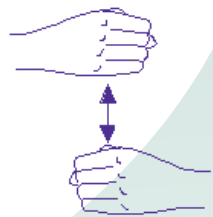




# SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S Action *for* Equality



*This Equality Policy Statement expresses our commitment to equality and sets the standards we have for achieving equality in all that we do. The agenda is very broad, and in consultation with our employees, service users, carers and communities we wish to develop it further. As we start to look at the issues of equality for Surrey in greater detail we would like you to participate and let us know your experiences so that we can put equality into action.*

Our vision is that Surrey County Council will embrace the principles of equality and make it a part of everything that we do.

Action for Equality outlines the Council's approach to equality. It is our commitment and we trust it is yours too. Implementing this policy will help us improve our equality action with all our employees, service users, carers, and communities. This statement represents our corporate approach to equality and our expectation is that each service area will adopt it and develop their response within these guidelines to the equality agenda.

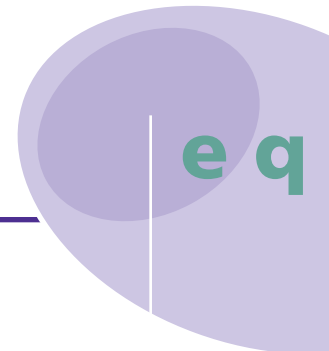
By implementing our equality policy, together we can Make Surrey a Better Place for Everyone.

Nick Skellett, Leader of the Council

Paul Coen, Chief Executive



# SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S Action *for* Equality



## Our commitments to equality are

- Building fairness into all that we do
- Eliminating all forms of inappropriate discrimination
- Listening, responding, and working together with our employees\*, service users, carers, and communities to provide services
- Providing services which are available to everyone
- Continually improving all that we do based on equality
- Developing environments where people are valued and respected
- Providing equality of opportunity in our employment practices
- Providing learning and development opportunities for all our staff to enable us to fulfil our commitment to equality
- Working with other agencies to ensure our commitments to equality are delivered
- Taking any complaints about inequality seriously (please see the back page for details).

## What do we mean by equality?

In our employment practices and in providing services, equality involves:

- providing fairness and equality of opportunity
- recognising that everyone is different and that these differences must be equally respected, and
- challenging discrimination so that we demonstrate our commitments to equality and do not exclude people or make them feel isolated.

We are fully committed to tackling all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination including those on the grounds of: age, asylum or refugee status, caring responsibilities, class, colour, disability (including physical, sensory impairment, mental health problems, or learning disability), ethnic or national origin (including Travellers), gender reassignment, HIV status, language, marital status, nationality (including citizenship), part-time working, race, religion, sex, sexuality, or trade union membership.

\* Employees: all those who personally carry out work for the County Council.

## What are unacceptable practices?

### Discrimination

Discrimination can be direct, indirect, intentional, unintentional, or institutional. Discrimination is unlawful. Direct discrimination is where an individual or group receives less favourable treatment with some unjustifiable reason because of sex, race or disability, for example. Indirect discrimination is applying unjustifiable requirements and conditions that have a disproportionate impact on an individual or particular group. Individuals, in law, have a responsibility not to discriminate.

### Institutional discrimination

Institutional discrimination is the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their background or experience. It can be seen in our attitudes, behaviours and procedures that amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and stereotyping which disadvantage people.

## What does tackling discrimination mean for you?

Overcoming your own prejudices and assumptions about others is a major step towards embracing equality within our organisation. Assumptions are often based on appearances and are a part of how we, as individuals, view others. Recognising that assumptions are not necessarily an accurate assessment of a person or situation, will allow you to make decisions based on equality. We can then avoid the costly effect assumptions may have on others.

We all need to rethink what we do and how we behave to achieve equality, which is not about treating everyone the same, but recognising and respecting differences and treating each other with fairness and dignity.



# Equalities

## Who is responsible for equality?

**Surrey County Council:** we are responsible for providing the people of Surrey with equal access to our services, and for encouraging communities to talk with us about improvements they believe we need to make.

**Elected members:** are responsible for acting according to this policy.

**The Chief Executive:** is responsible for leading the organisation on our commitments to equality and for ensuring that this policy is delivered.

**All employees:** are responsible for ensuring that they work together to recognise and remove barriers so that they can promote equality, and fairness and dignity, and behave in accordance with this policy.

**Managers:** are responsible for delivering equality in their services, providing support for staff to work together to achieve equality, and acting on any staff or community complaint. Any manager responsible for promoting employees, providing access to training, recruiting or developing employees must ensure alternative, appropriate delivery of these employment practices.

**Equality groups operating throughout the Council:** are responsible for co-ordinating equality at a service and corporate level.

## Who does this cover?

This policy covers elected members, employees, and those who personally carry out work for the County Council.

