

Telford & Wrekin Council Corporate Equality and Diversity Strategy

2022 – 2026

Protect
Care and Invest
to create a
better borough



Telford & Wrekin
COUNCIL



Note:

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Foreword

Telford & Wrekin Council works to Protect, Care and Invest in our services and our communities, and this strategy sets out our commitment to equality and diversity both as a large local employer and as a provider and commissioner of services. This means working to ensure that Telford & Wrekin is free from discrimination but also doing everything we can to positively promote equality and diversity across our Borough.

It sets out our proposals for not only fulfilling our legal and ethical duties but also to promote a culture where the diversity of our workforce and our communities is positively valued. Legislation places a duty on the Council with which we have to comply, but we strive to go beyond our duty.

The challenges we have faced in recent years have highlighted the importance of communities working together, and the key role that a diverse range of community groups and volunteers in Telford & Wrekin have played in responding to flooding and the Covid pandemic. The Black Lives Matter movement has further raised awareness of the importance of equality & diversity and the need to continue to build on the strong foundation we already have in the Borough.

I am delighted that this Equality and Diversity Strategy can be published and will formalise and put into action our message of inclusiveness across everything that we do.



Cllr Paul Watling

Cabinet Member for Cooperative Communities,
Engagement and Partnerships

This strategy sets out:

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1 Our commitment

We recognise that within our society there is widespread inequality.

The Council is committed to opposing unlawful discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity.

In October 2021, the Council resolved to condemn and speak out against any discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, religion or any other characteristic protected by the Equality Act 2010, and formally adopted the International Holocaust Memorial Alliance (IHMA) working definition of Antisemitism, and the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Muslims definition of Islamophobia.

Telford & Wrekin Council recognises its obligations under various pieces of legislation relating to equality of opportunity (see section 4 for further information).

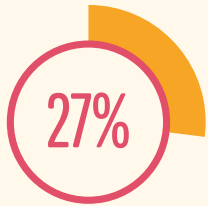
2 Our vision

An inclusive and open Council that works with local residents, organisations, partners and employees to build communities that are great places to live and work – where our leaders are committed to equality, and take positive action to ensure that everyone feels they belong. Diversity is celebrated and thrives at all levels of our organisation, and that every community can access the services and support they need.



3 The local context

3.1 Our Community



- **Our population is growing and ageing** – we currently have a population of **181,322** (ONS mid-2020 estimate). (This is projected to grow to 197,500 by 2030, with a predicted 27% increase in the 65 and over age group).



- **The population of Telford and Wrekin is growing at a greater rate than the West Midlands and England** – 2020 estimates show that the borough had the third highest growth rate in the West Midlands.



- **Working age population** – there are around 107,900 working age residents in the borough, representing 60% of the borough's total population.

Religion*

- At the time of the 2011 census two thirds of borough residents indicated that they had a religion.
- 61.7% of residents said that they were Christian with 1.8% Muslim, 1.3% Sikh and 0.5% Hindu.

Ethnicity*

- The borough is becoming more ethnically diverse. In the 2011 census the proportion of residents from a non-white British background had increased from 7.0% in 2001 to 10.5%. The proportion of Asian/Asian British residents increased from 2.9% in 2001 to 4.2% in 2011 and the proportion of residents from other White backgrounds increased from 1.0% in 2001 to 2.7% in 2011.
- In 2011, 7% of borough residents had been born outside of the United Kingdom with 3% coming from EU member countries and 4% from other countries.

* The latest available data we have on Religion and Ethnicity comes from the 2011 Census. We will have more up to date information on this once data from the 2021 Census starts being released (which is scheduled to be from late Spring 2022 to October 2023).



In terms of what our residents think:

- 68% of residents say they agree or strongly agree that **their immediate local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together** (with 11% disagreeing) (Residents Survey 2020).

However, many of our residents have specific needs and our 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) shows us that more needs to be done to tackle the inequalities in the borough.

3.2 Our Workforce

Information about our workforce is published annually and is available on the Council's website.

In terms of what our employees think (Employee Survey, 2020):

| | Stongly agree | Agree | Neither agree or disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------|---------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| I am treated fairly at work | 43% | 45% | 8% | 3% | 1% |
| I am treated with respect by the people I work with | 46% | 43% | 7% | 3% | 1% |
| I am treated with respect by internal customers and clients | 34% | 53% | 11% | 2% | 0% |
| I am treated with respect by external customers and clients | 26% | 51% | 21% | 2% | 0% |
| I feel valued for the work that I do | 28% | 44% | 17% | 9% | 2% |
| I think that the Council respects employees regardless of their ethnicity, sexuality, religion or disabilities | 49% | 41% | 8% | 2% | 1% |

4 Our Legal Duties

The Equality Act 2010

Prescribes a number of aims that as a local authority we must pay due regard to in relation to the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, maternity and pregnancy, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation.

