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# Annual Equality Statement 2022

Published 31 January 2022

Our Equality Statement is available to download at

[www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/equalities](http://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/equalities)

All figures included were sourced shortly before publication, using the most recent data available.

If you would like this document in large print, another format or colour, please telephone Alison Bowen on 01543 308129 or email [alison.bowen@lichfielddc.gov.uk](mailto:alison.bowen@lichfielddc.gov.uk)

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# Introduction

This Equality Statement shows how we are meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), under The Equality Act 2010. It helps our customers, staff, the Equality & Human Rights Commission, regulators and other interested parties to assess our equality performance and our compliance with equality legislation. It also shows how we are meeting the equality objectives we have set.

2021 was another difficult year for everyone, with the ongoing impact and effects of Covid 19. We continued to provide our services to the best of our ability whilst following and complying with government advice. In doing so, we constantly considered the way some of our services should be delivered to ensure everyone was kept as safe as possible. We recognise ever more the very real impact our council has on the lives of our residents through the services we provide and the positive contribution we can make to the communities we serve through the place making activities we lead.

We want ‘inclusion and belonging’ to be the watchword phrase articulated by anyone working for LDC when talking about what it is like to be an officer here; we believe valuing diversity and welcoming the different perspectives others can provide to discussions and problem solving will make us a better council. Having respect for everyone is a core value of the council and means working together across team, service and organisational boundaries to deliver effective services. In 2021 we launched a new organisational change programme ‘Being a Better Council’ (BABC). The programme seeks to plan and implement substantial and sustainable change to our organisational structures, performance and culture; helping us deliver our Strategic Plan and meet our aspirations to be a modern, well-run council.

Successful implementation of the programme will result in new operating models for our services, delivered by more of our employees who are skilled and confident; able to provide services that are resident centric, commercially minded and data and performance driven. This in turn will help to drive increased satisfaction with our performance and increased trust in us. Through the programme we are building an inclusive organisation, one that represents our district and values our staff for who they are and what they contribute to our council and communities.

This statement helps to demonstrate how we currently consider the varying needs of people who live, work, or visit our district.

Our focus is on the nine protected characteristics and demonstrating how equality considerations are embedded in our decision-making processes, and how they can influence both our service delivery and employment practices.

# Our equality duty and objectives

Under the Equalities Act 2010 we have a public sector equality duty to have due regard of the need to:

* Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act.
* Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.
* Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

Our equality objectives help us to focus attention on the priority equality issues for LDC, to deliver improvements in policy making, service delivery and employment, including resources allocation. Our objectives are:

* To scrutinise and improve access to our services ensuring we treat people fairly, provide our customers with equal opportunity, and that we gain business benefits from our services being accessible to the maximum number of people.
* To ensure our workforce profile reflects best practice in recruitment and, in consultation with our staff, continue to develop a culture that is both inclusive and open.
* To further promote the use of equality impact assessments so they become fully embedded in our planning and decision-making process.

# Who lives in our district

Understanding who lives in our district helps us understand the needs of our local communities and gives us information to help us make our services accessible.

We have considered the protected characteristics of our population using the Census 2011 data to provide most of the information. Unless otherwise stated, data quoted is from the Census 2011. The results of the 2021 Census will be published during 2022 and they will be used for future statements.

In 2019 the total population of Lichfield District was 104,800, in 2020 it had risen almost 1% to 105,600 (Office for National Statistics (Nomis)).

**Age**

Since 2001, the largest population growth has taken place in the number of residents aged 65 years or over, and we expect this to continue in the coming years.

In 2001, 15.5% of residents (14,437) were aged 65+ years and by 2020 this had increased to 24% (25,400). (National Office of Statistics – local authority based by five-year age band – December 2020)

**Disability**

18% of people living in our district (18,265) have a limiting long-term illness.

(National Office of Statistics – Long-term health problem or disability/2011)

**Gender**

The number of males and fem ales living in the district is almost equal, in 2020 the split was 50.7% (53,600) female and 49.3% (52,100) male (Nomis). These are the only figures available currently to identify the breakdown of gender within the district.

**Gender reassignment**

Currently there are no statistics available for gender reassignment within the district.

