

SOUTH DERBYSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**Equality and Diversity Policy Statement, adopted by the Council on 16 October 2003**

South Derbyshire District Council's vision is to promote and enhance the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the community through the provision of cost effective, customer focused services. We recognise that an essential part of that aim is to ensure fair and equal access to Council services and employment opportunities.¹ We intend to promote equality and diversity for all regardless of such considerations as gender, race, ethnic or national origin, disability, family status, age, religious belief, class or sexuality.²

Our Commitment³

The Council is committed to equality and diversity as integral to everything we do, based on the principles of quality, leadership and community involvement. We are therefore committed to a comprehensive programme of action that will:

- (1) ensure all potential users enjoy equal access to our services
- (2) provide equal opportunities of employment with us, and of training and promotion in our workforce
- (3) promote equality and diversity within our community.

Aims of the Policy

In **service delivery⁴** it is our intention to:

- (1) provide services and information on services that are accessible to everyone in our community
- (2) consult with our community to identify needs and how to improve services to meet them
- (3) value diversity, treating all existing and potential service users with dignity and respect
- (4) maintain complaints procedures that are clear, responsive and timely
- (5) inform existing and potential service users of this Policy and its aims
- (6) apply this Policy through any contractors delivering services on our behalf
- (7) ensure ongoing monitoring and review of our services to measure progress in meeting these aims.

In **employment⁵** it is our intention to:

- (1) maintain fair employment, training and promotion processes that are based on merit
- (2) employ fair recruitment and selection procedures that are based on merit
- (3) develop a workforce whose diversity reflects that of our community
- (4) investigate thoroughly, promptly and confidentially any complaints of unfair treatment
- (5) develop, in consultation with our employees, fair and flexible employment practices

- (6) inform employees and potential employees of this Policy and its aims, and provide relevant training to employees and Elected Members
- (7) ensure ongoing monitoring and review of employment processes and levels to measure progress in meeting these aims.

In promoting equality and diversity⁶ it is our intention to:

- (1) promote the health and welfare of all sections of our community
- (2) listen to, represent, and provide leadership to the people of South Derbyshire
- (3) publicise this Policy throughout our community
- (4) work in partnership with other agencies to eliminate unlawful and/or unfair discrimination
- (5) aid the development of strong, self-sufficient communities within our district
- (6) ensure ongoing monitoring and review of our activities to measure progress in meeting these aims.

Responsibilities⁷

The Council, through its Elected Members, is responsible for adopting this Policy and overseeing its implementation.

The Directors and Managers are responsible for taking active steps to carry out and monitor the Policy, and for ensuring compliance by all Employees for whom they are responsible.

All Employees and Elected Members are responsible for complying with the Policy in all aspects of their work and behaviour.

Breaches⁸

Any alleged breaches of this Policy will be taken extremely seriously and will be subject to thorough investigation, which will lead to formal action where appropriate.

Legislation⁹

The Council will comply with all relevant legislation including, for example, the:

Disability Discrimination Act 1995	Disability Rights Commission Act 1999
Race Relations Act 1976	Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
Equal Pay Act 1970 (as amended)	Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (as amended)
Equal Pay (Amendment) Regulations 1983	Sex Discrimination Act 1986
Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999	
Sex Discrimination (Indirect Discrimination and Burden of Proof) Regulations 2001	

and any future amendments or additions to that legislation, together with all Codes of Practice issued by the Disability Rights Commission, Equal Opportunities Commission and Commission for Racial Equality (details of which are available on request).

Review¹⁰

The Council will review this Policy, subject to appropriate consultation, at least every three years.

Explanatory Notes to the Equality and Diversity Policy Statement:

1. The opening sentence links directly to the Council's vision for the future, as set out in our 2003 Corporate Plan. The second sentence reflects our recognition that we cannot achieve our vision, unless we ensure fair and equal access to our services and employment opportunities.
2. This sets out our clear intention to promote equality and diversity, and goes on to list, by way of example, certain types of discrimination including those that are currently unlawful or are expected to be made unlawful in the future (eg age and religious belief).
3. This is the Council's Statement of Commitment to a comprehensive equality and diversity policy. This commitment is fundamental to our equality and diversity agenda in recognising the need for equality "as integral to everything we do". It guarantees action that will achieve equal access to our services and employment opportunities, and promote equality and diversity within our wider community.
4. Although all aspects of the Council's commitment may be treated as equally important, we have grouped our service delivery aims first. After all, this is the Council's primary purpose. We have then listed what we see as the seven key elements of effective service delivery. These are:
accessible service provision & information; consultation; respect for diversity; responsiveness; communication; contractual influence; and monitoring & review.
5. Effective service delivery is impossible without a motivated workforce committed to the principles of equality, throughout the Council and our wider community. We have then listed what we see as the seven key elements essential to equality in terms of employment, training and promotion. These are:
fair employment processes; fair recruitment & selection procedures; representative diversity; responsiveness; internal consultation; communication & training; and monitoring & review.
6. Local authorities have a statutory general duty to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, promote equal opportunities, and encourage good race relations. We have widened this general duty to include the following six key elements:
promoting health and welfare (a key aim within the Council's 2003 Corporate Plan); listening, representing and leadership (another corporate key aim); publicity; partnership; aiding self-sufficiency; and monitoring & review.
7. Although this section on responsibilities could have been written in much greater detail, we have chosen to give brief *flavours* of where the different responsibilities lie:
with the Council as a whole and its Elected Members for making sure the policy happens; with Managers for implementing, monitoring and ensuring compliance with the policy; and with all Employees and Councillors for complying with the policy.
8. This brief paragraph is not intended to be particularly threatening, but simply to give an unambiguous message - both internally and externally - that the Council will simply not tolerate unlawful or unfair discrimination.
9. The list of statutory provisions is not intended to be exhaustive. It is more a general commitment to comply with all relevant equalities legislation and codes of practice. We then quote examples of the most obvious.
10. It is important that the policy should be seen as a living document. We will therefore review the policy at least every three years to reflect future legislation, guidance and local circumstances, and to ensure on-going involvement by members of our local community. All such reviews will of course be subject to consultation, within the Council and throughout our wider community.

Consultation List

Local Partners and other Relevant Organisations

Age Concern
Burton upon Trent Chamber of Commerce & Industry
Churches Together in Swadlincote & District
Coalfields Regeneration Trust
Community Legal Service
Community Transport (Swadlincote)
CREST
Dales & South Primary Care Trust
DCIL
Derbyshire Association for the Blind
Derbyshire Association of Local Councils
Derbyshire Community Foundation
Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service
Derbyshire Learning & Skills Council
Derbyshire Youth Offending Service
East Midlands Black & Minorities Voluntary Sector Forum
East Staffordshire Racial Equality Council
Local Disabilities Focus Group
Made in Swadlincote Partnership
National Forest Company Ltd
National Probation Service
Need to Know Centre
North West Leicestershire District Council
Old Post Regeneration Association (OPRA)
People Express
South Derbyshire Access Group
South Derbyshire After Care Project
South Derbyshire Citizens Advice Bureau
South Derbyshire Community Learning Disability Team
South Derbyshire Council for Voluntary Service
South Derbyshire Mental Health Association
South Derbyshire Racial Equality Council
South Derbyshire Advocacy Service
South Derbyshire Chamber
Swadlincote Chamber of Trade & Commerce
Youth Information Shop

Derbyshire Equalities Forum

Amber Valley Borough Council
Bolsover District Council
Chesterfield Borough Council
Derby City Council
Derbyshire County Council
Derbyshire Dales District Council
Erewash Borough Council