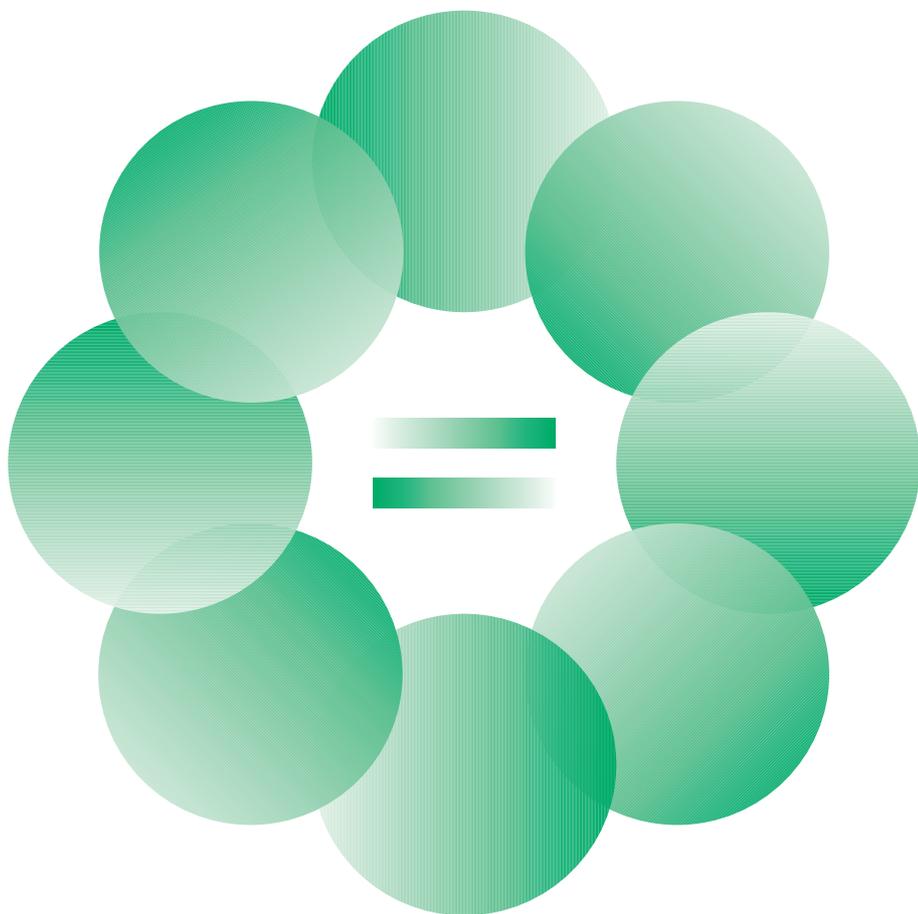


# Comprehensive equality and diversity policy



## **Vision**

Ealing Council's vision is to make a world of difference to the lives of all our customers. We recognise that in order to achieve our vision, it is essential that we consistently demonstrate a proactive commitment to valuing the rich diversity within our communities. Equality and diversity issues must become integral to the core of our service ethos and delivery, as well as in our employment practices. We will fully embrace our community leadership role and be the model example of equality and diversity in action in Ealing.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this comprehensive equality and diversity policy (and the associated Equality and Diversity Plan) is to ensure that we have clearly outlined to our customers, employees and partners:

- How Ealing Council will realise its vision
- Individual roles and responsibilities
- What we understand by Equality and Diversity in Ealing Council
- The standards the Council seeks to achieve and by when.
- Mechanisms for demonstrating progress and achievements
- Mechanisms for feedback, learning and involvement.

## **Message from the CEO – Darra Singh**

Ealing has a hugely rich, vibrant and diverse community, and it is something we should all be proud of. It is also one of the main reasons the borough is such a lively, vibrant and interesting place to live and work.

As a council, and one of the main employers in the borough, we must ensure at all times that equality and diversity is reflected in everything we do – from delivering services to involving all our communities in how we operate as a local authority.

This document sets out our policy, vision and purpose to ensure we deliver equality and diversity to you as staff, and to our residents, customers and partners.

