



The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead

Equality Policy

Date:

V.1_Draft for consultation

Draft

“Building a borough for everyone – where residents and businesses grow, with opportunities for all”

Our vision is underpinned by six priorities:

Healthy, skilled and independent residents

Growing economy, affordable housing

Safe and vibrant communities

Attractive and well-connected borough

An excellent customer experience

Well-managed resources delivering value for money

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Frequently used acronyms

FTE	Full time equivalent
RBWM	Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead is a diverse place with a vibrant cultural mix. Whilst this brings many benefits including different experiences, skills, cultures and approaches to life, it is important to acknowledge that this can mask inequalities in society.
- 1.2 The Royal Borough's vision is to build "a borough for everyone". By valuing diversity and ensuring equality, residents and visitors alike will benefit from strengthened local communities where all people have the opportunity to participate and to reach their full potential.
- 1.3 As a major employer and service-provider, the Royal Borough plays an essential role in improving life opportunities for people who are disadvantaged, vulnerable or have diverse characteristics. The Royal Borough is committed to promoting equality by knowing its community and understanding its changing needs. It will:
- Provide appropriate, accessible and effective services and facilities to all sections of the community without prejudice or bias.
 - Provide clear information about services in a variety of formats on request.
 - Identify appropriate representative groups of residents and strive to work in partnership through consultation and involve community representatives in decisions.
 - Through systematic reviews, ensure that policies and practices address any potential or actual discrimination and disadvantage, and monitor services to ensure they do not discriminate and identify where improvements can be made.
 - Achieve greater consistency in the council's approach to equality in the delivery of services.
 - Ensure that action is taken to identify groups within the community who have specific needs in relation to council services.
 - Ensure that equality considerations are addressed within service audits.
 - Monitor the provision of services against performance indicators.
 - Ensure that contractors, suppliers, volunteers and partners are aware of the council's position on equality and fulfil their obligations to provide services that are in line with that position.
 - Act promptly and appropriately in response to any complaints about the way services are delivered by ensuring that customer complaints are dealt with sensitively and fairly.
- 1.4 The Royal Borough believes that residents have responsibilities as well as rights, and in order to achieve "a borough for everyone" residents need to:
- Treat each other with dignity and respect.
 - Challenge discrimination and harassment.
 - Report illegal or anti-social behaviour.
 - Support the council and other organisations to address inequalities.

2 RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE LAW

- 2.1 The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society and sets out the different ways in which it is unlawful to treat someone. The Act brings together all previous equality legislation in England, Scotland and Wales, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations. The following characteristics are protected characteristics under the Act: **age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.**
- 2.2 In April 2011, the Public Sector Equality Duty (the Equality Duty), created under the Act, came into force. The Equality Duty requires public authorities to demonstrate that they are considering the needs of all individuals, including employees, in the course of decision-making and the delivery of services. The three aims of the Equality Duty are to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 2.3 To ensure transparency and assist in the performance of the Equality Duty, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 require public authorities to:
- Publish equality objectives, at least every four years (from 6 April 2012);
 - Publish information to demonstrate compliance with the Equality Duty on an annual basis (from 31 January 2012), and relating to the authority's role both as service-provider and employer (if it has more than 150 employees).
- 2.4 The Royal Borough meets its duties by:
- **Publishing equality objectives, at least every four years:** delivery of the council's vision and associated strategic priorities as set out in the Council Plan is supported by a suite of corporate plans, strategies and service plans containing objectives aligned to achievement of the vision. Consideration of how equality may be promoted is a key consideration when formulating objectives, and achievement of these objectives is published every four years.
 - **Publishing information to demonstrate compliance with the Equality Duty on an annual basis and relating to the authority's role as both service-provider and employer:** the council publishes an Annual Report at the end of each municipal year and this includes a statement outlining the council's progress against its existing equality objectives, supported by relevant performance and workforce diversity data.

3 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

- 3.1. Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) are a useful tool to ensure that due regard is given to equal opportunities when making a decision. EqIAs should be carried out whenever a service, policy or function is planned, changed or removed and should cover the impact

on both the workforce (employment) and customers/public (service delivery). A good EqIA helps to:

- Assess any potential impacts, positive and negative, in a proportionate way and with relevance.
- Make decisions that are justified, evidenced and relevant, and identify any mitigating proposals.
- Prioritise expenditure in an efficient and fair way.
- Have a record showing that the potential impacts have been considered and that decisions are based on evidence.

3.1. EqIAs are public documents and are published on the Royal Borough website.

4 MONITORING

4.1. The council has a statutory obligation to provide information about provision and use of services. Formal arrangements will be introduced to monitor the provision of services against specified performance indicators (e.g. increased take up of service by previously excluded groups) which measure how the service is being used by black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups, different gender groups, people with disabilities, etc. The use and impact of services will be monitored to:

- Improve the opportunity for service take up.
- Identify gaps in services.
- Better target resources to meet needs.
- Feed equality data analysis into the departmental service planning process.
- Demonstrate continuous improvement

5 RESIDENTS' COMPLAINTS

5.1. If residents feel that the council is in breach of its commitment to equalities they can make a complaint using the council's complaints procedure.

6 EQUALITY IN EMPLOYMENT

6.1. The council is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity to all in employment so that there is no unfair discrimination against any job applicant or employee for any reason.

6.2. As a recruiting employer, the Royal Borough will:

- Ensure vacancies are advertised in line with legislation.
- Ensure that the best people are appointed to deliver services.
- Ensure the council's recruitment and selection guidelines are adhered to.
- Only consider applicants for jobs on the basis of their relevant experience, qualifications, skills and abilities unless a Genuine Occupational Qualification (GOQ) exists for particular posts. This is in instances where there is an exception under the relevant legislation where an employer can recruit, train, promote or

transfer a person of a particular gender or racial group if it can demonstrate that a particular gender or race amounts to a GOQ for the post in question under the Race Relation Act 1976 c74.

- Aim to create a workforce which is representative of the local population.

6.3. The Royal Borough will take all measures possible to make reasonable adjustments where appropriate in order to provide employment to applicants with disabilities who meet the minimum requirements for the post and prove to be the best candidate for the post.

6.4. As an employer, the Royal Borough will

- Ensure that all employees receive fair and equal treatment in relation to their employment, regardless of whether they are part time, full time, permanent or temporary and what level or occupation they are within the authority.
- Promote a working environment where every employee is treated with respect regardless of occupation or level within the organisation.
- Ensure that promotion, training or any other benefit is on the basis of aptitude and ability.
- Encourage and help all employees to reach their full potential, within the resources available.
- Treat all employees fairly in relation to transfers, redundancy and the operation of the grievance and disciplinary procedures.
- Ensure that the workplace is free from discrimination and harassment and will act promptly on any complaints of discrimination or harassment in an appropriate manner.
- Develop and adhere to an equal pay policy and publish details of the gender pay gap in line with relevant legislation.
- Wherever possible, make reasonable adjustments and retain, in suitable employment, employees who become disabled or unable to undertake their duties due to illness.
- Ensure that all employees are aware of their personal responsibility to follow and support this policy.

7 MONITORING

7.1. The council incorporates equal opportunities monitoring within its recruitment procedures.

8 EMPLOYEES' COMPLAINTS

8.1. Any employee who has a concern regarding the application of this policy should use the council's grievance procedure. Any prospective employee wishing to raise a complaint should do so using the council's complaints procedure.

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