



CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

COMPREHENSIVE EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY POLICY “Embracing diversity, committed to equality”

OUR COMMITMENT

Cambridge City Council believes in the dignity of all people and their right to respect and equality of opportunity. We value the strength that comes with difference and the positive contribution that diversity brings to our city.

We recognise and accept that discrimination means some people may have not had equal access to services or employment or fair chances in life. Therefore we support the view that it may be necessary to develop or create some services or opportunities to specifically meet different needs.

We understand that discrimination can be institutionalised. We are committed to combating any unintended institutional discrimination by developing an anti-discriminatory organisational culture, placing equalities at the centre of all our activities and key agendas, and celebrating diversity in its many forms.

We work to the following principles:

- › We recognise nine main equality strands as recognised in UK law, giving all equal importance. These are: gender, gender reassignment; race and ethnicity; disability; sexual orientation; age; religion/belief, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity
- › We aim to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different and diverse communities
- › We support the progressive approach of promoting good relations between different groups in order to tackle prejudice and end discrimination, and apply this to all equality strands
- › We are committed to developing and promoting an anti-discriminatory environment within the Council and City as a whole and will reflect this in our policies and practices
- › We are committed to improving our equalities practice at corporate, departmental, service and individual levels throughout the council and want to maintain a positive and inclusive workplace culture that values all employees equally

- › We aim to identify and eliminate barriers in our own systems and procedures, training staff and managers to enable them to help make this happen
- › We will actively engage with the local community through communication and consultation to ensure that our services meet the needs of and are fully accessible to our diverse population
- › We recognise the value of an energetic and creative voluntary/community sector and will work with groups, individuals and organisations to provide culturally specific services, with equalities firmly embedded in those relationships and projects
- › We will ensure a commitment to equalities and diversity in our commissioning and procurement arrangements and expect suppliers and contractors to fully comply with this equalities and diversity policy
- › We encourage real participation in local democracy and representation on various bodies and in our processes, from people who may normally feel excluded from decision-making processes
- › We will comply with all our legal obligations and follow best practice guidance

SCOPE

This policy applies to all aspects of the Council's functions including:

- Provision of services
- Commissioning and purchasing of goods and services
- Recruitment, employment, training and development of staff
- Grants to voluntary and community organisations
- Landlord functions in respect of housing and other property
- Exercise of statutory powers and responsibilities
- Partnerships with other organisations
- Community involvement
- Consultation with local people
- Promotion and publicity

VALUING OUR EMPLOYEES – AS AN EMPLOYER

All Council employees are responsible for complying with this policy and must follow it as part of their conditions of service. Council staff must not discriminate against anyone, persuade another employee to discriminate, tolerate or condone discriminatory practices, harass or abuse other employees or members of the public - for any reason. In return we expect our staff to be treated with respect and we will not tolerate discriminatory or abusive behaviour towards our staff from members of the public.

The Working Environment

The Council aims to:

- provide a safe and accessible working environment for existing and potential employees, one that is free from harassment and discrimination, where individuals' values, beliefs, identities and cultures are respected
- provide equipment and facilities, including adaptations to the workplace, to enable people with disabilities to develop their full potential
- take action to protect employees who are at risk of violence while carrying out their duties
- support and facilitate staff networks for those from minority groups or those who face disadvantage or discrimination in society

Employment practices

- We aspire to being an employer for whom local people will want to work
- We aim to make sure that jobs with the council are accessible to all sections of the community, and that our recruitment policies and practices do not indirectly discriminate against any particular group of job seekers
- We actively seek to participate in innovative programmes that increase opportunities for minority groups to gain employment with the council
- We will develop initiatives to redress current imbalances in our workforce, through recruitment, career development and training, and building strong links with marginalised or minority communities
- We will provide support systems as part of our policy to promote dignity and respect at work and make confidential reporting systems available for those who may face prejudice or discrimination
- We will promote opportunities to ensure that not only is the Council's workforce representative of the local community, but that this representation is also reflected across all levels and grades
- We are committed to undertaking regular workforce database monitoring and staff attitude surveys, to help identify equality and diversity trends or issues that may need addressing