This requirement is known as the General Equality Duty. The Act also identifies a number of Specific Equality Duties placed on us as The General Equality Duty states, '...that the council in the exercise of our functions, must have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation** and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- **Foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Specific Equality Duties say that we must;

- **Publish equality information.** This includes information about how we have made our decisions, the evidence that we have used and the conclusions we have drawn. There is an expectation that the data behind a decision is made available so that people can see, understand and challenge the decision making process from a fully informed perspective.
- **Publish Equality Objective(s).** The objective(s) should be based on evidence, set every 4 years and reported upon annually.



Our equality objectives are:

- **Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment** – we will lead the Council in an inclusive and visible way with zero tolerance of any form of discrimination. We will also encourage, inform and engage with our partners and the rest of the borough on this agenda;
- **Diverse workforce** – we will be recognised as an employer of choice, working proactively to ensure that our workforce reflects the communities we serve, and that all employees are supported to achieve their full potential;
- **Accessible and responsive services** – we will encourage all service areas to better understand our communities and actively engage with local people and organisations to help people participate in decision-making, and get involved in public life. We will design, commission and deliver services that offer the best possible customer experience and that are accessible to all;
- **Celebrating diversity** – we will advance equality and positive relationships by promoting and celebrating diversity.

All of these will be achieved through ongoing engagement and partnership working with our employees, residents, local organisations and key partners.

Key actions to achieve these objectives are set out in **Appendix 1**.

Public Sector Equality Duty

The Public Sector Equality Duty is an obligation placed on public authorities to help deliver the objectives of the Equality Act 2010. More information on this can be obtained from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) at <https://equalityhumanrights.com/en/corporate-reporting/public-sector-equality-duty>



5 Our approach

Our values are exercised throughout the council, defining how we do things, both collectively as an organisation and individually. For more information on our values see [Council Plan 2020 Values & Priorities circle diagram](#).

We will continue to build on these values and utilise existing governance and engagement structures as the context for all policy and decision making.

We will therefore continue our work on equality and diversity as part of this approach, looking at new and different ways of working where we can, but always ensuring that the many and diverse communities of Telford and Wrekin lie at the heart of everything we do, the decisions we make, and the services we provide.

Underpinning all of this we need the confidence to know that we are well informed when decisions are made and take 'due regard' when planning services for all our residents. So as part of our decision making processes we adhere to 6 key principles:

- **Knowledge** – Those making decisions are informed regarding their duties and this is brought to their attention at appropriate times;
- **Timeliness** – equality is integrated from the beginning of a process or its initial stages and is considered throughout the process;
- **Real Consideration** – rigorous and documented decision making has taken place supported by an appropriate audit trail;
- **Sufficient Information** – for those making decisions there is enough information to be fully informed and it is brought to their attention;
- **Responsibility** – that decision makers ensure that consideration has been equitable and takes place at the appropriate time. It is not possible to delegate this responsibility. For example, contracting a third party will mean both the Council and the third party have the duty placed on them.

- **Review and Record Keeping** – there are adequate assurance steps to ensure that the intended consequences or impacts have taken place and future unidentified impacts can be dealt with and are recorded.



6 Priority areas for action

Our vision (see Section 2) and equality objectives (see Section 4) will direct our work moving forward and sets the context for priority areas for action over the next four years.

To ensure that we work towards our vision and deliver identified priorities, we have developed an action plan that supports this policy and sets out the key activities we will undertake (see **Appendix 1**)

In summary this action plan focusses on 4 key areas which are summarised below:

Priority area 1: Leading our organisation and communities

As a local authority it is important our residents understand our position on equality and diversity and what to expect from us as an employer, through our service delivery and our decision making processes.

Any proposals for change should be assessed on an individual basis, taking account of any impacts they are likely to have on our customers or workforce.

Key areas of focus include:

- **Ownership** – top level commitment from Council leaders and champions that will help drive the agenda throughout the Council;
- **Public awareness and accountability** – clear messages that set out our commitment to equality and diversity along with clear objectives and targets that we will publicly report against;
- **Impact analysis - initial impact analysis is carried out** at the start of any new proposals being develop and **full equality impact assessments are carried out** where proposals are likely to impact significantly – either financially or on particular groups within our communities;
- **Decision making is evidence based in everything we do** – for example policy/strategy development, Cabinet Reports, procurement specifications and service procedures.

Priority area 2: Supporting our workforce and elected members

We take our responsibilities as an employer very seriously. Telford & Wrekin Council's Equal Opportunities Charter sets out our [Employment Equality Promise](#). This gives an undertaking that all of our employees, and those who apply for employment, will be treated with equal fairness, respect and dignity, regardless of race, colour, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, gender reassignment, care of dependants, age, disability, religious or political beliefs, pregnancy or maternity, or unrelated criminal conviction.

We ensure that our employees have an influential voice in shaping our Council priorities, policies, workforce strategy and through employee groups. We place a strong emphasis on diversity and inclusion in all our employment practices. All employees are recruited using fair processes and whilst in employment, they are supported and developed so they can thrive at work and deliver the best services they can for local people.

Key areas of focus include:

- Becoming a **more diverse and inclusive employer**;
- Ensuring all of our employees and elected members will have **opportunities to be heard and inform what we do as an organisation**;
- Ensuring **our learning and development offer** enables our workforce to have the **awareness, knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity**.

