

# **Greenwich Council's Equality Policy**

**July 2003**



**Greenwich  
Council**

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# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity, good community relations, and to tackling all forms of discrimination in Greenwich through the Council's roles as service provider and commissioner, employer and community leader. We will work with our partners in the private, public and community sectors to achieve our objectives. We believe that the diversity of Greenwich is one of our greatest assets and should be celebrated and valued.
- 1.2 Our commitment to equality expressed in the Greenwich Strategy and our 'Vision For The Borough' will help to ensure that all residents benefit from the long term plans to make Greenwich a better place to live, work, learn and visit. Our commitment is also embedded in our Management Values which emphasise the value we place on our diverse workforce. Equality considerations are a fundamental aspect of our Best Value Reviews and help to ensure they are mainstreamed into all our services. This Policy will also help us to meet the equality objectives included in the Greenwich Social Inclusion and Justice Strategy.
- 1.3 The Comprehensive Equality Policy forms the basis of our commitment to the Equality Standard for Local Government which we adopted in October 2002. The Standard will:
- provide a systematic framework for mainstreaming equality
  - help us to meet our obligations under the law
  - integrate policies and objectives with Best Value
  - encourage anti-discrimination practice appropriate to Greenwich
  - provide a basis for tackling all forms of institutionalised discrimination
  - provide a framework for improving performance over time

There are five levels to the Standard which will be monitored by the Audit Commission. The Council aims to achieve the highest level.

This Policy sets out our commitments. The objectives within the Policy will be implemented through a Corporate Equality Plan setting out clear targets and timetables for achieving them.

- 1.4 The Policy replaces the Strategic Equalities Vision for Greenwich 1997. Its scope is more focused than that of the Vision in order to ensure that the more exacting requirements of the Equality Standard are fully met.

## **2 Timescale**

- 2.1 The Policy is effective from July 2003. It will be reviewed annually and amended as necessary to reflect any changes in legislation, codes of practice, or special issues of local concern.

## **3 Scope**

- 3.1 The Policy applies specifically to discrimination, equality of opportunity and the promotion of good community relations in respect of:

- age
- disability
- ethnicity, race, colour and national origin
- gender
- religion
- sexual orientation

- 3.2 The Policy applies to all aspects of the Council's functions including:

- service provision
- commissioning and purchasing of goods and services
- recruitment, employment, training and staff development
- grants to voluntary and community organisations
- landlord functions in respect of housing and other property
- exercise of statutory powers and responsibilities
- partnerships with other organisations
- community involvement
- education, promotion and publicity
- planning

- 3.3 The Policy applies at all levels of the Council's activities including corporate, departmental, service and individual.

## **4 Aims**

### **4.1 The Council aims to:**

- eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity
- celebrate and value diversity
- promote community cohesion

## **5 Objectives**

### **5.1 Service Delivery**

- Ensure that the allocation of financial resources takes into account equality considerations.
- Ensure that equality considerations are integrated into all relevant areas of mainstream service planning, management and delivery.
- Improve the Council's awareness and understanding of the needs of different groups in the borough through effective community profiling, consultation, liaison and involvement.
- Ensure that Council services are accessible, and are delivered appropriately and sensitively in order to facilitate equality of treatment.
- Ensure that information about services is offered in appropriate formats and languages.
- Ensure that the Council's commissioning, purchasing and grant giving policies and procedures promote equality of opportunity.
- Continually review existing services to assess their impact on the groups covered by the Policy.
- Improve the monitoring of service take up and use.
- Assess the impact of proposed new policies and proposals to significantly change existing policies.

- Train staff to ensure that they are aware of the Policy and are able to apply it to their own area of work.

## 5.2 Employment

- Promote opportunities to ensure that the Council's workforce is diverse and representative of the local community.
- Ensure that Council jobs are accessible to people from all sections of the community.
- Ensure that staff are treated equitably in all areas of employment including career development, pay, training and promotion.
- Tackle harassment and bullying in the workplace.
- Carry out regular workforce profiling.
- Improve consultation with staff from the groups covered by the policy.
- Continually review human resource policies to assess their impact on the groups covered by the policy.
- Monitor recruitment, promotion, training opportunities and take-up, grievances, disciplinary procedures and exit from employment.
- Assess the impact of proposed new policies and proposals to significantly change existing policies.

5.3 Tackle all forms of hate crime and harassment and promote safety and security.

5.4 Encourage participation in local democracy and representation on public and voluntary bodies.

5.5 Improve community relations and promote diversity through events, publicity, educational programmes and other initiatives.

5.6 Ensure that all sections of the community have opportunities to benefit from the regeneration of the borough.

5.7 Work with partners in the community, voluntary, public and business sectors to achieve the Policy's aims.

## **6 Implementation**

- 6.1 The Council will produce a Corporate Equality Plan which will set out the actions, targets and timescales and resources required to meet the objectives in the Policy.
- 6.2 All the Council's relevant policies, functions and services will be reviewed through a rolling three year programme of Equality Monitoring Reviews to assess their impact on the groups covered by the Policy. Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out for all proposed new policies or policies for which significant changes are proposed. It is anticipated that this process will result in real changes in many aspects of the Council's work.

