



European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

Case Study on Diversity Policy in Employment and Service Provision

Sefton, United Kingdom



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Foreword

This report is part of the Eurofound project "Cities for Local Integration Policy" (CLIP), which started in 2006.

Sefton is one of the 25 European cities that cooperate in exchanging information on their Integration Policies to start with on the terrain of housing and in the future on more terrains.

The project aims at collecting and analysing innovative policies and their successful implementation at the local level, supporting the exchange of experience between cities and encouraging a learning process within the network of cities, addressing the role of social partners, NGO's, companies and voluntary associations in supporting successful integration policies, providing objective assessment of current practice and initiatives and discussing their transferability, communicating good practices to other cities in Europe and developing guidelines to help cities to cope more effectively with the challenge of integrating migrants, supporting the further development of a European integration policy by communicating the policy relevant experiences and outputs of the network to: European organisations of cities and local regional authorities, the European and national organisations of social partners, the Council of Europe and the various institutions of the European Union.

The CLIP network is also a cooperation between cities and research institutes. Five research institutes in Bamberg, Amsterdam, Vienna, Liege and Oxford are taking care of the publications of the CLIP project. The researchers of the Center on Migration Policy and Society, COMPAS are responsible for this report on Sefton. Together with the contact person of the municipal of Sefton, Jan Egerton, and Stefan Jankowski, an enormous effort has been undertaken to find all necessary data for this report. Many officials and other parties who are involved with integration and welcome policy have been interviewed, as the list at the end of the report shows. They have provided us with reports, statistics and comments on the concept version of this report. Secondly the representatives of the Sefton Equalities Partnership have been willing to provide us with information. I want to thank all those who have cooperated in giving information and particularly Jan Egerton for coordinating the search of data.

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Christiane Wirth Forsberg and Jan Egerton

August 2007, Sefton, UK

1 The country: Setting the city and its diversity policies in context

1.1 Brief history of migration to the country and characteristics of migrants and people with a migration background

The history of immigration in the United Kingdom dates back beyond the 18th century. In the immediate post-war years, displaced people and refugees from Germany and Eastern Europe settled in the country, followed by significant primary immigration from the UK's former colonies, meeting a demand for labour in the post war economic boom, followed by migration for family reunion. The UK's colonial past and its persisting links with nations now in the Commonwealth have remained a determining influence on patterns of migration to and settlement in the country, the majority of people with a migration background in the UK coming from countries with a historical and economic link to the UK. Nevertheless, from the early 1990s in particular, refugees, labour migrants and international students from across the world have shifted the pattern of entrants to the UK and of those who have made it their home.

In 2001, at the time of the last full census, the migrant population (foreign born) accounted for 4.9 million or 8.3% of the population. The increase in foreign-born in the decade 1991–2001 was greater than in any post-war period: almost 1.1 million people migrated to the UK in that time. Among the foreign born, those from Europe ranked first, while the Republic of Ireland was the largest single country of birth. (National Statistics Online 2006).

Not captured in the census are the East and Central European migrants who came to work in the UK following enlargement of the European Union on 1st May 2004. A cumulative number of 743,000 have registered to work in the UK (Border and Immigration Agency 2007), an underestimate of the total arrivals as those who are self employed are not required to register; however the figure also does not identify those who have subsequently left the UK. Many are working in low wage sectors of the labour market where there were significant vacancies such as construction, agriculture and hospitality. As a result, the pattern of residence is very different from earlier migrant settlement in Britain's industrial heartlands: many towns and rural areas, as in Sefton, are experiencing significant numbers of East and Central European migrant workers living in the area for the first time (Home Office WRS data 2006; Anderson et al 2006).

In the post war period, legislation from the 1960s imposed increasing restrictions on immigration for work and family reunion. Since the early 1990s, a succession of Acts of Parliament have restricted access and welfare support for asylum seekers, and provided for the dispersal of those requiring accommodation and support to designated areas across the UK. Sefton was not among the designated areas. Skill and labour shortages in sections of the labour market led the Government, from the late 1990s, to allow employers greater access to labour migrants and to a shift, from 2000, to a 'managed migration' policy intended to maximise the economic benefit to the UK from labour migration. Opening up the UK's labour market to the countries which joined the EU in 2004 was part of that strategy, to reduce the UK's need for migrant workers from beyond the EU (Spencer 2007).

1.2 National policy context: law and policy on diversity in employment and service provision

A key element of UK policy on diversity in employment and service provision concerns equalities legislation. The legislation includes the Race Relations Act 1976, which was amended in 2000 with new statutory duties for public authorities. In addition to race, discrimination in employment on grounds of religion or belief became unlawful under the Employment Equality Regulations 2003, which implemented strands of the European Employment Directive (Council Directive 2000/78/EC).

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a statutory duty on public authorities. Each Council has to set out which of its functions and policies are relevant to the general duty which states that: A function or policy will be relevant if it has or could have, implications of any kind for promoting race equality. All relevant services and policies are subject to the Specific Duties.

In order to meet this general duty, specific duties required include:

- Specific Duty A: Publish a Race Equality Scheme
- Specific Duty B: Monitor existing services and policies relevant to the general duty, for any adverse impact and act on the results.
- Specific Duty C: Conduct assessment of the potential impact of proposed policies related to any of the prioritised services and policies and consult.
- Specific Duty D: Publish the results of monitoring, of impact assessments, and of consultation.
- Specific Duty E: Ensure that all sections of the community have access to information about all council services and access to the service they require.
- Specific Duty F: Arrangements for training staff on issues that are relevant to the general duty.
- Specific Duty G: Employment duties profile by race and monitor the staff, setting out what action will be taken if any of the monitoring procedures suggest the possibility of adverse impact.
- Specific Duty H: Education ensure that maintained schools have a Race Equality Policy; monitor and assess the impact of school policies on Parents, Children and Staff; and provide equality in employment.

It is important to point out that this race equalities legislation is innovative and complements the earlier anti-discrimination approach by putting responsibility on the local authority to be proactive in promoting equality not just to provide a remedy for a victim of discrimination, It is also intended to tackle any systemic failure to provide equality of opportunity rather than just tackle individual acts of discrimination. What does this mean for local authorities? The following section outlines in more detail first the duty to publish a race equality scheme, then the employment duty.

A race equality scheme sets out how a public authority will meet the required general and specific duties of the above Act. It summarises its approach to race equality and how this links to its corporate aims and objectives.

While these schemes are a more recent development in the light of the new legislation, many local authorities already had equal opportunity and/or diversity strategies in place.

In a race equality scheme, a public authority is expected to demonstrate how it will:

- assess and monitor its services to make sure that they are not affecting
- some groups negatively, and that all communities are satisfied with them;
- deal with evidence that its services are not in line with the general duty;
- publish the results of assessments, consultations and monitoring;
- make sure that everyone, irrespective of ethnic group, has access to information and to the services that it provides.

Public authorities are required not only to publish information about their services, but to ensure that different groups are accessing that information. They are required to investigate differences in access to services between ethnic groups and the barriers inhibiting equal access for some groups (e.g. through consultation with ethnic minority and migrant communities and organisations, and with service providers); and to develop measures to address those barriers.

The employment duty requires a public authority to monitor its workforce by ethnic group, including the number of :

- staff in post;
- applicants for employment, training and promotion;
- staff who receive training;
- staff who benefit or suffer detriment as a result of its performance assessment procedures;
- staff involved in grievance procedures;
- staff who are the subject of disciplinary procedures;
- staff who cease employment.

Public authorities are required to annually publish this monitoring data on their workforce. In addition, some public authorities also require contracted service providers to keep this data.

Race equalities legislation needs to be seen within the wider picture of the national equalities legislation which is currently under review. A Green Paper was published on this topic in summer 2007 proposing a single Equality Act. The government has committed to a single Equality Act approach in its manifesto. It is likely, however, that this change will affect other equality strands more than the race equality strand. As a first step, the Commission for Racial Equality has been abolished and replaced with the Equality and Human Rights Commission which covers race but also equality on grounds of religion and belief,

The performance of local government on equality and cohesion issues is monitored by government inspection bodies, notably the Audit Commission for local government.

