

THEME 1: Knowing our communities

We **know our communities** which enables us to understand the diverse needs of our service users and better target resources

Objectives:

- 1.1 Commissioners and project leads will make enhanced use of demographic and other data (such as the Local Information System and Needs Assessment data) to inform their projects, commissioning and decision making
- 1.2 Commissioners and project leads will carry out equality impact assessments, where relevant, to consider the effect of proposals, projects and strategies on different groups
- 1.3 A Geographic Information System (GIS) Strategy will be implemented to assist commissioners and services in better targeting resources and services
- 1.4 We will progress opportunities to integrate understanding of health and social care information to better target community safety interventions to support vulnerable people in our communities
- 1.5 We will implement a project to improve the budget forecasting process for Older People and Learning Disability residential placements, improving the process and allowing service managers to have a clearer view of forecasts

THEME 2: Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment

We have strong **leadership, partnership and organisational commitment** to equality and diversity

Objectives:

- 2.1 The Members' Information System (MIS) will contain information and data to support and enable members to fulfil their duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty, and following the next county council elections, Equality and Diversity Awareness raising will also feature in Members' Inductions
- 2.2 We will develop a Hate Crime Strategy to raise awareness in the community and to help address recommendations of Executive Members from the Hate Crime Scrutiny Panel
- 2.3 We will promote and implement the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Strategy and the revised Hertfordshire Compact to set out our commitment and principles when working and engaging with our communities and Voluntary Sector partners
- 2.4 We will ensure that our new Procurement Strategy embeds Equality Duties regarding procurement, including those relating to workers from partner organisations

- 2.5 We will contribute to the delivery of the county-wide Domestic Abuse Strategy, to deliver better outcomes for residents affected by Domestic Abuse
- 2.6 We will carry out a review of our collective Integrated Planning proposals every year to assess potential cumulative impact upon all protected groups
- 2.7 Hertfordshire Forward, the countywide local strategic partnership which brings together all the key agencies in the county, will work together to improve the quality of life and wellbeing of Hertfordshire residents. Its ambition is to see:
 - Citizens who enjoy life and are healthy
 - Safe and active communities that get on well
 - A strong economy where businesses thrive
 - A high quality environment
 - People who are able to achieve their potential

And to achieve its ambition it will work in a way that values diversity, addresses inequality and supports the most vulnerable.

- 2.8 We will support the implementation of Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board's new Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Hertfordshire in 2016
- 2.9 We will support and celebrate initiatives that promote equality and inclusion and encourage good relations between groups, including but not limited to Hertfordshire Pride, National Interfaith Week, Disability Awareness Day and Gypsy Traveller History Month
- 2.10 We will develop and implement an Accessible Communication Policy incorporating policy and guidance on how to communicate and support service users in formats including British Sign Language and Easy Read

THEME 3: Community engagement and satisfaction

We involve **communities** in developing services and evaluating their effectiveness

Objectives:

- 3.1 We will develop a framework for consultation to provide a set of principles to ensure we engage consistently and coherently with our residents
- 3.2 We will continue to celebrate, promote, co-ordinate and develop an infrastructure for effective volunteering and volunteering opportunities across Hertfordshire
- 3.3 We will encourage the involvement of volunteer "Community Advocates" to empower volunteers and help us provide a better service to the communities we serve, for example, in raising awareness of fire safety
- 3.4 We will seek residents' views on the council and the area in which they live, and monitor responses and trends by protected characteristic group
- 3.5 The Hertfordshire Community Covenant is a commitment from public and private organisations in the county to work towards supporting the active and retired Armed Forces community living and working in Hertfordshire, and their families, including work in the following areas:

- We will ensure that service families are able to speak to someone about in-year applications to schools for their children, to assist families in quickly settling into their new communities within Hertfordshire;
 - We will encourage veterans to access and ‘take-up’ mental health services through joint communication campaigns with the NHS and we will continue to explore the reasons why some people have not sought or received support and treatment in order to improve the transition from Armed Forces health care to the NHS
- 3.6 The council’s Next Generation website, Customer Service and Communications teams will consider the effect of their proposals, projects and strategies on different groups, and take reasonable steps to ensure the accessibility needs of service users are met
- 3.7 We will create more opportunities to work with service users to co-produce new service developments

