

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY SCHEME



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A vertical photograph on the left side of the page shows a woman with dark hair and blue eyes looking down at a desk. She is wearing a black top. On the desk, there are several documents, including a blue folder and some papers with charts and text. Her hands are visible, one pointing at a document. The lighting is bright and natural.

FORWARD

This Equality and Diversity Scheme brings together our responsibilities under the Equality Framework for Local Government. By 'equality' we mean treating people fairly. By 'diversity' we mean valuing people's differences.

The Scheme sets out:

- How we will promote equality and diversity and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination in the work we do as an employer;
- The actions we plan to take to improve our equality and diversity performance and outcomes; and
- How we meet our legal responsibilities under the Equality Framework for Local Government 2010.

We see the Scheme as a vital means of consulting with those who live, work and study in Warwick District, and therefore we would welcome any views and comments you have on what we plan to do.

Chris Elliott
Chief Executive
Warwick District Council

Cllr Michael Doody
Leader
Warwick District Council

Since developing our first Equality and Diversity Plan there have been a number of changes that affect the equality and diversity work we do. A new law for disability equality came into force in 2006 and for gender equality in 2007. This was followed by European directives on religion and belief and sexual orientation which placed even greater duties on public services to promote equality. The Equality Bill 2010 brings together a variety of equality legislation into one Bill and with it places duties and responsibilities that are required as an employer.

The Council publicised its first Equality and Diversity Plan in 2003 and revised in 2004. This document replaces the Equality and Diversity Plan now to be known as the Council's 'Equality and Diversity Scheme' to provide a single approach for building equality for race, disability, gender, age, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

We recognise that currently some people do not experience fair access to services or a fair quality of life. This can have an adverse impact on the opportunities available to them as they progress through their lives. People can experience discrimination, harassment and other barriers to participation as a result of different aspects of their identity such as race, disability, gender, age, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

We recognise, however, that although the three equality duties for race, disability and gender are very similar in spirit there are important differences between them. These differences reflect the specific experience of inequality and discrimination of each particular equality group. We will strive to ensure these differences are reflected in the actions the Council takes by ensuring the equality impact assessment process consider the needs of all equality areas. This document is our combined Equality and Diversity Scheme.

WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Warwick District is an attractive and diverse district with a population of approximately 135,000 and growing. It has four distinct and individual towns that bring a large, vibrant student population together with a wide rural community.

Role & Structure

The Council has a number of roles, which include:

- i Leading the community – providing structure and support
- ii Representing the community – know our customers and their needs
- iii Providing a range of services – tailored to our customers needs
- iv Providing democratic rights and overseeing local, national and European elections.

The Council's Services are led by a Corporate Management Team (CMT) which consists of one Chief Executive, two Deputy Chief Executives and a larger Senior Management Team (SMT) that includes the CMT and all Heads of Service

The Council's Purpose

"Warwick District is a great place to live, work and visit."

Mission

"Building upon Excellence, to become World Class by 2012"

[Follow this link to view Council Objectives](#)



VALUES

Our values set out the way we aim to conduct ourselves in the way we work. They are a statement of the kind of behaviours our customers can expect from us when they deal with the Council and they underline the kind of organisation we would like to be.

- **Honesty and Integrity** - we can be relied upon and will be truthful
- **Open and transparent** - we will be accountable and understandable
- **Fair and equitable** - will value all our citizens and our work will be without bias or prejudice
- **Community focused** - we will put the needs and aspirations of our local communities to the fore and we will work flexibly and collaboratively as one Council
- **Environmentally sensitive** - we will ensure our long term impacts are minimised and are sustainable for the future.

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

The Equality Framework for Local Government is a performance management and implementation tool for delivering on equality and diversity. It is a tool designed to help Councils assess the progress in relation to their commitment to equality and diversity.