An additional dimension to the current policy context in the UK concerns the government's community cohesion agenda, which developed in response to a number of conflicts amongst different ethnic communities in English cities and towns during 2001. Community cohesion is defined in terms of the development of policies and programmes at the local level to promote a common vision and sense of belonging for all communities, the valuing of diversity, similar life opportunities for all, strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds and circumstances in the workplace, in the school and within neighbourhoods. (Department for Communities and Local Government)

In 2006 the government appointed a Commission on Integration and Cohesion (CIC), which reported in 2007 on its proposals for the development of cohesion and integration policies . Significantly, the CIC included a focus on new migrants in its consideration of cohesion issues for the first time.

Diversity policy is also a key element of the government's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, first launched in 2001. The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy aims to narrow the gap between outcomes in deprived areas and the rest of the country by targeting housing and physical conditions of neighbourhoods as well as issues of unemployment, insufficient public services, schools, doctors and policing .

The diversity of communities in this context is considered not simply in terms of ethnicity or migrant background, but across different communities of identity, also including faith communities, gender, disability, older people etc. Neighbourhood Renewal programmes should take into account diversity issues in their strategies and implementation. A key focus is on the engagement of a wide range of communities in the development and implementation of Neighbourhood Renewal initiatives (Department for Communities and Local Government).

2 The City

2.1 Brief description of the city: location, history

Sefton is one of the five districts comprising the Merseyside metropolitan area, at the heart of the wider Liverpool City Region. Sefton is a richly diverse area covering 153 square kilometres. Its boundary commences at the heavily industrialised area around the Port of Liverpool in Bootle, South Sefton. This part of the Borough retains a significant amount of contaminated and derelict land that has left areas with already low land values at a further disadvantage due to the investment required to make it suitable for new development.

In the far North of the Borough is the Victorian holiday resort of Southport, which attracts significant and growing numbers of visitors. From Bootle, (which is in the northern sector of the Merseyside urban conurbation and supports a large office quarter), the Irish Sea coastline stretches the length of the Borough. Sefton has significant nature reserves and beaches at Formby and Southport and extensive areas of high-grade agricultural land and dormitory suburbs in Crosby, Formby and the eastern parishes around Maghull.

The age profile of the Borough is older than for the country as a whole, with a greater than average number of people over 50 living in the North of the borough. Compared to the England average of 13%, minority ethnic groups comprise 3.3% of the resident population, although this is changing with the increased population of migrant workers, most of whom are located in the North of the Borough (Audit Commission 2007). Sefton has a high proportion of retired and widowed people and people providing unpaid care to dependents.

Since its inception in 1974 Sefton Council has sought to respond to this cultural diversity by framing its policies to meet the individual needs of its residential communities, and to reduce inequalities by maximising opportunities for economic development through inward investment. For example, over £100 million has been invested in the last decade for job creation in the transformation of the Southport Seafront, whilst South Sefton has become the focus of numerous regeneration initiatives such as City Challenge, Neighbourhood Renewal and Housing Market Regeneration. These regeneration projects have created job opportunities for locals and migrant workers in the construction sector.

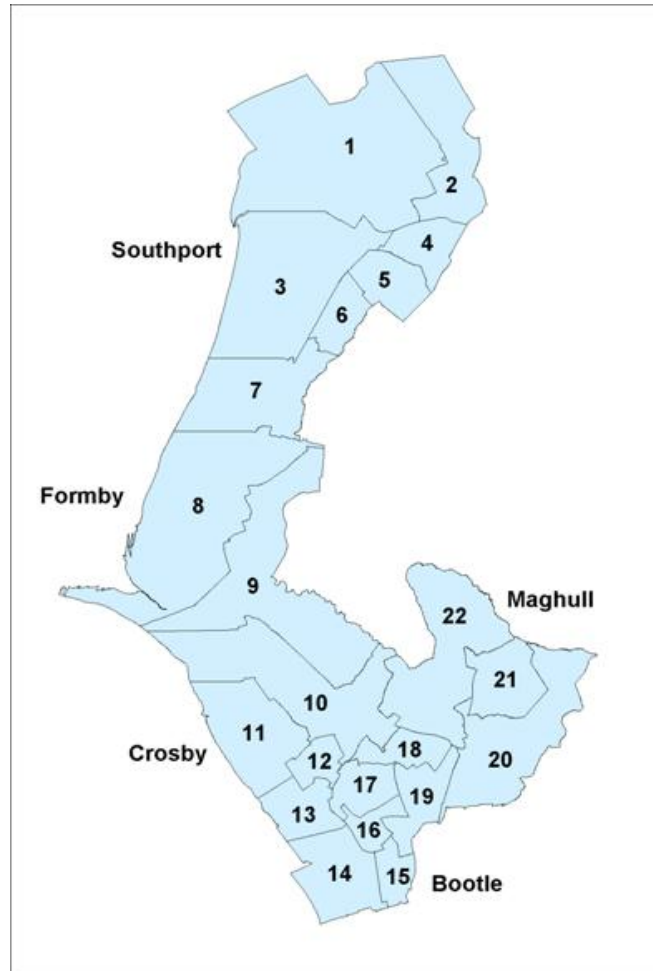
Sefton is an area in recovery. Years of economic decline are now being reversed and although there are still some pockets of long-term unemployment mainly in the South of the Borough, the total number of jobs in the Borough has increased by 8,500 since 1998. Approximately 10% of working age population in Sefton is either unemployed or on an inactive benefit and wants to work. This compares with 11.9% in February 2000. In 2004, the long-term decline in population was halted with the first increase for 16 years. The population is currently 281,800.

2.2 City's migrant population, its history and characteristics

Historically, there have been two groups of migrants in Southport since the 1940s, the first group was made up of Spanish and Portuguese migrants working mainly in the agriculture sector; which was in later post-war years joined by a substantial number of Polish people working across a number of sectors. Sefton is twinned with Gdansk in Poland. The main source of statistical information on the population in the area is the national census. The latest census took place in 2001. The 2001 census identified 4,418 members of the British minority and ethnic (BME) community in Sefton. This corresponds to 1.6% of the total population of roughly 280,000. It is unclear to which extent this group is made up of members of ethnic minorities including British born and to which extent of migrants. By the time of the 2001 census, the Chinese population in Sefton included 901 individuals and was identified as the strongest subgroup of the BME community.

Map 1: Sefton by electoral wards

1. Cambridge
2. Meols
3. Dukes
4. Norwood
5. Kew
6. Birkdale
7. Ainsdale
8. Harington
9. Ravenmeols
10. Manor
11. Blundellsands
12. Victoria
13. Church
14. Linacre
15. Derby
16. Litherland
17. Ford
18. St. Oswald
19. Netherton and Orrell
20. Molyneux
21. Sudell
22. Park



Source: Sefton Council

At ward level, the 2001 census information showed that six wards had a proportion of BME above the borough average. These were Suddell (1.6%), Linacre (2.0%), Norwood (2.2%), Dukes (2.6%), Blundellsands (2.7%), Kew (2.9%). As Map 1 shows, three of these are located in the south of Sefton; the remaining three are located in the north adjacent to the border with neighbouring West Lancashire.

Only in the past few years, however, has the number of migrants grown more significantly in Sefton, following the opening up of the UK labour market to people from the new EU member states after EU enlargement on 1st May 2004. This has meant that, unlike parts of the UK with a longer experience of migration, it is only in recent years that local residents in Sefton have become significantly aware of the presence of migrants. Although a relatively small number of migrants arrived, they did so in a relatively short period of time.

In response to the population changes, CLES Consulting was appointed by Sefton Borough Partnership in January 2006 to: ‘Research the causes and consequences of migrant labour in the Sefton economy and recommend an Employment, Skills and Support Strategy.’ Sefton

Borough Partnership constructed the brief for this work with a focus on Sefton Borough as a whole but with a specific focus on Southport; on migrant workers from the EU accession countries; on employer intermediaries with a significant

Determining the current number of migrant workers in Sefton is however still difficult as there is not a unified means to collate this information. Local authorities have to rely on their own ways of collecting the information they need. Among the available sources are national and regional reports related to migrant worker populations in the UK and the north West; National Insurance Number Applications (NINO), this information identifies place of residence, data for the government's Workers Registration Scheme (WRS)¹ for nationals from EU accession states (available for postcode areas, this identifies place of work, within Sefton and West Lancashire); migrant pupil numbers at local Sefton schools; employer surveys; Jobcentre Plus and other work related organisations within Sefton and the local office of a government service for young people.

