

**Warrington Borough Council
Equality & Diversity Policy
2012-2015**

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Foreword

Warrington Borough Council is committed to equality of opportunity and respect for diversity. We strive to promote fairness, cohesiveness and respect for the needs, views and wants of all - throughout the services we provide, our employment practices and the arrangements we enter into with our partners. We are committed to eliminating discrimination, and this is an ethos that is promoted at all levels of our organisation. In doing so, the Council will also meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

This policy summarises our approach to achieving this goal. It highlights our values, our key pledges to the residents of Warrington, and our commitment to equality and diversity. It reflects the ongoing work with partners to develop strong and active communities, and has been developed from research on the needs and aspirations of our communities.

The policy by no means covers all the actions that we will be carrying out over the next 3 years. These can be found throughout all the strategies, policies, plans and training programmes that the Council has. We hope it provides you with an insight into our vision for a cohesive, supportive and thriving community.

Councillor Terry O'Neill
Leader of Warrington Borough Council

Councillor Hitesh Patel
Executive Member for
Personnel and Communication

Diana Terris
Chief Executive of Warrington
Borough Council

Our vision

“Putting the people of Warrington first – enabling them to thrive now and in the future”

We are experiencing a time of great change and, like the whole of the public sector, we are having to deal with the reality of significant government cuts to the amount of money we have available to pay for services.

At the same time the economic, demographic and social challenges facing Warrington people and their communities have not disappeared. Now more than ever we need to be clear about what we hope to achieve with the reduced amount of public money available to us.

Despite the tight financial circumstances we remain ambitious for all the people of Warrington and want to work with them to enable them to thrive.

So we have made these pledges to our residents:

We pledge:
To protect the most vulnerable

We pledge:
To support the local economy

We pledge:
To help build strong and active communities for all

Our values

These core values will guide and inform our work:

- **Closing the gap**

We have committed to closing the equalities gap that exists within Warrington between the most deprived and other areas. We recognise that some areas and some people need more help than others and we will provide extra support to those people and communities.

- **Making the council more open and transparent**

We will publish and update equality information on the council web site www.warrington.gov.uk covering:

- information about equality characteristics in our community;
- equality information from our services; and
- the equality breakdown of our workforce

We will encourage formal and informal customer feedback and respond promptly and effectively to comments, compliments and complaints.

- **Living within our means**

We will make sure that when we are redesigning services and developing new policies, we minimise any negative impact on vulnerable people and ensure equality and diversity continues to be a core driver to improving service delivery.

To support these values we will prioritise the continual improvement of engagement activities with all our diverse communities – ensuring our residents are fully involved in strategy development, service design and improving service delivery.

Knowing our community*

Warrington has a mix of highly populated residential areas with industrial heritage, rural villages and affluent suburbs based around distinct community centres. The Annual Population Survey estimates the population to be around 198,900 residents. This population is projected to grow to 221,500 by 2033 (an increase of 12.9% since 2008 compared to 17.7% nationally).

Affluence and deprivation

A major issue for Warrington is gap in social outcomes between the most affluent, largely based in the south of the borough, and the most deprived, for example life expectancy, educational attainment and employment prospects. Low income is a contributing factor to the high levels of deprivation experienced in many of Warrington's inner wards.

Warrington's has 11 local community areas that fall within the most deprived 10% nationally. They have a combined population of 17,900, 9% of the total Warrington population. Borough-wide, however, Warrington has the 6th highest earnings in the UK, and the highest in the North West.

Age

Warrington currently has a relatively young population. However, the number of older people is projected to grow significantly by 2033. The number of children (aged 0 to 15) is projected to grow to 38,600 (increase of 2.1% since 2008 compared to 12.4% nationally). The number of people (aged 16 to 64) is projected to grow to 128,300 (increase of only 0.3% since 2008 compared to 7.4% nationally). The number of older people (aged 65 and over) is projected to grow significantly to 54,100 (increase of 79.7% since 2008 compared to 65% nationally).

Gender

Of Warrington's 198,000 residents, 50.5% are female (100,400) and 49.5% male (98,500).

Marriage and civil partnership

According to the 2001 census, of the 16+ population there are 82,810 married people (54.7% of the total), 15,615 divorced (10.3%), 11,991 widowed (7.9%) and 40,853 single people (27%).

Sexual orientation and gender reassignment

There is no statistically reliable data on the proportion of Warrington's residents who declare themselves as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender. However, in the 2010 Warrington Together survey 91% of residents described themselves as heterosexual, 1% as lesbian, gay or bisexual, and 8% did not respond.

Pregnancy and maternity

Between January and September 2011, there were 2,261 pregnant women in Warrington. For teenage pregnancy, on average there are 155 conceptions to females under the age of 18 in Warrington per year.

Disability

In November 2010, there were 11,120 claimants of Disability Living Allowance. This accounts for 5.6% of the total population, slightly above the national average of 5.2%. The rate of Incapacity Benefit Claimants has gradually decreased from 7.6% to 6.2% between 2005 and 2009, and currently stands at 5.6%.

Although life expectancy is improving, Warrington's males and females currently experience lower life expectancy than the average for England. There is also considerable variation within Warrington, with the more deprived wards experiencing substantially lower life expectancy.

Ethnicity and nationality

The majority of people who live in Warrington identify themselves as White British. 6.9% of the population describe themselves by other categories compared to 11.6% in the Northwest and 17.2% in England. The next largest group is 'Other White' estimated at 3,900 (2.0%) followed by 'Irish' and 'Indian' both estimated at 1,600 (0.8%) and 'Pakistani' estimated at 1,300 (0.7%).