## **7 Resources**

- 7.1 The Council is committed to integrating equality policy into mainstream service planning and budgetary allocation.
- 7.2 The Council also provides specialist resources devoted to developing, promoting and monitoring equality policy. The Social Inclusion and Justice Division provides a corporate policy development, scrutiny and practical support role. Staff in the corporate Human Resources team have specific equality responsibilities and each Department has staff with specific duties to co-ordinate the implementation of the Policy at Departmental level.
- 7.3 The Council will allocate funds specifically for the purpose of equality training for staff.

## **8 Responsibilities**

- 8.1 The Council's Cabinet has overall responsibility for the policy and ensuring that adequate resources are provided for its implementation. Members will scrutinise progress against the objectives set out in the policy.
- 8.2 The Greenwich Management Team has responsibility for overseeing implementation of the policy and the monitoring process
- 8.3 Managers are responsible for ensuring that all aspects of their services comply with the Policy.

- 8.4 All staff are required to ensure fairness towards colleagues, service users and other members of the community in carrying out their duties.
- 8.5 All staff should help to promote the Policy in the workplace in all aspects of service delivery and to work towards the elimination of discrimination.
- 8.6 All staff have a duty to report instances of discrimination to their manager at the earliest opportunity so that appropriate action can be taken to remedy the situation.
- 8.7 The Council requires that those who provide services on its behalf or organisations which are funded by the Council, ensure that their service provision and employment practices are consistent with the Policy.

## **9 Monitoring and review of the Policy**

- 9.1 The Social Inclusion and Justice Scrutiny Panel will regularly review the Policy to ensure that it is consistent with current legislation and codes of practice.
- 9.2 The Social Inclusion and Justice Scrutiny Panel will annually monitor progress on the corporate and departmental targets set out in the Corporate Equality Plan.
- 9.3 Performance Indicators will be included in the Corporate Equality Plan.
- 9.4 Reviews will take into account the views of elected members, staff, community and voluntary groups, and trade unions.
- 9.5 Progress reviews carried out by the Social Inclusion and Justice Scrutiny Panel and reports of equality impact assessments and equality monitoring reviews will be made available to the public.

## **10 Dissemination of the Policy**

- 10.1 The Policy will be published on the Council's website.
- 10.2 A summary document will be available in a range of formats and languages.



10.3 A copy of the Policy and summary will be available for all staff.

10.4 Applicants for Council posts will be made aware of the policy and it will form part of the induction programme for new recruits.

## **Appendix 1 – Legislation**

### Human Rights Act 1998

- It is unlawful for local authorities to act in a way which is incompatible with the rights and fundamental freedoms set out in the European Convention of Human Rights.

### Race Relations Act 1976

- It is unlawful for local authorities, in carrying out their functions, to discriminate, directly or indirectly, on grounds of colour, race, ethnic or national origin.
- Local authorities, in carrying out their functions, must have due regard to the need to:
  - eliminate unlawful discrimination
  - promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups

### Race Relations Act 1976 (Statutory Duties) Order 2001

- Local authorities must publish a Race Equality Scheme and monitor recruitment, promotion, grievance and disciplinary procedures, employment termination and training by reference to the racial groups to which staff and job applicants belong.

### Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003

- These contain new definitions of indirect discrimination and harassment and make other amendments to reflect the provisions of Council Directive 2000/43 EC. This provides for equal treatment between persons in the areas of employment, social protection, social advantage, education and access to goods and services which are available to the public, including the provision of housing.

### Disability Discrimination Act 1995

- It is illegal to discriminate against disabled people in employment, provision of goods and services and buying or renting land or property.

Employers and service providers are required to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers.

### Equal Pay Act 1970

- Prevents discrimination between men and women in the terms of their employment, including pay.

### Sex Discrimination Act 1975

- It is illegal to discriminate directly or indirectly against men or women in selection for appointment, promotion and training.

### Sex Discrimination Amendment Act 1999

- It is illegal to discriminate against a person who is undergoing a gender reassignment in terms of employment and training.

### European Directive on Employment (Article 13 Amsterdam Treaty)

- UK Law will be changed to give legal protection against discrimination on the grounds of religion and sexual orientation in employment and training by 2003; and age and disability by 2006.

## **Appendix 2 – Codes of Practice**

### Commission for Racial Equality

- The duty to promote race equality

### Equal Opportunities Commission

- Sex discrimination
- Equal Pay

### Disability Rights Commission

- Elimination of discrimination in the field of employment against disabled people or persons who have had a disability
- Rights of access to goods, facilities, services and premises

Reference copies of legislation and codes of practice are available from:

Greenwich Council,  
Social Inclusion and Justice Division,  
29 Wellington St, Woolwich  
Tel: 020 8921 6058  
Minicom: 020 8921 5690  
Email: [sij.policy@greenwich.gov.uk](mailto:sij.policy@greenwich.gov.uk)