



Mansfield District Council
Creating a District where People can Succeed

Mansfield District Council

**Corporate Equality and
Inclusion Policy**

2014 - 2016

CONTENTS

Introduction

1. Our Commitment

- 1.1 Corporate Equality Statement
- 1.2 Our Equality Journey

2. Equality of Opportunity

3. Our Vision, values and Priorities

- 3.1 Our Vision
- 3.2 Our Values
- 3.3 Our Priorities
- 3.4 The Equality Act

4. Setting our Equality Objectives for 2012 - 2016

5. Achieving Our Objectives

- 5.1. Equality Impact Assessment
- 5.2. Consultation
- 5.3. Monitoring, Reviewing and Evaluating Performance
- 5.4. Equality Framework for Local Government
- 5.5. Training
- 5.6. Medium Term Financial Strategy
- 5.7. Procurement
- 5.8. Partnerships

6. Resources and Responsibilities

- 6.1. Councillors
- 6.2. Managing Director, Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Heads of Service
- 6.3. Service Areas and Managers
- 6.4. Employees
- 6.5. Equality and Diversity Officer
- 6.6. Corporate Equality Group
- 6.7. Partner Organisations

7. Good Practice

8. Review

Introduction

Welcome to Mansfield District Council's Corporate Equality and Inclusion Policy 2014 - 2016

1. Our Commitment

1.1. Equality Statement

Mansfield District Council is committed to implementing and upholding equality and diversity in everything it does. The Council strives to be an effective service provider, community leader and corporate body and, in doing so, recognises the importance of meeting the needs of the diverse mix of communities represented amongst its residents, service users and workforce. In meeting those needs the Council will develop and harness a safe and sustainable community inclusive to all.

Mansfield District Council is committed to eliminating inequality on the basis of the protected characteristics and recognises that there are equality differences in the life chances available to people within the community with the services they gain access to and the job and careers they are able to pursue.

Equality is about ensuring that all people are treated according to their diverse needs, this does not mean treating everyone the same, but recognising the differences in life situations and experiences and ensuring that there is equality of opportunity for all people taking into account their individual needs.

1.2. Our Equality Journey

To affirm its commitment and to ensure continuous improvement, the Council uses the Equality Framework for Local Government and the improvement framework against which to assess its performance and development in equality and diversity. Since adopting the standard the Council has made significant progress and, in May 2007, was successful in achieving Level 3 against the Equality Standard, making it the first Borough or District Council in the country to be externally assessed at this level.

In the future the Council will measure its ongoing progress against the Local Government Association Equality Framework for Local Government 2012 edition which concentrates on the following areas of performance:

- Knowing your communities,
- Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment;
- Community engagement and satisfaction;
- Responsive services and customer care;
- A skilled and committed workforce.

The Council continues to work to improve services and meet the needs of its community especially those individuals and groups who are representative of the Protected Characteristics.

2. Equality of Opportunity

The aim of this policy is to communicate the commitment of the Authority to the promotion of equality of opportunity to all irrespective of:

- Gender, including gender reassignment
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Having or not having dependents
- Religious belief
- Race (including colour, nationality or ethnic origins)
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Maternity

We encourage a diverse workforce and aim to provide a working environment where all staff at all levels are valued and respected and where discrimination, bullying, promotion of negative stereotyping and harassment are not tolerated.

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. Our recruitment policy will be reviewed should the statistics collected highlight areas for improvement.

Our other key policies in relation to equality 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 policies are:

- Flexible working
- Flexible retirement
- Grievance
- Bullying & Harassment (revised version soon to be circulated)
- Learning & Development Policy

The Authority has statutory duties placed upon it that require it to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination. All employees are expected to assist the organisation in meeting these obligations by having due regard for the need to promote good relations between individuals from different groups and work towards achieving equality of opportunity for all.

3. Our Vision, values and Priorities

3.1 Our vision

The vision of Mansfield District Council is to ‘create a more positive image of Mansfield District which supports people, businesses and investment in the area and improves confidence, pride and dignity so that everyone can enjoy a good quality of life in their neighbourhoods.’