**Marital status**

In 2001, 60% of people living in the district aged 16 years or over were married. By 2011 this proportion had reduced to 55% and included 48 registered same-sex civil partnerships. (National Office of Statistics Marital and Civil Partnership Status 2011)

**Pregnancy and maternity**

During 2020, there were 913 babies born to mothers that normally reside within the district. This was a small decrease from 2019 when there were 991. (ONS births by usual area of residence)

**Race**

In 2011 the ethnic make-up of Lichfield District is as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ethnicity | 2011 | % population | 2001 | % population |
| White British | 95,263 | 94.6% | 90,034 | 96.6% |
| White Irish/other | 2,136 | 2.1% | 1,463 | 1.6% |
| Mixed | 1,034 | 1.1% | 499 | 0.53% |
| Asian or Asian British | 1,623 | 1.7% | 728 | 0.78% |
| Black or Black British | 481 | 0.5% | 237 | 0.25% |
| Other ethnic group | 117 | 0.1% | 274 | 0.29% |

**Religion or belief (including non-belief)**

In 2011, 69% of residents classed themselves as Christian. This decreased from 80% in 2001. 23% of local people state they have no religion, which is an increase from 12% in 2001. 6.4% of people did not state their religion. The number of people from all other religions, including Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh has increased since 2001. (National Office for Statistics Religion 2011).

**Sexual orientation**

There is no specific data on the number of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the district currently. The monitoring of protected characteristics carried out by LDC does include questions on this where appropriate.

The Office for National statistics has a [data set for sexual orientation in the United Kingdom](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualidentityuk/2018). The data set available for the West Midlands (2019) identifies the following:

Heterosexual or straight: 93.9%

Gay or lesbian: 1.2%

Bisexual: 1.5%

Other: 0.5%

Don’t know/refused to say: 2.9%

# Delivering equality in our services in 2021

We deliver a range of services, which we adapt and review to meet local needs and opportunities, and to take account of our funding situation. We also offer a range of services that particularly support individuals with protected characteristics. These include:

**Regulatory Services, Housing and Wellbeing**

* We support applications for disabled facilities grants to deliver adaptations within homes. During 2020/2021 we helped 53 people adapt their homes using the grant.
* Our Warm Homes, Greener District initiative works to help local people improve the energy efficiency of their homes, stay warmer in winter and reduce their energy bills. We continue to use and expand our networks to promote and make the services accessible to all residents in the district. Covid-19 has seen a significant and sustained increase in the use of this service as more people fall now fall within the vulnerable groups that need assistance.
* We gave grant funding of between £942 and £50,000 to local voluntary and community groups to deliver outcomes that support groups of residents within the local community. In 2021 this included:
* MHA Communities (The Lichfield and District Live at Home Scheme) – support for their members including dementia day care, developing digital skills, shopping support, care checks and telephone befriending.
* Liberty Jamboree – developing the skills and confidence of young people with learning disabilities and barriers not in education, employment or training to open more opportunities.
* Royal National institute for Deaf People – awareness raising and support to improve the wellbeing of older people with hearing loss.
* Spark – wellbeing activities for young people and older people, including wellbeing walks for men and support sessions for Dads and male carers.
* Friends2Friends – offering more opportunities for people with learning disabilities to develop skills and friendship groups.
* Pathway – supporting those who have experienced economic abuse and helping them address the issues that this presents.
* Cruse – for bereavement care.
* Places of Welcome - where everyone can go to meet a friendly face, have a drink and a conversation when they need it.
* We have also allocated funding to support victims of hate crime, people who have mental health needs, people who need advice and diversionary activities for young people.
* Through the Councillor Local Community Fund, funding from £50 to £300 has been awarded by councillors for projects and activities that include support for adults and young people with disabilities and a wide range of activities for young and older people that help counter social isolation and support improved mental health and wellbeing.

