

# **Cheltenham Borough Council**

## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

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## **1. Introduction and purpose of the policy**

- 1.1 Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) is committed to promoting equality, embracing diversity, and fostering an inclusive environment for all customers, employees, partners, and communities. We believe that everyone should be treated with dignity and respect and have equal opportunities to access our housing services, employment, and community support, regardless of their background, identity, or circumstances.
- 1.2 This policy outlines our approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and how it underpins our vision to be a landlord of choice, employer of choice, and a key partner in delivering better outcomes for the people of Cheltenham. It also sets out how Cheltenham Borough Council will tackle inequality and foster an inclusive workplace and inclusive communities, as the borough continues to grow, develop, create new opportunities and be a key partner in delivering better outcomes for everyone in Cheltenham.
- 1.3 The policy should be considered alongside other key documents which set out the expectations and requirements of everyone who works for the council.

## **2. Aims and scope of the policy**

- 2.1 We will work with our partners to create fairer opportunities for everyone in the borough. We will support residents of Cheltenham, tenants, leaseholders, service users and council employees to fulfil their potential, treating all members of our diverse community with respect and actively involving people from all groups in shaping the decisions that affect the services they receive, the places they live in or the organisation in which they work.
- 2.2 The policy explains the expectations on our workforce, as we work together to design and deliver services to create a vibrant and inclusive borough. The policy applies to all who represent the Council in any capacity including elected members (councillors), employees, volunteers, agency workers, contractors and consultants. The policy also applies to suppliers, sub-contractors and partners in our supply chain and to all those who live and work in or visit Cheltenham.
- 2.3 The diagram below shows how this policy relates to other key policies and strategies.



### 3. Defining equality, diversity and inclusion

We define an equal and inclusive borough as one where all residents, tenants and leaseholders, service users, council employees and elected members are supported to fulfil their potential, are treated equally with respect and are actively involved in shaping the decisions that will affect their workplace and wider community.



#### Equal outcomes

We will treat everyone fairly and equally, so that our employees, tenants, leaseholders, partners and communities have the same opportunities, regardless of their protected characteristics or socio-economic status. To do this, we will move beyond treating 'everyone the same' and instead make sure that we meet the different needs of individuals and groups. This is essential to address discrimination and disadvantage in an unequal society.



#### Respect

We will treat everyone with dignity and respect. "Respect" can be defined as having due regard for a person's feelings and wishes. Negative behaviours such as discrimination, harassment and intimidation undermine people's dignity, prevent equality and reinforce disadvantage.



### **Diversity**

We will appreciate the value of differences between individuals and groups. We will celebrate the rich diversity, culture and heritage of our community and work with our partners to ensure that everyone in Cheltenham can safely express their views, religion, beliefs, feelings and wishes. Promoting the benefits of a diverse community helps to break down barriers and negative attitudes created through lack of understanding and misinformation and helps to promote social cohesion and good community relations. By embracing diversity, we can draw on a range of lived experience to make better decisions and serve communities more effectively.



### **Inclusion**

Inclusion is about creating environments where everyone feels valued and respected. We will support communities from across the protected groups to actively participate in community life and to influence decision-making. We will support disadvantaged groups to have the opportunity to help shape policy and service changes which will affect them.

## **4. Meeting our legal and statutory responsibilities**

4.1 Protection from unlawful discrimination is provided by the Equality Act (2010) in relation to the following nine protected characteristics:



Age



Disability



Gender reassignment



Marriage and civil partnership



Pregnancy and maternity



Race



Religion or belief



Sex



Sexual orientation

4.2 In addition, the Act contains an integrated Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which requires all public bodies and private bodies that deliver a public function, to consider the needs of protected groups which designing and delivering services. As a local authority Cheltenham Borough Council has a legal duty to comply with the PSED which requires us to:

- 1) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- 2) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 3) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

4.3 Having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- 1) Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to protected characteristics.
- 2) Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- 3) Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

4) Tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between different communities.

4.4 Cheltenham Borough Council is committed to fulfilling our Public Sector Equality Duty. Direct and/or indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation will not be tolerated within the workplace, or in the way we deliver services or carry out our functions and duties. The Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity, eliminating unlawful discrimination and promoting community cohesion throughout the borough. We will seek to protect the right of everyone not to be discriminated against and work to ensure equality of opportunity for all, so that each person is supported to realise their potential.

