

# **Swale Borough Council**

## **Corporate Equality Scheme 2016 – 2020**

July 2016

**Contents**

Foreword..... 3  
Introduction..... 5  
The scheme..... 6  
Council services..... 6  
Profile of Swale Borough Council ..... 6  
Profile of Swale..... 7  
Our evidence base..... 8  
Our equality priorities..... 9  
Equality Objective One: Supporting integration and cohesion in our local  
Communities..... 10  
Equality Objective Two: Supporting our vulnerable residents..... 12  
Equality Objective Three: Ensuring easy, clear and convenient access to  
our services..... 13  
Equality Objective Four: Promoting equality as a local employer..... 15  
Community Impact Assessments..... 16  
Responsibility and accountability..... 16  
Publication..... 16  
How to give us feedback about the scheme..... 16

Appendix I: Swale – Equality and diversity key characteristics

Appendix II: Swale Borough Council workforce – Equality and diversity key characteristics

## Foreword

We view equality, human rights and good relations between people as something that affects us all, regardless of our backgrounds, and we are committed to working closely with all those who are interested in, or affected by, our work. We see this as an ongoing process enabling individuals and organisations to influence and shape our work.

In developing the Council's Corporate Equality Scheme 2016-2020, we have carefully considered all of the evidence and data that is available to us. This is the third Scheme the Council has developed since 2007, and we have decided to publish comprehensive data on the key equality and diversity characteristics of the Borough of Swale and of our residents.

The purpose of the Scheme is to describe how Swale Borough Council will fulfil its moral, social and legal obligations to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations.

Swale Borough Council's overarching purpose is making Swale a better place. We have put in place a three year Corporate Plan with three priorities:

- A Borough to be proud of – focussing on the Council's aspirations for Swale as a physical place;
- A Community to produce of – focussing on the Council's aspirations for the people of Swale; and
- A Council to be proud of – focussing on the Council's need to develop its own organisational capacity and culture as it continually re-assesses how it can best achieve the objectives of the other two priority themes.

The Corporate Plan and priorities are further underpinned by our core values:

- **Fairness** - being objective to balance the needs of all those in our community;
- **Integrity** - being open, honest and taking responsibility;
- **Respect** - embracing and valuing the diversity of others;
- **Service** - delivering high quality, cost effective public service; and
- **Trust** - delivering on our promises to each other, customers and our partners.

We have tried through this Scheme to focus more on what is important to Swale's community than on internal Council processes, although these are still important as reflected in the Scheme's objectives.

Our first equality objective – Supporting integration and cohesion in our local communities – is designed to foster good relations between different groups. The second equality objective – Supporting our vulnerable residents – is about supporting Swale's more vulnerable residents, particularly those with a disability.

Taken together, these objectives are designed to underpin the first two objectives of our Corporate Plan.

The third equality objective – Ensuring easy, clear and convenient access to our services – is about improving our customer care and working with our communities to make our services more responsive to the needs of Swale’s residents. The fourth equality objective – Promoting equality as a local employer – is about ensuring that those policies and practices that affect our staff are fair and promote equality of outcome.

Taken together, these objectives are designed to underpin the third objective of our Corporate Plan.

Looking ahead, this equality scheme sets out how our aims to make Swale a fairer place. The Borough of Swale is becoming an increasingly diverse place, and as a Council we need to tailor our services to meet those changing needs whilst providing value for money for local residents.

We also need to take a leading role in making Swale a place where everyone has equal life chances – regardless of age, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender, marital status, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity leave rights.

Councillor Andrew Bowles  
Leader of the Council

## Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty which applies to all public bodies and any private and voluntary bodies carrying out public functions. The Duty places a legal requirement on Swale Borough Council in carrying out its functions to have regard for the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and
- foster good relations between different groups.

The Duty covers people with the following protected characteristics:

- age;
- race;
- disability;
- sexual orientation;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- gender reassignment; and
- pregnancy and maternity.

The eliminating discrimination aim also covers marriage and civil partnership.

Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and persons who do not, includes:

- removing or minimising disadvantage suffered by people who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it; and
- encouraging persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such a person is disproportionately low.

Fostering good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not includes tackling prejudice, promoting understanding, and may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.

Our four year equality scheme sets out how we will meet these legal requirements.

Swale Borough Council views equality, human rights and good relations between people as something that affects us all, regardless of our backgrounds, and we are committed to working closely with all those who are interested in, or affected by, our work. We see this as an ongoing process enabling individuals and organisations to influence and shape our work.

## The scheme

This four year equality scheme covers the period July 2016 to July 2020, is closely linked to our Corporate Plan<sup>1</sup> and describes how Swale Borough Council will fulfil its moral, social and legal obligations to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations.

