



MALDON DISTRICT
COUNCIL

APPENDIX 1

Maldon District Council - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Sustainable Council – Prosperous Future



OUR VISION: To make Maldon District a better place to live, work and enjoy

Document Control Sheet

Document title	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
Summary of purpose	Maldon District Council is committed to enabling equal opportunity, diversity within our workforce and ensuring an inclusive culture where everyone feels they belong, are respected and can be themselves. This policy is intended to assist the Council to put this commitment into practice. Compliance with this policy should also ensure that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.
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Validity Statement

This document is due for review as and when relevant legislation changes. Users of the policy should ensure that they are consulting the currently valid version of the document.



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If you would like this information in large print, Braille or another language, please contact HR.

Abbreviations

- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion -EDI**

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1. Introduction

We recognise and value the diversity of all people that choose the District as a place to live or work and those who want to visit the district. The Council is committed to being an inclusive employer and providing inclusive services to our communities. This policy sets out:

- Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion statement
- Our objectives
- Our role as an employer and in the community
- The values that will guide us in addressing challenges

The Council is committed to providing equal opportunities and to tackle inequality and unlawful discrimination. We take our responsibilities as an employer seriously and work hard to ensure that our employees are supported and able to deliver the best possible services for local people.

2. Policy Statement and Context

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement

Maldon District Council is committed to promoting EDI as a community leader, as a service provider and as an employer. This policy is intended to assist the Council in promoting EDI through its business functions and work to ensure that people are treated fairly, and that everyone has the opportunity to live, learn and relax in the District.

We will address inequality both in the workplace and in relation to access to services:

In the workplace, we will continuously strive to ensure that our workplace is free of harassment and bullying behaviours and to enable an inclusive work culture; we will make sure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect. If an employee feels that they have been subject to inappropriate behaviour whether this is harassment, bullying or something else they are encouraged to raise this so that this can be investigated, and action taken. The Council has a separate Grievance Policy, which describes how to raise issues.

In the community, as officers and Members we will use our position to work with partners and stakeholders to ensure that individuals and our communities have a sense of belonging and understanding.

3.1 Context

3.11 Defining Equality

Equality is about creating a fairer society where everyone can participate, and everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their full potential. This means that everyone has a fair chance to achieve their aspirations and ambitions, whether that be at work or in their personal lives.

Equality is focused within a legislative framework, the main piece of legislation being the Equality Act 2010. The Act is designed to:

- Address unfair discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

There are nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment (transgender), marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation.

All local authorities are required to work within the legislative requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty. The Equality Duty is supported by general and specific duties.

The **Public Sector Equality Duty** (the **Equality Duty**) was created by the **Equality Act 2010** in order to harmonise the previous race, disability and gender **equality** duties and to extend protection to the new protected characteristics listed in the Act.

3.12 Defining Equity

Equity involves distributing resources and support based on the needs of the recipients.

3.13 Defining Diversity

Diversity is about recognising and valuing the full range of differences between people in the workplace and the community. Diversity is about 'harnessing, valuing and celebrating difference'. Whilst the legislation remains an important element, the scope of diversity goes further than the 'legal minimum' to allow for the exploration of differences in a safe, positive and nurturing environment. It means understanding one another by surpassing tolerance so that people's differences are truly valued.

3.14 Defining Inclusion

Inclusion within the equality and diversity context is about ensuring no one is excluded when in employment or when receiving services. It is understanding exclusion and closing the gaps, so that all communities benefit. If communities are to be at the heart of what we do, inclusion must happen from the onset of designing services, developing policies, engaging communities, as well as when recruiting employees.

For employees, inclusion means that everyone can be respected, valued and able to 'be themselves' in the workplace.

4.Objectives

The Council will achieve its vision by delivering against the following objectives:

Objective 1: We will identify the ways to improve our workforce data collection which will be used to inform policy development and workforce strategy

Objective 2: We will provide learning opportunities for our workforce and our Members to develop a wider understanding of our communities and their diverse needs

Objective 3: As officers and Members, we will improve our knowledge of, and our contact with, all communities and ensure that communities can continue to be involved in decision making processes

5.Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Equal Opportunities in Employment

The Council will enable equal opportunity in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for learning and development, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.

Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.

Please refer to the Safer Recruitment Policy.

5.2 Grievances

5.21 Where an employee considers that they have been unlawfully discriminated against, or if they have a complaint involving alleged bullying or harassment, they may use the Council's Grievance Policy to raise the issue.

