

Somerset Equality Objectives 2019 2023 – Updated October 2019

What is this

In Somerset public bodies have decided to work together on equality and diversity. We are doing this through a partnership called Somerset Equality Officers Group (SEOG). This group is made up of County and District Councils, Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group, Taunton Musgrove and Yeovil Hospitals, Somerset Partnership and Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue. Part of the work we have done together over the last year is looking at the documents and policies we have.

We have created a single equality policy and equality impact assessment process. This creates consistency in what we are doing and makes it easier for the public to understand what public bodies are committed to for equality and diversity. This document sets out the Equality Objectives that these public bodies have committed to and the actions they will undertake to complete them.



Where they came from

The objectives were created over a 6-month period. Firstly, SEOG pulled together their collective knowledge to of areas of work and inequality. They also reviewed evidence and data to establish what this was telling them about local need. This was then used to inform a long list of potential objectives for SEOG to consult with the community on. We did this over a three-month period sharing the objectives with over 150 equality and diversity groups, providing an online consultation and going to four community events. Based on this information we selected 5 objectives that we could collectively contribute towards.

How it Works

Each member of SEOG has agreed to adopt 5 collective equality objectives. These we will work together on to achieve a greater impact. These objectives will have joint and individual actions underneath them. SEOG member organisations are also able to adopt their own organisational objectives. We will list these below as well, so all objectives can be looked at together.

How will they be monitored

As these objectives are being completed collectively at a county wide bases we need to consider how they will be carefully monitored. Each action that supports the objectives will have a lead officer connected to it. This officer will be responsible for this actions completion. We will then provide feedback on the objectives in the following ways:

- Year one – A report indicating completion and progress on actions. This can then be shared with partner organisations and interested partners.
- Year two – A consultation event with communities to establish if the objectives are making a difference.
- Year three – A report indicating completion and progress on actions. This can then be shared with partner organisations and interested partners.
- Year four – Consultation and engagement on new objectives.

Objective 1	Work with Communities to improve the opportunities for integration and cohesion.
Organisations committed to this Objective	

	Action	Lead Organisation	Responsible and support officers	Completion Date	Status	Commentary
1.1	Work with the Lesbian, Gay Bisexual and Transgender community about support that is needed and opportunities that are available for better integration opportunities.	SEOG	Tom Rutland and Angela Farmer	2020 – Partnership in existence and way forward agreed	In progress	<p>A group of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender organisations have come together with the aim to work together.</p> <p>Funding is being identified and an organisation have been identified to work with the group.</p>
1.2	Work with the Faith and Belief community about support that is needed and opportunities that are available for better integration opportunities	SEOG	Tom Rutland and Angela Farmer and Lucy Nicholls	December 2021	Not started	This will be restarted in 2021
1.3	Undertake county wide Faith Audit	SEOG	Angela Farmer and Tom Rutland	2021	Not started	Update of current audit

	Action	Lead Organisation	Responsible and support officers	Completion Date	Status	Commentary
1.4	Review how Somerset Authorities marks Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD). Work with partners to create a larger joint response.	SEOG	Tom Rutland	2020	Not started	DSFRS can contribute to any events with attendance if necessary/appropriate
1.5	Work with Hate Crime support organisations, Hate Crime Champions and Community Groups to create a hate crime event in Somerset	Somerset County Council	Tom Rutland	October 2020	Not started	Connect to Somerset Community Cohesion and Hate Crime Action Plan. Connect to Hate Crime Awareness Month.
1.6	Support the BME Community around creating a Multicultural Forum in Somerset.	SEOG	Tom Rutland, Angela Farmer and Lucy Nicholls	Ongoing	Completed	Somerset Multi-Cultural Association has been created with representatives from BME groups in Somerset. Further work will need to be completed on Public Bodies relationship with the Forum (see action 1.38).
1.7	A publicly available list of equality community and VCS groups in Somerset.	SEOG	David Crisfield	April 2019 – Then reviewed Annually	In progress	The list has been updated. An online database will be created to make sure information can be shared and updated with partners.
1.9	Work with ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) providers in Somerset to create a single website to identify all ESOL provision in Somerset	SEOG	Angela Farmer and Tom Rutland	September 2020	In progress	A directory has been created. We are currently in the process of testing and uploading content.

