



CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

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

OUR COMMITMENT

We are a joint founder (with the University of Cambridge) and signatory of the Cambridgeshire-wide Equality Pledge that commits signatory organisations to appreciate and value the benefits that different communities contribute to Cambridge and the surrounding region. The Equality Pledge is as follows:

“We believe 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 community. Our aspiration is for Cambridge and the wider region to be safe, welcoming and inclusive”.

We recognise and accept that discrimination means some people have not had equal access to services or employment or fair chances in life. Therefore, we recognise it is necessary to develop inclusive services to reduce barriers to access or service use for people who experience discrimination, including those effected by multiple forms of discrimination.

We understand that discrimination can be institutionalised. We are committed to combating any 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: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. We treat care experience and poverty/ low-income as protected characteristics as far as the law allows this.
- We will recognise and treat people with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment according to the gender in which they identify as unless it is necessary, in exceptional circumstances, to use the services and employment

exceptions as a proportionate means to achieve a legitimate aim in line with the Equality Act 2010. If this is necessary, we shall make sure to communicate this in a respectful and sensitive manner.

- We understand the requirements under the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) and will proactively advance equality and promote inclusion.
- 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 and inclusive environment within the council and City as a whole and will reflect this in our policies and practices.
- We are committed to establishing an inclusive and equitable culture within our workforce where our people feel a sense of belonging and purpose.
- We want all staff, at all levels of the organisation including Leadership, to be equipped to challenge discrimination and unacceptable behaviour and to continue to develop and embed inclusive equalities working practices and policies.
- We are committed to identifying and eliminating 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 and are inclusive 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 comply with the Equality Act 2010. We will secure wider social and economic benefits (social value) in commissioning contracts and monitor this performance.
- We ensure our democratic services are easy to understand and promote participation 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 staff, councillors, volunteers and contractors working for or on behalf of the council and is related to the council's functions such as:

- Provision of services
- Commissioning and purchasing of goods and services
- Recruitment, employment, training, development and support 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

The Council aims to provide a working environment where people's values, beliefs, identities and cultures are respected. It aims to provide an environment where people feel listened to, valued for their contributions, and where they feel safe and comfortable to be themselves at work. All Council employees are responsible for complying with this policy and must follow it as part of their conditions of service. The council has a People and Culture Strategy, which also identifies how it proactively promotes equality, inclusion and belonging and celebrates diversity as an organisation.

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. Council staff must also look for opportunities to be as inclusive as possible to colleagues and residents from different backgrounds. We also 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

- We aspire to being an employer for whom local people from diverse backgrounds will want to work and be comfortable and feel valued to be themselves at work.
- We promote a working environment in which we actively listen to each other – being kind, compassionate and non-judgemental.
- We have a staff code of conduct in order to ensure we act professionally and treat others with dignity and respect.
- We promote a culture of allyship in the workplace – where we stand up against discrimination and proactively promote equality and diversity regardless of our personal backgrounds. We understand that this helps to

create a more diverse, equitable, and productive environment where we all feel valued and supported.

- We provide support and training on what equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging means and how to put this into practice in our work. Staff members have access to confidential reporting systems available for those who may face bullying, harassment, prejudice and/or discrimination.
- We undertake regular staff attitude surveys to help monitor equality, inclusion and belonging and to help identify any associated issues that may need addressing.
- We ensure that we consider individuals' needs and make adjustments where appropriate in order to help people be safe and effective at work, including making reasonable adjustments relating to disability.
- We have flexibility to enable us to work around our personal lives, beliefs, religious festivals and caring commitments.
- We place wellbeing at the forefront of all of our employment policies and practices. Our wellbeing offering provides support to all of our people, from those needing reasonable adjustments to those with caring responsibilities or just wanting to improve their work-life balance.
- We take action to protect employees who are at risk of violence while carrying out their duties.
- We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk. Staff are made aware that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- We have a domestic abuse policy to ensure that every employee who is experiencing or has experienced domestic abuse has the right to raise the issue with their employer in the knowledge that we will treat the matter effectively, sympathetically and confidentially.
- We support staff to set up staff groups representative of interests and/or identities of staff, especially for staff members experiencing inequality, disadvantage and discrimination. We work with staff groups to help drive strategy and develop inclusive policies.
- We recognise colleagues who are proactive in promoting equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging and the council rewards this.
- We ensure that our policies and processes are fair and transparent.

We know that this working environment leads to a better workplace culture and better decisions being made to serve our diverse resident population.

Recruitment practices and career development

- We have people from different backgrounds working with us (representing the population we serve), and we make sure everyone feels included and valued.
- We produce an annual 'Equality in Employment' report, which monitors the workforce profile in relation to age, disability, religion or belief, race, sex and

sexual orientation. From this we analyse diversity data and use this to understand equality issues and inform our objectives. We also develop and implement initiatives to redress any imbalances in our workforce. An example of this is removing names and equality monitoring data which is collected as part of the application process; prior to shortlisting so that all applications are reviewed and assessed on the evidence provided against the role profile without bias. This is extended through career development and training, and as we build strong links with our marginalised or minority communities to promote working in Local Government and all it has to offer.

