

Equality & Diversity Policy

Policy Statement

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC) (the Council) is committed to fulfilling its duty under the Equality Act. 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.**

1. Purpose and Scope

1.1 The purpose of having this policy is to provide a coherent approach to tackling equality and diversity across all the protected equality characteristics (age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion/belief and sexual orientation) It also aims to make equality and diversity integral to the way that the Council works in order to achieve:

- A clearer understanding of the needs of the residents of the Staffordshire Moorlands
- Better informed decision-making and policy development
- Excellent quality services which meet varied needs
- More effective targeting of policy and resources that will do the most to increase equality
- Better outcomes and greater confidence in public services
- A more effective use of talent in the workforce

2. Responsibilities

2.1 The Chief Executive with senior management teams are responsible for providing leadership in the implementation of this policy and for ensuring that they and their staff understand and comply with their responsibilities under the Equality Act.

2.2 Councillors have overall responsibility for the direction and scrutiny of this policy and will ensure that principles of fairness and equality guide the decision making process.

3. Service Delivery

3.1 The Council provides direct services, regulates, funds and commissions services. In all these roles and activities the Council is committed to fair and equitable access to services, whether they are provided directly by Council employees, in partnership with other agencies or indirectly through external contract, funding or commissioning arrangements. All service areas will take steps to ensure that Council functions and policies are carried out in a way that complies with statutory requirements and meets the needs of all local people as appropriately as possible.

3.2 The Council aims to ensure that all its functions and policies are carried out in a way that complies with statutory requirements by:

- Ensuring equal access, fair treatment and appropriate provision to the whole community regardless of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity status, race, religion, nationality, social background or sexual orientation;
- Providing services that are designed to meet a wide range of different needs in the community;
- Providing appropriate services, adapting them, where reasonable, to meet the needs of the whole community promoting equal access to services, including producing clear information about how to access our services (for example in large print);
- Providing and publicise clear information on how customers can complain or comment about the services they have received and respond efficiently to complaints;
- Ensuring that wherever practicable, all services and buildings are accessible to everyone;
- Carrying out consultation and undertaking formal impact assessment when necessary to ascertain whether current service provision and any proposed changes are consistent with legal obligations.

4. Training

4.1 Equipping Councillors, managers and Council employees with the knowledge and skills is essential.

Training will be focused at a range of levels including:

- Training at an appropriate level for all employees on equality and diversity;

- General awareness as part of the induction programme for all new employees and councillors.
- Refresher training when appropriate.

5. The Council as an Employer

5.1 The Council is a major employer in the District. As an employer the Council aims to:

- Develop, review and promote policies and practices that ensure equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination for our workforce in all areas of employment, including recruitment, retention, learning and development, and
- Reflect the diverse nature of the District within the Council's workforce.

6. Working with Partners

6.1 The Council works closely with many different groups of people in the community on numerous issues and will take a leading role to drive equality and diversity forward across the District.

6.2 Key partners include community and voluntary groups. These provide an excellent way of communicating, consulting and designing services with the people of the area as well as acting a monitoring forum on how the Council is delivering.

7. Procurement and contract management

7.1 The Council will take into account in its tender evaluation and contracting processes a potential contractor's approach to equalities in terms of its employment practices and service delivery. It will do this by asking potential contractors relevant questions and include appropriate provisions in its contract documents relating to these matters.

8. The Council's Action Plan

8.1 The Council has published its equality and diversity objectives which will set out specific actions which the Council will undertake, including timeframes, to promote its equality objectives. This will be updated when required.

8.2 The Council's equality and diversity objectives will be audited periodically to ensure delivery of those objectives and the results published on the Council's website.

8.3 The Council will arrange appropriate training for all its staff.

9. Contact details

For further information or if you would like this document in large print, Braille or audio format, contact Democratic Services:

Democratic.services@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk

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Appendix 1: IHRA and definition of antisemitism

Background:

The Council adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition of antisemitism on 16 June 2020.

The IHRA is an intergovernmental body established in Stockholm in 1998. It comprises 31 member nations whose purpose is to place political and social leaders' support behind the need for Holocaust education, remembrance and research, both nationally and internationally. In the spirit of the Stockholm Declaration that states: "With humanity still scarred by ...antisemitism and xenophobia the international community shares a solemn responsibility to fight those evils" the committee on Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial called the IHRA Plenary in Budapest 2015 to adopt the following working definition of antisemitism.

IHRA definition:

"Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."

To guide IHRA in its work, **the following examples may serve as illustrations:**

Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for "why things go wrong." It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.

- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

<https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/working-definition-antisemitism>