	Action	Lead Organisation	Responsible and support officers	Completion Date	Status	Commentary
1.10	Work with Syrian refugee families to support their integration in the communities of Somerset	Somerset County Council	Brittney Strange	Ongoing	Ongoing	Some support has been provided through the Somerset Diverse Community Grants
1.11	After retendering translation and interpretation contract promote their use internally.	Somerset County Council	Tom Rutland	October 2019	Completed	Yeovil and District Hospital are looking at the potential of joint procurement with Musgrove Park Hospital.
1.12	Review how Somerset County Council engage with equality communities and work with Partners on more efficient engagement mechanisms	Somerset County Council	Tom Rutland	December 2019	In progress	These have been reviewed in relation to Lesbian, Bi-sexual and transgender, Race and Gypsy and Traveller communities. There is further work to be completed
1.13	Issue regular newsletters to communities across Somerset, identifying: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in the delivery of the objectives • Events going on • Consultation and engagement opportunities at local and county level 	Sedgemoor District Council	Angela Farmer All	April 2020 – annual review to ensure remains fit for purpose	Ongoing	
1.14	Determine how websites can be used to hold better information and support for communities, delivering a common approach that can be replicated	Sedgemoor District Council	All	April 2020	Not started	

	Action	Lead Organisation	Responsible and support officers	Completion Date	Status	Commentary
1.15	Seek agreement to long term funding for English Classes at the Skills Café	Sedgemoor District Council	Angela Farmer	September 2019	In progress	Provisional agreement to a three year plan.
1.16	Hold 5 Sedgemoor Conversation events to June 2020	Sedgemoor District Council	Angela Farmer	July 2020	In progress	June meeting covered Social Prescribing. Another meeting planned for October 2019.
1.17	Determine involvement of Spark in future work for the Council	Sedgemoor District Council	Angela Farmer	July 2020	Not started	
1.18	Hold 2 Sedgemoor Older Persons' forum each year	Sedgemoor District Council	Angela Farmer	April 2023, although annual review to ensure numbers are adequate to continue	In progress	Forum held in July looking at community initiatives including the Village Agents and Red Cross.
1.19	Hold an event and a forum with the Disabled community in Sedgemoor during 2018	Sedgemoor District Council	Angela Farmer	December 2019	In progress	Event held in May, Forum planned for 31 st October.
1.20	Determine basis for engaging with the Disabled community in Sedgemoor long term	Sedgemoor District Council	Angela Farmer	December 2019	Not started	
1.21	Determine a local approach to Carer's group to understand their issues and concerns	Sedgemoor District Council	Angela Farmer	December 2019, review progress to determine continuation	Not started	Determine how any Council related issues and concerns can be resolved. To connect to Somerset Partnership.

	Action	Lead Organisation	Responsible and support officers	Completion Date	Status	Commentary
1.22	Hold 4 quarterly meetings with Elected Member each year	Sedgemoor District Council	Angela Farmer	April 2023	In progress	Elected Members identified to sit on Equality Working Group. First meeting to be organised for October with work plan for following 3 meetings to be agreed.
1.23	Work with Customer Services Managers to develop and deliver a Customer Panel to support the Council's transformation work on customer access	Sedgemoor District Council	Angela Farmer	April 2020, review progress	In progress	Customer Panel membership increasing due to increased publicity campaign
1.24	Assess future role and composition of the moribund South Somerset Equality Forum and bring forward action plan as appropriate.	South Somerset District Council	Richard Birch - Lead Specialist Dave Crisfield – Specialist	December 2019	Not started	
1.25	Design and deliver new Equalities module as part of SSDC staff Induction training, and more detailed ongoing Equalities Training for both staff and elected members.	South Somerset District Council	Dave Crisfield - Specialist HR Specialist	December 2019	In progress	An equalities elearning module will be part of the council's new Learning Management System (LMS). The LMS platform is currently in a testing phase.