Warwick District is committed to becoming an 'Achieving' authority within the Equality Framework for Local Government by 2011. This supports the Council's key Strategy Objectives 'improve the efficiency of service delivery to the council's customers'. It also underpins our commitment to putting our customers at the centre of all we do and that means knowing our customers

Objectives &
target

LEADING EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY WORK

Areas of responsibility

Elected Members will

CMT and SMT will

Managers will

The effective delivery of equality and diversity is everybody's responsibility, but specifically:

- Provide leadership; an effective scrutiny role and promote equality and diversity on the corporate agenda
- Model the standards of behaviour and conduct they expect from their managers and staff
- Provide direction and endorse equalities strategy, policy and practice
- Encourage the integration of equalities into all aspects of Service Area's work
- Actively promote equality issues/action within Service Areas
- Provide for one of their members to be an equalities champion
- Demonstrate commitment to equality by promoting it within their everyday roles – for themselves and for their staff
- Identify appropriate training needs and provide training opportunities
- Monitor the effectiveness of equalities policies and programmes in their areas and how this benefits the customer
- Encourage the provision of appropriate information, instruction and supervision

All staff will

- Demonstrate commitment to equality in the performance of their duties and in their professional relationships with service users and colleagues
- Support managers in the development and implementation of equality
- Undertake appropriate training on equalities to deliver better services to their customers

The Council is responsible for ensuring that its policies and decisions reflect the principles contained within this

Clients & Contractors

In addition, the Council expects that any clients or contractors carrying out work on behalf of the Council will comply with the principles set out in its own Equality and Diversity Policy.

The Council's contract compliance is currently under review but it is clear that equality will be found in the Council's new Procurement Code of Practice when it is launched later in the year.

EQUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Equality Framework was developed by IDeA and launched in April 2009, it replaces the Equality Standard for Local Government. It is a tool designed to help Councils assess the progress they are making in relation to their commitment to delivering positive equality and diversity outcomes to their customers, staff and communities.



Clients & Contractors

The Framework builds on and recognises the work that councils have already undertaken under the old Standard, but contains many new features. At its heart it aspires to be simpler, smarter, proportional and relevant.

The Framework provides three levels: 'developing', 'achieving' and 'excellent'. It also uses a wider definition of equality 'an equal society protects and promotes equal, real freedom and opportunity to live in the way people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish. An equal society recognises people's different needs, situations and goals and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and be' (Equalities Review 2007).

The Council has committed to becoming an 'achieving' authority within the Framework by 2011. The Framework will measure the positive outcomes achieved for our customers, staff and communities and place these within the context of the wider drive for delivering outcome focused services. External validation of our progress will be based on our corporate self-assessment against the 'achieving' standards.

Under the Equality Framework for Local Government there are 5 key performance areas:

- Knowing your communities and equality mapping
- Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- Community engagement & satisfaction
- Responsive services & customer care
- A modern & diverse workforce

THE SCHEME

Consultation, involvement & participation

We are committed to involving the public in our work so that we can reflect the experiences of people who use our services.

Consultation

The Council is involved in a wide range of partnerships with different stakeholders, including the Warwick Partnership, the District's Local Strategic Partnership. These partnerships provide an opportunity to undertake shared consultation activity, especially with other statutory and voluntary sector organisations. It is essential that the results of these consultations are shared with partner agencies, so that the relevant organisation can work from a common information database.

Involvement

The Council will continue to work with the specific community groups to establish how they would like to be involved and participate in the Council's equality activity.

Participation

The Council endeavours to identify and make contact with those individuals or groups who may feel excluded, or who do not have the opportunity to participate in the consultation process.

Assessment

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will be used to ensure that any decisions in changes to service delivery are not having an adverse affect on any group.

Methodology

We will use the EIA process to consider

- If the current or proposed policy or activity will have an negative impact on people from equalities groups; and
- Whether we have missed an unmet need or an opportunity to achieve a more positive impact for people from equalities groups.

Training

Training, advice and guidance will be provided for all relevant managers on how to conduct effective impact assessments. Service Area Managers are responsible for checking that appropriate assessments have taken place, and that the resulting actions plans are properly implemented.

Where gaps or imbalances are found, action plans will be developed by Services Areas to rectify any discriminatory outcomes or unmet needs. Services Areas will publish a summary of the results of the EIAs together with their action plans on an annual basis. This will be within the Service Area Planning process, which contain plans for the service over for the forthcoming year.

