



Mansfield
District Council

Corporate Equality and Inclusion Policy

2017 - 2021

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Introduction

This document sets out Mansfield District Council's Corporate Equality and Inclusion Policy 2017 - 2021

1. Our Commitment

The Council's Corporate Plan for 2016 – 2019 sets out an ambitious programme for the Council including a firm commitment to equality and diversity and an ambition to improve the quality of life for residents.

Like many authorities the Council faces significant financial challenges whilst striving to maintain quality and make improvements and efficiencies. However in the midst of austerity measures, the Council will continue to deliver services to high standards and go above and beyond statutory duty.

We are a caring authority: we want to serve our communities well.

2. Equality of Opportunity

Mansfield District Council believes that equality is one of the key values of the organisation and must be embedded within all of the services we provide. The Authority will treat everyone as individuals with the same attention, courtesy and respect to ensure that people do feel valued and respected and have equality of opportunity regardless of:

- Marital or civil partnership status
- Sex
- Gender reassignment/gender identity
- Religious belief
- Race (including colour, nationality or ethnic origins)
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Maternity and paternity

The Authority is legally required to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations within and between communities to build good community relations

3. Our Equality Objectives

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies to consider the needs of different groups and individuals when carrying out their day to day work. It

requires the Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.

Our equality objectives were reviewed in 2017 and now reflect the Corporate Priorities:

- **To maintain a modern and diverse workforce that is reflective of the local community and whose staff feel valued and treated fairly**
- **To develop and support resilient, active and inclusive communities who are involved in decisions that affect them**
- **To support access to high quality services recognising the needs of different customer**
- **To build strong , safe and resilient communities and support individuals to achieve a better quality of life**

Delivering against our objectives

We will measure and report on the effectiveness of our service delivery and employee polices and processes in relations to these objectives through performance monitoring and management information. The Equality Position Statement will demonstrate what progress has been made against the objectives.

4. Our Corporate Commitment

The Authority is committed to sharing strong links with partners, public agencies and local businesses to help shape the future of the District. Customer feedback and consultation is important to the Authority and the community will be consulted on key issues that affect their future.

Our Corporate Priorities:

- **A thriving, vibrant and sustainable district**
- **Strong, safe and resilient communities**
- **Clean and welcoming environment**

Our Values:

- **Excellence**
- **Integrity**
- **Teamwork**
- **Empower & Involve**
- **Passion & Pride**

Equality is embedded throughout all of these priorities and values as demonstrated by the following key actions included with in the Corporate Plan:

- Helping people to achieve their potential, enhancing and developing skills through our apprenticeship and graduate programmes
- Maintaining safe communities where people are able to enjoy their home and neighbourhoods
- Enabling people to live independent lives through provision of good quality affordable homes, and developing homes for life
- Engaging with our communities, listening, talking to and involving people in developing a cohesive tolerant community
- Ensuring our housing provision is safe and appropriate to the needs of the community
- Supporting people to live longer through healthier lifestyles, encouraging active lifestyles through increased participation in sport, promoting tobacco cessation and tackling obesity
- Working in partnership to tackle homelessness

5. Our Workforce

We are committed to employing a diverse workforce that reflects the community we serve and aim to provide a working environment where all employees are valued and respected and where discrimination, bullying, harassment and the promotion of negative stereotyping are not tolerated.

The People Strategy supports the achievement of the key themes in the Council's evolving Corporate Plan. An effective People Strategy enables the Authority to plan for the future with a clear focus on improving services through partnerships. The People Strategy and associated Workforce Development Plan is an integral part of the Council's performance management framework. The strategy provides a link between valuing and developing people, with improving and developing services and enabling local leadership

Assessment for recruitment, selection, appraisal, training and career progression purposes is based both on the individual's ability and suitability for the work. We are committed to providing all staff with opportunities to maximise their skills and achieve their potential, offering flexible working arrangements wherever possible.

Key policies and documents in relation to equalities are available to staff via the intranet or they are able to request copies from their manager, trade union reps or directly from Human Resources, these include:

- Flexible working
- Career break
- Grievance

- Bullying & Harassment
- Annual Workforce Profile Report
- Gender Pay Gap Report
- People Strategy and Action Plan

6. Learning and Development

The Council is committed to its employees and their ongoing development.