	Action	Lead Organisation	Responsible and support officers	Completion Date	Status	Commentary
1.26	Enhance community integration and cohesion through improved delivery of the Public Sector Equality Duty by delivering a process that will achieve greater compliance with the requirement to undertake Equality Impact Assessments.	South Somerset District Council	Dave Crisfield - Specialist Case Officer	February 2019	Completed	New countywide EIA process has been implemented with the addition of a pre EIA Impact Relevance Check Form. Supported with improved information on staff and members portals, publicity and briefings to Leadership Management Team and as part of new members training.
1.27	Around the World at YDH – diversity celebration event at Yeovil Hospital 25-26 March 2019. Invitation will be extended to external partners following previous discussions, e.g. Council	Yeovil District Hospital	Elaine Cox	March 2019	Completed	2020 event to be confirmed
1.28	YDH holding internal Domestic Abuse Awareness training day for its staff in April 2019	Yeovil District Hospital	Elaine Cox	April 2019	Completed	31 attended: 15 internal and 16 external No plans as yet for 2020

	Action	Lead Organisation	Responsible and support officers	Completion Date	Status	Commentary
1.29	Support specific communities to plan for, respond and recover from emergencies.	Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service	Audrey Gilding-deKort	Ongoing	In progress	Delivery of a community conference in each county, 20 community emergency plans complete, funding released to the community to support emergency plans. Work with Devon Community Resilience Board (DCRB) Work with Community Resilience in Somerset Project (CRISP). Provide Fire Safety Talks to all sorts of groups in the community.
1.30	Actively seek partnerships that reach our targeted vulnerable groups	Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service	Audrey Gilding-deKort	Ongoing	In progress	Partnership register active. Link established with Diverse Communities Team from police to coordinate engagement with communities. Engagement Steering Group established to ensure Engagement Framework is established to reach community groups effectively. We work closely with diverse organisations to provide Home Safety Visits to their clients and for events

	Action	Lead Organisation	Responsible and support officers	Completion Date	Status	Commentary
1.31	Continue to support local groups hosting community events that are inclusive, such as 'Wacky Wednesday' in Wellington and 'Pride in Priorswood' in Taunton.	Somerset West and Taunton	Community Engagement Leads	Ongoing		
1.32	Continue to promote and mark special days such as Mental health awareness week, Pride week, Holocaust Memorial Day, Armed Forces Day that support groups and individuals who share protected characteristics	Somerset West and Taunton	Communication and Engagement Specialist	Ongoing		
1.33	Hold at least 2 meetings per year of the Taunton Deane Disability Discussion Group	Somerset West and Taunton	Community Engagement Leads	Ongoing from Oct 2019		
1.34	Appoint an officer and a councillor as ambassadors for disabled people	Somerset West and Taunton	Governance Manager and Monitoring Officer	To be confirmed		
1.35	Develop a cross-party Youth Council to speak out on behalf of young people	Somerset West and Taunton	Governance Manager and Monitoring Officer	To be confirmed		

	Action	Lead Organisation	Responsible and support officers	Completion Date	Status	Commentary
1.36	YDH to publish WRES Report (Race Equality Standard) Sept 2019 including actions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seek Minorities Network reps on interview panels • create “reverse mentoring” to improve board presentation of workforce • Ensure interview panels for Board members are diverse • Arrange an Equality Open Day for staff to raise awareness; to include guest external speakers 	Yeovil District Hospital	Elaine Cox	Sept 2019	Ongoing	
1.37	Develop multilingual fire safety leaflets.	Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service	Audrey Gilding-deKort	March 2020	In progress	
1.38	Develop a good working relationship with the Somerset Multicultural Association	SEOG	Tom Rutland and Angela Farmer	September 2020	In progress	

