

## ANNUAL STATEMENT OF WORKFORCE MONITORING AND RECRUITMENT ACTIVITY: FINANCIAL YEAR 2006/7

### INTRODUCTION

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a statutory duty on local authorities to promote race equality and aims to improve equal opportunities in employment. The Act also places a statutory duty to monitor, by ethnic group, a number of key areas of employment data.

This report details the results of the monitoring exercise for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 for Council staff. The ethnicity statistics are taken from existing personnel and training records. The report also provides statistics on gender and disability.

As a Council, Watford Borough Council recognises that a diverse workforce that reflects the community that it serves is important. The Council is committed to being an equal opportunities employer.

Equality issues are overseen in the Council by the Corporate Equalities Working Group and through the monitoring of statutory performance indicators on equalities. Information on the Council's performance on equalities can be found on the Council's website at [www.watford.gov.uk](http://www.watford.gov.uk).

### 1. Legal General Duties – Corporate targets

#### **Race:**

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 introduced three strands to the General Duty effective from 2002:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination
- To promote equality of opportunity
- To promote good race relations between persons of different racial groups

#### **Gender:**

The Equality Act of 2006 amends the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and came into effect in April 2007. This places a new General duty on us to :-

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- Promote equality of opportunity between men and women

#### **Disability:**

We are required to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Promote equal opportunities
- Eliminate disability related harassment

- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life

The Council is required to conduct workforce monitoring across a range of measures to ensure there is no over representation or adverse impact on particular groups of employees.

Corporate Targets for Workforce Representation

National Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI) that the Council has to publish information are:-

- **BVPI 11a:** Percentage of top 5% of earners who are women

Results for 2004/5 – 52.75%  
 2005/6 – 53.33%  
 2006/7 – 58.62%

The target for 2006/7 was 48% and for 2007/8 is 50%.

- **BVPI 11b:** Percentage of the top 5% earners from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic communities (BME):-

Result for 2004/5 – 10.23%  
 2005/6 – 17.24%  
 2006/7 – 14.81%

The target for 2006/7 was 13.56% and for 2007/8 is 13.56%.

- **BVPI 11c:** Percentage of top paid 5% staff who have a disability. (A new BVPI in 2005/6)

Result for 2005/6 – 0%  
 2006/7 – 0%

The target for 2006/7 was 0.5% and for 2007/8 is 0.5%.

- **BVPI 16:** Percentage of employees in the authority declaring that they meet the DDA definition.

Result for 2005/6 – 1.48%  
 2006/7 – 1.50%

The target for 2006/7 was 2.5% and for 2007/8 is 2.5%.

- **BVPI 17:** Council employees from the BME community.

Result for 2004/5 – 12.28%  
 2005/6 – 12.6%  
 2006/7 – 11.6%

(Percentage of economically active minority ethnic population – 13.56%)

The target for 2006/7 was 13.6% and the target for 2007/8 is 13.6%.

## 2. Recruitment, Selection and Equal Opportunities

Fair recruitment practices are essential in achieving equality of opportunity in employment. The Council is committed to fair recruitment practices. To this end the following measures are in place:

- A positive statement about the Council's commitment to equal opportunities appears in all job adverts.
- Selection is made on merit on the basis of meeting the essential requirements of the job using interviews, relevant exercises and assessment centres.
- Applications are made using a standard application form unless an agency is used.
- Agencies are required to comply with the Council's Equalities and Diversity Policy.
- All vacancies are advertised in relevant publications to the role in the local press and on the Council's website.
- New employees are advised of their responsibilities under the Council's Code of Conduct, Discipline and Harassment Policy at induction.
- There is a corporate complaints procedure for applicants who consider that they have not been dealt with fairly.
- The Council has been re-accredited with the two ticks symbol on employing those with disabilities.

In addition:

- The Council will encourage women, members of BME groups and people with disabilities to apply for jobs in areas of employment where they are under-represented
- The Council is committed to setting and achieving equalities targets and reviewing them on an annual basis in line with the requirements of the Best Value Performance Indicator process
- Although the Council has shrunk in size from 695 employees in March 2007 to 567 as at 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2007 as a consequence of Housing Stock Transfer, it remains a large employer in the borough giving us influence over employment prospects in the community. The Council will continue to strive

to improve equality of opportunity by setting a good example in the town.