## Council Services

Swale Borough Council is one of 12 districts, which together with Kent County Council and Medway Unitary Authority comprise the local authorities within Kent. Local authorities are created by Acts of Parliament and their powers are determined by Parliament.

Councils provide three types of service to their communities:

- **statutory services** – these are services that councils must provide as set out in legislation such as refuse collection;
- **regulatory services** – this is the name given to a group of services which exist to ensure public, consumer, environmental and worker protection and includes services such as development control and licensing; and
- **discretionary services** – these are services that councils may choose to provide such as leisure and tourism.

## Profile of Swale Borough Council

The Council is made up of 47 elected councillors, who represent 24 wards. The last local elections were held on 7 May 2015 and coincided with the UK Parliamentary elections. The current political balance on the Council is Conservative 32 seats, United Kingdom Independence Party nine seats, Labour four seats, and Independent Group two seats. As a result, the Conservative Party form the Administration of the Council, and are likely to through to the next local government elections in 2019.

The whole council comes together to decide on the most important issues, but day-to-day political leadership is undertaken by a smaller group of councillors known as the Cabinet.

Councillors have an important role to play in representing the interests of their wards, scrutinising the Cabinet's decisions, and contributing to the development of policy.

With an annual gross expenditure of £26.8 million of public money, we need to be absolutely sure that the money we spend is going to achieve the maximum possible benefit for the Borough. To help us do this, we have set ourselves three priorities which were developed to ensure that we focussed on what really matters to local people.

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<sup>1</sup> Swale Borough Council: Make Swale a better place – Corporate Plan 2015-2018

Following a thorough analysis of all the relevant evidence available, including what our residents told us was important to them, we set the following Priority Themes and Objectives in our Corporate Plan for the period 2015-2018:

<b>Priority Theme 1: A Borough To Be Proud Of</b>	
<b>Objective</b>	
1.1	Deliver major regeneration projects
1.2	Enhance the Borough's economic and tourism offer
1.3	Keep Swale clean and tidy
1.4	Protect and improve the natural and built environments
1.5	Lobby for better roads and transport
<b>Priority Theme 2: A Community To Be Proud Of</b>	
<b>Objective</b>	
2.1	Foster economic growth and prosperity for all
2.2	Encourage active communities and support the voluntary sector
2.3	Reduce crime and disorder
2.4	Use our influence to ensure local skills are matched to local jobs
2.5	Work collaboratively to improve health and mental health
<b>Priority Theme 3: A Council To Be Proud Of</b>	
<b>Objective</b>	
3.1	Improve residents' perceptions and customers' experiences
3.2	Ensure that Swale's internal governance and decision-making are second to none
3.3	Encourage innovation at every level
3.4	Strengthen our financial and political resilience
3.5	Enhance our capacity for achieving outcomes collaboratively

## **Profile of Swale**

The Borough of Swale enjoys a great location on the North Kent coast, within easy reach of London but set in rolling Kentish countryside, less than 30 miles from the Channel Tunnel. With an area of 140 square miles and a population of 140,800, Swale includes the towns of Sittingbourne and Faversham, the Isle of Sheppey, and an extensive rural hinterland. The Borough is proud of the quality of its natural environment, and contains a large number of protected sites of scientific interest and outstanding natural beauty.

Much of the Borough's traditional employment has been low-skilled, which has left a legacy in some areas of low ambitions and relatively high deprivation. Swale has a growing population, with increasing demand for new homes, jobs and services, which needs to be managed in a fair and sustainable way. Along with many of our partners, this is a key role for the Borough Council.

### **Our evidence base**

In developing our equality scheme we have gathered evidence from a number of sources to determine the key characteristics of our equality and diversity if Swale's population. The key evidence has been drawn from the following sources:

- Kent County Council Business Intelligence Statistical Bulletins:
  - [2011 Census: Cultural diversity in Kent – January 2013](#)
  - [2014 Mid-Year Population Estimates: Age and gender profile – July 2015](#)
  - [Disability in Kent – September 2015](#).
- Office for National Statistics:
  - Marital and Civil Partnership Status, local authorities in England and Wales – December 2012
- Department for Work and Pensions:
  - NOMIS – labour market statistics.
- Local Area Perception Survey:
  - an annual postal survey on behalf of the council to provide a statistically robust way of assessing Swale residents' views and priorities.

The detailed data which has informed this strategy can be found in Appendix I.



## **Our Equality Priorities**

We have identified the following three key priorities for our equality scheme:

- Equality Objective One: Supporting integration and cohesion in our local communities
- Equality Objective Two: Supporting our vulnerable residents
- Equality Objective Three: Ensuring easy, clear and convenient access to our services
- Equality Objective Four: Promoting equality as a local employer

## **Equality Objective 1: Supporting integration and cohesion in our local communities**

This objective is about fostering good relations between different groups.

