



Southampton City Council Equality Policy

Vision

The council is committed to the Southampton Partnership vision for the city (as stated in the City of Southampton Strategy 2026), which embraces equalities objectives.

Objective

The objective of this policy is to re-affirm the long standing commitment of the council, in all its roles and functions, to work towards the elimination of discrimination and to achieve equality of outcomes for citizens and communities in the city. This is reflected in the council's published priorities and organisational values.

Definition

The council recognises that the effects of discrimination and inequality are many and will be experienced differently by different groups of people. It also recognises the multiplicity of disadvantage – so that some people experience many different forms of inequality at the same time.

Therefore the council adopts this statement as an example of discrimination, although it is not intended to be absolutely definitive:-

“Unfair or unequal treatment of people on the basis of race, colour, national and ethnic origin, culture or faith, gender, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or gender identity, marital status, responsibility for dependents, disability, physical, sensory or learning impairments, mental health problems, HIV status, low income or age.”

Scope

The council is committed to meeting its statutory duties under 'Equalities Legislation' that includes:-

- Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999;
- Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000;
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Equal Pay Act 1970, as amended;
- EU Directives on Employment (Article 13 Amsterdam Treaty).

This commitment extends to all current statutory duties on local authorities relating to equality or discrimination whether listed here or not and to any relevant new legislation.

Policy Commitment

The council is committed to:-

- improving equality practice in all its functions at both corporate and divisional levels;
- providing resources to improve equality practice;
- providing services fairly to all sections of the community; reducing any adverse or differential impact that services may have on the different communities;
- identifying on an on-going basis, groups or communities whose needs or requirements are less well met by council services than others and to address gaps in service provision to meet the objectives of this policy.

Policy Principles

The council is actively striving to achieve equalities action and outcomes through the performance of its primary functions.

Service Delivery

As a major service provider, the council will demonstrate continual improvements in service outcomes for all citizens with reduced differences between diverse communities and social groups.

Employment Practice

As one of the city's largest employers the council will achieve fair and equal employment policies and practice. To do this the council will:-

- seek to recruit and sustain a diverse workforce;
- undertake workforce profiling and use data to shape and influence service and employment practice;
- achieve and sustain fair recruitment, fair employment and equal pay;
- establish a workforce that is highly skilled in servicing and responding to the needs of diverse communities.

Leadership

As a community leader, influencer, enabler and partner the council will work with Southampton Partnership, local communities, other services and organisations to achieve equality and community cohesion objectives for the city.

Supplier and Purchaser

As a supplier and purchaser the council will ensure equality objectives are included and enforced in all contract, procurement and funding arrangements.

Implementation

To translate this policy into practice, the council has:-

- developed and implemented a Single Equality Scheme;
- agreed to set equality targets that are integrated into the council's overall business planning and performance process;
- undertaken to do equality impact assessments to ensure equality targets are based on sound evidence of need;
- identified clear lines of responsibility and accountability for undertaking the action set out in the Equality Scheme;
- put systems in place to monitor progress and revise targets in all areas of action;
- committed to undertake self-assessment, audit and scrutiny using national and locally developed performance indicators;
- supported the development of external evaluation of the Equality Scheme and progress against targets, by communities and service-users.