4.5 The council is going beyond its statutory duties under the 2010 Equality Act by seeking to also implement the Act's socio-economic duty (Part 1 Section<sup>1</sup>).

4.6 We commit to treating everyone equally regardless of socio-economic status and will work to eliminate discrimination and disadvantage caused by a person's socio-economic status.

4.7 The council is also a signatory to the Gloucestershire Armed Forces Community Covenant which complements, at a local level, the armed forces covenant, outlining the moral obligation between the nation, the government and the armed forces.

## **5. Our approach and commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion**

5.1 Cheltenham Borough Council is committed to ensuring equality, fairness, inclusion, and good relations are at the heart of everything we do. We therefore aim to drive supportive changes making Cheltenham a better place to live, work and visit for everyone.

5.2 To support our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion the Council will:

- a) Comply with and embrace equality law and good practice, which includes carrying out our public sector duties to promote equality.
- b) Regularly monitor and assess the impact of our policies, services, and functions to ensure they are fair and reflect people's different needs and opinions.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 1 of the Equality Act, the socio-economic duty, requires public bodies to adopt transparent and effective measures to address the inequalities that result from differences in occupation, education, place of residence or social class (the additional characteristics not explicitly covered by the Public Sector Equality Duty). Although implemented in Scotland, the UK Government has not commenced the duty in England – so local authorities are not bound by it. However, the council is committed to treating everyone equally regardless of socio-economic status and will work to eliminate discrimination and disadvantage caused by a person's socio-economic status

- c) Take a zero-tolerance approach to hate crime, investigate and work in partnership with the Police and Victim Support when hate incidents are reported to the council.
- d) Celebrate diversity and support campaigns for greater equality and awareness.
- e) Make equality and consideration of diversity a part of our everyday business.

5.2 Equality is the responsibility of every councillor, employee of Cheltenham Borough Council, and any other person or organisation employed by the council to work or to deliver services on its behalf, including those employed through contractual, commissioning or grant-aided arrangements.

5.3 Equality, diversity and inclusion are central to the decisions we make on how to deliver the best possible outcomes for our communities at a time of considerable financial challenge for the local authority. We will continue to use our limited resources smartly and our workforce will continue to maintain high standards in policy making, employment practice and service delivery to support all those who live, learn, work in or visit Cheltenham in the most effective and efficient way possible, to tackle inequality and discrimination and promote equality, diversity and inclusion in all that we do.

5.4 The council is also committed to being a fair and supportive employer, developing the skills and talent within our workforce so that employees are able to deliver high quality services to everyone.

5.5 The Council is committed to raising awareness across the workforce by providing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training to all colleagues and third parties who represent the organisation.

5.6 Our EDI Advocates make sure that the issues or groups they support are considered when making council policies and decisions. They give a voice to underrepresented groups or important issues.

## **6. How we will support our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion**

6.1 The council as a community leader will:

1. Comply with and embrace equality law and good practice, which includes carrying out our public sector duties to promote equality
2. Regularly monitor and assess the impact of our policies, services and functions to ensure they are fair and reflect people's different needs and opinions
3. Use our influence with our partners and businesses to generate opportunities in the borough

4. Celebrate diversity and support campaigns for greater equality and awareness
  5. Make equality and consideration of diversity a part of our everyday business. To do this we will expect all our councillors, employees and contractors to:
    - a) Treat everyone with courtesy, dignity and respect at all times.
    - b) Provide the best possible standards of service and value for money to residents and communities.
    - c) Consider the needs and opinions of every community.
    - d) Facilitate the use of pronouns in our communications.
  6. Promoting diversity, preventing inequality and tackling discrimination is not solely the responsibility of the council. We will also work with wider partnerships to promote an equal and inclusive approach across the whole of the Borough
- 6.2 We cannot reduce inequality alone and so we ask all our residents, communities, service users and partners to support us by also committing to treating council employees, elected members, and all those who live in, work in, learn in or visit Cheltenham with respect and fairness.
- 6.3 We ask that:
- a) Service users do not use language or physical actions of any form that could demean, distress or offend council employees or elected members. Threats of violence against a member of staff, an elected member or our partners will not be tolerated. Legal action may be taken against any person using or threatening violence.
  - b) Cheltenham's residents and visitors treat each other with mutual respect and open mindedness. It is important to respect different religions, cultures, beliefs and lifestyles.
  - c) Cheltenham's residents and visitors continue to demonstrate respect and tolerance for others when using online forums. Threatening or abusive language is not acceptable online or in person.
- 6.4 The council as a service provider and commissioner will:
- a) Provide guidance to employees about how to include equality, diversity and inclusion in procurement and commissioning processes
  - b) Consider equality of access in service delivery
  - c) Routinely carry out an equality impact assessment (EQIA) to consider the impact that any prospective changes to policy or service delivery may have on different protected groups and take action to mitigate against any unequal impact. This process will also be used to ensure we are taking every opportunity to advance equality
  - d) Ensure contractors, suppliers and partners are aware of what the council expects in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion and understand that they