### **Background**

Through our annual residents survey, over three-quarters of people in Swale have told us that they are generally satisfied with their local area as a place to live. However, only two thirds of those surveyed believed that Swale is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together.

Swale has a growing population<sup>2</sup> with more and more people coming to live here from other areas of the UK. The data also shows that people of other ethnic backgrounds, including Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) people and people from the European Union Accession States<sup>3</sup>, are part of this population growth.

As a council, we need to ensure that all communities feel safe, have equal access to our services, and that our services are designed to avoid any discrimination on people with a protected characteristic. Furthermore, we want to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding. This is best served by incorporating a specific equality objective aimed at tackling these issues.

### **Key actions**

We will aim to achieve this objective over the next four years by:

- fulfilling our community leadership role;
- consulting, involving and engaging representative networks covering all equality areas to help inform our future activities;
- continuing to tackle crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour through the Swale Community Safety Partnership including ongoing work to tackle the PREVENT agenda;
- continuing to promote and support the Swale Youth Forum;
- ensuring effective implementation of the Troubled Families programme;
- continuing to encourage the number of people giving their time to help others in Swale by supporting the voluntary and community sector;
- continuing to work closely with Swale's parish and town councils;
- continuing to support and actively promote community-led initiatives (eg. Neighbourhood Planning) which encourage communities themselves to work together to solve issues locally;
- continuing to use the local Health and Wellbeing Board to influence the local health and public health agendas; and

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix I for detailed information

<sup>3</sup> From 2001 Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Malta, Slovakia and Slovenia and from 2007 Bulgaria and Romania

- continuing to enable healthier lifestyles and physical activity through the implementation of the Sport and Physical Activity Framework for Swale and the Indoor Sports Strategy 2015-25.

## **Equality objective 2: Supporting our vulnerable residents**

This objective is about supporting Swale's more vulnerable residents, particularly those with a disability.

### **Background**

A major area where Swale's equality and diversity profile is different is disability. There is no single measure of the number of people with a disability. The definitions of disability vary and often rely on an individual's perception of their own health; a condition that one person considers disabling is not necessarily considered in the same way by another with the same condition.

At the time of the 2011 Census, Swale was among the highest district in Kent where people live with a long term health problem or disability. Swale is above the average for all Kent districts in this respect, and higher than the average for the South East and England and Wales.

Variations in lifestyle choices and in access to opportunities to improve health mean that average life expectancy is up to ten years lower in the Borough's worst-off neighbourhoods than in its more affluent.

As a result of Swale having a higher percentage of residents either with a long term health problem or disability, and more claiming disability benefits than the average for Kent, South East and national averages, we have decided to set a specific equality objective to support this section of our population.

### **Key actions**

We will aim to achieve this objective over the next four years by:

- continuing to support Swale's elderly and vulnerable residents through programmes such as the Staying Put service;
- supporting partners to improve health and reduce hospital admissions through effective home adaptations and by improving conditions in privately rented homes;
- supporting households with the greatest housing needs to access affordable housing;
- providing assistance to households where no one living at the property is able to physically move their refuse or recycling to the boundary for collection; and
- through the work of the Community Safety Partnership seek to identify and support vulnerable victims of crime and anti-social behaviour, focusing on those issues and vulnerable groups as identified in the annual Community Safety Strategic Assessment.

### **Equality objective 3: Ensuring easy, clear and convenient access to our services**

This objective is about improving our customer care and working with our communities to make our services more responsive to the needs of all of Swale's residents.

#### **Background**

The provision of excellent customer care is very important to Swale Borough Council and something that we are working to improve further. One of our priority themes, stated in our Corporate Plan, is "a Council to be proud of" and this describes our focus in terms of our approach to customer contact and the provision of consistently high standards of customer service.

We will continue to provide a choice of access to our services through a balance of cost-effective and convenient options, and pursue initiatives to improve customer service at reduced cost, including self-service options where appropriate. For many years we have offered to provide Council documents in alternative formats and, for example, our Staying Put Team provide leaflets in large print as a matter of course as the primary audience for the services they offer are generally elderly and vulnerable.

Although our equality and diversity profile is broadly similar to other local authorities in Kent and the South East, we recognise that a 'one size fits all' approach to service delivery is not the right approach. Therefore, when designing services we will focus on the diverse needs of Swale residents by consulting service users and through the use of tools such as Community Impact Assessments.

#### **Key actions**

We will aim to achieve this objective over the next four years by:

- providing a choice of access to our services through a balance of cost-effective and convenient options, and pursue initiatives to improve customer service at reduced cost (eg. face-to-face, electronic, phone or written letter depending on customer need);
- delivering high levels of customer satisfaction with our services;
- treating all of our customers with respect by being polite, welcoming and courteous;
- continuing to improve accessibility of our working practices and buildings;
- providing Council documents in alternatives formats, i.e. large print, audio, different language;
- consulting on the webcasting of Council meetings;
- retaining the industry-standard accreditation Customer Service Excellence for a range of our services;

- promoting opportunities to bid for Council contracts among local voluntary/ community organisations, and using social value criteria when assessing tenders to ensure fair competition;
- maintain our procurement framework to continue to ensure that suppliers can demonstrate fairly their commitment to equality; and
- endeavour to have greater consideration of cultural diversity when commissioning new services.