Priority area 3: Serving our customers

Our customers include residents of the borough, people working in the borough and tourists visiting the area.

We deliver a lot of our services to a lot of customers on a daily basis (for example, we receive on average over 900 calls a day to our contact centre). Many of our customers come from different backgrounds and have different needs.

It is important to remember also that in a lot of cases, we are the only provider for some of these services (like benefits, Council Tax and Adult Social Care for example) so our customers – many of which are vulnerable, do not have a choice and cannot choose to go elsewhere.

Key areas of focus include:

- **Better understanding who our customers are and what their needs are** – through more intelligent use of Council data;
- **Improving relationships with those who face barriers accessing our services or have specific needs in the borough** – through improving customer engagement across all service areas to make sure these groups are kept informed and have the opportunity to have their say and influence Council decisions;
- **Making sure all Council services are accessible to all**, regardless of their needs (including physical accessibility, digital accessibility, translation and interpretation) – actions to improve accessibility of services will be a key priority within the Council's Customer Strategy.

Priority area 4: Celebrating and promoting the diversity of the borough

By recognising and raising awareness of the different communities in Telford and Wrekin and celebrating the different cultures and faiths. We will encourage our communities to better come together which in turn will help to break down barriers and further support one another.

Key areas of focus include:

- **Awareness raising campaigns** - organised by the Council or in partnership with local community groups);
- **Hosting events** – to celebrate diversity;
- **Co-ordination of the different cultures and faiths** – to support the Council with service planning, and keep officers/members informed.



7 Progress monitoring and reporting

It is essential that we monitor our performance against our equality objectives and continue to challenge progress. We will do this by monitoring our:

- **Action plan** (see **Appendix 1**);
- **Customer feedback** (comments, complaints and compliments);
- **Performance indicators**, which will be reported as part of the corporate performance framework and where possible will be broken down demographically. These measures include:

Corporate measures:

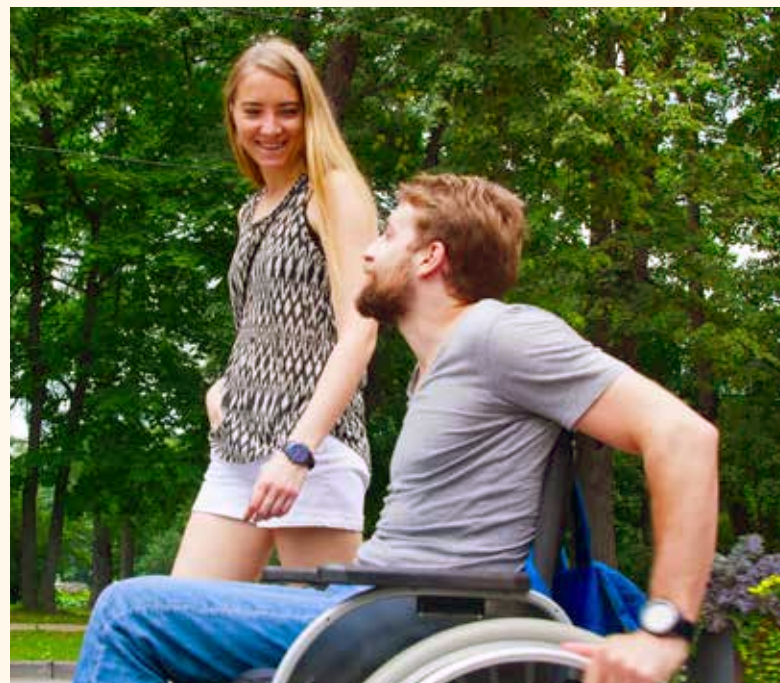
Note: these corporate measures link to our Residents Survey results and won't necessarily be updated annually.

- % of residents who had contacted the Council in the last 12 months who were satisfied with how their contact was handled
- % of residents who agree that the Council listens to their views
- % of residents who agree that their immediate local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together
- % of residents who agree that the Council treats all people fairly
- Number of complaints received by the Council that are based on discrimination or unfair treatment

Workforce measures:

- Workforce – by age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and religion/belief
- % of staff at different levels of the organisation, including senior managers
- Gender and ethnicity pay gap
- Completion of equalities training by employees and elected members
- Staff survey results

We will publish an annual report on our progress against our performance indicators and a summary of what we have achieved against our action plan.



