



**Carmarthenshire County Council**

**Race Equality Scheme**

**2008-2009**

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# Carmarthenshire County Council

## Race Equality Scheme 2008-2011

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## Foreword

I am pleased to introduce Carmarthenshire County Council's Revised Race Equality Scheme.

Since our first Race Equality Scheme there have been a number of demographic changes within the population of Carmarthenshire. It is now made up of many more diverse and thriving communities. Over the lifetime of the last scheme in addition to implementing our scheme we have responded proactively to these changes.

This scheme, and accompanying action plan, sets out our approach over the next year. It demonstrates our commitment to equality of access to services and employment, and highlights our priorities. At the end of this period it is our intention to include race equality in our Single Equality Scheme.

It is also our belief that best public service to the community is achieved by ensuring that we work collaboratively with other public bodies delivering services within Carmarthenshire and this is one of our main priorities for the next year.

It is my hope that *everyone* will embrace the scheme.

With your continuing assistance, we will be better informed as we work towards our commitment of bringing about a fairer Carmarthenshire.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark James', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Mark James  
Chief Executive

# **Carmarthenshire County Council**

## **Race Equality Scheme**

### **1. Introduction**

This scheme has been developed by the authority as required by the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000. In the Scheme we outline our actions to meet the General and Specific duties of the Act.

The Act is part of a new approach to equality legislation that is intended to drive forward a culture of positive change across the public sector and in doing so remove many of the barriers people of all races encounter in their daily lives.

The recommendations of the Commission for Racial Equality on Race Equality Scheme in local authorities in Wales 2007 have been adopted in the development of this scheme.

This scheme will be in place until 2009 when it is intended to replace it with a Single Equality Scheme which will include Carmarthenshire County Council's commitment to all Equality legislation. The decision to adopt a Single Equality Scheme is a recognition that 'multiple discrimination' is a reality for some people and that the approach to addressing discrimination and ensuring access to our services requires a consistent approach across all the equality strands.

#### **1.1 About Carmarthenshire County Council**

Carmarthenshire County Council is the local authority for the area. We have a wide range of policy and service delivery responsibilities including education, economic development, leisure and sport, social services, planning, transport (highways and public transport), and housing (see Appendix 1). Much of our activity is driven by the requirements of the UK and Welsh Assembly governments.

The County has a relatively low proportion of people of black and ethnic minorities. Overall 0.9 % of

Carmarthenshire's population are of black and ethnic minorities according to the 2001 Census. Around 80% of Carmarthenshire's population were born in Wales and a further 17.6% born in either England, Scotland or Northern Ireland. There is a lack of detailed statistics on ethnic minorities post the 2001 Census, with limited information provided by the Annual Population Survey undertaken by ONS. However, there is evidence to suggest from the Workers Registration Scheme for A8 foreign nationals and National Insurance Number counts of foreign nationals, that the number of ethnic minority groups in the County has increased. *(An ethnic group is a community of people who share cultural and/or physical characteristics these can include cultural traditions, ancestry, national origin, history, religion, language, political systems or myths.)*

## 2. **Review of our previous scheme** - 2005 - 2008

In our previous scheme we outlined our priorities and actions for the three year lifetime of the scheme. Our action plan contained a number of actions. For details and an update on the actions see Appendix 4. Whilst we are satisfied that significant progress has been made by Carmarthenshire in relation to Race Equality we also recognise areas for improvement that will be the focus of this scheme and our priorities. We also recognise that our action plan needs to reflect our local priorities which come out of our consultation, our impact assessment process and our review of our previous scheme.

What we sought to do 2005 – 2008 and what we consider we have achieved

Our main aims in our last scheme were to :-

Objective 1 Strategic Arrangements for Managing this Race Equality Scheme (RES)

Objective 2: Identifying relevant functions and policies

Objective 3: Arrangements for assessing, and consulting on likely

impact of new policies and functions

Objective 4: Arrangements for monitoring policies and functions for adverse impact.

Objective 5: Arrangements for publishing assessment, consultation and monitoring reports.

Objective 6: Arrangements for making sure the public have access to information and services

Objective 7: Arrangements for training staff

Objective 8: Meeting the specific duties for employers: monitoring employment

Objective 9: Procurement, Contractors and Partners

We consider that we have achieved our aim of having strategic arrangements in place for managing the scheme. We have also identified our relevant functions and policies, we have arrangements in place for assessing and consulting on likely impacts of new policies and functions, there are also systems in place for monitoring policies and functions for adverse impact. And publishing assessment, consultation and monitoring reports.

Arrangements are in place to ensure that the public have access to information and services.