Darra Singh  
Chief Executive

## Valuing diversity

Ealing Council believes that valuing diversity means actively recognising the strengths, talents and needs of every individual and all communities. This requires our nurturing the potential and maximising opportunities for all our customers, employees and partners in order that they can make their unique contribution to quality of life across the borough of Ealing. As a major employer and key service delivery agency, the council is uniquely placed to realise its vision and goals for people who live and work in Ealing.

We will ensure that our own organisation is accessible and productive for its customers, employees and partners, generating an environment where all contributions are valued.

The council recognises that to achieve our vision, it is essential that we recognise the reality of discrimination experienced by many communities, groups and individuals.

Despite developments and improvements to legal frameworks, such as the Race Relations Act, Human Rights Act, Disability Discrimination Act, negative impacts of discrimination is still a reality for too many people and communities across the UK. The reasons for this unacceptable reality are highly complex.

We are clear in Ealing Council that genuine progress is only possible if our approach to delivering on our Equality and Diversity policies systematically seeks to challenge and eradicate unfair and institutional discrimination. Barriers faced by vulnerable groups in accessing jobs, services and life enhancing opportunities must be removed and replaced by mechanisms to provide support and facilitation.

## The legal framework

In formulating this Policy, the council recognises and values the important role played by supporting legislation and associated Codes of Practice, in defining discrimination and mechanisms to prevent and stop inappropriate practices. The council embraces existing and scheduled legislation (listed below) as presenting opportunities for realising its vision of making a world of difference to our customers, employees and partners. The relevant legislation includes:

- The Equal Pay Act 1970
- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- The Race Relations Act (as amended)
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Human Rights Act 1998

Legislation originating from the European Employment Directive (2000/78/EC) covering:

- Age
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion or Belief

The Council is committed to meeting its statutory responsibilities to prevent discrimination and unfair treatment, by fully implementing all relevant legislation and ensuring that all steps have been taken to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made to meet relevant provisions. The Council particularly endorses its responsibilities under section 71 of the Race Relations Act (as amended).

## **Employment and recruitment of staff**

The council aims to:

- Nurture and build a diverse and representative workforce, which at all levels broadly, represents the community it serves, enabling it to better meet the service needs of all our communities.
- Treat all employees and applicants for employment fairly and ensure they are not discriminated against because of their race, gender, disability, age, religion or belief, nationality, social background or sexual orientation.
- Regularly review its recruitment and selection procedure to ensure fair access to all jobs. People will be selected on merit, based only on their skills, abilities, experience and qualifications to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the post for which they have applied.
- Ensure that all employees are valued and treated with dignity and respect. Where harassment, victimisation or bullying is found in the workplace this will be confronted and dealt with through the appropriate procedures. Every employee has a responsibility to challenge and report inappropriate behaviour.
- Provide fair access to training and development opportunities.
- Have due regard to equal pay legislation.
- Support employees who wish to use a mode of dress dictated by ethnic background and religious beliefs. However, where corporate clothing is used or provided or where the wearing of any apparel may conflict with health and safety regulations or this policy, the relevant Head of Service may impose restrictions.
- Consider and reasonably adapt organisational requirements or existing practices where they are contrary to employees' cultural and religious needs/or where these can be reasonably adjusted to meet the needs of employees with disability.

## **Employees role and responsibilities**

The contribution of the council's workforce is critical to achieving the aims of this policy. The actions and behaviours of all employees determine equality of access and outcome and this results in how customers perceive the council. This includes equality and diversity behaviours. In addition, to ensure that a framework exists for determining equality and diversity objectives for senior managers, guidance on equality and diversity objectives for directors will be produced.

The council is determined to maintain equality and fairness of treatment in all their dealings with employees and the public. **It is a condition of employment that all employees adhere to this policy.** Behaviours and actions that are contrary to this policy and any other associated guidelines will be considered as disciplinary matters.

## Policies and procedures

In order to ensure that the council maintains regard for this policy, all policies, procedures and practices will be subject to review in order to assess their impact on achieving and contributing equality and diversity objectives.

Priority will be given to new policies and procedures, but a systematic review of existing policies; procedures and practices will be carried out. A policy and procedure on maintaining Dignity at Work will be periodically reviewed to support the management of equality and diversity.

