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## South Lakeland District Council Equality Scheme 2011 – 2014

South Lakeland District Council aims to treat all its citizens, customers, employees and job applicants fairly whatever their circumstances or characteristics. So everyone can see what we are doing to achieve this, and how we are performing against our targets, the council will publish information on its website ([www.southlakeland.gov.uk](http://www.southlakeland.gov.uk)), and as paper copies. This Scheme and its objectives will be reviewed annually.

This Scheme applies to:

- Users of our services and visitors to our sites
- Councillors
- Employees
- Volunteers
- Contractors, sub-contractors and partners

**1.0** South Lakeland District Council's key equality objective for 2012 – 2013 will be identified and published here in March 2012 following an equality assessment of the refreshed Corporate Plan (2012 – 2016).

**1.1** To continually improve in integrating equality and fairness into our business, and to comply with the [Equality Act](#) and the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#), the council's Corporate Vision department has the following equality objectives:

Objective	Date	Councillor/ Officer + Notes	Completed
Councillor and senior officer equality lead in place. (Responsibilities include promoting good relations in the community and integrating equality work into partnerships)	March 2012	Portfolio Holder: H. Stephenson Assistant Director: D. Fox	
Information Unit (IU) to annually review local demographics, disseminate to service managers and publish on the website.	October 2012	P. Mountford Information used to improve service to equality groups where appropriate.	
IU to monitor and	March 2012	P. Mountford	

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Objective	Date	Councillor/ Officer + Notes	Completed
publish survey responses (including breakdown of minority groups) and show what has changed as a result. Published on the Community engagement pages on the website.		Aim to evidence improved participation rates. Work with AWAZ, CDN, OutREACH, Age UK to improve participation.	
IU to identify and address consultation information gaps.	March 2012	P. Mountford / E. Nichols IU to publish SLDC contact details for external bodies to feed information into the organisation.	
Community Engagement Strategy fully implemented	March 2012	Senior officer champion/ E. Nichols/ JR. Davies/ S. Blyth	
Equality peer review network set up in Cumbria.	March 2012	S. Blyth To share and develop good practice collectively.	
Annual service plans to highlight key equality issues for their service	March 2012	Service assistant Directors	
Review this scheme annually	November 2012	S. Blyth/ Senior Management Team/ Cabinet	

**1.2** These objectives (and the equality objectives listed in our [equality impact assessments](#)) will be reviewed and updates published annually.

**2.0** To illustrate how we are meeting the requirements of the Equality Duty please follow the links below. The information shows details of the analysis we have undertaken (and supporting information used) to improve our policies and services in 2011 – 2012. There are links to the community engagement and consultations that support our decision making. We also publish information highlighting the effects of

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our policies on different equality groups, for example through our complaints and surveys.

## 2.1 Equality analysis and information

The council manages equality through its annual programme of equality impact assessments (EIA's). EIA's enable officers and councillors to assess the fairness of our services and policies before they are implemented. They are reviewed annually.

- [Equality Impact Assessments](#)
- [South Lakeland profile](#)
- [Census statistics](#)
- [Local area profiles](#)
- SLDC Intelligence Unit
- Have your Say – including SLDC consultation and engagement reports
- Customer satisfaction surveys - profile of equality responses
- [Complaints, comments and compliments](#)
- Complaints - Annual report and summary
- [Equality information online](#)
- [South Lakeland News](#)

## 2.2 Plans, Reports and Meetings

The documents below provide details of the council's activities and procedures. They show where the council's focus lies and how decisions are made.

- [Corporate Plan 2011 - 2015](#) - The council's plan concerning its priorities. Progress on targets, priorities and risks.
- [Service Plans](#)
- [Annual Report 2010 - 11](#) (Council review of 2010 – 2011)
- [Procurement Strategy](#) (purchasing goods, works and services)
- [Accessibility and council buildings](#)
- [Forward Plan](#) (list of key decisions the council's Executive will make over the 3 month period)
- [Performance management framework](#) (how the council manages and reports on its performance)
- [Calendar of council meetings](#)
- [Cabinet members and meetings](#)
- [Overview and Scrutiny meetings](#)
- [Customer Charter](#) (SLDC customer service standards)

## 2.3 Employee and member information

The council employs 400 staff (382 full time equivalent– as at April 2011), and has 51 councillors. The documents below highlight the employee profile of the council compared with South Lakeland as a district. We have also summarised the training we provide for employees and details on our recruitment and bullying and harassment policies.

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- [Human Resources at SLDC](#) (Recruitment and selection, officers code of conduct, staff profile, equality and employment policy)
- [Councillors code of conduct](#)

## 2.4 Our Partners:

The council works with partners in the local area and abides by and promotes its equality commitments. Our equality impact assessments are completed with the advice of partners, and these are also listed below.

- [One South Lakeland](#) (SLDC partnerships and communities website)
- [Cumbria Equality member and officer meetings](#)
- [AWAZ](#) (an independent voluntary organisation providing a voice for Black and minority ethnic people)
- [Cumbria Disability Network](#) (representing the needs of disabled people in Cumbria)
- [Age UK South Lakeland](#) (services are for anyone in South Lakeland who is aged 50 or above)
- [OutREACH Cumbria](#) (works with the statutory and voluntary sector providing equality advice and consultation on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues)
- [Cumbria County Council](#)
- [Cumbria Equality and Diversity Partnership](#) (Cumbria equality partnership)
- [Reporting Hate Crime](#) (downloadable form to report race, disability, faith/ belief and sexual orientation hate crime )

**3.0** This Scheme is being developed in consultation with local groups and organisations and our employees. A draft version will be available for public consultation on the Council's website for 12 weeks before the final version is adopted.

We welcome comments on the Scheme and these will be taken into account in our reviews.

We have an equality page on our website: [www.southlakeland.gov.uk](http://www.southlakeland.gov.uk)

The Scheme should be read in conjunction with our annual equality impact assessments – these can be viewed [here](#).

## 4.0 Contact details:

Policy Officer: [policy@southlakeland.gov.uk](mailto:policy@southlakeland.gov.uk)

Senior officer Equality Champion: Debbie Fox, Assistant Director Corporate Vision

Councillor Portfolio Holder for Equality: Hilary Stephenson, Portfolio Holder

Communities and Well Being

Date Ratified	.....
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Policy Author	Simon Blyth
Assistant Director	Debbie Fox
Document Reference	V0.10
Date For Review	March 2013
Contact Details	<a href="mailto:policy@southlakeland.gov.uk">policy@southlakeland.gov.uk</a>

## Appendix 1:

The [Equality Act \(2010\)](#) requires public bodies 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.

DEFINITION: "[Protected characteristics](#)" - These are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful. The characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Equality Act involves:

1. Removing or minimizing disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
2. Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
3. Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low

Section 149 of the Act, which came into force on 5 April 2011, consolidated and harmonised the race, gender and disability duties into one and extended coverage of the duty to the additional protected characteristics (age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment).

## Appendix 2:

**The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011**

The [specific duties](#) require public bodies to publish:

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- **information to demonstrate their compliance with the Equality Duty**, by 31 January 2012 and then at least annually, and
- **equality objectives (which are specific and measurable)**, by 6 April 2012 and then at least every four years.

The information a public authority publishes must include, in particular, information relating to persons who share a relevant protected characteristic who are:

- its employees;
- Other persons affected by its policies and practices.