According to the Annual Population Survey around 4.59% (approximately 9000) of residents identify themselves as non-UK nationals. In 2011 there were 990 school children educated in Warrington (3.63% of the total), who's first language was known or believed to be something other than English.

The table below shows the breakdown by ethnic groups.

	Warrington		Northwest	England and Wales
<i>Thousands</i>	Persons	% Persons	% Persons	% Persons
All Groups	197.8	100	100	100
White: British	184.2	93.1	88.4	83.3
White: Irish	1.6	0.8	1.0	1.0
White: Other White	3.9	2.0	2.2	3.5
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	0.6	0.3	0.4	0.6
Mixed: White and Black African	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2
Mixed: White and Asian	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.6
Mixed: Other Mixed	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.4
Asian or Asian British: Indian	1.6	0.8	1.6	2.6
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	1.3	0.7	2.1	1.8
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	0.3	0.2	0.6	0.7
Asian or Asian British: Other Asian	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.7
Black or Black British: Black Caribbean	0.4	0.2	0.4	1.1
Black or Black British: Black African	0.6	0.3	0.6	1.5
Black or Black British: Other Black	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group: Chinese	0.7	0.4	0.6	0.8
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group: Other	0.6	0.3	0.5	0.8

Source: Experimental Estimates by Ethnicity 2009, Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence v.1.0

Religion or belief

Most people describe themselves as Christian (82%), with 13% saying they have no religion or belief, and 2% describing themselves as Buddhist, Muslim, Sikh, Jewish or other.

* During the consultation period all figures will be further verified against other available data sources.

Our Pledges

We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity and respect for the diversity of everyone: in relation to the services we provide, our employment practices and the arrangements we enter into with our partners.

We pledge: To protect the most vulnerable

Warrington Borough Council is committed to protecting those people within our communities that are vulnerable to abuse, neglect or poor quality of life. We have long-standing partnership arrangements with many agencies throughout Warrington to safeguard children and adults, and we will continue to strengthen these relationships, working with local people to inform improvements in services and multi-agency working.

We will:

- Work with partners to protect the most vulnerable adults, children and young people.
- Enable children in care to be healthy, safe, enjoy and achieve.
- Promote healthy and active ageing and work with our partners and local people to improve healthy life expectancy.
- Enable disabled people and their families to choose their own care and support services.
- Lead on the prevention and reduction of hate crime.
- Work with our partners to reduce levels of poverty, with a particular focus on supporting our most deprived communities in the central areas of the borough.

We pledge: To support the local economy

As the economy continues to struggle, the residents of Warrington are finding it increasingly difficult to find and sustain employment. This is particularly true for our young people, but also for our over 50s. We have a responsibility as a community leader, employer and contractor of services to do all we can to support our local economy and promote local jobs for local people.

We will:

- Tackle youth unemployment by: working with others to create employment opportunities for school leavers; continuing to offer quality apprenticeships within Warrington Borough Council; and, supporting other employers in Warrington to promote apprenticeships.
- Encourage a diverse workforce that understands and responds to the needs of our communities, and ensure equality in all aspects of recruitment and employment through the *Council's Fair Employment Statement*.
- Embed equality and diversity within our contracting, commissioning and monitoring arrangements - promoting the use of local companies, providers and workers.

We pledge: To help build strong and active communities for all

Warrington has a strong record of community engagement and is proud of its thriving voluntary and community sector. But we also have a long history of unequal communities, with many living in the centre of our borough suffering disproportionately from a range of disadvantage including higher levels of deprivation, poor health, lower educational attainment and higher rates of unemployment. We recognise that some of our communities need extra help, and, along with our partners, we will align our services to help reduce this inequality gap.

We will:

- Focus our support on those communities in greatest need, helping people to live successful and quality lives.
- Continue to work with the voluntary and community sector to promote inclusive communities that are involved in local decision making and to encourage a choice in appropriate and high quality services.

How we will implement this policy

Warrington Borough Council is committed to delivering on the pledges outlined in this strategy, and it has a dedicated working group tasked with ensuring this happens – the Equalities Steering Group. It is the role of this group to ensure the organisation is proactive in promoting equality and diversity, and that elected members, staff and partners understand their roles in delivering our pledges.

It does this via a number of working groups based within each directorate, a range of policies, procedures and guidance documents, and a well-established training plan. We also have an Equality Impact Assessment Framework, which is there to ensure equality and diversity principles are a core element of all service plans, improvements and policy developments.

However, it is important to make sure this approach is working effectively and driving improvements through action planning, performance monitoring and impact reviews. It is also crucial that we maintain and improve our understanding of our communities, workforce and service users – their needs, concerns and priorities for improvement.

We will:

- Develop an Equality and Diversity Delivery Plan that sets out the details of how we will implement this policy.
- Review our Equality Impact Assessment Framework and initiate an improvement plan aimed at further embedding the values of equality and diversity in all policy developments, service re-designs and service improvement activities.
- Review our training package and ensure all Councillors and staff fully understand our values and pledges and their role and responsibilities for implementing this policy.
- Make sure the Equalities Steering Group reports on progress to our Executive Board twice a year.

We welcome your comments

If you have any comments or questions about this policy please contact:

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If you would like this information provided in another language or format including large print, Braille, audio or British Sign Language please telephone 01925 443322.