Staff in locally managed education establishments have their policies and procedures determined by their governors which means that they are not covered by this policy and procedure. This policy is recommended as a model of good practice and where a policy of this nature does not exist this one may be adopted or customised to meet specific needs.

Firefighters should refer to their personnel section for advice and guidance.

Visitors to the County Council should be made aware of the County Council's policy and procedure to treat others with dignity and respect at all times.

## How will we implement equality action?

We have adopted a national standard for equality that measures us against five key performance areas:

**Policy and planning:** we put our policies into action based on consultation, raising awareness and developing outcomes that make a difference.



**Service delivery and customer care:** the action from our equality policy is directly linked to improving user, carer and community satisfaction with our services.

**Community development:** we encourage community participation because we listen to and invest in the needs of our communities. This part of our standard is linked to our Promoting Self-Reliance Policy (please see the back page for more details).

**Employment:** our workforce is built on open and fair employment practices. Our staff are valued throughout their working lives with us.

**Marketing and corporate image:** we want to be known for our positive approach to equality.

We will use this standard to audit what we do and to find out how well we are doing it.

## How will we provide training on equality?

We will raise awareness about equality and provide training for employees. We will also invite our communities to continue to develop an understanding and learn with us about equality issues. We will run campaigns from time to time that focus on the various equality issues.

Part of our training will be in the form of Equality Briefing Sheets that will provide information about the many equality issues you as employees, service users, carers and our communities have raised with us. We will ask individuals and groups about how we might address these issues and work with us to turn these issues into positive actions.

## How will we monitor equality?

To ensure the effectiveness of our Equality Policy we will carry out regular monitoring across the organisation. We will monitor our workforce to find out whether it broadly reflects our local communities and to ensure our practices are free from discrimination. Service areas will monitor those using their services to determine whether they are reaching the wider community. We will also seek feedback from employees, service users, carers, and our communities as part of our commitment to listening and continually improving what we do.



### Some suggestions for how you can show your commitment to equality:

- Show respect and dignity to others
- Be open and honest, expressing any criticism in a sensitive and constructive way
- Take a stand against discrimination by showing personal responsibility: e.g. speak out against discriminatory jokes and remarks
- Make a formal complaint if you witness a racist attack, through the Surrey County Council complaints procedure, to a manager or the police
- Find out about black, ethnic minority, or Traveller history and local community achievements
- Work towards providing accessible information, venues, offices, and meeting places
- Arrange for equality to be on your team meeting agenda
- Develop team approaches to a work-life balance
- Provide services which recognise that many people have major caring roles, i.e. those who look after someone who cannot manage without help because of sickness, age or disability
- Ensure that you offer team briefings, meetings, and training which consider the needs of part-time workers, for example vary your meeting times to allow for greater participation
- Attend equality awareness training
- Be clear about essential elements of a job profile, so you do not over specify and limit the pool of applicants.

### What do you do if this policy is not working?

If you experience discrimination or unfair practices while working with us, using our services, or living or working in our communities, we want to know. We want to ensure your experience is recorded and that the incident is resolved. If you are a service user or work or live in Surrey, use our complaints procedures, or if you are an employee use our Fairness and Dignity at Work procedure. Complaints from the community will be taken seriously and the Council will take action where this policy is breached. Breaches by employees of this policy will be treated as a serious offence, and may lead to disciplinary action, in accordance with agreed procedures. If you have concerns or ideas about our equality policy and action that you would like to share, please contact us and let us know.

#### English

For a copy of this document in your own language please call WITS 01483 750548

#### Bengali

আপনার ইকুয়ালিটি পলিসি, এই নীতিটি যদি আপনার নিজের ভাষায় বুঝতে চান অথবা সমস্যা করে তুলিবে তাহলে দ্রুত এ 01483 750548 নাম্বারে যোগাযোগ করুন

#### Portuguese

Se necessitar de assistência com este documento, a nossa *Declaração de Política de Igualdade (Equality Policy Statement)*, na sua própria língua, por favor ligue para o WITS no telefone 01483750548.

#### Italian

Se hai bisogno di assistenza nella tua lingua con questo documento, la nostra Dichiarazione di Intenti Egualitari, mettiti in contatto con WITS al numero 01483750548.

#### Urdu

اگر آپ کو "اٹوٹ" یا کسی اور زبان میں اس پالیسی اسٹیٹمنٹ سے متعلق ہمارے اس دستاویز کو سمجھنے میں عسری ضرورت ہے تو براہ کرم "وٹس" WITS کو اس نمبر پر فون کیجئے 01483 750548

### For more information

Please contact **08456 009 009** Minicom **0208 541 9592**

For further details about the related documents mentioned in this policy statement - Code of Conduct; Complaints procedure; Fairness and Dignity at Work procedure; Promoting Self-Reliance policy; and Disciplinary and Dismissals procedure. For this document in an alternative format To give us any feedback.

November 2000

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County Hall, Penrhyn Road,  
Kingston upon Thames Surrey KT1 2DN

