

# West Berkshire Council

## Equality Objectives and Activities 2019

### Annual Equalities Report

#### **Introduction**

Following the introduction of the Equality Act 2010, public authorities are required to comply with the general equality duty and specific equality duties as set out below:

#### **General Duty**

In exercising its functions, 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.

The nine protected characteristics are as follows:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender Reassignment;
- Marriage and Civil Partnership;
- Pregnancy and Maternity;
- Race;
- Religion and Belief;
- Sex;
- Sexual Orientation.

#### **Specific Duties**

In summary, the Council is required to:

1. Publish information to demonstrate compliance with the general equality duty in January each year. This must include information relating to people who share a protected characteristic who are employees, or others affected by its policies and practices. Employee information is published in the Annual Employee Report. Details of where this can be found are included below.
2. Prepare and publish one or more objectives that act to further any of the aims of the general equality duty. This must be done at least every four years and the objectives must be specific and measurable.

The Council's equality objectives remain unchanged from 2018 and have been drawn from the Council Strategy 2015-19 and from the work of the previous Including Everyone Board (IEB).

A new Council Strategy 2019-2023 was agreed in May 2019 and an accompanying Delivery Plan has recently been approved. Equality and diversity remain key elements of that Strategy and a new Equality and Diversity Board has been established to take this work forward. The Council is set to appoint an Equality and Diversity Officer in 2020 to support the work of the Board.

The Terms of Reference for the new Equality and Diversity Board are broader than the previous IEB. There is a recognised need to address wider equalities issues within the West Berkshire community as well as meeting the specific requirements of the Equality Act 2010. There will be an increased emphasis of the former during the course of 2020.

In addition to a new Council Strategy, the West Berkshire Health and Wellbeing Board also published a long term Vision for the District in 2019. This also highlights the equality challenges that exist across West Berkshire and the Board is actively engaged in addressing these. Given the publication of these two new strategic documents the equality objectives outlined here will be reviewed during 2020. It is also intended to prepare an Equality and Diversity Strategy to guide the work of the Board over the coming year.

#### Key highlights for 2019

- Creation of a new Equality and Diversity Board to help implement the Council Strategy 2019-2023.
- Agreement to employ an Equalities Officer to support the work of the new Equality and Diversity Board.
- Continued support for the development of 'Connecting Communities' a Community Interest Company geared to providing information support and language training to West Berkshire BAMER communities and vulnerable groups. It is hoped that this will be formally launched in 2020.
- Gender pay gap.....
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## West Berkshire Council Equality Objectives Progress Update

### Equality Objective 1: Ensure our workforce is reflective of our communities

**Performance Measure (i):** On an annual basis, review % of council staff with protected characteristics compared to Census data

Category (% of workforce)	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2011 Census
Female	76.47	76.59	76.85	77.28	77.46	n/a
Male	23.53	23.41	23.15	22.72	22.54	n/a
Disability declared (definition in Equality Act 2010)*	3.49	3.34	3.22	3.23	3.57	3.20
Black minority ethnic (BME)	4.07	5.05	5.41	6.25	7.07	5.00
Age under 25	3.75	3.54	3.15	3.23	3.23	n/a
Age 25-34	15.64	15.67	15.89	14.92	15.28	n/a
Age 35-44	22.82	22.62	22.67	22.11	21.53	n/a
Age 45-54	30.45	29.31	29.79	31.65	30.89	n/a
Age 55-64	24.31	25.11	24.93	24.87	25.30	n/a
Age 65+	3.04	3.74	3.56	3.23	3.77	n/a
Full time	61.86	62.03	62.40	62.23	62.52	n/a
Part time (under 37 hours a week and/or 52 weeks a year)	38.14	37.97	37.60	37.77	37.48	n/a

The high proportion (77.46%) of female employees is typical for a unitary authority. This figure has remained stable for many years and seems unlikely to change. It is over representative when compared to Census data for West Berkshire as a whole, which shows a roughly equal gender split.

The percentage of employees who declare themselves to have a disability (3.57%) is a small increase on last year. It is slightly higher than the proportion of working age (16-65) residents in the latest Census who report their day to day activities are limited 'a lot' by disability (3.2%). It would therefore appear that the Council continues to employ a representative number of the local working population with disabilities.

The percentage of employees who declare themselves of black and minority ethnic (BME) origin (7.07%), is higher than the figure for the District population based on the Census (5%). This is an increase on last year and is the third consecutive year that the Council has reported a BME workforce that equals or exceeds the proportion in the population.

