

# Swindon Borough Council

## Equality Policy

Agreed at Cabinet, 14<sup>th</sup> April 2010, amended April 2011 as part of the Single Equality Scheme.

### Policy Statements – Recognition & Commitment

#### Recognition:

- The Council recognises that people may experience discrimination and less favourable treatment or privilege on the grounds of their: age, disability, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender or marital/civil partnership status, religion or belief, sexual orientation, and financial or economic status, homelessness or lack of a fixed address, political view or trade union activity, and may be prevented from achieving their full potential;
- We understand that people in majority communities also experience privilege in society because of their age, disability, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender or marital/civil partnership status, religion or belief, sexual orientation, and financial, economic or housing status and that this may lead to disadvantage or discrimination to other groups.
- We are committed to challenging all forms of unfair and unlawful discrimination, false assumptions, prejudice and stereotyping. We will develop policies, procedures and practices to ensure all people have fair and equal access to our services and job opportunities;
- We recognise that employees may experience discrimination, victimisation or harassment at work. We aim to ensure that the workplace is free from discrimination and harassment and will act promptly if any such incidents occur. It is a disciplinary offence for an employee to harass or victimise another. The Council requires staff when at work to support the expressed values of the Council;
- We recognise that people may experience multiple forms of discrimination, or may experience discrimination driven by association or assumptions;
- We will work with local and national organisations to improve access to all areas of society.

## **Commitment in key equality areas:**

### **A Age**

- A.1 We recognise that some people experience discrimination and prejudice in our society on the basis of their age.
- A.2 We are committed to challenging all forms of unfair age discrimination.

### **B Disability**

- B.1 We recognise that disabled people experience discrimination and prejudice in our society.
- B.2 We recognise that “disability” includes sensory and physical impairment, learning disability and mental ill health.
- B.3 We believe that the Social Model of Disability best identifies how Disabled People experience discrimination and will endeavour to reflect this model in all our work.
- B.4 We are committed to challenging all forms of unfair disability discrimination.

### **C Sex, Gender, Marital or Civil Partnership Status**

- C.1 We recognise that some people experience discrimination and prejudice in our society on the basis of their sex, gender identity, characteristics or expression, responsibilities for children, and marital or civil partnership status.
- C.2 We are committed to challenging all forms of unfair gender discrimination.
- C.3 We will support employees so they can be open about their gender identity, characteristics or expression if they choose. Disclosing information about someone’s change in gender identity without permission will be viewed as harassment and may be treated as a disciplinary offence.
- C.4 We recognise that gender stereotyped work can be undervalued and we will seek to improve the working conditions of women in low paid jobs.
- C.5 We are committed to make sure that women and men receive equal treatment in employment with pay awarded fairly and equitably.

### **D Race, Colour, Ethnic or National Origin.**

- D.1 We recognise that some people experience discrimination and prejudice in our society on the basis of their Race, Colour, Ethnic or National Origin.
- D.2 We are committed to challenging all forms of unfair racial discrimination.

### **E Religion or Belief**

- E.1 We recognise that some people experience discrimination and prejudice in our society on the basis of their Religion or Belief.
- E.2 We are committed to challenging all forms of unfair discrimination based on a person’s religion or belief (or their assumed religion or belief).

- E.3 We respect the right to practise religious belief and we will, where practicable, take account of specific religious needs in service delivery and employment.
- E.4 We will support employees so they can be open about their religious or other beliefs if they choose.

## **F Sexual Orientation**

- F.1 We recognise that Lesbians, Gay Men and Bisexual people may be discriminated against because of their Sexual Orientation, or assumed Sexual Orientation.
- F.2 We are committed to challenging all forms of unfair Sexual Orientation discrimination.
- F.3 We will support Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual employees so they can be open about their sexual orientation if they choose. Disclosing information about someone's Sexual Orientation without their permission will be viewed as harassment and may be treated as a disciplinary offence.

## **G Financial or Economic Status**

- We recognise that some people experience discrimination and prejudice in our society on the basis of having a low income.
- We aim to improve the quality of life for everyone in Swindon by building a sustainable economy, encouraging social cohesion, securing a healthy environment and promoting democratic rights.
- We will ensure people with a low income have equal access to Council services and develop partnerships across Council departments, with public agencies, the voluntary sector and local business to co-ordinate activities, resources and fundraising.

## **H Homelessness or lack of a fixed address**

- We recognise that some people experience discrimination and prejudice in our society because they are homeless or do not have a fixed address, this include gypsy and traveller communities.
- We believe that everyone should have the opportunity to live in a secure and affordable home.
- We aim to ensure that our services, policy and practices do not unjustifiably discriminate against people who have no fixed address.

## **I Political view or Trade Union activity.**

- We recognise that some people may experience prejudice or discrimination because of their political views or involvement with/affiliation to Trades Unions, and may be prevented from achieving their full potential.
- We value and support the work of the Trades Unions, professional associations and other staff representative bodies, and welcome the continued constructive working relationship that we have with those organisations.

## **Implementation and Review**

This policy will be supported by a range of documents and plans including, but not limited to:

SBC Equality and Diversity Vision and Strategy

SBC Equality Objectives

SBC Equality Action Plan

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Equality Task Group.

Last reviewed April 2014