

Translation

To request this Charter in an alternative format or other language, including BSL (British Sign Language) or Easy Read version or an alternative language please contact one of the people listed at the end of this document.

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*Supporting the Wiltshire Compact
and the Swindon Compact*



Vision

The statutory services¹ in Wiltshire and Swindon are committed to promoting and upholding equality and human rights. This Charter outlines our vision, aims and actions we will take to support this commitment.

- We believe in the dignity of the individual and that people are of equal value whatever their age, caring status, disability, race or ethnicity, gender or gender identity, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity status, religion and belief, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status.
- We recognise that all people possess human rights to be treated fairly and with respect.
- As statutory services, it is our duty to promote equality and cohesion, to protect human rights, and prevent discrimination. We will place this at the heart of what we do, and of what we commission others to do on our behalf.
- We value the diversity of communities within Wiltshire and Swindon. Our aim is to provide services that recognise, understand and respond to the experiences and needs of all Wiltshire and Swindon's diverse population. We aim to do this so that everyone in Wiltshire and Swindon has equality of opportunity to access and benefit from co-ordinated and appropriate services.

- ✓ Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service
- ✓ Swindon Borough Council
- ✓ Wiltshire Police
- ✓ Police & Crime Commissioner for Wiltshire & Swindon
- ✓ Wiltshire Probation
- ✓ Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust
- ✓ NHS Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group
- ✓ NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group
- ✓ Central Southern Commissioning Group
- ✓ Wiltshire Council

¹ Statutory Services are required to exist by law (eg: social services, the National Health Service, Fire & Rescue Service, Police Service)

Introduction

This Equality and Human Rights Charter for Wiltshire and Swindon provides a framework for improving access to and quality of services in response to the diversity of communities within Wiltshire and Swindon.

The partners signing the Charter make a commitment to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- 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
- Develop services and practices to be more appropriate and responsive,
- Increase partnership working on equality, in order to:
 - develop a more consistent approach to equality,
 - share common aims, information and resources to better address specific issues, and
- Safeguard Human Rights by working across sectors and organisations and;
- Develop an understanding of key human rights issues in line with the Human Rights Act 1998 Articles.

These commitments apply to current and potential service users, our employees and to the wider community.

This Charter provides a framework to:

- improve understanding of communities and barriers they may face,
- increase the effectiveness and appropriateness of service delivery and
- develop joint working across partners leading to greater efficiencies and improved services.

It will enable us to work together to:

- improve access to services,
- remove barriers and
- improve the quality of services and the experience of the community.

Each organisation also has a set equality and human rights objectives which provide more detail about their specific actions to improve services. These are available from the contacts listed later in this charter.

This charter is a working document and will develop to respond to the changing needs of all the partners and the communities they serve.

Monitoring and reporting

Partners to this Charter will report to the Wiltshire Public Service Board, Wiltshire Resilient Communities Partnership and the One Swindon Leadership Board, which will oversee achievement and progress. Reporting will be through existing regulatory frameworks and the work programme of the Wiltshire Public Service Board and the One Swindon Leadership Board.

Each Partner will also report to their respective management structures within their own organisations. This will ensure that specific work to embed equality and human rights in Partner organisations will be the responsibility of managers within those organisations.

This Charter is aligned to and supports the delivery of the Wiltshire Compact and the Swindon Compact which recognises and promotes the importance of equality, diversity and human rights to ensure an inclusive approach in the creation of stronger, more resilient communities

Commitments

Monitoring and using data

We will improve the sharing of equality information in line with public sector information sharing protocols. This will include assessment of equality and human rights impacts, community engagement findings, national and local research and monitoring data to:

- design services which are accessible and barrier free
- inform and guide the development of policy, strategy and practice and;
- increase opportunities for joint working

We will improve the consistency of equality monitoring across all services, including commissioning through the introduction of standard equality monitoring categories and guidance.

We will agree and develop a standard and consistent method of publishing equality data across statutory organisations in Wiltshire and Swindon. This will be produced in a format which is easily understood by all members of the community and will ensure that the specific duties under the Equality Act 2010 are complied with.

We will develop a consistent and shared understanding of the ways in which equality groups are defined and which people are included in these groups.

We will improve our understanding of all equality groups within Wiltshire and Swindon. Specifically, we will build this understanding about groups where we currently have limited information and will identify the barriers these groups face in accessing services.

Partnership working

We will work together as public sector organisations to reduce inequality and eliminate discrimination in Wiltshire and Swindon.

We will identify opportunities for joint working and commissioning approaches to more effectively identify and remove any barriers which affect individual equality or human rights.

We will identify and access new resources to support equality and human rights priorities and increase impact of existing resources

Service Delivery

We will introduce a consistent process of assessing the impact on protected characteristic groups and human rights when making decisions, developing policies, strategies and processes, to remove discrimination and promote equality and good relations between groups

We will identify areas where joint equality impact assessments can be undertaken to improve the understanding and approach to addressing disadvantage

We will ensure that commissioned services fully comply with equality and human rights legislation and respond to the changing needs of residents in Wiltshire and Swindon.

