

Knowsley Council Equality and Diversity Policy Statement

2017-2020

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1. INTRODUCTION

The vision is to make Knowsley the 'Borough of Choice'. Whilst the physical assets of the Borough - its green space, leisure facilities, its infrastructure and connectivity - are of very high quality, its greatest potential asset is its people and their families. Fundamentally we need more families wanting to come to live in our Borough to make it sustainable and to do this we need to put the conditions in place so that all families can thrive and achieve their full potential.

To help deliver this vision, the Council has identified around five delivery priorities for 2017-2020:-

- Maximise the Council's contribution to education in Knowsley;
- Maximise the Council's contribution to the health and wellbeing of Knowsley residents;
- Provide high quality and sustainable Adult Social Care;
- Accelerate business growth, new jobs and new housing; and,
- Create a sustainable Borough.

These outcomes are supplemented through the following equality objectives:

- Listen to and collaborate with the community;
- Promote an inclusive and trusting working environment; and
- Embed equality within all we do.

To be successful, the Council will adhere to its Co-operative Principles to build better partnerships and help others to make a difference in Knowsley. The Council will also continue to be a community leader by connecting with residents, helping to shape opportunities, sharing responsibilities, and always championing Knowsley within and outside the Borough.

We recognise that there are certain groups of individuals who are likely to need more protection than others and we will actively seek to ensure that these groups of people are protected and that their access to opportunities is actively promoted. We acknowledge our roles and responsibilities as an organisation and we commit to ensuring that our internal processes and ways of working promote equality and ensure that no one is disadvantaged by how we operate as an organisation. We also have a role in shaping and influencing the area and the culture of the communities in Knowsley, and we are committed to ensuring that principles of equality are embedded in this role.

This Policy statement sets out our commitment to equality and diversity and provides the overarching context within which we work.

THE LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT FOR EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to protect people from harassment in the workplace and also in wider society. The Equality Act places responsibilities on public sector organisations. As such, local authorities must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. It also requires that public sector organisations:

- have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

2. PROTECTING PEOPLE AGAINST DISCRIMINATION AND HARRASSMENT

The Equality Act sets out nine characteristic groups who are protected from discrimination or harassment by law. It is therefore illegal to discriminate against people because of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race (including gypsies and travellers)
- Religion and belief
- Sex (Gender)
- Sexual Orientation

In recognition of particular local characteristics, Knowsley Council has chosen to include within our equality impact assessment analysis Carer's, Offending Past, Socio-economic Status and Child Poverty and Armed Forces personnel, Veterans and their Families.

3. OUR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS AN ORGANISATION

4.1 Knowsley Council as an employer

- Promote equality of opportunity for all staff
- Make reasonable adjustments to allow staff to fulfil their potential and take action, where it is needed, to tackle inequality and promote diversity
- Protect and promote the health, wellbeing and safety of all staff
- Ensure our recruitment practices and procedures do not discriminate against anyone negatively
- Monitor our workforce regularly to identify any issues in regards to equal opportunity or development
- Promote and protect equality and respect for diversity in the culture of our workforce
- Enable, encourage and support staff to report discrimination or harassment in the workplace

4.2 Knowsley Council as a purchaser and commissioner of services

- Ensure that when we purchase or commission services from organisations we are confident that these organisations respect equality and diversity
- Ensure the money we spend on services protects and promotes equality in employment
- Ensure our services are accessible to everyone
- Ensure that equality and diversity is built into our processes and procedures around procurement and commissioning

4.3 Knowsley Council's policy, strategy and decision making procedures

- Ensure that equality and diversity issues are considered in the development of all policies and strategies
- Develop policies and strategies to reduce the inequality faced by whole communities or individuals
- Ensure the Council is fully aware of any adverse impacts that may occur because of decisions made, and actively seek to mitigate any negative impact
- Regularly evaluate the impact of our policies and strategies with regard to equality and diversity issues

4.4 Equality Impact Assessments

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to assess the impact of decisions on underrepresented groups. Knowsley Council's method for complying and further documenting our commitment to equality and diversity is through the implementation and completion of Equality Impact Assessments. An equality and diversity impact assessment is a way of finding out whether a decision affects different groups of people in different ways. These assessments must be undertaken to comply with our organisational commitments and statutory obligations.

As part of Knowsley's commitment to equality and diversity, impact assessments will be undertaken which take into account the Equality Act 2010 General Duty, The Human Rights Act 1998, the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and the Care Act 2014.

