



Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Equality Policy

1. Introduction

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council is committed to the creation of a fairer Borough for everyone. We understand that we have a lead role to play in making the borough a place where everyone has equal life chances.

We are committed to providing good quality services shaped by an understanding of the needs of different people and ensuring that how we employ people and deliver services promotes equality and challenges inequality. We will seek to understand Hinckley and Bosworth's communities and to work effectively to reduce and eliminate disadvantage, unlawful discrimination and hate crime.

Our aim is for residents to believe that Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council treats people fairly and that their opinions matter. We also aim to encourage good relations between and within different groups of people.

This Policy recognises our legal responsibilities as set out in the Equality Act 2010, and states our response to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector equality duties. This Policy applies to all our employees and Councillors and covers all aspects of the Council's activities.

1.1 The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) sets out the general equality duty, which in summary requires that those subject to the equality duty must, in the exercise of their functions have due regard to the need 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

The Equality and Human Rights Commission states that "having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low

The Equality Act 2010 covers the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment

- Marriage and civil partnership (only with regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination)
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Definitions of these protected characteristics can be found in Appendix One.

In addition to the general equality duty, the Equality Act's specific duties require the Council to publish information to demonstrate our compliance with the general equality duty, and prepare and publish one or more equality objectives that the Council thinks it needs to achieve in order to meet one or more of the general equality duties, and then at least every four years subsequently. These objectives must be specific, measurable and published in a way that is accessible for the public.

The publication of information includes information relating to people who share protected characteristics that are affected by the Council's policies and practices, and information related to its employees. This information is published on the Open Data page of our website.

1.2 The Equality Framework for Local Government

The Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) replaced the Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG) when it came to effect on 1st April 2009.

The framework aimed to be simpler, smarter, proportional and relevant. Rather than the five levels of the old Equality standard, the framework is based on three levels of achievement:

- Developing
- Achieving
- Excellent

Each level of achievement in the Equality framework has five areas of performance:

- Knowing your communities and equality mapping
- Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- Community engagement and satisfaction
- Responsive services and customer care
- A modern and diverse workforce

We completed a peer review in September 2011 by Local Government Improvement and Development. We were found to be an 'Achieving Council' – one of only two district/borough councils in Leicestershire to have reached this level.



The Local Government Association had reported back to us following our assessment, giving recommendations to help us improve in certain areas. We continue to work to being a 'Fair and Equitable' service provider and employer.

1.3 The local context

Hinckley and Bosworth is one of the 7 Districts of Leicestershire. It has an area of 29,735 hectares which represents 14.28% of the total area of Leicestershire County.

Residents

Based upon census data from 2011, Hinckley and Bosworth has an estimated resident population of 105,078 which represents 16.15% of the total Leicestershire County resident population of 650,489.

Hinckley and Bosworth's resident population is 50.8% female and 49.2% male

Age

The mean age of the Hinckley and Bosworth District population is 42 years compared to a mean age of 41 years for residents in the whole of Leicestershire. The predominant age band in Hinckley and Bosworth is Age 45 to 59 which represents 21.50% of the total District population.

Ethnicity

The largest ethnic group in Hinckley & Bosworth is 'Number of usual residents who are White' with 96.5% of the District's population. That compares with a figure of 96.5% for Leicestershire County as a whole and 89.3% for East Midlands.

The second largest ethnic group is 'Number of usual residents who are Asian/Asian British' with 2.1% of the District's population. That compares with 6.3% for the County as a whole and 6.5% for East Midlands.

Households

Hinckley and Bosworth District has 45,377 households, which represent 16.97% of Leicestershire's 267,434 households. 4,619 households have **dependent children aged 0 to 4**. That represents 10.20% of the District's households.

12,416 households in the District have **dependent children of all ages**. That represents 27.40% of the District's households.

Education

24.10% of Hinckley and Bosworth's residents have achieved level 4 qualifications and above compared to 26.10% in Leicestershire as a whole and 24.40% of Hinckley and Bosworth's residents have no qualifications compared to 22.10% in Leicestershire.

Health

Hinckley and Bosworth has 3,812 (3.6%) residents that report being in bad health and 1,027 (1.0%) residents that report being in very bad health.

Its ranking for the number of residents in very bad health is 5 (out of 7 Districts) within Leicestershire (1 being the highest performing).

2. The Council's Equality Objectives

The following equality objectives were identified following a review of the equality information published by the Council, local information and consultation with employees via the Equalities and Health Working Group. The aims of the general equality duty were also considered in the creation of these equality objectives. The equality objectives apply to all protected characteristics, except where stated otherwise.

