

# Accessibility Statement

## ‘Corporate Commitment’

The County Council commits itself to the general principles of fairness and equality and seeks to apply these principles by challenging and eliminating discrimination where it exists.

As an indication of WCC’s commitment, our core purpose for the future is to ‘develop and sustain a society that looks after its most vulnerable members, delivers appropriate, quality services at the right time, and seeks opportunities for economic growth and innovation’. Central to this aim is our commitment towards ensuring;

- Our communities and individuals are safe and protected from harm and are able to remain independent for longer
- The health and wellbeing of all in Warwickshire is protected
- Our economy is vibrant, residents have access to jobs, training and skills development
- Warwickshire’s communities are supported by excellent communications and transport infrastructure
- Resources and services are targeted effectively and efficiently whether delivered by the local authority, commissioned or in partnership

WCC also endorses the ‘social model’ of disability, which proposes that it is society which dictates who is excluded - not the nature of the disability itself. The model recognises that removing barriers is as much about encouraging positive attitudes and behaviour traits as it is about removing physical barriers. In developing this policy WCC acknowledges that the world is changing rapidly and that social interaction, teaching and learning and access to information, goods and resources is increasingly delivered electronically. WCC’s hope is that the technological revolution together with rates of progress in new developments can support us in removing barriers experienced by staff and service users with impairments and disabilities.

In addition to this, WCC recognises that others with protected characteristics may also experience similar barriers when either working for or accessing its services and will seek to address these inequalities also through this policy.

## Definition

A person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. A physical or mental impairment includes learning difficulties, mental health conditions, medical conditions and hidden impairments such as dyslexia, autism and speech, language and communication impairments (Equality Act 2010).

## Legislation

The Equality Act 2010 replaced existing equality legislation including the Disability Discrimination Act and others. Its function has been to simplify the law and bring together the duties and requirements within one piece of legislation. The Equality Act has introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (sometimes also referred to as the 'general duty') that applies to public bodies and which extends to all protected characteristics - race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment. The duty has three main elements. In carrying out their functions, public bodies are required to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act,
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it,
- foster good relations across all characteristics - between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The Equality Act 2010 requires reasonable adjustments to be made to ensure disabled people can access the following things:

1. education
2. employment
3. housing
4. goods and services like shops, banks, cinemas, hospitals, council offices, leisure centres
5. associations and private clubs like the Scouts and Guides, private golf clubs and working men clubs.

The duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people comprises a series of duties falling into three main areas, as follows: -

1. changing practices, policies and procedures;
2. providing auxiliary aids and services;
3. overcoming a physical feature by
  - (a) removing the feature; or
  - (b) altering it so it no longer discriminates; or
  - (c) provide a reasonable means of avoiding it; or
  - (d) provide a reasonable alternative method of making the services available.

**Services** - In order to meet the needs of our customers, Warwickshire County Council and its partners will provide services that are:

- Easily accessible
- Simple to use
- Streamlined
- Convenient
- Cost effective
- Reliable

Our Customer Vision is to make it easy for anyone living, visiting, working or studying in Warwickshire to access services where and when they need them. We will deliver a quality experience for all our customers, regardless of when or how they make contact and will offer appropriate and relevant and sustainable services that are joined up with other agencies.

We will focus on developing high quality digital services from beginning to end which will be easy to use and delivered a timely manner. Self-service will enable access to an increasing range of information and services available 24/7.

We do recognise that some of our customers have varying needs and or more complex needs and will continue to require our face to face and phone channels. We will assist these customers in accessing our services and will strive to gradually build their confidence, trust and skills enabling them to ultimately become self-serving.

<https://apps.warwickshire.gov.uk/api/documents/WCCC-1064-57>

### **Access in relation to;**

**Buildings** - The Facilities Support Service is responsible for the day to day upkeep of Warwickshire County Council's office complexes, they provide a varied service encompassing a wide variety of activities. The Disability Staff Network also influences the WCC disability duty and equality of access to services and opportunities within WCC for disabled people.

### **Information**

WCC aims to deliver strong compelling messages to key audiences in plain English and to communicate with our target audiences using their preferred methods.

<https://apps.warwickshire.gov.uk/api/documents/WCCC-1064-57>

On line - Accessibility of online services means providing reasonable access to online information, services and systems to all people, regardless of disability or the method they choose to access the information. Further details available via <http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/accessibility>

Interpreting and translation - We provide a face to face interpreting and document translation services for County Council service users who require an alternative method of communication. This also includes sign language and braille documents. <http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/interpreting>

## **Employment**

Warwickshire County Council values and encourages diversity in our workforce. As part of our aim to deliver quality services, we are committed to promoting equality and eliminating discrimination. WCC will provide equal opportunities for individuals who are disabled in relation to recruitment, education, training, promotion, transfer and terms and conditions of employment will;

- a) Ensure that disabled staff are given reasonable support, equipment and facilities necessary for them to carry out their duties successfully;
- b) Make reasonable adjustments to working arrangements and/or the physical working environment, where they disadvantage a disabled member of staff;
- c) Ensure that it follows statutory guidance with regards to defining what is 'reasonable'

## **Commissioned Services**

Through Warwickshire County Council's commissioning process we will ensure that those organisations who deliver services on our behalf share the same values and ethos as we do and that the services they deliver are equitable and accessible.