THEME 4: Responsive services and customer care

We have **responsive services** that are proactive rather than reactive and consider inter-related and long term outcomes

Objectives:

- 4.1 We will work with an external partner to produce a detailed access guide to 1000 venues in Hertfordshire to maximise independence and choice for disabled people in accessing their local area and the places we all want to visit
- 4.2 We will give every child the opportunity to thrive in their families, in their schools and in their communities. All children and young people should enjoy a happy, healthy and safe childhood that gives them the foundations for adulthood and the opportunity to get the best out of life
- 4.3 Our early help services will take action to support service users as soon as a problem emerges
- 4.4 We will embed the practice and operation of multi-disciplinary teams to enable the impact of issues such as domestic abuse, adult mental health and substance misuse to be better understood. We will increasingly deliver protection services on a family basis and in so doing, will reach better shared understanding of risk and improve outcomes
- 4.5 We will implement a system of real time and interactive British Sign Language interpreters for all service users contacting the Customer Service Centre, and provide accessible information to service users who have additional needs
- 4.6 We will provide translation and interpreting services where appropriate to minimise barriers in accessing council services by people who do not speak English
- 4.7 We will ensure that the core principles of reducing health inequalities and promoting better health outcomes for our communities are embedded in our new Public Health Strategy for Hertfordshire

THEME 5: A high performing, engaged and committed workforce

We have a **high performing, engaged and committed workforce** that represents and supports all citizens of Hertfordshire.

Objectives:

Joining

- 5.1 We will have attraction and sourcing strategies that are inclusive and attract talented people from diverse backgrounds including minority groups and apprentices so we have a workforce that represents all citizens of Hertfordshire
- 5.2 We ensure that we recruit the right people with the right values and behaviours for the organisation

Working

- 5.3 We will ensure the workforce is well aligned to our values by giving managers the tools to enable them to create high performing teams, giving staff regular feedback and development opportunities
- 5.4 We will encourage managers to harness diversity within teams in order to create an innovative working environment
- 5.5 We will encourage an agile and flexible workforce by giving managers and employees the tools to manage by outcomes
- 5.6 We will analyse the staff survey by the protected characteristics of the workforce and take relevant action where necessary
- 5.7 We will review HR equality and diversity information so it is clear and accessible to all employees when they need support and advice
- 5.8 We will publish an annual workforce diversity profile

Learning

- 5.9 We will promote equality and inclusion in our work, employment practices and training
- 5.10 We will review the iLearn, induction, and the Herts Manager offering and ensure that equality and diversity is embedded throughout
- 5.11 We will ensure that there is equal access to learning for all the workforce

Leaving

- 5.12 We will analyse leaver information by the protected characteristics of the workforce and take relevant action where necessary

APPENDIX 1 OTHER KEY ACTION PLANS, STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS

Other relevant action plans, strategies and projects can be viewed below

[Hertfordshire Interfaith Forum](#)
[LGBT*Q Guide](#)
[LDPB Partnership](#)
[Sexual Health Improvement Plan](#)

See also (this is a non-exhaustive list):

[0-25 Integration](#)
[Adult Social Care](#)
[Caring for Someone](#)
[Care Act](#)
[Care and Support for Children and Families](#)
[Children's Services Strategic Plan](#)
[County Community Safety Unit](#)
[Domestic Abuse Strategy](#)
[Early Help – Families First](#)
[Family Safeguarding](#)
[HAFLS](#)
[Herts for Learning](#)
[Hertfordshire Library Service](#)
[Hertfordshire Compact](#)
[Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)
[Public Health Strategy](#)
[Shaping the Future](#)
[School Improvement Strategy](#)
[Sensory Services](#)
[Thriving Families](#)
[Voluntary Sector Commissioning Strategy](#)
[Work Solutions](#)
[Youth Connexions](#)

Make a complaint

To make a complaint, compliment or to comment on this Strategy, see [here](#)

APPENDIX 2 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT BOARD AND DIVERSITY BOARD MEMBERSHIP



Diversity Board



Chair
Jenny Coles
Director of
Children's
Services