Appendix 1: Draft Action Plan

Priority area 1: Leading our organisation and communities

| Action | Lead Area |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Ownership - top level commitment from Council leaders and champions that will help drive the agenda throughout the Council | |
| Identify opportunities for senior managers to better understand the unique challenges faced by employees from under-represented groups, for example through reverse mentoring | Organisational Development |
| Set Directorate targets specific to their service areas around recruitment of under-represented groups | Senior Management Team |
| Cabinet Members, Senior Managers and role models within the organisation publish their job history internally to show different career paths | Cabinet Members and SMT |
| Incorporate management of Equality and Diversity into senior managers APPDs | Executive Directors |
| Partnership boards to take account of the E&D strategy, how it applies to their work and adopt relevant targets/actions | Partnership Management Team |
| Support the work of the ICS around the Equality & Diversity Pledge | Adult Social Care |
| Review, co-ordinate and provide rapid responses to reports of serious incidents in the borough through a Trusted Panel | Childrens Services |
| Ensure the Equality and Diversity Steering Group monitor progress with the E&D action plan and drive this agenda across the Council | SMT leads |
| Continue with the work done to create a range of employee working groups that act as 'Champions' (that can drive key pieces of work that will influence how we support our staff and serve our customers) | Human Resources |
| Review existing commissioning strategies to ensure they adequately cover all aspects of equality and diversity | Commissioning |
| Review our ICT project mandate process for new systems to ensure accurate recording of protected characteristic information is captured where appropriate to do so | ICT |

| Action | Lead Area |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Continue to be a member of the West Midlands Local Authority Equality Network – for benchmarking purposes, sharing best practice and keeping up to date with the latest guidance to help inform/ support our agenda | Community Services |
| Public awareness and accountability | |
| Declare our commitment and incorporate our equality objectives into the Council Plan | Organisational Development |
| Publish an annual report on progress made against the E&D Strategy action plan, performance indicators, and update with further actions to be delivered | Community Services |
| Adopt and publish a new Zero Tolerance Policy – with a clear statement on discrimination and clarity on how staff should report hate speech and hate crime | Human Resources |
| Install clear public messages in Council buildings about ‘being kind’ and our zero tolerance of discrimination | Communication Team |
| Develop a comprehensive communications plan to raise awareness in a variety of formats about equality and diversity for residents, partners and staff | Communication Team |
| Improve communications for staff that do not have access to the intranet or a TWC email address | Communication Team |
| Clear guidance and understanding on Impact Analysis and Assessments | |
| Review the processes and procedures in place to support the organisation– including training, toolkits, training and Forward Plan | Community Services |
| Decision making is evidence based in everything we do | |
| Review reports templates, etc. to ensure equality and diversity is picked up in the appropriate way through service delivery and to help inform the decision making process | Community Services |
| Review and publicise more effectively the different routes in which communities can get involved and have their say on Council decisions | Community Services |
| Ensure we publish the results of all consultations and explain how they have informed our decision making processes | Community Services |

Priority area 2: Supporting our workforce and elected members

| Action | Lead Area |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Becoming a more diverse and inclusive employer | |
| Review recruitment advertising strategies to ensure we are encouraging applications from groups who are currently underrepresented within the Council, including for Kick Start and Apprenticeship Programmes and work experience placements | Human Resources |
| Update Job Description/Person Specification templates to include a statement around equality, diversity and inclusion | Human Resources |
| Collate comparative data (comparing with the local community as well as other similar local authorities) and work with WM Jobs to develop equality reports in relation to job applicants/shortlisted candidates/successful candidates | Human Resource |
| Comprehensive review of policies to ensure that any barriers in recruitment, development and progression are removed and to allow fair treatment and opportunity for all | Human Resources/ Organisational Development |
| Wherever possible ensure that we have diverse interview panels and/or identify ways we can involve diverse stakeholders in recruitment processes | Human Resources |
| Ensure all members of recruitment panels are appropriately trained on Equality and Diversity | Human Resources |
| Agree recruitment targets with all members of senior management | Human Resources |
| Report ethnicity pay gap alongside statutory gender pay gap reporting | Human Resources |
| Review talent management programmes across the Council – prioritising staff from under-represented groups to attend Leadership Programmes to help increase diversity | Organisational Development |
| Encourage gender pronouns on email signatures – that set out what an individual wants to use | SMT/Corporate Communications |
| Promote and encourage more staff to update their personal data – explaining why it is important and how it can help us better meet their needs | Human Resources |
| Ensuring all of our employees will have opportunities to be heard and inform what we do as an organisation | |
| Lead and embed inclusion into our employment policies and practices in all areas of the organisation | Human Resources |

| Action | Lead Area |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Ensure that employees whose views sometimes go unheard are given opportunities to engage with the organisation and inform policy development (through employee groups – each of which will have a Senior Management Team sponsor) | Human Resources/ Organisational Development |
| Continue to provide and develop ‘safe spaces’ for employees to raise concerns and talk about their experiences- including external services/support if required | Human Resources/ Childrens Services |
| Ensure that our learning and development offer enables our workforce and elected members to have the awareness, knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity | |
| Ensure all elected members complete basic E&D training as part of their role/ induction | Democratic Services |
| Ensuring all Council employees complete the basic E&D training as part of their induction (and do a refresh as part of Essential Learning) | Organisational Development |
| Introduce more detailed training for those that require it as part of their job role | Service Leads |
| Review and update our Equality and Diversity training and development to adequately support our workforce and elected members | Organisational Development |

