Equalities Statement
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Purpose of our Equalities Statement
This Equality Scheme brings together our previous four equality schemes under one document that reflects our ongoing commitment to continuous improvement in equality outcomes for all.

About the Equality Duty
Those subject to the equality duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have 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
• Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Having due regard means:
• Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
• Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
• Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low

*Meeting different needs involves taking steps to take account of disabled people’s impairments.
*Fostering good relations means tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups
*Compliance with the duty may mean treating some people more favourably than others

Protected characteristics
• age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation
• marriage and civil partnership are protected under the first principle of the equality duty (eliminate unlawful discrimination)

There are six types of discrimination prohibited under the act. They are:-

Direct Discrimination – where some is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination – Where a rule, policy or practice, which applies to everyone, particularly disadvantages people who share a particular protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination can be justified if it can be shown that the rule, policy or practice is intended to meet a legitimate objective in a fair, balanced and reasonable way.

Discrimination by association – where someone is treated less favourably because they are linked or associated with someone who has a protected characteristic.
Discrimination by perception – where someone is treated less favourably because they are perceived to have a protected characteristic.

Harassment & Victimisation – It is unlawful to discriminate against, harass or victimise a person because of a protected characteristic when providing services*

*The prohibition on harassment does not cover sexual orientation or religion & belief

Our Vision
We want South Norfolk to be a place where all people thrive – physically, mentally, socially, spiritually and economically

We aim to ensure we deliver good quality services that meet the needs and aspirations of all the district’s residents, service users, employees and visitors.

We will address the needs of people who have traditionally faced discrimination or received less favourable treatment based on their age, disability, gender, gender identity, race and ethnicity, pregnancy & maternity, religion or belief, sexual orientation and marriage & civil partnership. These are known as protected characteristics.

We are committed to taking all reasonable steps towards promoting equality in respect of our role as a service provider, our role as an employer and our role as community leaders. We are committed to equal life chances for all.

We believe that equality for all is a basic human right and actively oppose all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination. We celebrate the diversity of our district and are striving to promote and reflect this diversity within the council’s own structure.

South Norfolk Council is committed to the Social Model of Disability which, in simple terms, is the fact that it is environment around us which is disabling and not an individual’s impairment. Disability is what happens when one group of people create barriers by designing a world only for their way of living, taking no account of impairments other people have.

Therefore if we remove barriers we allow those with impairments to be involved.

About our District
South Norfolk, located in the East of England, is a predominantly rural area covering 907km² (350 square miles): just over one sixth of the county. The mid-year population estimate in 2016 was 131,000 people (14.8% of the Norfolk population).

Due to its rural location we recognise the issues that people face in access to services such as information and transport. We are committed to supporting facilities within communities to ensure equality of access. We are also committed to supporting employment opportunities in the local area.
About the Council

Our Corporate Priorities

We have three corporate priority areas where we focus resources and efforts. These areas are underpinned by our customer focused collaborative and commercial approach to service delivery.

- **Economic Growth, Productivity and Prosperity** – Providing the conditions to stimulate growth, productivity and prosperity, sharing the benefits of growth with our communities.
- **Place, Communities and Environment** – Improving the quality of life of our communities and enhancing the built and natural environment in our towns and villages.
- **Health, Well-being and Early Help** – Proactively working with communities to provide help at the earliest opportunity and enhancing the health and well-being of our residents.

Our Values

Moving Forward Together

- Customer Focused
- Can do and collaborative
- Businesslike, efficient and entrepreneurial

Our Equality Objectives

Our equality objectives aim to strengthen South Norfolk Council’s performance in relation to the Public Sector Equality Duty. The process of developing and setting objectives for both our internal and external functions, and ensuring progress towards them, will enable us to focus on achieving specific outcomes and play an important part in enabling us to demonstrate compliance with the Duty.

As well as being a legal requirement for us, the act of setting objectives encourages an outcome-focused approach to creating challenging but measurable targets to improve delivery of equality in South Norfolk.

Working to objectives can also assist in building the Duty into our planning processes, in prioritising resources and in improving awareness and understanding of the Duty among our senior leaders and staff.

**What are the criteria for setting objectives?**
The objectives we are proposing relate to our role, remit and focus on what we consider to be the most pressing equality issues for South Norfolk.
Cross Cutting Objectives

1) We have tackled inappropriate attitudes, stereotyping and hate crime utilising the Multi-Agency Protocol on tackling hate crime and we recognise and represent those who share protected characteristics in dialogue and communications.

2) We effectively engage with those we know are under-represented including Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual people, transgendered people, disabled people, faith/belief/non-belief organisations and Black & Minority Ethnic people.

3) Partnership working has helped reduce health inequalities and deprivation, including rural based deprivation and isolation.

4) We have promoted a clear understanding of Human rights and responsibilities.
Service Specific Objectives

5) Through partnership working we have reduced overall repeat incidents of domestic abuse and increased the detection rate for domestic abuse assaults
6) Older people, disabled people and their families have better choice of housing options and access to appropriate housing
7) We have addressed the Council’s gender pay gap through understanding and developing our workforce, promoting ‘non traditional’ jobs and offering flexible working practices
8) The Council’s workforce is more representative of the communities it serves and those facing the most disadvantage have been helped to gain employment, including our young people.
9) Disabled people have better access to leisure, sports and other community activities, to improve general health and well-being and to combat feelings of isolation

Our Approach to Equality – Elected Members

It is the responsibility of all members to address inequality and promote diversity. Members play an integral role in promoting equality; where they believe unfair discrimination or harassment has taken place they should report it. The Council will take action against members who breach equality policies.

All hate incidents should be reported in accordance with the Multi-Agency Protocol (MAP).

Our Approach to Equality - Managers

Directors are responsible for ensuring that their services comply with the legislation and standards set by the Council.

All managers are responsible for implementing this approach and ensuring equalities are mainstreamed into their services.

All managers are expected to take positive measures to address inequality and promote fairness. Diversity, for all managers, should be integral to carrying out their duties. The Council will take action against managers who breach equality policies.

All hate incidents should be reported in accordance with the Multi-Agency Protocol (MAP).
Our Approach to Equality – Employees
All employees play an integral role in promoting equality; where they believe unfair discrimination or harassment has taken place they should report it to their manager. Employees who work directly with the public are the Council’s ambassadors and as such, the Council will be judged by them.

All employees are expected to take positive measures to address inequality and promote fairness. Diversity, for all employees, should be integral to carrying out their duties. The Council will take action against employees who breach equality policies.

All hate incidents should be reported in accordance with the Multi-Agency Protocol (MAP).

If you would like this document in large print, audio, Braille alternative format or in a different language, please call us on 01508 533633, minicom 01508 533622 or e-mail equalities@s-norfolk.gov.uk