Most likely, these sources provide only an incomplete picture of the actual numbers of migrant workers in Sefton. None the less, they are an important tool in understanding recent population changes. The WRS is the most useful to determine numbers of migrant workers at a regional level.

Under the Workers Registration Scheme (WRS), one of the national tools for data collection about migrant workers, 1,345 accession countries migrants had registered for work in Sefton between 1 May 2004 and December 2005. There are a further 1,094 registered in the area immediately west of Southport who are thought to be working in West Lancashire but living in Southport. The total number of economically active people in Sefton for this period stands at 126,100, 58.4% of the total population, meaning the number of registered accession country migrants in Sefton is around 1% of the total working population of the whole borough but significantly higher in Southport. If the number of accession country migrants in adjacent area, this increases to 2% of the working population and to about 0.86% of the total population in Sefton as a whole but again the figure is significantly higher for Southport. It is important to note however that there are migrant workers from the accession countries known to be either working or searching for employment in and around Southport, who do not have a National Insurance number and are not registered with the WRS. The International Workers Steering Group, a multi-agency task force initiated by Sefton Council, estimates that as of September 2007 there might be up to 5000 migrant workers (Hetherington 2007) in Sefton.

Migrant workers are currently working in sectors ranging from horticulture and catering, sheet metal working to high skilled sectors such as medicine. However, at present, it would appear that the majority of migrant workers are filling low skilled vacancies although the migrants themselves are not necessarily low skilled. The skills of migrant workers are not always easily transferred to the UK because of differences in quality standards and education systems and because of their limited knowledge of the English language.

¹ The Worker Registration Scheme was set up by the Home Office in 2004 prior to EU enlargement. Of the 10 countries joining the EU only nationals of Malta and Cyprus were granted free movement and employment rights. For the remaining eight countries (A8), the WRS was created. Nationals from the A8 countries are required to register when entering the UK for work. There are a few exceptions from the obligation to register, including a length of stay of less than one month or having been employed legally prior to May 2004. Further WRS information and trends are monitored and published quarterly. EU Accession Monitoring Reports are available at http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/aboutus/reports/accession_monitoring_report

2.3 The city authority: tier of government, responsibilities, structure

Sefton Metropolitan borough Council (Sefton) is one of five metropolitan districts that make up Merseyside. Until 1986 Merseyside was one of six metropolitan counties in England. Merseyside County Council included five metropolitan boroughs, one of which is Sefton. After the abolition of the Merseyside City Council, its power was devolved to each of its five metropolitan boroughs City of Liverpool, Knowsley, Sefton, St Helens, Wirral. Merseyside is still recognised as a unit for statistical purposes. This left the single-tier authorities with more power than equivalent non-metropolitan boroughs (Office for National Statistics, 2004). Sefton belongs to the north West government office region of England. As a single tier authority, Sefton can be described as an “all purpose council” that is responsible for all local authority functions. Sefton Council is responsible for the following areas: education, housing, planning and regulatory applications, strategic planning, highways, fire (joint with other boroughs in Merseyside), social services, libraries, leisure & recreation, waste collection, waste disposal, environmental health, revenue collection, Tourism, Economic Regeneration, and Emergency Planning.

3 The city’s approach to diversity

3.1 Historical background: explaining reasons for the development of the city’s approach, including influence of national policy, and of the media

The national UK Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a duty on Sefton MBC to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and to promote good relations between people from different racial groups. In addition to this general duty, there are eight specific duties (as outlined in the first section of this report) , including the duty to publish a Race Equality Scheme. Sefton published its revised Race Equality Scheme in March 2006. In the Race Equality Scheme, the Council summarises its approach to race equality and its corporate aims. The Race Equality Scheme states how the Council plans to carry out each part of the general and specific duties and how it will deal with a complaint if a member of the community or staff feels that the Council is not fulfilling our statutory obligations under the Race Relations Act (Amendment) 2000.

The race equality scheme forms part of the overarching work on equality within the Council. In July 2005 Sefton MBC published a three-year Corporate Equality Plan, outlining what the Council is doing to create a fairer and more equal Sefton. Since the Corporate Equalities Plan in 2005, Sefton MBC jointly with Sefton Council for Voluntary Services have formed the Sefton Equalities Partnership. Sefton Equalities Partnership was established in 2006 when the Council, other key public bodies such as the Police, Fire Service and Primary Care Trust came together with Sefton Council for Voluntary Services to work collaboratively on equality and diversity across the borough. Supported by a multi-agency delivery team the Equalities Partnership is responsible for ensuring a co-ordinated approach to equality and diversity across the Council and its partners.

The current members of the Equalities Partnership are: Community Empowerment Networks (CEN’S), Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council, Merseyside Police, Sefton Council for Voluntary Services, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, Sefton Primary Care Trust, Greater

Merseyside Connexions Service, Learning and Skills Council, Probation Service Merseyside, Merseytravel, One Vision Housing.

Sefton's Equality Partnership (EP) has during its first 12 months of existence won a north West Equality & Diversity Award. The Equalities Partnership has met the North Western Local Authorities' Employers' organization (NWEO) standard for a local initiative recognising equality and diversity and has achieved the NWEO Award "Recognising Diversity". The Equalities Partnership has also been commended by the Cabinet Office in the MJ Local Government Achievement Awards for 'Innovation within the third Sector'. MJ Awards publicly recognise and promote achievement in local government services. The awards are part of the Local Government Employers organisation.

For the equalities work in Sefton, the formation of the partnership represented a significant shift from working on equality and diversity issues in thematic 'silos' for race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief towards working on issues of equality and diversity in a way that cuts across the different departments and areas of the borough. This shift has also meant that the importance of issues of racial equality is now more widely accepted throughout the Council and the population. In the past because of Sefton's small proportion of British minority ethnic population, it has been more challenging to engage Council staff and population in race equality work. Now, because of the joined-up approach to equalities, the Council's policy can be promoted as creating equal opportunities for everyone in Sefton no matter whether they experience difficulties in accessing services or employment because of race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief.

As part of the race equality duty, local authorities are obliged to assess the impact that policies are most likely to have on race equality. Tools for conducting Equality Impact Assessments (EAP) are consultation and monitoring. In order to coordinate its efforts on consultation, Sefton Cabinet approved the Council's Public Engagement and Consultation Strategy in March 2006. This strategy focuses on engaging with service users, staff and other stakeholders, including the voluntary and community sector to give their views on service delivery and customer care.

Additional measures were also taken within the strategy to secure involvement from minority ethnic groups and other groups at risk of disadvantage. The original strategy was refreshed in April 2007 with a strong commitment to partnership working. The new approach to public engagement will be taken forward via the Equalities Partnership. Currently Sefton engages with the community empowerment networks for feed back on its actions and policies. This includes the document, 'Fair and Equal Access' outlining the Council's Equality approach that is currently being disseminated via the Community Empowerment Network and networks for under-represented groups to inform them of the work that the Council is undertaking, but more importantly highlight any gaps or make recommendations on how the Council can improve in the future. Sefton Community Empowerment Network (CEN) is a 'network of networks, bringing together voluntary and community organisations that provide services to Sefton's communities.

In addition to the Equalities legislation, there are a series of key indicators and targets the UK national government uses to measure the performance of local authorities. Some of these targets are relevant to particular service areas and others are overarching for the Council and include:

For improving employment and service delivery in local authorities, the national Equality Standard for Local Government has been introduced in Sefton. The Equality Standard for

Local Government is a framework for improving employment and service delivery through mechanisms such as impact assessments to assess the risk to traditionally under represented groups of a policy or procedure and monitoring to ensure that baseline data is collected so that improvements to service delivery and employment can be monitored and the outcomes measured. It is a voluntary scheme owned by the Improvement and Development Agency (IdeA). IdeA is owned by the Local Government Association (which promotes the interest of local governments in England and Wales). IdeA provides support to local authorities through a peer system and aims at an exchange of best practice among Councils. The Equality Standard for Local Government, comprises of 5 levels as follows; Level 1: commitment to a Comprehensive Equality Policy, Level 2: assessment and consultation, Level 3: setting equality objectives and targets, Level 4: information systems and monitoring against targets, Level 5: achieving and reviewing outcomes.

