

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021 – 2023

CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

Our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion is integral to everything we do as a Council, whether it is in how we work with our residents, in the services we provide or through the recruitment of our workforce. Our commitment goes beyond complying with our statutory duties. It is about the Council and our partners actively removing barriers and supporting individuals and families to reach their fullest potential. We want to advance equality of opportunity, foster good relations in our local community and ensure that everyone feels valued, respected and included.

Our [Council Plan](#) 2019-2023 sets out our ambition for a borough where all residents can fulfil their potential and access the services they need in Kensington and Chelsea. This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy supports those commitments and sets out the high standards we expect of ourselves in how we treat our workforce, engage with and deliver services for our residents and businesses. We will strive to:

- Narrow existing inequalities and differences in life chances for our residents and our employees, whether that be at work, in health, in housing or education. To do that we may need to treat some people differently, as we focus our resources and efforts on those who experience the worst outcomes currently, or those with the most urgent and pressing need.
- Value and recognise people's diverse skills and abilities, which means taking difference into account in everything that we do. For our employees, **diversity** is an opportunity to bring together and develop a unique mix of individuals and skills, that reflect our communities and help us serve them better.
- Work together to create a safe, open, accessible and **inclusive** borough and workplace - where everybody thrives and feels valued, and the lived experience of our residents is heard.

The Grenfell tragedy and its aftermath raised fundamental questions about equalities, diversity and inclusion. The local response to the tragedy demonstrated the enormous strength of our diverse communities, particularly in North Kensington, and challenged the Council both to improve our understanding of those communities and to increase the reach and accessibility of our services. Since June 2017, we have reflected on what our communities have told us about what we need to do differently as a Council. Building on this, and our learning throughout these unprecedented times, we aspire to rebuild trust and reconnect with our communities by being open, inclusive and putting local people at the heart of decision-making. Our core values guide how we work: putting communities first, respecting others, acting with integrity and working together. They inform the way in which we involve and empower residents to have their say; how we design and deliver our services; and how we recruit and support our workforce.

The impact of COVID-19 and Black Lives Matter have shone a light on structural inequality, including how we deliver public services. It has rightly prompted us to further explore our

ability and ambition to improve equality of opportunity for all our residents, whatever their background, beliefs or characteristics. To do this well we need to continually examine our services and policies to ensure that they are accessible and that outcomes are equitable for those that current experience the worst outcomes.

The events of the last year have affected almost every community and are likely to be deep and long lasting as well as exacerbating some of the inequalities that already existed, around health, employment, opportunities and housing. It is critical that we stay connected with our residents, understand how the recent events are affecting their lives and ensure we make interventions that will have a genuine impact.

OUR APPROACH

The Council is committed to embedding our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion in everything we do. This means our plans and policies, the way we design and deliver services, how we employ and develop staff and most importantly in how we work with our residents is all achieved in a fair and inclusive way that addresses inequalities and reflects the diversity of our borough.

This strategy sets out the Council's Equality Objectives for 2021 – 2023. We have developed these using [data and information](#) about the diversity of the place as well as the views of residents and partners.

We aim to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the specific requirements placed on the Council through the Public Sector Equality Duty. This means that the Council has regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not;
- foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

We have a responsibility as a local authority to publish information to demonstrate how we are meeting these duties as an employer and a service provider and whether there is an impact on people with protected characteristics.¹ Creating an inclusive borough also means recognising that the causes of inequality or exclusion are often inter-connected and mutually reinforcing, such as low income, social isolation, living in overcrowded housing and poor health, but also require a strengths-based rather than deficit approach to address.

OUR COMMITMENT

We seek to respect, value and celebrate differences among the communities we serve and within our own workforce. These differences include the characteristics protected under the Equality Act but are not limited to these. We recognise other important differences in the backgrounds and life circumstances or experiences of residents, service users and our workforce.

We are committed and determined to deliver fair, accessible, and relevant services. We offer a number of universal services and some targeted, that should be available to **all** who require them based on the most urgent and pressing need, as Kensington and Chelsea residents.