<p>Objective 2</p>	<p>Improve public understanding of mental health</p>
<p>Organisations committed to this Objective</p>	

	Action	Organisational Lead	Responsible and support officers	Completion Date	Status	Commentary
2.1	Work with youth groups to improve knowledge of and destigmatise eating disorders	Somerset CCG	Lee Reed	December 2020		
2.2	Agreement on the definition of a Mate Crime (Mate crimes happen when vulnerable people are befriended by someone who uses the relationship to exploit or abuse them) across Somerset	Somerset County Council	Tom Rutland	September 2020	In progress	Connected to the Somerset Hate Crime and Community Cohesion Group
2.3	Work with Mental Health charities in Somerset to identify training materials and opportunities for staff.	Somerset County Council	Tom Rutland	December 2020	Not started	
2.4	Deliver training to core partners (Police, Social Care, Housing Associations, Hospital Staff) on mental health conditions	Somerset County Council	Tom Rutland	April 2023	Not started	

	Action	Organisational Lead	Responsible and support officers	Completion Date	Status	Commentary
2.5	Create a mechanism to reach agreement on what Public bodies publish about Mental health	Somerset County Council	Tom Rutland	April 2021	Not started	
2.6	Use of social media to spread information about mental health conditions	Somerset County Council	Lucy Nicholls and Tom Rutland	April 2023	Not started	Prioritising TimeToTalk Day in February
2.7	Training opportunities for staff to improve understanding around mental health	Somerset County Council	Michelle Anderson	April 2023	Ongoing	Mental Health First Aid training ongoing for staff at YDH Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue provide Mind Blue Light and Mental Health First Aid training provided. Suicide prevention course and Suicide Awareness training made available.
2.8	Develop a 3-year training programme using the Sedgemoor Bitesize initiative on Disability Awareness which will include sessions on Mental Health awareness and threat of suicide	Sedgemoor District Council	Angela Farmer	April 2020	In progress	Year one has been delivered and year 2 being planned to include sessions on disability awareness, mental health and threat of suicide
2.9	Develop the internal Intranet site to allow staff access to information on disability and mental health conditions, including links to local support and community groups,	Sedgemoor District Council	Angela Farmer	April 2020	In progress	This links to the action above

	Action	Organisational Lead	Responsible and support officers	Completion Date	Status	Commentary
2.10	Update the Council's action plan around Disability Confident Employer, producing an update report for Assistant Directors	Sedgemoor District Council	Angela Farmer People Team	April 2020	Not started	
2.11	To refresh and update the Supporting Attendance Policy for Sedgemoor including extending the support available to include mental health support through Working Minds	Sedgemoor District Council	People Team		Completed	Revised policy has been agreed and signed off. Recognises the increased support for mental health through Working Minds.
2.12	Contribute to the delivery of improved mental health services in Somerset by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the local South Somerset Health and Wellbeing forums and the development of local projects. • Strategic influence through the South Somerset Strategy Group 	South Somerset District Council	Dave Crisfield - Specialist Ian Potter – Lead Specialist (Vulnerable People)	Ongoing	In progress	Work of the Health and Wellbeing structures in South Somerset made significant contribution to the awarding of new funding to support mental health services for young people in Yeovil.
2.13	Achieve Disability Confident Level 2	Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue	Audrey Gilding-deKort	Dec 2019	In progress	Currently Disability Confident Level 1 achieved, working to level 2
2.14	Create promotion activity and community support around a mental health day at Mendip District Council Shepton Mallet offices.	Mendip District Council	Nataliya Wills	September 2019	Completed	