Sefton MBC has reached Level 3 and has to this end submitted a self-assessment report to the Improvement and Development Agency in September 2007. Sefton MBC has committed to working through all five levels of the Standard. In order to make further progress the Council needs to demonstrate progress in improving fairness and equality in service delivery, monitoring the people it buys goods and services from as well as implementing mechanisms for continuous employment in service delivery and employment.

Another area in which Sefton has been working actively to improve conditions for its population is that of race hate crime reporting. In May 2005, the Sefton Hate Crime Form was launched. Through this initiative, Sefton MBC and its partners provide a dynamic multi-agency approach to support the victims of hate crime, including racist incidents. There are currently 45-50 reporting centres across Sefton where reporting forms can be submitted. The reporting centres are Council authorities including for example housing offices but also non-governmental organisations including the local branch of the national organisation Victim Support. Following up on the incidents, Victim Support then offers emotional and practical help for people concerned. Victim Support works in close cooperation with the Police who have trained their staff on cultural awareness and equality issues. There is anecdotal evidence that hate crime issues have increased after EU accession, but there is no factual increase in reporting. One reason could be that the people do not know about the service. Another reason might be anxiety about approaching the authorities. There is a feeling among staff at reporting centres and within the Victim Support organisation that the current level of reporting is only the 'tip of the iceberg'. According to staff at the reporting centres, reasons for underreporting might include lack of confidence, and sadly, people getting used to abuse. Reporting also depends on individuals' definition of a hate crime. There have been incidents where people's claims have been discounted by police officers and they would not be referred on to receive help.

The Equalities Partnership has been reviewing the responses to Hate Crime in Sefton. As part of the overall review it has been acknowledged that the Partnership requires more in-depth and detailed knowledge of the needs of victims of hate crime particularly as that relates to Sefton. The Equalities Partnership recently commissioned a consultancy to undertake the needs assessment in order to: document the experiences of victims of hate crime in Sefton and, detail the support that victims, say that they need. A joint engagement event is currently being organised with public sector bodies in Sefton for the development of a multi-agency race equality scheme. This will mean that although agencies will have their own schemes, joint priorities will be identified and a multi-agency approach taken do working on the joint priorities identified as a result of engaging with staff and customers.

The Draft report from the research was presented at a multi-agency conference in January 2008. Workshops at the conference focused on ‘Supporting the Victims of Hate Crime’ resulting in a framework for taking the work forward.

3.2 Objectives of the policy/approach; to which categories of the city’s population it applies and to which sectors of employment, services and external agencies

The Council’s key objectives regarding equalities are to improve access to services for everyone in Sefton including people from under represented groups, to improve and increase employment opportunities for everyone including people from underrepresented groups, to work towards a more cohesive Sefton through joint working and engagement with all our partners and stakeholders.

These objectives are outlined in the Council’s ‘Comprehensive Equalities Policy’. The policy includes all aspects of employment, service delivery, policies and practices of the Council. It applies to employees and candidates for employment with Sefton MBC. Its principles apply to the provision and use of all services. It also applies to those contractors and partners who provide services to the public on behalf of the Council.

The Comprehensive policy includes policy statement subsections on each of the six strands of equality: race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief. The policy statement on racial equality for all ethnic groups defines the focus as:

- Black and Minority Ethnic Communities
- Travelers and gypsies
- Asylum seekers
- Refugees
- Economic Migrants

In line with this policy, Sefton Council has made a commitment to seek to have a workforce, which reflects the diversity of its population, and to deliver services in a manner which displays equality to all its residents, visitors and the business community.

In its Comprehensive Equality Policy, Sefton MBC outlines that it will work in such a way that ensures that no resident, service user, employee or job applicant is discriminated against or receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of: gender, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation (including gay men, lesbians and bisexuals), gender reassignment, responsibility for dependants, age, trade union or political activities, religious beliefs, spent offences in accordance with legislation and the procedure set down by the criminal records bureau, or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified. With this commitment Sefton Council’s policy goes beyond the six strands that are planned to be combined in the national single equality legislation: race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief.

The policy also includes a statement that the document will be relevant to the developing and changing circumstances in Sefton and as such will be reviewed and adapted as Government legislation, best practice and the local community develops and changes. Lastly the Council has committed to reaching the highest standards of the five levels within the ‘Equality Standard for Local Government’. (see also section 3.1)

In more detail, the commitments are given for service delivery and for employment respectively:

Service Delivery Commitment

- To incorporate the Comprehensive Equality Policy as a key theme within the 'Community Plan' drawn up by the local authority and its partners and so promote equality and diversity across Sefton.
- To earmark specific resources for improving equality practice.
- To assess organisational, departmental and individual requirements required for compliance with legislation through service planning
- To consult with designated community, staff and stakeholder groups on all aspects of its equality policy and plan, this will include Sefton borough Partnership and Community Empowerment Networks.
- To establishing mechanisms for responding to harassment on the grounds of race, disability and gender etc
- To ensure equal access to service delivery ensuring that all Council functions and policies are carried out in a way that copes with statutory requirements, minimises adverse impact on any section of the community and meets as appropriately as possible the needs of all local people To set any required equality targets within departments and service areas as part of the business planning process
- To manage this Comprehensive Equality Policy through a process of self-assessment, scrutiny, audit and equality impact assessments.

Employment Commitment

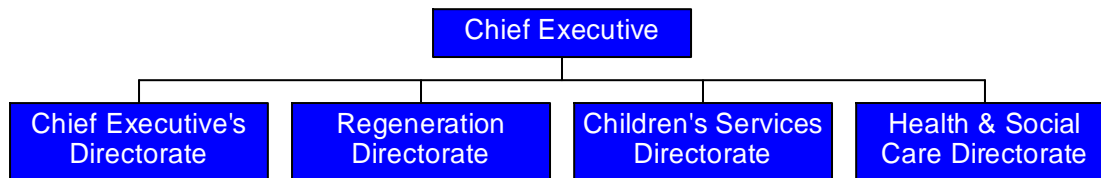
- To develop fair employment and equal pay policies
- To ensure recruitment procedures use non-discriminatory practices
- To carry out an employment equality assessment of the Local Labour Market Area (LLMA), workforce profiling and an equal pay review.
- To ensure that publicity for vacancies does not unfairly restrict the range of applicants To provide application forms and job descriptions that are clear and explicit
- To develop suitable personnel information monitoring systems to meet statutory monitoring duties
- To ensure procedures are consistent with Employment Codes of Practice
- To develop staff training on equality issues.

3.3 Responsibility: elected representatives and officials

In 2006, Sefton established a Portfolio for Communities within the Council, which also includes the equalities agenda. The Cabinet Member for Communities who holds the Portfolio for equality and diversity is also Chair of the Sefton Equalities Partnership Board and champions equality initiatives across the Council.

Sefton Metropolitan borough Council consists of four directorates (see Figure 1). In order to monitor and ensure progress is made against equalities action plans and targets, the Council has established a Corporate Equalities Group, which consists of Strategic Directors and is chaired by the Chief Executive.

Figure 1 - Sefton Council, Directorates



Each of the four Council Directorates has their own Equalities Group that drives forward the work of the Corporate Equalities Group. The four equality groups have been established to enable a debate and an exchange between the Council's overall Corporate Equalities group and the directorates. The Directorates equality groups include representatives from each of the business units that form the Directorates.

