

Diversity and inclusion policy

Policy overview

People from different backgrounds, cultures and experiences bring value to the workplace and this brings benefits. We work better and improve services if we have a supportive environment. Everyone has visible and non-visible differences and by respecting these differences, colleagues, customers, communities and other stakeholders can feel valued.

This policy covers how we treat everyone when:

- carrying our functions
- whenever we plan policies
- when we provide or commission services
- when we recruit or fulfil our role as an employer

We oppose all forms of unlawful discrimination. We do not tolerate any form of intimidation, bullying or harassment. [Read the Harassment and Bullying Policy for more information.](#)

The Council also recognises that services that are regulated will have bespoke responsibilities to their residents, service users and workforce that may fall outside of this policy.

Principles

We are committed with our workforce to:

- providing equality and fairness to all our employees and to those applying to work for us
- recognising and valuing individual differences and input of all team members
- avoiding stereotypical assumptions or bias, conscious or otherwise
- selecting candidates based on their aptitude and ability for:
 - employment
 - promotion
 - training
 - any other benefit
- promoting dignity and respect for every employee. We will identify and address issues affecting health, wellbeing and ability to perform well
- developing training programmes to meet employees' needs, learning styles and ability

- offering mandatory training on diversity and inclusion
- encouraging anyone who feels they have been subject to discrimination to raise their concerns so we can apply corrective measures

We will not:

- tolerate intimidation, harassment, or bullying
- tolerate discrimination based on any protected characteristic listed in the Equality Act 2010. The protected characteristics are:
 - age
 - disability
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage and civil partnerships
 - pregnancy and maternity
 - race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins)
 - religion or belief
 - sex
 - sexual orientation

Equality duty

By law, in carrying out our public functions, we must take positive steps to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunities
- foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

We are required to publish information to demonstrate our compliance with the general equality duty. This includes information about those who share a protected characteristic who are:

- employees
- people affected by our policies or practices

To do this, we use an Equality Impact Analysis process.

This process will identify any impact on people with protected characteristics regarding:

- projects
- proposed service changes
- commissioning
- decommissioning

- policies

Types of discrimination

- direct discrimination
- indirect discrimination
- associate discrimination
- perceptive discrimination

All the above types of discrimination are defined on the Government's website: [Discrimination: your rights: Types of discrimination \('protected characteristics'\)](#)

Proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim

The Equality Act 2010 provides for exceptional circumstances where unfavourable treatment, or any disadvantage caused to a claimant may not necessarily equate to unlawful discrimination. However these will be rare and HR and legal advice must be sought.

Harassment and bullying

Unwanted conduct, related to one of the protected characteristics, that has the purpose or effect of:

- violating a person's dignity
- or, creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment

Employees or the public can complain of behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them. The complainant need not have the relevant characteristic themselves.

Those who commit severe acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

Bullying an individual related to a protected characteristic can be unlawful behaviour.

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour. It is an abuse or misuse of power. It undermines, humiliates, denigrates or injures an individual or a group of employees.

Victimisation

An individual is subject to a detriment when, for example, an employee is denied a promotion because they:

- made or supported a complaint
- raised a concern
- are suspected of submitting a complaint or concern

or

- a member of the public being denied our services because they:
 - made or supported a complaint
 - raised a concern or we suspect they have done so

Failure to make reasonable adjustments

By law, we must make reasonable adjustments. These ensure we do not disadvantage disabled people compared to those who are not disabled. They fall into three areas:

- changing practices, policies and procedures
- physical feature, for example, a barrier
- providing extra equipment or getting someone to do something to assist you

Reasonable adjustments are however not limitless and will need to be a balanced alongside with cost, likely impact and the working environment

Raising an issue

An employee may use our [grievance policy and procedure](#) to make a complaint if they consider that they have:

- been unlawfully discriminated against based on any of the protected characteristics
- a complaint involving alleged bullying or harassment

Alternatively employees may raise issues in confidence with a senior officer in HR services [by email](#).

A member of the public may use our [complaints policy](#) for similar complaints.

Employee support

We have some employee networks in place. In addition, there are management groups that review and consider matters about diversity and inclusion. These groups include but are not limited to:

- LGBT staff
- disability staff engagement group
- black and minority ethnic staff network
- corporate diversity steering group
- people strategy engagement group

All employees are encouraged to engage with the employee networks and activities during working time. This includes attending monthly meetings and taking part in events.

