



Equality Plan

2015 – 2019

www.southglos.gov.uk


South Gloucestershire
Council

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Part 1: Introduction

Integrating equality into all aspects of the council's work provides the opportunity to significantly and continuously improve and develop services by making them more appropriate and responsive to the needs of people. This leads to better value for money. Good equality approaches and practices significantly impact on making the council a better employer, improving our ability to meet the needs of customers, helping us to be better placed to deliver public services and to ensuring that our vision for South Gloucestershire is achieved.

The South Gloucestershire Sustainable Community Strategy² shapes the local work and priorities of the South Gloucestershire Partnership. Our vision is that South Gloucestershire is: "A great place to live and work" and the following values are embedded into all sections of the Strategy:

- ensure natural resources are used wisely, reduce carbon emissions, prevent pollution and waste, and conserve and enhance the environment for future generations
- promote a greater understanding and mutual respect between different sectors and sections of the community; empower all people to participate and become involved in decisions which affect the area
- find simple and effective ways of working together that improve efficiency, make the most of resources and ensure value for money.

The Council Strategy³ sets out the council's corporate aims and core values for meeting our area's vision. "Championing equality of opportunity for all" is clearly set out as one of our core values.

South Gloucestershire Council works for all parts of every community. Our aim is to:

- encourage mutual respect for all of our residents
- recognise and work with every diverse group
- give high quality inclusive services and facilities
- make sure our employment policies and practices are fair
- eliminate harassment and discrimination

The council has a Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy⁴ which details our commitments and aims. We are committed to valuing and treating all people with dignity and respect. Our approach is three fold:

1. To recognise that people, whether as communities or individuals, will have specific needs that need to be recognised and addressed in order for them to develop their full potential
2. To acknowledge that the majority view is not always right and the rights of minorities will need to be protected
3. To mainstream equalities into all aspects of our policy development and service delivery

The principles that underpin the overarching Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy and inform our approach to equality are:

- welcoming and celebrating diversity
- developing a shared understanding of the essence of equality which is to value and treat all

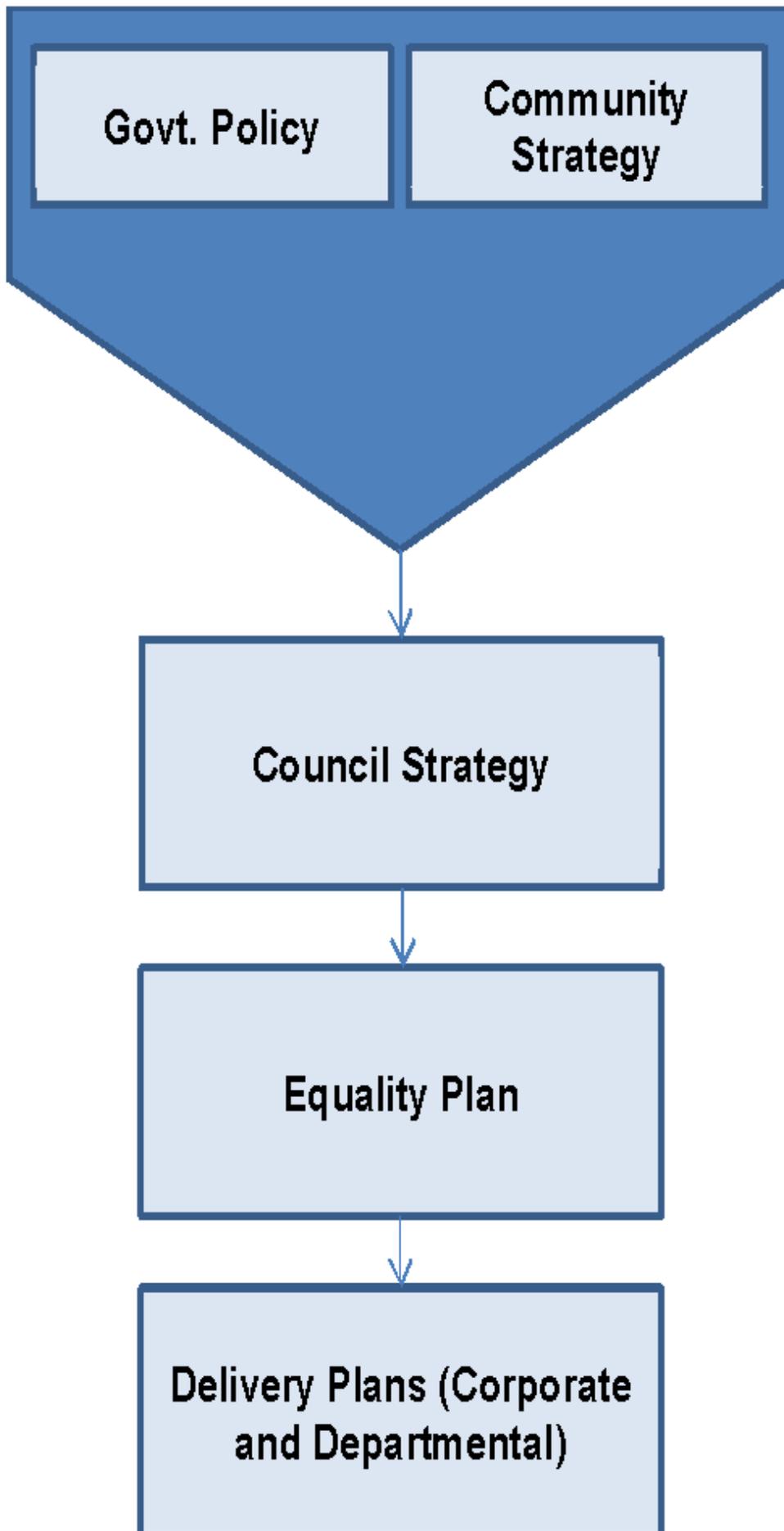
- people with respect and dignity
- promoting equality of opportunity
 - through policies, services, employment, contracting, and funding practices ensuring that no service user, employee or job applicant will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, colour, impairment, marital status, lifestyle and culture, religion or belief, nationality, race gender, sexual orientation, gender identity
 - taking all possible steps to eliminate discrimination, and undertaking action to remedy past discrimination and disadvantage

