

Equal Opportunities Policy

Worcester City Council EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY 2013

Title	Equal Opportunities Policy	
Status	Final Document	
Document Version	1.0	
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Owner	PIE	
Approved by	Cabinet	
Approved date	23 January 2013	
Review frequency	Annual	
Next Review:	January 2014	
Version History		
Version	Date	Description
0.1	April 2012	Draft
1.0	January 2013	Final Document

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Scope

1. This Policy covers both current and future employees, services to local residents, as well as businesses and visitors to Worcester, who use council services whether provided directly by the Council or on its behalf by a third party i.e. private, other statutory, voluntary or community sector organisation. In particular, the Policy covers persons who share one or more of the nine protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010 i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation.

General Statement

2. Worcester City Council is committed to equality of opportunity for the whole community and believes that the diversity of the community is a major strength which contributes to the social and economic prosperity of the area. The Council commits to ensure that its customers, services users and the wider community of Worcester have equal access to its services and are not discriminated against in any aspect of its service delivery. It will also ensure fair and equal access in employment ranging from recruitment and selection to learning and development opportunities.
3. This Policy should be read in conjunction with our Equality and Inclusion Strategy.

Service Delivery

4. Worcester City Council is committed to ensuring that its services are available and accessible to current and potential service users. We will ensure that:
 - The range and quality of services provided are appropriate and sensitive to the needs of our customers;
 - No customer is subjected to unjustifiable discrimination in the delivery of any of the Council's services. In addition we will promote equality, diversity and social inclusion amongst our partners in the services they provide.
5. This will be achieved by the Council:
 - Designing and delivering appropriate, accessible and effective services and facilities to all members of the community, ensuring that equality issues are considered at the outset of all policy development and planning and become an integral part of the way that all services are

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delivered

- Providing clear and accessible information about our services, in a variety of appropriate formats and languages which meet the needs of members of the community;
- Using effective systems for reviewing and monitoring our service delivery so that quality and equality are continuously evaluated and improved and all sections of the community are receiving fair access and outcomes;
- Ensuring that all our Councillors and employees understand what equality in service provision means by providing specific training;
- Engaging with and listening to all sections of the community in identifying needs and in decisions on the way the Council plans and delivers its services;
- Ensuring that complaints about services will be dealt with promptly through the Council's Corporate Complaints Policy and Procedure and will be monitored by the protected characteristics.

Procurement and Commissioning Services

6. The Council will ensure that the purchase of goods, services and facilities is undertaken in line with our Equality Commitment. We will positively promote fair contracting by complying with the Council's procurement policy, equality guidelines and all relevant legislation. Through appropriate monitoring we will ensure that suppliers acting on behalf of or as agents of the Council do not practice unlawful acts of discrimination
7. The Council will encourage the local community to take up opportunities to contract and will seek, wherever appropriate, to offer contracts within the local community's ability to deliver, ensuring that they comply with Best Value and EU legislation on procurement and geographic location.
8. To achieve the above the Council will aim to:
 - Ensure that contractors, suppliers, volunteers and partners are aware of our position on equality and are clear about their obligation to provide services that are free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation;
 - Recognise and promote the application of national guidelines and advice, in line with our own contracting procedures;
 - Make sure that our selection and tendering processes positively address and include equality considerations that are in line with the procedures mentioned above;
 - Provide training for relevant employees in equalities issues for procurement

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9. All contracts will be monitored by the Council to ensure that the goods, services or facilities being purchased are being delivered as agreed, and to ensure that the continued delivery of such remain advantageous to the Council and the community it serves.

Employment

10. Worcester City Council intend to be a champion of equal opportunity principles and practice as an employer. The Council is committed to reviewing all policies, practices and procedures in order to remove potential barriers to equality of opportunity.

The Council is committed to having a workforce that reflects the diversity of the local community. It will encourage people from under-represented groups to apply for employment and obtain employment on merit.

11. We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All job applicants, employees and others who work for us will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any of the above grounds.
12. Decisions about recruitment and selection, promotion, training or any other benefit will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination.
13. We recognise that the provision of equal opportunities in the workplace is not only good management practice; it also makes sound business sense.
14. Our equal opportunities policy will help all those who work for us to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be utilised fully to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
15. Equality monitoring in employment is an essential part of the Council's Equalities commitment. The Council will monitor the recruitment and selection process. It will monitor representation within the workforce by department, pay, training, promotion, redeployment, redundancy, complaints, investigations, grievances and disciplinary proceedings.

Responsibility for Policy Implementation and Monitoring

16. Elected Members and the Corporate Management Team will be responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the policy.

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17. Service Managers and line managers with supervisory responsibility are responsible, within their area of responsibility, for implementing, monitoring and promoting this policy.
18. All Council employees and those who are involved in serving the community are responsible for making this policy a reality. They must adhere to it as part of their conditions of service, and will be supported by their managers. Any breach will be considered in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary Procedures.
19. Staff will not be expected to tolerate discrimination from service users, other employees, providers or any third party.
20. The Council will inform all job applicants, employees and service users of this policy and ensure everyone understands their collective and individual responsibilities.
21. In order to further develop its Equal Opportunities Policy, the Council will monitor and review annually its progress both in employment and service delivery. It will consult its stakeholders and make the necessary change to its practices to improve performance for its diverse service users.