

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement



How and where we work
Agile, adaptable, accessible

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Slough Borough Council recognises the significant role that public sector organisations have in advancing equality in Britain today. As both an employer and provider of a wide range of public services, local authorities are at the heart of improving life opportunities for people who experience disadvantage and discrimination. Organisations in the public sector are expected to lead the way in promoting equality, inclusion and human rights, not just through compliance with the law, but also with targeted service improvements and fair, inclusive employment practices.
- 1.2 The council acknowledges that there exists in society individuals and groups which face barriers and discrimination (whether intentional or unintentional) based on their shared equality characteristic, background or personal circumstances. The unintended consequences of a service or employment policy or procedure may have an adverse impact on a particular group of residents or employees.

2. Policy Aim

- 2.1 The council will foster an environment in which each person has equal access to quality services and employment opportunities, irrespective of their ethnicity, religion or belief, disability, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or marital status.
- 2.2 We aim for our workforce to be representative of all sections of society and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best. We are fully committed to advancing equality, diversity and inclusion and eliminating unlawful discrimination, through ensuring fair and inclusive recruitment practices and HR policies.
- 2.3 As a Local Authority we will provide services that are fair and accessible to all and responsive to the needs of all our residents.

3. Legislative Framework

- 3.1 The Equality Act 2010 replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single legislative act. It simplified the law, removed inconsistencies and made it easier for people to understand and comply with equalities legislation. The Act also strengthens the law in important ways to help tackle discrimination and inequality. Its purpose is to embed equality considerations into the daily work of public authorities in order to counter discrimination and inequality at every level and to remove the possibility of institutional discrimination. The Act imposes the Public Sector Equality Duty which itself comprises a general duty as well as some specific duties which set out how to comply with the general duty.

3.2 The **General Duty** has three aims. Public bodies in all their operations (employment and service provision) *must have due regard to the need to:*

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different (equality) groups and
- foster good relations between people from different (equality) groups.

3.3 The specific duties include the requirement to publish how we comply with the general duty above and set equality objectives every 4 years.

The Equality Act defines the following as protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race (this includes an individual's colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

4. How we will meet our Equality Duties

4.1 As an organisation in the delivery of all our duties and functions we will:

- Expect all employees to promote the principles and practices of equality and inclusion and comply fully with the requirements of the Equality Act (2010), in both the discharge of their job duties in the delivery of public services and in their day to day conduct as employees.
- Implement clear internal policies and procedures to address inequality and ensure that employees and service users are not discriminated against on the basis of any protected characteristic.
- Challenge all forms of unfair discrimination and harassment through existing procedures and where relevant enforcing appropriate legislation.
- Promote good relations between people of different equality groups.
- Promote equality of opportunity for people of different equality groups.
- Ensure that council policy decisions are fair, proportionate and take account of equalities implications through the conducting of evidence-based Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)
- Celebrate diversity.

4.2 As an employer, Slough Borough Council will advance equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace by:

- Fostering an inclusive working environment based on dignity and respect and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.

- Being clear about standards of expected behaviour by having in place a Dignity at Work Code of Conduct, and ensure a workplace that is free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination. This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010).
- Taking seriously any complaint of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination in the workplace and have appropriate policies in place to support employees.
- Regularly reviewing and updating employment practices, policies and procedures to ensure fairness, inclusion and compliance with equalities legislation and best practice.
- Ensuring that opportunities for training, development and progression are available to all staff who will be supported to realise their full potential.
- Monitoring the make- up of the workforce based on self-declared, protected characteristics.
- Monitoring the impacts of Human Resources procedures and policies on different equality groups to ensure they support inclusion and equality.
- Conducting an Equality Impact Assessment throughout any organisational change or staffing restructure process.
- Encouraging all staff to feel confident about declaring their individual diversity information via the confidential self - service HR system so we have accurate data on our workforce.
- Supporting staff-led Employee Network Groups and engaging with all staff to promote inclusive practices and celebrating diversity.

Policy Schedule

Policy Schedule	Details
Policy owner and lead	HR Service: Diversity and Inclusion Lead
Consultation	Trade Unions Staff Network Groups Corporate / Senior Leadership Team Corporate Consultative Forum Employment & Appeals Committee
Equality Impact Assessment	Christine Ford
Approving body	Employment Committee
Date of approval	16.04.24
Date of implementation	17.04.24
This version number	Final Version 16.04.24
Last version	Equal Opportunities Policy Statement 2018
Related documents	Dignity at Work Code of Conduct Workforce Equality Data Reports Recruitment Policy All HR policies will include EDI considerations relevant to that policy area
Review interval	3 years

Version

Version	Author	Date	Changes
Draft 1.1	CF	28.06.23	First draft
Draft 1.2	CF	29.06.23	4.1 – statement that all employees expected to comply with Equality Act in the discharge of their duties and to each other as employees
Draft 1.3	CF	17.08.23	4.2 additional statement on EIAs for restructures following REACH network comments
Draft 1.4	CF	14.03.24	3.3 expansion of definition of Race following comment from TU.