Staff and members training needs have been assessed and training programmes to meet these needs have been arranged.

In relation to monitoring employment significant progress has been made and we now capture and record data to ensure we meet our specific duties as employers. These have been in place for 3 years and we are now in a position to analyse trends.

Our procurement policy has been revised to reflect legislative requirement and best practice.

## 2:1 Lessons learned

Whilst we believe that our scheme has gone a long way to address race equality within the organisation and the services we deliver, we feel that there is now a need to focus on local priorities for the organisation and community. We will continue to meet our statutory duties whilst at the same time targeting key priorities for the next year in response to our findings. The authority intends to

develop and adopt a Single Equality Scheme in keeping with the anticipated legislative requirements of the Equality Bill.

We also believe that our main area of development from our last scheme is to ensure that our action plan and work in relation to Race deliver the desired outcomes for the citizen of Carmarthenshire. In order to do this our action points need to be more focussed and contain measureable targets.

We have also encountered a number of difficulties around monitoring specifically in relation to service users. These experiences will assist in ensuring that we improve and avoid repeating previous mistakes.

### 3. Areas of good practice

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We consider that over the past 3 years we have achieved a great deal in relation to Race Equality within the organisation. The focus on Customer care aspect of the work has increased ownership and mainstreaming of the work across all services. In addition to the actions in our original plan the authority has been proactive in addressing changes in our community demographics and responding to changing service demands. The points outlined below explain how we have addressed in line with the areas identified in the CRE's report on key areas required by a local authority in their report:- **Putting Priorities in Focus - Race Equality Schemes for Local Government in Wales September 2007.**

#### 3:1 Identifying Functions, Policies and internal strategic links

Through the active engagement of all of our communities, and communities of interest, we aim to improve service delivery, service planning and ensure effective use of economic and human resources, for the benefit of all. Carmarthenshire's Community Strategy is developed in partnership with the public, private, voluntary sector agencies and communities, and defines our long term vision for the area and high level objectives for the county. These strategic themes are cascaded into our Corporate Strategy & Improvement Plan - our high level strategic plans and subsequently into departmental business plans. Details of our departments their responsibilities and the services they deliver can be found at Appendix 1.

- Feeling Fine:
- A Better Place:
- Opening Doors
- Feeling Secure
- Investment and Innovation

### 3:2 Senior Level commitment within Carmarthenshire County Council

The Council recognises the importance of leadership on a number of levels. A member of the Executive Board is an Equalities Champion. This councillor attends meetings of the Equalities Working Group and takes a close interest in the progress of the Race Equality Working Group. Alongside this, the councillor champions issues of Race Equality within the Executive Board itself.

On the officer side, the Assistant Chief Executive is the current senior management Champion for Race Equality this ensures issues of Race Equality are taken forward within the Corporate Management Team. The Assistant Chief Executive also chairs the Equality Working Group - the officer group overseeing the development of this scheme and its successful implementation.

The council has adopted a number of 'core values' which are the fundamental beliefs and principles which guide the policies and

everyday actions of all employees. These values establish a culture of –

- Openness, Trust, Honesty and Integrity
- Valuing staff
- Putting customers first
- Ensuring equality of opportunity
- Listening and delivering promises
- Treating people and the environment with respect
- Working in partnership
- Improving services

### 3:3 Decision making process

The decision making process within the Council has a number of different layers. These include:

- The Council. Composed of elected representatives (councillors), the Council has responsibility for agreeing the Policy Framework of the Council. Before this scheme can become policy, Council must approve it.
- The Executive Board. The Executive Board is responsible for the day-to-day running of the Authority, but only in accordance with the Policy Framework agreed by Council. The Executive Board has an Equalities Champion to ensure Race Equality issues are raised at the highest level;
- Scrutiny Committees. Again composed of councillors, these committees hold the Executive Board and officers of the Council to account. They also provide recommendations to the Executive Board. The Policy and Resources, and Social Justice Scrutiny Committees each receive frequent progress reports on equality and diversity issues;
- Corporate Management Team (CMT). Composed of the directors of the Council's departments, and including the Chief Executive and other senior officers, CMT makes operational decisions in relation to the Council's activities. It also provides advice to the Executive Board. The Director Champion for Race Equality ensures relevant issues are addressed at CMT level;

Officer working groups. The Equality Working Group comprises officers from each department of the Council. It has responsibility for developing this scheme and for overseeing its successful implementation. The Assistant Chief Executive chairs the group.