Priority area 3: Serving our customers

| Action | Lead Area |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Better understanding who our customers are and what their needs are | |
| Carry out a review of our local demographic data following the 2021 Census | Organisational Development |
| Complete a review of the complaints process to incorporate equality, diversity and inclusion including the nature and types of complaints received and the protected characteristics of the customer | Customer Services |
| Service areas to periodically gather customer feedback where relevant – based on service provision and customer satisfaction | Service Delivery Manager |
| Continue with our mystery shopper programme of work | Customer Services |
| Build diversity into communications and develop some simple case studies and data profiles – to help residents and services better understand the diverse needs of our borough and the barriers they face | Corporate Communications |

| Action | Lead Area |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Making sure all Council services are accessible to all | |
| Raise awareness of the Accessibility Standards and our accessibility web page and incorporate Equality and Diversity into some refreshed customer services training | Corporate Communications / Customer Services |
| Ensure Equality and Diversity is included in the Council's revised volunteering policies and practices to support as many people as possible to volunteer for the Council | Community Services |
| Produce a checklist for Service Delivery Managers to conduct peer to peer service reviews to assess accessibility and equality of different services | Customer Services |
| Service Delivery Managers to conduct at least one peer to peer review on accessibility each year | Service Delivery Managers |
| Improving relationships with those who face barriers to accessing our services and those with specific needs in the borough | |
| Appoint an independent facilitator to carry out engagement on the Council's draft EDI Strategy – ensuring our harder to reach groups are made aware and have the opportunity to get involved | SMT leads |
| Review and regularly update our stakeholder list - of a range of community contacts reflecting all protected characteristics – and promote as part of a toolkit to support ongoing dialogue and relationship building across the Council | Community Services |
| Make sure that when carrying out consultation activity, we reach out to all these stakeholder groups as appropriate, to ensure they are aware and understand how they can get involved and have their say | Community Services |
| Build on the Community Connector volunteer scheme – to recruit volunteers within these groups to act as 'communicators and ambassadors' to support the Council with passing on messages and involving members of their communities so they feel informed and involved and increase participation | Community Services |

Priority area 4: Celebrating and promoting the diversity of the borough

| Action | Lead Area |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Awareness raising campaigns | |
| Develop and update our Diversity Calendar containing a range of celebrations/events that are nationally and/or locally recognised for publication on the Council's website and to support awareness raising through corporate communications and within our own workforce | Community Services |
| Explore ways for new street and building names in the borough to demonstrate diversity | Planning |
| Hosting events | |
| Promote and engage with community groups on the diversity calendar and work in partnership to promote, organise and engage in local events | Communications and Events Teams |
| Co-ordination of the different cultures and faiths | |
| Continue building on the working relationship with Wolverhampton EDI network to deliver joint awareness raising campaigns e.g. Black History Month | Childrens Services |

Appendix 2: Supporting policies and strategies

Although Equality and Diversity runs through all that we do there are some strategies and procedures that are particularly relevant for supporting delivery of our vision in both service delivery and employment:

Service Delivery

- **Customer Strategy (currently being updated)** – setting out our strategic approach for how we offer services to our varied and diverse residents through the use of online, face to face, telephone and self-service channels.
- **Customer Contract (currently being updated)** – details of our commitment to customer service and what our service users can expect from us
- **Compliments, Complaints and Feedback** – how we receive and handle information from service users
- **Health and Wellbeing Strategy** – focussing on creating more resilient, happier communities and preventing poor health & wellbeing in the borough.
- **Housing Strategy** – all about the future of housing in Telford and Wrekin and providing a decent place to live.
- **Specialist and Supported Housing Strategy** – helping vulnerable people into good quality homes.
- **Belonging Strategy** - to develop a more consistent, borough wide approach to including children and young people with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs within the changing context of Local Authority provision.
- **Community Safety Strategy** – putting in place measures to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, prevent the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances; and prevent re-offending.
- **Adults with Learning Disabilities** - providing quality support in a personalised way so that people with a learning disability can receive the assistance they need to enhance their independence and enable them to lead meaningful, valued lives.
- **Communication and engagement toolkits** – around how we provide support for individuals with communication needs, and guidance on how services can engage with their service users to improve outcomes and customer satisfaction.
- **Procurement Procedures** – how we buy services including clauses that allow us to request certain social conditions, such as apprenticeships, and to ensure we only do business with reputable companies and individuals.
- **Service User Choice** – provision for selecting the person delivering intimate personal care on the basis of gender but not other characteristics.

Employment

- **Workforce Strategy** - placing a strong emphasis on diversity and inclusion in all our employment practices.
- **Flexible Working** – details how employees are able to tailor working arrangements to meet their individual needs, for example caring or family responsibilities, religious, belief or cultural requirements.
- **Recruitment and Selection** – how we advertise, select and recruit employees recognising that a transparent and open system promotes the employment of the best talent from the widest possible pool of available applicants.
- **Induction training** – Initial training to ensure employees have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and appropriate behaviours through our customer focussed approach.
- **Resolving Workplace Issues** – a policy that sets out a positive approach for dealing with situations where an employee may feel they have not been treated fairly or with dignity and respect.
- **Annual Performance and Development Discussion (APDD)**
– our employee review and development process to ensure continuous improvement of skills and opportunities through the identified needs of the individual and business.

