

Workforce Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policy

Policy/Guideline Title:	Workforce Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policy		
Executive Summary:	This policy sets out Coventry City Council's commitment as an employer, to the principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. This policy will act as the foundation for, and the cornerstone of all of our employment policies, procedures and practice throughout the organisation.		
Supersedes:	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy – Becoming an Inclusive Employer April 2018.		
Description of Amendment(s):	Various.		
This policy will impact on: All employees			
Financial Implications: None			
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Issued By:	Human Resources	Expiry Date:	February 2023
Author:	Andy Hyland	Impact Assessment Date:	January 2020
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1 - Statement of commitment

- 1.1 Coventry City Council believes in the importance of the principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion underpinning everything we do.
- 1.2 We view diversity as a strength to be harnessed and aim to create an inclusive workplace culture that respects and values difference.
- 1.3 We aim to promote equality of opportunity as an employer to enable all employees within our workforce to develop and maximise their true and full potential.
- 1.4 We recognise that individuals still experience discrimination and inequality in our society and therefore as an employer we will take a pro-active approach to identifying and redressing this within the workplace.
- 1.5 We are clear that we will not tolerate harassment, bullying, discrimination and victimisation of any kind and will regard this behaviour as misconduct which may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal as appropriate where breaches amount to gross misconduct.
- 1.6 This policy will ensure that the Council fulfils its legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and The Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010).
- 1.7 This policy has been created with, and has the full support of our Elected Members, Strategic Management Board and Trade Union colleagues.

2 - Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all aspects of the Council's functions as an employer, and covers all employees, apprentices, graduate placements, casual workers, workers engaged via an employment agency and consultants.
- 2.2 Where Council services are provided by external contractors or third parties (including sub-contractors) these contractors or third parties are responsible for adhering to this policy whilst providing services on behalf of Coventry City Council.
- 2.3 This policy is applicable whether employees are on or off the premises, including those working away from their main office or normal place of work. This also includes social events outside of working hours that are an extension of work and the use of Social Media in line with the Code of Conduct and Social networking policy.
- 2.4 Every employee is responsible for compliance with this policy. Breaches of the policy will be regarded as misconduct and may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal as appropriate where breaches amount to gross misconduct.

3 - Responsibilities

Coventry City Council will:

- 3.1 Ensure that the letter and spirit of this policy acts as the foundation for all of the Council's employment policies, procedures and practices.
- 3.2 Embed a systemic commitment to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the organisation.
- 3.3 Provide an inclusive, safe and accessible environment for all of our employees.
- 3.4 Strive through proactive action to recruit, retain and develop a workforce that reflects the city's diverse communities and the people we serve.
- 3.5 Actively promote equality, diversity & inclusion throughout the workplace.
- 3.6 Ensure that we undertake an equality impact assessment on all the decisions we make relating to our workforce (including restructures) to minimise/ mitigate any adverse effects.
- 3.7 Ensure that organisations providing services on our behalf through any commissioning process are aware of and adhere to this policy.
- 3.8 Encourage colleagues to disclose their equality and diversity information to enable effective monitoring of the workforce.

Leaders and Managers will:

- 3.9 Lead on and be responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the policy, ensuring that all employees working in their service areas and in their teams attend relevant training and understand their responsibilities.
- 3.10 Take ownership for creating a working environment for their service areas and for their team members which is free from discrimination, including harassment, bullying, victimisation and all other forms of abuse and intimidation.
- 3.11 Effectively manage and deal promptly and thoroughly with any complaints of discrimination including harassment, bullying and victimisation.
- 3.12 Deal promptly with complaints of discrimination and inequality, ensuring thorough investigation and appropriate follow-up actions.

Employees will:

- 3.13 Ensure that they understand the policy and its implications for them as an employee and attend relevant training.
- 3.14 Not discriminate against, harass, abuse, intimidate, victimise or bully colleagues, service users or visitors to Council premises.
- 3.15 Take immediate and appropriate action if there are apparent breaches of this policy involving either themselves or others.

4 - Review, monitoring and reporting

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis commencing 12 months after it is agreed.

Performance will be monitored through:

- Joint Consultation Negotiation Committee
- Cabinet Member for Policing & Equalities briefings
- Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources
- The Workforce Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Board
- The Workforce Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action plan
- The Council's Equality Objectives Report
- Gender Pay Gap reporting
- Annual Workforce profile data
- Equality data completion rates
- Our Employee Engagement Survey
- Our Employee Networks

5 – Communication and training

- 5.1 We recognise that to maximise the impact of our aims for this policy it is important that it is widely communicated and that our workforce has the required skills and knowledge to undertake their responsibilities within it. We will ensure that the policy is widely communicated to all employees and visitors to Council offices, with copies available both electronically and in hardcopy for those with limited access to computers.
- 5.2 We will provide both classroom based and online Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training for employees and managers, with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training forming part of our mandatory training. We will supplement this training with additional briefings and communications designed to raise awareness and increase knowledge around all equality issues, best practice and legislation. Training will also be provided to managers undertaking equality impact assessment.

6 – Further information and definitions

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act brought together all the previously existing strands of equality and discrimination legislation, with the aim of clarifying existing law and extending it to cover some anomalies in existing discrimination law.

For further information and the latest version of the Equality Act see:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010)

The Public Sector Equality Duty is a duty on public authorities to consider how their policies and decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act. Those subject to the equality duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

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

These are sometimes referred to as the three aims or arms of the general equality duty. The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

For further information and the latest version of the Public Sector Equality Duty see:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>

Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act identifies 9 Protected Characteristics and the Act provides protection from unlawful discrimination in respect of these characteristics.

The Characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership

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

What is Discrimination?

Coventry City Council recognises that discrimination can take many different forms, all of which are unacceptable.

Direct Discrimination

This occurs when someone is treated less favourably than others because of a Protected Characteristic they possess.

Indirect Discrimination

This occurs when a condition, rule or policy that applies to everyone but is particularly disadvantageous to people who share a Protected Characteristic. Indirect discrimination can be justified if it can be shown that the requirement is a proportionate means to achieving a legitimate aim.

Associative Discrimination

This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with someone who possesses a Protected Characteristic.

Discrimination by Perception

This is direct discrimination against an individual because they are believed to possess a Protected Characteristic, regardless of whether they actually possess that characteristic or not.

Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

Victimisation

Victimisation refers to bad treatment directed towards someone who has made or is believed to have made or supported a complaint under the Equality Act. It includes situations where a complaint hasn't yet been made but someone is victimised because it's suspected they might make one.

Bullying

Bullying can be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. The impact on the individual can be the same as harassment and the words bullying and harassment are often used interchangeably in the workplace.