**Operational Services**

* Our leisure and parks team encourages participation in sports and physical activity to improve the health and wellbeing of people that would most benefit. This includes children and young people, people aged 60 and over, people with disabilities, women and carers. The service works in partnership with several key partners, including our commissioned leisure operator, Freedom Leisure, who support the provision of a range of activities that target specific groups.
* During 2021 services in parks continued, but with slight changes when required due to Covid restrictions.
* In 2021 we installed a new play area at Stowe Fields, again with wheelchair accessible surfacing, a range of accessible play items along with more benches.
* In Beacon and Stowe parks several benches have been installed, looking at the intervals between each bench, assisting and encouraging the less mobile to use public space.  A selection of benches has also been installed with a space alongside for wheelchair users to sit with their companions.
* Looking at Wellbeing, Park Pause was introduced providing a range of activities for mindfulness, <https://lichfieldhistoricparks.co.uk/2020/10/boost-your-wellbeing-with-park-pause-activities/>
* In 2021 the team launched an audio trail <https://lichfieldhistoricparks.co.uk/audiotour/> providing both literature and audio links.
* Volunteering re-started following the relaxing of Covid restrictions, whereas several helpers were grateful to come back, offering a range of health benefits.
* The toilets in Beacon Park have disabled facilities with a portable hoist on site. There are also disabled facilities in the football changing rooms. Accessibility information can be found at [www.lichfieldhistoricparks.co.uk/beacon-park/accessibility/](http://www.lichfieldhistoricparks.co.uk/beacon-park/accessibility/). Further detailed information can be sought by emailing [parks@lichfielddc.gov.uk](mailto:parks@lichfielddc.gov.uk).
* Our sports development and wellbeing team works in partnership with a number of key partners, including our commissioned leisure operator, Freedom Leisure, who support the provision of a range of activities that target specific groups. These include:
  + Activities for older adults - aerobics, Pilates, relaxation classes and walking netball at Burntwood Leisure Centre, and exercise sessions, silver circuits at Friary Grange Leisure Centre.
  + Coaching sessions for young people with autism.
  + Dementia friendly activities.
  + Coaching courses and sessions in swimming, football, gymnastics, trampolining, tennis, no strings badminton, multi-games, dance for children and young people.
  + Swimming sessions for mothers and toddlers.
* Covid-19 lockdowns restrictions meant our leisure centres had to close between January and March 2021. When allowed to operate, the session have complied with government guidance.
* To encourage participation, Freedom Leisure offer Leisure Activity Passports (LAP), which provides up to 30% savings on leisure activities across the district. People aged 60 and over, those on means tested benefits, those with disabilities and registered carers can apply for a free passport.
* When Covid-19 restrictions allowed and following the government social distancing guidelines, our Active Lichfield team provided specific targeted intervention programmes which included:
  + Getin2it diversionary programme to reduce anti-social behaviour among young people aged from 7 to 25 years.
  + Netball in Beacon Park for girls and women.
  + Walking football, cricket and netball for older people.
  + Disability multi sports sessions for young people aged 5 to 18.
  + Providing physical activity, physical literacy and wellbeing programmes within our parks and open spaces.
  + Online zoom fitness and dance sessions.
* Our joint waste service continued to operate a full service of emptying bins during 2021. This service also provides:
  + Supplies bin collection calendars in braille and large print.
  + Provides free/additional domestic waste bins to families where extra waste is generated. This might be due to a medical condition, or children in nappies, and for families of six or more. In 2021 we supplied 931 additional bins.
  + Provides assisted bin collections for people who struggle to get their bins to the roadside, such as older residents and people with disabilities. In 2021 assisted 1059 homes.
* We operate a shop mobility service for people who have permanent or temporary disabilities within Lichfield city centre. More information on the scheme and how to hire the equipment can be found within the Councils webpage.  <https://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/car-parks/shopmobility>
* There are seven council operated public toilets in Lichfield and Burntwood including the public toilet facility within Beacon Park in Lichfield. All facilities either have separate cubicles suitable for disabled people or an all in one unisex cubical suitable for everyone. We also have a dedicated Changing Places facility for people with more severe disabilities located in The Friary car park in Lichfield.
* Grounds maintenance and park teams trim back hedges each year to ensure footpaths in our parks and open spaces are not obstructed. This particularly assists people in a wheelchair, users of a mobility scooter and helps people with pushchairs.
* Our Street Cleansing team have staff working 365 days of the year keeping the district as clean and tidy as possible. The work includes sweeping public footpaths and highways, removal of litter and fly tipping and trying to ensure the footpaths within our district are safe for people of all abilities to use.