VALUING OUR CUSTOMERS – DELIVERING SERVICES

It is our aim that:

- service users receive fair, sensitive and equal treatment when accessing services, and are treated with dignity and respect
- services are relevant and responsive to the changing and diverse needs of our local population, and are delivered without discrimination, prejudice or bias
- services, buildings and information are fully accessible, particularly to those groups or individuals who face disadvantage or discrimination
- we provide clear and understandable information about services and policies in accessible formats and languages
- all external contracts comply with the council's equality policy
- service users are aware of their rights and entitlements when receiving services

We will ensure that all job applicants, employees and service users have access to this policy and our equality values statement.

HOW WE ARE ORGANISED

There is a clear infrastructure to help deliver equality and diversity in the organisation.

Councillors - elected members of the Council have overall responsibility for this policy. The Leader of the Council is the portfolio holder for equalities and diversity. The Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee oversees and scrutinises the Leader's portfolio.

Equalities Panel - meets formally twice a year to advise on the Council's equalities work. Membership consists of four members of the public, four staff representatives (two at management level) and four elected Councillors.

Strategic Leadership Team – provides visible leadership on equalities and diversity issues.

Equalities Champion - a member of the Council's Strategic Leadership Team is responsible for championing all equality areas.

Joint Equalities Group (JEG) – an officer group that meets regularly to develop, deliver and oversee the council's equalities and diversity programme. Combines equalities work in employment, service delivery and community relations. Core membership is:

- Strategy & Partnerships
- Human Resources
- Community Development
- Departmental Link Officers

Departmental Equalities Link Officers - representatives from each department report to Departmental Management Teams and link in with the corporate equalities agenda through the Joint Equalities Group.

Staff Groups – four staff groups that meet regularly throughout the year:

- Black and Minority Ethnic Staff Group
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Staff Group
- Disabled Staff Group
- Women's Staff Network



Staff groups are encouraged to be self-determining; all have their own ways of working. The staff groups meet jointly with the Strategic Leadership Team at least annually.

HOW WE DELIVER

Promoting diversity programme

The Council has responded to the duty to promote good relations between different communities by developing an annual programme of 'diversity days'. This approach recognises the main equality strands and provides a framework for engaging different individuals, groups, partners and communities.

The programme primarily consists of support for events to celebrate, for example:

- › LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) History Month – February
- › International Women's Day – 8th March
- › International Day to Eliminate Racism – 21st March
- › National Play Day – August
- › Pink Festival – August
- › Black History Month – October
- › International Day of Older People – 1st October
- › International Day of Disabled People – 3rd December
- › Holocaust Memorial Day – 27th January
- › various interfaith initiatives throughout the year

This way of working also allows for response to other equality or diversity projects, for example World Roma Day – 8th April, International Day of Peace – 21st September, Refugee Week – June.

Community Development

Cambridge City Council has a strong Community Development Unit with equalities resources who support, strengthen, resource and engage many minority and marginalised communities.

Training, communications and resources

We provide equality and diversity training for staff and managers including mandatory equalities training within induction programmes for new staff. We supplement formal training with additional briefings and communications designed to raise awareness and increase knowledge around all equality issues, best practice and legislation.

Consultation and Involvement

The Council undertakes regular consultation with service users to ensure that the views of all communities are heard. Targeted work is undertaken to seek minority communities' views where these may not be picked up in general consultation initiatives. This consultation is used to inform council priorities and improve services.

Equality Framework for Local Government

The Equality Framework is a national framework offering a comprehensive and systematic approach to measuring performance on equalities issues. The Framework covers all the groups that are protected by discrimination law. The Council measures its progress against the five areas of performance contained in the Framework as part of our Annual Equalities Review.

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)

EIAs are a mechanism to equality check council functions and policies to ensure they do not discriminate or cause any adverse impact relating to equalities and diversity. The Council has an ongoing process of undertaking EIAs on all relevant policies and functions.

