

Equality Policy

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Approved by	Human Resources Committee
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1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy sets out the Council's commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty. The overall aims of this policy are to:
- 1.1.1 Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation (these terms are defined in the Appendix) and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010.
 - 1.1.2 Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - 1.1.3 Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 1.2 The Council will pay due regard to these aims when we:
- provide services.
 - buy goods and services.
 - employ people.
 - work in partnership.
 - And through our role in community leadership.
- 1.3. The Council is committed to fair access and public service excellence. We are committed to mainstreaming equality practices within our democratic activity, service planning and delivery and all human resource processes.



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2. Scope

- 2.1 The Protected Characteristics (as laid down in the Equality Act 2010) are: Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage/Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion/Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation.
- 2.2 This policy applies to Councillors and employees, contractors, and placements regardless of any protected characteristic, working arrangement, and membership of trade union or public interest disclosure status.
- 2.3 This policy also applies to the services the Council provides, including the treatment of our customers.

3. Policy Statement

- 3.1 The Council's Statement of Commitment towards equal opportunities and diversity is as follows. We are committed to:
 - Removing unfair treatment.
 - Promoting equality of opportunity and fair access.
 - Fostering good relations between all people.

4. Employment

- 4.1. Vacancies for posts are normally concurrently advertised internally and externally and are placed on the Council's website. They are also advertised in media outlets considered accessible to all suitable candidates. Where the Council believes there is an internal recruitment pool, vacancies are advertised internally only. In all circumstances the Council is compliant with the Equality Act 2010.



- 4.2. The Council is a member of the Disability Confident Scheme. This includes considering measures to enable staff to stay in their job - if they become disabled. Also measures in

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place to assist disabled applicants in recruitment. Wherever possible, the Council will also ensure job information is available in alternative formats if requested.

- 4.3. The Council will only request pre-employment health checks after a job has been offered.
- 4.4. Equality and Diversity awareness training will be available to all staff and elected members. All new members of staff are notified of their personal obligations to equality as part of the Council's Induction process.
- 4.5. The Council will apply the provisions in national and local conditions of service fairly. The Council will consider all reasonable requests for adjustment of working arrangements, subject to the requirements of maintaining an effective public service.
- 4.6. The Council will ensure the development of employment policies, practices and/or working conditions are in line with this policy.
- 4.7. The Council will ensure the composition of the workforce is monitored, in accordance with the [Employment: Statutory Code of Practice | Equality and Human Rights Commission](#). The Council will analyse the results to detect any trends, bias, or discrimination. Workforce data will be published where appropriate, in line with the specific duties within the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 4.8. Where under representation of any protected groups is identified, the Council may consider using positive action measures.
- 4.9. The Council will ensure that the gender pay gap is reported on, annually.
- 4.10. The Council will explore all reasonable adjustment requests and whether they can be made to overcome the barriers presented by disability.
- 4.11. The Council will seek to ensure staff are engaged and consulted appropriately and proportionately.
- 4.12. The Council will continue to have an open and transparent approach to their pay policies.
- 4.13. The Council's policy is to ensure any concerns of discrimination, victimisation and harassment are investigated and appropriate action is taken.
- 4.14. The Council will, at its discretion, implement schemes that support our commitment to inclusivity and the Public Sector Equality Duty.



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- 5.1. The Council aims to ensure that all services are free from prejudice and discrimination and are accessible to all.
- 5.2. The Council will seek to ensure that all employees, contractors, and partners have the information they need to provide equality of opportunity and that this is reflected in their conduct.
- 5.3. The Council will require partners and contractors to have equal opportunity policies/or to adopt ours. And will proportionately seek sufficient information and evidence that compliance with equal opportunities legislation is undertaken.
- 5.4. Any organisation working for the Council who commits an act of unjustified or unlawful discrimination, or allows discrimination to occur without taking appropriate action, may have their contract terminated.
- 5.5. The Council will ensure customer information is collected and analysed (where appropriate) to monitor customer satisfaction and representation in the take-up of services.
- 5.6. The Council will ensure that due regard is paid to this policy in the development of services, policies, and practices to identify potential impacts on protected characteristics. This will include using local and national demographic information (such as the Census, Indices of Multiple Deprivation, Labour Market Statistics) as well as local and national research reports.
- 5.7. The Council will seek to ensure customers are engaged and consulted (including minority groups) appropriately and proportionately to the function in question.
- 5.8. The Council will monitor and fully investigate all complaints of discrimination, victimisation and harassment and take appropriate action.



