

CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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North Kesteven
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Executive summary

North Kesteven District Council is committed to providing services which embrace diversity and promote equality of opportunity. As an employer, the Council is committed to ensuring equality and valuing diversity within its workforce. The Council will not tolerate any discrimination, directly or indirectly.

Aims of the Policy

We will:

- Know the diversity of our community and understand its needs
- Show leadership and commitment in promoting equality and challenging inequality
- Work in partnership with public, private, voluntary and community organisations to reduce the equality gaps and improve lives
- Actively engage our community to participate in decision making processes to improve the services we provide
- Provide services that meet the needs of the diversity of the community and are accessible to all
- Have a workforce where everyone is treated equally with dignity and respect. with an ongoing commitment by the Council to regularly report and review our gender pay gap.

Our duty:

We will have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any 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.

This involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages people may experience due to their protected characteristics
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where participation is disproportionately low
- Tackling prejudice
- Promoting understanding.

North Kesteven District Council exists to serve residents, communities, businesses and other organisations within the area. The Council has five main roles as a:

- Community leader
- Service provider
- Commissioner of services
- Employer
- Partner.

1. Introduction

Equality is about creating a fairer society where everyone can participate and has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. It is not about treating people the same, but recognising that everyone has different needs, which need to be met in different ways.

Diversity is based on everyone being different. Our commitment to diversity is about recognising, valuing and respecting differences in others and embracing the differences. We welcome the different skills, abilities and experiences that people bring into the workforce and the wider community.

The Council is both an employer and service provider and has a responsibility to ensure that everyone has the right to be treated fairly at work or when using its services. The Equality Act 2010 provides the legal support for this.

In addition, as the Council is a public sector provider it has a General Equality Duty to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any 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.

To do this we will:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages people may experience due to their protected characteristics
- Take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups
- Encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where participation is disproportionately low
- Tackle prejudice
- Promote understanding.

2. Background

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 brings together separate pieces of legislation into one single Act simplifying the law and strengthening it in important ways to help tackle discrimination and inequality.

It provides a cross-cutting legislative framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. In addition, it is intended to deliver a simple, modern and accessible framework of discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society.

Public Sector Equality Duty

The Public Sector Equality Duty came into force on the 5 April 2011. The Equality Duty replaces the three previous duties on race, disability and sex, bringing them together into a single duty, and extending it to cover age, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

The Equality Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations in the course of developing policies and delivering services. The aim is for public bodies to consider the needs of all individuals in their day to day work, in developing policies, in delivering services, and in relation to their own employees.

Protected Characteristics Introduced in the Equality Act 2010

The duty covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

North Kesteven District Council also considers rurality and socio-economic matters in its decision-making process. Rurality is how we assess the potential impact of a policy or service on rural communities and ensuring equally effective and successful outcomes for communities and individuals in the design and delivery of public services, regardless of location. Socio-economic matters relates to where a person is living, their interactions with society and financial status.

3. Aims and Objectives

A set of equality objectives have been established to meet the needs of the Local Government Equality Framework assessment and to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty:

- Know the diversity of our community and understand its need
- Show leadership and commitment in promoting equality and challenging inequality
- Work in partnership with public, private, voluntary and community organisations to reduce the equality gaps and improve lives
- Actively engage our community to participate in decision making processes to improve the services we provide
- Provide services that meet the needs of the diversity of the community and are accessible to all
- Have a workforce where everyone is treated equally with dignity and respect. with an ongoing commitment by the Council to regularly report and review our gender pay gap.

North Kesteven District Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is a statement demonstrating a commitment to:

- Promote equality of opportunity
- Ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion is considered in decision-making, service delivery and employment.

4. Behaviours and Activities

This section highlights some of the behaviours and activities required under each of the equality objectives to demonstrate that North Kesteven District Council is committed to providing services which embrace diversity and promote equality of opportunity.

- Know the diversity of our community and understand its need
 - 1 Know the equality profile of our service users and the wider community, and understand their changing needs
 - 2 Monitor and respond to inequalities in service delivery.
- Show leadership and commitment in promoting equality and challenging inequality
 - 1 Have schemes, policies and procedures that comply with legislation and statutory duties, to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion is fully integrated into the culture of the Council
 - 2 Promote good practice by achieving and maintaining externally recognised accreditation or awards
 - 3 Have a vision of equality which is coherently shared with, and owned by, the Council, our partners and the local community
 - 4 Have service and action plans to integrate the findings from our equality analysis process
 - 5 To challenge our own and our partners' equality performance
 - 6 Commission and procure services which deliver our equality objectives
 - 7 Councillors and Officers understand the diversity and needs of our community and are committed to our equality objectives.
- Work in partnership with public, private, voluntary and community organisations to reduce the equality gaps and improve lives
 - 1 Work with partners to develop and progress our equality objectives
 - 2 Improve relations across our community and deal effectively with any discrimination, harassment or hate crime incidents
 - 3 Work with others to share best practice and benchmark equality achievements
 - 4 Work with partners to review priorities to take into account the

community's needs.

- Actively engage our community to participate in decision making processes to improve the services we provide
 - 1 Consult and involve different communities in decision making processes to ensure that we continue to improve our services
 - 2 Ensure all sections of our community are satisfied that we have taken their views into account.

