

EQUALITY INFORMATION 2016

BACKGROUND

Hartlepool is compact and densely populated. The 2014 mid-year population estimate from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) estimated the population of Hartlepool to be 92,590.

Tees Valley Unlimited has compiled a number of Demographic Reports based on ONS 2011 Census results for the Local Authorities of the Tees Valley. These reports, including data for Hartlepool, are available on the [Tees Valley Unlimited website](#).

A detailed breakdown of nationalities from the Electoral Register is also available from the list of Demographic Reports on the [Tees Valley Unlimited website](#). In December 2014 there were 40 different nationalities (including UK) in Hartlepool based on information provided through the Electoral Register. However, this only equated to 0.9% of non-UK electors.

The ONS 2011 Census results for Hartlepool identified that:

- 2.4% of the population classified themselves as non-white;
- 0.7% of the population identified that no people in their household had English as their first language;
- 0.2% of the population identified that they were in a Civil Partnership;
- 18.2% of working age adults identified that they had a Limiting Long Term Illness;
- 23.2% of the population identified that they had a Limiting Long Term Illness.

HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL

Hartlepool Borough Council became a unitary authority in 1996. It is the smallest of the five unitary authorities in the Tees Valley sub-region and it is the second smallest unitary council in England.

The Council has 33 elected members representing 11 wards. The authority comprises of 4 Departments – Chief Executives, Child & Adult Services, Regeneration & Neighbourhood Services and Public Health.

The 2015 workforce profile information reflects the employees in post at 1 April 2015.

RECOGNISING EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN HARTLEPOOL

Our approach to equality and diversity is to focus on people who access our services by looking at their whole identity and recognising and valuing that each individual resident, visitor, partner, service provider, service user and employee is unique. The Council is committed to promoting a community and organisational culture that fully respects and values everyone's differences and needs.

The Equality & Diversity Group have representatives from each department who continue to work to provide the support and leadership required to deliver success against our equality objectives.

ACCESS TO SERVICES

1. Access to Council services and support
2. Access to Council Information
3. Access to Council transport
4. Access to Council buildings, land, sites and other facilities

1. Access to Council services and support

We aim to promote accessible services and to provide information in alternative languages or formats on request. We are able to provide translation services to assist in the access of our services when requested and information can also be provided in braille or on audio tape.

Customer Services

The Customer Services Section, incorporating the Registration Service, has introduced a programme of training and development aimed at removing communication barriers. The programme is centred on the needs of residents with initial focus on meeting the aims of the Hartlepool Deaf and Hard of Hearing Strategy. The strategy recognises that there are over 14,000 Hartlepool residents with hearing difficulties. The Customer Services team are learning valuable new skills that will empower them to communicate more effectively with our hard of hearing residents and in turn provide effective access to services. Eight members of the team are accredited with British Sign Language Level 1.

The main reception area has been awarded the gold standard for Breastfeeding Awareness due to its welcoming and inclusive approach.

Modifications are being made to the main reception area which will include a IT suite for members of the public to access Council services on-line. Help will be on hand from the Customer Services team to assist customers develop their on-line skills as part of the Council's wider approach to tackling social exclusion.

As a Council, we are committed to challenging discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity in all aspects of our work. Our policies outline our commitment as an employer, as a service provider, and as a community leader, with elected members undertaking Equality & Diversity training.

2. Access to Council Information

We aim to provide information in alternative languages or formats on request. We are able to provide translation services to assist in the access of our services when requested and information can also be provided in braille or on audio tape.

Website

Our recently re-launched [website](#) provides greater accessibility to Council services. Text size and colour can be altered to suit individual preferences.

The number of web pages has been reduced to help people find the information they need quickly and easily and the site navigation and structure are consistent to make it easy for people to find their way around.

There are a number of other ways the new website is more accessible:

- You can change the text size, font and letter spacing.
- You can choose your colour preferences.
- If you have difficulties using a mouse you can navigate the site using the keyboard using the tab key to jump from link to link (or shift + tab to go backwards).
- The new site also includes a link to the BBC accessibility website for help with making adjustments to your computer to make the most of the web.

First Contact and Support Hub

The First Contact and Support Hub (FCSH) provides information, advice and guidance on services and support for children, young people and families including:

- Advice on family issues and concerns
- Access to specialist services and support
- Family finance and budgeting
- Benefit and entitlement checks
- Training and employment advice
- Becoming a childminder / childcare provider

- Help with finding and paying for childcare
- 2, 3, 4 year old Free Nursery Entitlement
- Sure Start Children's Centres
- Activities for children and young people

The Hub includes information on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) 'Local Offer'. The intention of Hartlepool's Local Offer is improved choice and transparency to enable families to make informed choices and have greater control over services they wish to access. By setting out a local offer of services for children and young people with special educational needs or who are disabled and their families, this will help them make choices about what is right for them over the services that their family receives, including the use of personal budgets. The Local Offer gives information to parents of children with Special Educational Needs and disabilities between the ages of 0 – 25 years, in a single place. The local offer has been split into seven Key Stages and also links to the SEND Homepage which provides additional information around the coordinated assessment process, personal budgets, information & guidance and comments, complaints and compliments procedures.