Data information


Data gathering and analysis of how well we are performing is a core part of the Council's business. We gather and interpret data on a regular basis to make judgements about performance and inform decisions. The Council believes that gathering and using data is intrinsic to understanding needs and improving service.

Monitoring

The monitoring and management of our equality work is embedded into our existing performance management and business planning process. The Council's Executive and the Strategic Equality and Diversity Group have a specific role in scrutinising and evaluating the effective delivery of our Equality and Diversity Scheme by ensuring:

- Services have their own service specific action plans based on the results of their EIAs council-wide issues can be identified and tackled;
- Outcomes are achieved; and
- Consistency of approach is maintained.

Information on the overall progress that the Council is making with the Equality and Diversity Scheme will be collected regularly and published in an Annual Progress Report at the end of each financial year.



Complaints

The council has placed the customer at the centre of all that we do. Listening to our customers is important to us. Complaints as well as compliments and comments offer an opportunity to identify areas for improvement and can help enhance service provision. The Council has a Corporate Complaints procedure and each Service Area has an Officer to deal with complaints (Every complaint will be treated in the strictest confidence).

Service users and members of the community are actively encouraged to report any such concerns to the appropriate Services Areas Complaints Officer.

Procedures for staff

No form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation will be tolerated in the workplace. Should any member of staff experience a racist incident at work, or any act of victimisation or harassment due to their race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or religion/belief, this should be reported through the Council's Harassment at Work Policy, which forms part of the Grievance Policy.

Identifying and recording racist incidents and complaints of

The Council is committed to ensuring that the recommendations from the report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (1999) and the guidelines contained within the Home Office Code of Practice on reporting and recording racist incidents are fully implemented across the Council.

The Council participates in a number of multi-agency groups that aim to ensure that systems are in place for the prevention of racist incidents and the detection of those that are reported by the community.

**Monitoring
the workforce
for equality of
opportunity**

The Council is committed to equal opportunities and by constantly improving its monitoring systems will be able to demonstrate that its workforce reflects the community it serves. It is vital that the Council fulfils its responsibilities and set a good example to other employers.

The Council has a specific duty under the Equality Legislation to monitor its workforce in a variety of ways. An Equal Opportunities monitoring form is included in recruitment packs so that this data can be collected for analysis.

**Public Access
to services and
information**

The Council recognises there is a risk that some sections of the public will not enjoy equality of opportunity in accessing Council information. For example, people with learning difficulties and people with visual impairments may have difficulties with printed information. People whose first language is not English may have difficulties with information that is only provided in English.

The Council is committed to providing, where possible, equal access to our services and to the information that it provides.

Accessible to all communities

The Council will ensure that its publications and press statements are accessible to all communities. It will aim to provide information in accessible formats, including electronically.

The Council also has membership of 'Language Line' to provide language support in the key frontline customer service areas.

The Council will continue to review its approach to the provision of translation, interpreting and language services. The Council's web-site will continue to undergo improvements to enhance access for everyone.

Training & Development

Every new member of staff attends the Corporate Induction Training Programme; one of the key elements of the training is the Equality and Diversity Awareness Training. The aim of the programme is to create an awareness of equalities issues and to help participants explore how their own contribution can assist in supporting the Council's equalities policies.

We are committed to ensuring that all staff have the opportunity to participate in training opportunities within the Council



OUR PRIORITIES & ACTION PLAN

This section identifies what we need to do in order to become 'achieving' under the framework.

OUR PRIORITY OBJECTIVE FOR 2010/2011 IS:

- To embed equality and diversity into our service thinking
- Train and support our staff so that they understand their responsibilities
- What we know about the equality and diversity performance of the Council;

OUR ACTION PLAN FOR 2010/2011 IS:

- To deliver EIA training to all staff.
- Update and drive through the EIA schedule within each service area and the council as a whole
- Embed EIA's into service delivery planning processes
- Support and develop customer mapping and 'knowing our customer'