3.4 Collaboration with social partners and non governmental organisations in policy development and implementation

Sefton MBC outlines in his Comprehensive Equalities Policy that it is committed to opening its structures and to support the development of strong local organisations, which can have effective dialogue with the Council and other key agencies. Sefton MBC is also committed to develop a more coherent and consistent consultation strategy and to ensure that the Council's partners, service users and staff are actively involved in design of service delivery, so that the Council can positively serve the needs of the borough

The Audit Commission (2007b), in their Corporate Assessment of Sefton MBC, pointed out that the borough is characterised by strong effective partnership working. There are a number of community networks that are facilitated through the Council of Voluntary Services (CVS). 'Equal Voice' is the community network that brings together Black and Ethnic Minority People. Equal Voice together with other Community Empowerment Networks are actively participating in the work of the Equalities Partnership. To date several documents have been circulated around the community empowerment networks for comment including, Fair and Equal Access for All, the gender equality scheme and the disability equality scheme. These are similar to the race equality scheme. More recently there has been consultation on the single equality scheme.

Each of the CENs are represented on the Local Strategic Partnership and as such have the opportunity to be involved in setting, and agreeing, priorities and are part of the strategic decision making process.

The Equalities Partnership has organised a number of consultation and engagement events. Many of the events that have taken place over the past 18 months have focused on gender and disabled people.

3.5 Policy and practice on monitoring progress

Local authorities' performance in England is closely monitored by the national Audit Commission. The monitoring framework that is currently used is based on 'Best Value Performance Indicators' (BVPI). The current set of BVPIs includes 90 indicators. Local

authorities measure their success against these indicators and the outcome is audited by the Audit Commission. For some performance indicators, national targets are set, for others, local authorities set their own targets. Sefton, as a metropolitan council provides performance information against the following services:

Corporate Health, Education, Social Services, Housing and Homelessness, Council Tax and Housing Benefits, Waste and Cleanliness, Transport, Planning, Environment and Environmental Health & Trading Standards, Culture and Related Services, Community Safety and Wellbeing.

Best Value Performance Indicators concerned with racial equality currently include the Level of Equality Standard for Local Governments and the quality of an authority's Race Equality Scheme (RES) and the improvements resulting from its application. In addition there are indicators concerned with ethnic minorities, these include the percentage of the top 5% of Local Authority Staff who are from an ethnic minority, the percentage of local authority employees from ethnic minority communities, and the percentage of the economically active (persons aged 18-65) population from ethnic minority communities in the local authority area.

3.6 Key challenges faced in implementation and broad lessons learnt

The extension of Sefton MBC's policy from race, gender and disability to cover the additional grounds of age, sexual orientation, religion and belief has meant an increased need for training and also workload for many local authority staff. The introduction of a number of different electronic data management tools have also increased training needs especially during the initial phase.

Achieving equality in employment and service delivery in Sefton will rely on close cross-departmental cooperation and exchange. Issues cross service and geographic boundaries, and solutions require effective cooperation between multiple public, private, faith and voluntary agencies with local authorities well placed to coordinate. Sefton Council acknowledges, that all partners, including local police, fire services, the NHS, Gangmasters Licensing Authority and local branches of national services such as Jobcentre Plus, have important contributions to make. It takes however time to establish such channels of mutual exchange.

3.7 Potential future policy development

Sefton has developed an Equality Framework for the borough which will be introduced in May 2008. The Framework forms part of the Equalities and Human Rights Strategy and is a roadmap for how the strategy will be implemented. The main function of the framework is to ensure that Sefton Council and its partners have an equalities framework that looks specifically at issues within the borough and provides a system for benchmarking. It is envisaged that the paradigm shift from silo working to multi agency and multi sector working will facilitate the sharing of data, information and good practice to improve service delivery, employment and quality of life outcomes for all of Sefton's residents. Sefton has adopted an Equalities and Human Rights approach to reflect the Equality Act 2006, which brought into being the new Commission for Equalities and Human Rights (CEHR) which is the bringing together of the legacy commissions of the Commission for Racial Equality, Disability Rights Commission and Equal Opportunities, the work of which is underpinned by statutory legislation, codes of practice and the

Table 1 Timetable for future policy developments

October 2007	Equality and Human Rights Strategy for Sefton Equalities Partnership
December 2007	Review of Disability Equality Schemes
March 2008/ April 2008	Review of Gender and Race Equality Scheme
December/January 2008	Update on progress of the Equality Standard for Local Government

Human Rights Act. Sefton adopted this approach so that it could align itself more strategically with what was happening on a national level and then translate this into local targets, objectives and priorities that reflected the needs of the borough. A timetable (Table 1) has been agreed to ensure that the mainstreaming approach to equality and diversity within Sefton Council remains on track. The timetable for this year includes the development of the Equality and Human Rights Strategy for Sefton and the review of the Disability Equality Scheme.

The new national Commission on Equalities and Human Rights will have a further impact on future developments in relation to equality and diversity and future approaches to integration and cohesion. The commission officially began its work in October 2007 and is a national body combining the 3 former commissions; DRC (Disability Rights Commission) CRE (commission for Racial Equality) EOC (Equal Opportunities Commission) together underpinned by the Human Right Act.

4 Employment: policy, practice and outcomes

4.1 Profile of city employees: data

With 11 500 employees, Sefton MBC is the second biggest employer in the area. The largest employer being Alliance and Leicester. As part of the Best Value framework, Sefton reports on a number of Performance Indicators (see Table 2). These include the percentage of top-paid 5% of local authority staff who are from an ethnic minority as well as the percentage of local authority staff from ethnic minority communities. The purpose of the Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) is to compare the percentage of the Black Minority Ethnic communities (BMEs) in jobs with the percentage of local population to see if it identifies any barrier to employment or promotion.

Table 2 Percentage of staff from traditionally underrepresented groups

	Figures @ Dec. 2006	Targets 2006/07
% of top-paid 5% of local authority staff who are women	31.73%	37.25%
% of top-paid 5% of local authority staff who are from an ethnic minority	1.00%	1.52%
% of top-paid 5% of local authority staff who have declared they have a disability	0.92%	0.46%
% of local authority staff who have declared they have a disability	0.49%	1.39%
% of local authority staff from ethnic minority communities	1.35%	1.58%

Source: Sefton Council: 'Fair and Equal Access to Employment and Services for Everyone'

In December 2006, one percent of the top-paid five percent of local authority staff was from an ethnic minority. At the same time, the total percentage of local authority staff from ethnic minority communities was 1.35%. The target for 2006/07 was set at 1.58%. The targets that are set for this monitoring exercise are different from a 'quota'. To set a quota would imply giving priority to BME applicants priority at the time of recruitment. This is unlawful in the UK, By setting a target, the Council commits to removing barriers to application and promotion.

The figures show an underrepresentation of BME population in jobs within the local authority and particular in senior positions.

Table 3 - Percentage of local authority staff from Black and Ethnic Minorities

Description	2005/6	2006/7	2006/7	2006/7	2006/7	2006/7
	Actual	Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
% of top 5% of earners from black & ethnic minorities	1.52%	1.52%	1.45%	1.44%	1.00%	1.48%
Staff from ethnic minorities	1.44%	1.58%	1.48%	1.46%	1.35%	1.69%

Source: Equalities Partnership, Level 3 Self Assessment

As Table 3 shows, it has been possible for Sefton MBC to increase the percentage of its work force from ethnic minorities throughout 2006/07. The target of 1.58% of the work force from ethnic minorities was nearly met with an average 1.50% of the Council's workforce from ethnic minorities in 2006/07. This corresponds to approximately 170 BME Council employees on average in 2006/07.

In March 2006 a staff survey was carried out and staff were encouraged to provide details about their ethnicity and also whether they considered themselves to have a disability. The results for staff employed in the Council's four Directorates are outlined in Table 4. The numbers show that staff from the British Minority Ethnic communities is underrepresented in these fields of work. Despite some efforts to change this, the Council's workforce is still less diverse than Sefton's population overall. According to this survey, 0.9% of Sefton's employees are 'non-white'. Compared to 2.3% of the Sefton population being in this category. It is important to note, however, that the statistics for the area neglect the 'travel to work area'. Many people working for the Council do not live in Sefton and vice versa. Despite its shortcomings, the data available has improved significantly since the monitoring week data collection.

Since May 2004, Sefton and especially Southport in the north of the borough has received a significant number of migrant workers from the EU accession states, the biggest single group of origin being Polish workers. It has proven to be difficult for some services and ethnic monitoring in Sefton, to capture these workers with existing data surveys (Table 4) does not give any information as to how many migrant workers from Eastern European countries might be working for the Council or living in the area. If monitoring forms give the choice to state ethnicity they might only ask if a person was collection tools. This has been the result of monitoring categories that ask for ethnicity and not for example country of origin or nationality.