must provide services that are free from harassment, discrimination, or victimisation

- e) Ensure that the tendering processes include equality, diversity and inclusion as part of the selection criteria

6.5 We ask that:

- a) All contractors and suppliers ensure that they are aware of the council's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and take responsibility for promoting EDI and challenging discrimination

6.6 The council as an employer will:

- a) Be an organisation where local people choose to work and develop good careers, where employees from different backgrounds work together harmoniously and productively and everyone feels valued
- b) Use policies and practices that demonstrably enable employees to fulfil their potential and progress within our organisation
- c) Tackle unacceptable behaviour in the workplace
- d) Reward all employees fairly and provide employment conditions which support them to do a good job
- e) Regularly review and update the council's human resources policies (including those relating to recruitment, learning and development and employee relations) to ensure that they are inclusive and accessible for all employees, regardless of protected characteristics
- f) Provide reasonable and timely adjustments for employees to allow them to work effectively and access any services or support they may require
- g) Promote a good work-life balance and opportunities to work flexibly
- h) Support disabled employees by making reasonable adjustments
- i) Monitor and publish the make-up of our workforce as required by the specific public sector equality duty
- j) Provide training and support to enable employees to manage and/or work within a diverse workforce
- k) Address any unfair treatment in the workplace relating to any of the protected characteristics

6.7 The council's Leadership Team will be responsible for overall management and direction of its equality, diversity and inclusion commitments.

6.8 We ask that:

- a) All managers ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are core to service delivery, employee management and employee wellbeing, evidenced by discussions in annual appraisals

- b) All employees ensure that they are aware of the council's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and take responsibility for promoting EDI and challenging discrimination.

## 7. Equal Access to Housing services and support

- 7.1 Cheltenham Borough Council is committed to ensuring that every tenant can access safe, fair and inclusive housing services. We believe everyone should be treated with dignity and respect and have equal opportunities to secure and sustain a home, regardless of their background or protected characteristics.
- 7.2 How we provide fair accessible housing services:
- Work closely with partners and agencies to make sure people who may be at risk of discrimination or disadvantage receive the right support.
  - Applying our Housing Options Protocol to ensure consistent and fair decision-making.
  - Working with specialist services to provide tailored help where needed. Our approach supports the council's legal duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.
  - Through projects such as Housing First, we offer intensive, person-centred support to people who face multiple barriers to accessing stable housing. We also work with countywide partners to ensure places of safety for people fleeing domestic abuse or violence, recognising that everyone has the right to live free from harm.
- 7.3 We are committed to ensuring that residents with protected characteristics receive timely, reasonable adjustments and accessible support so they can live in their homes as easily and confidently as anyone else. Our partnerships with community and specialist services help us remove barriers, challenge discrimination and promote inclusion across all our housing services
- 7.4 **Our Community EDI Achievements:** CBC's Community Investment Team use IMD data, local insight and customer feedback to deliver community projects that support our commitment to equality and inclusion across the town.
- 7.5 Promotion- we use accessible language and do targeted promotion to harder to reach groups
- 7.6 Partnerships- we work with partners, such as inclusion Gloucestershire and Barnwood Trust to exchange expertise.
- 7.7 Venue- we use accessible venues and support tenants with transportation. We work with partners to bring their services to the heart of our communities.
- 7.8 Feedback- we gather regular feedback at our sessions