### 3:4 Leadership in the Community

- The authority has established a multi agency working group to look at the implication of large numbers of migrant workers into Carmarthenshire from 2004 to date. All public service providers, private employers and voluntary organisations are represented on the group. The objective of the group is to identify and address any service needs, to consider what steps can be taken to foster and promote positive community relations / integration into the local community”
- The authority’s Social Justice Scrutiny committee also undertook a task and finish project to look at the impact and needs of Eastern European workers moving into the county . The impact on changes to services delivered by the local authority.
- All members received equalities training which includes race equality training in the context of their role as community leaders. All recently elected members have also received this training as part of their induction.

### 3:5 Policy Development

Policy development is being improved through the use of the Carmarthenshire Community Strategy Integration Tool. The Tool helps to makes sure that policies complement the strategic aims of the Authority (and those of partner organisations). It acts as a ‘screening tool’ and helps highlight the need for more detailed assessments, such as the equality impact assessment, where appropriate.

Copies of the completed Integration Tool are forwarded to Corporate Policy where a view is taken as to whether an equality impact assessment should be conducted.

### 3:6 Impact Assessment

Impact assessment is a systematic mechanism for identifying and addressing inequality. A tool has been developed for use across the various dimensions of equality, including Race Equality, and has been applied to policies and functions across the authority. A review of the tool has been undertaken in the last few months and a revision of the tool is underway. The impact assessments have contributed to the identification of the authority's priorities and action plan (see Appendix 5).

The equality impact assessment process is also informing the Wales Programme for Improvement Risk Assessment and will continue to do so. It is enabling the Authority to recognise gaps in its performance and plan to remedy these. Any areas identified by the impact assessment are fed into the risk assessment and addressed in business plans and departmental customer focus action plans.

### 3:7 Monitoring

The ethos of the Authority is to continuously improve. There is a compelling argument that further increases in performance will need to recognise more explicitly the relevance of race equality.

The authority has an electronic HR / payroll system which allows the recording and reporting of all equality monitoring data. Effective monitoring of the recruitment process, workforce composition, promotion, training and reasons for leaving employment is identifying trends. This information has been gathered for 3 years and analysis of this data is underway to inform the planning process for positive action strategies and the workforce planning process.

An Annual Equal Opportunity Monitoring Report is published via the Council's Internet site and other relevant publications. A copy of the annual report is also sent to the EHRC.

The annual report is presented to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, Executive Board Members Decisions Meeting and Equality Working Group

### 3:8 Feedback mechanisms

As an organisation we value the ongoing feedback we get from members of the public and staff. Members of the public can raise race equality issues with their local councillor, or they can contact officers of the relevant service by contacting Carmarthenshire Direct on 0845 6580445 or [direct@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:direct@carmarthenshire.gov.uk)

Because of our ethos of continual improvement, we are very keen to hear what people think of its services. Our Complaints and Compliments procedure has been modified to track race equality related issues, ensuring the Authority can identify and root out persistent problems. Complaints and Compliments can be made through Carmarthenshire Direct, or via our web-site at: [www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk](http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk)

Mechanisms are in place to ensure concerns from employees, including those relating to race equality are addressed. We encourage employees to raise these informally with their line manager where possible and many concerns can be managed in this way. However, there are occasions when a more formal approach is necessary and these can be taken through a number of routes, including:

- Performance appraisal/supervision meetings
- Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure;
- Whistle-blowing Policy and Procedure;
- The Grievance Policy and Procedure;
- Health and Safety Policies and Procedures.

Issues and suggestions can also be raised through:

- Employee Consultative Groups. These are departmental groups, chaired by the relevant director, where members of staff discuss work issues;
- Employee Relations Group. This is the main formal consultation group involving management and trade unions.
- Human Resource teams. HR Officers are available to provide advice and support to employees and managers on a range of people management issues, including race equality in the workplace.

A staff panel, to consider race equality issues, is planned for the near future. The panel will assist with the production of our annual report on progress in implementing this scheme.

### 3:9 Promoting race equality

#### 3:9:1 Training

The authority has an equality training plan for staff which includes a variety of learning and development methodologies, including e-learning and face to face training. This is then broken down into departmental plans.

All members receive equality training which includes Race Equality training.

All staff receive race equality training as part of their induction when they join the organisation.

Senior managers also have a separate equalities development programme which includes race equality and valuing diversity training.

#### 3:9:2 ESL classes

In response to requests from individuals and results of research the authority has increased the number of English as a second language courses it provides.

#### 3:9:3 School projects

Carmarthenshire County Council believes that the promotion of Race Equality must be started at the earliest age possible to ensure that prejudices do not become embedded, within our role at a LEA the authority has participated in national projects with the secondary schools in the county to start to address this. The CRE ran the Croeso training programme in Carmarthenshire in September 2007, They trained 13 school councils. They also trained the youth Council as a result of which they made Diversity and Equality the focus of the Youth Conference last November. Following the training the School Councils presented what they

had learned back to the rest of the school via an assembly/workshop.