Table 4 Summary of Staff in Post By Racial Group as at 01.04.07

(By Directorate and excluding school-based staff)

	Asian	Black	Mixed	Unknown	White British	Any Other Group inc Irish & Other White
<i>Chief Executive Directorate</i>						
CE Department		1	1	4	137	1
Legal Department			2	6	103	2
Personnel Department			1	2	78	
<i>Corporate Services Directorate</i>						
Finance Department	1	1	1	53	332	5
Information Services	1		1	10	78	3
<i>Children's Services Directorate</i>						
	1	8	2	286	1 121	25
<i>Regeneration & Environmental Services Directorate</i>						
Environmental Services Dept		1	2	3	438	5
Housing Market Renewal					15	
Technical Services Department	1	1	5	8	597	12
Planning Department		2	1	2	185	5
<i>Social & Community Services Directorate</i>						
Leisure Department	1		4	25	657	6
Tourism Department				1	41	
Social Services Department	1	4	2	10	419	11
<i>Transportation Directorate</i>						
				29	128	1
TOTAL: 4890	6	18	22	439	4 329	76
Percentages	0.12%	0.37%	0.45%	8.98%	88.53%	1.55%

The 'White other' category in many 'White British' or 'White Other' without necessarily giving an option to fill in which 'Other'. The International Workers Steering Group in Sefton estimates that there are currently about 5000 migrant workers throughout the borough but concentrated in the south around construction work in the Liverpool docks in Bootle and in Southport in the north. There is no information as to whether any of the EU accession migrants have started working for the Council.

4.2 Employment diversity policy, including target sections of the population to which it is directed and occupations covered

Sefton's Employment diversity policy outlines the Council's commitment to maintaining fair employment and equal pay policies. As a major employer in the area, the Council is committed to taking positive steps to eliminate discrimination in policy, practice and procedure and act as a benchmark for other agencies in the borough. The Council is committed to workforce profiling to ensure that its workforce reflects the diversity of the boroughs communities through its employment practices. In addition the Council has an ongoing commitment to achieve equality within the workforce via the Pay and Grading Review process, and support of positive action processes such as the Disability focused Welfare to Work Joint Investment Plan. The Council has committed to using all the power available to it, including the provisions of the Equal Pay Act 1970, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Race Relations Act 1976 (1986) and European Directives such as the EEC, Equal Treatment Directive and subsequent case law to ensure this happens.

Sefton MBC has committed to providing an environment where international workers are welcomed and people from Black and ethnic minority groups are able to find employment. Sefton Council is an equal opportunities employer, this means that the council is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all residents. In terms of employment policies the Council seeks to recruit the best person for the job regardless of race, migration background, disability, sexual orientation, religion and or belief. This is supported by the Council's equal opportunities policy statement which stipulates "In pursuance of this policy Sefton Council is striving to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, sex, sexuality, marital status, race, religion, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin, or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable. To achieve this the Council has committed itself to taking active and positive steps to eliminate discrimination, reduce the effects of past discrimination and promote equality in employment. Selection criteria and procedures will be reviewed consistently to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their relevant merit and abilities.

Sefton's equal opportunities policy is supported by several policies and procedures that seek to promote equality in employment, these include a harassment and bullying policy and a dignity at work policy. The Council takes seriously its obligations under the Statutory Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and as such has committed to actively seeking to encourage people from under-represented groups to apply for jobs through a series of positive action measures, including targeted advertising and ensuring where possible all advertising including publicity for jobs includes diverse images. With an overall ageing population and a significant number of young people from black and ethnic minority background, it will be important for Sefton MBC in the development of workforce strategies that succession planning looks at the importance of recruiting from large pools of multicultural talent in order to ensure that the public services of the future can meet the needs of the borough's residents.

Sefton MBC has committed resources to dealing with the challenges faced by the increasing numbers of migrant workers. It is important to note that the work, although driven by issues around migrant worker, does not target resources specifically at migrant worker communities and any initiative would have to identify benefits for the wider community. This is done because the Council wishes to avoid tensions and competition for resources among disadvantaged groups.

4.3 Recruitment, training and promotion

As part of the commitment to continuously improve service delivery to their service users, Sefton Council is striving to ensure that all staff are engendered with the skills and understanding required to deliver services in a fair and equitable manner. The Council outlines their strategy for improved service delivery through training and skill development in the Equalities Training Plan 2006 which is currently under annual review.

The equalities training delivered to staff currently includes:

- General Equalities Training
- Training on Equalities for Managers involved in Recruitment and Selection
- Training for Managers so they can discuss and set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timed) Equalities Targets with all staff
- Woman as Managers
- Training for all managers involved in purchasing either goods or services for the Council to ensure that the people they commission goods and services from adhere to and understand the Council's Equalities Policies
- Disability Awareness training delivered by disabled people

Plans are in place that by the end of 2007 appropriate methods will be identified to enable all staff to receive general equalities training. In the same way managers are to receive training to develop equality actions, targets and objectives with their staff. In addition, it is the aim of the Council to ensure that all key staff involved in the procurement of goods or services are trained on equality and diversity.

The Council has recently rewritten the recruitment and selection procedures to ensure equality of access to employment. The Community Empowerment Networks (CEN's) for underrepresented groups played an important role in reviewing the processes and procedures for the recruitment and selection policy and as such several improvements have been made to ensure a fairer and more transparent process.

The Council has developed equality targets for recruitment that influence the levels of employee retention and the training and development that takes place for under represented groups. These targets are set according to local data, including information from the Local Labour Market Assessment that is currently being updated. The Council report performance in relation to these equality targets on a six monthly basis to Cabinet Member for Corporate Services. In September 2007 the Council undertook a two week equalities monitoring exercise of both access to services and staff. This information, together with the updated information from the Local Labour Market Assessment will be used to revise and develop new recruitment and employment targets. Targets on sexual orientation, age, religion and belief will be set when the baseline information from these information sources has been produced. The Council has started a number of activities to achieve equality targets including a Disability and Employment Working Group, the development of the Positive Action Working Group and a Diversity Week

The Local labour Market Assessment highlighted several key issues including women make up 60.8% of the workforce but only 31.9% of the top 5% of earners. The vast majority of women are employed in part time work in the Council. This reflects work patterns nationally

and suggests the Council needs to address the use of flexible and part time working in senior positions (recommended by the Equal Opportunities Commission as a measure to encourage women into senior positions) as well as supporting women in training and development opportunities.

The North West Regional Development agency highlights the fact that white, able bodied men in 2- 3 years time will only make up 20% of the workforce in the north West. The implication of this is that in order to attract the best people for the job, a workplace that is welcoming towards diversity is essential.

The Positive Action Working Group is currently working with directorates to identify gaps in the labour force and targets will be set corporately and action plans will be developed directorate wide and monitored by the Corporate Equalities Group and Personnel. Sefton Equalities Partnership are currently engaged in a project with Aintree Hospital to develop a strategy to convert voluntary opportunities for disabled people into meaningful employment. Staff are both employed by the Council and are service users. As such staff support forums have been established to engage staff in the issues that impact upon them in terms of employment and service delivery. Currently Sefton has three staff support groups, which are for Black and Ethnic Minorities, Disabled People and Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual staff. The uptake for the Black and Ethnic Minorities staff group has so far only been limited, but as a newly established group it still needs to inform staff about its existence and added value. The staff groups have initially been introduced for a 12-month period after which they will be reviewed and additional staff support groups added if this will be needed.

The Corporate Learning and Development Unit have the main training co-ordination function for the Council although other Directorates such as Leisure and Health and Social Care have their own in-house training teams that provide a range of courses on equality and diversity issues. There are a number of courses that currently have equality and diversity at their core or have elements of equality and diversity integrated into them.

4.4 Equal pay and working conditions

All employees employed by Sefton Council and other public bodies are bound by the equal pay act which stipulates that men and women regardless of migration background or ethnicity are entitled to equal pay for work of equal value. The Council has been undertaking a major job evaluation exercise and this has led to the development of the work on equal pay. Sefton has made a series of equal pay awards and is working through key areas of work and making adjustments accordingly.