7.9 Targeted projects to address specific needs- such as Men's group, Inclusion hub, Health and Wellbeing project,

7.10 Some of the projects within the community include:

- Mild learning difficulties training project with the Training and Employment Team
- the Art Therapy Project around healthy relationships for Inclusion Hub
- Graffiti project targeted at young, isolated people 18 plus at Scott and Edward Wilson House
- Gardening groups across the town which support people with mental ill health including Monkscroft Action Group, St Pauls Hub, Popes Close and Bush court gardening groups.
- Working in partnership with Cheltenham Welcomes Refugee's to encourage community Inclusion.
- The CBC Training and Employment team provide support and training often targeting hard to reach groups to support with literacy skills training volunteering and apprenticeships.
- The CBC Benefits and Money Advice team provide support for people who are impacted and discriminated against because of their socioeconomic status.

## **8. Using data to inform our work – making fair decisions**

8.1 Every day, decisions are made within the council that affect the lives and relationships of local people, service users and employees. Equality analysis and impact assessments will be used as a tool to help us make fair, sound and transparent decisions that are based on a robust understanding of the needs and rights of the groups and individuals who may be affected.

8.2 The council's assessment process ensures that equality analysis is exercised in such a way that influences the final decision. It will also be used to identify positive actions that will mitigate any negative effects of our decisions or enhance any benefits for protected groups and others at risk of disadvantage.

### **Equality Impact Assessment in Regulatory Decision Making (Planning and Licensing)**

8.3 An equality assessment (whether through the planning process, prescribed screening or a full Equalities Impact Assessment) is a tool to enable decision makers to consider the needs and effects of a particular planning application on people with protected characteristics. Equality assessments (EqIA/screening) enable openness, transparency and early engagement in the development process.

8.4 Screening identifies planning applications that are likely to have an impact on protected characteristics and helps to draw considerations of equality into the decision-making process for planning and licensing applications. It is one of the

methods by which the necessary level of “due regard” is demonstrated as being paid to the statutory equality duty.

- 8.5 Screening should be proportionate to enable the Council to assess the level of relevance that a proposed development/licence has to the statutory duty not to discriminate and to the public sector equality duty (i.e. the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality 2010 Act, advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding ) and should enable consideration of removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics, making reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people, including steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.
- 8.6 Screening must be considered by the decision maker before and at the time that a particular decision is being considered, and not afterwards.
- 8.7 When considering planning or licensing applications, the Local Planning Authority/Council as part of the determination process gathers information it requires to assess and determine the application, including the relevant equality impacts or opportunities, and where it has received sufficient information, will determine the impacts on equality if any as part of the application process.
- 8.8 Where the application process does not provide an adequate means of gathering information regarding equality impact or opportunity, the application will be screened in accordance with the Council's prescribed manner and processes for screening applicable at the time.
- 8.9 Where appropriate in accordance with the screening exercise, an EqIA will be undertaken regarding the relevant planning application.”

### **Benchmarking**

- 8.10 We will aim to benchmark our approach using the following resources:
- The council participates in Local Government Association (LGA) peer reviews. The feedback from the LGA peer reviews is used to improve our approach to equalities, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and to the services we provide

- The council is a Disability Confident employer, and we aim to use our staff equality monitoring data to benchmark ourselves against other district councils

## **Equality information**

- 8.11 Whenever relevant to do so we will collate, analyse, interpret and publish information about equality and diversity in the workforce, service delivery and our communities. This information will be used in equality analysis to:
- Inform our service planning, policy development and decision-making process
  - Understand the impact of policies, practices and decisions on people with different protected characteristics, and to plan them more effectively
  - Help identify key equality issues
  - Develop and monitor our equality objectives
  - Identify ways of improving performance
  - Demonstrate compliance with the Equality Duty
- 8.12 When we ask employees and service-users to provide information about their personal characteristics, this will only be done where the information is relevant to the aims of the equality duty – for example if there are known inequalities in relation to a particular outcome or service. The council will always make it clear that disclosure of sensitive information (e.g., sexual orientation, gender orientation, religion, or belief) is optional and not compulsory.
- 8.13 However, without gathering some form of evidence, it may be difficult to monitor the impact of policies and procedures on certain protected groups. The council will aim to overcome this by creating a culture of trust whereby individuals are comfortable disclosing such information.
- 8.14 The council will uphold its duty to protect an individual’s right to privacy and will not publish information that could identify an individual. Nor will the information be used to identify an individual or make a decision about them purely on the grounds of the information that has been provided in relation to their protected characteristics.