## **Equality objective 4: Promoting equality as a local employer**

This objective is about ensuring that those policies and practices that affect our staff are fair and promote equality of outcome.

### **Background**

Members of staff have rights in their capacity as employees. We want to enable all our staff to be fully involved in the Council's work, to protect them from unfair treatment, to uphold our obligations to provide job descriptions, work plans, appraisals and related performance and monitoring systems, and to give the support, development opportunities and training.

To inform our key actions we have gathered evidence from our equality monitoring data, equality impact assessments, and consultation with staff, including our staff survey. The key equality and diversity characteristics for Swale Borough Council employees are at Appendix II.

### **Key actions**

We will aim to achieve this objective over the next four years by:

- promoting a workplace environment where all of our staff are treated with dignity and respect;
- encouraging the diversity of our staff to reflect the communities we serve across all the equality characteristics, and will continue to monitor our workforce profile;
- adopting non-discriminatory practices;
- retaining industry-standard accreditations such as Investors in People; and
- continuing to provide our staff and councillors with relevant on-going training and development on equality and diversity issues.

## **Community Impact Assessments**

A Community Impact Assessment (CIA) is a document that summarises how the Council has had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty in decision-making.

The Council undertakes CIAs whenever it is changing, removing or introducing a new service, policy or function.

## **Responsibility and Accountability**

The Council is ultimately responsible for delivering the General and Specific Duties set out in the Equality Scheme.

Our Chief Executive has overall accountability for making sure that we carry out the actions in this scheme. However, actions have been allocated to the relevant Directors and Heads of Service across the council, and they are responsible for carrying these out and reporting on progress.

The Scheme will be monitored, and regular progress reports will be made to the Strategic Management Team.

## **Publication**

This 2016-2020 scheme will be available on our website. A summary of this document will be made available in alternative formats on request.

## **How to give us feedback about the Scheme**

We welcome feedback on any aspect of our Equality Scheme and more generally on our approach to equality and inclusion. You can contact us at [policyteam@swale.gov.uk](mailto:policyteam@swale.gov.uk)

At Swale Borough Council we value what our customers think about us. We would therefore be very grateful if you would provide us with feedback about our services and in fact anything relating to the Council be it good or bad.

Members of the public who feel that they have experienced unlawful discrimination in the way they have been treated by the council may make a complaint through the corporate complaints procedure. The council promises to take all complaints seriously, and will not accept discrimination of any kind. The council will also monitor complaints to see whether we are meeting our equality duties.

The Members' Code of Conduct deals with complaints about the conduct of elected Members. Members who experience unlawful discrimination can alert the council through the grievance procedure.

If you believe the Council has not delivered its services to your satisfaction and would like to complain, there is a four step complaints process which is free to use and details can be found on the website at: <http://www.swale.gov.uk/compliments-and-complaints/>



## Swale – Equality and diversity key characteristics

<b>AGE AND GENDER<sup>4</sup></b>
<p><b>Key observations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The 45-49 age group is the highest proportion of Swale's population (7.5%)</li> <li>▪ The 90+ age group is the smallest proportion of the population (0.7%)</li> <li>▪ 50.6% of the population in Swale are female and 49.4% are male</li> </ul>

The source of data for these observations is Kent County Council's Business Intelligence Statistical Bulletin: 2014 Mid-Year Population Estimates – Age and gender profile: July 2015. This is in turn based on information published by the Office for National Statistics compiled from the 2011 Census.

### Total population

Swale is the third most populous district in Kent. Swale's population has been growing for over 20 years as a result of migration (i.e. more people entering the borough than leaving it), coupled with an increase in natural change (i.e. increased life expectancy with less people dying and an increase in the number of births). Swale is no different from most other Kent districts in this respect.

	<b>Swale</b>		<b>Kent districts</b>	
<b>Population</b>	140,800		1,510,400	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
<b>No.</b>	69,600	71,200	740,100	770,300
<b>%</b>	49.4%	50.6%	49.0%	51.0%

### Population growth

In the early 1990s, all areas of Kent including Swale experienced net outward migration (i.e. more people were leaving the county than entering it), and so all population growth was attributed to positive natural change (i.e. more births than deaths). From mid-1993 onwards, Swale<sup>5</sup> and the other Kent districts began to experience net inward migration (more people entering the county than leaving), and the rate of this net migration has been the predominant factor in Swale's population growth ever since.