Employment

We will ensure our recruitment and selection practices are fair and equitable and work to remove barriers to people from the diverse communities joining our Workforce.

We will ensure our working practices are accessible for all so that our work environments meet everyone's needs

We will ensure that staff are skilled, knowledgeable and confident in addressing equality and human rights when planning and delivering services in Wiltshire and Swindon.

Review of Charter

The Charter will be reviewed at least annually by the Wiltshire & Swindon Equality & Diversity Lead Officer Group to ensure that it is relevant and fit for purpose. They will report any recommendations for change to Wiltshire's Public Service Board, Resilient Communities Partnership and the One Swindon Board as appropriate.

Further information

For further information about this Charter or to find out more about organisations Equality and Human Rights Objectives please contact the following:

Feedback/complaints

Your feedback is important in ensuring that our services are accessible and appropriate to you at all times. If you wish to give/or obtain feedback on a specific service or if you have a complaint, please do so by specifying the service and sending your feedback/complaint to any one of the contacts below.

Your complaint/feedback will be forwarded to the most appropriate party for consideration/reply.

Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service

Equalities: 07771 897912
equalities@wiltsfire.gov.uk
www.wiltsfire.gov.uk

Wiltshire Police

Wiltshire Police non-emergency number 101
In an emergency always call 999
www.wiltshire.police.uk

Swindon Borough Council

01793 445500
equalities@swindon.gov.uk
www.swindon.gov.uk

Wiltshire Council

0300 456 0100
equalities@wiltshire.gov.uk
www.wiltshire.gov.uk

Equality Act 2010

Public Sector Equality Duty

See:

http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/EqualityAct/PSED/essential_guide_update_nov.pdf

And in Easy Read:

http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/EqualityAct/PSED/a_law_about_making_things_better_for_people_from_different_groups_psed_er.pdf

The general equality duty is set out in the Equality Act 2010 (the Act). In summary, those subject to the equality duty must, in the exercise of their functions, 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 (see page 10) and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

These are sometimes referred to as the three aims or arms of the general equality duty.

The Act helpfully explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low

The Act states that meeting different needs involves taking steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities. It describes fostering good relations as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups. It states that compliance with the duty may involve treating some people more favourably than others.

Public authorities also need to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination against someone because of their marriage or civil partnership status. This means that the first arm of the duty applies to this characteristic but that the others arms (advancing equality and fostering good relations) do not apply.

Specific Equality Duties

The specific duties apply to all the public authorities that are listed in Schedule 1 to the regulations.

Publish information

Publish sufficient information to demonstrate its compliance with the general equality duty across its functions. This must be done by 31 January 2012 (and by 6 April 2012 for schools), and at least annually after that, from the first date of publication.

This information must include, in particular:

- Information on the effect that its policies and practices have had on people who share a relevant protected characteristic, to demonstrate the extent to which it furthered the aims of the general equality duty for its employees and for others with an interest in the way it performs its functions.

Public authorities with fewer than 150 employees are exempt from the requirement to publish information.

Manner of Publishing information

Information must be published in such a manner that it is accessible to the public.

The information required to be published under the Act can be published within another published document e.g. within the annual business plan.

Prepare and publish equality objectives

By 6 April 2012, prepare and publish:

- One or more objectives that it reasonably thinks it should achieve to meet one or more aims of the general equality duty.
- Subsequently objectives should be set at intervals of not greater than four years.

It must also:

- Ensure the objectives are specific and measurable

Human Rights Act 1998

See: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/>

Public authorities when they are carrying out 'functions of a public nature', have a duty under the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA) not to act incompatibly with rights under the European Convention for the Protection of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms (the Convention). Because of the close relationship between human rights and equality, it is good practice for those exercising public functions to consider equality and human rights together when drawing up equality or human rights policies

Convention Rights

Articles 1 and 13 are "enabling measures of the Act".

- Article 2.....the right to life
- Article 3.....the right not to be tortured or subjected to treatment or punishment that is inhuman or degrading.
- Article 4.....the right not to be subject of slavery or forced labour.
- Article 5.....the right to liberty and security of person.
- Article 6.....the right to a fair trial.
- Article 7.....the right not to receive punishment without law.
- Article 8.....the right to respect for your private and family life, your home and correspondence.
- Article 9.....the right to respect for freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
- Article 10.....the right to free expression.
- Article 11.....the right to free assembly and association.
- Article 12.....the right to marry and have a family.
- Article 14.....the right to enjoy all your Convention rights without discrimination.

Article 1of protocol 1.....the right to peaceful enjoyment of possessions.

Article 2 of protocol 1.....the right to an education.

Article 3 of protocol 1.....the right to free elections.