## **Cheltenham borough council – equality data**

- 8.15 Inform Gloucestershire provides a valuable source of information about the people of Cheltenham borough. It has an interactive website designed to provide a ‘one stop shop’ of information and holds information profiles for the whole of Gloucestershire and snapshots of each of the boroughs electoral wards including protected characteristics of the borough. The protected characteristics for Cheltenham can be found at:

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/inform/equality-and-diversity/interactive-report/>

## **9 Making our services accessible and easy to use**

- 9.1 We constantly strive to deliver services that are easily accessible by all who need them, and to support people to participate in public life. This in turn will help us achieve our duty to foster good relations between different groups and individuals. We are committed to listening to our residents, service users and customers to develop an understanding of how we can break down barriers and better meet their needs. This may involve making adjustments to the way we deliver services where it is reasonable to do so.
- 9.2 We will make sure that everyone has the information they need about our services. We will aim to provide all information in plain English and will provide alternative formats on request.
- 9.3 We are committed to engaging effectively with local people, community groups and other stakeholders. We will actively seek their views about the council and the services they receive, as well as involving them in shaping services and local decision making.

## **10 Protecting people**

- 10.1 Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults is everybody's business, wherever they work and whatever they do for the council. This includes staff, elected members and people who work for organisations that provide services on behalf of the council. We will endeavour to ensure all employees and elected members are aware of our safeguarding responsibilities and receive the appropriate training in safeguarding awareness.
- a. The council is committed to working in partnership to ensure that hate crime is not tolerated within our communities and neighbourhoods. Hate crime is motivated because of prejudice, hostility or hatred towards a person, family or groups because of their sexuality, gender identity, disability, ethnicity, religion or faith. It can include physical attacks to either a person or their property, threats, verbal abuse and insults. Nobody should suffer because of who they are, and nobody should put up with it. We aim to continue to encourage and promote trusting relationships giving people to confidence to speak up when they feel they have been a victim of hate crime or other forms of abuse.
- b. We are also working with our partners to tackle domestic abuse and sexual violence and have developed a county wide strategy to ensure that all residents in the borough have a fundamental right to live their lives in an

environment which will not tolerate domestic violence, will support victims/survivors and will hold perpetrators accountable for their actions.

## **11 Implementing this policy**

- 11.1 The Council recognises that leadership, ownership and commitment by elected members and staff, with adequate resources allocated, are essential for this policy to be effective.
- 11.2 We understand that identifying and taking action is a key to mainstreaming equality and we will therefore deliver our commitments through our equality action plan.

## **12 Governance**

- 12.1 Once formally agreed this policy will form part of the Council's policy framework.

**Councillors represent the views of their communities and bring their views into the council's decision-making process in their role as community leaders.**

**The Leadership Team will provide visible leadership on equality ensuring it is embedded into policy, strategy, service delivery, our culture and behaviours as well as ensuring that the Council is meeting its duty under the Act.**

**A lead director will working with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advocates group to oversee the delivery of the equality action plan and will report to the leadership team and councillors on performance and progress.**

**All members of our workforce are responsible for delivering services, working with our communities and working with one another in accordance with the council's policies and procedures in regard to tackling inequality and promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion. Senior officers throughout the council are responsible for ensuring that everyone who works for Cheltenham Borough Council follows this policy in all aspects of their work.**

## **13 Monitoring and review**

- 13.1 This equality, diversity and inclusion policy will be periodically reviewed and updated to reflect changing needs, new strategies or organisational restructure.
- 13.2 Progress in delivering on our equalities objectives will be subject to ongoing review and the objectives themselves will be reviewed and updated in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

- 13.3 Progress made towards achieving our equalities objectives will be assessed annually by the Leadership Team.
- 13.4 As part of our Public Sector Equality Duty, we will publish equalities information, including progress on equalities targets; and include our workforce review which outlines the makeup of our workforce by ethnicity, age, disability and gender. The information will show how these groups are represented across different pay scales and includes the annual gender pay gap report.
- 13.5 Equality impact assessments (EQIAs) are used to monitor the equality impact of all key decisions, including by assessing whether groups are disproportionately affected by changes to policy or services and identifying action we will take as a result to mitigate this.

