



Equality Scheme 2021 - 2024

HR



GUILDFORD
BOROUGH

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Please contact Ali Holman, Specialist – HR (Business Partner) on 01483 444008 or ali.holman@guildford.gov.uk to request this document in an alternative format or language

1. Introduction

As a Council we recognise that a workplace encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion can help:

- make it more successful
- keep employees happy and motivated
- prevent serious or legal issues arising, such as bullying, harassment and discrimination
- to better serve a diverse range of customers
- improve ideas and problem solving
- attract and retain good employees.

We aim to deliver equality of opportunity and promote diversity through our work and operate in accordance with recognised good practice in respect of employment.

Our Equality Scheme outlines our commitment to this area of work. The Equality Action Plan sets out our equality objectives under a number of key headings. The actions will develop over a period of three years, progress will be reviewed annually, and the scheme updated as necessary.

The Council is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The scheme's purpose is to:

- provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time
- not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation
- oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

2. Our commitment to equality and diversity

The Council commits to:

- encouraging equality and diversity in the workplace as they are good practice and make sound business sense
- ensuring that all our staff are clear about their roles and their responsibilities to the people and communities of Guildford

- employing a workforce which reflects, so far as reasonably practicable, the different communities we serve
- monitoring the make-up of the workforce to assess how the scheme and action plan are working in practice, and publishing this data on our website
- fully including and implementing diversity and equality issues in delivering our services
- through training, development and progression, give our staff the necessary skills to challenge and work with our partners effectively in our role as a provider of local public services
- giving all staff opportunities to develop themselves and their careers so that they can achieve their full potential.

3. Legislative and regulatory requirements

The [Equality Act 2010](#) has two main purposes, to harmonise discrimination law and to strengthen the law to support the progress on equality.

The **general** and **specific** duties placed on public bodies are set out in [Public Sector Equality Duty](#)

The general duty sets out three main aims. As a public body, we must have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Act states that compliance with the equality duty may involve treating some people more favourably than others in order to take account of their differing needs.

The **specific duties** are:

- to publish equality information annually to demonstrate compliance with the general equality duty. This includes information relating to people with protected characteristics who are:
 - its employees, or
 - affected by its policies and practices e.g. service users.
- to publish at least one equality objective we think we should achieve in order to meet the general duty. This must be done at least every four years and objectives must be specific and measurable.

4. Delivering on our intentions

Equality monitoring

We monitor Equality and Diversity through:

- reporting on data held on the HR management system
- reporting on data collected through the recruitment process
- Equality Impact Assessment data

Training and Development

Equality training and development is a key component of the Equality Scheme and is already an established area of good practice.

We offer training in areas such as:

- Mandatory training in Equality and Disability awareness
- Dementia Friends
- Gypsy and Traveller awareness
- Autism Awareness
- Mental Health First Aid and commitment to the [Time to Change Employers Pledge](#)
- Resilience training
- Emotion gyms on depression, low mood, anxiety, and anger management.

All of the above can be delivered according to organisational need.

Performance management

We aim to:

- give our staff the necessary skills, training and support including, where relevant, behavioural targets based on the Council's Organisational Culture Framework
- take appropriate action in response to complaints of discrimination or other inappropriate behaviour
- enable managers to make reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of disabled staff so that they can carry out their work
- improve our monitoring systems, assessing the information we collect and acting on the results
- make relevant data available to show how we have taken the view of our diverse community into account when deciding on priorities and to show the progress that we are making.
- give clear and positive leadership from senior management in the Council

Developing and maintaining a diverse and inclusive workforce

Recruitment

We work to achieve equality of opportunity in employment by making sure all employees involved in recruitment are aware that:

- no job applicant should receive less favourable treatment than another on the grounds of a protected characteristic
- they must not impose any conditions or requirements which unfairly affect applicants from one group more than those from other groups
- they must assess each individual on their capability to do any given task. This also means recognising the need for reasonable adjustments for disabled people to carry out the duties of the post
- all staff involved in recruiting must attend the relevant training.