- Provide services that meet the needs of the diversity of the community and are accessible to all
 - 1 Deliver excellent services that meet the needs of, and are fully accessible, to all sections of the community
 - 2 Monitor, review and evaluate equality outcomes
 - 3 Carry out equality analysis on all functions and policies, to support the decision making process for decisions on new or changed policies, procedures or working practices
 - 4 Ensure all commissioned and procured services are carried out in accordance with our equality priorities
 - 5 Improve satisfaction rates with council services.

- Have a workforce where everyone is treated equally with dignity and respect, with an ongoing commitment by the Council to regularly report and review our gender pay gap.
 - 1 Recognise and value the differences, skills, abilities and experiences that people bring into the workplace
 - 2 Is committed to the workplace being free of harassment, bullying and discrimination and where people are treated with dignity and respect and allowed to develop their full potential
 - 3 Provides all employees with the training and development they need to enable us to achieve our equality objectives
 - 4 Monitor and act upon adverse trends or inequalities in employment
 - 5 Improve satisfaction levels across all staff groups
 - 6 Develop and monitor innovative employment practices
 - 7 To report our gender pay gap on an annual basis and progress actions within the gender pay gap action plan
 - 8 Participate in the ethnicity pay gap
 - 9 Participate in the disability pay gap.

5. Equality Analysis

For North Kesteven District Council, equality extends beyond just meeting statutory obligations and we recognise that, only by understanding the rights, requirements and expectations of all our communities, can we really deliver exceptional services. The General Equality Duty does not specify how public

authorities should analyse the effect of their existing and new policies and practices, but doing so is an important part of complying with the General Equality Duty.

It is up to us to choose the most effective approach for the organisation, although case law on the meaning of the previous general equality duties makes it clear analysis has to be undertaken before making the relevant policy decision, and include consideration as to whether any detrimental impact can be mitigated. Therefore, a written record to demonstrate that due regard has taken place is expected, which is why the Council use of Equality Impact Assessments is important.

We need to consider all of our functions to determine which are relevant to the aims of the Duty, in what way and whether this may vary according to the needs of protected groups. Assessing service and policy delivery will assist us in determining the main priorities for action, recognising that functions may change in the future and that this initial analysis may need to be reviewed.

Also, at the end of engagement surveys, equal opportunity monitoring questions are asked. The monitoring of responses ensures that the Council is not discriminating against any section of society when delivering and providing services. To evidence this, the Council includes monitoring questions on survey forms which ask about the individual that is completing the form.

These questions mean North Kesteven District Council can track satisfaction and service usage and can ensure people from protected groups have been consulted with. In addition, the Council recognises that some people may have different service needs than others. Therefore, asking these questions allows the Council to tailor services to meet these needs. North Kesteven District Council does not publish individual responses and all surveys are input and analysed by the Corporate Information Team who do not have access to any customer records. This way, personal information provided cannot be tracked back to individuals. Furthermore, as stated on the form, the monitoring questions are entirely optional. Therefore, if residents are not comfortable with answering them, as with any other question, they are able to leave them blank.

Engagement to support the equality analysis

Engagement enables us and people with an interest in our work to pool their knowledge and experience on equality and good relations. This intelligence can then be used to achieve shared aims and to deliver better decision-making, for example, in policy and service development and in setting priorities for action.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The successful implementation of this Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is dependent on all elected Members and colleagues understanding their roles and responsibilities.

Elected Members

Elected Members of the Council play a number of important roles in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion. The Executive Board is the part of the Council which is responsible for many of the decisions that give effect to the policies and strategies approved by the organisation. The Executive Board comprises the Leader and five members of the Council. In North Kesteven one of the Executive Board Members has a special interest in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. In addition, Members of the Scrutiny Committees review policies and their impact, and also scrutinise performance. Members in their local community leadership role can also represent the views of individuals, groups and communities and can play an important part in ensuring peoples' needs and views are represented.

Corporate Management Team

The main responsibility for making sure the organisation fulfils its duties and deliver improvement actions to achieve our equality, diversity and inclusion objectives rests with the Corporate Management Team.

Individual Managers

Managers have a legal duty, as well as policy and ethical responsibilities, for the development and implementation of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. They should make sure their Teams are:

- Aware of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Have a clear understanding of the impact of the services they provide and the role they fulfil, in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion.

This can be achieved through normal supervision, agreeing and setting equality, diversity and inclusion targets and expectations during appraisals, the provision of equality, diversity and inclusion training and development, and through a work culture which promotes values and expectations that accord with and support the Council's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion

Colleagues

Each colleagues within the Council as an individual, as well as a collective, has a duty to ensure they promote equality, diversity and inclusion in their daily work and ensure that no one is unlawfully discriminated against, either directly or indirectly, on the basis of protected characteristics.

7. Training

The Council is committed to providing information, guidance and signposting on equality, diversity and inclusion legislation and on the organisation's

policies and priorities to colleagues and elected Members. We will continue to ensure that all new employees and elected Members are briefed and make provision for equality, diversity and inclusion training as part of their induction programme.

8. Communication

Everyone has the right to information and support to enable them to access Council services. Many people face barriers to their understanding of information due to factors such as language differences, sensory impairment and barriers to their understanding of information. Therefore, a variety of approaches need to be used to overcome these obstacles. We all have a duty to provide information in alternative languages and formats, but our approach to communication should go beyond our statutory duty.

9. Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it continues to be relevant and current, with a formal review taking place in October 2022.



North Kesteven
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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