<b>Swale population growth since 1994</b>	
1994	116,800
2004	125,900
2014	140,800

<sup>4</sup>2014 mid-year population estimates – ONS, 25/06/15

<sup>5</sup> Kent County Council interactive populations estimates toolkit

## Mean age

There are more females than males in Swale, but this pattern is seen across Kent. Swale has the least percentage difference between females and males in Kent. Similarly, the male/female ratio changes with age. On the whole, there are more males compared with females in the younger age groups, but as age increases there become more females to males.

	Swale			Kent districts		
	Total persons	Males	Females	Total persons	Males	Females
<b>Mean age</b>	40.1	39.2	41.0	40.7	39.6	41.7

## Swale 2014 Mid-year Population Estimates by five-year Group and Gender

	Total persons		Males		Females	
	No.	% of total population	No.	%	No.	%
<b>All ages</b>	140,800	-	69,600	49.4%	71,200	50.6%
<b>0-4</b>	9,200	6.5%	4,700	51.8%	4,400	48.2%
<b>5-9</b>	8,900	6.3%	4,600	51.8%	4,300	48.2%
<b>10-14</b>	8,200	5.8%	4,200	51.1%	4,000	48.9%
<b>15-19</b>	8,900	6.3%	4,600	51.1%	4,400	48.9%
<b>20-24</b>	8,000	5.7%	4,300	53.1%	3,800	46.9%
<b>25-29</b>	8,200	5.8%	4,000	49.2%	4,200	50.8%
<b>30-34</b>	8,500	6.1%	4,100	48.1%	4,400	51.9%
<b>35-39</b>	7,900	5.6%	3,800	48.2%	4,100	51.8%
<b>40-44</b>	9,400	6.6%	4,600	49.1%	4,800	50.9%
<b>45-49</b>	10,600	7.5%	5,200	49.2%	5,400	50.8%
<b>50-54</b>	10,100	7.2%	5,100	50.0%	5,100	50.0%
<b>55-59</b>	8,700	6.2%	4,500	51.1%	4,300	48.9%
<b>60-64</b>	8,100	5.8%	4,000	49.7%	4,100	50.3%
<b>65-69</b>	9,000	6.4%	4,400	48.7%	4,600	51.3%
<b>70-74</b>	6,200	4.4%	3,000	48.5%	3,200	51.5%
<b>75-79</b>	4,700	3.4%	2,200	47.4%	2,500	52.6%
<b>80-84</b>	3,200	2.3%	1,300	41.7%	1,900	58.3%
<b>85-89</b>	1,900	1.4%	700	37.9%	1,200	62.1%
<b>90+</b>	1,100	0.7%	300	25.4%	800	73.6%

**Kent districts 2014 Mid-year Population Estimates by five-year Group and Gender**

	Total persons		Males		Females	
	No.	% of total population	No.	%	No.	%
<b>All ages</b>	1,510,400	-	740,100	49.0%	770,300	51.0%
<b>0-4</b>	91,700	6.1%	47,100	51.4%	44,600	48.6%
<b>5-9</b>	91,800	6.1%	47,200	51.4%	44,600	48.6%
<b>10-14</b>	87,100	5.8%	44,600	51.2%	42,500	48.8%
<b>15-19</b>	94,900	6.3%	48,500	51.1%	46,400	48.9%
<b>20-24</b>	92,900	6.2%	47,100	50.7%	45,800	49.3%
<b>25-29</b>	87,400	5.8%	43,800	50.2%	43,600	49.8%
<b>30-34</b>	87,300	5.8%	41,900	48.1%	45,300	51.9%
<b>35-39</b>	85,700	5.7%	41,700	48.7%	44,000	51.3%
<b>40-44</b>	102,100	6.8%	49,800	48.8%	52,200	51.2%
<b>45-49</b>	112,800	7.5%	55,800	49.5%	57,000	50.5%
<b>50-54</b>	105,500	7.0%	52,500	49.7%	53,000	50.3%
<b>55-59</b>	91,300	6.0%	45,200	49.4%	46,200	50.6%
<b>60-64</b>	85,500	5.7%	41,700	48.8%	43,700	51.2%
<b>65-69</b>	93,900	6.2%	45,500	48.5%	48,400	51.5%
<b>70-74</b>	67,200	4.5%	32,100	47.7%	35,200	52.3%
<b>75-79</b>	53,400	3.5%	24,700	46.3%	28,700	53.7%
<b>80-84</b>	40,000	2.6%	17,000	42.7%	22,900	57.3%
<b>85-89</b>	25,000	1.7%	9,500	37.8%	15,500	62.2%
<b>90+</b>	15,000	1.0%	4,200	28.3%	10,800	71.7%

