

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Origination/Author:	Richard Wood
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Equality and Diversity Policy Statement

1. Guildford Borough Council has a longstanding track record of working to ensure equality of opportunity in both service delivery and employment. In the context of changing attitudes, changing legislative requirements and increasing expectations on the part of the community and employees and job seekers, the Council has refreshed and expanded its continuing commitment to equality of opportunity.

This statement sets out our commitment to equality

2. We recognise that we serve a diverse community that has diverse needs. We regard diversity as a strength in our community and we will work hard to ensure that the community that we serve, whether residents or visitors to our Borough or applicant for jobs, face no unjustifiable barriers in accessing our services, the services that others provide on our behalf and our job opportunities.
3. This means identifying and correcting any direct discrimination, indirect (or unintended) discrimination and any institutional discrimination arising out of the procedures and practices of the Council. Beyond that, we will seek to ensure that unfair discrimination does not arise by promoting equality of opportunity and the valuing of diversity and by promoting good relations between the diverse members of our community as well as tolerance and understanding of the needs of others.
4. We recognise that people need protection from unfair discrimination, in particular, on grounds of:
 - gender/sex
 - race/ethnicity
 - disability
 - religion or belief
 - sexual orientation
 - age

- gender reassignment
 - marital/civil partnership status
 - pregnancy/maternity
5. We also recognise that individuals may experience discrimination on more than one of the above grounds (dual or combined discrimination). We will use and maintain up-to-date our Single Equality Scheme 2012 – 2015 to ensure that we are alert to and that we work to eliminate discrimination whether for one or more than one reason.

More specifically, we will:

- set out our intentions towards equality and diversity and how we will meet our statutory obligations in a Single Equality Scheme, which will be reviewed every 3 years
 - identify specific equality and diversity objectives in our annual service plans
 - include equality objectives in our policies on both service delivery and employment
 - use our Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) toolkit to systematically and consistently assess all of our activities to identify potential differential impacts on people from the above protected groups;
 - where the EIA identifies a clear differential impact on one or more of the above groups, consult with people from those groups on the best ways of avoiding the differential impact causing unfair discrimination
 - monitor the impact of our equality policy and objectives to ensure that they are having the desired affect
 - ensure that our staff and councillors have appropriate knowledge and skills to deliver and influence the achievement of the principles in this policy statement
 - ensure that those that we work with in partnership understand and share our values and approaches to ensuring equality and valuing diversity
 - ensure, through our procurement procedures, that those who we contract with to provide services on our behalf apply the Council's equality and diversity approaches in the work that they do
 - publish, mainly on the Council's website but in other ways as appropriate, our commitments to equality and diversity as a means of promoting good relations between the different groups that make up our diverse community.
6. We acknowledge that we do not have unlimited resources and that the commitments that we make in respect of equality and diversity should be realistic and achievable. With that in mind, we will take steps to ensure that we know, as best we can, the equality profile of our community. That knowledge of the make up of the communities that we serve, together with the involvement of and consultation with our communities, will

enable us to prioritise our activities and focus our attention where there is the greatest need.

Ultimate goal

7. Our aim is to 'mainstream' equality and diversity into all of our activities. This means that it becomes second nature to think of equality and diversity implications as part of the everyday delivery of services and in the development of new activities and changes to existing activities.

Recognition

8. We want our achievements in developing our equality and diversity approaches to be recognised. Having reached 'achieving' status of the Equality Framework for Local Government, we will continue to use the Framework as a tool for continuous improvement and to benchmark our performance.

Responsibility

9. The ultimate responsibility for ensuring equality of opportunity and the valuing of diversity in the Council's activities rests with the Managing Director in conjunction with the Council's Executive. The Managing Director will allocate lead responsibility for this to an Executive Head of Service and all Executive Heads of Service and service managers will have responsibility for ensuring that equality is integrated into their service area, is implemented on a day-to-day basis and is monitored to make sure that improvements are achieved and maintained.
10. Human Resources will provide the professional expertise on equality and diversity matters and will be responsible for alerting the Management Team to new legislation and the development of emerging best practice.
11. For more information about the Council's equality and diversity activities please visit the Council's website at:

<http://www.guildford.gov.uk/article/6688/Equality-and-diversity>

Please contact us if you:

- feel that you suffer discrimination in receiving any of the Council's services
- have a complaint that falls within our equality and diversity policy statement
- want more information about the Council's equality and diversity approaches
- have suggestions about the way that the Council could improve its approaches to equality and diversity

In the first instance, please contact the HR Partner (Equality and Diversity) by any one of the following methods:

e-mail on HR@guildford.gov.uk

telephone on 01483 444013

letter to Guildford Borough Council, Millmead House, Millmead, Guildford, Surrey GU2 4BB