Knowsley Equality Impact Assessments cover the following protected (and additional) characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race (including Gypsies and Travellers)
- Religion and Belief
- Sex (Gender)
- Sexual Orientation
- Offending Past
- Carer's Status
- Social Economic Status (including Child Poverty)
- Armed Forces personnel, Veterans and their Families

The results of the Equality Impact Assessments will be used to address negative issues which may arise from existing or proposed policies, including the identification of potential for discrimination and the consideration of alternative proposals and activities that will mitigate any adverse impact.

Knowsley Council aspires to recruit and retain a diverse workforce, which generally reflects the local population and which has the skills and understanding to improve the lives of the people of Knowsley through the provision of quality services responsive to cultural, individual and community needs.

In addition, the Council collects and evaluates workforce monitoring data in compliance with the statutory monitoring duties. The Public Sector Equalities Duty states that we should monitor our workforce by the different protected characteristics for:

- All employees
- All applicants for jobs
- All applicants for promotion
- All applicants for training

This information is gathered annually and published in the workforce monitoring report.

4. OUR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OUTSIDE THE ORGANISATION

5.1 Knowsley Council's responsibilities

It is recognised that to achieve the vision to become the '*Borough of Choice*', we need to raise Knowsley's performance in a number of areas. The Borough's population fell by over 4,500 between 2001-2011, and despite improvements in recent years, levels of educational attainment, child poverty, dependency and worklessness remain challenges to the future sustainability of the Borough. We must work together to enable families to get out of poverty, into work and do more for themselves. We need more families choosing to live in Knowsley to make it sustainable and to do this we need to put the conditions in place that will help families thrive and achieve their full potential.

This means working with our partners through the Knowsley Partnership arrangements to remove barriers, eliminate discrimination, address disadvantage, and raise the aspirations of residents and communities. It is important to recognise that whilst the family is the building block for all our activities, the foundation for this work is predicated on a number of Co-operative Principles. These principles are embedded in how we will work as an organisation to help make Knowsley the 'Borough of Choice' and reduce any inequalities that may exist within Knowsley.

The Co-operative Principles are:

- **Community leadership** - supporting people to be less dependent on public services and more able to find solutions from within their communities to the challenges and opportunities that they face
- **Partnership and co-operation** – we will work closely with our partners to ensure that where intervention is needed it is timely and as 'up-stream' as possible to maximise impact and minimise cost
- **Retaining jobs and investment locally** – to attract inward investment, and ensure that Knowsley residents have the skills needed to get those jobs
- **Building social value** - we adopted a policy of Social Value in 2013, which sets out the outcomes and measures we expect to see in every relevant tender exercise that goes through our procurement team
- **Empowering residents** - increasingly we are looking to residents to take on and run community assets such as libraries, community centres, parks and green space

Narrowing the inequality gap is at the heart of the Council's core policies and strategies, including:

- Economic Growth Plan
- Local Plan
- Child and Families Strategic Plan
- Knowsley Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Housing Strategy
- Liverpool City Region Growth Strategy
- Green Space Strategy
- Community Safety Plan
- Transforming Adult Social Care
- LCR Transport Plan for Growth

We will also ensure that our policies, procedures and practices as an organisation around equality and diversity are exemplary and set the context for how other organisations or partners in Knowsley should operate. Where necessary, we will support partner organisations to improve their equality and diversity policies and procedures, and we will actively promote equality and diversity within our communities

5. GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

6.1 Equality and Diversity

Equality and Diversity is within the brief of the Community Cohesion Manager. The role consists of supporting the senior manager cohort, through establishing task and finish forums, of the strategic and operational progress of the business plan.

6.2 Elected Members

Elected Members are equally bound to the principles of Equality and Diversity with the same obligations and expectations as all local authority employees. The role of Elected Members includes support and challenge to the local authority's equality and diversity processes on behalf of their constituents and employees. Equality and Diversity sits within the portfolio of the Leader of the Council. The Leader of the Council is the Chair of Cabinet, which is the lead forum for all corporate decision making with regard to service delivery and employment.

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This policy statement sets out our commitment to equality and diversity and our roles and responsibilities. It is accompanied by a delivery plan which identifies our equality and diversity objectives for the two year period 2017-20, and how we intend to implement this policy. Progress will be monitored and reported to the Senior Managers Group.