## Ethnicity

### Key observations

- The white ethnic group is the largest group within Swale (96.6%)
- Of these, 92.9% are White English, Welsh, Scottish or Northern Irish; 0.6% are Irish, 0.5% are Gypsy or Irish Traveller; and 2.6% are from other white ethnic groups
- Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) residents account for 3.4% of Swale residents, and the Borough has the second lowest number and proportion of residents from a BME group in Kent
- BME groups in Swale consist of mixed/ multiple ethnic groups (1.2%), Asian/ British Asian (1.2%), Black/African/Caribbean/Black British (1%); and other ethnic groups (0.1%)

The source for these observations is Kent County Council's Business Intelligence Statistical Bulletin, Census 2011: Cultural Diversity in Kent – January 2013, and the Office for National Statistics 2014 Mid-Year Populations Estimates.

Swale's population is overwhelmingly white British, more so than other Kent districts. Although it is not possible to separate out how many people born in the EU Accession States live in Swale from those born in other countries of the world, taken together these groups increased by 12 percent between the 2001 and 2011 censuses, representing the largest annual rate of change for any ethnicity during that period.

The largest Black and Minority Ethnic group are Black Africans, making them the largest ethnic group in Swale. The next largest ethnic group are Gypsy and Irish Travellers.

Swale has the largest proportion of population born in England in Kent, and has 97 per cent of households where all occupants have English as their main language. This too is the highest proportion of all local authority areas in Kent, and is significantly higher than the regional and national averages.

Since 1991, Swale's Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population has increased by 301 percent, which is of a similar order to that of Kent County (275 percent) and the wider south east (269 percent), although all these figures are significantly above the rate for England of 166 percent. Despite this apparently large percentage increase, at 3.4% Swale still has a relatively small proportion of BME residents compared with the national average, and the second lowest number and proportion of BME residents in Kent.

As a result of changes to questions which have been included in each Census since 1991, it is not possible to give an accurate and comparable time series of whether the various groups within this broad ethnic category have increased or decreased in numbers over the years.

<b>Swale BME population 1991 to 2011<sup>6</sup></b>	
1991	1,166
2001	2,285
2011	4,680

The other ethnic group which is growing in Swale is the number of people from countries that joined the European Union (EU) in 2004 (i.e. the Accession States - Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, plus Bulgaria and Romania who joined in 2007).

Of those Kent residents who were born in the EU, the majority (25,872 people or 1.8 percent) were born in countries which were part of the EU after April 2001. 20,778 people, or 1.4 percent, were born in countries which were part of the EU before April 2001. 5.4 percent of Kent residents were born in countries outside of the UK and the EU. This is considerably lower than the national figure of 9.4 percent for England, or the regional figure of 7.7 percent for the South East.

Swale's average annual rate of change in the number of residents who were not born in the UK or in any of the EU states which were part of the EU before 2004-07 was 12 percent between 2001 and 2011, slightly higher than the equivalent figure for Kent as a whole (11 percent), and half as much again than the figure for England (8 percent).

Swale's 2015 Local Area Perception Survey showed that 66 percent of those surveyed believed that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. This is unchanged from the previous survey undertaken in 2014, but the results of both the 2014 and 2015 surveys showed a statistically significant improvement in this area compared with previous years.

The Local Area Perception Survey results also show that the proportion of residents who have given unpaid help to a club, society or organisation at least once a month in the past year has risen.

With the exception of disabled people (see Objective 2), Swale has a similar equality and diversity profile to other Kent districts in respect of the other protected characteristics of age and gender, religion or belief, and marital status.

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<sup>6</sup> Kent County Council Business Intelligence Statistical Bulletin – 2011 Census: Cultural diversity in Kent

**Percentage of population by detailed ethnic category in Kent districts, the South East and England – Census 2011**

	<b>Swale</b>	<b>Kent districts</b>	<b>South East</b>	<b>England</b>
<b>White</b>				
English/Welsh/Scottish/ Northern Irish/British	92.9%	89.1%	85.2%	79.8%
Irish	0.6%	0.7%	0.9%	1.0%
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.5%	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%
Other white	2.6%	3.6%	4.4%	4.6%
<b>Mixed/multiple ethnic groups</b>				
White and black Caribbean	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.8%
White and black African	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%
White and Asian	0.3%	0.5%	0.7%	0.6%
Other mixed	0.3%	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%
<b>Asian/Asian British</b>				
Indian	0.4%	1.2%	1.8%	2.6%
Pakistani	0.1%	0.2%	1.1%	2.1%
Bangladeshi	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.8%
Chinese	0.2%	0.4%	0.6%	0.7%
Other Asian	0.3%	1.2%	1.4%	1.5%
<b>Black/African/Caribbean/ Black British</b>				
African	0.7%	0.8%	1.0%	1.8%
Caribbean	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%	1.1%
Other black	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.5%
<b>Other ethnic group</b>				
Arab	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.4%
Any other ethnic group	0.1%	0.4%	0.4%	0.6%

