

Appendix One

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY STATEMENT FOR THE LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES

The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames positively welcomes and aims to support the growing diversity of the community we serve and the people we employ. Our diversity is our strength and we are committed to providing services to our many different communities, by a workforce that reflects the diversity of society.

We also acknowledge that we live in an unequal society in which many people face discrimination. The Council of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames believes that equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination are fundamental human rights. We actively oppose all forms of discrimination and are committed to the principle that no person shall face discrimination by being treated unfairly or being denied access to services or employment opportunities.

We will not discriminate (indirectly or directly) on the grounds of race, gender or gender reassignment, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, age, religious beliefs or disability.

Discrimination as outlined above and harassment is unacceptable and contrary to our explicit aim of providing quality services and recruiting and retaining diverse staff.

The Council recognises its responsibilities under the following equalities legislation and related Codes of Practice:

- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (updated 1986)
- The Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005
- The Equal Pay Act 1970
- The Equality Act 2006
- The Race Relations Act 1976 and (Amendment) Regulations 2003 and
- The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Amendments
- The Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

Equality and diversity are majority issues, which concern the whole community:

- Young people
- Older people
- Women and men
- People from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds
- Faith groups
- Disabled people
- Lesbians and gay men, Bi Sexual and Transgender groups

Quality means equality in the services we plan and provide, and in the staff we employ to provide those services. We cannot achieve our aim of providing good quality well managed services unless we take into consideration the diverse needs of all sections of our diverse communities and aim to become an organisation with a well developed workforce, which is able to respond to those diverse needs at all levels of the workforce.

We aim to be a borough, which values the diversity of all its communities and enables all its residents to become full and active citizens with a shared sense of belonging.

We will build on the strengths of diversity and aim to be a borough where all Richmond's diverse communities feel safe, included, respected and valued.

This is key to all people who live, visit and work in the borough feeling safe and being able to 'take pride' in a borough which values and respects its growing diversity and promotes positive attitudes and good relations between all sections of its communities.

We intend to promote equality, value diversity and prevent discrimination through our roles as

- Service Provider
- Employer
- Community Leader

The Equalities Scheme and equality action plans detail how we intend to progressively achieve this through three year action plan cycles of assessment, review, actions and outcomes.

This will be undertaken as part of a programme of continuous development and mainstreaming of equality/diversity considerations throughout the whole business of the Council.

OUR COMMITMENTS:

- We will identify, tackle and prevent any form of institutional discrimination.
- We will promote equality of opportunity and fair treatment for all our communities.
- We will build on the strengths of diversity and aim to promote good relations between different communities.
- We will work with specific groups of people who are hard to reach and who may not have been provided with opportunities to voice their needs. We will particularly work with those groups who experience marginalisation, disadvantage and discrimination to discover previously unmet need.
- We will implement a framework for action on equality, which is based on key requirements of the Equality Standard, the three General duties to promote equalities and other equality legislation. This will help us towards our goal of the mainstreaming of equality/diversity considerations and objectives in all the work of the Council.
- We will ensure that all our partners and contractors are informed of our equality/diversity commitments and work towards the adoption of a shared code of practice.
- We will monitor and evaluate all aspects of service delivery and employment to inform our progress, objectives and review of outcomes. We will also initiate changes where necessary.
- We will develop corporate consultation, involvement and review mechanisms as part of our commitment to on-going consultation with and involvement of key stakeholders, partners and community/voluntary groups.
- We will ensure that all Members, managers and staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities under equalities legislation and Council policy and are provided with learning and development opportunities to develop skills, knowledge and competencies to facilitate their roles.

Our general commitments will also be translated through our particular responsibilities in relation to service delivery and employment areas.