3.2 Our Values

Our vision defines our priorities and what we are trying to achieve. How we will do this is defined by our three broad values of Quality, Respect and Openness:

Quality

- Excellent quality and value-for-money services that meet the needs of all our communities and are accessible to everyone.
- Develop new opportunities for partnership working to improve, expand and build upon the services we provide.
- Manage and help support employees; Members, partners and communities through change, efficiently and effectively.

Respect

- Consult, listen to and understand the views of our communities, partners and employees.
- Meet the needs of our communities, partners and employees through consideration and empathy for their emotional and physical wellbeing.
- Encourage good employment practice, effective employee development and a positive and enthusiastic workforce.

Openness

- Strive to be open, honest, transparent and accountable.
- Promote a culture of effective and consistent communication with and between employees, Members, partners and communities.

3.3 Our Priorities

The Corporate Priorities are reviewed each year to ensure they remain relevant to current circumstances and opportunities, and are informed by local people’s views and evidence about local needs.

To achieve the Council’s vision the Authority has made a commitment to focus on addressing the following five priorities:

- **Regeneration and Employment** – Revitalising our district, town centres and neighbourhoods, encouraging inward investment and creating a climate for job creation and growth.

- **Reducing crime and disorder** – Making the District a safer place to live, work and visit by working with partners to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour.
- **Vulnerable people** – Supporting the most vulnerable people in the District to help them live independent and fulfilled lives.
- **Housing** – Ensuring there is an adequate supply of good quality, well managed housing which is accessible and affordable to those who need it
- **Protecting the Environment** – delivering a local plan for the provision of housing, parks, green spaces and commercial and retail development and ensuring a high quality and sustainable environment.

The Council's commitment to address equality and diversity issues is expressed within the priority to support Vulnerable People.'

Underpinning our values and everything that we do is our commitment to equality. As an employer, service provider, corporate body and community leader, we aim to treat everyone fairly and strive to achieve equality for our diverse mix of communities.

4. The Equality Act

The Equality Act 2010 puts all of the equality laws into one place and sets our duty to give people from different groups, identified as Protected Characteristics, consistent rights and protection.

The Public Sector Equality Duty is made up of a General Equality duty which is supported by Specific Duties. The General Duty requires public authorities to:

- Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty, at least annually, and
- Set and publish equality objectives at least every four years.

The information published must evidence that the Authority has considered the following three aims of the duty and that due regard has been given to the need to:

- **To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation**
- **To Advance Equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not**
- **To Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.**

4. Setting our Equality Objectives for 2012 – 2016

The specific duty requires public bodies to prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objective which will help to further the three

aims of the duty. This information must be published by 6th April 2012 and subsequent objectives to be published a least every four years.

Our Equality objectives for Mansfield District Council are as follows:

- **To develop a modern and diverse workforce that is reflective of the local community and whose staff feel valued and treated fairly**
- **To carry out effective and meaningful consultation and engagement activities to better understand the needs of our diverse community and to build stronger relations with the community that will enable them to participate within council services and influence the decisions made.**
- **To ensure that vulnerable people have access to the services and support they need**
- **To improve customer contact and access**
- **To help make Mansfield a district where visitors and residents from all backgrounds feel safe and secure**

The Authority has aimed to set objectives that are stretching and focus on the bigger equality challenges facing the Authority that will have the greatest impact on promoting and improving the three aims of the duty.

In setting these objectives we have considered what evidence we have from both internal and external sources and what types of equality issues are raised by staff and customers. We have also identified how we will measure progress against these objectives

A number of people were involved in setting these objectives, including internal teams, Disability Network Group, Strategic Equality Group, Corporate Equality Group, unions and local representatives of the protected characteristics where possible

5. Achieving Our Objectives

To achieve our objectives and embed a corporate approach to addressing equality and diversity issues a variety of activity is required to identify need, take action and measure the Council's performance. The following corporate initiatives are therefore undertaken in all service areas across the Council:

5.1. Equality Impact Assessment

Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's) are carried out on all external and internal policies where there is a potential impact on either employees or customers. As part of the decision making process with regard to service delivery and the budget setting process the Authority will also consider the

impact on groups and individuals representative of the Protected Characteristics.