Objective 1: Everyone can access our services, facilities and information

We aim for the different needs of people to be considered in all aspects of the planning and delivery of our services, facilities and information, and for reasonable adjustments to be made for people with disabilities. We will collect and analyse data from communities to develop our understanding of communities and service users.

Actions:

- To collect, analyse and where appropriate publish equality information from our service users across the protected characteristics to monitor who is using our services and facilities and their satisfaction with our services and facilities
- To use the equality information gathered from our service users, and information on our communities, to inform the design and delivery of our services and policies
- To continue to review our policies and activities to monitor their impact on different groups, using equality impact assessments where appropriate. (EIAs)
- To ensure that our processes for buying works, goods and services consider our equality commitments

- To ensure that our processes for awarding grants and funding consider our equality commitments
- Our communication methods and content reflect the communities of Hinckley and Bosworth

Evidence:

- Equality information is published on our website. To strive to show that equality information from our services demonstrates that the people using our services and facilities are reflective of the borough's communities, where the services are designed to do so
- The Council's website meets accessibility Standards and has been accredited as such
- Alternative formats of documents are available on request. Employees are aware of the processes for creating or requesting alternative formats via staff briefings
- Detailed information on access to all Council facilities is available to the public on our website

Objective 2: Decision making and services are influenced by the needs of residents and communities

Our aim is for all communities to engage in public and civic life, and for information from all communities to influence decision making, planning and the delivery of services. We aim for information from and about communities to include information across all protected characteristics, communities of interest and communities of place.

Actions:

- To undertake consultation which aims to include people with all protected characteristics, and include equality monitoring of people being consulted where appropriate
- To undertake service user satisfaction surveys and analyse people's experiences by protected characteristic where appropriate. To identify any inequalities in rates of satisfaction and add any actions required to address these inequalities to Service Improvement Plans
- Activities to encourage voter registration take into account different groups within the borough
- Services use equality information and information from communities to inform services and policies

Evidence

- Community consultation is undertaken in the planning of all play area equipment
- Tenants are consulted regarding housing services provision and offered choices in materials and products used in their homes where possible

Objective 3: Discrimination, harassment and hate crime is not tolerated

To support the general equality duty aims to "eliminate unlawful discrimination,

harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.”

Our aim is for discrimination, harassment and hate crime related to disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, age, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership or sexual orientation to not be tolerated, both in the community and in the workforce. Our aim is for everyone to have the confidence to report incidents of harassment, discrimination, victimisation and hate crime, and to be confident that it will be dealt with robustly. We aim for good relations to be promoted between and within communities.

Actions:

- To continue to record and monitor hate crimes and incidents reported to the Council, and incidents of harassment, discrimination and victimisation in the workforce
- Anti-social behaviour motivated by hatred for the victim related to a protected characteristic is identified and dealt with appropriately
- Workforce policies support this objective, particularly the Dignity at Work policy which recognises the importance of maintaining a working environment where colleagues, service users and customers are treated with respect and dignity, and in which no-one feels threatened or intimidated or are subject to harassment and bullying

Evidence:

- All hate crimes and incidents reported to the Council are recorded and action taken as appropriate. This data is analysed quarterly and reported to the County Hate Incident Steering group, a multi-agency hate crime forum and the Community Safety Partnership
- The Dignity at Work and Equality Policy are communicated to employees during the induction programme and equality awareness training.
- Residents are informed of hate crime and discrimination reporting channels via our website
- Employees are required to undertake online hate crime training.
- Data and equality information on anti - social behaviour complaints is recorded, analysed and will be published on our website
- Incidents of discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation in our workforce are recorded and appropriate action taken

Objective 4: Our workforce, and workforce policies, support equality

We aim for our workforce policies and practices to not discriminate, provide equal opportunities for employees to progress and develop and to be responsive to the needs of the workforce. We also aim for our workforce to understand and support our equality commitments. Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council recognises that our employees are our most valuable asset and is committed to:

- Ensuring that all employees are treated with dignity and respect and that no form of intimidation, bullying or harassment is tolerated
- Making training, development and progression opportunities available to all staff;
- Ensuring that all of our employment policies and practices reflect

our commitments to equality and fairness

- Fostering good relations between people of different groups within the workforce

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council has undertaken a process of job evaluation, which included comparison of the pay of men and women doing like work, work rated as equivalent and work of equal value, and checked for any equal pay gaps to ensure that a fair pay structure resulted. This process was completed in 2007.