**Economic Growth and Development**

* We work with developers to secure contributions (CIL and Section 106) towards community improvements/infrastructure and engage all sectors of the community in determining how to best use these funds. These contributions help to reduce the impact of developments on local areas and create better quality environments in and around new developments. This ranges from improving roads and building new community facilities, through to creating open spaces and improving local schools. Examples of projects that have positively impacted on communities and specific groups of people, include allocations of monies to bring forward improvements to community halls and the creation of new space to accommodate community activities, enhancing medical facilities, supporting a range of arts projects and contributing towards new school provision.
* In developing and creating our local plan and its subsequent on-going review:
  + We have prepared executive summaries to help people understand detailed documents.
  + We have carried out equality impact assessments to check our documents are not having a negative impact on any sector of the community.
  + We have worked towards providing policies to support the delivery of housing, including affordable housing and housing to meet differing needs as well as sites to serve the requirements of the Gypsy and Traveller community.
  + We have liaised with interest groups and representative bodies to ensure our policies protect and safeguard our important centres, allowing access to services and facilities.
  + We have updated our Statement of Community Involvement to take account of the impacts of Covid-19 on the public consultation process while ensuring there is fair access for everyone to be able to view and comment on the plan making process.
* We continue to enforce building regulations and ensure the built environment is accessible and useable by the whole community, including people with a disability.
* We comply with all relevant recommendations for the provision of dedicated parking for blue badge holders. Blue badge holders are also allowed to use any of our parking bays (apart from those dedicated to electric vehicle charging) without payment.  Due to the ongoing pandemic we continue to have closures of some on street and blue badge bays to allow for improved social distancing in line with government guidance. An equal number of additional spaces continue to be provided in alternative car parks serving the city centre.
* We have continued to work with colleagues at County Highways and with the major retailers and hospitality providers to ensure a safe visitor environment is maintained in the city centre.
* The city centre bus station development has been in operation for over a year and provides improved facilities for users of public transport whilst fully complying with disability access requirements.

**Corporate Services**

* We ensure our website is accessible in the following ways:
  + Descriptive headers and images so a screen reader can pick them up.
  + Clear font colour contrast.
  + Descriptive links for easy access on a screen reader.
  + We are currently AA compliant according to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).
  + Providing clear and consistent navigation mechanisms, orientation information, navigation bars, and a site map that increases the likelihood that a person will find what they are looking for.
  + We carry out user testing of all online forms to ensure they are easy to use and are accessible.
  + Implemented the accessibility regulations to ensure all documents on our website either meet these requirements or can be requested in a suitable format compatible with screen readers etc.
* Although not currently open for face-to-face visitors, our customer service team is available via the telephone and email.
* We encourage the use of our online services across the authority. If a person is unable to self-serve online at home, we will offer telephone appointments for our trained advisors to complete forms on the customer’s behalf.
* Where documentation is required, it may be emailed in, or hard copies dropped into the post box at the offices.
* If a customer cannot self-serve and a telephone appointment is not sufficient/appropriate we may pre book a face-to-face appointment. To protect both customers and staff, Covid guidelines (no symptoms, hand sanitiser, face masks, distancing) must be followed by all parties involved in the appointment.
* Our Customer Service team regularly receive safeguarding and equality training.
* Whilst our offices are currently closed there are times that people need to enter, our District Council House offices offers access via steps or a ramp through double width automatic doors. A disabled toilet, which uses a radar key for access, is available to visitors.
* Our reception area has a portable hearing loop that is made available to those who need it, and the desks have been selected to be wheelchair user friendly.
* We can make a provision to ensure that translation services are available.