### 3:9:4 Equalities at your fingertips - staff handbook

A staff handbook promoting equalities and staff role in achieving this has been distributed to all departments and new staff as they join the organisation.

### 3:9:5 Positive press releases

As an outcome of the scrutiny task and finish group research and the multi agency migrant workers group there is a campaign to ensure that the authority releases regular press releases relating to promoting Race Equality on a regular basis in conjunction with our partners.

## 3:10 Strategic Links: External

The Beecham Review, Beyond Boundaries highlighted the principle of a 'public service' ethos that developed joined up 'citizen centred' services. Key statutory plans within Carmarthenshire identify a number of aims and objectives which make those strategic links.

The Children and Young People Plan include 7 core aims one of which directly addresses race equality in service delivery to children and young people and race equality is core element of all the other core aims.

The Health and social care and Welbeing strategy include health impact assessments that specifically address race equality in relation to health and social care issues.

The Community Safety Plan contain a number of objectives that directly address race equality including the true vision initiative, crime reduction targets and the promotion of Anti Social Behaviour reporting methods.

The authority addresses race equality as part of its WPI risk assessments with information gathered from the impact

assessments of services and functions feeding the risk assessment process for the authority.

In keeping with the authority's commitment to improvement we have already made a commitment to engage and follow the Equality Improvement Framework launched this year by the WLGA as a tool to assist in our work.

In keeping with the Welsh Assembly Governments Making connections agenda as well as looking at working in partnership within the delivery of services we are also working with Dyfed Powys Police Authority, Mid and West Fire Service , Hywel Dda NHS Trust, Local Health Board, and Ceredigion County Council in the development

### 3:11 Leadership in the Community

The duty to develop a Community Strategy lies at this time with local councils to work in partnership to promote the social, economic and environmental well being of the area. Paragraph 3.1 above identifies the internal strategic links which help drives the corporate strategy and community strategy priorities. As leaders of this process, the council supports a successful and well established community planning framework which brings together strategic partnerships and plans, community engagement mechanisms and reporting and information arrangements :

The recently established Local Service Board has a strategic and 'problem solving' role, dealing with cross cutting and intractable issues that cannot be resolved elsewhere. The Board will oversee the new Community Strategy currently being developed and has entered into a Local Delivery agreement with WAG to deliver service changes that deliver 'citizen centred' services. The Board

is supported by the following strategic partnerships and a number of strategic plans

- Health, Social Care and Well Being Partnership
- Environment Partnership
- Lifelong Learning and Children and Young People Partnership
- Community Safety Partnership
- Regeneration Partnership

Fundamental to this work is a number of guiding themes which have been adopted during the community planning process –

- Equal opportunities
- Fairness and social inclusion
- Sustainability
- Connecting with communities and openness and transparency
- Ensuring Welsh Language prospers

#### **4.1 Consultation prior to drafting the scheme**

The Authority has undertaken consultation with the public, members, staff and organisations representing the communities. This took place over July, August and September 2008. All staff and members within the authority were asked to give feedback alongside over 20 local organisations interested in issues of Race Equality. The consultation was also widely publicised in the local press and it was possible to submit comments on-line.

Two different questionnaires were used (Appendix 7).

Given that this was a revision of the current scheme the focus of the consultation was to identify barriers to services and areas for improvement and the priorities for the next year.

As an authority and in light of the feedback in the report from the CRE in 2007 we also asked a direct question about gypsies and travellers, with two aims in view, the first being to raise awareness

of those completing the questionnaire that Gypsies and Travellers were included in Race legislation and secondly to assess awareness of this to establish the starting point of our work with staff and the community.

Around 60 people indicated that they would be prepared to be involved further in taking forward the Race Equality Scheme.

## **4.2 Summary of responses to the public and staff survey**

A summary report can be seen at Appendix 3. The key issues to emerge were:

- Learning and development of both staff and the community in general
- Inclusion - linked with development of language skills
- Promoting racial harmony through celebrating diversity of cultures within the community.
- Confusion over the identification of issues relation to Welsh language skills as a race equality issue.

These issues are addressed in the action plan at Appendix 6

## **4.3 Impact assessment results**

As explained in section 3:6, the Council has a programme of equality impact assessments on its functions and services. From analysis of those undertaken to date, the following issues have been highlighted as relevant to issues of Race Equality that potentially need to be improved.

