

# Race Equality Scheme 2008-2011 Summary





## Introduction

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (RRAA 2000) places a statutory duty on all public authorities, including Woking Borough Council, to promote race equality.

The Council's revised Race Equality Scheme sets out the Council's commitment to promoting race equality by reducing discrimination, disadvantages and inequalities of opportunity, and to promote diversity in terms of the people we serve, our workforce, the partners we work with and the services we deliver.

## What is the Council's statutory duty?

The statutory duty requires Woking Borough Council to put measures in place to:

- eliminate unlawful race discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity
- promote good relations between persons of different race.

This is known as the 'general duty' and aims to make race equality an integral part of the way the Council works, by putting it at the centre of policy making, service delivery and employment.




## To help meet its general duties, the Council has a specific duty to:

- produce and publish a Race Equality Scheme, identifying how the authority will meet its duties and setting out its race equality objectives
- set out and prioritise which of the Council's current and proposed functions and policies are relevant to promoting race equality
- assess the impact of its current and proposed policies and practices on race equality
- gather and use information on how policies and practices affect race equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services
- consult stakeholders and take account of relevant information in order to determine its race equality objectives
- implement the actions set out in the Race Equality Scheme, within three years
- report and review on a regular basis.


## What is the purpose of the Race Equality Scheme?

- To ensure all those living, working or visiting Woking are able to access services, which are appropriate to their needs and participate fully and equally within the communities of Woking.
- To promote good relations between persons of different race.
- To eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment in employment practices and actively promote race equality within the workforce.



## What are the objectives of the Race Equality Scheme?

To help Woking Borough Council meet the aims of the Race Equality Scheme, eight objectives have been developed.

- Create a culture within the Council where equality is at the core of all its activities.
  - Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment in employment practices and actively promote race equality in the workforce.
  - Build a workforce that is representative of the diverse communities within the Borough.
  - Make services relevant and accessible to present and future users.
  - Target resources, where necessary, to groups and communities who are most at risk of exclusion.
  - Promote equality through partnership working and community leadership.
  - Ensure the Council's involvement in the voluntary and community sector supports community groups focusing on equality and inclusion.
  - Influence others through good practice in service provision, employment and procurement.
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## How we intend to achieve our aims

- **Leadership and accountability** – the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Strategy together with members of the Equality and Diversity Working Group are responsible for overseeing progress on equality within the Council. Equality and Diversity is also one of the skills required by the Behaviour and Skills Framework, which is being implemented for all staff across the Council during 2008.
- **Gather and analyse information** on our employees and service users, in order to identify areas for improvement and priorities for action.
- **Consult stakeholders**, including employees, UNISON, members of the community, voluntary organisations and service users, to help establish areas of concern and improvement, inform the action plan and target resources.
- **Carry out impact assessments** – a legal requirement under the RRAA (2000), the assessment is a simple tool that enables the Council to check whether any existing or proposed strategy, policy, service or project is discriminating.
- **Access to information and services** – the Council will ensure all information provided to citizens is appropriate and accessible to everyone (i.e. alternative formats and translations will be available upon request).
- **Prioritise and implement race equality objectives** established from the results of a consultation with community representatives, as well as taking into account the priorities of Woking Borough Council.
- **Reporting and reviewing** – the Scheme will be reviewed and revised every three years. We will report annually on the progress made against fulfilling our duty and whether our targets have been met. Stakeholders, including the Equality Forum, will be involved in reviewing progress and the effectiveness of the previous scheme and its objectives.
- **Ensure our workforce is representative of the community it serves** by monitoring the make up of staff and those applying for employment to ensure they broadly reflect the make-up of local communities across all levels of the organisation.
- **Training** – a programme of equalities training has been developed to ensure the skills and understanding of Councillors and Council staff continue. This programme is regularly reviewed and updated to take into account changes in legislation and thinking.





## Developing an action plan

The information gained from consultation with the Equality Forum and other local community groups, has been used to inform the development of an action plan in support of the Race Equality Scheme.

The detailed activities and actions developed form part of a Corporate Equality Action Plan (CEAP). This CEAP will be included in the Council's business planning process.

The CEAP will be monitored and managed by both Councillors and Council Officers and be a living document able to be modified appropriately should priorities change and/or new issues arise.





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01483 750548

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LINK LINE



Woking Borough Council  
Civic Offices  
Gloucester Square  
Woking  
Surrey GU21 6YL

Phone: 01483 755855  
Website: [www.woking.gov.uk](http://www.woking.gov.uk)