Appendix 3: Glossary of Terms

We have produced this glossary of terms to help everyone understand the principles of our Equality and Diversity policy.

We use these definitions because local and national self-organised groups have agreed them and because they are used in legislation. The glossary will adapt overtime to reflect changes in society and terminology.

Age and ageism

Age is one of the nine protected characteristics included within the Equality Act 2010. Generally speaking, it is unlawful to discriminate against anyone because of age, although there are exceptions when goods and services and other things can be prioritised for specific age groups, such as providing care services or concessionary travel discounts to older people.

Ageism can be defined as any attitude, action or institutional structure, which through its actions ends up making people subordinate because of their age (sees them as inferior, less, less important, less able...).

Age discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of their age and particularly affects young and older people.

Alternative formats

This refers to when information is produced in other or additional methods so as to make it easier to read and understand/ easier to access the information, and often means producing information in other languages either in written word or spoken word, in British Sign language, in an easy read version for people with a learning disability,

or perhaps in a larger size to meet the needs of someone with reduced or loss of vision.

Producing information in alternative formats can form an example of a reasonable adjustment for disabled people, or as positive action to tackle race inequality.

Anti-Semitism

In 2020, the Council adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Definition of Anti-Semitism which states:

“Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed towards Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/ or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

The full definition and examples are shown in section 2 of this appendix.

Bisexual

Bisexual is the term which refers to a man or a woman who is emotionally and sexually attracted to people of both sexes.

Black Asian and Minority Ethnic

Whilst there is no single word or phrase which fully covers all members of minority ethnic groups in Britain, the term black Asian and minority ethnic is often used to summarise all of the groups which fall under this category. This phrase has replaced earlier examples which are no longer seen as appropriate. When people refer to themselves as black or Black this usually mean they are from an African-Caribbean and Asian origin to show a shared experience of discrimination and exploitation (in Britain and abroad).

People who are both white and black increasingly refer to themselves as dual heritage rather than using the term mixed race, which is the term which was used in the last census in 2011.

Bullying

Bullying can be defined as offensive behaviour which violates a person's dignity, or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment, or which humiliates or undermines an individual or group. Bullying can take various forms, from name calling, sarcasm, teasing, and unwanted criticism, to threats of violence or actual physical violence. Such behaviour can be vindictive, cruel or malicious.

Bullying can cause stress and employers may fail in their duty to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of employees, if they do not take steps to prevent it or respond to it effectively.

Carers

Carers are people who, without payment, provide help and support to a partner, child, relative, friend or neighbour who could not manage without this help. This could be due to age, physical or mental illness, learning disability, addiction or disability. The carer may be an adult, child or young person.

Civil partnership

Same sex couples can legally undergo a marriage or civil partnership. If they form a civil partnership they have the legal status of civil partner. This brings with it a range of legal rights and equal treatment for things such as tax, benefits, pensions, parenting responsibilities etc.

Deaf

Whilst most people use the word deaf to mean loss of hearing it can also be used with a capital D to refer to the Deaf community, those with hearing loss who use British Sign Language as the first language.

Disability and the Social Model of Disability

Disability has a legal definition within the Equality Act 2010. For the purposes of our Policy we have adopted what is known as the Social Model of Disability and accordingly a broader meaning of disability:

“Disability is the disadvantage or restriction of activity arising out of how society regards people who have a disability, failing to make adjustments to enable disabled people to enjoy full and free access to all aspects of society and the environment. Disability is not caused by an individual's impairment but by the way society fails to meet their needs.”

However, when we need to identify our duties towards employees and customers, we will sometimes need to complete an assessment in order to ascertain whether a person's impairment has a long-term and significant limiting impact on their daily life and will require individual reasonable adjustments of support.

Disabled people

We will use the term Disabled people and not phrases such as “The disabled” as this recognises people as individuals.

Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination is where a person is treated less favourably on the grounds of a protected characteristic. For example, recruiting a male applicant for a job rather than a more qualified woman because of irrational, prejudicial or stereotypical views, or not accepting a disabled person on to a course because it is assumed they would

not be able to meet the required course standards due to their disability, would constitute direct disability.

Diversity

Diversity means the different backgrounds and beliefs of people we serve or work with. Diversity recognises that everyone is different in a variety of visible and non-visible ways, and that those differences are to be recognised, respected and valued. They may include, but are not limited to, differences protected by equalities law known as protected characteristics.

Easy Read

A method of presenting written information to make it easier to understand for people with difficulty reading. Typically, involving pictorial representations and sentences that are short and have just one idea and one verb. A method useful for supporting people with learning disabilities although often welcomed by everyone.

Equal opportunities

Equal opportunities, or equality of opportunity, may be defined as ensuring that everyone is entitled to freedom from discrimination, where individuals have an equal opportunity to fulfil their potential. The term Equal Opportunities has mostly been replaced by Equality and Diversity in recent years.

Equal pay

Equal pay is generally used to refer to the provisions of the Equal Pay Act 1970 which requires men and women to be paid the same where they are employed on like work, work rated as equivalent under a valid pay evaluation scheme, or work of equal value, unless the pay difference can be objectively justified.