4.5 Harassment

The Employment policies at Sefton cover harassment and bullying. The council is committed to providing a work environment within which everyone is treated in a fair manner. The Council policy states that all employees have the right to be treated with dignity and respect at work and, equally all employees are expected to behave in a manner which affords dignity and respect to all they come into contact with at work. The policy amongst other forms of discrimination covers racial harassment and this also includes harassment based on nationality. The Council has specially trained harassment and bullying officers who are able to provide support advice and guidance to the victims of harassment and bullying. There are two types of actions that can be undertaken with regards to harassment and bullying these are informal and formal routes. The informal approach involves the alleged victim approaching the alleged harasser with support from a manager or a trade union representative and

identifying the offending behaviour and requesting it to stop. The formal procedure involves an investigation and this is supported by personnel and trade unions on request.

4.6 Accommodation of cultural and religious needs

Sefton Council strives to accommodate requests around religious needs, including observances of religious holidays and managers try to ensure that cover is arranged if people require time off work. The approach may not be consistent in all departments. However, there is an understanding that where practicably possible requests for religious holidays and the right of employees to wear cultural clothing is respected

4.7 Health and safety

Current UK health and safety laws require that regulations are understood by all employees. If employers do not make substantial efforts to ensure staff are aware of the health and safety implications of the work they are undertaking then there is a possibility that the employer will be liable should an accident occur and they are unable to prove that all practicable steps to avoid the incident have been taken. Services that have been contracted out by the Council also have to ensure that their workforce understands health and safety regulations. The degree to which this is made explicit in the contracts varies depending on the nature of the contract. Contract monitoring and compliance is the responsibility of individual directorates and it is also their responsibility to ensure that people whom they contract out to have an understanding of the Health and Safety regulations that may operate in that environment as the organisation may be vicariously liable if there is accident or injury due to negligence. For example when Health and Social Care commission a service they ensure that the contract stipulates the minimum standards that must be held by people undertaking that work and will ask for evidence that people have undergone the relevant training. Health and Social care often work with contractors to ensure that minimum health and safety requirements are met and sometimes offer training in order to plug any gaps to ensure quality and consistency of service.

4.8 Recognition of qualifications

Information on recognition of qualifications is laid out in the Council's Recruitment and Selection guidelines, which provides a source of information relative to qualifications obtained abroad. It is not known that this has been a particular issue to date within the Council.

4.9 Complaints

All the Council's Personnel policies are reviewed on a regular basis in order that they remain non-discriminatory and up-to-date with current legislation.

The Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (RRA), gives Public Authorities a general duty to promote race equality and good race relations. There is also a specific duty to promote race equality as an employer. This specific duty means that as an employer, Sefton must collect and monitor records of grievances, dignity at work and disciplinaries by reference to the racial groups to which their employees/job applicants belong. This information is monitored and reported on an annual basis to Elected Members.

4.10 Special initiatives

Sefton Council is positive about Disabled People and committed to their employment. The Council's Policy is that any disabled applicant meeting the minimum, i.e. essential, criteria for the job will be interviewed. If an applicant considers him/herself to be a disabled person, and wishes to take advantage of the guaranteed interview scheme, he/she must indicate this clearly on the application form. (The Disability Symbol does not currently apply to school based jobs.)

Sefton @Work runs a project called 'Routeway'. The programme is focussed at delivering a range of activities that support young people and adults at risk of long-term unemployment to develop employability/transferable skills, allowing them to overcome their barriers and progress into the labour market, particularly across the public sector.

Between December 06 and July 07 Sefton@Work was funded, by NLIDC (Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities) to support international job seekers in Sefton. The project involved the recruitment of a bilingual (Polish /English) Learning and Employerability Worker whose priority was to deliver an Information and Advice service to migrant job seekers, and particularly to encourage non-English speakers to take up English as a second language training (ESOL) and other relevant learning opportunities.

4.11 Monitoring

Under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 public sector bodies are responsible for monitoring by ethnicity/race. The results from this monitoring have to be reviewed every year and every three years the public sector body has to produce a race equality scheme stipulating how it intends to create a more inclusive and representative workforce.

One of the main tools for the Council directorates in monitoring the diversity of their workforce are electronic data management tools that have been established in each of the four Council directorates.

4.12 Impact of policy and lessons learnt

The number of BME population and employers in the Council is rising but it is not yet representative. Sefton Council has adopted a comprehensive equalities approach for the whole of Sefton's population. This has proven politically easier than targeting sections of the population such as for example migrant workers particularly. Based on the existing data it is not possible to say whether migrant workers are getting equal opportunities as the Council does not monitor for this. A number of initiatives have proven positive with varying degrees of success. One of the main employers in the region, Pleasureland, until its closure in 2006, worked with the local college to provide English Language courses tailored to the needs of the business, including Health and Safety Training for its staff on the work premises and during working time.

5 Diversity in service provision

5.1 Services provided and contracted out

Sefton Council does no longer own any significant amount of housing stock nor does the Council provide any direct health and social care. Some services are contracted out to private organisations. In line with national government guidelines, former Council functions, including the administration of housing stock, have been externalised into separate organisations. ‘One Vision Housing’ is the newly established registered social landlord that has taken over the Council housing stock. In the same way, ‘New Directions’ is the newly established organisation that has taken over the delivery of health and safety functions from the Council. In the Health and Social Care sector, Sefton Council holds contracts with about 140 different organisations that are delivering services for the Council. There are no non governmental organisations among this group. Contracting out these services means a need to ensure that the Council’s equality responsibilities are passed on to the contracted organisations.

To this end, Sefton Council is working towards mainstreaming the inclusion of equalities clauses into all relevant service delivery contracts including residential and nursing, specialist community support, supported tenancy agreement, voluntary sector, day care, New Directions, including: residential, domiciliary, supported tenancy, community meals and adult placement.

5.2 Diversity policy in services including target sections of population and services covered

Sefton Council produced a Code of Practice on Equalities in Procurement. It was approved by Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources in October 2006. The code of practice highlights the importance of taking into account the employment and service delivery history of organisations or individuals the Council is commissioning goods and services from. Sefton MBC acknowledges that as a major procurer of goods and services in the area they have a responsibility to ensure that they do not unwittingly engage in agreements with suppliers who discriminate unfairly or are engaged in poor employment practices. Sefton also acknowledges responsibility to ensure that when asking people or organisations to tender the Council does not unwittingly put in place barriers that will make it impossible for small and medium sized enterprises to engage in the process.

The code of practice has been provided to all staff involved in the procurement of goods and services. Equality in Procurement training has been provided to core members of procurement. Sefton has also held a workshop on equalities in procurement for all the Council’s partners in Sefton facilitated by the national Improvement and Development Agency. All partners are currently engaged in discussions to adopt the Bolton style model of procurement which is a set of standard for mainstreaming equalities in procurement and offers tools to help organisations build equalities in at the tendering and contract stage to the monitoring of contracts.

5.3 Employment profile of service providers

There is currently no one place within Sefton Council where this information is held.

5.4 Access to services

To ensure that the information that Sefton Council distributes is inclusive for people who do not have English as their first language, leaflets and documents can be made available in alternative languages and formats to widen participation and engagement. The group of languages (Languages include Chinese, Arabic, Vietnamese, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Gujarati and Bengali) includes many that are associated with BME communities in England but have not yet been amended to include more regionally important ones, such as for example Polish and Portuguese. The Council also has a contract with a Language Interpretation Service. This enables customers who do not have English as a first language to communicate their needs to relevant service areas. Sefton Council has produced Guidelines for Translation and Interpretation circulated to all staff and available on the intranet .

5.5 Monitoring of access and outcomes identified

The Council has developed the Equalities Monitoring Guide, which was approved in December 2006. The guidance sets out the Council's approach to monitoring staff and service users. Managers are required to monitor service provision to guarantee equality and inclusion in the delivery of services in Sefton, and several Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI) which are recorded in the Council's Performance Plan. The BVPI's set requirements for the council such as progressing through the equalities standard, accessible buildings, and recording racist incidents. As part of the BVPIs, Sefton reports on its race equality through the 'Race Equality Checklist'. The checklist consists of a series of 18 questions covering the compliance of the Race Equality Scheme and evidence of measurable improvement in employment and service delivery. As Table 5 outlines, the Council has currently achieved 65% at the end of March 2007.

