

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

Introduction

1. Norfolk County Council is committed to providing equality of opportunity for Norfolk's people and communities. We respect and value difference in the county and across our workforce, and we want everyone to feel included and able to play their part in making Norfolk a great place to live, learn, work and visit.
2. We do not tolerate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation in service delivery or employment on the grounds of any protected characteristic:
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Race
 - Religion and belief
 - Sex
 - Gender reassignment
 - Sexual orientation
 - Marriage and civil partnership
 - Pregnancy and maternity.
3. We will not treat anyone less favourably than any other, on the grounds of any protected characteristic, except when such treatment is within the law and determined by lawful requirements.
4. In adopting the aims of this policy, we will:
 - Promote equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and bullying
 - Promote understanding, tackle prejudice and foster positive relations between different communities
 - Make reasonable adjustments for disabled people
 - Take steps to remove barriers or inequalities that may already exist
 - Promote a workforce culture that values and respects difference
 - Engage with local communities fairly and proportionately
 - Encourage people who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation is disproportionately low.

Accessibility and inclusive design

5. We are committed to providing public services and a workforce environment that can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their ability or disability.

6. When reviewing or redesigning our public services or workforce environment (or any building, product or service in that environment, such as premises, technology, information, communication and culture) we will be guided by the following:
 - (a) Provide the same means of use to enable access for all users: identical whenever possible; equivalent when not
 - (b) Avoid segregating or stigmatizing any users
 - (c) Provisions for privacy, security and safety shall be equally available to all users
 - (d) Ensure dignity in use for all users.

Reasonable adjustments for disabled people

7. Where something the Council does places a disabled personⁱ at a substantial disadvantage compared to a non-disabled person, we will take all reasonable steps to try to avoid that disadvantage. This may mean changing the way we work, providing extra equipment or removing physical or other barriers.

Discharging our responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty

8. When exercising our public functions, we will have due regard to the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#).ⁱⁱ
9. At least every four years, we will publish one or more equality objectives.
10. We will maintain and publish annual information which shows our compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Equality impact assessments

11. Equality assessments should be undertaken at the design stage of planning and commissioning, to enable equality and accessibility to be routinely considered.
12. In particular, as part of the assessment, [guidance](#) should be sought on the minimum and maximum access considerations that could be applied to any given initiative – to enable decision-makers to consider the most reasonable approach in the circumstances, taking all relevant factors into account - such as available resources; demand and future proofing.
13. It will not always be possible to adopt the course of action that will best promote equality, diversity and inclusion for all. However, equality assessments enable informed decisions to be made, that take into account every opportunity to minimise disadvantage.
14. Guidance on equality assessments is available [here](#).

Staff professional development

15. All new staff undertake induction training which includes a module on behaviour and conduct expectations (standards at work). They are also encouraged to complete the four e-learning modules below on equality within their first six months in post (and existing staff every two years):

- The Equality Act 2010
- Equality in the Workplace
- Implementing reasonable adjustments
- Reporting hate incidents.

16. Staff can access these modules via [Learning Hub](#).

Who this policy affects

17. This policy affects elected members and all workers including employees, consultants, temporary workers, agency staff and other third parties working on behalf of Norfolk County Council. It also applies to suppliers, sub-contractors and agencies in our supply chain.

This policy applies to (but is not limited to) the planning, design, operation, construction and delivery of services, the provision of goods, facilities and services, exercising of public functions, recruitment and selection, conditions of service, benefits, facilities and pay, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conduct at work, employment policy, procedures and guidance, and termination of employment.

18. We expect all staff to take responsibility for familiarising themselves with this policy and conducting themselves in an appropriate manner. Staff are expected to engage proactively in the implementation of this policy.

Relevant legislation

19. In implementing this policy we will have regard to our legal obligations under relevant legislation, including the [Equality Act 2010](#) and Public Sector Equality Duty.

Relevant NCC policies

20. The following HR policies provide further guidance about implementing equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace:

- Equality in Employment Policy P305
- Transgender Policy and Procedure P305a
- Employing People with Disabilities Guidance G312d
- Bullying and Harassment Policy P308.

Communication

21. This policy will be made available via Norfolk County Council's website and intranet.

Review

22. We will review the terms of this policy and any associated codes of practice and guidance in 2021.

Complaints

23. We regard any breach of this policy as a serious matter to be dealt with through agreed procedures and this may result in disciplinary action.

24. We encourage anyone who has a complaint concerning a breach of this policy to bring this to the County Council. See the County Council's [Grievance guidance and policy](#)

Further Information

25. For further information please contact: equalities@norfolk.gov.uk

ⁱ The definition of disability is set out in the Equality Act 2010, Part 6: 'A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities'. A person must meet all elements of this definition in order to satisfy the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and trigger the duty to make reasonable adjustments.

ⁱⁱ Public sector equality duty:

A local authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
3. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.