

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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Team: Guildford HR Team and Waverley Corporate Policy Team

Document Information & Governance

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Equality Impact Assessment	Required	18 May 2023		Louise Norie
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required			
Climate Change	Not required			

1. Document Statement

We recognise the value and worth of everyone who lives and works in our respective Boroughs. This policy sets out our commitment as an employer, community leader and provider of services to actively promote equality, diversity and inclusion and commit to equal opportunities for all, upholding the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

2. Scope and Purpose

The scope of this policy covers not only the role of the council as a major employer and provider of services but also recognises that we have an important role to play as a community leader. This policy sets out our commitment to the values of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and their importance in underlying everything we do as a council.

2.1 Our Equality Objectives

Our equality objectives, published on our website, make a commitment to:

- provide high quality public services which are accessible to all; delivered fairly and with an understanding of where need is greatest
- work with partners to develop cohesive communities where equality, diversity and inclusion are respected and championed in accordance with the principles above and discrimination is eliminated
- actively welcome into Waverley those world citizens who are seeking refuge in the UK from war, repression, natural disasters, extreme hunger and poverty
- actively welcome and respect difference and recognise the performance benefits that a diverse and engaged workforce brings and build a culture in which the contribution everyone makes is valued, recognised and celebrated
- promote an environment where people feel safe to challenge discriminatory behaviour and discriminatory language and will respond swiftly and transparently to any such allegations.

2.2 Our Legislative and Regulatory Requirements

The [Equality Act 2010](#) legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. The following protected characteristics are covered by the Act:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

As a local authority, we have both general and specific duties under the 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.

2.3 As an Employer

We commit to creating a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.

We carry out the following **monitoring** to ensure we are treating everyone fairly and without bias or discrimination.

- Reporting on data held on the HR management system.
- Reporting on data collected through the recruitment process.
- Monitoring and publishing quarterly workforce profiles and gender pay gap data annually.
- Maintaining an up-to-date EDI action plan monitored by our Equality Group.
- Monitoring and taking appropriate action on reports from our employees regarding any aggression, accidents, bullying or near misses.
- Continue to review our HR policies and ensure gender neutral language is being used.
- Take appropriate action in response to complaints of discrimination or other inappropriate behaviour.
- Enable managers to make reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of staff with a disability so that they can carry out their work.
- Conduct staff surveys regularly to find out what employees think and feel about working for the council.

Recruitment

The recruitment process is designed to give all candidates equal opportunities and to ensure decisions are based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act.)

The interview procedure ensures that interview panels must be made up of fully trained interviewers. Reasonable adjustments must be made for anyone who identifies as having a disability as defined under the Equality Act 2010 and interviewers must be aware of their equality responsibilities and ensure that these are met. Consideration should be given to using panel members from other services to provide balance and the gender/age mix of the panel bearing in mind the nature of the role being interviewed for. Interviews must be inclusive, welcoming, private and give the candidate a positive experience of the council whether or not they are successful.

We are:

- a Disability Confident organisation.
- supportive of the Armed Forces Covenant.

Learning and Development

EDI learning and development is crucial to the EDI Policy and is already an established area of good practice. Opportunities for learning, training and development will be available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

We offer:

- Mandatory induction training on EDI awareness.
- Additional EDI training workshops through Surrey Learn and other providers on a range of learning including Neurodiversity in the Workplace, Gypsy and Traveller awareness, disability awareness, dementia, resilience training, health and wellbeing, Mental First Aid and commitment to the [Time to Change Employers Pledge](#).
- Regular internal communications raising awareness of cultural, religious and wellbeing events.
- Positive action through additional training/support .

We also have internal equality groups that meet regularly.

Performance management

Performance is managed through an annual performance agreement process at which performance is assessed, targets are set and EDI support needs discussed as appropriate.

Managers are enabled to make reasonable adjustments to meet and support the needs of staff with a disability to ensure barriers to work are minimised.

Employees

We expect all employees to be treated, and to treat others, with fairness, dignity and respect. Where behaviour falls short and unfair treatment is identified, we will take steps to correct this through the normal procedures. We take a zero tolerance approach to bullying, discrimination and harassment and will investigate any complaints of this nature thoroughly.

To support our employees in this approach, we have robust policies including equal opportunities, bullying and harassment at work, staff code of conduct, dignity and respect policy, grievance and discipline. These policies are regularly reviewed and equality checked to take account of changes in the law and equality impact assessments are undertaken.

The council aims to provide an accessible and inclusive working environment where the contribution everyone makes is valued, recognised and celebrated and everyone feels comfortable to be themselves.

2.4 As a Provider of Services

The council provides over a hundred different services to residents, businesses and customers. We are committed to “providing high quality public services which are accessible to all; delivered fairly and with an understanding of where need is greatest”. (Equality Objective)

We expect contractors, working on our behalf, to uphold and demonstrate at least the same commitment to the values of equality, diversity and inclusion as the council and the legal obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Equality Impact Assessments

Service managers are responsible for carrying out appropriate Equality Impact Assessments to ensure there is no discrimination in the way services are provided. Impact assessments should be carried out when there are proposals to change service delivery, policies or practices and should result in the mitigation of any negative effects that might arise. Impact assessments should be done at the start of project. It is important that decision makers take ‘due regard’ of the impact of the changes or policies proposed and therefore the evidence of the impact assessment should be included in the decision making process.

Complaints Process

All complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation’s work activities will be taken seriously. Complaints will be investigated under the Council’s complaints procedure and appropriate action taken.

Customer Surveys

When conducting customer surveys, it is important to ensure that those responding are a representative sample of the customer base. Equality monitoring questions should be included on a proportionate basis and guidance can be found on the council’s intranet.

2.5 As a Community Leader

In our role as Community Leaders, we are committed to:

- working with partners to develop cohesive communities where equality, diversity and inclusion are respected and championed and discrimination is eliminated
- actively welcoming into Waverley those world citizens who are seeking refuge in the UK from war, repression, natural disasters, extreme hunger and poverty.
- actively welcoming and respecting difference and recognising the performance benefits that a diverse and engaged workforce brings and build a culture in which the contribution everyone makes is valued recognised and celebrated.
- promoting an environment where people feel safe to challenge discriminatory behaviour and discriminatory language and will respond swiftly and transparently to any such allegations.

3. Document Improvement

The Council welcomes comments and feedback on its policies and procedures. Please contact the Waverley Corporate Policy Manager, Organisational Development, or the Specialist – HR (Business Partner) for Guildford, if you have any comments.

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