- We proactively monitor our pay and grading systems and take action to remove any bias. We believe that all employees should receive equal pay for the same or broadly similar work, for work rated as equivalent, and for work of equal value. We report on trends in pay in our annual 'Equality in Employment' report, including related to the disability, ethnicity and gender pay gaps.
- We aim to make sure that advertised opportunities with the council are accessible to all sections of the community, and that our recruitment policies and practices do not discriminate against any equality groups. Selection for employment will be based upon aptitude and ability against each role profile, and assessment of this is carried out so that each candidate can demonstrate their best self.
- We are a Disability Confident employer and are committed to recruiting, retaining and supporting disabled employees. The Council aims to remove barriers, resolve issues relating to disability and consider individual needs. This includes taking positive steps towards promoting equality of opportunity, reasonable adjustments and accommodations, inclusion for all and promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people.
- We help and encourage our workforce to develop their full potential and talents to fully maximise resources in delivering our services.

VALUING OUR CUSTOMERS – DELIVERING SERVICES

It is our aim that:

- We listen to residents and communities from diverse backgrounds and consider their needs and priorities in everything we do.
- We deliver our services in a clear, efficient, and accessible way for residents and communities.
- We design our processes with the user in mind, understanding their whole journey, whether inside or outside of the organisation. Service users receive fair and sensitive treatment according to their needs when accessing services and are treated with dignity and respect.

- We ensure 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 inclusive and fully accessible, particularly to those groups or individuals who face disadvantage or discrimination.
- We provide clear and understandable information about services and policies that is communicated effectively to people with different backgrounds and according to communication needs.
- Service users are aware of their rights and entitlements when receiving services.
- We ensure that all job applicants, employees and service users have access to this policy, and other policies and plans relating to equality and diversity, including our equality values statement to be aware of their rights.

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 Executive Councillor for Communities is the portfolio holder for equalities and diversity.

Equalities Panel - meets formally twice a year to advise on the council's equalities work. Membership consists of five members of the public, five staff representatives and five elected Councillors.

Leadership Team – provides visible leadership on equalities and diversity issues, being proactive in developing Group-led approaches to achieving equalities.

Corporate Management Team – is accountable for the implementation of this policy and measuring performance related to equalities.

Officers – have an essential role in delivering the responsibilities for all staff relating to equalities as set out in this policy.

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.

Council motions

The council has made the following public commitments at Full Council that are reflected in priority areas of work relating to equality, diversity and inclusion:

- [The Black Lives Matter motion \(July 2020\)](#), which welcomes the council's duty as a public leader to actively spearhead work tackling racism locally.
- [Trans rights are human rights motion \(October 2020\)](#), which states publicly that trans rights are human rights and affirm the legal rights of all protected groups under the Equality Act 2010.
- [Motion on Policing Bill \(July 2021\)](#), which commits the council to build trust and good relations with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. It also commits the council to work with neighbouring local authorities in Cambridgeshire to find solutions where it is found that there is a lack of legal sites and stopping places for the communities.
- [Motion to treat care experience as a protected characteristic \(February 2024\)](#)

Communities Group

- Cambridge City Council has a vision of "One Cambridge, fair for all", where the city is safe healthy and inclusive, and residents enjoy a high quality of life.
- The Communities Group is responsible for:
 - Ensuring communities are supported and enabled to engage in meaningful ways in local decision-making and community life
 - Building relationships with key stakeholders representing seldom heard voices or that support cohorts with protected characteristics.
 - Engaging with minoritised groups to understand their needs to improve both in-house services and community initiatives delivered in partnership with the voluntary sector.
 - Enabling capacity building, connection and community development through our annual grant and investment programme.

Training, communications and resources

Staff training aims to increase the cultural awareness, knowledge and skills of participants with the intention of increasing inclusion and service relevance. The council provides mandatory equality and diversity training for all new staff via an induction programme. E-learning modules are also available and 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. Consultation is used to inform council priorities and improve services.

Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs)

EqIAs are a mechanism to ensure that the council considers equalities issues and assesses the likely impact of its services, policies and decisions to ensure they do not discriminate or cause any adverse impact relating to equalities and diversity. The Council has an ongoing process of undertaking EqIAs on all relevant policies and functions.

Monitoring

We monitor our performance relating to equalities to meet the specific duties as set out in The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, which support the general equality duty of the PSED.

Equalities objectives

In line with the specific duties of the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) the Council updates its equalities objectives at least every four years.

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 law relating to equality and diversity is the Equality Act 2010:

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act brought together all the previously existing strands of equality and discrimination legislation, with the aim of clarifying existing law and extending it to cover some anomalies in existing discrimination law.

The nine main pieces of legislation that have merged are:

- the Equal Pay Act 1970
- the Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- the Race Relations Act 1976
- the Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- the Equality Act 2006, Part 2
- the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007

For full information on the Equality Act see:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010)

The broad purpose of the equality duty is to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into the day-to-day business of public authorities. Those subject to the equality duty must, in the exercise of their functions, 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.

These are sometimes referred to as the three aims or arms of the general equality duty. The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

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