# Service quality improvements in 2021

In our 2021 Equality Statement we identified a number of service equality priorities which are detailed below. This section sets out what we said we would doand what we did.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **We said:** | **We did…** |
| We will review our equalities policy and our equalities objectives to ensure they reflect our equalities commitments and provide a framework for progressing these commitments. | Work on this has been ongoing and will always be continual. In 2022 our new change programme BABC will allow us to develop further as we want to respond to the changing needs and expectations of our residents. |
| We will continue to maximise take up of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to support vulnerable people and helping to prevent homelessness. | For 2021/2022 we received funding of £104,168, currently in this financial year we have spent 61% (£63,490) of it – to date 146 applications have been paid and 74 declined. We hope to spend the remaining amount during the last quarter of the year.  We have tried to raise awareness this year by arranging meetings with our Housing Options team and Citizens Advice Bureau. We are also working closely with our local Jobcentre, private landlords and registered providers in an attempt to fully utilise the funding we receive from the Department for Work and Pensions. |
| We will continue to monitor the protected characteristics of service users and consider the expansion of this monitoring into other service areas where possible. | We have continued to do this and have this data for the following services:   * Discretionary housing payments * Housing enquiries * Temporary accommodation placement   During 2022, we will be considering alternative ways to obtain this information enabling us to capture more data and using it more effectively. An update on this will be provided in our 2023 statement. |
| Where services and policies are reviewed and changes are proposed, equality impact assessments (EIA’s) will be carried out to ensure the full impact of changes is understood before a decision is made. EIA’s are done for:   * A review an existing policy or service. * Developing a new policy or planned service. * Making a change to an existing policy or service, **this includes temporary changes**. * When a service has to be stopped. | During 2021 the following EIA’s were completed:   * Disabled parking bays * Car parking strategy * Dry mixed recycling * Food safety delivery plan * Housing assistance policy * Local plan 2040 * Public realm strategy   We found there were no negative impacts affecting any of the protected characteristics. |
| We will ensure projects which are implemented from the local plan and community infrastructure levy projects are subject to an equality impact assessment. | During 2021 we did not complete any. |
| We will work to ensure all elected members have completed equalities training. | Since May 2019, 54% of all elected members have completed equalities training. Further training is planned during2022. Our aim to ensure that training is updated every three years. |
| We will work to ensure all elected members have completed recent training in safeguarding and child sexual exploitation. | 46% of our elected members have now completed the training since the district council elections in May 2019. More training is planned during 2022. |
| We will continue to embed equalities and our corporate value of having respect for everyone in how we work as a council and all that we do. We will measure this through our employee surveys. | Our most recent employee survey was done in 2018. 64% of staff agreed that our approach to equalities is embedded within our organisation. |

# Our service equality priorities for 2022

We will undertake the following actions:

* Our procurement team will continue to review our policies and procedures to ensure they consider our equality duty.
* We will continue to maximise take up of discretionary housing payments to support vulnerable people and help prevent homelessness.
* We will continue to monitor the protected characteristics of service users where this data will be of use and consider the expansion of this monitoring into other service areas where possible.
* When services are reviewed and changes are proposed, we will carry out equality impact assessments to ensure the full impact of changes is understood before decisions are made.
* We will consider revising our equality impact assessment process.
* When conducting customer surveys, we will collect equality trend data.
* We will ensure new projects, services and strategies implemented because of our local plan or through community infrastructure levy projects will be subject to equality impact assessments.
* We will continue to work to ensure all elected members have completed recent training in equalities as well as safeguarding and child sexual exploitation.
* We will continue to embed equalities and our corporate value of having respect for everyone.
* We will ensure equality and accessibility are key outcomes from our digitisation programme in ensuring the delivery of consistent customer journeys and easy to use online services.

# Delivering equality in employment in 2021

We aim to provide an inclusive, respectful and discrimination free work environment for all our employees. We want all our employees to feel respected and appreciated.

We have three core values that our staff and councillors work towards:

* **Put customers first** - We are passionate about our customer service. We always listen and work with our customers to meet their needs. We take responsibility for things we can change and improve and encourage our customers to do the same.
* **Improve and innovate** - We challenge each other to look for ways to do things better. We listen to feedback and learn from it so we can improve. We welcome change and move forward with confidence.
* **Have respect for everyone** -We listen to everyone and understand each other’s views and pressures. We appreciate each other and trust our colleagues to do a good job to the best of their ability.