**Performance Measure (ii):** Produce data showing representation of protected characteristics in more senior roles within the council.

Grade	% of those in this grade in each age group (rows total to 100)					
	Under 25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
B-F	6.74	16.67	16.49	25.53	28.19	6.38
G-J	1.46	17.32	25.47	31.30	23.14	1.31
Middle managers	0.00	6.36	22.73	43.64	22.73	4.55
Senior managers	0.00	0.00	13.33	26.67	53.33	6.67

The age profile for the Council shows that just over 77.7% of employees were aged between 35 and 64 in 2018/19. Whilst the Council has a relatively mature workforce (common with much of local government) the proportion of staff aged under 35 has increased slightly. The proportion aged 65 or over is relatively stable at between 3 and 4%.

As with age profile the proportion of full to part time staff has remained largely unchanged. In 2019 just over 37% of all staff were part time.

Female employees as percentage of employees in this grade	
B-F	83.87
G-J	77.73
Middle managers	64.09
Senior managers	20.00

Whilst female staff dominate the Council's workforce that female workforce is not equally represented across the various grades. More senior staff are male and there is a much higher proportion of female staff within the lower paid grades as the table above shows. The issue, sometimes referred to as the gender pay gap, was reviewed in some detail by the Council during 2019. The main conclusions from the report confirmed that the Council pays men and women the same rate for doing the same job. Whilst the proportion of women in senior management positions did fall during 2019, the primary reason why the Council fares poorly in terms of comparative data is because of the underlying structure of the organisation. In essence manual functions which tend to be less well paid have been retained in house for occupations such as care, which are generally occupied by women. In contrast waste and highways management functions, which are generally occupied by men, have been outsourced largely to the private sector and no longer feature in the Council's data. The net result is that the Council's data has become skewed.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>% of those in this grade who have a disability ie representation in workforce</b>
B-F	3.37
G-J	3.64
Middle managers	3.64
Senior managers	6.67

<b>Grade</b>	<b>% of those in this grade who are BME ie representation in workforce</b>
B-F	8.87
G-J	6.40
Middle managers	5.00
Senior managers	0.00

With regard to the Council's BME workforce representation across the various pay grades the data shows an improvement over the past year with higher representation being seen at middle manager level although no representation within senior management.

In respect of disability, representation remains much more even with the highest representation being recorded amongst senior management.

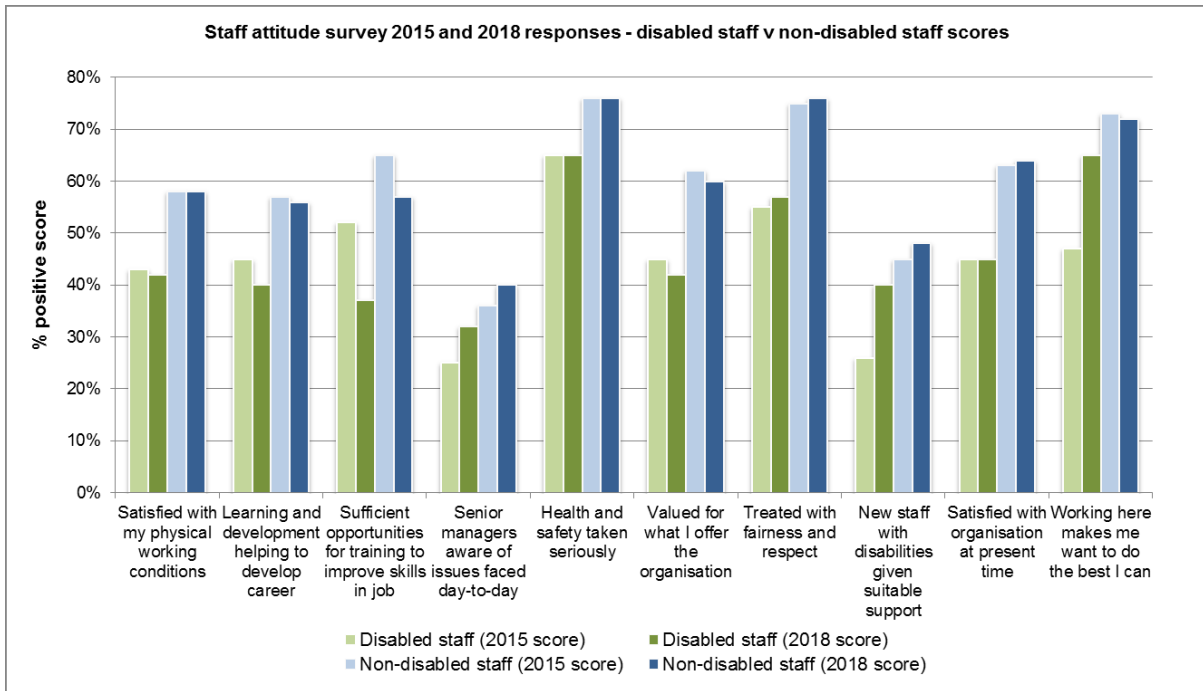
With regard to age the overall picture shows improved representation across the board although the correlation between age and grade is still very apparent. There is however some evidence that younger age groups are seeing an increasing representation within the higher grades.

