

The **Public Sector Equality Duty** (Section 149 of the Equality Act) requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people carrying out their activities.

The Equality Duty supports good decision making – it encourages public bodies to be more efficient and effective by understanding how different people will be affected by their activities, so that their policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people’s needs. The Council’s Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) includes an assessment of the community safety impact assessment to comply with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act and will enable the Council to better understand the potential impact of proposals and consider mitigating action.

Name or Brief Description of Proposal	Changes to membership on SACRE
Brief Service Profile (including number of customers)	
<p>The proposal, if agreed, will bring about a new representative on SACRE to be a voice for people who would consider they are not represented through a religious group currently within the membership groups – but who have other religious alliance or beliefs as set out in the Human Rights Act. It will also provide a voting membership whereas this is currently a non-voting co-opted position.</p> <p>It will also bring about a full voting membership to a representative of Southampton City Mission from a co-opted position currently also.</p>	
Summary of Impact and Issues	
<p>Impact is linked to religion or belief</p> <p>The South Hampshire Humanist group have requested a full voting place on SACRE. Currently they are a co-opted member within the current constitution, but the co-opted group have no voting rights.</p> <p>The DFE and statute set out the legal position that SACREs must follow regarding membership and their responsibilities. This can be determined in a number of ways.</p> <p>During the constitution review analysis of the data provided to schools by parents regarding their child’s religious affiliation – or “No religion” has been undertaken.</p> <p>The data set is not full, and also relies on schools having recorded accurate</p>	

information in a non-statutory aspect in their information system. However, it indicates that 40% of the current school population have an aspect of “no religion” filled in. This would therefore support the proposal to widen the groups who may have a full place on SACRE from a current pupil population perspective.

We have not found any evidence to support that the South Hampshire Humanists group would represent the beliefs of all of those who have indicated “No Religion” so a place that can be applied for by people who would consider themselves to be part of a belief system but non-religious is proposed to accommodate.

This will enable a broad range of applicants, who would meet the criteria to be determined, to put forward how they will be able to support the statutory duties of SACRE for a period of an academic year. This will enable a wide group of people to have representation over time to contribute. It will be re-assessed when the most recent census data is available so this is taken into account also for the next review.

A process for application will need to be agreed by a sub-committee, for commencement August 2021. It will need to determine clear criteria for who can apply, criteria for those interested to include information against, an application template, and a timeframe for launching and undertaking the process.

The timeframe should be relevant to the unique membership place.

Co-opted members have an agreed timeframe of membership set for any period

Other SACRE members have a 4-year period of membership

SACRE will need to vote to recommend the proposal or not, or make any amended recommendations. It may be that, if this is not recommended by SACRE, or the cabinet to whom the report will go to next, the South Hampshire Humanists who have previously challenged previous decision to not recommend their group become full members may not be satisfied with this application proposal and may decide to proceed with Judicial Review proceedings.

There may be other groups, who if the South Hampshire Humanists are given a specific member place would then feel not represented. Hence the proposed application for short time-framed positions.

The committee already acknowledged the need to be legally compliant whilst balancing the changing population position in the constitution review in 2020 and strongly felt that the DFE needed to take a national position on this to support all SACREs and review the statute rather than place individual SACREs in a difficult position. It is reasonable to think this may continue to be their position, but as time has passed it also will have given members time to reflect and now re-assess.

Southampton City Mission – a representative of a group of churches has also expressed interest in becoming full voting members of SACRE. It is felt that as a representative of other Christian denominations and other bodies this would be already accommodated for within the current Group A arrangements if SACRE were to vote to recommend this additional member

Impact may be that SACRE may recommend something different to that which is proposed – or that South Hampshire Humanists do not accept the constitution membership amendments proposed.

Potential Positive Impacts

Strengthen the defensible position of good decision making by SACRE by strengthening the good relations between different people.

An additional representative for the indicated large pupil population group, with belief or no religion, who is able to demonstrate they are able to positively contribute to the statutory duties and scope of Southampton SACRE would be of benefit to the diversity of the full membership voting committee members.

Southampton City Mission, representative of a group of local churches, would be able to vote with other members regarding any issues requiring a vote, if made a full member.

Responsible Service Manager	
Date	
Approved by Senior Manager	
Date	

Potential Impact

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
Age		
Disability		
Gender Reassignment		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
Pregnancy and Maternity		
Race		
Religion or Belief	People who have beliefs, but not religious beliefs will be further included in SACRE decision making where voting is required	Solution is as proposed for two additions to group A
Sex		
Sexual Orientation		
Community Safety		
Poverty		
Health & Wellbeing		
Other Significant Impacts		

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