Equality is central to our identification of local priorities and underpins all the services that we deliver.

This is our second equality plan; it sets out our strategic aims for equalities in South Gloucestershire. It demonstrates that we recognise and are committed to delivering fair and equitable outcomes for all those who live, work and study in South Gloucestershire.

Equality plan

As shown in the following diagram, this equality plan sets out our strategic aims in relation to equalities and the delivery of these objectives through a full range of delivery plans ensuring a comprehensive and outcome focused approach to equalities.



This Equality Plan sets out a comprehensive, manageable, strategic agenda for all of our work in the field of equalities.

Working in partnership

The council is very aware that its work on equalities cannot stand in isolation from the actions of others working in this field both locally and nationally. In order to promote and improve equalities within South Gloucestershire the council will continue to work closely with partners including the South Gloucestershire Equalities Forum; Disability Equality Network; and the Race Equality Network.

The other public bodies in these partnerships are required to comply with the public sector equality duty and will have to prepare their own equality plans.

South Gloucestershire Council will share its equality plan with our partners and work through partnership bodies to achieve a consistent approach to promoting equality of opportunity.

² To view the South Gloucestershire Sustainable Community Strategy visit:

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/localism/sustainable-community-strategy/>

³ To view the Council Strategy visit: <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/cex120053.pdf>

⁴ To view the council's Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy visit:

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/Corporate-Equality-and-Diversity-Policy.pdf>

The public sector equality duty

The public sector equality duty is laid out within the Equality Act 2010. It is about ensuring the needs of all are met. The broad purpose of the duty is to ensure that equality and good relations are issues which are robustly considered in the day-to-day business of public authorities. If an authority does not consider how its actions can or do affect different groups in different ways, it is unlikely that their actions will have the intended effect – this, in turn, can contribute to inequality and poor outcomes.

The public sector equality duty consists of:

1. A general equality duty (which is set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) and
2. Specific duties (which are imposed by secondary legislation – The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011)

The general equality duty requires organisations to consider how they can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations. It requires equality considerations to be reflected in the design of policies and the delivery of services, including internal policies, and for these issues to be kept under review.