93.33% of senior managers are aged between 45 and 64, which is an increase on last year.

In general the correlation between age and grade is a reflection of the experience needed to undertake these more senior roles.

*Source: West Berkshire Council's Annual Employment Report 2017/18*

**Performance Measure (iii):** Produce a comparison of responses from staff with a disability in the employee attitude surveys for 2015 and 2018 to monitor the effect of the work of the Including Everyone Board with the Disability Staff Network.



The graph shows an improvement in the views of staff with disabilities in some areas since 2015 e.g. senior managers being aware of issues faced day to day, new staff with disabilities given suitable support and wanting to do the best for the organisation. However there has been a deterioration in other areas, e.g. the availability of learning and development, sufficient opportunities for training and being valued by the organisation.

**Equality Objective 2:** Endeavour to minimise discrimination, harassment and victimisation and advance equality of opportunity for employees and all members of our communities

**Performance Measure (i):** Document the number of employees and Members who have taken part in mandatory equality and diversity training at least every 3 years.

Classroom based equality and diversity training is no longer mandatory for staff. However, it is mandatory to complete the e-learning training. It is still mandatory for managers to attend the classroom based training followed by the e-learning refresher. Mandatory training is also provided in-house for Elected Members.

The graph shows the percentage of staff, managers and Elected



Members who have completed the training in the required time period as at the end of Q2 2018/19.

**Performance Measure (ii):** Produce comparison data for responses to question 44 in the Employee Attitude Surveys for 2015 and 2018 'I would feel free to report bullying/harassment without worrying that I would be treated in a negative way'

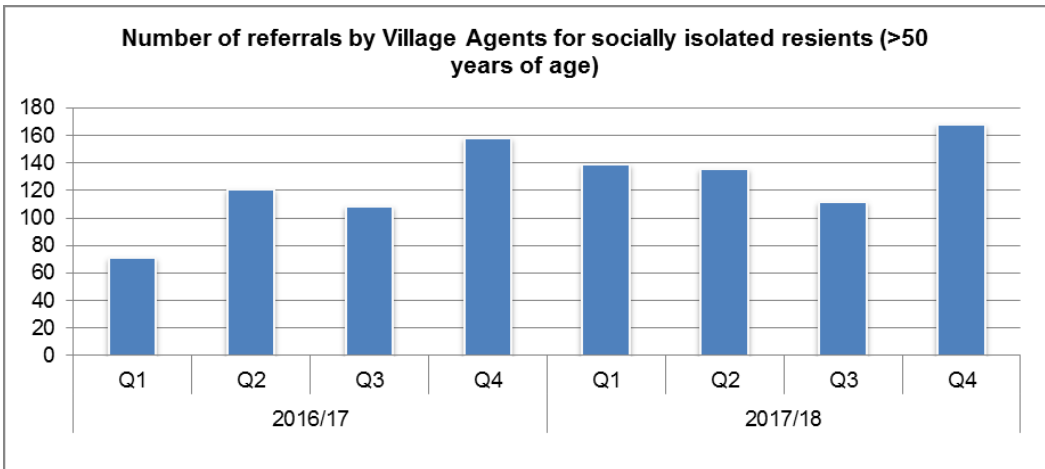


Data shows that there has been a 2% increase (71% in 2015 to 73% in 2018) in the number of employees saying that they would feel free to report bullying and harassment without worrying that they would be treated in a negative way.

The variance between disabled and non-disabled staff's positive scores remains, however it has increased from 8% to 12%, with disabled staff positive scores lower than non-disabled staff.