EIA's are one method for ensuring that individuals and service areas think carefully about the potential impacts of the decisions they make and how these impact upon the community. They are then able to ensure actions are put in place to mitigate any negative impacts identified or any unmet needs. They provide a basis for action to improve services where appropriate.

5.2. Consultation

The Authority is developing a Consultation and Community Engagement Strategy that will provide a framework to provide effective and inclusive Community Engagement. It will provide guidance and direction on:

- When the Authority should consult and engage stakeholders
- Level of consultation and engagement required
- Principles to consider when undertaking consultation and engagement
- Use of consultation and engagement results

The Consultation Strategy will determine the way we:

- Establish and share good practice
- Use resources effectively
- Maximise the use of consultation findings
- Co-ordinate effort and avoid duplication

We already engage and consult with a number of groups within our community and we plan to build on these established methods to create a coordinated approach which is accessible to the diverse community and ensures that we meet the requirement of national policies such as the Localism Act.

5.3. Monitoring, Reviewing and Evaluating Performance

There is a corporate approach to embedding equality and diversity throughout the organisation. Equality objectives and actions are integrated into the service planning and performance management framework to monitor, evaluate and review progress and performance. Actions identified through the EIA process are included in service area business plans and indicators and targets are developed to measure progress on these actions.

All indicators are reported to the Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Performance Management Working Group (PMWG) on a quarterly basis. The areas that are not performing to target are required to submit an action plan to outline their proposals for improving performance and meeting future targets.

Progress against equality actions is also monitored as part of six month and annual service plan reviews.

5.4. Equality Framework for Local Government

The Council uses the Equality Framework for Local Government (formerly Equality Standard for Local Government) to benchmark progress and ensure its continuous development. Since adopting the standard in 2004 the Council made significant progress and in 2007 was externally assessed as having achieved Level 3 of the standard which now equates to the 'Achieving' level of the Framework. This made the Council the first borough or district council in the country to be externally assessed as having achieved this level. The Council will continue to challenge itself against the framework to develop and improve.

5.5. Training

All Councillors and staff are provided with equality and diversity training as part of their personal development programme. Different training courses have been designed to meet the specific and individual needs of officers in non-supervisory roles, managers and Councillors. Training is delivered through a number of different methods including: MEL (electronic learning), briefing notes, focus groups, specialist external providers, lunchtime awareness sessions, extended learning sessions, extended leadership team meetings.

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.

5.6. Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy is developed to ensure that all revenue and capital programme investment decisions are based on council priorities using a priority scoring matrix. One of the criteria against which projects are assessed is their impact on equality and diversity. This means that projects to be developed that would have a positive impact on groups representing one or more of the six equality strands will receive greater priority in the allocation of funding.

5.7. Procurement

The Council procures a number of goods and services. These companies are assessed and monitored for their compliance with equality legislation. This service is now part of a shared service arrangement led by Bassetlaw District Council which also includes Mansfield District Council, Ashfield District Council and Erewash Borough Council.

5.8. Partnerships

The Council has produced and implemented a partnership protocol and partnership register to assist in the management of its partnership

arrangements. The protocol instigates the evaluation of the Council's use of partnerships to identify their value and benefit. Where there is little or no added value to the Council involvement in the partnership will be scaled down or withdrawn. Partners are also evaluated on the basis of their equality and diversity arrangements with questionnaires sent to each partner requesting them to provide a copy of their equality policy or details of their approach to tackling equality issues. Partners who do not have their own policy are required to adhere to the principles of the Council's policy.

6. Resources and Responsibilities

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.

Every member of staff within the Council has the individual responsibility to lead by example and uphold the equality objectives. In addition a number of individuals or groups have been given specific role and responsibilities as follows:

6.1. Councillors

- Provide a Member Champion for equality and diversity issues and a Chair for the Corporate Equality Group.
- Provide leadership and support for 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.
- Provide a performance management role through the involvement of Performance Management Working Group in the monitoring of equality indicators.