In order to comply with equal pay legislation it is recommended that employers have a job evaluation scheme in place and that they carry out an equal pay audit to highlight and rectify any disparities.

Ethnicity, Race and National origin

Views of what constitutes ethnicity, race and national origin generally include a common understanding of culture and a shared history. Ethnicity and race are seen as something fluid and socially influenced. Culture (one of the key components) is increasingly seen as constantly developing and reproducing our ethnic identities.

Equality

Equality is about eliminating disadvantage, discrimination, deprivation and treating people fairly. Equity is where groups have parity.

Gender

This is the sex-role identity used by humans to emphasise the difference between females and males. The words “gender” and “sex” are often used to mean the same thing, but sex relates specifically to the biological and physical characteristics which make a person male or female at birth, whereas gender refers to the behaviour and experiences associated with members of that sex. Gender stereotypes lead to sexism.

Gender identity

The gender to which you feel you belong.

Gender re-assignment

This is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 and relates to when a person changes from one gender to another, with or without medical treatment. The term Trans or Transgender is often used when referring to people who are or who have undergone gender re-assignment.

Harassment

Harassment is behaviour which is unwanted, uninvited, and which fails to respect the individual. Harassment can happen in and around the workplace, in communities, and has a harmful effect and creates negative feelings. It is left to the person experiencing the harassment to determine if the treatment is offensive and unacceptable.

Harassment is often subtle and long term, and can include a wide range of behaviours including unwelcome comments;

- offensive material and graffiti
- verbal insults, threats or obscene behaviour
- malicious complaints
- being ignored; overlooking or shunning particular employees
- unwanted physical contact; and offensive jokes
- bullying
- unjustified or unconstructive criticism
- violence

Heterosexual

Heterosexual is the term which refers to a man or woman who is emotionally and sexually attracted to people of the opposite sex.

Heterosexism/heteronormativity

Heterosexism is the assumption that every individual is heterosexual. This has been institutionalised in the family, as well as culture and the law.

Homophobia

Homophobia describes the aggressive or fearful feelings and behaviour directed at lesbians, gay men and bisexual men and women. This can range from jokes, graffiti, insults and threats, discrimination, to physical threats and violence.

Impairment

We use the word impairment to describe the grounds on which people are disabled.

Indirect discrimination

This is when a provision, criterion or practice is applied in a way that creates disproportionate disadvantage for a person with a protected characteristic as compared to those who do not share that characteristic, and this is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Intersex

Intersex people are individuals born with anatomy and physiology that differs from contemporary ideas of what constitutes “normal” male and female. Genitalia may be ambiguous, but can often appear totally male or totally female. Often, but not always, people choose to present as either male or female.

Islamophobia

Islamophobia is a form of irrational hatred or fear of people who follow Islam. It is often replicated as discrimination, harassment, abuse or hate crime towards people of Asian and Arabian origin, sometimes this will include people who do not follow Islam.

In 2020, the Council adopted the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Muslims which states:

“Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness.”

The full definition and examples are shown in section 3.

Lesbians and gay men

Lesbian and gay are terms which most lesbians and gay men prefer rather than homosexual. Lesbians often prefer the term “lesbian” rather than gay woman because it reflects their separate identities and experiences.

LGB, LGBT and LGBTQ

This is used as the collective term for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or who consider their identity to be subject to homophobia, transphobia or heterosexism.

Monitoring

This is one way that we can find out more about whether people from different backgrounds or equalities groups are using our services and are they being employed throughout the Council. We do this by asking people to complete confidential monitoring forms.

The information is stored separately from an individual’s personal information or protected in situations where discrimination could take place from those making decisions, such as in recruitment, to ensure

people get considered fairly, but also so that we can monitor the experiences of different groups of people who apply for our jobs.

Positive Action

Positive action is where there has been discrimination in the past, so we target our resources to work with people to overcome discrimination. It can be used in service delivery and employment and training. It is often used to address inequality and to address under-representation or remove barriers to equality.

Prejudice

An unfavourable opinion or feeling, formed beforehand or without knowledge or awareness, based on partial knowledge or selective use of knowledge. It is also unreasonable feelings, opinions or attitudes, especially hostile ones.

Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 has defined 9 protected characteristics:

Age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage or civil partnership, race; religion or belief; pregnancy and maternity; sex and sexual orientation.

It is unlawful to discriminate on grounds of someone’s protected characteristic status, or because they are associated with someone who has such a status.

Race equality

Race equality is equality based on ethnicity, race and national origin.

Racism

Racism is the negative behaviour towards people because of their ethnicity, race or national origin. It often takes the form of discrimination in key areas of society.

Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are adjustments which can be made for disabled people, pregnant women, and people undergoing gender re-assignment, to assist them at work or in relation to the consumption or access to goods and services.

The law places a requirement on service providers and employers to make reasonable adjustments. Traditionally and most commonly this is for Disabled people by making changes to an environment, workplace, working arrangements, to aid communications and access, or by altering policies and processes to make services and employment more accessible and easier to gain.

Reasonable adjustments depend on a range of things, the individual, the employer or service provider's capacity to make such adjustments, and the context for the needed adjustment.