**Percentage of population by country of birth in Kent districts, the South East and England – Census 2011**

	<b>Swale</b>	<b>Kent districts</b>	<b>South East</b>	<b>England</b>
England	92.5%	88.6%	84.4%	83.5%
Northern Ireland	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Scotland	0.9%	1.2%	1.6%	1.3%
Wales	0.6%	0.7%	1.1%	1.0%
Republic of Ireland	0.5%	0.6%	0.7%	0.7%
Other EU: Member countries in March 2011	0.9%	1.4%	1.9%	1.7%
Other EU: Accession countries April 2001 to March 2011	1.6%	1.8%	1.8%	2.0%
Other countries	2.8%	5.4%	7.7%	9.4%

**2001 to 2011 percentage annual rate of change in country of birth of residents in Kent districts, the South East and England – Census 2011**

	<b>Swale</b>	<b>Kent districts</b>	<b>South East</b>	<b>England</b>
England	0.9%	0.7%	0.4%	0.3%
Northern Ireland	-0.1%	-0.3%	-0.6%	-0.4%
Scotland	-1.3%	-0.9%	-1.2%	-1.1%
Wales	-2.8%	-2.1%	-1.8%	-1.7%
Republic of Ireland	0.1%	-0.2%	-0.8%	-1.4%
Other EU: Member countries in March 2001	0.8%	1.4%	1.3%	2.9%
Other countries (includes EU Accession countries, plus the rest of the world)	12.0%	10.9%	8.5%	7.8%

**Proportion of households by main language in Kent local authority districts, Kent, the South East and England – Census 2011**

	<b>Swale</b>	<b>Kent districts</b>	<b>South East</b>	<b>England</b>
All people aged 16 and over in household have English as a main language	97.0%	94.4%	93.2%	90.9%
At least one but not all people aged 16 and over in household have English as a main language	1.4%	2.3%	3.2%	3.9%
Non people aged 16 and over in household but at least one person aged 3 to 15 has English as a main language	0.2%	0.4%	0.5%	0.8%
No people in household have English as a main language	1.4%	2.5%	3.1%	4.4%

## DISABILITY

### Key observations

- 18.6% of residents in Swale have a limiting long term illness - this is above the Kent average (17.6%), the South East (15.7%), and England and Wales (17.9%) averages
- 9.0% of people claim a disability related benefit in Swale - this is above the Kent (7.6%), South East (6.4%), and England and Wales (8.0%) averages

The sources for these observations are Kent County Council's Business Intelligence Statistical Bulletin, Disability in Kent – September 2015, and the Department for Work and Pensions Disability Benefit Claimant data – February 2015.

There is no single measure of the number of people with a disability. The definitions of disability vary and often rely on an individual's perception of their own health. The data provided here relates to the number of people with a disability or a disabling condition.

At the time of the 2011 Census, Swale was the fourth highest district in Kent for having the most people with a long term health problem or disability. Swale is a percentage point above the average for all Kent districts in this respect, and higher than the average for the South East and England and Wales.

The percentage of people aged over 50 with a long term health problem or disability varies across the Borough, with 23.4% in West Downs ward rising to 44.4% in Sheerness ward on the Isle of Sheppey.

The percentage of people in Swale claiming a disability benefit as at February 2015 equates to 12,629 claimants. The percentage is above the Kent, South East and England and Wales averages, and the fourth highest of the Kent districts.

### People with a long term health problem or disability<sup>7</sup>

	Swale	Kent districts	South East	England and Wales
<b>Total</b>	135,835	1,463,730	8,634,750	56,075,912
<b>% of all people with long-term health problem or disability</b>	18.6%	17.6%	15.7%	17.9%
<b>% of all people without long-term health problem or disability</b>	81.4%	82.4%	84.3%	82.1%

<sup>7</sup> 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics



### People aged 50+ with a long term health problem or disability – by ward<sup>8</sup>

Ward	No people with long term health problems or disability aged 50+	% of ward population aged 50+ <sup>9</sup>
Abbey*	750	36.0%
Bobbing, Iwade and Lower Halstow	407	26.0%
Borden and Grove Park	761	28.3%
Boughton and Courtenay	669	26.6%
Chalkwell	373	36.9%
East Downs	351	27.4%
Hartlip, Newington and Upchurch	737	29.2%
Homewood	735	32.3%
Kemsley	450	27.6%
Milton Regis	693	32.6%
Minster Cliffs	1,340	35.9%
Murston	589	32.3%
Priory	375	33.7%
Queenborough and Halfway	1,136	37.2%
Roman	915	40.4%
St Ann's	665	31.9%
Sheerness	1,633	44.4%
Sheppey Central	988	35.5%
Sheppey East	965	37.8%
Teynham and Lynsted	707	31.0%
The Meads	120	23.5%
Watling	778	33.3%
West Downs	309	23.4%
Woodstock	646	24.3%

### Total disability benefits claimants, February 2015<sup>10</sup>

	Swale	Kent districts	South East	England and Wales
% of total population	9.0%	7.6%	6.4%	8.0%

<sup>8</sup> KCC Ward Profiles - Swale

<sup>9</sup> Please note that the numbers and percentage for any given ward can be skewed by the number of care and retirement homes located within that ward, for example, Abbey Ward.