6. Responsibilities of Councillors

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- 6.1 As decision makers, Councillors are responsible for discharging the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty and paying due regard to the three aims of this policy (set out in the policy statement).
- 6.2 All Councillors are responsible for promoting this policy and treating everybody fairly and without assumptions, with respect and promoting equality of opportunity.

7. Responsibilities of Managers and Staff

- 7.1 The Chief Executive is responsible for providing leadership in the overall implementation of this policy.
- 7.2 All Executive Directors and Heads of Service are responsible for implementing this policy in their service areas, allocating specific resources to ensure compliance.
- 7.3 Managers at all levels will set an example in non-discriminatory behaviour and are expected to ensure that staff are aware of the Council's policy and act in accordance with it.
- 7.4 All managers are responsible for implementing this policy and for addressing equality issues in their business planning and performance management activities in their areas.
- 7.5 All employees are responsible for ensuring they play their part in implementing this policy by treating all people fairly, with respect and promoting equality of opportunity.
- 7.6 All staff and managers are responsible in ensuring they make themselves available for mandatory equality training.
- 7.7 Officers responsible for advising Councillors in decision making are responsible for advising those decision makers of any impact on equality, to enable them to discharge the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty and make fully informed decisions.

8. Failure to Comply with this Policy

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- 8.1 Any cases of unfair treatment, harassment, or victimisation because of a protected characteristic, whether actual or perceived, will be taken very seriously by the Council.
- 8.2 Service users (customers), partners or anyone else who feel they have been subject to unfair discrimination can make a complaint under the Council's Complaints Procedure.
- 8.3 Employees who feel they have been subject to unfair discrimination should raise the issue informally in line with the terms of the Council's Grievance Procedure.
- 8.4 Employees who are alleged to have committed an act of unfair discrimination or harassment may be liable to disciplinary action in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary Procedure, which may lead to the termination of employment.
- 8.5 Guidance and support will be available and provided to employees who are responsible for ensuring due regard to equality is paid through changes to, or the formation of new policies, services, functions, outsourcing or partnerships.

9. Monitor and Review of this Policy

- 9.1 Workforce data will be collected, analysed, and published annually in line with the Specific Duties of the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 9.2 The Council will ensure that the gender pay gap is reported on annually and kept on the website for three years.
- 9.3 The Council will monitor and fully investigate all complaints of discrimination, victimisation and harassment and take appropriate action.
- 9.4 Monitoring equality in the workplace will be measured through Staff Surveys.
- 9.6 Monitoring equality across the Borough will be measured through Residents Surveys.
- 9.5 This policy will be monitored annually and reviewed every three years.

10. Related Documents and Policies

- [Employment: Statutory Code of Practice | Equality and Human Rights Commission](#)
- [Gender Pay Gap](#)



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- Council Whistleblowing Policy
- Council Members/Officers Relations Protocol
- Council Code of Conduct for Councillors
- Council Code of Conduct for Employees
- Council Grievance Procedure
- Council Complaints Policy (External)
- Council Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

Version control record

Version number	Date	Author / reviewer	Comments / changes
V1	2017	Equality Diversity and Inclusion Advisor	Approved
V2	2020	Equality Diversity and Inclusion Advisor	Reviewed no changes to Policy
V3	2023	Equality Diversity and Inclusion Advisor	No major changes. Broken links removed, better use of language, removal of occasional duplicate statements. Also, transfer to new policy template.

