

Equality and Diversity Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This documents sets out Lancaster City Council's commitment to advancing equality and celebrating the diversity across the district. It has been written so that everyone will know what we are committed to.
- 1.2 Whilst the policy complies with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 its also recognises that the Council serves people who live, work, study in or visit the district and that these people as individuals or groups have diverse backgrounds and circumstances. The communities we serve are made up of people of all ages, races and ethnic backgrounds, there are people who are disabled and non-disabled, and there are people from faith and non faith backgrounds, and the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender community. The district we serve covers both rural and urban areas and therefore people live in a range of different types of homes and have widely differing levels of income.

2.0 Our commitment to equality and diversity

- 2.1 As a major employer and provider of services Lancaster County Council will:
- Comply with equality law and good practice, including carrying out our public duties to promote equality.
 - Provide equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination, harassment and intimidation and disadvantage in employment and when delivering services.
 - Strive to make all communities across the district, large and small, urban and rural, to be strong places with a sense of togetherness and belonging, where everyone works for the good of their community.
 - Support every citizen and employee in realising their full potential, to exercise genuine choice and control over their own lives, and participate fully in the community life of the district.
- 2.2 To deliver the above commitments the Council will continuously strive to achieve the highest standards of service delivery, decision-making and employment practice. This policy reinforces our responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure equality of opportunity for all sections of the community and our workforce, and in particular our general and specific duties.

Our General Duty is:

- 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.

Our Specific Duty is:

- To publish information to demonstrate how we are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty,
and
- To prepare and publish equality objectives.

2.3 The Council's objectives relating to equality are incorporated in to the Corporate Plan and associated action plans. It is these objectives that outline the specific steps Lancaster City Council will take to achieve both its general and specific duty. These objectives can be found in the Councils Performance Management System (CorVu) and on the Council's website.

2.4 To meet our objectives the Council will expect all Councillors, Managers, Employees and Contractors to:

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect at all times, this includes but not limited to; Citizens of the District; Customers, Visitors; Employees and any other people with a connection with the Council.
- Have a clear set of objectives for equality and diversity.
- Deliver the best possible standards of service to all our citizens and customers
- Consider the needs and opinions of every community

3.0 Our commitment as an employer

3.1 Lancaster County Council is committed to being a fair and supportive employer, enabling our workforce to deliver high quality services to everyone.

To achieve this we will:

- Ensure all recruitment is carried out fairly and effectively
- Ensure all Managers and staff are appropriately trained and equipped to implement this Policy
- Treat all employees fairly, with dignity and respect at all times
- Apply a zero tolerance approach to unacceptable behaviour and take necessary action to deal with any such act swiftly and appropriately
- Create an environment where employees are fully engaged in the development of our policies and practice
- Provide fair and transparent pay, rewards and conditions of service
- Promote the opportunities to work flexibly across the organisation and promote an appropriate work-life balance.
- Make reasonable adjustments in line with our legal duties
- Continually monitor the make-up of our workforce and aim to employ a workforce that reflects the population of district we serve.

3.2 We will also work to tackling inequality arising out of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender re-assignment
- Marital status and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief, including non-belief
- Sex or gender
- Sexual orientation
- Other forms of disadvantage such as rural deprivation and isolation
- Any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified.

4.0 Responsibilities

4.1 This Policy applies to every Councillor, Manager and Employee of Lancaster County Council, and any other person or organisation employed by the Council to work or to deliver services on its behalf, including those employed through contractual, commissioning or grant-aided arrangements.

5.0 Policy implementation

5.1 We will ensure that everyone associated with the Council is made aware of this Policy and understands their responsibilities for ensuring we are meeting our statutory duty, our commitment, corporate and service specific objectives.

5.2 We will support Councillors, Employees and Contractors so they know how to implement the Policy in relation to their role.

5.3 We will continue to develop our approach to equality and diversity by identifying good practice in employment, service delivery and how we engage with the people in the communities we serve.

5.4 We will regularly monitor and report our progress in relation to published equality and diversity based objectives.

5.5 To do this, we will gather feedback from customers, residents and employees in relation to employment, the delivery of services and the opportunities available to influence Council decision-making. This information will be monitored and assessed so that we know:

- The take-up of Council services
- The levels of service user satisfaction
- The effectiveness of our services
- The make-up of our workforce
- The impact of our employment practices
- Involvement in decision-making
- The experience of residents living in the districts we serve.

6.0 Equality monitoring

6.1 When we ask members of the public or employees for information in order to undertake equality monitoring we will take care that:

- The monitoring is appropriate, only ask for the information we need
- Always explain why we need the information and how we will use it
- Ensure that individuals cannot be identified from the information collected
- Comply with the law in relation to confidentiality, data protection and freedom of information.

7.0 Policy Review

7.1 We will review this Policy on a regular basis and will carry out consultation before making any changes to the Policy.

8.0 Further Information

8.1 Should you require any further information relating about this policy, please contact the Council's Human Resources Manager on 01524 582076.