

**Culture, Communities and Rural Affairs**  
**Equality And Diversity Awareness**



## Introduction

This booklet is aimed at Culture Communities and Rural Affairs (CCRA) staff and casual staff who do not have access to the Equalities and Diversity e-learning. It may be used with volunteers to outline the overall ethos of what Equality and Diversity means for members of staff in the Department. It is based on the Corporate Equality and Diversity booklet.

Hampshire is a large and diverse county. Its residents are made up of people of different cultures, genders, religious beliefs, ages and sexual orientations, with different abilities and aspirations. The same is true of our employees.

It is the aim of Hampshire County Council to provide a safe atmosphere for everyone to live and work in, where every resident and employee can live in the way they would choose, and where opportunities are available to all.

Everyone who works for Hampshire County Council can help with this. By reading this booklet and completing the activities it will help you understand the importance of Equality and Diversity to your work and the things that you can do to respect and value difference.

In CCRA we want to encourage all communities to use and enjoy our services.

## Hampshire's Vision For Equality

In order to create an environment where everyone feels valued, we first of all have to recognise that some people experience barriers to being treated fairly.

We have a Single Equality Scheme which tells us that the Council wants to do to promote Equality for the residents of Hampshire and the employees of the Council. General HCC Equality web pages can be found at:

[www.hants.gov.uk/equality](http://www.hants.gov.uk/equality).

CCRA intranet:

<http://intranet.hants.gov.uk/rhhq/rh-equality.htm>

This is our vision

*"Hampshire County Council values diversity, respects individual rights and expects others to take personal responsibility to do the same"*

We recognise that:

- equality is an issue for everyone
- we don't all start from the same position, and
- to create a fair society we must recognise different needs



## Why do we need Equality?

Equality is at the heart of all the work that HCC does in Hampshire. There are three main reasons for everyone within HCC to understand the impact that we can all have on promoting Equality and Diversity.

### The Law

Law changes frequently and there are many pieces of legislation that surround equality. However, what is clear in law is that customers and employees are protected from discrimination because of characteristics that make them different, for example because of their gender, age, religious belief, cultural background, sexual orientation or disability. The law also makes it clear that as a public authority we have extra duties to promote equality – we need to show that we are doing more than just ‘ticking boxes’.

### Rights and Responsibilities

Hampshire County Council believes that everyone has the right to the same opportunities. It is this fundamental belief in this right and our responsibility for promoting Equality which leads us to treat people fairly. Translating this belief into accessible services and employment is more important than merely complying with the law.

## Bringing Communities Together

Factors such as age, wealth, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, disability and political ideology can create divisions in communities. Councils have an important community leadership role to play in bringing communities together. Meeting the diverse needs of our customers will help to achieve the Council’s aims:

- Hampshire Safer and more secure for all
- Maximising our wellbeing
- Enhancing our quality of place

In addition, for CCRA it makes good business sense to make our services more available for the whole community and employ the best staff from this ‘workpool’.