SERVICE DELIVERY:

- The Council's central duty is to provide and enable the provision of appropriate, effective, responsive and sensitive services to the whole community. We will do this by working in partnership with all sections of the community, contractors and local partners to promote the economic, social and environmental well being of the whole community.
- We will work in partnership with staff, community/voluntary groups, and other stakeholders, in order to translate statutory requirements and local needs into meaningful and achievable equality/diversity objectives and outcomes.
- We will work to include the consideration and incorporation of diverse needs in all our key functions, policies and services. We aim to achieve this within a culture of continuous improvement.
- We aim to become an organisation where thinking about equality/diversity issues and objectives is integral to service delivery and review.
- We will produce good quality data in relation to service provision, community profiles and employment areas, in order to feed into our objective setting and review processes.
- We will promote equal access to services and accessible information about services.
- We will work towards identifying, understanding and eliminating barriers to equality of access, equality of treatment and equality of outcome in the services we plan and provide and the staff we employ to deliver them.

EMPLOYMENT:

- We will strive to achieve a representative and well-equipped workforce at all levels, to reflect and provide/commission services for the diverse local communities we serve.
- We aim to become an inclusive organisation, where diversity is valued, respected and built upon, so that we are able to recruit and retain the best staff to meet diverse needs.
- As a major employer in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, the Council recognises its pro-active role in valuing and promoting diversity, fairness, social justice and equality of opportunity by adopting and promoting fair employment practices. We aim to act as a role model for other employers.
- The Council will strive to achieve a change in its own organisation and work culture and create an ethos of diversity and equality by reviewing working practices and procedures to ensure that they do not discriminate against any particular sections of the workforce.
- The Council will also achieve this through the introduction of anti-discriminatory practice in all areas of work.
- The Council will not tolerate harassment or bullying of employees by other employees whatever their level in the Council, and will take remedial action in accordance with the Council's Policy Statements and Anti Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Procedure.
- Our employees are our greatest assets. We will work in partnership with our employees at all levels and those who represent them. Through a programme of learning and development and the provision of information, we will strive to ensure that employees are aware of their individual and collective responsibilities under our Equality and Diversity Policy.
- Where appropriate and allowed in law, the Council will implement Positive Action initiatives. Examples of Positive Action include staff training and development schemes, the use of specialist press for job advertising and the encouragement of applications for jobs from people because of their race, gender or disability, wherever they may be under-represented in the Council's workforce
- We will seek to provide equal pay for equal work by continuing to apply job evaluation schemes that objectively apply pay to job requirements

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW:

- Elected members will fulfil their statutory responsibilities under equalities legislation and aim to promote good community relations in all their work, particularly in their community leadership role.
- The lead Member for Equalities and Diversity will lead at Cabinet and Committees as appropriate.
- The Strategic Equalities Executive Board will champion and lead by example by using the equalities strategic framework to encourage the integration of equality/diversity issues in all aspects of departmental work. Executive Board will actively help to promote equality/diversity issues/actions within directorates.
- Directorate and divisional management teams will maintain an overview for the directorate and service and ensure effective development, implementation and monitoring of departmental equality/diversity action plans; and ensure that the incorporation of key equality/diversity objectives arising from this work become incorporated within directorate and service plans.
- Each directorate will produce annual equality/diversity action plans with clear targets and indicators by which to address progress. Action plan should clearly state lead officers for each action/task. Each directorate will need to demonstrate the process by which policy objectives and action plans were developed and widely consulted.
- Six monthly progress reports to be presented to Strategic Equalities Executive Board. Annual report to be presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.
- Equality partnerships and other forums to feed into the process of setting equality/diversity objectives and action plans and the monitoring and review of these.
- Managers will demonstrate commitment to equalities by promoting them within their everyday roles, for themselves and their staff; identify appropriate training needs and provide training opportunities, monitor the effectiveness of equalities policies and programmes in their areas; feed into the equality/diversity objective setting and review processes.
- Staff will be encouraged to demonstrate commitment to equalities by taking active steps to challenge discrimination and harassment; feed into the equality/diversity objective setting and review processes in their departments and support managers in their effective implementation.

- Relevant Contractors to incorporate appropriate sections of the Council's equality/diversity policy commitments in all dealings and practices on behalf of the Council.
- Partners to be aware of the Council's equality/diversity policy commitments and objectives and incorporate these within their work in all key and relevant areas.