

Equality & Diversity Policy (DRAFT)

Policy Statement

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC) (the Council) is committed to fulfilling its duty under the Equality Act. To

- **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.**

1. Purpose and Scope

1.1 The purpose of having this policy is to provide a coherent approach to tackling equality and diversity across all the protected equality characteristics (age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion/belief and sexual orientation) It also aims to make equality and diversity integral to the way that the Council works in order to achieve:

- A clearer understanding of the needs of the residents of the Staffordshire Moorlands
- Better informed decision-making and policy development
- Excellent quality services which meet varied needs
- More effective targeting of policy and resources that will do the most to increase equality
- Better outcomes and greater confidence in public services
- A more effective use of talent in the workforce

2. Responsibilities

2.1 The Chief Executive with senior management teams are responsible for providing leadership in the implementation of this policy and for ensuring that they and their staff understand and comply with their responsibilities under the Equality Act.

2.2 Councillors have overall responsibility for the direction and scrutiny of this policy and will ensure that principles of fairness and equality guide the decision making process.

3. Service Delivery

3.1 The Council provides direct services, regulates, funds and commissions services. In all these roles and activities the Council is committed to fair and equitable access to services, whether they are provided directly by Council employees, in partnership with other agencies or indirectly through external contract, funding or commissioning arrangements. All service areas will take steps to ensure that Council functions and policies are carried out in a way that complies with statutory requirements and meets the needs of all local people as appropriately as possible.

3.2 The Council aims to ensure that all its functions and policies are carried out in a way that complies with statutory requirements by:

- Ensuring equal access, fair treatment and appropriate provision to the whole community regardless of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity status, race, religion, nationality, social background or sexual orientation;
- Providing services that are designed to meet a wide range of different needs in the community;
- Providing appropriate services, adapting them, where reasonable, to meet the needs of the whole community promoting equal access to services, including producing clear information about how to access our services (for example in large print);
- Providing and publicise clear information on how customers can complain or comment about the services they have received and respond efficiently to complaints;
- Ensuring that wherever practicable, all services and buildings are accessible to everyone;
- Carrying out consultation and undertaking formal impact assessment when necessary to ascertain whether current service provision and any proposed changes are consistent with legal obligations.

4. Training

4.1 Equipping Councillors, managers and Council employees with the knowledge and skills is essential.

Training will be focused at a range of levels including:

- Training at an appropriate level for all employees on equality and diversity;

- General awareness as part of the induction programme for all new employees and councillors.
- Refresher training when appropriate.

5. The Council as an Employer

5.1 The Council is a major employer in the District. As an employer the Council aims to:

- Develop, review and promote policies and practices that ensure equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination for our workforce in all areas of employment, including recruitment, retention, learning and development, and
- Reflect the diverse nature of the District within the Council's workforce.

6. Working with Partners

6.1 The Council works closely with many different groups of people in the community on numerous issues and will take a leading role to drive equality and diversity forward across the District.

6.2 Key partners include community and voluntary groups. These provide an excellent way of communicating, consulting and designing services with the people of the area as well as acting a monitoring forum on how the Council is delivering.

7. Procurement and contract management

7.1 The Council will take into account in its tender evaluation and contracting processes a potential contractor's approach to equalities in terms of its employment practices and service delivery. It will do this by asking potential contractors relevant questions and include appropriate provisions in its contract documents relating to these matters.

8. The Council's Action Plan

8.1 The Council has published its equality and diversity objectives which will set out specific actions which the Council will undertake, including timeframes, to promote its equality objectives. This will be updated when required.

8.2 The Council's equality and diversity objectives will be audited periodically to ensure delivery of those objectives and the results published on the Council's website.

8.3 The Council will arrange appropriate training for all its staff.

9. Contact details

For further information or if you would like this document in large print, Braille or audio format, contact Mark Forrester, Manager, Democratic and Community Services:

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