



London Borough of Hounslow

Equal Opportunities and Cohesion Policy Statement Hounslow Council

The Hounslow Plan sets the tone for the council's Equal Opportunities policy. The plan offers a single unifying vision of what needs to be achieved for all communities - a strong, vibrant and united community.

To make this vision a reality the council has put in place priorities for 'Building Pride Borough Wide' which focuses on the following themes:

People, Respect, Improve, Dialogue and Empower

The council's Equal Opportunities Policy is informed by this vision and the Equalities legislation.

The council as a service provider

People

The council's ambition for a cohesive community means that we will advance equal opportunity by broadening people's horizons beyond traditional racial, gender, sexual orientation, age and disability grounds.

This policy sets in motion a shift away from multi-culturalism and diversity to an approach which actively seeks to build stronger united communities. This will be pursued by nurturing a sense of collective social responsibility between equalities groups for making Hounslow a better place for all. The new Equality Bill reinforces this new broader outlook for promoting equality.

For our part, we will be a council with a human face where people's needs are always our number one priority. We will banish bureaucracy and you can expect to receive a high quality efficient public service delivered fairly based on demonstrable need.

Respect

The council will

- promote a shared vision grounded in respect
- promote a sense of shared ownership and responsibility for the future of Hounslow.
- build pride in the local community
- build pride in the local physical environment
- create opportunities for people from different communities to connect and work together to discuss issues and concerns that affect them all
- combat discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the basis of race, religion and belief, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age and socio-economic status

- promote equality of opportunity by tackling disadvantage experienced by all communities including socio-economic disadvantage.

Improve

The council is responsible for providing a range of services that directly affect people's everyday life. We want all our residents to reach their potential and so we will fight unfair discrimination that holds people back.

The council will tackle disadvantages by addressing the substantive issues being experienced by both the majority and minority communities in the borough- whether levels of deprivation and under- achievement, or a wider lack of opportunity and therefore aspiration.

Our policy is to mainstream our equalities work by responding to disadvantage identified by our Strategic Needs Assessment and our Children's Plan. The drive for efficiency, improved performance, openness and accountability is rapidly changing the way Hounslow delivers services. We will continue to strive for more effective use of resources which is capable of demonstrating value for money. We will therefore only invest in equalities work that can demonstrate direct improvements in outcomes for disadvantaged communities.

The aim of mainstreaming is to raise the bar for people by not marginalising them in traditional equalities silos. We will only provide targeted services to specific equalities groups in exceptional circumstances if universal services are unable to respond to special needs of groups.

We will monitor and review our services to ensure that all people, regardless of their background or circumstance, enjoy a fair and equal access to services and will take appropriate action where this is not the case

We will work to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good community relations with the relevant partners, voluntary sector agencies, contractors and all other associated organisations, groups, as appropriate, who deliver services on our behalf.

Dialogue

Our policy puts residents, service users, staff and partners at the heart of everything we do and how we do it. We will work with local people and users to guide and shape what and how services are delivered. We will provide information that allows local people to exercise choice, control and social responsibility.

We will consult all our community, about any policy change that will impact upon them.

Empower

Our policy is to deliver much needed improvement for communities by investing in and empowering our community.

We will create opportunities for people from different communities to connect, meet openly and honestly to discuss issues and concerns that affect them all.

We will promote good relations by involving all communities regardless of background on issues of common concern such as crime and safety, education, unemployment, recycling and environmental issues and only target specific consultation with equalities groups as and when necessary.

The council as an employer

The council will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy

The council is also committed to recruiting the best person(s), and would therefore actively recruit and support high potential individuals regardless of their background. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against requirements for the job taking into account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability

We will ensure that all employees and potential employees are treated equally and fairly and will ensure that no applicants are discriminated against in the recruitment and selection process.

We will review the recruitment, promotion, training and development of our staff and the composition of our workforce, in line with our statutory obligations.

The council will comply with its obligations in relation to statutory requests for contract variations. The council will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

We are committed to investing in our staff and will provide training to support the development of our workforce.

We will not tolerate discrimination, harassment and victimisation of any kind within the council and will take prompt and effective action whenever it occurs.

We will support our managers' right to manage, and also the right of staff to be managed fairly.