

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

Hambleton District Council, in its role as Community Leader, believes that equality of opportunity should be placed at the heart of its service provision. A snapshot of information gathered in the 2011 Census illustrates some of the issues that the Council must bear in mind :

Hambleton has a population of 89,140 residents living in 38,117 households across an area of 506 square miles. Almost one third of our citizens (29.3%) are aged over 60 and, despite being a largely rural district, some 13.3% of households do not have a car and rely entirely on public transport for access to essential services. Whilst we do not have a large range of people from minority ethnic backgrounds compared to some districts, 1.7% of Hambleton households include residents whose main language is not English and some 4,000 of our citizens were born outside the UK.

Clearly it is only right and proper that Hambleton District Council is aware of and considers the needs of *all* its residents, when planning and delivering services to the Community.

The Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 protects people on the basis of nine 'protected characteristics' to ensure that everyone really does receive a fair chance of employment and use of services. The protected characteristics are:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex (gender);
- sexual orientation;
- marriage & civil partnerships

The legislation is designed to ensure that public authorities in particular have due regard to the need to :

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Authorities must also publish information to demonstrate their compliance.

How we do it at Hambleton

We take positive action to ensure that our workforce is representative of the community it serves, and that our services are accessible to, and meet, the needs of all our citizens. To meet our Equality & Diversity obligations at Hambleton we :

- OFFER help and assistance to residents politely and respectfully, in a variety of formats and languages to meet the needs of the whole community
- OPERATE employment practices that ensure employee diversity and protect our staff from their initial recruitment through to departure or retirement
- DELIVER best practice customer service through a range of access methods including written, telephone, face to face, email and website
- MEASURE and monitor service standards and performance targets, welcoming feedback from customers and the wider community
- PUBLISH information on what we do and how we do it

To find out more about Equality & Diversity in general, and how we at Hambleton in particular look after our employees, our customers and our community, follow these links :

- Customer Charter
- Customer Service Standards
- Data Protection Act 1998 (www.legislation.gov.uk)
- Employment : Equal Opportunity & Diversity Monitoring Form
- Equality Act 2010 (www.homeoffice.gov.uk)
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Freedom of Information (www.legislation.gov.uk)
- Planning Applicants Charter
- Public Sector Equality Duty (www.homeoffice.gov.uk)