

Equality & diversity Policy

Introduction

The success of the Council depends on the work of its Councillors and employees.

The Council believes that capitalising on what is unique about individuals, drawing on their different perspectives and experiences and celebrating diversity will add value to the way the Council manages its affairs on behalf of the community it serves.

Policy Statement

The Council will constantly strive to create a productive environment, representative of and responsive to different cultures and groups, where everyone has an equal opportunity to contribute to the Council's objectives.

Councillors and employees all have a responsibility to embrace and support this ethos and must continue to challenge behaviour and attitudes that prevent the Council from achieving its vision. Using fair, objective and innovative employment practices, the Council's aim is to ensure that:

- All employees and potential employees are treated fairly and with respect at all stages of their employment.
- All employees have the right to be free from harassment and bullying of any description, or any other form of unwanted behavior. No individual shall suffer harassment, bullying or unfavourable treatment of any kind based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion/ belief, sex or sexual orientation as per the Equality Act 2010.
- All employees have an equal opportunity to contribute and to achieve their potential, irrespective of any defining feature that may give rise to unfair or unlawful discrimination.

For each 'Protected Characteristic, the Council sets out its Commitment as follows:

Age

Age diversity is promoted and valued through challenging age stereotyping. The Council recognises that the age range of the modern workforce is wider than ever, and will take steps to ensure that nobody is disadvantaged on the basis of age.

Disability

The abilities of disabled people are recognised and valued within the Council through:

- focusing on what people can do rather than on what they cannot
- challenging stereotypes about people with disabilities
- making reasonable adjustments in the workplace where we are able, to help people

with disabilities achieve their full career potential.

Gender Reassignment

People who plan to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone gender reassignment are protected against all forms of discrimination and harassment. The Council will take positive steps to support a trans-gender person and ensure they are treated with dignity and respect. The Council will seek to support employees who are transitioning (the steps a person may take to live in the gender which they identify as) by taking a sensitive and understanding approach. The Council recognises that each person's transition is unique to them and respects people's right to confidentiality as well as people's right to be open about their transition. Encouragement and support will be given to employees who are trying to step outside the constraints of gender stereotypes as the Council recognises that gender stereotyping can be harmful and offensive to trans people.

The Council acknowledges that transitioning does not necessarily mean someone choosing to have a medical intervention such as surgery or hormone therapy as this is not necessarily an essential part of transitioning. Transitioning might also involve things such as dressing more aligned to the gender the individual identifies as, changing official documents, etc.

The Council will seek to update its personnel records to state the chosen name and sex identified by the individual at an appropriate time. The Council will ensure that all records of trans employees will not refer to a previous name, with any records being made prior to a name or gender change being updated upon receipt of a Gender Recognition Certificate.

Marital status

People are treated fairly and equally within the Council irrespective of them being in a Marriage or Civil Partnership.

Pregnancy and Maternity

The Council is committed to diversity and inclusion. As part of this commitment it will seek to create an inclusive and supportive environment for employees who are pregnant, on maternity leave or returning/have returned to work following a period of maternity leave. Where it is able, the Council will ensure that facilities and working conditions are in place that support such employees (e.g. facilities for mothers who are breastfeeding where possible).

Race

No employee of the Council should suffer any form of unlawful discrimination on the basis of their race.

To ensure this, the Council is committed to:

- challenging racial stereotypes
- understanding, respecting and valuing different racial and cultural backgrounds and perspectives.

Religion/Belief

People are treated fairly in the Council irrespective of their religious beliefs and practices by recognising individuals' freedom of belief and right to protection from intolerance and persecution. The Council will also, where possible, make reasonable adjustments for employees who may observe certain religious practices and festivals (e.g. Muslims may require a designated area for prayer)

Sex

No employee or potential employee will be treated any less favourably irrespective of whether they are a man or a woman.

Sexual Orientation

No employee or potential employee shall be treated any less favourably regardless of their sexual orientation. This includes how individuals choose to express their sexual orientation, such as through appearance or places they visit.

Monitoring

The Council will look to monitor its policies and practices to ensure their effectiveness in promoting equality and embracing diversity in all its activities. If the monitoring process indicates possible areas where discrimination, harassment, victimisation may be occurring, appropriate action will be taken.

Bearing in mind the small number of staff the Council employs, if under-representation of certain groups occurs then in the first instance reasons for this will be established. Where necessary, positive action such as training employees, encouraging applications, or introducing more flexible working practices maybe considered.