	Action	Organisational Lead	Responsible and support officers	Completion Date	Status	Commentary
2.15	Promote Purple Tuesday to Businesses in Mendip. Help to promote those that are taking part to the disabled community.	Mendip District Council	Tom Rutland and Jenny Pitcher	November 2020	Not Started	
2.16	Work with Businesses in Mendip to provide Mental Health first aiders	Mendip District Council	Tom Rutland and Jenny Pitcher	November 2020	Not Started	
2.17	Create a network of Mental Health Ambassadors in Somerset	Somerset County Council	Michelle Anderson	April 2023	Not Started	
2.18	Signpost sources of mental health support on our website and within our Tenant's Newsletters.	Somerset West and Taunton	Communication and Engagement Specialist	Ongoing from 2019/20		
2.19	Use Social Media and SWT staff/Member newsletters to promote Mental Health Awareness Week in May and Time To Talk in February	Somerset West and Taunton	Communication and Engagement Specialist	Ongoing from Feb 2020		
2.20	Deliver mental health awareness training to our front line staff	Somerset West and Taunton	Strategy specialist	December 2021	Not Started	
2.21	SWT to undertake Council domestic-violence self-assessment and implement an action plan.	Somerset West and Taunton	Strategy specialist	December 2021	Not Started	

	Action	Organisational Lead	Responsible and support officers	Completion Date	Status	Commentary
2.22	<p>YDH to publish WDES (disability equality) Sept-19, to include actions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • update terminology, replacing 'disabled' with 'differently enabled' following discussion with Compass; • review reasons for individuals entering a capability process; • consider addition of characteristic fields in incident system; • provide additional Conflict Resolution training for staff; also guidance for managers re 'reasonable adjustments'; • consider how Trust Board could be more representative 	Yeovil District Hospital	Elaine Cox	Sept 2019	Ongoing	

Objective 3	Work with the Gypsy and Traveller community to improve relationships and the provision of pitches
Organisations committed to this Objective	

	Action	Organisational Lead	Responsible and support officers	Completion Date	Status	Commentary
3.1	Work across Somerset to identify pitch/plot provision for Gypsies and Travellers (including temporary and transit pitch provision)	SEOG	Angela Farmer and Tom Rutland	December 2020	In progress	Work has taken place to identify some land that could be used for Gypsy and Traveller provision.
3.2	Work with support services to create a companion document for the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) focusing on services	SEOG	Tom Rutland and Angela Farmer	June 2019	Completed	Whilst the document has been created it will need to be updated once the GTAA is completed in Spring 2020
3.3	With the Community create an informed Illegal encampments process for Somerset	SEOG	Angela Farmer and Tom Rutland	December 2019	Completed	A process has been created in Sedgemoor that could be used across other authorities.
3.4	Work with the Community to create briefing sheets for staff around understanding of the community in relation to service delivery	SEOG	Angela Farmer and Tom Rutland	June 2021	Not started	

	Action	Organisational Lead	Responsible and support officers	Completion Date	Status	Commentary
3.5	Work to find suitable funding to create Gypsy Liaison Officer role for Somerset	SEOG	Tom Rutland and Angela Farmer		Completed	Funding has been agreed till October 2021. Further funding will need to be identified after this point.
3.6	Work with the community to create a functioning Gypsy and Traveller Forum	SEOG	Angela Farmer and Tom Rutland		In progress	This will be taken forward by the Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Roles.
3.7	Determine which land parcels Sedgemoor will take forward based on SCC land identification work	Sedgemoor District Council	Angela Farmer	April 2019	Completed	County Council land parcels identified and fully examined. No plots found to be suitable.
3.8	Seek agreement from Senior Leadership team about the plots to take forward including the actions that will be needed to deliver the sites and budgetary requirements	Sedgemoor District Council	Angela Farmer	April 2019	Completed	Senior Leadership Team agreed with outcome identified above. They agreed to work with partners to look at more joined up approach.
3.9	Seek agreement from the Executive to the approach agreed	Sedgemoor District Council	Angela Farmer	December 2019	Cancelled	No longer being taken forward as part of another action.
3.10	Support Planning Policy team in the delivery of Development Plan Document for Gypsy and Traveller sites in Sedgemoor	Sedgemoor District Council	Angela Farmer Planning Policy Team	April 2021	Not started	
3.11	Provide training for the Planning Board on Gypsy and Traveller issues in relation to planning. Using this opportunity to remind them of their responsibilities in this area.	Mendip District Council	Tom Rutland	November 2019	Completed	This needs to be repeated for the new members of Planning Board

