



Equality and Inclusion Policy 2024-27

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Introduction

This policy sets out Middlesbrough Council's commitment to equality and inclusion and details how considerations relating to equality and inclusion are embedded within corporate governance to ensure that the Council complies with its legal and moral obligations.

Aims

This policy will ensure that the Council:

- has due regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010;
- provides fair access to employment, promotion, recruitment, selection and training opportunities
- prevents discrimination, harassment or victimisation wherever possible, and is dealt with effectively if it does occur.

Scope

This policy applies to all residents of Middlesbrough and users of the Council's services, direct employees, prospective employees, volunteers and others delivering services on behalf of the Council.

The Council's commitment to equality and inclusion

As a community leader in Middlesbrough, the Council will:

- celebrate the diversity of the town;
- promote tolerance, fairness and community cohesion; and
- encourage and support all local people to be active in public life.

This commitment is embedded within the Council's Strategic Plan and its supporting policy framework.

As a commissioner and provider of services, the Council will:

- seek the views of local communities and service users through meaningful engagement, as appropriate;
- ensure that it understands local needs and shapes services around these needs where practicable;
- provide clear, accessible information about its services; and
- ensure that all customers are treated with dignity and respect, as outlined in its Customer Charter.

As an employer, the Council will:

- ensure that its recruitment and employment practices are fair and transparent;
- take steps wherever possible to employ a workforce that reflects local diversity;
- undertake clear and open communication with its employees;
- ensure employees have fair access to learning and development opportunities where necessary to ensure they have the skills to deliver; and

- ensure that its employees are protected from discrimination, harassment or victimisation as far as is reasonably possible to do so.

Policies and practices in place to deliver the Council's commitment

The Council's commitment to equality and inclusion is embedded within the following strategies, policies, procedures and action plans:

- Impact Assessment policy
- Equality Monitoring policy
- Reviews, Consultation and Redundancy
- Corporate Procurement strategy
- Corporate Complaints procedure
- Dignity and Respect at Work
- Recruitment and Selection process
- Family, leave and work life balance
- Whistleblowing policy
- Appraisals
- Code of Conduct
- Behaviour and Standards
- Managing health, attendance and wellbeing

The Council is committed to promoting a diverse and inclusive community – a place where we can all be our true selves. Equality, diversity, and inclusion is at the heart of our values, and we're committed to having an inclusive workforce which represents the communities we serve. We aim to create opportunities and reduce barriers for everyone, particularly under-represented groups. We are committed to making sure there is no unjustified discrimination in our processes for recruitment and selection, performance management and pay, and that promotion and retention is fairly granted across all our operations.

We have built a number of staff-led diversity networks, which are aimed at creating better engagement and making sure that our staff feel seen, connected, and supported. The work of our networks includes a focus on shaping organisational culture to create fairer and more inclusive work environments for all. Each network has specific objectives but all of them share the aim of providing a sense of community, inspiring and raising awareness of diversity, and creating a genuinely inclusive culture at Middlesbrough Council. In addition to the networks we have a dedicated Equality Inclusion Working Group, which is led by the Leadership Team.

Monitoring and reporting

The Council has a range of measures in place to ensure that it can monitor the effectiveness of its work to ensure fair and equitable outcomes. Progress against these measures is monitored within the Council's performance management framework.

Review

The effectiveness of the Council's overall approach to equality and inclusion is evaluated every year within the Annual Equality and Inclusion report. The report summarises the work of the Council that has been undertaken in the previous calendar year and identifies areas for improvement. The next report will be completed March 2024.

Further information

Further information on the Council's approach to equality and inclusion can be found on the Council's website and intranet.

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