The Regeneration Directorate's Housing Market Renewal department completed an Equality Impact Assessment on Community Communication and Engagement in October 2006. In undertaking this impact assessment the department consulted extensively and an action plan was produced. This plan resulted in clear equalities monitoring guidelines being produced for Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). The guidelines are a voluntary code of practice based on principles of sharing best practice around data collection

Table 5 Best Value Performance Indicators

Ref.	Description	2005/06 Actual	2005/06 Met Average	2006/07 Actual	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target
2a ↑	Equality Standard for Local Government Level	Level 1 ●	N/Av	Level 2 ◆	Level 2/3	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
2b ↑	The duty to promote race checklist score	52.6% ◆	63 ⊖	74% ◆	65%	80%	90%	100%
174 ↔	Racial incidents recorded by the LA per 100,000 population	47.91	N/Av	34.99	No targets set			
175 ↑	CPA % of racial incidents that resulted in further action	100% ◆	94.7% 😊	100% ●	100%	100%	100%	100%

processes and protocols. The monitoring system identifies key lines of enquiry, based on category profiles, on a regular basis such as: What engagement has taken place; with whom; in what capacity; what outcomes/outputs achieved. The data is then shared with partners and key stakeholders within the Engagement Strategy framework. This has led to the establishment of base line data for the RSLs and will be used to identify key groups to target in these areas when the next round of equalities monitoring is undertaken by the RSLs. Housing Market Renewal, in recognition of the significant contracts they oversee, have also allocated a member of staff to carry out the monitoring on their contracts with a clear focus on the promotion of equality.

5.6 Special initiatives

The Health and Social Care department has adopted the Person Centred Planning approach. The initiative was driven by the need to provide services that meet the needs of individual service users. The approach ensures that people with learning disabilities are able to stipulate what services they need and how they would like them delivered. The Health and Social care directorate recognise that people with learning disabilities who are from BME groups often have to deal with double discrimination. As such one of the department's key priority is to identify BME people with learning disabilities and ensure that their cultural and/or religious needs (e.g. providing Kosher or Halal meals) are also met to ensure inclusive service delivery. The plans are not static but dynamic and when a new person works with an identified individual they are made aware of what the individual's needs are.

Sefton Council has launched two One Stop shops and customer contact centres to increase accessibility to services. The buildings are fully accessible and all staff have been trained to respond sensitively to the needs of customers and aim to assist customers as the first point of contact. Service monitoring is planned to take place later this year and will help to identify if there are any groups not making use of the services or if there are barriers to access. The information from this monitoring exercise will be used to identify what actions need to be taken to remove these barriers. The development of the One Stop Shops has been a crucial part of Sefton Council's approach to delivering services.

The regeneration directorate acknowledges that clean and tidy communities are important in promoting community cohesion and creating clean and aesthetically pleasing environments. The directorate realized that sometimes changes in policy need to be explained in a sensitive and supportive manner to the public. As part of the impact assessment process for alternative weekly collections and to explain to customers issues around recycling, Waste Advisors have been hired. The remit of the Advisors is to go out with the cleansing operatives and identify households who may need assistance in understanding waste disposal or assistance in general. All Waste Advisors have access to language line for translation purposes and have undergone an intensive equality and diversity awareness programme to enable them to provide culturally sensitive service.

The Equalities Partnership publishes a magazine under the title 'Everyone'. This publication shows examples of how the Equalities work within the Council has made an impact on individual lives. It is also an opportunity for the Partnership to provide information on planned initiatives and events around equality and diversity. Lastly it is illustrated with pictures of members of staff from diverse backgrounds and promotes a more diverse image of Sefton.

5.7 Impact of policy on access to and quality of services and lessons learnt

In May 2007 Leisure Services, which is part of the Regeneration Directorate, conducted an impact assessment on their Passport to Leisure scheme. The aim of the scheme is to ‘To improve the quality of life and health of Sefton’s residents who are on low income or in other specific health promotion target groups. This is achieved by enabling them to access appropriate and affordable leisure and cultural activities through a targeted discount scheme’. The impact assessments highlighted the importance of ensuring that all information has a bilingual panel on the back and is available in Braille and large print upon request to make it accessible to traditionally under-represented groups. It was also concluded that when re-launching the scheme more diverse images should be used to demonstrate the inclusiveness of the service. Lastly it was established that that all staff in Leisure Services should have access to the National Interpretation Service.

6 Conclusion: Key challenges, lessons and learning for CLIP

Sefton has until recently been an ethnically homogenous and predominantly white population. There are few employees from BME or international workers in higher ranks within the Council. The proportion of staff from these groups among low paid employment in some sectors including health and social care is significantly higher. Although a considerable number of migrant workers from Eastern Europe have come to the area to live and work since EU enlargement in 2004, there has been some hesitation towards targeting policy initiatives directly and exclusively at this group. With explicit gaps in wealth and employment between the population in the north and south of the borough, it was feared that to single out one group would bring more problems than benefits. National equalities legislation has enabled the Council to introduce a number of initiative for the whole population following the six strands of diversity. In choosing this approach migrant workers are considered as one of many groups who might need special attention. It has been easier for Council officials to explain this approach to the public.

As one of the most pressing issues within Sefton, a lack of information and knowledge about the population has been identified. This makes it difficult for Sefton to understand who is accessing their services. There is an understanding that the data will need to be collected not only about characteristics of the population but also about their needs. Where data is collected there is a need to adapt it to the specific local situation. In Sefton it would for example be useful to collect data on country of origin and nationality in addition to ethnicity. This would help to get a better understanding of the more recent arrivals and migrant worker population in the borough.

Data on EU accession country migrants is collected at the national level. The national registration scheme for A8 migrants is however designed with national immigration and welfare legislation in mind. It falls short of being a reliable source of data for local authorities. Data is currently collected by postcodes of the employers. This makes it difficult for local authorities who would benefit more from a data collection by place of residence. Also there is no need for migrant workers to de-register upon leaving the country. This has meant that only a cumulative figure is available and local authorities struggle to determine the proportion of workers who leave after temporary employment.

As one of the barriers to change, the institutional culture in many parts of the local authority shows hesitation towards change in the areas of equality and diversity. New technologies and an increased workload also add to staff's concerns.

In service delivery, language has been identified as one of the main issues both among staff and in customer contact. At the national UK level there is an ongoing debate about the costs of translation services and whether translation provided can be a barrier to learning English. The Sefton example outlines the counter argument, that without translation services there are barriers to access services and that this can result in tensions for example with regards to rubbish collection. Anecdotal evidence suggests that existing language teaching is not adequate to the needs of the mostly transient migrant worker population. Language was also identified as an issue for staff in health and social care.

To sum up the key issues on diversity in Sefton are

1. The importance of the national legislation and inspection framework on equalities which both drive and provide the framework for local action and standards by which local authority performance is measured.
2. The importance of data as a means to identifying barriers to equality and to measure progress.
3. The lack of data on foreign born. This means that existing data biases analysis towards ethnic minorities and excludes a focus on recent arrivals and European migrants.

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Interviews

Field visits: 4/5 September 2007, Interviewed experts:

Name	Role	Department/Organisation
Val Wilkinson	Southport College	College
June McGill	Equalities Partnership	Sefton Council
Tony Griffin	Equalities Partnership	Sefton Council
Stacey Davis	Equalities Partnership	Sefton Council
Lynne Bowker	One Vision	Registered Social Landlord
Paulette Lappin	Merseytravel	
Linda Douglas	Sefton Primary Care Trust	
John Au	Victim Support	NGO
Ann Burman	Parenting 2000	NGO
Martin Murphy	Health and Social Care Directorate	Sefton Council
Jan Egerton	International Workers Steering Group (IWSG)	Sefton Council
Stefan Jankowski	International Workers Steering Group and Southport Partnership	Sefton Council