

Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2020-2024

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WARRINGTON
Borough Council

1. Introduction

We are committed to working with our residents, businesses and partners to make sure that Warrington is accessible, welcoming and provides opportunities for everybody. This strategy sets out how we will achieve this vision through the delivery of our equality objectives and priorities 2020-2024. These are an integral part of the organisation and link closely with our corporate strategy. They guide the work we carry out and show our commitment to challenging inequality and promoting a fair and inclusive town. They also demonstrate our commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty contained within the Equality Act 2010.

2. Delivery of these objectives and priorities

As a diverse public sector organisation our equality objectives cover a wide range of areas. Over the next four years we will deliver our objectives through projects, policies and strategies. Many of these projects will involve working with our partners, residents and the wider community.

The Council's strategic equality group is responsible for the delivery of the objectives and priorities. Regular progress reports will be forwarded to the council's Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee. In addition many of the projects will be monitored through our performance management framework.

3. Our Equality objectives

Equality objective - Provide opportunities to improve life chances

We are committed to being a council that helps to provide equal life opportunities for all our residents.

We know that lots of things affect a person's ability to have a fulfilling and happy life. This includes well-paid sustainable employment, good physical and mental health and access to educational opportunities. Some people are able to access educational opportunities and well paid employment more easily than others whilst others face additional barriers and challenges. This objective focuses on tackling these inequalities.

Priorities - What are we doing now and in the future?

- Reduce income inequality and improve social mobility by supporting the Living Wage Foundation's living wage through the council's procurement strategy.
- Work with our partners to reduce the gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived communities in Warrington.
- Improve educational outcomes and employment opportunities for disadvantaged children and young people. Disadvantaged children are pupils who have been eligible for free school meals in the past 6 years or they are a looked after child in the care of the council. Children who have ceased to be looked after by the council are also classed as disadvantaged.
- Improve employment opportunities and educational placements for:
 - Young people with special education needs and disability (SEND)
 - Adults who have a physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability

Equality objective - Work with our partners and businesses to improve accessibility and tackle discrimination

Our goal is to make sure that Warrington town centre and other public places are welcoming, safe and easily accessible for everybody. Digital accessibility is important to us and we want to make sure that everyone is able to access our online services.

We want to ensure that everybody feels valued, enjoys living in Warrington and does not experience discrimination or hate crime.

This objective focuses on improving accessibility and tackling discrimination.

Priorities - What are we doing now and in the future?

- Work with partners and businesses to improve accessibility to the town centre and public spaces for disabled people, older people and carers.
- Improve digital availability and reduce barriers to online services. This priority will include improving communication materials to make sure they are easily understandable.
- Develop a transparent robust equality impact assessment process to help improve our services and make sure they are accessible and inclusive. This work will include increasing our knowledge of our customers through improved equality monitoring.
- Strengthen our knowledge, understanding and communication with black, ethnic and minority populations.
- Work with Cheshire Police and Warrington Hate Crime Action Alliance to improve reporting and reduce levels of hate crime.

Equality objective - Promote and foster an inclusive working environment for our workforce

Our workforce is our most precious resource and we value all employees as individuals. We want to provide an inclusive organisation where everybody is able to participate and achieve their full potential.

We acknowledge that some employees may find it harder to be themselves at work and some people may experience barriers to accessing opportunities.

This objective focuses on tackling these challenges and improving our knowledge of our workforce.

Priorities - What are we doing now and in the future?

- Raise awareness and promote LGBT+ inclusion. This work will include an application to Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index.
- Work towards level 3 leader status under the Disability Confident Scheme.
- Develop and deliver a leadership and career development programme to help reduce our gender pay gap
- Improve our equality monitoring information for our workforce and reduce the proportion of unknown equality data.
- Develop and deliver an equality, diversity and inclusion training programme for councillors and employees. This priority includes the promotion of existing equality, diversity and inclusion training to all councillors and staff.