6.2. Managing Director, Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Heads of Service

- 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 2012 – 2016 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.

6.3. Service Areas and Managers

- Provide quality services that meet the diverse needs of all service users.
- Ensure that Equality Impact Assessments are carried out on all relevant policies.
- 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 attended an equality training course.
- Ensure that all employees are aware of the process and procedure for reporting hate crime or discriminatory and prejudicial activity or behaviour.
- Identify a service area Corporate Equality Group representative.
- Share equality data, correspondence and good practice in team meetings
- Benchmark service delivery with other similar service providers and competitors.
- Consult with service users.

6.4. Employees

- Develop an understanding and awareness of the corporate values and equality objectives.
- 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.
- Be receptive and open to equality training.
- Share equality data, correspondence and good practice in team meetings

6.5. 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 and service planning.

- Support the implementation and coordination of service level Equality Impact Assessments.
- Provide support for equality monitoring, self-assessment and reporting.
- Provide effective communication and equality information.
- Facilitate and support the Corporate Equality Group.
- Produce, review and update the Corporate Equality and Inclusion Policy.
- Coordinate the Annual Workforce Report

6.6. Corporate Equality Group

- To be consulted with on the review and update of the Corporate Equality and Inclusion Policy.
- Monitor and review progress against the Corporate Equality Objectives.
- Monitor and review Equality Impact Assessments and the equality actions identified for inclusion in service plans.
- Agree the framework for self-assessment.
- Challenge and evaluate the results of self-assessment.
- Commission external organisations to provide consultancy and undertake formal assessment when appropriate.
- 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 Equality Impact Assessment, hate crime reporting and the monitoring of equality objectives.
- Support development of corporate equality training programmes.

6.7. Partner Organisations

- Share service delivery good practice.
- Provide peer support and challenge.
- Participate in consultation and provide feedback on Council services, procedures and processes.
- Benchmark performance.

7. Good Practice

There are examples from across the Authority that demonstrate how service areas are considering the needs of the diverse community and are committed to meeting those needs. These include the following examples;

Learning and Development Team shortlisted for national award

The Summer Job Shop was shortlisted for national award in the Economic Development Category of the Local Government Chronicle Awards in 2012. The Job Shop project supported 60 young people through career workshops over the summer holidays.

Apprenticeships and Work Experience Placements

Since 2011 there has been 37 apprenticeship placements secured across the Authority 6 of these have resulted in the apprentice gaining employment. There have been 307 work experience and volunteers since 2008 which have enabled young people to gain valuable experience and knowledge of the work that the Authority does.

Graduate Scheme

In 2013 a placement scheme organised by Mansfield and Ashfield Councils helped local employers to recruit talented graduates to take on projects, which bring real benefits to their businesses.

The Graduates into Enterprise Programme linked high calibre, recent university graduates or postgraduates, with employers to undertake a fixed term placement (maximum six months), in order to work on a structured business project, or specific piece of work related to the graduate's skills and experience.

Five graduates secured either temporary or permanent employment after taking part in the scheme.

Inclusive performances at the Palace Theatre

There are a number of initiatives in place to fully engage with the diverse community including; signed performances, relaxed performance for audiences on the Autistic Spectrum, designated wheelchair spaces and reduced priced tickets for carers companions. The theatre has installed a stair lift to enable disabled musicians to access the orchestra and take part in performances.

Marshmallow Sky

Play directed by the Education Manager at the theatre called Marshmallow Sky that raised awareness of Aspergers Syndrome. This production was performed at Dawn House School (Dawn House School is an 'Outstanding' specialist school for children and young people aged 5-19 with severe and complex communication difficulties or Aspergers Syndrome)

The MARS Scheme

The Multi- Agency Rented Solutions (M.A.R.S.) and Sharing Or Letting A Room (S.O.L.A.R) schemes have been introduced by the Council to provide good quality homes within the private sector for families and single people in Mansfield and surrounding districts

Assist



ASSIST (Advocacy, Sustainment, Supporting Independence and Safeguarding Team) offers a range of services for the most vulnerable people in the District and assesses individual needs so that people can maintain an independent lifestyle in their own home.