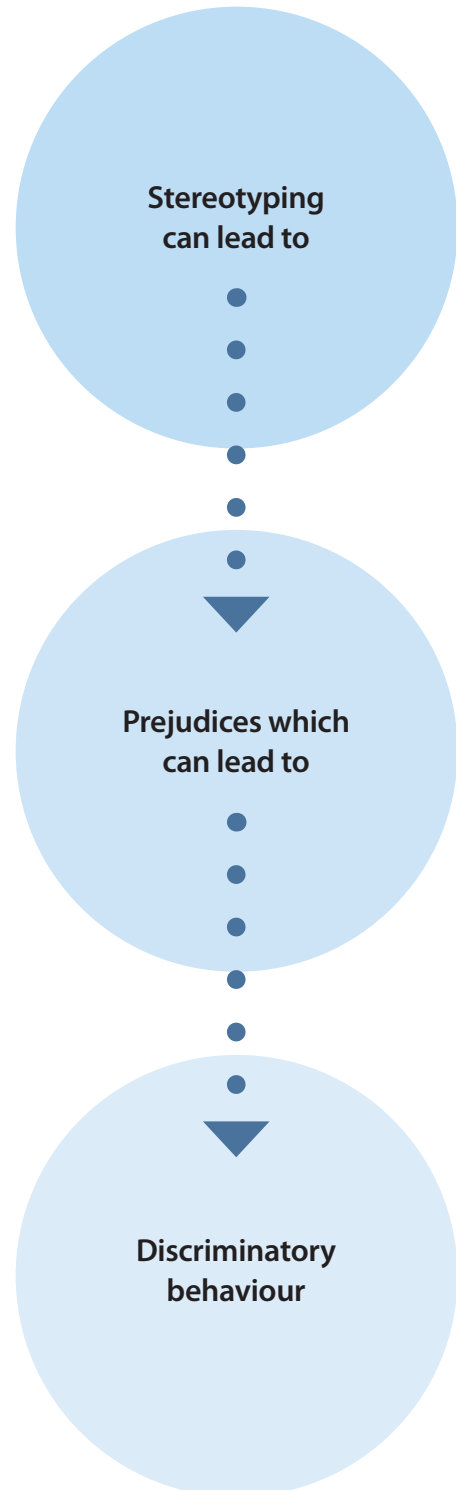
## Stereotyping

Stereotyping is when we have a generalised view of a group of people – we imagine that all people in that group are the same. We all have stereotypical images and opinions of different cultures, religions, genders, professions, age groups – it is how we make sense of the world.

Stereotypes are reinforced by the world around us – the media, people we work and live with, teachers and people we grew up with.

However, sometimes these stereotypes can lead us to make decisions about a group of people based on information that is negative and sometimes not correct. So at times it is important to question our assumptions that we hold about these stereotypes.

This can lead us to become prejudiced against a group of people, which in turn can change our behaviour towards them. This is called discrimination.



## What is Discrimination?

Discrimination is treating someone unfairly because they are different. This could be due to their race or ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, disability or age. It could equally apply to anything else which might lead to someone being perceived as different.

(“definition “ by CCRA Equalities and Diversity group)

Here are some examples of discrimination:

### Refusing someone a job because they are gay

This is discrimination because their sexual orientation has no bearing on their ability to do their job and should not be part of a recruitment decision.

### Making the assumption that because someone is over 50 that they will not want training or be interested in promotion

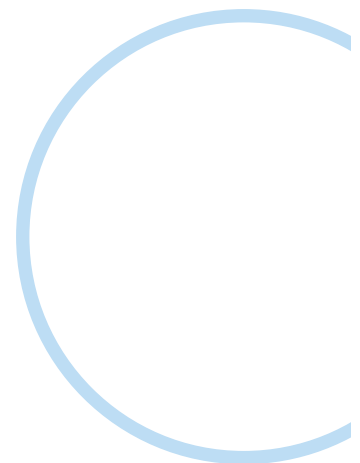
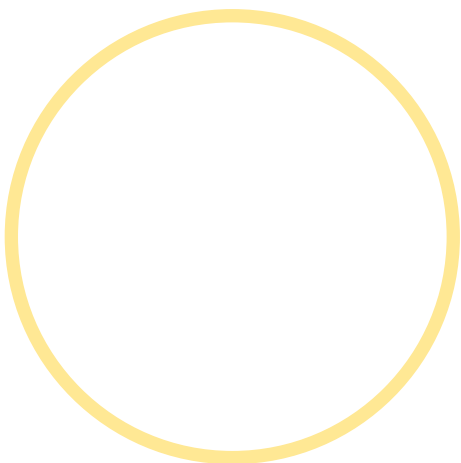
This is discrimination because they are being treated differently to other employees because of their age.

### Making comments about someone’s cultural background, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age or religious belief which will cause them or others to feel uncomfortable

This is harassment. Harassment is a type of discrimination which causes people to feel uncomfortable, humiliated and unwelcome.

### Ignoring a member of the team because they have asked you to stop making comments about someone else, which are unwelcome

This is victimisation. It is a type of discrimination which results in people being treated unfairly because they have helped someone else who is a victim of discrimination.



## Putting it into practice

There is not just one way of treating people, as everyone has their own personal needs, values and beliefs. It means that a 'one size fits all' approach to employees and customers will exclude some and so won't work.

This means that we have to be flexible and creative in the way that we provide employment opportunities and services. We have to be prepared to adapt what we do to be an inclusive employer and service provider. Wherever possible we should ask customers what would suit their needs best.

Look at the following scenarios and make some notes on your thoughts about what has happened and what you think you could do to help.

**1. Anita, a member of staff in the office where you work has a Muslim husband. Recently, some of the other staff have been making derogatory comments about Muslims in general, and although they are not referring to your colleague's husband, you can tell she is upset by these comments.**

Should this behaviour be challenged?

