



Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

www.wokingham.gov.uk



1 | Introduction

Our Equality Diversity and Inclusion policy sets out our commitment to make Wokingham a fair place to live for all residents. We have listened to our residents in its development to make sure that the policy will work for everyone and all communities from the very young to the very old.

Our Council mission is to work with and for our communities to make sure everyone has the opportunity to thrive; being able to start well, live well, and age well in Wokingham Borough.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is integral to achieving this mission, and underpins our council plan themes of **Fair, Green, Safe** and **Connected**.

The approach we have taken to develop the EDI Policy has had three areas of focus:

- Engagement and co-creation with workforce, partners, residents, including the Voice of Inclusion and Equality forum (VINE)
- Alignment to the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG)
- Understanding of local and national data and insight

See Appendix for more information.



2 | Aims

We will continue to ensure the Equality Framework for Local Government informs the work that we do, this is considered best practice and ensures that we will be:

- A borough where people trust and respect each other
- A place where everyone feels they belong
- A place where services are accessible for everyone

And Our Council will:

- Listen to our residents and make changes to improve people's lives
- Ensure our recruitment approach is fair and open to all
- Be a place where everyone can be themselves and feel valued at work



3 | Definitions

What we mean by equality, diversity and inclusion:

Equality - equal opportunities in employment and training and fair treatment in the workplace. For residents this relates to accessing council services.

Diversity - celebrating differences and valuing everyone. This means respecting and appreciating both visible and invisible differences in people.

Inclusion - taking steps to ensure that the environment is welcoming to everyone. This includes both workplace and community activities.



Other terms:

Equity - an acknowledgment that not all individuals have equal life chances. It is based on providing more support to some individuals to receive fair access to services.

Belonging - individuals genuinely feel welcomed, valued, heard and accepted.

Communities - a group of people living in the same place or having the same characteristics in common.



4 | Our Responsibilities

The Equality Act 2010 says that we must not discriminate against people because of their protected characteristics:

		
Age	Disability	Race
		
Religion or Belief	Gender Reassignment	Sex (Gender)
		
Sexual Orientation	Pregnancy & Maternity	Marriage & Civil Partnership

We have chosen to expand to include others who may be treated unfairly, including:

- People with a connection to the Armed Forces
- Care experienced people
- People who are struggling financially

The Equality Act says we must also:

1. Eliminate unlawful behaviour such as discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
3. Foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not.





5 | Our **commitment to EDI**

1. **We will** review equality progress annually and report on progress.
2. **We will** consider our colleagues' and residents' communication needs and use appropriate, accessible formats.
3. **We will** work with our partners to boost opportunities for everyone to join in public life, such as through volunteering, becoming a councillor, magistrate or school governor.
4. **We will** host events that aim to bring together different communities in Wokingham. We will continue to encourage trust and respect between communities.
5. **We will** take equality, diversity and inclusion into account when we design and deliver the services we provide.
6. **We will** compare our equality performance against other councils and share good practice.



Our **commitment to EDI**

7. **We will** collect, analyse and share equality data with partners to ensure that we are delivering services to residents based on need.
8. **We will** make decisions informed by robust Equality Impact Assessments.
9. **We will** make sure our suppliers are committed to and have appropriate processes and controls in place to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
10. **We will** continue to provide and promote opportunities for our workforce and Councillors to learn more about Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
11. **We will** recruit, select, and promote using fair and accessible processes, that ensure best practice and allow opportunities for all.
12. **We will** challenge discriminatory behaviour towards our workforce.



6 | Our Equality Objectives

Priority 1

Continue to improve outcomes for everyone, with a focus on those who have the greatest need and the worst outcomes.

Objectives:

- Provide services that meet the diverse needs of service users and are delivered in ways that are accessible to all communities
- We will use a co production approach when we redesign council services. We will take account of the lived experience of residents when we design solutions
- Ensure that the procurement process supports local organisations to deliver services to diverse communities

Priority 2

Work with residents and partners to continue to build vibrant, welcoming communities where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Objectives:

- Encourage communities to come together to further build trust and a sense of belonging
- Use data and insight to better understand our communities' needs. Ensuring that people in the borough who need support know where to go for help
- Work with partners to tackle hate crime in all its forms, providing support to communities affected
- Motivate all communities to engage in public life through volunteering, attending public meetings, and joining local events



Our Equality Objectives

Priority 3

Fulfil our equality commitments to communities, sharing the results and progress with residents.

Objectives:

- Communicate with our communities in a way that is accessible to everyone
- Strengthen partnerships with seldom heard groups to highlight and resolve matters of structural inequality
- Strengthen and improve equality impact assessments
- Identify resident needs by using data and insights and target support for those with the highest need and worst outcomes

Priority 4

Continue to focus on creating a working environment where, everyone is recognised, valued, respected, and supported to thrive.

Objectives:

- We will treat our workforce with dignity and respect. Creating an inclusive environment where everyone feels they belong
- We will consider all our colleagues' needs, focusing on health and wellbeing and providing help where we can
- Continue to learn more about equality, diversity and inclusion, helping managers and our workforce to gain the skills required for challenging conversations
- Continue to engage with staff network groups to identify and address workforce improvements



7 | Monitoring and review

- Regular updates on progress against the action plan will be shared with the council's Extended Leadership Team
- We will provide an annual update to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee. This report will also include a yearly review of our performance against the Equality Framework for Local Government
- We will provide regular updates to our partners in the Voice of Inclusion and Equality group
- We will keep our communities regularly updated on our progress
- The policy and objectives will be reviewed formally in 2029



Appendix

The Appendix is a separate document that sets out the background to the development of the Equality policy.

It explains our engagement with residents, community partners and colleagues.

It also includes information on the communities that live in the borough and the inequalities faced by some residents.

Included in this document is:

- EDI Policy Development and Engagement
- Our Community Partners
- Wokingham Demographic Profile
- Indices of Deprivation
- Food Poverty
- Inequalities in health, wellbeing, and opportunities to thrive
- Equalities Framework for Local Government
- Other Council strategies
- Literature