We aim to encourage job applications from all communities and the retention of staff from all communities and groups. We also have a flexible working policy.

Actions:

- To develop the understanding of equality for staff through
- An equality module in the e-induction programme for new employees
- Equality awareness training which encompasses all protected characteristics
- More detailed training on equality, including awareness of particular characteristics such as deaf awareness or mental health awareness, recruitment and selection and dignity at work where appropriate
- A hate crime module on the e-learning system for new and existing employees
- To develop the understanding of equality for Councillors through Councillor briefings and induction sessions
- To have an identified elected member to act as the Champion
- To maintain the Corporate Equality Steering Group as an equality champion group
- To collect and analyse workforce equality information to monitor the makeup of our workforce in relation to the local labour market and to monitor the impact of HR policies and activities. This information includes:
Workforce: The composition of the workforce by sex, age, ethnicity and disability and the return to work rate following maternity leave. This information is also broken down by part time / full time staff and pay scale.
Recruitment: Applicants, people shortlisted and appointed by sex, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief.
Staff leavers: by gender, age, ethnicity and disability.
Grievances and harassment: by gender, age, ethnicity and disability
- Training opportunities are available to all employees
- Staff experiences collected through staff surveys are analysed by protected characteristic where appropriate and possible
- Adjustments and flexible working for members of staff with disabilities is supported. During the recruitment process, all applicants who state that they have a disability are guaranteed an interview if they meet the essential criteria on the person specification for the role
- To have targets in relation to the profile for our workforce, for example number of employees with a disability

Evidence:

- Hold one equality awareness training session for staff annually
- The induction of employees and Councillors includes information on equality
- Workforce information is monitored and reported annually to the Corporate

- Management Team. A workforce profile is published annually on our website
- The Equality and Health Working Group meets a minimum of four times per year and supports the implementation of the Equality Policy
- Updates on equality are provided to staff via staff briefings

3. Responsibilities for equality

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council is committed to equalities and has a structure of responsibility for the implementation and scrutiny of equalities, from departmental to Executive level. The Executive Member for Corporate Services has the equalities portfolio, as does the Chief Executive. A key responsibility of the equality portfolio holders is to demonstrate leadership on equality for our workforce, Councillors and communities.

Senior managers and managers

All managers are responsible for ensuring that our equality commitments and the requirements of this Policy are embedded within their teams and service delivery.

Employees

Employees have a key role in creating a workplace environment where hate crime, harassment, unlawful discrimination and bullying are not tolerated. Employees should understand the relevance and importance of equality to their roles, be committed to delivering good quality services shaped by the needs of different people, and report any equality issues to their managers.

The Chief Officer (Corporate Governance and Housing Repairs) monitors the completion of the corporate equality objectives and updates the Equality Policy. They also support the collection and publication of equality information.

Councillors

The support of Councillors in the development of a fairer Hinckley and Bosworth and in the achievement of the corporate equality objectives is essential. Councillors have a vital community leadership role in relation to equality and in engaging with communities and acting as conduits for community information. Councillors also have a key role in the scrutiny, review and monitoring of the corporate equality objectives.

4. Communication of the Single Equality Policy

The updated Equality Policy and corporate equality objectives will be communicated to staff through staff briefings, the e-induction and equality awareness training. Councillors will receive information about the Equality Policy and the corporate equality in Member Briefings. The Policy and corporate equality objectives will also be published on our website for members of the public to view. Alternative formats of this information will be available on request.

5. Further information

Alternative formats of this publication are available on request. Please contact Julie Kenny to discuss an appropriate format.

Call: 01455 255985

Email: julie.kenny@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk

Definitions of the Protected Characteristics

Please find below further information about the key terms used in this document.

The protected characteristics

These are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful. The characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Definitions of these protected characteristics can be found below:

Age: This refers to a person belonging to a particular age group, which can mean people of the same age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds, or people over 50).

Disability: A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Gender reassignment: The process of changing or transitioning from one gender to another.

Marriage and civil partnership: In England and Wales marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman but now includes a marriage between a same-sex couple. This will also be true in Scotland when the relevant legislation is brought into force. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).

Pregnancy and maternity: Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Race: Refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Religion or belief: Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

Sex: Refers to whether a person is a man or a woman.

Sexual orientation: Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

This information has been sourced from the Equality and Human Rights Commission website: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/private-and-public-sector-guidance/guidance-all/protected-characteristics>