Protected characteristics

The duty covers the following nine protected characteristics:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Pregnancy and maternity
5. Race
6. Religion or belief
7. Sex
8. Sexual orientation
9. Marriage and civil partnership

The general duty

The general equality duty is made up of three aims which state that a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; this means:
 - removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic
 - taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it
 - encouraging persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low
3. Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; this means:
 - tackling prejudice
 - promoting understanding

The specific duties and how South Gloucestershire Council meets them

The specific duties state that a public authority must carry out a number of actions. These actions, together with the way in which they are being implemented by South Gloucestershire Council, are shown below:

Specific duty	How this is delivered by South Gloucestershire Council
<p>Publish information to demonstrate its compliance with the general equality duty (not later than 31 January 2012); and subsequently publish this information annually. The information a public authority publishes must include, in particular, information relating to persons who share a relevant protected characteristic who are its employees and other persons affected by its policies and practices.</p>	<p>This information is published via the council's website both within our annual equalities reports and within our equality impact assessments and analyses (EqIAAs). Annual equalities reports are updated and published on an annual basis and contain a wealth of information in relation to the council's progress against the requirements of the general equality duty. To view the reports, visit: Annual equalities reports In addition, our on-going equality impact assessment and analyses (EqIAAs) are published via the council's website. To view completed EqIAAs, visit: Equality impact assessment and analysis (EqIAAs)</p>

Specific duty	How this is delivered by South Gloucestershire Council
<p>Prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable objectives it thinks it should achieve the general equality duty. A public authority must publish these objectives by 6 April 2012; and subsequently publish this information at intervals of not greater than four years.</p>	<p>Specific measurable objectives are included in the council's equality plan. Our first equality plan was published prior to 6 April 2012. Objectives are reviewed four-yearly to fit the council's budget and service planning timetable. This, our second equality plan sets out our objectives 2015-2019. Measurement of progress against these objectives is set out in the council's annual equalities reports. To view the reports, visit: https://www.southglos.gov.uk/community-and-living/equality-and-diversity/monitoring-equalities-information-and-reports</p>
<p>Publish the above information in such a manner that it is accessible to the public and may do this by publishing the information within another published document.</p>	<p>This information is published in the council's equality plan, annual equalities reports and EqIAA. These are made available via the council's website (www.southglos.gov.uk)</p>

In the interest of clarity, the specific duties mean that the council must do the following:

Specific duty	How this is delivered by South Gloucestershire Council
<p>Prepare equality objectives ensuring that they are specific and measurable. These are the developments/improvements that the council aims to achieve.</p>	<p>Specific measurable objectives are included in the council's equality plan which, following consultation, is published on our website. Objectives are reviewed four-yearly to fit the council's budget and service planning timetable. This will help ensure equality principles and best practices are truly embedded into the council's work. Progress against the objectives is published on an annual basis via our annual equalities reports.</p>

Specific duty	How this is delivered by South Gloucestershire Council
<p>Assess and analyse policies and practices to ensure all that they further the aims of the general duty.</p>	<p>Equality impact is considered as part of all policies and decisions presented for consideration by the council and is built into service planning at all stages.</p> <p>The analysis is carried out by the managers and staff involved in each service, to ensure conclusions are grounded in, and reflected in the delivery of, service delivery.</p> <p>To view our on-going impact assessment and analysis documents please see: EqlAAs</p>
<p>Engage with a full range of interested parties concerning our work to fulfil the equality duty when we are setting our equality objectives, developing our action plans and reviewing our progress. This is to ensure that our objectives and actions are focused, relevant and successful in achieving the maximum impact and benefit for all.</p>	<p>The council's plans to fulfil the equality duty are laid out within this equality plan. In developing this, consultation has specifically included relevant bodies as well as being made available to all residents via the council's website (www.southglos.gov.uk) and local media, and to all staff via the council intranet.</p>
<p>Monitor the composition of our workforce on an annual basis. The results of this monitoring should be analysed and interpreted so that it can be used to identify actions that can be taken to advance equality and good relations.</p>	<p>This work is carried out and reported each year after consideration by the council's equality and diversity action team.</p> <p>Results from the biennial staff survey are also considered as part of this process.</p> <p>To view our workforce monitoring results which is published in our equalities in employment reports, please see: Workforce equalities monitoring</p>
<p>Monitor the composition of service-users and their experiences of our services on an annual basis. The results of this monitoring should be analysed and interpreted so that it can be used to identify actions that can be taken to advance equality and good relations.</p>	<p>Both users and non-users of services are surveyed on a regular basis. Analysis of these results is carried out as appropriate and the results included within the Annual Equalities Report.</p> <p>See: Annual Equalities Reports</p>
<p>Publish information concerning our equalities work and progress annually; either as an individual document or as part of another report.</p>	<p>This information is included each year in the annual equalities report which is published on the council's website, and reviewed with the SGEF.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual equalities reports • EqlAAs • Workforce equalities monitoring
<p>When undertaking procurement, have due regard to equality and consider the extent to which equality considerations are relevant and proportionate to the subject matter of the contract.</p>	<p>The council's equalities in procurement guide sets out how procurement is to be carried out in order to achieve this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning and procurement strategy