The Hub Directory and SEND Local Officer can be found at <http://hartlepool.fsd.org.uk/kb5/hartlepool/fsd/home.page>

Hartlepool Now

www.hartlepoolnow.co.uk is the comprehensive advice and information service developed in response to the Care Act 2014. The site provides the public with details of services available in their local area, explains adult social care processes and gives information on how to raise safeguarding concerns.

3. Access to Council Transport

The Council provides a range of transport services including training and support to aid independent travel.

The Council has worked to ensure dropped kerbs and low floor bus kerb infrastructure are in place across the town to assist people using wheelchairs.

In addition, tactile floor surfaces have been provided in order to provide warning and guidance for visually impaired people where there is no kerb.

The Council operate the national concessionary bus passes scheme which is available to individuals who have reached pensionable age, or those who are Registered Blind or Disabled. This entitles those that qualify to free off-peak travel on all local buses anywhere in England. All passes are issued for four years,

expiring on the applicant's birthday, with the exception of temporary disabled passes.

4. Access to Council buildings, land, sites and other facilities

Every effort is made to install appropriate facilities in our premises, to ensure that Council buildings and facilities, including parks and open spaces, are accessible to all in line with Building Regulations and specific requirements regarding access.

This includes where possible:

- the provision of ramps;
- suitable width corridors;
- disabled toilet facilities; and
- in some buildings the provision of a lift.

We recognise that access for people with a disability is not just about wheelchairs, it covers a wide range of disabilities such as:

- sight
- hearing
- walking impairments

DECISION MAKING (Impact Assessments)

When reviewing or implementing a change in service, officers are required, as part of the decision making process, to consciously think about the 3 aims of the Equality Duty. To help this, an impact assessment is carried out and evidence documented that demonstrates compliance with the Duty. All proposals for service changes are included within the Council's Forward Plan prior to decisions being taken. During 2015 officers have worked to improve the information provided in the forward plan in relation to equality and diversity.

COMPLAINTS

We take all complaints seriously – they are responded to following the Council's agreed Corporate Complaints, Comments and Compliments Procedure. The outcome of complaint investigations and lessons learned from complaints are actioned and monitored. Any complaints relating to equality characteristics are reviewed by the Equality & Diversity Group.

CONSULTATION

We use a variety of consultation methods to understand the views of our local community. This includes surveys that are interviewer-led, online, postal and telephone as well as discussion or focus groups. The Council has established an online panel where individuals can register their email address and receive notifications of consultations that the Council is undertaking.

The people we consult vary from the general population of Hartlepool to different age groups, residents of particular areas, service users, interest groups, Council staff and partner organisations.

The information collected helps to inform the Council when it is thinking about things like changing services, checking on how well services are performing and deciding what should be the Council's priorities in the future.

People can access consultations through the Council's [website](#).

PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS THAT BENEFIT PEOPLE WITHIN PROTECTED GROUPS

Adult Social Care (age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation).

The delivery of adult social care reflects the requirements of the Care Act 2014 and places an increasing emphasis on person-centred support and the right of individuals to organise and have control over their own support needs. The department uses the self-directed assessment process to work out how much money an individual who qualifies for adult social care is entitled to. The person is then offered a personal budget.

A personal budget is for the sole purpose of paying for care and support that a person arranges to meet their individual need within a criteria pre-defined by the Care Act 2014. Working with a social worker, an individual develops a support plan which focuses on how the individual wants to live their life and what outcomes they want to achieve. This system of self directed support gives people the freedom to approach a range of different providers - including family and friends - to arrange support that most suits them.

Personal budgets are an excellent way of enabling people from the BME and diverse communities to purchase the support that they know will contribute effectively to the outcomes that will improve their quality of life. Results from the Annual Social Care Survey and bi-annual Carers Survey have continued to reflect people's satisfaction with the services received by Adult Social Care.

Looked After Children/Children In Need (Age, Disability, Race, Religion Or Belief, Gender, Sexual Orientation)

The number of children receiving services from children's services has increased and is attributable to, for example:

- The increased awareness of vulnerable children
- The pressures on families associated with the economic downturn
- Welfare reforms with associated increases in child poverty, and
- More families receiving preventative services

The department has developed a vision that is to support children and their families who are at risk of becoming looked after. The department believes that care should only be provided for those for whom it has been assessed as the best option and all available resources within the family and social network have been explored.

