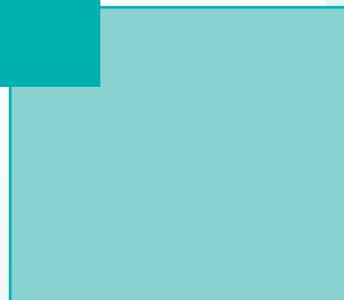


# Equality Scheme

Executive summary  
2007/08 – 2010/11  
Easy Read version



# Background information

Barnet has people from many different cultures living in the Borough.

Out of all of the different boroughs in England, Barnet has the 20th most ethnically varied population.

Out of all of the different boroughs in England, Barnet has the 2nd most religiously varied population.

Barnet Council recognises that discrimination and inequalities affect people in many different ways.

Barnet's Equality Scheme will show how we will meet our legal responsibilities in promoting race, disability and gender equality. It will also consider how services can affect people differently depending upon how old they are, what their faith or belief is and their sexuality.

Barnet is a diverse borough:

- We have the largest Jewish and Chinese communities in England
- 50 000 of our residents have a long-term illness, health problem or disability which affects their daily activities
- Around 6 000 people in Barnet are sight impaired
- 7 000 people are hard of hearing



- 80 000 people are younger than 19 and this number is getting bigger
- 134 languages are spoken by our primary school children
- 45 000 people are older than 65
- Barnet's current population is 330,000 and is getting bigger. In 2016 it is expected to be around 360,000 because 16,000 new homes are being built.
- It is expected that the Muslim community will get bigger.

The people who live in some parts of Barnet are much richer than the people who live in other parts of Barnet. The poorer areas have more crime, less education, less people in jobs and poorer health.

## Barnet's values



Barnet knows that people are very complex and have many different things that make them an individual. These must all be considered when we make sure people are being treated equally.

We want to make Barnet a better place for people who live here now and who will live here in the future. To do this we need to work with other organisations to find out what people from all communities want and need. When we do this we can provide excellent services that are good value for money and give people choice.

Barnet has a Corporate Plan 2007/08 – 2010/11 which summarises these values and is connected to our Equalities Scheme.

Barnet's Equality Scheme will look at how our council priorities affect different communities in Barnet. We want to make sure that all parts of Barnet benefit from the positive changes.

Barnet Council has helped to create a society that is joined up and open-minded by giving people quality services that meet their needs.

87% of the people who live in Barnet are happy living here.

## Promoting Race Equality



To promote race equality the council must make sure that:

- Everyone has the same opportunities
- Discrimination is challenged
- Good relationships between people from different racial backgrounds are encouraged.

In 2005/06 Barnet's white residents said they were less happy with the Council than people from black and minority ethnic communities.

During the summer of 2006 over a quarter of white residents felt that the council was doing too much to protect the rights of people from different communities. The Muslim and Hindu communities also felt this.

Work has begun to find out why these communities feel like this. Barnet residents have chosen the following as the most important areas for improvement to promote race equality:

- Crime and Safety
- Housing
- Health
- Asking people what they think about Council policies
- Communication

Black and minority ethnic residents said the following council services that needed to be improved most were:

- Asking people what they think about council policies
- Housing
- Complaints about council services
- Communication
- Contacting and accessing council services

When we looked at the ethnicities of people who worked for the council we found out that 23% of people came from black and minority ethnic communities. 26% of the whole Barnet population come from black and minority ethnic communities.

## Promoting disability equality



To promote disability equality the council must make sure that:

- Everyone has the same opportunities
- People are free from harassment and discrimination
- Positive attitudes are encouraged
- Disabled people are encouraged to lead an active life and are favourably treated if necessary.

The council believes in the social model of disability. It also wants disabled people to have full opportunities and choices to improve their quality of life and be respected and be included as equal members of society by 2025. Disabled people feel the council could do more to protect their rights.

Barnet residents have chosen the following as the most important areas for improvement to disability equality:

- Transport
- Crime and safety issues
- Education for disabled children and young people
- Housing
- Health

The council services that disabled people felt needed to get better are:

- Housing
- Contacting and accessing council services
- Improving access to leisure services
- Asking people what they think about council policies
- Finding out about council services

2% of Barnet Council staff say they have a disability. We think this is much lower than the number of disabled people in Barnet living in Barnet.

In 2007/08 we want to support disabled people to apply for jobs and work experience at the council. We also want to make sure that the people who already work for Barnet and have a disability are well supported to give their best performance at work.

## Promoting gender equality



The council will promote gender equality by:

- Getting rid of sex discrimination and harassment
- Encouraging equality for men and women

The council's work on gender equality will concentrate on making sure women have the same job opportunities and pay as men.

76% of the council's employees are women although only 52% of Barnet's population are women. However, only 42% of the senior, full-time jobs are done by women.

49% of Barnet employees work part-time and of these 92% are women. Many women employees are in low paid, part-time jobs. We are looking into why this is happening and how we can make it better.

We also want to reduce how often women are victims of domestic violence. This affects many areas of their life including their career and mental and physical health.

The Home Office have said that 1 out of every 4 women will be a victim of domestic violence in their lives. Domestic violence makes up 25% of violent crime in Barnet.

The Safer Communities Strategy will concentrate on preventing violence against women.

## Working in partnership

Barnet residents have told us what things need to be improved. We will work with our partners to meet our equalities goals. Our joint priorities will be included in important partnership documents and will help encourage organisation to work together.

There are many ways in which Barnet Council are already working with their partners including:

- Barnet Multifaith Forum have been involved in the redevelopment of the Cricklewood/Brent Cross area
- Barnet Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Network is working with our local LGBT community to increase reporting of hate crime.

- Barnet Domestic Violence Forum has been raising awareness about forced marriages and domestic violence within south Asian communities.

## Action Planning and Monitoring

Barnet Council will look at how well they are doing at delivering equality as a part of their current performance monitoring process.

Barnet Council will also regularly look at how well they are doing at meeting their plans for delivering equality.

The Equality Standard for Local Government will be a measure of how well local government is doing to deliver equality. The council is hoping to reach Level 4 by March 2008.

The areas Barnet residents would most like us to improve will become part of our plans for delivering equality. Data about how well Barnet is doing at delivering equality will be collected using our Diversity Monitoring Form.

We believe that residents will be happier with the council once they start to feel the effects of these changes. We will also be listening to what people say about the services they receive from the council.

To start with, we are collecting information about inequalities we already know about, but in the future we will discover inequalities we did not know about.

Barnet Disability Equality Advisory Group has been set up to make sure that we hear the voices of disabled people. The group will feedback to the

Adult Strategy Group and corporate Equalities and Diversity Group every year.