In 2022, we are implementing our new Belonging and Wellbeing Strategy allowing us to action this further by promoting and encouraging more staff engagement. We are creating and encouraging inclusion networks for all our staff, developing a Belonging and Wellbeing group with ‘Champion’ representatives from all services. We want to have a workforce that celebrates equality, diversity and inclusivity as part of everyone’s work life balance.

We remain committed to promoting and encouraging a culture where people can openly and constructively express their feelings without fear of retribution and criticism. In support of this we maintain policies on whistleblowing and the prevention of bullying and harassment, to ensure employees can raise concerns in confidence without fear of recrimination.

We also continue to adjust meet the needs of employees with a disability. Examples include -purchase of specialist technology (speech recognition software) for users who have had difficulty using keyboards/mice, provision of specialist ICT equipment such as an upright mouse or trackball devices, specialist keyboards and specialist furniture, such as rise and fall desks, ergonomic seating for people with long term chronic back, neck or leg issues and specialist seat pads for drivers with conditions, such as sciatica or sacro iliac damage.

We are currently redesigning and reducing our office space which will be ready to use early in 2022. We have purchased two accessible electric height adjustable desks, and any carpets that are replaced will be a contrasting colour for walkways and desk areas.

We have a total of 324 employees of which 157 are female (48% compared to 51% of residents in the district), 167 are male (52% compared to 49% of residents in the district).

Just over 2% of our employees are from black and minority backgrounds (compared to 4.69% of the district workplace population) and 2.7% have a disability (compared to 18% of residents living in the district).

Of our 324 members of staff, 239 (74%) are full time employees and 85 (26%) are part time.

Within our workforce 3% are aged between 18 and 24, compared to 7% of our residents living in the district, 35% are aged between 25 and 44 compared to 24% of our residents living in the district.

Most of our employees (58%) are aged between 45 and 64, compared to 28% of our residents living in the district, 4% of our workforce are aged between 65 and 74, compared to 12% of our residents living in the district.

We regularly collect information relating to our employees and this helps us monitor changes in our workforce profile.

In 2021 we planned to collect data from our employees relating to protected characteristics, this piece of work is still in progress and the data will be gathered in 2022 in more depth. Of course, providing this information will be optional.

When changes are proposed, our management consults with employees, both as individuals and collectively through employee representatives with support from the human resources team. We have a code of conduct and continually update a range of HR policies. These are subject to regular review and impact assessment.

Several EIA’s were also completed relating to policies that staff use internally.

# Equality in employment improvements in 2021

In our 2021 Equality Statement we identified employment equality priorities which are detailed below. This section sets out what we said we would doand what we did:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **We said:** | **We did…** |
| We will continue to equality impact assess key policies, procedures and procurement, including considering the implications of savings proposals, which may impact on staff with protected characteristics. | Our current Equality and Diversity policy will undergo a full review and update in 2022, it will reflect and will be linked to our new Belonging and Wellbeing strategy, we want to be an organisation that is truly inclusive and a place where everyone feels empowered and valued.  Our three promises through the strategy are to **Lead, Promote and Support.** |
| We will continue to collect, analyse and publish key workforce data. | Workforce data has been collected and is published as part of this Equality Statement. |
| We will continue to increase the number of staff that successfully complete equality awareness training so at least 50% of all employees have completed training and 100% of all employees in front line customer facing roles. | Just over 50% of current staff have received equality and diversity training within the last three years. More is planned in June 2022. |

# Our employment equality priorities for 2022

This year we will deliver the following:

* We will continue to equality impact assess key policies, procedures and procurement.
* We will continue to collect, analyse and publish key workforce data and develop a workforce development plan, which will set out how we develop and attract the workforce of the future.
* We will continue to increase the number of staff that successfully complete equality awareness training.

# How we monitor progress and identify equality issues

Monitoring our progress and ensuring we have the right data to both inform and review how well equality issues are embedded into our services, underpins our service delivery. Here is how we achieve this:

* The actions and priorities identified in the Equality Statement 2022 will be monitored throughout 2022, progress will be reported in the council’s next Equality Statement (to be published 31 January 2023).
* We are monitored by the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the government’s Equalities Office to ensure equality issues are addressed.

# Getting the right data

We use national and local data to produce a profile of the district.