**Equality Objective 3:** Implement new ways of working to develop communities to be more resilient in meeting the needs of vulnerable people (from Council Strategy 2015/19)

**Performance Measure (i):** Number of referrals by village agents for socially isolated residents (<50 years of age). 2017/18 target =480 referrals



This measure has replaced the original Council Strategy measure 'Number of volunteers obtained through the village agents'

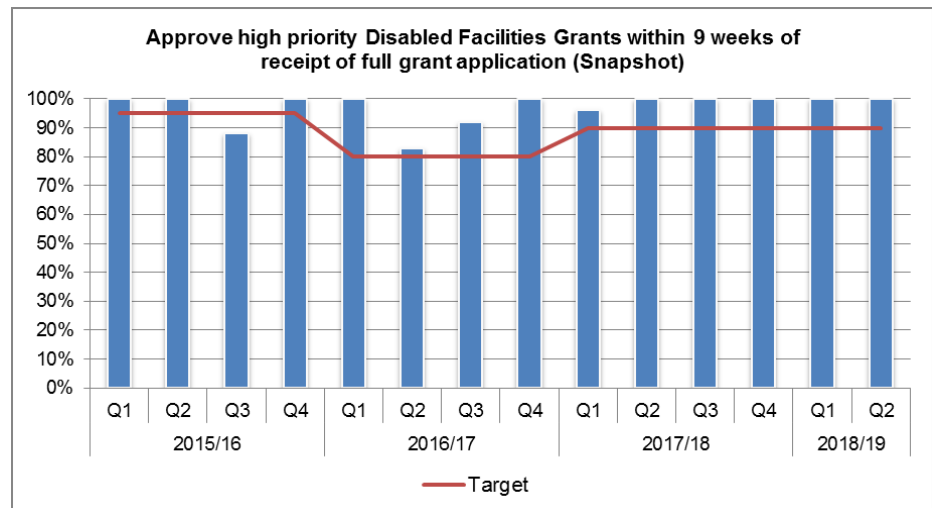
volunteer scheme, focusing on, targeting rural areas and adult social care users'.

The graph above relates to the Council’s financial year, which is April – March. It shows that the target to obtain 120 referrals per quarter was exceeded during January – March 2017 (Q4), April – June 2017 (Q1), July – September 2017 (Q3) and January – March 2018 (Q4). However, the measure ceased to be monitored during 2018/19 and therefore this data is not included.

**Performance Measure (ii): Percentage of high priority Disabled Facilities Grants approved within 9 weeks of receipt of full grant application**

The data shows that this target has been either met or exceeded over the last 11 quarters.

The graph relates to the council’s financial year, which is April – March, and therefore, the quarters apply accordingly.



**Equality Objective 4: Close the education attainment gap for vulnerable pupils (from Council Strategy 2015/19)**

**Performance Measure (i): % of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) at foundation stage (Early Years)**

Academic Year	Year End Outturn (% and Rank)
2015/16	57% (38 /152 – 1 <sup>st</sup> quartile)
2016/17	53% (99 /152 – 3 <sup>rd</sup> quartile)

**Performance Measure (ii): Year 1 Phonics: Proportion of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) achieving expected level in Phonics decoding**

Academic Year	Year End Outturn (%)
2014/15	55%
2015/16	54%
2016/17	54%



**Performance Measure (iii):** To improve on 2015/16 year rankings for reading, writing and maths combined expected standard for Free School Meals (FSM) pupils in KS2

Academic Year	Year End Outturn (Rank)
2015/16	83 / 152 (3 <sup>rd</sup> quartile)
2016/17	146 / 152 (4 <sup>th</sup> quartile)

**Performance Measure (iv):** To improve on 2015/16 rankings for attainment 8 for Free School Meals (FSM) pupils in KS4

Academic Year	Year End Outturn (Rank)
2015/16	118 / 152 (4 <sup>th</sup> quartile)
2016/17	86 / 152 (3 <sup>rd</sup> quartile)

2017/18 data is currently unavailable for all of the above measures. Tables will be updated accordingly later in the year.

The above statistics highlight one of the many strategic challenges which face the Council and its partners in West Berkshire, namely the wide gap that exists between communities with regard to a range of quality of life indicators. These are perhaps much more evident for employment, education and health. In some cases this gap is evident between communities of place, for example between sometimes neighbouring wards. A notable example is the variation in life expectancy between wards in Thatcham and neighbouring Bucklebury where a difference of 10 years exists in life expectancy of some groups. The figures above highlight a significant variation in educational attainment between those eligible for school meals and those who are not. Other examples of such gaps exist across a number of domains, many which have been highlighted in West Berkshire 2036 and the Council Strategy 2019 – 2023. There remains a firm commitment to refocus our collective efforts to address this. The Equality and Diversity Board will play its role in helping to make this a reality.