Part 2: A brief profile of South Gloucestershire

South Gloucestershire is in the West of England, located between Gloucester and Bristol, the Severn Estuary and the Cotswolds. The first and second crossings of the River Severn lie within South Gloucestershire and the area is well served by motorway and rail links.

The district covers 536.6 sq km with a population of 269,100⁵ and 112,467⁶ households.

It is a mixed urban and rural area of great diversity with long-established urban communities, market towns, small villages and substantial new development. 62% of the population live in built up areas immediately adjoining Bristol. 18% live in the towns of Yate, Chipping Sodbury and Thornbury, and the remaining 20% live in the more rural areas of South Gloucestershire.

Our residents have a high quality local environment which they greatly value. South Gloucestershire is mainly an affluent area, with vibrant towns and parishes and a good range of community infrastructure making it a safe and strong place to live. In 2014/15, 81% of respondents to the Viewpoint survey said they are satisfied with their area as a place to live⁷. Crime levels are low - 45 recorded crime incidents per 1,000 residents compared to 61 per 1,000 across England and Wales⁸ - and getting lower year on year.

South Gloucestershire has a diverse economy including world leading companies from key high growth sectors such as advanced engineering, aerospace and defence, microelectronics and silicon design. It also includes large local economic drivers such as the Mall at Cribbs Causeway and the University of West of England which attract investment and create opportunities as well as being major employers. We host the new Science Park a world class environment for businesses in science and advanced technology; and the new National Composite Centre which leads nationally on research and design of new composites technologies.

Gender

In South Gloucestershire, 50.5% of the population are female (135,700 persons) and 49.5% (133,400 persons) are male, as reported in the 2011 Census.

Race

South Gloucestershire has a small but growing number of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) residents. The 2011 Census reported that 5% of the population is BAME (compared to the average of 14% for England and Wales). In addition 2.5% of the population is classified as 'White Other'. This is broken down as follows:

South Gloucestershire 2011 Census data

Group	South Glos number	South Glos percentage
Asian/Asian British – Bangladeshi	238	0.1
Asian/Asian British – Indian	2,699	1

Group	South Glos number	South Glos percentage
Asian/Asian British – Pakistani	698	0.3
Asian/Asian British – Chinese	1,312	0.5
Asian/Asian British – Other	1,493	0.6
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – African	987	0.4
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – Caribbean	980	0.4
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – Other	251	0.1
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups – White & Asian	1,016	0.4
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups – White & Black African	396	0.2
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups – White & Black Caribbean	1,516	0.6
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups – Other	739	0.3
White – English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	241,611	91.9
White – Irish	1,223	0.5
White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller	271	0.1
White – Other	6,469	2.5
Other Ethnic Group - Arab	366	0.1
Any Other ethnic group	502	0.2

Note: Totals may not sum because of rounding

South Gloucestershire Council is supporting the development of a race equality network. South Gloucestershire Race Equality Network (SG DEN) currently meets three times a year to discuss topics affecting the BAME community in the district and advise the statutory bodies of their concerns about the issue.