Monitoring

Monitoring is an essential and integral element of the Council's equalities performance, and is a requirement of the revised Equality Standard. We also monitor our services to meet the specific duties as set out in the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005.

Single Equality Scheme (SES)

In 2009, in anticipation of the introduction of the Equality Act 2010, the Council adopted a single equality scheme, which includes outstanding actions from our previous race, disability and gender schemes. The scheme is reviewed and reported on annually as part of the Council's Annual Equalities Review.

REVIEWING THE POLICY

We will review our practice regularly in line with this policy to ensure that the principles, objectives and priorities are achieved. We will produce an annual report each year, which will be reported to the Strategic Leadership Team, the Equalities Panel, and Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, and will be published on the Internet.



LEGISLATION

We are committed to complying fully with our legal obligations under equality laws and guidance, and to responding to these speedily and thoroughly. The main UK laws relating to equality and diversity are as follows, starting with the most recent:

Equality Act 2010

Brings together all the existing strands of equality and discrimination legislation, with the aim of clarifying existing law, extending it to cover some anomalies in existing discrimination law, and creating a stronger set of obligations on public bodies to promote equality. Creates a new Public Sector Equality Duty and a duty to consider reducing social and economic inequality. Bans age discrimination outside the workplace and strengthens protection from discrimination for disabled people and extends protection to carers. Introduces the concept of 'dual discrimination' where people have a combination of protected characteristics.

Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007

Prohibits discrimination in the provision of goods, facilities, services and education, in the exercise of public functions and the use and disposal of premises.

Equality Act 2006

Establishes a single Commission for Equality and Human Rights by 2007 that replaces the three existing commissions. Introduces a positive duty on public sector bodies to promote equality of opportunity between women and men and eliminate sex discrimination. Protects access discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in terms of access to goods, facilities and services.

Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

Protects against discrimination on grounds of age in employment and vocational training. Prohibits direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation, harassment and instructions to discriminate.

Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006

The Act seeks to stop people from intentionally using threatening words or behaviour to stir up hatred against somebody because of what they believe.

Disability Discrimination Amendment Act 2005

Introduces a positive duty on public bodies to promote equality for disabled people.

Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005

Introduces new definitions of indirect discrimination and harassment, explicitly prohibits discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity leave, sets out the extent to which it is discriminatory to pay a woman less than she would otherwise have been paid due to pregnancy or maternity issues.

Civil Partnerships Act 2004

Provides legal recognition and parity of treatment for same-sex couples and married couples, including employment benefits and pension rights.

Gender Recognition Act 2004

The purpose of the Act is to provide transsexual people with legal recognition in their acquired gender. Legal recognition follows from the issue of a full gender recognition certificate by a gender recognition panel.

Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulation 2003

The directive protects against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in employment, vocational training, promotion, and working conditions.

Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulation 2003

The directive protects against discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief in employment, vocational training, promotion and working conditions.

Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulation 2003

Introduced new definitions of indirect discrimination and harassment, new burden of proof requirements, continuing protection after employment ceases, new exemption for a determinate job requirement and the removal of certain other exemptions.

Race Relations Amendment Act 2000

Places a statutory duty on all public bodies to promote equal opportunity, eliminate racial discrimination and promote good relations between different racial groups.

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Outlaws the discrimination of disabled people in employment, the provision of goods, facilities and services or the administration of management of premises.

Race Relations Act 1976

The Act prohibits discrimination on racial grounds in the areas of employment, education, and the provision of goods, facilities, services and premises.

Sex Discrimination Act 1975

The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of sex. Sex discrimination is unlawful in employment, education, advertising or when providing housing, goods, services or facilities. It is unlawful to discriminate because someone is married, in employment or advertisements for jobs.

Equal Pay Act 1970 (Amended)

This gives an individual a right to the same contractual pay and benefits as a person of the opposite sex in the same employment, where the man and the woman are doing: like work; work rates as equivalent under an analytical job evaluation study; or work that is proved to be of equal value.