

Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration

“An equal society protects and promotes equal, real freedom and opportunity to live in the way people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish. An equal society recognises people’s different needs, situations and goals, and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and be.”

(The Equalities Review)

We are one of the largest employers in the city and provide public services to a population of almost three quarters of a million people.

Equal opportunities in the council is about making sure that everyone can fully join in the social, cultural, political and economic life of the city. We are committed to treating our staff and the people of Leeds fairly. We want to make sure that we take equality and diversity into account, in a positive way, at every stage of our work. We will make sure that we follow equal opportunities policies in the way we recruit and treat our staff, deliver our services, consult the people of Leeds, and work with other organisations.

This leaflet explains our approach to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration. It also provides some information on the Equality Framework.

Equality and Diversity Scheme

We all aspire to live in a society that is fair and which supports each individual to fulfil their potential. Leeds City Council recognises the need to embed equality and diversity at the heart of what we do and is committed to making this happen. We recognise that there are different aspects of identity that individuals and communities have. These can be based on race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief and age. We also recognise that disadvantage experienced by others such as carers and single parents is no less significant. Taking full account of these differences, the Leeds approach focuses on:

- The effect organisational barriers can have on a diverse population
- Practical ways of removing or reducing these barriers.

As a public authority we have legal responsibilities to address inequalities by eliminating discrimination. In order to meet our legal duties we have developed an equality and diversity scheme. The single equality and diversity scheme outlines the continued commitment of Leeds City Council to creating an environment of true equality and diversity across the city.

The single equality and diversity scheme reflects the council's responsibilities under equality legislation.

The scheme recognises that people do not exist in neat and clearly definable groups and that people will identify with more than one equality area at a time. The scheme assists us in responding to the issues of multiple discrimination.

Our Equality and Diversity outcomes and priorities 2008-2011

The priorities have been divided into five themed areas:

- **Employment, training and development**

Our staff reflect the diverse communities of our city, perform well, are constantly learning, and are able to develop their careers through all levels of the council without discrimination.

- **Safer communities**

Leeds is a city where hate crime and domestic violence is not tolerated.

- **Service delivery**

Leeds City Council provides fair access to services which meet the needs of our diverse communities and individuals.

- **Stronger communities**

Leeds is a city that values the contributions of the people of Leeds and actively engages with all our diverse communities.

- **Promotion of equality and diversity**

Create an environment where all the people of Leeds are respected and valued.

Cohesion and Integration strategy

The council has adopted the Government's definition of cohesion and integration to set its priorities.

Community cohesion is what must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together. A key contributor to community cohesion is integration which is what must happen to enable new residents and existing residents to adjust to one another.

Our vision of an integrated and cohesive community is based on three foundations:

- People from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities
- People know their rights and responsibilities
- People trust one another and trust local institutions to act fairly.

And three key ways of living together:

- A shared future vision and sense of belonging
- A focus on what new and existing communities have in common, alongside a recognition of the value of diversity
- Strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds.

Our Cohesion and Integration Priorities 2008-2011

We have six cohesion and integration priorities:

- **Leadership and community empowerment**

Strong community leadership at all levels is vital to support good community relations across Leeds.

- **Sense of belonging and opportunities for all**

How people behave with, and to, their neighbours, or respond to strangers in their local communities is critical to the how relationships develop locally. The importance of individual actions in building cohesion and integration needs to be understood and recognised.

- **Preventing the problems of tomorrow**

Any approach to cohesion and integration needs to include a focus on breaking down tensions and building relations within, and between, all communities. This involves dealing with not just facts, but also with rumours and perceptions, and recognising that any of these can fuel tensions between groups. This will also include our approach to the preventing extremism agenda.

- **Children and young people**

The vision in the Children and Young People's Plan is that we want all children and young people in Leeds to be happy, healthy, safe, successful and free from the effects of poverty. The five outcomes of being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic wellbeing all contribute to achieving cohesive and integrated communities.

- **Communication and information**

The importance of our understanding how our local areas are changing and that factual information and reassurance messages need to be communicated to all communities. Cohesion and integration messages need to be targeted at the whole community.

- **The inclusion of cohesion and integration into key council and city policies and practices**

Provide a commitment to ensuring that, wherever possible, our policies and services promote cohesion and integration and help reduce any tensions and conflict that may arise within our communities.