Disability

The 2011 Census provided the following information in regard to disability:

	Disability/Day-to-day activities limited to some extent
Number	40,914
Percentage of population	15.60%

This compares with 17.9% across England and Wales.

South Gloucestershire Council supports SG DEN, a group of disabled people and organisations representing disabled people in the district. SG DEN is becoming an increasingly valuable source of advice to the council on how best to serve disabled residents and an influential voice for the disabled community.

There is a Learning Difficulties Partnership Board to act as a voice for people with learning

difficulties and to bring issues to the attention of statutory organisations.

Age

The age structure in South Gloucestershire is broadly similar to the national picture as follows:

- Children age (0-15 years): 50,100 (18.6% of total population)
- Working age (16-64 years): 170,800 (63.5% of total population)
- Pensionable age (65+) 48,200 (17.9% of total population)

The total population is predicted to grow broadly in line with national averages. This growth is expected to see a significant increase in the number of people aged 65+

Religion or belief

In respect of religion or belief, the 2011 Census reported the following:

South Gloucestershire 2011 Census data

Religion/belief	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Other religion	No religion	Religion not stated
Number	156,504	708	1,681	145	2,176	623	888	80,607	19,435
Percentage of population	59.6%	0.3%	0.6%	0.1%	0.8%	0.2%	0.3%	30.7%	7.4%

- 59.6% of the population were Christian - considerably lower than the proportion recorded in the 2001 Census (73.9%)
- 30.7% of the population stated that they do not have a religion – nearly double the proportion recorded in the 2001 Census (17.5%) and higher than the national average (25.1%)

At present most followers of non-Christian faiths need to travel into Bristol to worship.

Sexual orientation and gender reassignment

There is no hard data on the number of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgendered people in the UK. However, the Government is using the figure of 5-7% of the population and Stonewall⁹ agree that this is a reasonable estimate. This means that across the area, we have approximately 15,000 residents who identify as being LGBT – the largest minority group in South Gloucestershire.

Equality information about South Gloucestershire Council workforce

South Gloucestershire Council workforce data of March 2015 shows (excluding schools), that 70.1% of employees are female and 29.9% are male. Of all part-time workers within the council, 66.6% are female.

In March 2015, 7.7% of South Gloucestershire Council employees identified as being from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) group

A corporate BAME employee network has been in place historically contributing to a wide range of relevant issues within the authority. However, over the last two years this group, particularly due to workforce change, has ceased to be active. As such, a key action identified by EDAT for 2015/16 will be to reinvigorate this group as well as identify the need for any other specific employee equalities groups.

In March 2015 the number of disabled people employed by South Gloucestershire council was reported as 4%.

South Gloucestershire Council has an active disabled employees group which provides support for council employees and the council itself. Council workforce data from March 2015 shows the following in terms of council employees:

<20 (%)	20-29 (%)	30-39 (%)	40-49 (%)	50-59 (%)	60-64 (%)	65+ (%)
(0.4%)	(8.8%)	(20%)	(29.9%)	(30.1%)	(7.6%)	(3.2%)

Further information

A range of information concerning the South Gloucestershire population can be found at our webpage entitled "Statistics about the area":

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/census/>

A range of information concerning council workforce demographics can be found on our webpage:

[Workforce equalities monitoring](#)

In respect of key issues experienced by groups across the UK and South Gloucestershire, the council's website contains a wealth of information: www.southglos.gov.uk. In addition, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) website contains information pertaining to all protected characteristic groups.

⁵ Office for National Statistics mid-year estimates, 2013

⁶ Valuation Office Agency, August 2014

⁷ South Gloucestershire Quality of Life Report - 2014

⁸ South Gloucestershire Quality of Life Report - 2014

⁹ For further information, visit: <http://www.stonewall.org.uk/>

Part 3: Managing equalities within the council

Every member of staff has responsibilities for delivering equalities actions.

The communities committee is involved in the production of equalities policies on behalf of the council, and monitors their delivery on behalf of the council.

The chief executive officer (CEO) and communities committee have overall responsibility for equalities, and fulfil leadership functions both internally and externally.

The director of environment and community services who is the corporate champion for equality and diversity supports the CEO and communities committee. This post holder provides internal and external leadership and raises equality issues at the chief officers management team (COMT).