Two ticks Disability

The 'two ticks' positive about **disability symbol** is awarded by Jobcentre Plus to employers who have made commitments to employ, keep and develop the abilities of Disabled people

Disabled grants

More disabled people living in Mansfield District are now eligible for grants to adapt their properties to install showers and wet rooms in private and residential properties

The Green Team



On the community plot at Barratts Field allotment site, people get the chance to try allotment gardening. The site has raised beds and paved flat paths so that people with mobility problems / wheelchair users are able to access and make use of the site easily. A large greenhouse allows for year round work in all weather conditions, there's even a covered teaching area where cooking demonstrations are held. Those residents working on the allotment describe at their "Green Gym"

Explorer events

Over the half term break Yeoman Hill and Titchfield Park ran Explorer events in association with British Orienteering. These inclusive events attracted nearly 600 participants from all backgrounds and physical abilities from the very young to the older generations as well as a number of wheelchair users. There are plans to run similar events in the future.

Promoting Dyslexia Awareness

Dyslexia awareness continues to be promoted across the organisation through workshops and training courses.

Positive about Mental Health 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
- ensuring 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.

Get Active – Active Mansfield

Paralympic swimming stars Charlotte Henshaw and Ollie Hynd teamed up with Active Mansfield to get the residents of Mansfield more active. Ollie and Charlotte challenged everyone across Mansfield to become more active stating that they had not allowed their disability to stop them being active so what was stopping everyone!

Accessible Britain Challenge

The Accessible Britain Challenge was launched on 4th September 2014 by Mark Harper, Minister of State for Disabled People. The Challenge was developed by the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Communities and Local Government and their vision is;

“For communities to become more inclusive and accessible by engaging and working with disabled people to remove barrier that get in the way of them being full and active contributors in their community”.

The Authority has signed up to the campaign and presented two examples of best practice; **Marshmallow Sky** a performance staged at the Palace Theatre that dealt with the issues around Aspergers syndrome and also the **Get**

Active a campaign promoted by Paralympic swimming stars Ollie Hynd and Charlotte Henshaw to get the people of Mansfield more active.

Both these case studies were included in the resource pack provided by the Accessible Challenge team as examples of positive initiatives.

Health and wellbeing events for employees

A number of health and wellbeing events are organised throughout the year, these range from therapies such as massage, Reiki, sports days, cricket events and arts and crafts.

Youth Mayor

Mansfield's new Youth Mayor for 2014/15 is Danielle Bridges (16) of Samworth Church Academy

Elections were held at Samworth Church Academy, All Saints' Catholic Academy, The Brunts Academy, The Manor Academy, Queen Elizabeth's Academy, Vision West Nottinghamshire College and the E2E Group at My Place on Thursday 9 October and the count took place on Friday 10 October.

Danielle will represent young people in the District and take their voice to the Mayor, Members and Officers of the Council and other community organisations. She will act as an ambassador for Mansfield at various conferences and as a role model for her peers across the District. This is the 7th year that Mansfield will have a Youth Mayor.

Veterans Charter

The Mansfield Veterans Charter is a unique commitment by service providers in the Mansfield District to recognise that war veterans may have issues that can impact on their well-being and affect their adjustment to civilian life.

The Veterans Charter was launched in June 2009 to coincide with National Armed Forces Week and since then has helped support many ex-service personnel in a variety of ways.

Sign language training for front line employees

A number of front line employees have undertaken sign language level 1 to enable them to improve the services they provide to customers who are deaf.

District Heating

Funding was secured to replace the coal fired district heating scheme at The Willows, River View and New England Way with individual gas boilers. This project had a positive impact on residents as the individual systems can be controlled more easily by the tenants and also there should be a reduction in bills.

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed in 2016 and will demonstrate progress made towards the Equality Objectives set in 2012. The policy will be reviewed if

required to reflect any changes in legislation that will impact upon the Authority.