What could you do if you witnessed this happening?

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**2. A customer has requested a copy of a 'What's On' leaflet in an alternative format because they have sight loss.**

What could you do to meet their request?

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## ANSWERS

1. Should this behaviour be challenged?

This behaviour should be challenged straight away. Not only is it offensive to Anita, but if it goes unchallenged then people assume that it is OK to make derogatory comments about anyone who is different.

What could you do if you witnessed this happening?

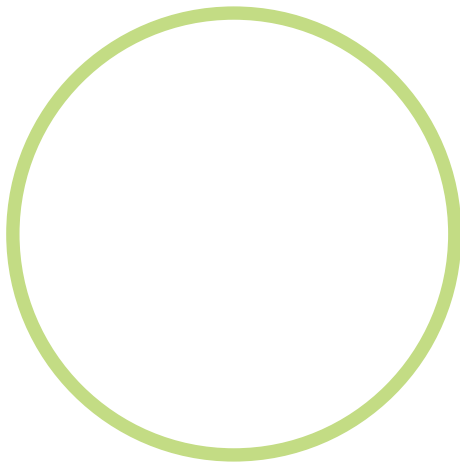
The ideal situation would be to tell the person concerned that you are unhappy with their behaviour and that you would rather that they stop making offensive comments. You can also talk to your manager, your Equalities rep, an HR Advisor or your trade union representative about how you might deal with this. It might lead to Cultural Awareness training for the team.

2. This would be about what is reasonable – finding out their needs, your timescale and resources. It might mean finding out their specific interests, reading the headlines, photocopying to a larger print size, or ordering a larger print, audio version or the leaflet in Braille.

## What does all this mean for me?

# DIVERSITY

Everyone has a responsibility to promote equality and diversity with colleagues and service users. Here are some examples of what you can do that are reasonable:



**D**ignity and respect – respect the individual's need for privacy and dignity in the way that a service is provided or the way in which information is handled.

**I**nformation and Communication – provide information in plain English in different formats as needed to help those with visual or hearing impairments, learning disabilities, or if English is not their first language.

**V**alue the contribution that individuals make. This might mean that some members of the team have different skills and each can make their own contribution.

**E**mbrace difference – be aware of the diversity of colleagues and customers around us and think about their reactions to the things that you might do or say.

**R**emove physical barriers – this could be improving access to those who have a sensory or mobility impairments or a small child in a buggy, or it might be making changes to someone's duties so that they do not have to do heavy lifting if they have a back problem.

**S**tereotypes – avoid using negative or offensive language which reinforces stereotypes. Keep questioning your own assumptions.

**I**mprove access – this might be providing information on different coloured paper to help a colleague with dyslexia.

**T**ailor services to needs – an example of this would be providing alternative main courses to meet diverse religious or cultural needs.

**Y**ou have the opportunity to ask people what they need!

## Staff Rights and Responsibilities

Hampshire County Council believe that employees have certain rights and responsibilities.

- You have the right to be treated with fairness, equity and without discrimination
- You have the responsibility to act honestly and with integrity and to challenge discrimination

Cases of discrimination are rare, but processes are in place just in case. The Dignity at Work policy aims to ensure that your working environment is free from undue stress, anxiety, threatening or frightening situations.

If you have any concerns, if you see discriminatory behaviour taking place, or you experience harassment or bullying then you should talk in the first instance to your Line Manager.

If you feel unable to talk to your line manager or their line manager, then you should talk to your HR Advisor or trade union representative who will be able to give you advice and guidance.

HCC staff also have access to an Employee Support Line, a free and confidential counselling service.

For further information on the support line, please call 02380 626606

## QUIZ

To check your understanding of the topics discussed in this booklet, please complete the following quiz and then discuss with your manager.

### 1. What is equality?

- a. Making sure everyone is treated differently
- b. Treating everyone the same
- c. Making sure everyone is treated fairly

### 2. What is Diversity?

- a. Everyone is the same
- b. Understanding that everyone is different
- c. The different cultures that make up our society

### 3. Where can you find out how Hampshire County Council will promote Equality in Hampshire?

- a. Hampshire Now
- b. The Single Equality Scheme
- c. The Daily Echo

### 4. What do we mean by Stereotyping?

- a. A biased view being applied to particular groups
- b. An informed fact about someone
- c. Giving misleading information