If however, a child or young person becomes 'looked after' this is regarded as a positive choice which is intended to meet the child's assessed needs. Any placements for a child looked after will, where possible and in the child's best interests, enable the child to remain close to home, have continuity of education and health care provision, enable siblings to live together and ensure suitability of accommodation if the child or young person is disabled.

To ensure a range of options are available to meet children's needs, the Local Authority has:

- Increased foster care provision and designed and delivered an annual foster carers training programme.
- Developed and implemented plans to open a children's home in Hartlepool to ensure that children needing residential care can be cared for within their home town.
- Changed provision at Exmoor Grove Children's home to offer permanent and short break care to children with a learning disability and associated challenging behaviours.

The department delivers a wide range of universal, targeted and specialist services to support children to be safely looked after within their families and receive the right services at the right time. The provision of tailored support packages for children are based on a thorough assessment of the needs of the child, the capacity of his/her parent to meet those needs and the family and environmental factors that impact upon the family.

Following the Health and Social Care Act (2001) direct payments have been introduced for children with disabilities. Direct payments have allowed parents and carers to make their own decisions as to how and where care for their child is delivered.

Help for people with Mobility Difficulties (Age, Disability)

We offer assistance to residents who are unable to get their bins to the kerbside on collection day. We collect it from a mutually agreed location, empty it, and then return it to the same location where possible.

Any resident who meets one (or more) of the following criteria automatically qualifies for an assisted collection, providing they live alone or there is no other person living at the property who is able to present the bins on their behalf:

- Be in receipt of a blue badge
- Be in receipt of a Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- Be in receipt of a War Pensioners Mobility Supplement
- Be over 80 years of age
- Have been certified as having a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability, or very considerable difficulty, in walking and have received a lump sum benefit from the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces Compensation Scheme within tariffs 1-8
- Be registered blind
- Be in receipt of palliative care
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If someone does not qualify they may still be eligible as we deal with each application sympathetically on a case-by-case basis.

Apprenticeships (Age)

In addition to the Councils Apprenticeship programme, which offers apprenticeships across a wide range of skills and trades, the Council extended the programme to offer additional apprenticeship opportunities restricted to young people leaving care.

This has resulted in a number of young care leavers taking up Apprenticeships in roles such as Business Administration, Joinery, Painting and Decorating and Customer Service. Offering opportunities specifically for care leavers is a very positive step forward in respect of the Council fulfilling their corporate parent responsibilities.

Tees-wide Safe Places Scheme (Disability)

Hartlepool Council and the Tees Valley Authorities are committed to encouraging access to facilities in their communities via all transport options, with particular attention being paid to vulnerable members of society.



Tees-wide Safe Places is a scheme operating across the Tees Valley providing a safe place to anyone feeling unsafe or who may have experienced an incident during their journey. Where the symbol above is displayed, they will be able to receive support and help.

Tees-wide Safe Places provides:

- Somewhere safe and friendly
- Staff to understand and give reassurance
- Staff to listen and provide help and advice
- Opportunity to make a phone call
- Information e.g. bus timetables, bus numbers, directions or any information required by the individual

For further information on the Safe Places in Hartlepool or around the Tees Valley contact Passenger Transport Services on 01429 523695 or you can access via the [Police and Crime Commissioners website](#).

Sports Development (age, gender, disability)

Sport and Recreation Service – ‘Get Active, Stay Active, Feel Good in Hartlepool’

The Service includes Mill House Leisure Centre, Headland Sports Hall and Borough Hall, Brierton Sports Centre, Summerhill Outdoor Activity Centre and Country Park, Carlton Outdoor Education Centre, Grayfields Recreation Ground, the Sport and Physical Activity Team, Outdoor Activity Team, Learn to Swim Service, Outreach work at Summerhill and the Exercise on Referral service.

The Service already holds inclusive accreditations including Sport England and the English Federation of Disability Sport’s ‘Count Me In’; Inclusive Fitness Initiative site accreditation for our leisure centres as well as Quest Quality assurance across all the main leisure sites, Gold Breastfeeding Awards, Green Flag at Summerhill and Learning Outside the Classroom at both Carlton and for the Outdoor Activities Team.

The service is fully inclusive and continues to work with all service users and to also promote the service to new users who are often non participants in sport, recreation and physical activity. We have an excellent track record of attracting

external partnership funding for new participation opportunities which would not be forthcoming if we did not provide inclusive services.

