

# **Winchester City Council**

## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

The council and anyone acting on their behalf has a legal responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This policy outlines how the council will meet these legal duties.

### **2. Policy Statement**

Winchester City Council is committed to integrating the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion into everything it does. Our ambition is to develop a district where no-one faces discrimination, and everyone can reach their potential regardless of race, disability, gender, age, sexuality, religion or belief, gender reassignment, marital status or pregnancy and maternity.

We recognise and value all people in our community and believe that diversity is central to the provision of effective, modern, quality services.

### **3. Who this Policy applies to**

This policy is applicable to all who represent Winchester City Council in any capacity, including councillors, officers, contractors, volunteers, partner organisations, visitors and customers.

It applies to everyone:

- In day to day service delivery and interactions with customers.
- When considering changes to service we provide or creating or reviewing a policy.

### **4. Our legal duty**

This policy demonstrates how the council meets its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

Protection from unlawful discrimination is provided by the Equality Act in relation to the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership

- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Under the PSED, we are required to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

The practical effect of this legislation is that public bodies must consider how their policies, programmes and service delivery will affect people with protected characteristics.

The Equality Act 2010 allows an employer or service provider or other organisation to take positive action to alleviate and prevent any disadvantage experienced by people with protected characteristics. For example, in relation to recruitment and the provision of certain services.

The Human Rights Act 1998 confers a range of rights including, for example, the right to family life, which have implications for the way that we as a council deliver services and manage our workforce.

## **5. The Policy**

We integrate equality into everything we do starting from the highest level – the Council Plan - and working through the organisation into service and business plans. We have reviewed our corporate priorities to ensure that our commitment to equality is adequately reflected and also developed a set of core values that clearly establish equality as a key priority of the council.

Our established equality impact assessment process ensures equality is "mainstreamed" into the service and business planning processes and integrated with the performance management system and decision-making process.

Making this policy work is ultimately dependent on developing an organisational culture where difference is respected and valued, and everyone is treated fairly and equally, and everyone feels that they are being treated fairly and equally. Achieving this requires commitment and involvement from members, management and all employees. Appropriate information, training and support

is provided to ensure that members and employees have the awareness, knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities in this field.

## **6. Roles and responsibilities**

The Cabinet Member for Community and Engagement is the council's champion for equality, diversity and inclusion. They also chair the EDI Forum.

Elected members have a strategic responsibility to ensure that equality is built into policies and procedures. They also have an important role of using their links within the community to develop relationships and to encourage dialogue with the council. As decision makers, elected members have a key role to ensure that the PSED duty is met when decisions are taken; such duty is unable to be delegated as is relevant when the decision is taken.

All employees and others working on behalf of the council are responsible for working together to promote equality and inclusion in the way that they treat service users and colleagues and through the services they provide to the public. We have identified a "Lead Officer", currently the Senior Policy and Programme Manager, to lead and co-ordinate corporate working on this issue

Corporate Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring the equality objectives (as laid out in our EDI Strategy) are implemented and embedded within their own service areas. They must exercise due diligence to equalities in any decision made regarding a service, policy or practice.

All managers are responsible for ensuring that employees are aware of this policy and act in accordance with it at all times. They also have a role to play in demonstrating sound equality practice in their leadership.

All employees and others working on behalf of the council are responsible for adhering to this policy and integrating equality, diversity and inclusion in everything they do.

## **7. Compliance**

The priorities included in our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy are our equalities objectives and demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

All performance relating to equality will be reported regularly to the Executive Leadership Board (ELB) and the Cabinet.

We will publish Equality Impact Assessments as part of committee reports to show how we have considered our equalities issues when making decisions.

The council will report annually on its compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty to the Audit and Governance Committee and include the details

of the actions that the council has undertaken towards achieving its EDI priorities and objectives.

We will publish an annual report to Audit & Governance Committee that includes a workforce profile. We will publish annually in accordance with the Act our gender pay gap on our website.

Progress against the EDI Action Plan will be regularly monitored and progress reported to Executive Leadership Board and the council's equality, diversity and inclusion officer group.

## **8. Complaints**

We are committed to providing a high standard of service to all our service users, and we work to continuously improve our service. Continuous improvement can only be achieved when we seek and consider service user feedback.

Every effort is made to deal with complaints promptly and put matters right quickly, fairly and consistently.

## **9. Links to Council Strategies and Policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action plan 2025-2028
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in employment policy
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Policy