### **Analysis by Ethnicity**

Ethnic distribution of the workforce as at 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2007 was:

<b>Ethnic Origin Description</b>	<b>No Post holders</b>	<b>%</b>
Blank/Do Not Wish to Disclose	37	5.32%
African	4	0.58%
Caribbean	18	2.59%
Black other	2	0.29%
British	510	73.38%
Irish	19	2.73%
Chinese	2	0.29%
Bangladeshi	3	0.43%
Indian	26	3.74%
Pakistani	10	1.44%
Asian other	4	0.58%
Mixed	7	1.01%
White other	53	7.63%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>695</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

NB includes multiposts

The total number of employees from a BME background was 11.6% against a community population of 13.56%. This rate is top quartile performance nationally and is the second highest in Hertfordshire.

During the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2006 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007, the number of applications received from candidates from an ethnic minority background was 23.41% of those who applied and they were successful in obtaining 7.5% of posts filled. Ethnicity data was not declared on 40% of monitoring forms of successful candidates. Consequently their ethnicity cannot be identified. This phenomenon highlights the need to ask the successful applicant at their individual induction if they would re-consider completing their monitoring form in order to help us with our monitoring data.

The Council uses a grading structure which in its simplest terms grades jobs as follows:-

- Scale 6 and below – (most front line jobs within the council)
- Senior Officer – (typically supervisors and technical specialists)
- Principal Officer – (typically professionals and managers)
- Chief Officers –(Heads of Service)

- Corporate Directors

BME employees are represented in this grading structure as follows:

	March 07	March 06
○ Scale 6 and below	9.88%	11.01%
○ Senior Officer	15.18%	14.39%
○ Principal Officer	11.97%	13.85%
○ Head of Service	10%	10%
○ Corporate Director	0%	0%

In view of the fact that the ethnic minority population within the community population is 13.56%, BME staff are well-represented at senior and principal officer level and Chief Officer positions which is either above the level of the community population or just below it. The position of BME staff has improved by 0.79% at Senior Officer level but decreased at PO level. However small fluctuations have a disproportionate effect on the percentages.

### **Analysis by Gender**

The Council's gender profile illustrates that 57.25% of the council's workforce were female and 42.75% male at 31st March 2007. This figure therefore remains steady in comparison with 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006 when women comprises 57.14% of the workforce. However as in many organisations, some job types are dominated by men and some by women. Eight jobs were predominantly occupied by men in the 2006/7 financial year and 11 jobs predominantly by women. The jobs dominated by predominantly male occupancy were Refuse Drivers and Collectors, Sweeper Drivers and Sweepers, Gardeners and Groundspersons, Multi-trade Operatives, and Security Officers. (Multi-trade Operatives now form part of the Watford Community Housing Trust) The jobs mainly dominated by women included Scheme Assistants and Managers (now TUPE transferred to the WCHT), Benefits Assessors, Receptionists, Community Playworkers, Administrative Assistants, Fitness Instructors, and Fitness Advisers.

During the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007, of the 1008 applications received for jobs 53.57% were from women. Of the 80 jobs appointed to 45% of the new joiners were male and 53.75% were female.

The Council uses the NJC Job Evaluation Scheme to ensure equality of pay between genders. An Equal Pay Audit was undertaken last year to monitor the Council's robustness on equal pay for work of equal value and an action plan developed to minimise risks and ensure we retain a sound position on this issue.

An analysis of womens' position in the grading structure illustrates the success of women at Watford Borough Council:

Women are represented within the grading structure as follows:-

	March 07	March 06
○ Scale 6 and below	56.87%	61.65%
○ Senior Officer	59.82%	55.6%
○ Principal Officer	56.34%	56.2%
○ Heads of Service	50%	50%
○ Directors	100%	100%

This analysis represents a 4.22% increase in women at Senior Officer grade and an 0.14% increase in women at Principal Officer grades. It is extremely uncommon in local authorities to have women occupying 50% of Heads of Service position and all Director posts.

Women, therefore, fare better than men at senior officer level and above. However, women are disproportionately employed in more part-time or job-share roles due primarily to child-care responsibilities or sometimes life-style choice. Female part-time employees represented 24.48% of the work-force between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007.

### **Analysis by Disability**

The Council complies with the Employment Service "Two Ticks" standard which means that we guarantee an interview for all applicants with disabilities who meet the requirements of the role in their applications.