It is important that all employees can contribute to the achievement of the Authorities objectives and have access to learning and development covering all equality areas. Training courses have been designed to meet the specific needs of officers in front line roles to support them in meeting the diverse and individual needs of customers.

All Councillors are provided with equality and diversity training as part of their personal development programme.

The training for employees and members takes place through various methods including, mentoring and coaching sessions, focus groups, employee briefings, lunch time learning sessions, Extended and Aspiring Leadership Team meetings and electronically through the e-Learning portal.

Equality training also forms an integral element of the corporate induction course through e-Learning. This training seeks to equip participants with the awareness, knowledge, skills and information necessary to manage and respond to equality and diversity issues experienced in the workplace. It also focuses on legislation and the Council's own policies and procedures for equality.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

All our policies and practices are at the heart of equality impact assessment. Ideally an impact assessment should form part of any relevant new policy or practice and be factored in as early as possible to determine if there is any risk of discrimination or disadvantage. Equality impact assessments will help an organisation to analyse the impact of the changes and to mitigate any negative impact and promote equality.

8. Consultation

The Authority has developed a Community Involvement Strategy for 2017 – 2018 which is designed to support the Council's corporate vision and values and its commitment to residents. The Community Involvement Strategy aims to support resilient, active and inclusive communities who are informed and involved in decision making to improve public services and enhance their quality of life. By this we mean:

- **Strong communities**, who can form and sustain their own organisations, bringing people together to deal with their common concerns
- **Active communities**, where people are supported to improve the quality of life in their own communities
- **Inclusive communities**, where all sections of the community feel they have opportunities to be involved in decision making and influence public services

9. Procurement

Mansfield District Council is now part of a shared service arrangement led by Bassetlaw District Council and involving other local authorities.

The Council provides a wide range of services to the community and businesses in the District. In some cases these are provided directly by Officers employed by the Council, but in other cases, contractors and partners may provide them on its behalf. Therefore, the services provided to the community should be geared towards their diverse needs and requirements. Spending by the Council sustains and maintains a significant number of jobs within the District, and the Council has a statutory duty to ensure that public money is spent in a way that ensures value for money and does not lead to unfair discrimination and social exclusion.

10. Partnerships

The Authority has a history of forming collaborative partnerships which have extended the level of participation and the level of delegated decision asking with a view to eventually sharing power in decision-making to achieve collaborative action. Examples of these collaborative involvement arrangements have previously included:

- Neighbourhood Management Groups
- Stakeholder Groups

However future partnerships will be supported to be more resident involved and led focussing and building on what is strong and not what is wrong to develop their own vision.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

We live in a democratic society governed by a legal framework which respects individual liberty, responsibilities and rights. Everyone has a right to be treated fairly with dignity and mutual respect. For this to happen we need to understand and embrace difference and take responsibility for our actions and behaviours.

The Council will provide adequate capacity and assign specific responsibilities to ensure that officers and members are equipped with the skills necessary to effectively deliver and support the Corporate Equality Objectives. However it

is the responsibility of everyone at the Council to lead by example and uphold the equality objectives.

In addition a number of individuals or groups have been given specific roles and responsibilities as follows:

Councillors

- The Portfolio Holder for Resources has lead portfolio responsibility for Equality and Diversity
- Provide leadership and support to improving equality practice
- Consider and apply equality in all work with the local community
- Ensure that resources are made available to support the delivery of equality objectives
- Provide a scrutiny and overview role
- Ensure that the Council meets all its legal obligations according to current equality legislation

Chief Executive and Corporate Leadership Team

- The Director for Governance has lead officer responsibility for equality and diversity
- Provide leadership and support for improving equality practice
- Collective accountability for delivering against the Equality Objectives and ensuring that reporting mechanisms are in place
- Responsibility to champion the Corporate Equality and Inclusion Policy and ensure that employees are motivated to deliver it
- Lead by example and challenge activity or behaviour that falls below expected standards or fails to uphold the corporate values and equality objectives
- Ensure that the Council meets all its legal obligations according to current equality legislation under the Equality Act 2010