<sup>10</sup> NOMIS – Department for Work and Pensions

## Religion or belief

### Key observations

- In Swale, the highest proportion of people (63%) state their religion as Christianity
- A higher proportion of people in Swale say they are Christian or have no religion than the average for Kent
- After no religion (28.8%), a greater proportion of people in Swale state they are Muslims (0.6%) than any other religion, although this figure is lower than the average for Kent (1%), the South East (2.3%), and England and Wales (5%)

The source for these observations is Kent County Council's Business Intelligence Statistical Bulletin, Census 2011: Cultural Diversity in Kent – January 2013.

In 2011, Christianity remains the largest religion in Swale, and this is a similar picture to the average for Kent, the South East, and England and Wales. There are significantly fewer people in Swale who stated their religion as Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh or other non-Christian religion than in the South East region or England and Wales.

### Religion in Swale, Kent districts, South East and England – Census 2011

	Swale	Kent districts	South East	England and Wales
<b>Christian</b>	63.0%	62.5%	59.8%	59.4%
<b>Buddhist</b>	0.2%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
<b>Hindu</b>	0.3%	0.7%	1.1%	1.5%
<b>Jewish</b>	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.5%
<b>Muslim</b>	0.6%	1.0%	2.3%	5.0%
<b>Sikh</b>	0.1%	0.7%	0.6%	0.8%
<b>Other religion</b>	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%
<b>No religion</b>	28.8%	26.8%	27.2%	24.7%
<b>Religion not stated</b>	6.6%	7.3%	7.4%	7.2%

## Marriage and civil partnerships

### Key observations

- 31.1% of residents in Swale are single
- 48.3% of residents are married
- 10% of Swale residents are divorced
- 7% are widowed
- 3.2% are separated
- 0.2% are in a registered same sex partnership.

The source for these observations are the 2011 Census: Key Statistics for local authorities, published in December 2012 by the Office for National Statistics.

There is no data available on the number of people in Swale whose sexual orientation is to their own sex, to the opposite sex, or to both sexes. Similarly there is no data available on the number of people in Swale who are going through or have gone through gender reassignment.

However, the 2011 Census gathered information for the first time on Civil Partnerships, and this showed that 197 people stated in the Census that they were in a Civil Partnership, which equates to 0.2% of Swale's adult population.

Swale has a similar profile to Kent, the South East and nationally in terms of marital and civil partnership status.

### Marital and civil partnership status – Census 2011

	Swale	Kent districts	South East	England
<b>Single</b>	31.1%	31.3%	31.9%	34.6%
<b>Married</b>	48.3%	48.8%	49.3%	46.6%
<b>In a registered same sex partnership</b>	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
<b>Separated</b>	3.2%	2.8%	2.5%	2.5%
<b>Divorced</b>	10.0%	9.6%	9.1%	9.0%
<b>Widowed</b>	7.0%	7.3%	6.9%	6.9%

### Swale Borough Council workforce – Equality and diversity key characteristics<sup>11</sup>

- 71 per cent of the Swale Borough Council workforce are female, much higher than the proportion of economically active women in the Swale workforce as a whole which is around 46 per cent.
- 4.6 per cent of our workforce describe themselves as having a disability, compared with 8 per cent of the economically active Swale population who describe themselves as having a disability.
- 1.8 per cent of our workforce are from black and minority ethnic groups compared with 3.1 per cent of the economically active Swale population from black and minority ethnic groups.
- Just over 30 per cent of staff are aged 20 to 39, with 2.5 per cent aged 16 to 19 and the remainder (just over two thirds) aged 40 or above. 8.6 per cent of staff are over 60.
- A third of staff did not wish to give details of their sexual orientation, but 63.8 per cent stated that they were heterosexual, 0.9% as gay or lesbian, and 0.3 per cent as bisexual.
- Just under a third of staff did not wish to give details of their religion or belief. 40.6 per cent of staff gave their religion as Christian, 24.5% stated they had no religion or belief, 0.6% stated they were Muslim, 0.3% stated they were Sikh, and 1.2% stated their religion or belief was not any of these, nor Buddhist, Hindu or Jewish.

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<sup>11</sup> Swale Borough Council People Performance Management report: 1 January 2016 and NOMIS datasets, Office for National Statistics