Equality Framework for Local Government

The Equality Framework for Local Government builds on and develops the work councils have done on the Equality Standard for Local Government. The objective of the Equality Framework for Local Government is to mainstream equality into authorities' key performance management systems so that equality objectives do not sit apart from core council business.

The five areas of performance are:

- Knowing your communities and equality mapping
- Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- Community engagement and satisfaction
- Responsive services and customer care
- A modern and diverse workforce.

The framework has three levels of performance

Level 1: Developing

A developing authority has the following characteristics:

- Councillors and officers understand the significance of equality of opportunity in creating local areas that people want to live and work in. They visibly lead partnerships that address inequality.
- It has demonstrated clear plans to undertake equality mapping and understands the profile and needs of communities of interests within its locality.
- It has publicly committed to improving equality outcomes and the elimination of discrimination in both service delivery and employment based on race, gender, disability, age, religion, and/or belief, sexual orientation and other areas of disadvantage.
- It is compliant with all legal requirements, including having all public duty equality schemes in place.
- It has systems in place at corporate and service levels to ensure the delivery review and scrutiny of its equality and cohesion priorities.
- Key internal and external stakeholders and community members are involved and consulted on equality issues.
- It has earmarked specific resources for improving equality practices.
- It is carrying out both retrospective and prospective equality impact assessments.
- It is clear about its workforce profile and has plans to ensure equal pay and to improve representation where appropriate.

Level 2: Achieving

An achieving authority has the following characteristics:

- Councillors and officers take direct and personal responsibility for promoting greater equality and test themselves on progress by the outcomes they achieve.
- It has undertaken equality mapping and has a good understanding of its communities, including the extent of inequalities and disadvantage, and used the information to inform corporate and service priorities.
- It has stretching equality priorities in consultation with partners in the public and voluntary and community sectors and these are reflected in its sustainable community and other relevant strategies, local and multi-area agreements, and local targets.
- It works with partners in the public and voluntary and community sectors to develop joint equality strategies.
- It uses equality impact assessments to review all major corporate service changes in policy and regularly conducts service and employment equality impact assessments.
- It has set appropriate corporate and service objectives to address persistent inequalities to narrow the gap.
- It has set appropriate corporate and service employment and pay related objectives for race, gender, disability, age, religion and/or belief and sexual orientation.
- Equality objectives are integrated into the council's business and service planning processes.
- All relevant data on service access is monitored against the equality strands.

- There are good practices of delivery in all the sections of the council with few adverse impacts found in impact assessments. Where adverse impacts have been found these have been mitigated.
- Key stakeholders and community members, including those who are vulnerable and marginalised, are able to scrutinise and challenge performance on equality issues.
- It has developed information and monitoring systems that allow it to disaggregate data where appropriate and to assess progress in achieving objectives and targets. It reviews them in the light of changing needs, when necessary.

Level 3: Excellent

An excellent authority has the following characteristics:

- Councillors and officers have a reputation for championing equality issues and ensuring that the equality issues are relevant to their communities and are embedded in their sustainable community strategy, strategic plans, local area agreements and local delivery plans.
- It works with all strategic partners and the voluntary and community sector acting as advocates to achieve defined equality outcomes.
- It has good evidence of the equalities profile of the community based on national and local data that is regularly reviewed.
- It is measuring progress on equality outcomes, is able to disaggregate data on relevant performance indicators and can demonstrate real outcomes that have improved equality in services and employment.
- It identifies the changing nature of its communities and their expectations and then prioritises its activities and explains its decisions.

- It provides good customer care by ensuring that services are provided by knowledgeable and well-trained staff who understand the needs of their communities.
- It has improving satisfaction and perception indicators from all sections of the community and staff.
- Equality groups are integrally involved in community engagement programmes.
- There are forums for all equality stakeholders to share experiences and evaluate the authority's progress.
- All parts of the authority can show tangible progress towards achieving outcomes which address persistent inequalities and narrow the gaps.
- It has implemented action for equal pay outcomes and demonstrates progress on under-representation, flexible working, access to training and development and promotes an inclusive working culture based on respect.
- It reviews its equality strategy and public duty equality schemes every three years and seeks innovative improvement challenges.
- Through its achievements, it is an exemplar of good practice for other local authorities and agencies and works with others to share best practice.

Useful Information

For enquiries please contact the Equality Team:

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