

# Equality Policy

## Document Control

<b>Document Ref:</b>		<b>Date Created:</b>	July 2012
<b>Version:</b>	1.0	<b>Date Modified:</b>	
<b>Revision due</b>	July 2015		
<b>Author:</b>	Elaine Walker	<b>Sign &amp; Date:</b>	
<b>Owning Service</b>	Strategic Support		
<b>Equality Impact Assessment: (EIA)</b>	<b>Date undertaken:</b>		
	<b>Issues (if any):</b>		

<b>Chief Executive</b>	<b>Sign &amp; Date:</b>	
<b>Corporate Director (Community Services)</b>	<b>Sign &amp; Date:</b>	
<b>Corporate Director (Children &amp; Young People)</b>	<b>Sign &amp; Date:</b>	
<b>Corporate Director (Environment)</b>	<b>Sign &amp; Date:</b>	

## Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
1			
2			
3			



# Contents

---

1. Purpose .....	3
2. Applicability .....	3
3. Policy .....	3
4. Roles and Responsibilities .....	4
5. Failure to comply with the Equality Policy .....	4
6. Review .....	4

## **1. Purpose**

- 1.1. The purpose of this policy is to set out West Berkshire Council's commitment to equality.
- 1.2. This policy provides a broad statement of the Council's expectations and responsibilities in relation to equality, and is a reflection of our requirements under current equalities legislation.

## **2. Applicability**

- 2.1. This Policy applies to:
  - 2.1.1. All non-school based employees working for the Council, including those working from home or at non-Council locations.
  - 2.1.2. Other persons including elected members, consultants, agency staff and contractors working for the Council, and external organisations working with the Council, whilst engaged on Council business.
- 2.2. It is the responsibility of each employee and other person mentioned in Section 2.1.2 to familiarise themselves with and adhere to this policy.
- 2.3. This policy has undergone internal and external consultation including with Heads of Service and trade unions and has been ratified by the Executive Member for Equalities.

## **3. Policy**

- 3.1. West Berkshire Council recognises that the needs of our service users and employees are diverse and that we must consider these differences when developing our activities. We understand that one size does not fit all, and we strive to develop services and practices that will be suitable for all.
- 3.2. We are committed to ensuring that equality and diversity lie at the heart of our services and employment practices and will work to remove the barriers that limit access and opportunity. We welcome and embrace the strength and resilience that diversity brings to the district.
- 3.3. We endeavour to treat our service users, employees, and contractors with respect and dignity and according to the framework set out in legislation. We will ensure that no one is treated less fairly on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion, belief, sexual orientation, or on any other grounds, as set out in legislation, which cannot be justified.
- 3.4. In order to meet our aims, West Berkshire Council will:
  - 3.4.1. Ensure a continuing strategic lead for equalities supported by appropriate policies and guidance;
  - 3.4.2. Have regard to our obligations under relevant legislation, including the requirement to duly consider people from all communities in the formation of our policies and services;
  - 3.4.3. Promote equality and good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
  - 3.4.4. Promote an environment free from discrimination, bullying and harassment, and tackle behaviour in contravention of this;
  - 3.4.5. Recognise and value the differences and individual contribution that people make;

3.4.6. Treat our customers, colleagues and partners fairly and with respect

#### **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

- 4.1. The Including Everyone Board is responsible for:
  - 4.1.1. Being aware of new legislation, new national initiatives and policy changes;
  - 4.1.2. Prioritising equality activity and focus in light of internal and external drivers, reprioritising when necessary;
  - 4.1.3. Reviewing corporate progress against West Berkshire Council's equality objectives;
  - 4.1.4. Holding directorates to account for completion of allocated activity;
  - 4.1.5. Consulting with and seeking feedback from relevant local groups on the Council's approach to equality;
  - 4.1.6. Providing a forum for the discussion of activity and sharing information and good practice between directorates.
- 4.2. Employees are expected to:
  - 4.2.1. Treat customers and colleagues fairly and with respect;
  - 4.2.2. Promote equality of opportunity within the Council, and externally with customers, communities and partners;
  - 4.2.3. Take into consideration the impact on service users, and consult effectively with them when designing new policies or services;
  - 4.2.4. Familiarise themselves with this policy and acting in accordance with it.

#### **5. Failure to comply with the Equality Policy**

- 5.1. Job applicants and service users who feel they have been subject to unfair discrimination can make a complaint under the Council's Complaints Procedure.
- 5.2. Employees who feel they have been subject to unfair discrimination can raise the issue informally with their line manager, or formally under the terms of the Council's Grievance Procedure.
- 5.3. Employees who are alleged to have committed an act of unfair discrimination may be liable to disciplinary action in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.
- 5.4. Any individual or organisation working for the Council who commits an act of unjustified or unlawful discrimination, or allows discrimination to occur without taking appropriate action, may have their contract terminated.
- 5.5. Anyone to whom this policy applies, who commits an act of unjustified or unlawful discrimination, or allows discrimination to occur without taking appropriate action, may also be liable to a claim being brought against them by the victim in the Civil Court.

#### **6. Review**

- 6.1. This policy will be reviewed to respond to any changes and at least every 3 years.
- 6.2. The Including Everyone Board is responsible for reviewing and maintaining this Policy.

## **7. Further Documentation**

- 7.1. Equality Act (2010)
- 7.2. Non-statutory guidance on the Equality Duty (Equality and Human Rights Commission)
- 7.3. Equality Impact Assessment Guidance (West Berkshire Council)
- 7.4. Consultation Policy (West Berkshire Council)