



1. Introduction and scope

- 1.1 Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are committed to providing equality of opportunity for people and communities. We respect and value difference in the districts and across our workforce, and we want everyone to feel included, live in an environment of good health and wellbeing and be able to play their part in making Babergh and Mid Suffolk great places to live, work and visit.
- 1.2 We do not tolerate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation in service delivery or employment on the grounds of any protected characteristic:
- Age
 - Disability
 - Race/ethnicity
 - Religion or belief
 - Sex
 - Gender reassignment
 - Sexual orientation
 - Marriage or civil partnership
 - Pregnancy or maternity
- 1.3 We will not treat anyone less favourably than any other, on the grounds of any protected characteristic, except when such treatment is within the law and determined by lawful requirements.
- 1.4 In adopting the aims of this policy, we will:
- Promote equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and bullying
 - Promote understanding, tackle prejudice and foster positive relations between different communities
 - Make reasonable adjustments
 - Take steps to remove barriers or inequalities that may already exist
 - Promote a workforce culture that values and respects difference
 - Engage with local communities fairly and proportionately
 - Encourage people who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which their participation is disproportionately low.

2. Accessibility and Reasonable adjustments

- 2.1 We are committed to providing public services and a workforce environment that can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their ability or disability.

2.2 When reviewing or redesigning our public services or workforce environment (or any building, product or service in that environment, such as premises, technology, information, communication and culture) we will be guided by the following:

- Provide the same means of use to enable access for all users: identical whenever possible; equivalent when not
- Avoid segregating or stigmatizing any users
- Provisions for privacy, security and safety shall be equally available to all users
- Ensure dignity in use for all users.

2.3 Where something the Council does places a person at a substantial disadvantage, we will take all reasonable steps to try to avoid that disadvantage. This may mean changing the way we work, providing extra equipment or removing physical or other barriers.

3. Discharging our responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty

3.1 When exercising our public functions, we will have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty. At least every four years, we will publish one or more equality objectives. Our objectives are published on our website and they are found [here](#). We will maintain and publish annual information which shows our compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty. As there are over 150 employees at Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils the Act requires us to publish a workforce profile each year, which can be found [here](#). We also publish service reports on the protected characteristics annually, which can be found [here](#).

4. Equality impact assessments

4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) should be undertaken for any new strategy, policy, project, contract, engagement, consultation, decision or function or substantive change to an existing policy or strategy.

4.2 In particular, as part of the equality impact assessment, direction should be sought on the minimum and maximum considerations that could be applied – to enable decision-makers to consider the most reasonable approach in the circumstances, taking all relevant factors into account - such as available resources; demand and future proofing.

4.3 It will not always be possible to adopt the course of action that will best promote accessibility for all. However, equality impact assessments enable informed decisions to be made, that consider every opportunity to minimise disadvantage.

4.4 Guidance on equality impact assessments is available [here](#).

5. Staff professional development

5.1 We have a separate recruitment policy to ensure that, when we employ, we do not treat anyone less favourably than any other, on the grounds of any protected characteristic, except when such treatment is within the law and determined by lawful requirements.

- 5.2 All new staff undertake induction training which includes a module on behaviour and conduct expectations (standards at work). All managers undertake a further module to support their role in respect of equality and diversity and ensure that our aims are achieved
- 5.3 All staff are required to complete the e-learning modules below on equality and diversity within their first six months of employment:
- The Equality Act 2010
 - Equality in the Workplace
 - Implementing reasonable adjustments
- 5.4 Staff can access these modules via Learning Hub.

6. Who this policy affects

- 6.1 This policy affects elected members and all workers including employees, consultants, temporary workers, agency staff and other third parties working on behalf of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council. It also applies to suppliers, sub-contractors and agencies in our supply chain.
- 6.2 This policy applies to (but is not limited to) the planning, design, operation, construction and delivery of services, the provision of goods, facilities and services, exercising of public functions, , conditions of service, benefits, facilities and pay, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conduct at work , and procedures and guidance. The equality and diversity of recruitment, selection and termination of employment is covered by the recruitment policy.
- 6.3 We expect all staff to take responsibility for familiarising themselves with this policy and conducting themselves in an appropriate manner. Staff are expected to engage proactively in the implementation of this policy.

7. Relevant legislation

- 7.1 In implementing this policy, we will have regard to our legal obligations under relevant legislation, including the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty.

8. Relevant policies, action plans and guidance

- 8.1 The following HR policies provide further guidance about implementing equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace:
- Transgender Action Plan
 - Transgender Guidance
 - Flexible Working Policy
 - Dress Code Policy
 - Equality and Diversity Employment Policy
 - Harassment and Bullying Policy
 - Recruitment Policy
 - People Strategy (in development)

9. Communication

- 9.1 This policy will be made available via Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils website and intranet.
- 9.2 On Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils website we publish our workforce report and service reports annually.

10. Complaints

- 10.1 We regard any breach of this policy as a serious matter to be dealt with through agreed procedures and this may result in disciplinary action. We encourage anyone who has a complaint concerning a breach of this policy to bring this to Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' attention.

11. Further Information

- 11.1 For further information please contact: equalities@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

12. Review

- 12.1 We will review the terms of this policy and any associated codes of practice and guidance in 2022.