## **14 Roles and Responsibilities**

- 14.1 Equality is the responsibility of every Councillor, employee of, Cheltenham Borough Council and any other person or organisation employed by the Council to work or to deliver services on its behalf.
- Elected Members: Should ensure EDI is considered in policy and decision-making processes.
  - Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team (SLT): Accountable for delivering equality objectives across all services.
  - EDI Advocates Group: Comprising cross party councillors and officers and CBC colleagues Advocates group will oversee this policy and monitor the extent to which we are achieving our commitments.
  - Policy and Governance Team: Support the delivery of the EDI Policy, report on progress made against the annual action plan and ensure equality initiatives, such as EIAs, are embedded in project management and council decision making.
  - HR: Lead efforts to promote a diverse workforce, ensure inclusive recruitment practices, and monitor representation.
  - Procurement team: Ensure suppliers meet EDI objectives and implement fair practices.

## **15 Acting when things go wrong**

- 15.1 As a council we aim to apply the highest equality and inclusion standards, however, despite the best intentions sometimes things can go wrong.
- 15.2 People have the right to complain about either a service they have received from us, a contractor that provides services on our behalf, or their experience in the workplace. The council has a formal complaints procedure for service users and a grievance procedure for employees.

- 15.3 The council takes all complaints seriously and actively encourages people to voice their concern when things go wrong, so that the issue can be addressed and lessons can be learnt. Responding to and learning from complaints will form a key part of the council's drive for better local services.
- 15.4 We do not tolerate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation and will take decisive and appropriate action against people found in breach of this policy. Employees found in breach of this policy may be liable to disciplinary action including dismissal.

Thank you for taking the time to read our equality, diversity and inclusion policy; we hope you found it interesting.

If you would like to find out more about our plans and services, how we are doing and how to get involved, please visit our website [www.cheltenham.gov.uk](http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk)

### **Useful links and reference**

[Equality Framework for Local Government | Local Government Association](#)

[Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK](#)

[Disability rights: Overview - GOV.UK](#)

[Homepage | Stonewall](#)

[Pride in Gloucestershire](#)

[Neurodiversity Support UK](#)

[Refugee Support | Gloucestershire County Council](#)

## Appendix 1 – Glossary

### A

**Accessibility:** The design, development or state of physical or digital environments, resources and services that are easy to reach, enter, use, see, etc. for all users.

**Age:** This refers to a person having a particular age (for example, 32-year-olds) or being within an age group (for example, 18–30-year-olds).

### B

**Belief:** see Religion and belief

**Bi:** An attraction towards more than one gender. Bi people may also describe themselves as bisexual, pansexual, bi-curious, queer, and other non-monosexual identities.

**Bi-cultural:** Bicultural identity is the condition of being oneself regarding the combination of two cultures.

**Bias:** Systematic patterns where our brains stray from rationality in judgment which can result in attitudes for or against a person, group or concept especially in a way considered to be unfair.

**Black:** A broad term for all people with ethnic origins in the African continent. Less commonly this term is used to refer to all people around the world who are not of white European descent. Note that we encourage capitalising Black (when you are talking about race).

**Black Lives Matter:** A political and social movement originating among African Americans, emphasizing basic human rights and racial equality for Black people and campaigning against various forms of racism. Abbreviations: BLM, B.L.M.

**BME, BAME ME:** An acronym that stands for black [and Asian] & minority ethnic. Though generally accepted, as with people of colour (see below), there's been some pushback to these terms in recent years for being too reductionist and too inclusive. By reductionist we mean it reduces the nuanced and complex experiences of an individual to an overly simplistic, broad term. Minority Ethnic (ME). Is less common but has been used in recent Scottish government policy documents in relation to EDI.

## C

**Civil partnership:** Legal recognition of a same-sex couple's relationship. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a range of legal matters.

### **Cisgender / cis**

A term that can be used to describe people whose gender identity corresponds to the sex registered at birth. Non-trans or not transgender can also be used.

## D

**Direct discrimination:** This refers to less favourable treatment because of a person's protected characteristic.

**Disability:** A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

**Diversity:** Diversity is recognising and valuing that individuals are unique each having their own values, beliefs, attitude, culture, racial background, sexuality, skills and life experience.

## E

**Engagement:** A broad term, intended to cover the whole range of ways in which public authorities interact with their service users and their employees, over and above what they do in providing services or within a formal employment relationship.