To ensure that equality and diversity matters are considered as part of mainstream service development, it is expected that all reports will include a formal consideration of equality and diversity implications.

## Service delivery

The council provides direct services, regulates, funds and commission's services. In all these roles and activities the council is committed to fair and equitable access to service whether they are delivered directly by council employees, in partnership with other agencies or indirectly through external contract, funding or commissioning arrangements. All departments and divisions of Ealing Council will take steps to ensure that council functions and policies are carried out in a way that complies with statutory requirements, minimises adverse impact on any section of the community and meets the needs of all local people (as appropriately as possible).

The council aims to:

- Ensure equal access, fair treatment and appropriate provision to the whole community regardless of race, gender, disability, age, religion, nationality, social background or sexual orientation and any other reason not connected to entitlement and availability.
- Provide quality services designed to meet a wide range of different needs in the community and regularly review them to ensure that we have not disadvantaged our customers.
- Provide appropriate services, adapting these to meet the needs of the whole community promoting equal access to services, including producing clear information about how to access our services (for example in different languages and large print).
- Provide and publicise clear information on how dissatisfied customers can complain about the services they have received and respond efficiently to complaints received. Also, clear information will be provided to enable satisfied customers to commend a service.
- Ensure that wherever practicable, all services and buildings are accessible.
- The council will through its procurement practices seeks to encourage and promote good equality of opportunity and diversity practices from our suppliers.

In addition the council will:

- Assess organisational, departmental and individual requirements to achieve compliance with legislation.

- Establish mechanisms for responding to harassment.
- Ensure that all council functions and policies are carried out in a way that complies with statutory requirements, minimises adverse impact on any section of the community and meets (as appropriately as possible) the needs of all local people.
- Develop and implement a framework that enables and supports a regular process of self-assessment, scrutiny and audit.

## **Consultation**

As part of the Corporate Consultation strategy the council will consult with and actively listen to our customers, partners, community groups and stakeholders (including employees) on all aspects of developing and delivering this equality and diversity policy.

## **Impact assessments**

Ealing Council is committed to initiating an equality impact assessment of all existing and proposed policies, procedures and practices to ensure that they do not have a disproportionately adverse impact on particular sections of the community.

## **Standards and monitoring**

The council will measure its overall performance against the Equality Standard for local government. Our aim is to reach level 5 of the Equality Standard.

The standard, increasingly used by local authorities and the Audit Commission, provides a common framework within which councils can plan and evaluate the success of their work in employment and service delivery. This measurement will be aided by:

- Using the census as a base, develop a profile of the community.
- Monitoring Recruitment and Selection, training and other personnel procedures, and measuring change in the composition of the workforce. Collecting and analysing information to check that the council's employment policies and practices are fair and prevent discrimination.
- Reporting the results of employment monitoring on an annual basis.
- Developing the use of efficient and confidential monitoring systems to analyse and evaluate how effectively services meet the needs of the borough's diverse community. This will include monitoring information about use and non-use of services together with reviewing allocations of service ensuring equal access.
- All departments compiling, publishing and periodically reviewing plans for achieving equality of opportunity and access in service delivery, reporting these issues through the appropriate channels.
- Set equality and diversity objectives with targets, outputs and outcomes within departments and service areas, (as part of the regular business planning process) in accordance with corporate performance planning guidelines.

## **Who has responsibility?**

Ealing Council takes its responsibilities for equality of opportunity and diversity very seriously and recognises that discrimination can only be effectively eliminated in partnership with employees, service users and also our external partners.

- The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for ensuring this policy is carried out.
- A relevant Executive Director will be identified by the Corporate Board to be responsible for coordinating a strategic and corporate approach to the management of equality and diversity issues
- Executive directors are responsible for ensuring that equality and diversity issues are mainstreamed in the planning and delivery of the services for which they have executive responsibility.
- Service Directors are responsible for ensuring that arrangements are in place to ensure effective day-to-day delivery of services and management of employees with due regards to the council's equality and diversity objectives on a basis.
- All employees have a responsibility to carry out their duties in accordance with this Comprehensive Equality and Diversity Policy and statutory requirements.
- The Cabinet and elected Members of the council will promote, support and uphold this policy in all their dealings with employees, partners and our external customers.

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