

THIS IS THE DIFFERENCE YOU MAKE

Warwickshire County Council Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement

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1. Purpose: Our Commitment

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) vision, **“Warwickshire County Council, a place where everyone feels valued, included, safe, supported and welcome”**, places our approach to inclusivity at the heart of everything we do.

At Warwickshire County Council we benefit greatly from the different skills, talent, and attributes of our diverse range of people. We recognise that diversity and inclusion is essential to us being able to develop, adapt, innovate and progress, whilst best serving our customers and striving to ensure that no one is treated inappropriately or disrespectfully. This is aligned with Our Behaviours, to build strong working relationships, do what we say, and be the best we can be for our people.

We want our Employees to feel...	We want our Communities to feel...	We want our Members to feel...
Valued, included, safe, supported, welcome and that they can reach their potential no matter what their background.	Safe, supported and that when they interact with Warwickshire County Council in whatever capacity, that they consistently receive a dedicated, inclusive and accessible service.	Included and supported by our action plan. Leveraging support from Members where possible will enhance our external reputation and internal profile.

The County Council is committed to the values of fairness and equality. We have a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, harassment and bullying and will seek to apply these values by challenging and eliminating it where it exists. We will do this by ensuring there is public satisfaction with our services, by having a diverse and talented workforce who are enabled to be their best, and through our leadership role within communities. To demonstrate our commitment, EDI is central to our Council Plan, which sets out our core purpose for the future to make **“Warwickshire the best it can be, sustainable now and for future generations”**. We want Warwickshire to be a brilliant County in which to grow up, work and prosper and grow older. This is supported by our three strategic priorities: -

- A County with a thriving economy and places with the right jobs, skills, and infrastructure.
- A place where people can live their best lives; where communities and individuals are supported to live safely, healthily, happily and independently.
- A County with sustainable futures which means adapting to and mitigating climate change and meeting net zero commitments.

EDI also plays an essential role in delivering the following outcomes of Our People Strategy to make **“Warwickshire County Council, a great place to work where diverse and talented people are enabled to be their best”**: -

- Our people are diverse, feel that they belong and can bring their whole self to work.
- We will listen, learn and act to create an inclusive organisation with a sustainable and resilient workforce.
- We will break down barriers to enable a collaborative, innovative and accountable environment.
- Our offer enables us to attract, retain, engage and motivate a diverse and talented workforce.
- Our people are celebrated for their diversity and bring the capabilities and behaviour to drive a high-performance culture.

2. Scope: Our Legal Duty

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination on the basis of nine ‘protected characteristics’; age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnership (currently marriage and civil partnership only applies in terms of employment – not service delivery). The Equality Act also introduced a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) on all public authorities. In meeting this duty, the County Council must demonstrate how it will: -

- **eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.**
- **advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**
This involves having due regard to the need to: -
 - remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
 - take steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people, for example, taking steps to take account of people with disabilities;
 - encourage people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.
- **foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**
This means tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups and communities.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

To meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), it is the responsibility of all our people to ensure that decision making, policy setting, and service delivery supports these three aims, that EDI is integrated into our day-to-day work, and that we positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations.

All our people are responsible for making sure individuals do not suffer any form of discrimination as a result of their identity, and that they are supportive of individual needs. Every person working for Warwickshire County Council will be accountable for their own behaviour and actions, on and off site during working hours or within any activity linked to their employment.

All leaders are responsible for trying to prevent any breaches of the policy amongst their teams and taking action where appropriate. All colleagues and members of the public are entitled to be treated with respect and to perform their roles free from harassment and discrimination. Warwickshire County Council views harassment or discrimination of colleagues, workers (including temporary employees and volunteers) and customers as a serious disciplinary offence.

3.1 Discrimination

Discrimination occurs when a person or group of people are treated less favourably than others because of a protected characteristic they may hold. Discrimination of this kind can be direct, indirect, intentional, or unintentional, and can be carried out by individuals, groups or institutions. We acknowledge that discrimination can occur at both an institutional level, (where prejudices can become rooted within organisations through policies, practices, processes, and criteria for decision making) and at an individual level, (where a person may hold negative attitudes about other people or groups). Either of these could result in inappropriate discriminatory behaviour to which Warwickshire County Council has a zero-tolerance approach.

3.2. Achieving Equality and Inclusion, and Valuing Diversity

Our EDI objectives ensure that there is an integrated and proactive approach to EDI that meets our Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), is informed by sector best practice, and supports the achievement of our values, behaviours and vision.

To achieve our vision and objectives we will: -

- Deliver our action plan to meet our EDI objectives.
- Review, measure, and report on our progress and provide this publicly in the form of our [annual reviews](#).
- Work with our partners in the statutory, voluntary, and private sectors to make sure we are delivering the best outcomes for the people of Warwickshire.

