



Equality and Diversity Policy

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V0.1		Deborah Carr	March 2017	

Introduction

Ipswich Borough Council is proud of its diverse community; it's what makes this area a great place to live, work and visit.

This Policy seeks to promote and uphold the principles of equality, diversity, fairness and inclusion within our employment practices, service design and delivery, procurement and partnership working. The Policy is in line with Ipswich Borough Council's duties and responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

As a council we will not tolerate discrimination, harassment or victimisation and will strive to promote equality of opportunity, understanding and foster good relations within our organisation and our community.

We want Ipswich to be a town that is fair and sustainable, ambitious, fun and creative for all. We will continue to work with others to achieve better outcomes for the borough through a combination of innovation and efficiencies.

We want to live in an equal society that recognises different people's different needs, situations and goals, and removes barriers that limit what people can do and can be.

The council is legally required to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity;
- foster good relations within and between our communities with a view to building good community relations.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Council Members;
- employees, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, and all job applicants
- Service users and those applying to access services;
- contractors and sub-contractors;
- volunteers;
- partnership arrangements.

We will treat everyone with the same attention, courtesy and respect regardless of:

- Age,
- Disability,
- Race,
- Religion or belief,
- Sex,
- Marriage and Civil Partnership,
- Gender reassignment/ gender identity,
- Pregnancy and maternity,

- Sexual orientation,

Our commitment

We are committed to promoting equality by:

- recognising, value and respect diversity and difference
- aiming to ensure that our services are accessible and relevant to the needs of our community;
- having appropriate recruitment, employment and promotion practices and procedures;
- letting contracts to suitable/appropriate suppliers of services;
- consulting with communities and groups affected when developing policies;
- providing training opportunities for employees and councillors;
- ensuring equal access to our complaints and other procedures
- ensuring that no form of intimidation, bullying or harassment is tolerated
- ensuring causes of unfairness are understood and addressed

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that we do not unlawfully discriminate.

Roles and responsibilities

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

We recognise that less favourable treatment may still take place. This is clearly not in line with the Councils' values and priorities and is something we should strive to challenge, directly or through customer or staff complaints.

Principles

In all of our activities we will:

- give due regard to equality and diversity when reviewing existing and developing new strategies, policies, services and functions to ensure that we provide excellent services, secure flexible and fair working practices and fairly award contracts, grants and commissioned services;
- engage and involve interested groups and individuals (both internal and external to the Council) within our decision making processes;
- deal with all complaints of discrimination, harassment or victimisation promptly and with sensitivity to all those involved;
- take all opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations within and between our communities.

In delivering our services we will:

- assess the needs of our existing and potential service users and ensure fair access to our services. For example, making reasonable adjustments for disabled people to enable the full use our services;

- ensure the availability of appropriate support services;
- provide access points for reporting hate crimes;
- work with and between communities to help develop and strengthen relationships and resilience.

Support to implement and monitor the policy

The Council has a range of policies and practices in place for all aspects of our work. They are all guided by this equality and diversity policy and support respectful behaviours. All are supported by appropriate training or briefing sessions and guidance provided by appropriate services. Mandatory equality and diversity e-learning modules are available through the Health and Safety team and advice and guidance is also available from Human Resources

Key policies – such as those relating to employment, service delivery, community engagement, commissioning and procurement - are specifically designed to:

- promote equality of opportunity;
- protect people against unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and
- foster positive relationships with and between communities.

We collect and analyse data relating to these areas of policy, to identify trends and areas of inequality, and then take appropriate action.

Communications

The Equality and Diversity Policy is available on the intranet and our external website. We will use all opportunities to promote the policy, for example: at induction events for new staff and within our procurement and commissioning processes

Reviewing this policy

This policy will be reviewed every three years.