



Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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We aim to provide services fairly to all sections of our community, and that all our existing and future employees have equal opportunities.

1. Introduction

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) is important to us.

We want people to thrive in Wokingham Borough whoever they are.

We must listen to our residents so we know what's going well and what could be better.

We must make sure our workforce has equal employment and training opportunities.

2. Our commitment to EDI

Our mission is to work with and for our communities, to ensure that all residents have the opportunity to thrive.

Our Council Plan says we will do this by helping Wokingham Borough to be **Fair, Green, Safe** and **Connected**.

EDI is relevant to all four themes: it's essential to achieving our mission, and it's the right thing to do.

We want EDI to be included in all that we do, and our vision for EDI is that Wokingham Borough is:

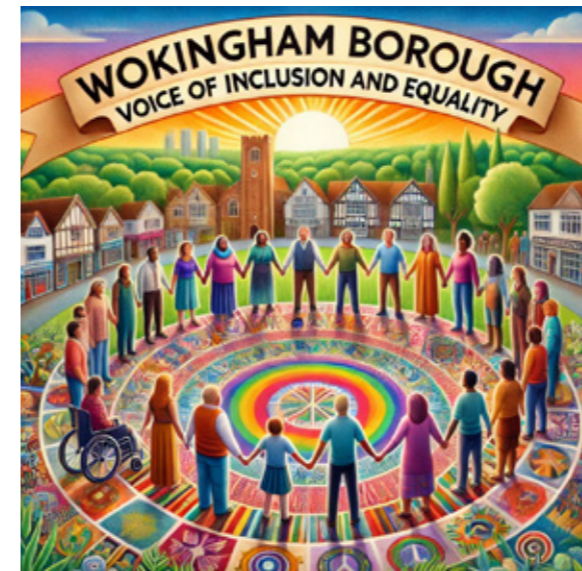
- A borough where people trust and respect each other
- A place where everyone feels they belong



- A place where services are accessible for all communities, including for people with disabilities

And Wokingham Borough Council is:

- A council that listens to our residents and makes changes to improve people's lives
- An employer whose recruitment is fair and open to all
- A council whose workforce reflects our diverse communities
- An organisation where everyone can be themselves and feel valued when they come to work



3. Definitions

What we mean by equality, diversity and inclusion:

Equality - equal opportunities to employment, training and fair treatment in the workplace and in accessing our services.

Diversity - celebrating differences and valuing everyone. This means respecting and appreciating the individuality of our colleagues and customers, whether visible or invisible.

Inclusion - taking steps to make sure colleagues and residents feel able to get involved in the workplace and community, and that their contributions are valued.

Other terms:

Equity - recognising that we do not all start from the same place and some people need more support than others to receive equal treatment.

Belonging - individuals genuinely feel welcomed, valued, heard and accepted.



We will treat our workforce and customers with dignity and respect and embrace and celebrate diversity.

4. Our Responsibilities

The Equality Act 2010 says that we must not discriminate against people because of their:

Age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership.

These are called “protected characteristics”.

We go beyond the law to help other people who may get treated unfairly. They are:

- Armed services veterans
- Care experienced people
- People who are struggling financially



The Equality Act says we must also:

1. Eliminate any unlawful behaviour such as discrimination, harassment or victimisation
2. Improve equality of opportunity between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not
3. Foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not



5. What residents and our workforce can expect from the council:

- **We will** agree new equality objectives every four years.
- **We will** consider the needs of our diverse communities in the way we communicate with our workforce and residents.
- **We will** work with our partners to increase opportunities for people from all backgrounds to take part in public life.
- **We will** proactively engage in activity that fosters good relations between different communities in Wokingham Borough.
- **We will** take equality for all into account when we design and deliver our services.
- **We will** produce service plans that include equality actions that we plan to undertake.
- **We will** compare our equality performance against other similar councils and share good practice.
- **We will** collect, analyse and share equality data and use it to identify our priorities.
- **We will** make decisions informed by robust equality analysis.
- **We will** ensure that all our suppliers and service providers work in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- **We will** train our workforce and support our councillors to help us meet our equality duties.
- **We will** recruit, select, train and promote our workforce fairly.
- **We will** work towards having a workforce that matches the make-up of our communities.
- **We will** have clear systems for staff to complain if they believe that they are treated unfairly.
- **We will** challenge discriminatory behaviour towards our workforce.



6. Our Equality Objectives

Priority 1

Continue to improve outcomes for everyone, with a focus on those who have the greatest need and the worst outcomes

Objectives:

- Provide services that are equitable and delivered in ways that are accessible to all communities.
- When we redesign council services, we will work with our communities using a co-production approach, ensuring that the lived experience of communities is used to address identified needs.
- Ensure that the procurement process removes barriers for community organisations and that they are supported to deliver services for our diverse communities.

We aim to have a workforce that reflects the diversity of Wokingham Borough.

Priority 2

Build a vibrant community where everyone can thrive, by understanding our communities and harnessing relationships

Objectives:

- Develop opportunities for communities to come together to build trust and a sense of belonging for everyone.
- Increase efforts to understand the needs of our communities, ensuring that people in the borough who need support can receive it.
- Update communities on progress against plans and next steps, in ways that are accessible to everyone.
- Tackle hate crime in all its forms, providing support to communities affected.
- Encourage all communities to engage in public life.



Priority 3

Deliver our equality commitments to communities, sharing details of impact and progress against our actions

Objectives:

- Communicate with our communities in a way that is accessible to everyone.
- Increase partnership working with communities that are underserved to identify and address issues of structural inequality.
- Strengthen and improve equality analysis using data to deliver targeted support to communities with poorer outcomes.

Priority 4

Build a diverse and engaged workforce where everyone is recognised, valued, respected and supported to thrive

Objectives:

- We will treat our workforce with dignity and respect and create an inclusive environment where everyone feels that they belong.



- We will consider the holistic needs of our workforce, providing support to address needs where possible.
- Continue to learn more about equality, diversity and inclusion, providing the skills for managers and the workforce to undertake challenging conversations about equality.
- Continue to work in partnership with staff network groups to identify and meet workforce needs for everyone and make improvements where appropriate.

7. Monitoring and review

Oversight of the delivery of the action plan will be through the council's Extended Leadership Team on a monthly basis.

Progress against our equality objectives will be reported annually to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

We will keep our communities regularly updated on our progress.

The policy and objectives will be reviewed formally in 2029.



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