



Single Equality Scheme 2024 - 2027

Policies and Procedures Control Page

Change History

Version	Date	Description	Author Initial
1	2011	Original Document	
2	2017	Update	LD
3	2017	Agreed by The Cabinet 13 March 2017	DB
4	2024	Review by Management Team 25 January 2024	DB

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council introduced a Diversity Policy in 2007, which has since been replaced by the Single Equality Scheme to address the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 1.2 The Scheme contains information about the steps which the Council is taking to ensure equality of opportunity for both employees and service users in our communities.

2. THE LEGAL CONTEXT

2.1 The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 provides legal protection from discrimination both in the workplace and the wider community for people with a 'protected characteristic'. The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

2.2 Public Sector Equality Duty

Under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council must publish information to show its compliance with the Equality Duty. The information published must have regard to the following three aims, in respect of the protected characteristics:-

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination (harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity (between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it); and
- Foster good relations (between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it).

- 2.3 On 31 January 2012, the Council first published information to show that it had consciously thought about the three aims of the Equality Duty in its decision making processes. The Council's equality objectives which address these aims are appended to the Scheme.

- 2.4 The Council is required to publish the information on an annual basis.

2.5 Gender Pay Reporting

The Government published the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017, along with an explanatory note, which implemented the mandatory gender pay gap reporting requirement for public sector employers with 250 or more employees.

The requirement first related to pay as of 31 March 2017. Employers are required annually to publish by 30 March each year (for the previous year) the position in relation to the Gender Pay requirements. In line with the legislation the Council updates this data and this can be found on the Council's website : [Gender Pay Reporting | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#)

2.6 The headline figures for the Council up to 2023 are as follows:

Table 1 : Mean and Median Gender Pay Gap

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Mean Gender Pay Gap	20.59%	17.45%	19.10%	21.60%	21.80%	24.30%	15.70%
Median Gender Pay Gap	26.24%	15.99%	18.30%	17.80%	19.90%	21.50%	13.20%

Table 2 : Pay Quartiles

		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Lower Quartile	Male	25.40%	29.60%	22.40%	25.70%	22.20%
	Female	74.60%	73.10%	77.60%	74.30%	77.80%
Lower Middle Quartile	Male	29.60%	29.50%	31.60%	32.90%	31.90%
	Female	70.40%	70.50%	68.40%	67.10%	68.10%
Upper Middle Quartile	Male	40.80%	39.70%	36.80%	35.70%	34.70%
	Female	59.20%	60.30%	63.20%	64.30%	65.30%
Upper Quartile	Male	66.20%	64.90%	67.50%	60.90%	55.60%
	Female	33.80%	35.10%	32.50%	39.10%	44.40%

3. **OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE**

- 3.1 The communities that make up the population of Stratford-on-Avon District are becoming increasingly diverse and as a community leader the Council has a vital role to play to ensure that all service users may access our services equally.
- 3.2 The Scheme reflects what we do to promote equality and diversity, not just within the Council but externally with the help of partners. We will build on the work already undertaken and continue to be an organisation which includes everyone, acknowledges and is comfortable with people's differences and has the confidence to promote equality and diversity.
- 3.3 The Council seeks to be a role model of good practice, ensuring that it is both a fair and equitable employer and that the services it delivers do not discriminate against anyone.

4. OUR APPROACH TO EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

4.1 The Council's approach to equality and diversity is to ensure that inclusivity is at the forefront of our decision making processes and service delivery.

4.2 In particular the Council strives to:

- Ensure that the principles of equality and diversity are integrated into the day to day work of all of our officers and elected members, and promoted both with our community and also within the workplace;
- Ensure that Equality & Diversity issues are fully considered through the Council's decision making processes;
- Identify and focus on specific inequalities within our district and our workplace;
- Foster equal opportunity for all and ensure that it underpins our day to day delivery of services, both internally and externally;
- Demonstrate the Council's commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty and the three aims when making decisions;
- Confidently encourage and challenge partners and organisations we work with to improve their approach to equality and diversity;
- Ensure that there is senior level commitment to equality and diversity, our approach is championed by our Management Team, supported by Human Resources; and
- Maintain the Council's Respect Network.

5. WHAT STEPS ARE WE TAKING?

The Council have committed to a number of actions to ensure that equality and diversity is at the heart of our organisation. These actions include:

5.1 Corporate Commitments

- Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) for all new strategy and policy;
- Identifying the outcomes of the EIA within all Committee reports for Councillors to consider;
- Training our staff and elected members;
- Regularly reviewing the way we work;
- Making equalities the responsibility of every officer and elected member;
- Publishing equality and diversity information annually;
- Taking positive action to address all forms of disadvantage or exclusion;
- Establishment of the Council's Respect Network and encouraging presentations for staff from local groups including Stratford MIND and Accessible Stratford.

5.2 Workforce Commitments

- Retention and ongoing commitment to the principles of the Disability Confident Level 2 Employers Award;
- Continuously reviewing how we recruit staff to ensure they reflect the community we serve;
- Ensuring that men and women are paid equally for doing the same job or jobs of similar value;
- Ensuring that all policies and procedures are non-discriminatory;
- Mandating training and development to all staff;
- Making reasonable adjustments to enable people with a disability to join our workforce, and also to remain at work;
- Training all newly appointed officers and elected members on equality and diversity;
- Offering officers and elected members supplementary and refresher training on individual protected characteristics;
- Providing opportunity for all staff to request flexible working;
- Addressing any gender imbalance within the senior management team.

6. DELIVERING THE SCHEME

- 6.1 Elected members and senior managers will 'champion' the Council's approach to equality and diversity.
- 6.2 Warwickshire County Council will provide ad-hoc specialist support and assistance.
- 6.3 Training will form part of mandatory induction.
- 6.4 A template and training will be provided for carrying out Equality Impact Assessments.

7. WHAT WE EXPECT FROM OUR EMPLOYEES AND ELECTED MEMBERS

- 7.1 To treat each other and our customers with respect and dignity, putting into practice the principles of equality and diversity in daily working life.
- 7.2 To challenge the Council and its partners to include good practice on equality and diversity as part of the services they deliver.
- 7.3 To take responsibility for their own learning, making good use of the opportunities and the resources which are on offer.
- 7.4 To be aware of the equality and diversity legislation and their responsibilities as a local government elected official or officer.

Equality Targets for 2024/25

- To complete the required further self-assessment against the Level 2 Disability Confident Standard to retain 'Disability Confident Employer' Status.
- To ensure that the Council continues to comply with the Gender Reporting Duty.
- To further enhance the Equality and Diversity considerations within the Council's decision making processes.
- To relaunch the joint Officer and Member Respect Network and to identify Respect Champions.
- To carry out refresher training on Equality Assessments.