We consult widely and there are many opportunities within the service for individuals and groups to get involved and to voice their views regarding the offer the service has. The Service also coordinates the Disability Sport Steering Group and works with all key partners within this sector to ensure information is communicated and service users needs are met.

Public Health - Commissioning and Procurement Activity (Age, Disability, Race, Religion or Belief, Gender, Sexual Orientation)

All Service Reviews consider the impact to protected groups when introducing changes to Public Health service delivery whether that be provision of new services or decommissioning existing ones. Procurement and commissioning activities also require consideration of equality and diversity impact statements as a matter of routine.

Public Health – Health Improvement (age, gender, disability, race)

The very essence of health improvement work is to ensure that services are available to all, whilst being aware of the health inequalities in Hartlepool where targeted work for specific groups, geographical areas and settings is necessary.

- All service specifications are written to ensure that potential providers deliver an equitable service.
- A very wide range of health promotion resources and information links are available on topics covering all life stages from pre-conception to end of life. This includes information on mental health, learning disabilities and sexual orientation. Some resources are available in other languages.

Public Protection – Trading Standards (Age, Disability)

The Trading Standards Service is committed to protecting elderly and vulnerable residents from the unscrupulous actions of rogue traders and those that cause annoyance and distress through constant unsolicited 'prize winning' letters and nuisance phone calls .

Trading Standards officers have begun working with community groups to empower residents to say 'no' to doorstep callers; bank staff so that they can recognise vulnerable customers who are withdrawing large amounts of cash and who may be being conned; other enforcement agencies so that perpetrators can

be swiftly brought to justice; and social workers so that victims can receive the appropriate care and support they need.

Similarly, electronic call blocking devices are being made available to those who are suffering most from nuisance phone calls and Trading Standards officers are working with the 'National Scams Hub' to identify and protect those who have been targeted by postal scammers.

Substance Misuse (Age, Disability, Race, Religion or Belief, Gender, Sexual Orientation)

Our substance misuse service offers fair and equitable support to families affected by substance misuse. We offer a range of recovery based treatment options to people suffering from substance misuse issues and also provide support to families, significant others and carers affected by drug and alcohol problems.

Cultural Services (age, gender, disability)

Outreach staff from the museum service have delivered a range of training programmes and activities to increase attendance at the museum.

The libraries deliver the BBC 'First Click' Campaign for older people and offer a number of opportunities for people to take part in reading groups.

The culture and information section with youth services have been working on a number of projects to involve young people in cultural activities. We have successfully operated the Young Cultural ambassadors Scheme which connects the young people of the town to our cultural venues.

The Town Hall Theatre has Relax theatre and cinema events for families with autistic children.

The Town Hall Theatre is registered with 'Attitude is Everything' which advises on best practice for venues and festivals to improve deaf people's access to live music.

Community Cohesion and Ward Profiles (Age, Disability, Race, Religion or Belief, Gender, Sexual Orientation)

A Community Engagement and Cohesion Strategy developed in 2015 brings together the Community Cohesion Strategic Framework and the Neighbourhood Management and Empowerment Strategy. Ward Profiles are refreshed every two as part of the strategy. This provides a more structured and co-ordinated approach

to tackling community cohesion and basic quality of life issues in our poorest neighbourhoods. The aim is that through increased access to services in disadvantaged and vulnerable neighbourhoods the new strategy and revised delivery model will strengthen the Council's approach to addressing equality and diversity issues across the neighbourhoods of Hartlepool.

Community Safety & Engagement – Hate Crime (Age, Disability, Race, Religion or Belief, Gender, Sexual Orientation)

In the past year the Community Safety and Engagement Team have supported a range of Voluntary and Community Groups who work with individuals from the protected characteristic groups. This includes the Refugee & Asylum Seeker Group, the Salaam Centre and Hart Gables. The Team also:

- Participated in a detailed Hate Crime Scrutiny investigation, the final report from which is available at <http://www.cfps.org.uk/library?filter=hate+crime> ; and
- Supported the annual Diversity event which was very well attended and focussed on domestic violence and hate crime with people being urged to report incidents.

Details were provided on where incidents could be reporting including the ten 3rd Party Reporting Centres that are available within Hartlepool. These centres enable people to report a hate crime or incident to an agency other than the police as we know some people can feel unhappy about having to approach the police in these circumstances. The 3rd Party Reporting Centres in Hartlepool are:

- Hartlepool Borough Council (Civic Centre or 24 hour through the Community Monitoring Centre)
- Blind Welfare Association
- Central Library
- Centre for Independent Living
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Hart Gables
- Owton Manor Library
- Salaam Centre
- Seaton Library
- West View Advice & Resource Centre

This document will continue to be updated and published annually by 31st January.

Our equality policy is also published on our website and is available [here](#).

January 2016