

**Diversity peer challenge
Wychavon District Council
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The challenge

- designed to assess Wychavon District Council's own self assessment
- not an inspection but an external assessment by critical friends

The challenge

The equality framework for accreditation as an achieving authority focuses on 5 themes:

- knowing your communities and equality mapping
- place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- community engagement and satisfaction
- responsive services and customer care
- modern and diverse workforce

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The detail.....

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knowing your communities and equality mapping

strengths:

- The Council are aware of the needs of the majority of its' vulnerable groups and special mention is made of the work carried out with migrant workers and young people.
- Mosaic has recently been purchased and will be used for data mapping
- Customer insight information is starting to be used effectively to target vulnerable groups (e.g. Mortgage Rescue Scheme)
- There are examples of good practice of Members being proactive within their wards to understand the needs their citizens

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knowing your communities and equality mapping

areas for consideration:

- Data mapping and sharing of data with partners could be improved
- The Council needs to ensure that all staff are aware of the breakdown of the population by ethnicity and that the focus is not just on the Polish but all groups
- Equality monitoring of service take up, including take up by ethnic groups. This information would be useful for diversity impact assessments
- Managers want to use customer insight information more intelligently in the development of their services

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place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment

strengths:

- The Leader of the Council and the Managing Director have a clear commitment to Equality and Diversity
- The Portfolio holder for Community Engagement Rural Affairs is responsible for Equality and Diversity and also chairs the LSP
- Resources are pooled with Partners to ensure maximum impact e.g. research into migrant workers, the migrant worker panel
- Equality is part of the day job
- The Member Scrutiny addresses Equality and Diversity issues through Scrutiny panels
- The Council is very clear that one size does not fit all and tailors its services according to need
- The Equality and Diversity Group comprising officers and Members proactively support the equality agenda

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place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment

areas for consideration:

- Equality impact assessments could be improved to drive service delivery
- There is room for improvement on working with partners on equality impact assessments
- There is no equality impact assessment of the procurement process
- Scrutiny could be used more effectively to support the equality agenda and in monitoring equality impact assessments

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community engagement and satisfaction

strengths:

- Strong evidence of community engagement through the Citizens Panel and the SIMALTO budgetary consultation
- There are strong volunteering networks. Volunteers feel involved in development of services from the start and see results
- The Council has taken a proactive approach to ensure as many people as possible are on the electoral register
- Studies on the needs of migrants have led to the establishment of a Polish Association
- Wychavon is pro-active in supporting youth from deprived areas and those that are rurally isolated. They have established the Youth Zone and are currently developing a youth bus to visit rural communities. These are normally seen as county responsibilities
- Encourage small traders to tender as suppliers, e.g. Selling to the Council Guide, help with policies, meet-the-buyer events

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community engagement and satisfaction

areas for consideration:

- Partners recognise that a challenge for Wychavon is reaching out to the some seldom heard groups, e.g. Gypsies and Travellers, migrants, LGBT community
- Hard to reach groups are not always represented in volunteer organisations
- Could Wychavon be more proactive in promoting equalities and diversity issues amongst communities?

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responsive services and customer care

strengths:

- There is a strong County Equalities and Diversity group. The 'Being Different Together' project has resulted in plans for joint training (e-learning and 'Changing Faces') and joint interpretation & translation arrangements
- An impact assessment has been done on the budget consultation options. A 'Your budget: your choice' survey was run to give as many residents as possible the opportunity to express their views. The results of the impact assessment is informing this year's budget
- All public buildings are 100% DDA compliant
- A wide range of formats is used to communicate with customers and residents, e.g. translation and interpretation

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responsive services and customer care

areas for consideration:

- Equality impact assessment programme not fully embedded
- Need to develop a greater understanding of how equality performance monitoring can benefit service development
- The Council website needs updating to ensure it is accessible to everyone. Easy to read guidance is not available

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modern and diverse workforce

strengths:

- An Equal Pay review has been successfully implemented. It was supported by a good communication strategy
- Member Induction includes Equality and Diversity and all Members have 'exposure' to Equality and Diversity training
- The Council is working towards Member Charter status and introducing Member personal development plans
- Wychavon Council won the 'Best Council to work for' and 'Best Training and Development' awards
- Staff say Wychavon is a good place to work and there is low staff turnover
- The Council has an effective flexible working policy

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modern and diverse workforce

areas for consideration:

- There needs to be ongoing monitoring of changing demographics to ensure that the workforce is representative of the district
- Uptake of training by Members could be improved
- The Council needs to improve communication between departments including from the top down
- Staff need to feel able to communicate issues both upwards and across service areas and receive the appropriate support
- Could the Council attract Elected Members from the diverse communities they serve?

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Key Challenges

- **Equality impact assessments**
- **Further developing data mapping and customer insight**
- **Ongoing programme of training for staff and Members**
- **Implementation of the Single Equality Scheme**
- **Monitoring of workforce diversity and working towards a more representative workforce**

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Overall conclusion

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CONGRATULATIONS

Wychavon District Council
Has
completed a satisfactory self assessment
against the criteria for an **achieving
authority** as set out in the Equality
Framework for Local Government