- Undertake [Equality Impact Assessments](#) when developing or reviewing our services, policies, strategies, practices and plans.
- Positively promote equal opportunities within Warwickshire as part of the Council's community leadership role.
- Provide a range of EDI learning and development opportunities for our people.
- Support a modern and diverse workforce so that we reflect the community we serve.

3.3. Service Provision

We aim to: -

- Provide easy to use and accessible services and facilities to all our communities.
- Provide clear and easy to reach information about our services in various formats and languages when needed.
- Review and monitor our services, working practices and resource allocations to ensure that they do not discriminate, and identify where improvements can be made.
- Promote and publicise to employees what equality in service provision means.
- Ensure that all service users have easy access to our Corporate Complaints Procedure.
- Offer services and advice that are accessible either in person, via telephone or online channels.
- Improve satisfaction of our services by engaging and consulting with customers.

3.4. Procurement and Contracting

When we buy services and develop contracts, we will: -

- Require any commissioned services to have considered equality of access and service delivery.
- Ensure contractors, suppliers, volunteers and partners are aware of what the County Council expects in relation to EDI and understands that they must provide services that are free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Make sure that our selection and tendering processes include sections on EDI.
- Give guidance to our people about how to include EDI in procurement documents and tenders.
- Include EDI in the quality assurance of commissioned services.

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 encourages the County Council to achieve better value for money by taking into consideration the Social Value of Contracts as well as the standard focus on price and quality. Social Value goes

beyond the individual contract and looks at the additional benefits to the well-being of individuals and communities, social capital and the environment.

Before starting the process of procurement, we will consider: -

- How what is proposed to be procured might improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area; and
- How the process of procurement might be carried out with a view to securing that improvement.

3.5. In Recruitment

Our People vision is to be a great place to work where diverse and talented people are enabled to be their best. We recognise that diversity is a strength, helping us to better connect with and serve our communities. We believe that a diverse range of talent is vital in creating an effective workforce who can bring different skills and experiences to the table.

We ask for Equal Opportunities information as part of the application process to monitor the effectiveness of our attraction and recruitment. This information is not sent to the hiring manager and does not form part of the selection process.

We are committed to enabling each employee to reach their potential, drawing on the widest possible pool of talent for recruitment and promotions. We are a Disability Confident Level 2 employer which means we guarantee an interview to anyone with a disability who demonstrates through their application that they meet the minimum essential criteria for the post. We also guarantee an interview to any armed forces service person or leaver who meets the essential criteria for any post being advertised externally as part of our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant. [Find out more about equality, diversity, and inclusion in recruitment.](#)

3.6. At Work

As a major local employer, it is essential we guarantee that EDI is central to our employment policies and practices, and as such we will aim to: -

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation through our policies, practices, and processes.
- Provide appropriate learning and development opportunities to all our people.
- Ensure that our people receive fair and equal treatment in relation to their employment, regardless of whether they have full time, part time or temporary positions.
- Recognise and ensure that our people have the right to work in a safe and harassment free environment. This is supported by our Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy and Procedure.
- Wherever possible, make reasonable adjustments for employees with disabilities.

- Ensure our people are aware of their own responsibility to follow and support this policy.

3.7. Consultation and Engagement

As a public body we must ensure we provide fair and equitable services for everyone and fully understand the impacts of decisions on our diverse communities. To do this we aim to: -

- Collect good diversity monitoring data on customers and residents.
- Engage with diverse people and age groups to understand their experiences of our services.
- Fully consider the impact of changes or policies we consider, particularly on vulnerable people, seldom heard and people with protected characteristics.
- Everyone has a right to be listened to and treated with value and respect. We strive to ensure all engagement and consultation activities are fully inclusive.

We will also carry out regular employee surveys to check satisfaction levels in relation to the working environment. This will help us to ensure that we are developing and maintaining an inclusive organisational culture.

3.8. Monitoring and Measuring Progress

We will review, monitor and evaluate all our employment and service delivery policies, procedures and practices to make sure we are meeting our equality duty. When accessing a service, taking part in a consultation, or applying for one of our job roles, you might come across a range of diversity monitoring questions. The purpose of collecting diversity monitoring information is to ensure that we can identify, tackle and prevent issues that would otherwise prevent engagement with different groups of people and ensure our processes, practices and services are suitable for and reach as wide an audience as possible (see [more](#)).

3.9. How to Make a Complaint

Comments and complaints provide us with an opportunity to examine the quality of our services and to actively address any issues that have been raised.

If a customer or resident has a complaint against the County Council about the services we provide, including services delivered by external providers on the Council's behalf, they can complain through the Corporate Complaints Procedure. This can include discrimination complaints. A copy of the procedure is available from the Customer Relations Team, Resources Group, Warwickshire County Council, PO Box 9, Shire Hall, Warwick, CV34 4RR, or by telephoning the team on 01926 410410. Alternatively, it can be found on our website: www.warwickshire.gov.uk

If an employee feels they have been discriminated against, harassed or victimised by a colleague, they should consult the Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure.

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17/04/2022	09/04/2022	09/04/2025	EDI team	EDI practitioner