

Equality Policy

2021

Chief Executives Office



We are dedicated,
We are respectful,
We are collaborative
We are Milton Keynes

We are dedicated, we are respectful, and we are collaborative.

We strive to be responsive to the needs of those we serve and those we serve alongside.

Milton Keynes is a diverse borough where people's different characteristics make demands on the skills and expertise of officers and decision makers. Therefore, equality and inclusion lie at the very heart of everything we do in employing people, providing services to people and in shaping the place they live and work. This is encapsulated in the Council's Equality Vision:

'Improve the way we engage, think, plan and act to deliver equality and inclusion for everyone, every day'.

1.1 What do we mean by Equality and Inclusion

We respond to people as diverse individuals having regard to the:

- elimination illegal discrimination, harassment and victimisation,
- advancement equality of opportunity, and the
- fostering good community relations by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

Working to a standard beyond compliance to the Equality Act, the Council will consider the impact of its services by actively working to create opportunities and removing barriers. This is what we mean by equality and inclusion, it forms a cross-cutting priority in the Corporate Plan, enabling all other outcomes contained in the plan

1.2 Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 covers nine protected characteristics, which cannot be used as a reason to treat people unfairly. Every person has one or more of the protected characteristics; so, the act has the effect of protecting everyone against unfair treatment. The protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment (including those in transition)
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

1.3 Other people we consider

This protection also covers those discriminated against because they are perceived to have, or are associated with someone who has, a protected characteristic; for example, carers of a disabled child. They are protected by virtue of their association to that person.

The Council promotes equality of opportunity and seeks to avoid discrimination at all times and has a suite of employment policies that build upon this policy.

1.4 Our Equality Commitment

Milton Keynes Council serves a diverse community, where people from a range of backgrounds and experiences enhance the life and development of the Borough.

The council will:

Engage

- Support engagement in all equality streams
- Capture service user experience
- Maintain good communication with staff

Think

- Equality impact assess all key decisions
- Monitor and analyse trends in data and information
- Publish a staff profile annually

Plan

- Ensure services identify their equality challenges
- Promote equality of opportunity through a Diversity Action Plan
- Be a 'disability confident' employer

Act

- Alleviate the main causes of inequality in Milton Keynes
- All residents have easy access to council information and services
- All staff are adequately equipped to serve a diverse community

1.5 Partnerships

The council works with partners to advance equality in Milton Keynes. This includes working with those partners who are not public authorities, but who exercise public functions, to ensure they meet their equalities duties, as set in the Equality Act 2010.

The council understands that inequality and issues of discrimination are part of a broad and complex social context. The council has adopted a Corporate Plan, which describes

objectives to meet the broader issues of inequality, support for vulnerable people and poverty.

1.6 Who is Responsible for this Policy?

The Cabinet has collective Member responsibility for overseeing achievement of this policy and accounting for its progress. The Cabinet Member with lead responsibility for Equality has the lead for the equality policy development.

The Corporate Management Team makes sure that activities are in place to deliver on this policy and receives the monitoring details through the corporate performance processes.

All managers across the Council have an essential role in delivering this policy, proactive in developing a service led approach to equalities development and ensuring that staff are adequately trained to meet the requirements of this policy.

Every individual that works in a council service has a role to play in implementing this policy.

The **Corporate Equalities and Diversity Officer** is responsible for the corporate aspects of the policy and providing equality guidance.

The **Human Resources Department** is implementing practices in line with this policy and equality legislation, advising and guiding on their implementation.

All members of the council, council employees and people who work for the council (whether volunteers, temporary staff or working for a partner) will conduct themselves in a manner that maintains the council's reputation on equalities and accessibility while carrying out a council function, but also at other times when their actions could reflect on the council's reputation.

1.7 Review

This policy will be kept under review and be subject to amendments and changes when there are changes in society and legislation. The outcome of any review will be published in the Annual Performance Report, which will be published every June.