Service Area Managers

- Provide quality services that meet the diverse needs of all service users
- Ensure that equality impact assessment is carried out on all relevant policies and activities of the service area
- Identify equality related actions and incorporate them within service planning
- Identify equality indicators and set targets to measure performance
- Monitor, review and evaluate performance against equality indicators and keep track of progress against actions set
- Ensure that all employees are aware of the Corporate Equality and Inclusion Policy and its key objectives
- Ensure that all employees have completed equality training

- Ensure that all employees are aware of the process and procedure for reporting hate crime or discriminatory and prejudicial activity or behaviour
- Share equality data, correspondence and good practice in team meetings
- Benchmark service delivery with other similar service providers and competitors
- Consult with service users

Employees

- Understand, uphold and promote the corporate values and equality objectives
- Treat colleagues and service users with respect and according to their individual need
- Challenge activity or behaviour that is discriminatory, falls below expected standards or fails to uphold the corporate values and equality objectives
- Report any hate crime or discriminatory and prejudicial activity or behaviour observed
- Share equality data, correspondence and good practice in team meetings.
- Be receptive and open to equality training

Equality and Diversity Officer

- Provide advice to Councillors and officers on equality issues including new and changing legislation
- Work with the community and partners to develop a shared approach to equality
- Help mainstream diversity and equality in corporate service planning
- Provide support for equality monitoring, self-assessment and reporting
- Provide effective communication and equality information
- Facilitate and support the Equality Steering Group
- Produce, review and update the Corporate Equality and Inclusion Policy

Corporate Equality Group

- The internal Equality Group will oversee the development and embedding of equality policy and practices
- Monitor and review progress against the Corporate Equality Objectives
- Communicate corporate equality information and initiatives to service areas
- Share service delivery good practice in response to the equality and diversity issues faced by the Council
- Oversee and evaluate the development of the processes for hate crime reporting and the monitoring of equality objectives
- Oversee the rolling Equalities Work Plan

Partner Organisations

- Adhering to any equality guidelines in agreements or contracts
- Demonstrate their commitment to equality and diversity and have policies and procedures in place to achieve this
- Share service delivery good practice
- Provide peer support and challenge
- Participate in consultation and provide feedback on Council services, procedures and processes
- Benchmark performance

12. Supporting Our Employees

Disability Confident

The Disability Confident accreditation is awarded by Jobcentre Plus to employers who have made commitments to employ, keep and develop the abilities of Disabled people. By building a reputation as a Disability Confident employer that actively seeks out and hires skilled disabled people, it will positively help to change attitudes, behaviours and cultures, not just within the Authority but in networks, supply chains, and the communities.

The Disability Confident Charter aims to:

- Engage and encourage employers to become more confident so they employ and retain disabled people
- Increase understanding of disability and the benefits of employing or retaining disabled people
- Increase the number of employers taking action to be Disability Confident
- Make a substantial contribution towards halving the disability employment gap

Workplace Health

The Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Wellbeing at Work: Workplace Health Award Scheme aims to support businesses of all types to invest in the wellbeing of their employees to achieve the following outcomes for the employer:

- Demonstrate exemplary practice by leading in the area of promoting positive health and well-being of employees the ability to attract a higher calibre of employees for roles
- Improved employee retention
- Improved absences due to illness
- Increased efficiencies
- Increased productivity

Outcomes for the employee:

- Better mental health
- Better work life balance
- increase sense of self value and efficacy
- Increased awareness and ability to improve health
- Improved levels of wellbeing

There is a rolling programme of diverse health and wellbeing events organised throughout the year, across all Council facilities.

Mindful Employer Charter

The Authority has signed up to the Mindful Employer Charter. This initiative supports employers in achieving a positive working environment for people with mental ill health through the following;

- Application and recruitment process
- Providing support for employees disclosing their mental ill health
- Not making assumptions about people with mental ill health
- Providing non-judgemental and proactive support to individual staff who experience mental health issues
- Ensuing that managers are equipped with the right information and training to manage mental health in the workplace

Mental Health Awareness training

A number of employees from across the organisation have completed the NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Mental Health Awareness course. This has equipped the Authority with key members of staff to champion mental health within the workplace.

13. Review

This Policy will be reviewed in 2021

Approval date	
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