Employees

The Council has robust policies including equal opportunities, bullying and harassment at work, staff code of conduct, grievance and discipline and, through these, it operates a zero tolerance policy to discrimination, harassment and victimisation. These policies are regularly reviewed and equality checked, and equality impact assessments are undertaken in accordance with our Equality Scheme.

We commit to recording and monitoring

- the number and diversity of employees in post using a variety of data
- applicants for employment and success rates in regard to the protected groups
- employees receiving training and development provided via the Corporate Training Plan
- employees who are subject to the Council's disciplinary procedure and use the data to change, where appropriate, policies and practices
- grievances, including claims of bullying and harassment, and use the data to change, where appropriate, employment policies and practices
- leavers' reasons, by offering exit interviews to all voluntary leavers.

5. Our priorities

We have identified the four key areas for this Scheme and these provide the framework for our action plan:

Leadership and corporate commitment

As a Council we have an important community leadership role to promote and encourage acceptance, fairness and equality across the borough, and encouraging good practice with our partnership agencies.

Consultation and community development and scrutiny

We recognise that to ensure our services meet the needs of all the diverse communities it serves, it is important to consult and engage all communities effectively through appropriate communications, monitoring and systems.

Service delivery and customer care

As a Council we recognise that all services should meet diverse needs, be accessible and ensure local people feel fairly treated and receive services appropriate to their needs.

Employment and training

We recognise and value the diversity of Guildford's communities. The Council will seek to employ and retain a diverse workforce that, so far as reasonably possible, reflects the community we serve.

6. Carrying out our statutory duties

We will:

- continue to review our policies, carry out equality impact assessments of our relevant activities, and mitigate any negative effects of the policy/decision if appropriate. We will publish summaries of the equality impact assessments on our intranet and internet sites
- continue to consult with staff groups and employees on the introduction of new policies and procedures prior to implementation
- conduct staff surveys regularly to find out what employees think and feel about working for our Council
- conduct customer satisfaction surveys, such as tenant surveys and, wherever possible, include questions relating to equality and diversity
- publish on our website:
 - the Equality Scheme and action plan
 - a summary of the results of equality impact assessments and consultations
 - a summary of the results of monitoring
 - our annual Workforce Profile Report.

7. How we will measure the impact of our actions

Assessing the impact of our policies, practices and decision-making on equality, using good equality information and analysis, is an important part of complying with the general equality duty. This can help identify practical steps to tackle any negative impacts or discrimination, and to ensure that this is an integral part of decision-making.

For more detailed information and advice, please see our [Equality Impact Assessment Guidance \(link\)](#)

8. Concluding statement

We welcome and encourage comments on and questions about our Equality Scheme. Should you wish, at any time, to raise issues about this Scheme or about other equality and diversity matters at Guildford Borough Council please contact Ali Holman, Specialist – HR (Business Partner), on 01483 444008 or ali.holman@guildford.gov.uk

Useful information

The Equality Act 2010

The following legislation was merged into one act and formed the Equality Act 2010:

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976 (RRA)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA 2005)
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Equality Act 2006 (This remains in force as far as it relates to the constitution and operation of the Equality and Human Rights Commission)
- Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007

The Human Rights Act 1998

This is related to but separate from the Equality Act 2010 and remains fully in force.

UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities

The text of this Convention was agreed at the United Nations (UN) in December 2006. The UK signed the Convention on 30 March 2007 and ratified it on 8 June 2009 albeit with reservations on some of the articles in the convention, i.e. those that it felt not (yet) willing to take steps to implement fully.

Its purpose is to reinforce that basic human rights, i.e. as set out in the Human Rights Act, should be available, fully, to disabled people.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission

The Equality and Human Rights Commission is the regulatory body responsible for enforcing the Equality Act 2010.

To find out more about any of the above please visit <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com>