Of the 1008 applicants for council jobs in the financial year 2006/7, 16 declared a disability which did not meet the Disability Discrimination Act definition, 7 chose not to disclose, but no-one applied who declared a disability which met the DDA definition. However 144 applicants left the section on disability in the monitoring form blank . None of the new joiners appointed to the 80 jobs declared themselves as disabled but 15% of the new joiners did not declare their status on disability on their form. Clearly the fact that a number of prospective or new employees leave this section on monitoring blank makes it difficult to know the true status of prospective or some new employees on this issue. This may be due to privacy issues or perhaps a fear that being disabled might put them at a disadvantage. The Council has been advertising in one of the main magazines for Disabled people that it welcomes applications from disabled applicants but we clearly need to do more as part of the review of our recruitment policy to attract disabled applicants.

Workforce Monitoring illustrates that 1.5% of employees declared that they met the DDA definition of disability.

A breakdown of disabled employees within the grading structure presents the following picture:

- Below Scale 6 - 3.37%
- Senior Officer - 4.46%
- Principal Officer - 4.83%
- Head of Service level - 20%
- Director level 33.33%

The Council has a good record in adapting to the needs of employees with disabilities under the requirements of the DDA and is often able to make adjustments to try to enable employees to remain in work with the organisation where this is feasible. Human Resources had the most employees in the Council who were classified as disabled within the terms of the Act in 2006/7 at 7.14%.

In October, 2007 the Council introduced a new Disability Policy to comprehensively provide a policy framework and guidance for managers in dealing with disability issues. The Council's recruitment policy and processes are currently being reviewed to try to encourage more disabled applicants to apply for jobs with the Council.

### **Analysis by Age**

The government introduced age discrimination legislation in October 2006 which made it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of age. Employees can now elect to work beyond the previous local government retirement age of 65 for both men and women. This development is welcomed, particularly in areas of skills shortage. However central government did not set down any BVPIs related to age.

The median age of council employees in 2006/7 was 42.6 years, the mode was 43 and the median, 43. This is consistent with the previous financial year where 51.7% of staff were aged 42 or over and 30.4% were over 50. This reflects demographic trends in the wider community and also illustrates the need for effective succession planning.

### **Training**

The Council has a strong commitment to developing its staff within the resources available. The training budget reduced from £237k in 2005/6 to £200k in 2006/7 to reflect the reduction in staff numbers. 1130.79 days of training were provided to staff. Qualification support was provided to 28 staff. Of these, 46.42% were women, 21.43% were BME(3.43% up on last year), and none identified themselves as disabled. However 14.29% of the staff who were supported on qualification courses did not declare their status on disability.

## **Policy Reviews**

In the financial year 2005/6, new HR policies had been developed for Discipline, Grievance Handling, Managing Poor Performance, Probation, and a new Dependency and Compassionate Leave all of which had EIA assessments produced for them. In the following financial year 2006/7, new policies were produced on avoiding Age Discrimination, Smoking, Alcohol, Drugs and Substance Misuse and again the implications on equalities were considered. The policies on smoking and Alcohol and Drugs had a strong welfare element which applied regardless of ethnicity, gender and disability. Indeed they were intended to facilitate a healthier working environment. The Age Discrimination Policy was devised with the specific intention of ensuring compliance with the new Age Discrimination legislation. In 2007/8 these policies were followed by a new Maternity Policy to ensure the Council complied with the new Maternity Regulations and a Disability Policy designed to cover all aspects of employing staff with disabilities. The Council as a whole was accredited Level 3 of the Equalities standard .

## **The Way Forward**

Although the Council performs strongly as an employer in employing staff in terms of gender and from the BME population, the statistics reflect the need to attract more disabled staff and employees from the population base below the current median age of 42.6 years since our workforce profile suggests an imbalance in favour of older employees.

We clearly need to do more to encourage applicants and staff to complete their monitoring forms fully when applying for roles or when data cleansing forms are circulated. The Recruitment Policy and processes are currently being updated and the need to attract more disabled staff will be incorporated in them. Similarly although we are top quartile nationally in our performance in reflecting our community closely in our workforce we need to continue to make efforts to ensure this remains the case and to improve upon our performance. In relation to women we need to raise the awareness of staff, managers and applicants that jobs which may be non-traditional to particular genders are also open equally to staff from both sexes to avoid any tendency to occupational segregation in some job roles.

Monitoring processes need to be improved in training to ensure workforce monitoring occurs on all short courses in accordance with good practice.

We will continue to update and follow our Equalities Action Plans in all the areas of equalities and monitor their effectiveness. We welcome all suggestions on improving our performance on equalities.



