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Comprehensive Equality Policy



SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL EQUALITY POLICY

Vision:

The council is committed to the Southampton Partnership vision for the city (as stated in the Community Strategy). In particular, that vision embraces equalities objectives by stating that:

‘Southampton in 2020 will be a city in which:-

- everyone - within and beyond its boundaries – can contribute to and benefit from, its success;
- no one is seriously disadvantaged because of where they live, their personal circumstances or the community they belong to; and
- everyone has the chance to acquire the skills, confidence and employment opportunities they need to improve their quality of life’.

Objective:

The objective of this policy is to re-affirm the long standing commitment of the council to work towards the elimination of discrimination and to achieve equality of outcomes for citizens and communities in the city.

The council in all its roles and functions is committed to actively striving to achieve the vision outlined above. This is reflected in the council’s Top Five Priorities. It will be achieved through the development, delivery and on-going evaluation of the council’s Comprehensive Equality Plan.

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 or sensory impairments, learning disabilities, mental health problems, HIV status, low income or age.”

Scope:

The council is committed to meeting its statutory duties under ‘Equalities Legislation’ that include:-

- 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;
- 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.

This ambition will be underpinned by adoption of the national Equality Standard. The Standard is a framework and performance measure for delivering equalities in local government. It applies a systematic approach to service improvements leading to specific and measurable service-level equality targets. These targets are subject to wide community consultation and integrated into the council’s business planning process.

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 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 is implementing a Comprehensive Equality Plan;
- made a commitment to achieve the national Equality Standard;
- 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 this policy and specifically for the delivery of the Equality Plan;
- 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 Plan and progress against targets, from communities and service-users.