**Equality:** Equality means treating everyone with fairness and respect and recognising the needs of individuals.

**Equality analysis:** Equality analysis involves looking at your equality information and the outcome of your engagement in order to understand the effect or potential effect of your decisions on different protected groups. The general equality duty does not specify how public authorities should analyse the effect of their policies and practices on equality.

**Equality information:** The information that you have (or that you will collect) about people with protected characteristics that will help you to show compliance with the equality duty.

This will include the findings of engagement with protected groups and others and the effect of your policies on protected groups. It includes both qualitative and quantitative information, as well as evidence of analysis you have undertaken.

**Equality objectives:** A requirement to prepare, set and publish objectives is one of the specific duties set out under the equality duty. An authority's objectives should aim to further one or more aims of the equality duty.

**Equality outcome:** The results that individuals or groups actually achieve and are able to benefit from. For example, equal pay between men and women.

## F

**Fostering good relations:** The Equality Act 2010 states that having due regard to the need to fostering good relations involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

**Function:** The full range of a public authority's activities, duties and powers.

## G

**Gender reassignment:** This is the process of transitioning from one sex to another. See also trans, transgender, transsexual.

Gender or Gender identity

Often expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity, gender is largely culturally determined and is assumed from the sex assigned at birth. A person's gender identity is an innate sense of their own gender, which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth. (Source: Stonewall: List of LGBTQ+ Terms)

Gender neutral

Often used to refer to non-gendered facilities (e.g. gender neutral toilets) as well as non-discriminatory, neutral language that may be used instead of gendered language and pronouns. For example, when referring to people, gender neutral language would tend to use 'they', 'them' or 'their' rather than 'she/he', 'hers/his' etc. (Source:

**General duty:** The requirement to show due regard to the need to 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; and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

**Global Majority:** shortened version of the term 'people of the global majority', used to refer to all ethnic groups except white British and other white groups, including white minorities. This includes people from black, Asian, mixed, and other ethnic groups who are often racialised as 'ethnic minorities'.

## H

**Harassment:** Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It may also involve unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or be related to gender reassignment or sex.

## I

**Inclusion:** Inclusion is the result of welcoming, respecting, supporting, involving, valuing and empowering those around you equally.

**Indirect discrimination:** This is when a provision, criterion or practice is applied in a way that creates disproportionate disadvantage for a person with a protected characteristic as compared to those who do not share that characteristic and is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

### Intersectionality

A theory coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, an American civil rights activist, intersectionality refers to the intertwining of social identities like gender, race, ethnicity, social class, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity that causes unique opportunities, barriers, experiences or social inequality

## L

### Learning disabilities and learning differences

A learning disability is a reduced intellectual ability and difficulty with everyday activities which affects someone for their whole life.

People with a learning disability tend to take longer to learn and may need support to develop new skills, understand complicated information and interact with other people.

### LGBTQ+

Acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer. The Q generally stands for queer when LGBTQ organizations, leaders, and media use the acronym.

## M

**Marriage:** a formal union and social and legal contract between two individuals that unites their lives legally, economically, and emotionally.

**Maternity:** The period after giving birth. It is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, including as a result of breastfeeding.

**Mitigation:** This is when measures are put in place that lessen the negative effects of a policy or policies on protected groups. For example, delivering a service by telephone alone may cause problems for those with a language barrier. Rather than changing the way the service is delivered, this could be mitigated by using telephone interpreting services.

### **Marginalised**

A term to describe communities that may have societal disadvantages placed upon them, often based on their identity or social class.

### **Minority ethnic**

Minority ethnic refers to individuals and groups who are in the minority within a larger population based on certain characteristics and who are often subject to differential treatment.

### **Misgendering**

Misgendering' is the term used when someone refers to a trans person using terms linked to the gender they were assigned at birth, instead of their real gender (for example by using terms like 'man', 'woman' or using pronouns incorrectly).

## **N**

### **Neurodiversity / neurodivergent**

Being neurodivergent means that an individual may think and learn in a different way to others. Neurodiversity has a wide spectrum that covers a range of hidden neurological conditions, such as but not limited to autism spectrum, dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD, Tourette's and social anxiety.

### **Nonbinary / gender non-conforming**

These are broad terms used by and to refer to some people who experience their gender identity and/or gender expression as falling outside the binary categories of man and woman.