The head of safe and strong communities chairs the equality and diversity action team (EDAT) and has an active involvement in the South Gloucestershire equalities forum (SGEF)¹⁰.

Each service retains responsibility for meeting its equality responsibilities. However the council provides extensive guidance and support to them in doing this through EDAT. EDAT is made up of senior departmental equality and diversity representatives, a senior member of the audit team, the corporate equalities officers and other officers of the council as deemed appropriate by the group. Representatives of the council's employee Equalities groups also form the EDAT employee subgroup and raise issues and provide feedback to EDAT.

EDAT meets at least every three months to provide strategic direction, guidance and performance management to members, departments and partners on equality and diversity issues, as well as discuss and act on equality and diversity issues within the authority and partnerships. EDAT is therefore the mechanism for driving, monitoring and evaluating progress; promoting best practice across the authority and partnerships; and provides general advice and guidance to members and staff on equality and diversity matters

The members of EDAT feed back to the departmental equality and diversity working groups within each department. These departmental working groups ensure that the corporate equality commitments are translated into action and therefore are tasked with devising and delivering equalities outcomes for customers and staff. These working groups also provide two-way communication on equalities issues between customer facing staff and corporate centre through EDAT.

EDAT is supported in its work by two specialists. One of these has an internal focus and has responsibility for co-ordinating the day-to-day running of the equality plan and reporting on the progress of the equality plan which assists EDAT and the communities committee with their monitoring functions. Reports are available for council and public scrutiny.

The second officer, the equalities co-ordinator, has an external facing role, which entails assisting community groups and individuals to have voice and influence within the council. The equalities co-ordinator is also the council's link to the SGEF which brings together statutory and voluntary

partners to share their equality experience and knowledge and collaborate on specific initiatives.

The SGEF brings together representatives from different equality groups to highlight areas of concern and bring them to the attention of the council and its partners in order that they can be addressed.

To ensure the development of policies and practices that are meaningful to people from all communities, EDAT calls upon advisors with the relevant expertise.

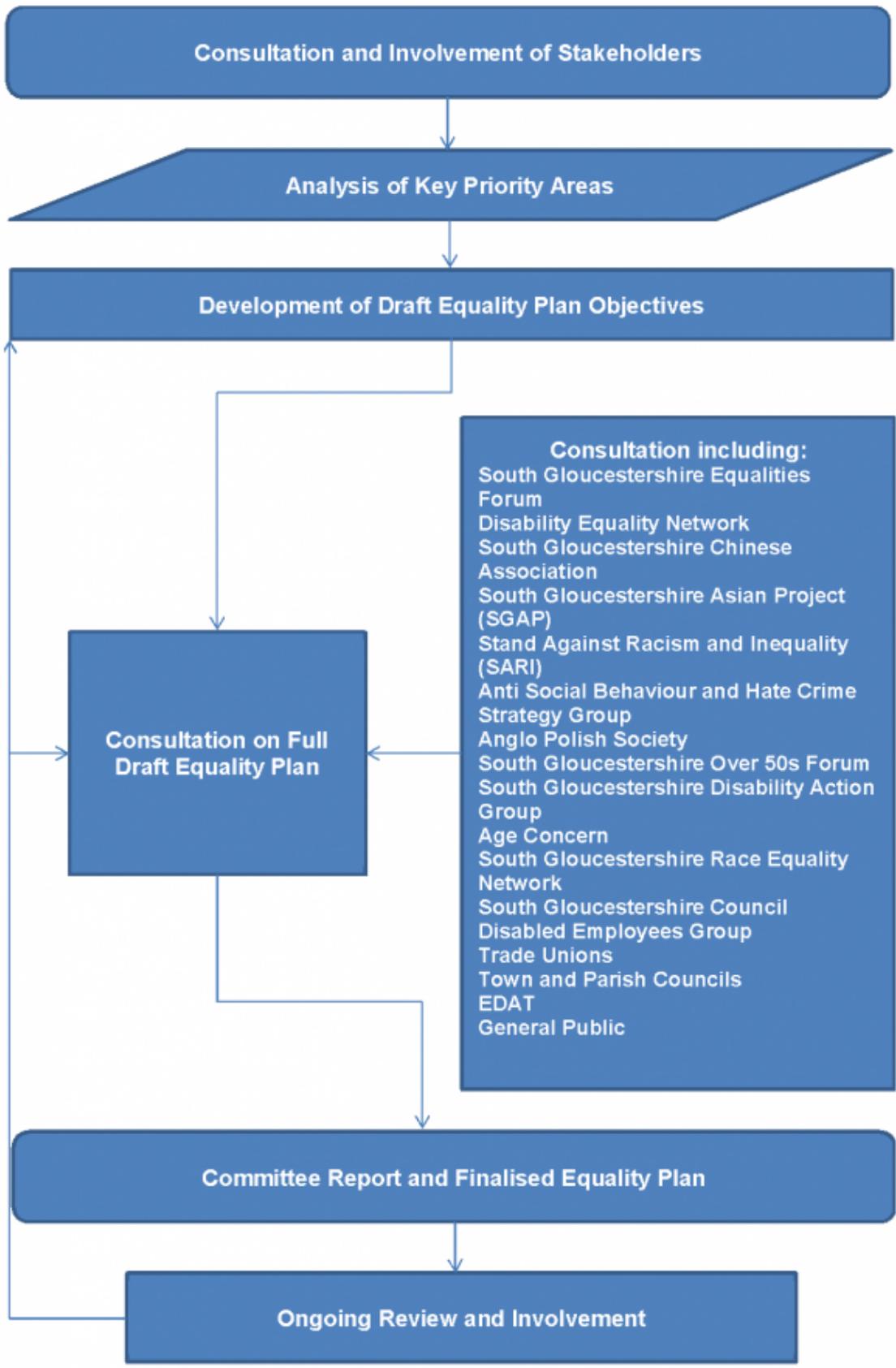
Mandatory equalities training is in place for all staff, including for all councillors. Plans are in place to develop this training into a comprehensive refreshed package of training for all during 2016.