Religion and belief, including non-belief

For equality law purposes, the Equality Act 2010 provides a definition of religion and belief, including non-belief. In short a religion tends to have a clear structure and belief system.

Philosophical beliefs are defined as a belief that is genuinely held and more than an opinion. It must be cogent, serious and apply to an important aspect of human life or behaviour. These beliefs could include vegetarianism or climate change.

Sex

The term sex (as in women and men are different sexes) refers to the biological differences between men and women.

Sexism

Sexism is discrimination based on sex. Traditionally such discrimination has operated against women by limiting employment and other opportunities, or by restricting rights such as voting rights.

Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation is a combination of emotional, romantic, sexual or affectionate attraction to another person. In other words it is about who you are attracted to, fall in love with and want to live your life with.

Stereotyping

This refers to having a fixed mental impression about particular groups of people. Stereotypes have developed whereby large groups of people are labelled as having the same limited, usually negative, characteristics. Even though most of the people in the group are nothing like the stereotype, the characteristics of a tiny minority are used to maintain the stereotype.

Transgender

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity/ or gender expression differs from their birth sex. The term may include, not is not limited to, transsexual people and others who see themselves as not clearly fitting into male or female identities. Transgender people may or may not choose to alter their bodies hormonally and/ or surgically.

Transsexual

A person who feels a consistent and overwhelming desire to transition and fulfil their life as a member of the opposite sex. Someone in this position will have the medical condition gender dysphoria. This term should only be used as an adjective: individuals should be referred to as transsexual people not as transsexuals.

Travellers, Gypsies and Roma

Travellers, Gypsies and Roma (Eastern European Roma) often face prejudice and discrimination and that anti-racist strategies must tackle the needs and experiences of these communities.

Young

The definition of young changes over time and depending on the context or service responsibilities, so it could mean children of school age and younger, or people under 25, for example.

1 IHRA Working Definition of Anti-Semitism

In the spirit of the Stockholm Declaration that states: “With humanity still scarred by ...antisemitism and xenophobia the international community shares a solemn responsibility to fight those evils” the committee on Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial called the IHRA Plenary in Budapest 2015 to adopt the following working definition of antisemitism.

On 26 May 2016, the Plenary in Bucharest decided that:

“Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

The following examples may serve as illustrations:

Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as anti-Semitic. Anti-Semitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong.” It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Contemporary examples of anti-Semitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

Anti-Semitic acts are criminal when they are so defined by law (for example, denial of the Holocaust or distribution of anti-Semitic materials in some countries).

Criminal acts are anti-Semitic when the targets of attacks, whether they are people or property – such as buildings, schools, places of worship and cemeteries – are selected because they are, or are perceived to be, Jewish or linked to Jews.

Anti-Semitic discrimination is the denial to Jews of opportunities or services available to others and is illegal in many countries.

2 The APPG Definition of Islamophobia

The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Muslims was established on 18 July 2017 to build on the work of the APPG on Islamophobia, but with a wider remit to examine a broad range of issues that British Muslims care about, and are affected by.

APPGs are composed of Members of both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. They are informal, cross-party groups that have no official status within Parliament, are not accorded any powers by Parliament or any of its Committees, and are independent of Government.

Following two years of consultation, on 27 November 2018, the APPG on British Muslims published a report titled “Islamophobia Defined: the inquiry into a working definition of Islamophobia.”

This report contained the following definition:

“Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness.”

Contemporary examples of Islamophobia in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in encounters between religions and non-religions in the public sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, instigating or justifying the killing or harming of Muslims in the name of a racist/ fascist ideology, or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Muslims as such, or of Muslims as a collective group, such as, especially but not exclusively, conspiracies about Muslim entryism in politics, government or other societal institutions; the myth of Muslim identity having a unique propensity for terrorism, and claims of a demographic ‘threat’ posed by Muslims or of a ‘Muslim takeover’.
- Accusing Muslims as a group of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Muslim person or group of Muslim individuals, or even for acts committed by non-Muslims.
- Accusing Muslims as a group, or Muslim majority states, of inventing or exaggerating Islamophobia, ethnic cleansing or genocide perpetrated against Muslims.
- Accusing Muslim citizens of being more loyal to the ‘Ummah’ (transnational Muslim community) or to their countries of origin, or to the alleged priorities of Muslims worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- Denying Muslim populations the right to self-determination e.g., by claiming that the existence of an independent Palestine or Kashmir is a terrorist endeavour.

- Applying double standards by requiring of Muslims behaviours that are not expected or demanded of any other groups in society, e.g. loyalty tests.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic Islamophobia (e.g. Muhammed being a paedophile, claims of Muslims spreading Islam by the sword or subjugating minority groups under their rule) to characterize Muslims as being 'sex groomers', inherently violent or incapable of living harmoniously in plural societies.
- Holding Muslims collectively responsible for the actions of any Muslim majority state, whether secular or constitutionally Islamic.

Telford & Wrekin Council Corporate Equality and Diversity Strategy

2022 – 2026

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Care and Invest
to create a
better borough



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