- Staff training and awareness
- Consultation
- User monitoring

## **4:4 Carmarthenshire County Council priorities**

As detailed above, the Council has drawn upon many sources of information in developing its priorities for action on Race Equality. In developing the Scheme, it has also considered the report on the Welsh Assembly Government's engagement events that were held between April and June 2006, alongside consideration of a number of Race Equality Rights Commission publications.<sup>1</sup>

The Council's priorities for this Race Equality Scheme are:

- Promoting of good race relations
- Partnership working
- Developing our monitoring of customers and service users
- Promoting understanding of Gypsies and travellers needs
- Development activities for staff

In order for the Authority to check that its proposals are in line with the views of people from BME, new communities, the draft version of this scheme has been circulated to local organisations interested in issues of Race Equality, placed on our website and its existence publicised in the local press.

The Authority will compile annual reports on progress in the implementation of this scheme and make these publicly available.

For greater detail on what the Council proposes to do, please see the action plan, at Appendix 6

## 5. **Areas for improvement**

Following our consultation on the priorities of this scheme and the barriers faced by members of our community some clear areas for improvements have emerged in addition to those we had already identified ourselves.

### 5:1 Capturing monitoring data at service delivery point.

In our previous schemes action plan a number of actions related to addressing the need to capture race equality data, along with other

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equality data from our customers. This has proven to be less successful than we hoped. A number of areas of difficulty have been encountered, such as:-

- There are a number of instances where we in the authority administer, distribute and collect data from customers but have little control over the content of the form, such as in housing benefit and council tax information which is decided and controlled by the - Department of Works and Pension.
- In some areas such as our contact centre the impact of collecting data on every call received has a very negative impact on general service delivery with callers having to wait longer for a response to sometime urgent calls.
- Staff have also encountered difficulties in getting customers to understand the need to collect such data, such as in leisure centres.

### 5:2 Consultation

The authority currently has a wide range of consultation mechanisms in place as outlined in our consultation framework. We recognise that we do not however have specific groups with expertise in relation to Race issues that we could consult with.

### 5:3 Partnership working

We are aware that a number of public sector organisation will be consulting on and producing Race Equality and Single Equality Schemes. We would like to work with other public sector organisations providing services within Carmarthenshire to work jointly on these. We have established a group of all public sector providers within Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion County Council to identify how we can work collaboratively. It is our feeling that most members of the public will not want to read 6 or 7 different schemes and if we can produce one jointly that outlines how we intend to work, albeit with different priorities and action plans this will assist with delivering on our duty within Carmarthenshire and promoting race equality.

### 5:4 Departmental action plans as well as corporate focus

A weakness recognised by the CRE review of RES in 2007 was the corporate focus of action plans and the need to cascade this into all departments with the creation of a departmental plan. The Authority believes that, within service delivery, race equality is

fundamentally about good customer care. For this reason, Customer Focus Action Plans are being developed within each department, this may need to be publicised more.

#### 5:5 Promotion of work being undertaken within CCC

To some extent the area for improvement here is caused from a success of mainstreaming race equality into the work of the services. In the review of the scheme and the consultation it has come to light that there are a number of service led projects directly affecting race equality that may not be known corporately but have been identified, funded and managed by business unit managers as part of their response to customer needs. For example:-

- the involvement of Gypsy and Traveller representatives on the Community First partnership meetings.
- Work with a local school and the gypsy and traveller families locally
- The translation of some public notices into Polish by technical services as it was identified that a number of Polish residents were not putting out refuse at the correct times.

We need to identify a method to capture all this work in order to share best practice and share expertise.

#### 5:6 Promotion of race relations

In the responses we had from our consultation an area that was consistently highlighted was the need to promote understanding of different cultures within Carmarthenshire in order to ensure good race relations. To date there have been no specific multicultural events planned by CCC, although this may have happened in individual schools.

This needs to be addressed by the organisation in collaboration with other public bodies delivering services within Carmarthenshire.

#### 5:7 Impact assessments

Following feedback from staff a need to allow easier access to the impact assessment system has been identified. The process and system are currently being reviewed to improve access and ease of use of the system.

### 5:8 Performance

In order to strengthen our monitoring the actions on the action plan will be put on our Performance Information Management System (PIMMS) and reported on quarterly as part of our performance report to Scrutiny. Any areas not performing will be taken into account as part of the WPI annual risk assessment process and remedial action identified.

### 5:9 Addressing the Needs of Gypsies and Travellers

We recognise the need to be a more co-ordinated approach to addressing the needs of gypsies and travellers within the Authority. To ensure this we will create a cross department working group to specifically review the needs and actions required.