



Equality and diversity – glossary of terms

Term	Explanation
Authority	A public agency with administrative powers in a specified field e.g. County Council, Police, NHS etc.
Belief	Something believed or accepted as true, especially a particular tenet or a body of tenets accepted by a group of persons.
Black & Minority Ethnic	This is a term applied to individuals or communities who are identified (or self identify) as Black or are from a minority ethnic culture or racial group. Asylum seekers and refugees are sometimes included in this category although this is not always accurate as it often depends how these people self-identify themselves. Migrants and Economic Migrants are also sometimes included within this category.
British Sign Language	The language of signs and gestures used by Deaf people.
BSL	See British Sign Language definition above.
Commission / s / ing	In East Sussex County Council commissioning is the process whereby the Council purchases services from a range of providers for and on behalf of the local population.
Community	This term can be applied to the population of East Sussex (or any town, city, county or country). It can also be applied to a specific community which people identify themselves with such as the Black & Minority Ethnic community.
Communities of interest	This term is applied to communities which have a particular interest in a subject. An example would be all the communities identified under the 'equalities' definition below would be 'interested' in the equalities work of the Council.
Community Sector	This term is applied to workers, projects and groups which work with communities or communities of interest. They are typically voluntary but can be indirectly employed by statutory bodies.
Council	The County democratically elected body responsible for running some services in East Sussex.
County Council	See above.
Deaf people	People who have lost part or all of their hearing.
Deaf/Blind people	People who have lost part or all of their hearing and all or part of their sight.
The Deaf Community/Deaf Culture	Some people who have lost all or part of their

	hearing feel that there is a difference in human experience rather than referring deafness as a disability.
Disability	<p>ESCC has subscribed to a definition of disability explained in terms of barriers some people experience which are created by social organisation.</p> <p>Barriers can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prejudice and stereotypes • Inflexible organisational procedures and practices • Inaccessible information • Inaccessible buildings
Disability Forum	See Staff Forums.
Discrimination	This term is applied when any of the people or communities described under the 'equalities' definition below are seen to have been directly or indirectly disadvantaged by individuals or organisations.
Diversity	This term is applied when a country, county, town, society, organisation is seen to have a range of different groups (as defined under the 'equalities' definition below) within it.
East Sussex County Council (ESCC)	See Council.
Equalities	This is a term applied to a range of issues where individuals or communities are seen to have less equal access to aspects of life taken for granted by other people.
Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA)	These are requirements under the Race Equality Schemes. All statutory organisations / authorities have to undertake detailed assessments of all their policies, functions and work to identify good or bad practice around the Black & Minority Ethnic issues.
Gay*	<p>An umbrella term for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual people.</p> <p>Refers to a person whose primary sexual attraction is to people of the same sex.</p> <p>The term is more commonly applied to men who self-identify as same sex attracted, rather than men who have sex with men but do not self-identify as Gay.</p> <p>While many women identify as Gay, the term Lesbian is commonly used to describe same sex attracted women.</p> <p>It is best to avoid using this word to cover all LGB</p>

	people as it can render lesbians and bisexual people excluded. Use: Lesbian, gay or bisexual, or the acronym LGB.
Gender	Gender is the term that refers to the social roles and relationships that structure men's and women's lives, in contrast to the term 'sex' which is used to describe the biological differences between men and women.
Gender identity	A person's sense of identity defined in relation to the categories of male and female. In this glossary, the term is primarily used to describe people whose gender identity does not match their biological sex at birth. However, it is important to note that not everyone identifies exclusively with one sex or the other. Some may well identify as both male and female, while others may identify as male in one setting and female in another.
Human Rights Act	The Human Rights Act 1998 gives legal effect in the UK to the fundamental rights and freedoms contained in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). These rights not only affect matters of life and death like freedom from torture and killing but also affect your rights in everyday life: what you can say and do; your beliefs, your right to a fair trial and many other similar basic entitlements.
Homophobia*	An irrational fear and/or dislike of lesbian, gay and bisexual people, which can lead to hatred resulting in verbal and physical attacks.
Homosexual*	Considered by some in the LGB community to be a derogatory and offensive term. It originates from a medical definition when same-sex attraction/relationships were construed as mental illness. Use: gay, lesbian, gay man/woman, bisexual, bisexual man/woman or the acronym LGB (lesbian, gay and bisexual).
Lesbian*	A woman whose primary sexual attraction is to other women. This term often refers to women who are same sex attracted rather than women who have sex with other women but do not self-identify as lesbian.
Limiting Long Term Illness (LLTI)	Term used for a disability that restricts daily activities in the Census 2001.
LGBT Forum	See Staff Forum.
Impact Assessments	See Equalities Impact Assessments definition above

Inequality	This term is applied when any of the people or communities described under the 'equalities' definition above are not seen to be having their needs met.
Interpreters	Professionals who can translate one language into another verbally or using British Sign Language.
Learning Disability	This term is applied to a range of conditions where a person has usually been born with difficulties which stop them developing learning skills at the same rate as others.
Mental Health	This term is applied to a range of conditions where a person is suffering from an emotional or brain function disorder such as depression, schizophrenia etc.
Minority Groups Forum	See Staff Forum.
Procurement	Procurement is the purchase of merchandise or services at the optimum possible total cost in the correct amount and quality. These goods and services are also purchased at the correct time and location for the express gain or use of the County Council by signing a contract.
Religion	A set of beliefs, values, and practices based on the teachings of a spiritual leader.
Refugee and asylum seeker	An asylum seeker is an individual who arrives in a new country and makes an asylum application. The Government then decides if their claim satisfies the definition of a refugee. Under the UN Convention on Refugees a refugee is termed as someone who has fled their country due to 'a well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.'
Service User	A person who has, or is, using County Council services.
Staff Forums	Forums allow staff to build up a support network and helpful resources and they also enable ESCC to seek the views of staff in new projects and policies and ensures that staff have the opportunity to be involved in their development.
Staff Networks	See Staff Forums.

Statutory Organisations / Authorities	These are organisations / authorities that are legally required to exist by the Government. These include Councils, NHS Hospital Trusts, Primary Care Trusts, Police, Courts, Learning Skills Council.
Transgender*	Transgender is an inclusive, umbrella term used to describe the diversity of gender identity and gender expression. The term can be used to describe all people who don't identify to the common ideas of gender roles, including transsexuals.
Transphobia*	An irrational fear and dislike of Transgender people, which can lead to hatred resulting in verbal or physical attacks and abuse.
Transsexual*	Transsexual is a term used to describe people who feel they are born into the wrong physical sex – this includes pre-operative, post-operative and non-operative female-to-male and male-to-female transsexuals. Known as gender dysphoria.
Victimisation	Treats someone less favourably because they have taken action, given evidence or alleged discrimination.
Voluntary Sector	This term is applied to non-statutory groups, projects, schemes and individuals who offer services with voluntary (and sometimes some paid) workers.