Each year every council service analyses its performance against the agreed corporate objectives, and establishes priorities to be addressed over the next 12 months. The results of their work is reported within the published annual equalities report, together with the next year's priorities.

¹⁰ For further information, visit:

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/community-and-living/equality-and-diversity/south-gloucestershire-equalities-forum/>

Engagement



Part 4: Objectives

Introduction

The following objectives have been formulated as a result of the involvement of a wide range and number of stakeholders.

Responsibility for the operational delivery of our actions rests with all staff. Each department head has responsibility to ensure that staff have the skills and knowledge to implement their responsibilities under this action plan.

We realise that a range of the actions we have developed will improve all areas of our equality and diversity policy and practices.

Key objectives

We have identified four key objectives which we will focus on over the next three years, together with the ways in which we will measure success:

Objective	Measuring success
Objective 1: To ensure a consistently high and effective approach to managing equalities	Our system for managing equalities is consistently followed as described in part 3 of this equality plan
Objective 2: To ensure fair treatment for all by council services	Percentage of residents surveyed who believe they have received unfair treatment from council services on the basis of protected characteristics
Objective 3: To reduce any gaps in service use, take-up and outcomes.	Analysis of data within each service of gaps in service use, take-up and the achievement of intended outcomes.
Objective 4: To continuously improve equality of opportunity for our employees and job applicants, leading to a diverse workforce at all levels of the organisation.	Analysis of equalities gaps as assessed in annual 'Equalities in Employment' report together with attitudes and experiences of staff from biennial staff survey.

Priorities and actions to address these objectives will be published annually.

Glossary

BAME

Black, Asian and minority ethnic

BME

Black and minority ethnic

CA&H

Children, adults and health department

CE&CR

Chief executive and corporate resources department

SGEF

South Gloucestershire equalities forum

COMT

Chief officers management team

DEG

Disabled employees group

DEN

Disability equality network

EDAT

Equality and diversity action team

EFLG

Equality framework for local government

EqIAA

Equality impact assessment and analysis

LDPB

Learning difficulties partnership board

LGBT

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender

EQUALITY PLAN

Equality plan

SGEF

South Gloucestershire equalities forum