

Equality and Diversity Protocol

Wandsworth Council is committed to promoting equality and diversity and developing a culture that values differences and recognises that people from a variety of different backgrounds can bring important and positive contributions to the Council and improve the way we deliver services for residents and the wider public. Our aim is that our workforce reflects the people we serve and is representative of all sections of society as far as we can. We aim to continue to have a working environment where each employee feels respected, treated fairly and able to give of their best.

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society. The Council believes that equality and diversity in the workplace are good management practice and make sound business sense and we wish to go beyond what is required by the Equality Act. All employees have a role to play and managers must take the lead and set a good example to others.

Our aim is to ensure equality and fairness for all employees and to ensure working practices do not discriminate on grounds of age, gender and gender reassignment, marital and civil partnership status, race (including ethnic origin, colour, and nationality), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief. We aim to eliminate all unlawful and unfair discrimination so that no individual or group is directly or indirectly discriminated for any reason.

The Council seeks to break down any barriers that prevent equal access to opportunities for all those who work for it. All members of staff are expected to respect differences and report any potential concerns to their line manager.

Selection for employment, promotion and training will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

Senior management, the trade unions and staff side have agreed this protocol.

The Council's intention is to:

- create an organisation in which individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued and there is zero tolerance towards any form of discrimination.
- maintain and grow a working environment that promotes dignity and respect for all; intimidation, bullying or harassment will not be tolerated and all reported acts will be thoroughly investigated.
- treat discriminatory acts and breaches of this protocol as misconduct; potentially resulting in disciplinary proceedings.

- introduce a six monthly corporate forum chaired by the Chief Executive, with representatives from each department and trade unions/ staff side, to review terms of reference likely to include major equality and diversity issues.
- publish on Wandsworthi key staffing information relating to equalities and diversity, along with relevant targets.
- monitor and act upon Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) for any adverse impacts and publish the assessments.

Roles and Responsibilities for operating the protocol

Employees are responsible for:

- understanding the Policy and what the Council expects from them in terms of their conduct and behaviour at work and implementing this in their day to day work;
- promoting dignity and respect for all;
- ensuring that acts of intimidation, bullying or harassment are not tolerated;
- reporting acts of intimidation, bullying or harassment; and
- participating in any appropriate learning and development interventions, including the Diversity e-learning package

Additionally **managers** are responsible for:

- helping to create an organisation in which individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued;
- treating alleged acts of discrimination with urgency and seriousness and as potential misconduct and consult with Human Resources where action may be necessary; and
- attempting to resolve issues and problems as part of normal management processes and encouraging issues to be raised informally as much as possible by creating and maintaining a harmonious working environment where colleagues and managers treat each other with dignity and respect;
- ensuring that employees understand what is expected in terms of equality and diversity

Human Resources are responsible for:

- being involved in all aspect of any formal action emanating from breaches of the equality and diversity protocol and providing support and guidance on all issues;
- ensuring that the statement and supporting materials are kept up to date and reflective of legislative developments and best practice and monitoring and reviewing outcomes on a regular basis; and

- treating information relating to any action taken in relation to the protocol confidentially, except to the extent that disclosure is appropriate
- co-ordinating the Diversity e-learning package

Staff Side and Trades Unions are responsible for:

- providing advice and guidance to staff as appropriate;
- providing the Head of Human Resources with comments on the protocol; and
- providing representation to employees as appropriate.