	Action	Organisational Lead	Responsible and support officers	Completion Date	Status	Commentary
3.12	Include a positive policy within the emerging SWT Local Plan to support pitches in appropriate locations (criteria based) informed by the GTAA	Somerset West and Taunton	Strategy Specialist	To be Confirmed		
3.13	Explore options at Otterford B site	Somerset West and Taunton	Strategy Specialist	December 2020		
3.14	Review the Gypsy, Traveller Accommodation Assessment for Somerset	Somerset West and Taunton		December 2020		

Objective 4	Create an Equality Working group for staff in the Public Sector in Somerset
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	Action	Organisational Lead	Responsible and support officers	Completion Date	Status	Commentary
4.1	Create a pilot staff equality working group in South Somerset made up of multiple public bodies	Somerset County Council	Michelle Anderson	December 2019	Cancelled	How this is being delivered is changing. A new action will be included.
4.2	Work with HR to reassess the role of the Staff Forum in Sedgemoor. Report to Assistant Directors to discuss the proposed changes and agree a way forward	Sedgemoor District Council	Angela Farmer People team	October 2019	Completed	Review was undertaken and agreed by Assistant Directors.
4.3	Somerset West and Taunton to promote to staff, the pilot staff equality working group made up of multiple public bodies that SCC aim to create.	Somerset West and Taunton	HR Specialist	Once group created		

Objective 5	Implement and review the Accessibility Information Standard to create consistency around its implementation.
Organisations committed to this Objective	

	Action	Organisational Lead	Responsible and support officers	Completion Date	Status	Commentary
5.1	Create a Sensory Loss Charter for Somerset, recognising the Accessibility Information Standard	SEOG	Tom Rutland and Angela Farmer	April 2021	Not started	
5.2	Sensory Loss Action Plan	SEOG	Tom Rutland and Angela Farmer	April 2021	Not started	
5.3	Deliver the work necessary to meet the accessibility requirements within Bridgwater House	Sedgemoor District Council	Angela Farmer and Sedgemoor Property Team	April 2020	In progress	Senior Leadership Team have agreed to pursue work to automate identified doors to improve accessibility around Bridgwater House.
5.4	Undertake a review of the Council's website in light of EU accessibility requirements for websites	Sedgemoor District Council	Angela Farmer and Web Manager	April 2020	Not started	

	Action	Organisational Lead	Responsible and support officers	Completion Date	Status	Commentary
5.5	Work to deliver an agreed approach to translation and interpretation in Sedgemoor	Sedgemoor District Council	Angela Farmer	April 2020	In progress	Have worked as part of the County Council Translation and Interpretation tender and agreed to be part of the contract moving forward. Work to do to compliment the contract within Sedgemoor.
5.6	Work to improve information to staff around accessibility requirements, how to respond and what provider the Council has agreed to use	Sedgemoor District Council	Angela Farmer	April 2020	Not started	
5.7	Deliver an accessible new SSDC website as part of the Transformation Programme	South Somerset District Council	Jess Power Dave Crisfield	January 2019	Completed	New WCAG 2.0 Level AA compliant website launched. BSL videos now largely out of date.
5.8	Monitor new website in its first 12 months of operation to address any initial accessibility teething problems.	South Somerset District Council	Dave Crisfield	December 2019	Not started	
5.9	Produce an accessibility standard for Mendip District Council	Mendip District Council	Tom Rutland	December 2019	Not started	
5.10	Complete an access audit on all Mendip Council buildings	Mendip District Council	Tom Rutland	December 2020	Not started	

	Action	Organisational Lead	Responsible and support officers	Completion Date	Status	Commentary
5.11	Identify work to be completed to make Mendip buildings More accessible for staff and the public.	Mendip District Council	Tom Rutland	December 2020	Not started	