## **P**

**Positive action:** Lawful actions that seeks to overcome or minimise disadvantages that people who share a protected characteristic have experienced, or to meet their different

needs (for example, providing mentoring to encourage staff from under-represented groups to apply for promotion).

**Pregnancy:** The condition of being pregnant.

**Protected characteristics:** The equality duty covers the following characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. These are also referred to as protected groups. The duty also covers marriage and civil partnerships, but not for all aspects of the duty.

**Protected groups:** see Protected characteristics above

**Public authority:** The general equality duty applies to public authorities. For this purpose, a public authority is a body that is named (listed) or described in Schedule 19 of the Equality Act. It also applies to other organisations who exercise public functions. This includes private bodies or voluntary organisations which are carrying out public functions on behalf of a public authority. Public functions: The Equality Act 2010 defines a public function as a function that is of a public nature for the purposes of the Human Rights Act 1998.

## R

**Race:** This is the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins.

**Reasonable adjustment:** Public authorities making adjustments to the way in which they carry out their functions so that disabled people are not disadvantaged by the way in which those functions are carried out. This is with regard to policies, practices or procedures, premises, and the provision of auxiliary aids or services.

**Relevance:** How far a function or policy affects people, as members of the public, and as employees of the authority. Some functions may be more relevant to some protected groups than to others, and to one or more of the three elements of the general equality duty. The function or policy may still be relevant if the numbers affected by it are very small.

**Religion or belief:** Religion means any religion, including a reference to a lack of religion. Belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (for example,

Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included

## S

**Seldom Heard:** The term 'seldom-heard groups' refers to under-represented people who use or might potentially use services and who are less likely to be heard by these service professionals and decision-makers. These groups used to be described as hard to reach – suggesting that there is something that prevents their engagement with services. Seldom heard emphasises the responsibility of agencies to reach out to excluded people, ensuring that they have access to services and that their voices can be heard, and is preferred for those reasons.

Examples of seldom heard groups could include:

- Particular ethnic minority groups
- Carers
- People with disabilities
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer people
- Refugees/asylum seekers
- People who are homeless
- Younger people
- People with language barriers

To summarise, it is anyone who is under-served. These people may have particular needs when it comes to participating.

**Sex:** Someone being a man or a woman.

**Sexual orientation:** This is whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

**Specific duties:** Certain public authorities named or described (listed) in Schedule 1 of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) Regulations 2011 are required to comply with certain specific duties. These duties are intended to assist authorities in complying with the general equality duty.

**Stakeholders:** People with an interest in a subject or an issue who are likely to be affected by any decision relating to it and/or have responsibilities relating to it.

**Statutory Code of Practice:** A document which offers practical guidance on the law, has been approved by parliament and is admissible as evidence in a Court of law.

### **Sensory disability**

A sensory disability is a disability of the senses (for example, sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste)

### **Systemic/ structural / institutional racism**

Systemic/structural/institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups

## **T**

**Trans:** The terms ‘trans people’ and ‘transgender people’ are both often used as umbrella terms for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from their birth sex, including transsexual people (those who propose to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process of gender reassignment to live permanently in their acquired gender), transvestite/cross-dressing people (those who wear clothing traditionally associated with the other gender either occasionally or more regularly), androgyne / polygender people (those who have non-binary gender identities and do not identify as male or female), and others who define as gender variant.

**Transgender:** An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from their birth sex. They may or may not seek to undergo gender reassignment hormonal treatment/surgery. Often used interchangeably with trans.

**Transsexual:** A person who intends to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment (which may or may not involve hormone therapy or surgery). Transsexual people feel the deep conviction to present themselves in the appearance of the opposite sex. They may change their name and identity to live in the preferred gender. Some take hormones and have cosmetic treatments to alter their appearance and physical characteristics. Some undergo surgery to change their bodies to approximate more closely to their preferred gender. Transsexual people have the protected characteristic of gender reassignment under the Equality Act 2010. Under the Act, gender reassignment is a personal process rather than a medical one and it does not require someone to undergo medical treatment in order to be protected.

## V

**Victimisation:** Subjecting a person to a detriment because they have made a complaint of discrimination or are thought to have done so; or because they have supported someone else who has made a complaint of discrimination. Victimisation is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.