Bullying at work is a behaviour that is:

- threatening, aggressive or intimidating;
- abusive, insulting or offensive;
- cruel or vindictive; or
- humiliating, degrading or demeaning

Harassment is behaviour that violates an individual's dignity at work or creates an intimidating hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive working environment. It may be related to age, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion or belief, race, ethnic origin or national origin. The key in relation to harassment is that the actions or comments are viewed as unacceptable to the recipient.

5.22. The Council will take all complaints seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds. Employees will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if the grievance is not upheld, unless the complaint is made in bad faith or for some other malicious or inappropriate reason.

Please refer to Grievance Policy.

5.3 Employees

5.31 The Council has introduced Core Values that are embedded into the way we work and all employees are expected to understand and uphold the Council Values. Our values are embedded into the [Corporate Plan](#).

5.32 Employees are required to assist the Council to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination and to report incidents of discrimination or harassment or bullying behaviour to their manager

5.33 Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the Council for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

5.34 Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the Council's Disciplinary Policy (attached in Section 9). Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

5.4 HR Specialists

HR Specialists co-ordinate the corporate approach, helping to create a workplace culture where diversity is valued and celebrated. The Specialists will assist in the delivery of the Council's objectives related to the workforce.

5.5 Managers

Managers have a responsibility to consider EDI in the design, commissioning and delivery of their services, in the development of policies and procedures, learning and nurturing working environments, as well as in managing teams and individuals.

Managers are expected to lead by example and address any harassment and bullying behaviour or other behaviour which does not meet the Council's values and expected standards

Managers are expected to take responsibility for the Equality Impact Assessment of new or revised policy, activity or strategy for which they are responsible in their area of work.

5.6 Corporate Leadership Team

The Corporate Leadership Team champions the EDI Framework, promotes EDI throughout the Council and act as leaders across the organisation.

5.7 Elected Members

Elected Members are encouraged to champion and promote EDI and our Core Values in all their areas of responsibility and in all decision making and to work with officers to enable our equality objectives to be achieved.

6 Our role within the community

6.1 Engaging with partners and stakeholders

The Council recognises that we cannot work in isolation. We believe that by working together with our partners and stakeholders we can achieve more for the benefit of the community. We will work with public services and our thriving voluntary and community sector to continuously raise the profile of the EDI agenda. Improving the lives of our residents will require us to share information and resources. We will also continue to engage with the business sector to allow us to jointly address education, employment and skills and therefore economic prosperity, all of which help to make Maldon district a good place to live and work.

6.2 Building resilience and cohesive communities

The Council aims to build resilient and cohesive communities. By 'resilient', we mean people and communities that can cope with changes in their lives and communities. By 'cohesive', we mean that people from different backgrounds will enjoy good relations and live and work comfortably together. The Council will support our local communities by:

- Building on the strengths and capabilities of our communities to find solutions that are right for and which work for them. We will capitalise on the District's existing assets, both in terms of facilities and people, and explore opportunities to connect these together to form innovative solutions.
- Working collaboratively with public, voluntary, faith and community groups to deliver events that celebrate integration and cohesion
- Welcoming newer communities to encourage participation in civic life and increase interaction between different community groups
- Promoting Maldon District as an inclusive, diversity-friendly district, and encourage active participation in civic life by all local people
- Facilitating constructive engagement with all community groups on policies and procedures
- Working with partners and our communities to tackle hate crime in our District

6.3 Our role as a service provider

The Council is committed to equality of access and equality of opportunity for all those people living and working in the District. It is committed to understanding the composition of its communities and enabling access.

All employees and service users will be treated with fairness and respect, and without discrimination. Appropriate monitoring of service usage will take place in order to understand our customers and ensure that any barriers to accessing services are removed.

The Council is committed to carrying out the actions needed to meet its EDI objectives and will ensure that an action plan is followed to achieve them.

Employees should report any bullying or harassment by customers, suppliers, visitors or others to their manager who will take appropriate action.

7. Monitoring and Measuring Success

7.1 Surveys

The purpose of EDI surveys is to support the Council to capture the service user needs and what we need to consider ensuring our systems, services and processes support our workforce and community.

7.2 Data Collection

- We will collect data to ensure the Council is meeting the data requirements for the following:
- Meeting the legal requirements to publish information as required in the Equality Act
- New telephone system to capture and monitor our service user needs

7.3 Reviewing Objectives and Priorities

We will commit to reviewing our objectives and our priorities annually.

8. EDI Champions

EDI Champions have been introduced to act as ambassadors for the Council. The value and benefits of EDI Champions are as follows:

- Seek feedback on diversity and inclusion
- Encourage two-way communication channels
- Help to foster open, understanding, tolerant and clear communication
- Making sure our EDI policies, guidance, training and any other relevant communications are up to date