¹ Protected characteristics are the nine groups protected under the Equality Act 2010. These are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

In promoting fairness and advancing equality, we want to build a strong sense of belonging and pride for everyone who lives in, works in or visits the borough. We want people of all backgrounds to feel valued and able to participate fully in, and contribute to, building a strong community within Kensington and Chelsea.

OUR EQUALITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION OBJECTIVES

Our equality, diversity and inclusion objectives reflect the cross-cutting themes in our [Council Plan](#) and [People Strategy](#).

These five objectives relate to each aspect of the Council's role as an employer, a provider of services and in our public sector equality duty in bringing communities together.

- 1. Narrowing the Gap:** We will improve outcomes for our residents, with a focus on narrowing the gap between different communities and seek to ensure that individuals have equal opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Why is this important?

The Council has duties and powers to provide a wide range of services. Many of these services can play a role in delivery equality of opportunity. The challenges we face need action by a range of stakeholders and the Council has a leading role to play in bringing together agencies across the private, public and voluntary sector to tackle inequalities and exclusion across the borough.

- 2. Community Involvement:** We will engage openly with our residents and service users, seeking to capture all points of view to make better informed decisions. Wherever possible, we will use the talents and skills within our communities to co-design and commission better services. We will work widely to involve local people and abide by the Council's [Charter for Public Participation](#).

Why is this important?

Empowering communities, involving them in decision making and listening to the lived experiences of all our residents is a key goal for the Council. We cannot tackle inequalities and exclusion without fostering good relations between people and understanding our diverse communities.

- 3. Prevention and early intervention:** By focusing on prevention and early intervention, particularly in Adults; and Children's Services, we can ensure that health and social care needs of the whole community are being addressed now and, in the future, for adults, children and families. Our approaches to prevention and early intervention have to be tailored to different communities and draw on the strengths of those communities

Why is this important?

Early intervention means identifying and providing effective early support to those who are at risk of poor outcomes. Effective early intervention works to prevent problems occurring, or to tackle them head-on when they do, before problems get worse. It also helps to foster a whole set of personal strengths and skills that prepare a child for adult life.

- 4. Increasing Diversity:** We will aim to increase the diversity of our workforce at every level to more closely reflect our residents and service users and bring it closer to our communities. Having a workforce that is diverse in the widest possible sense and in which diversity of background and thought is valued.

Why is this important?

To achieve our vision, we must develop a culture that has inclusion and equality at the heart of everything we do. Having a diverse workforce brings a diversity of experiences and perspectives which will help us better meet the needs of residents. This is not just about the Council's role as an employer but a genuinely inclusive and diverse organisation is the foundation of commissioning and delivering services that meet the needs of our diverse communities and treat citizens with respect.

- 5. Building an inclusive workforce and cohesive borough:** To help attract, recruit and retain the best people for the job, we will develop an open, collaborative and inclusive working environment where the principles of fairness and wellbeing is promoted, and everyone is encouraged to reach their full potential.

Why is this important?

Creating a culture which embeds equality and inclusion across our activities, and adopting the right leadership model, structures and processes will enable us to achieve the high standards we have identified for ourselves. This means showing that we value diversity in how we all speak and behave every day, not just when we are talking about equality. To achieve our vision, we must develop a culture that has inclusion and equality at the heart of everything we do. Inclusive cultures do not just happen, our leaders, managers and all our employees must understand and model inclusive behaviours.

We intend to deliver on our five objectives in the following ways:

SERVICE DELIVERY

We will involve our residents in shaping and delivering services that anticipate and respond appropriately to the needs of our diverse community. To do this, we will:

- Identify and remove barriers that may prevent certain groups from engaging with the Council, in order to shape the services that matter to them;

- Foster a culture of learning and continuous improvement, using evidence (data and feedback from our diverse service users) to inform our approach;
- Provide services that are fair, relevant and accessible to the communities we serve;
- Reaching out to and in to communities to learn what works well for them;
- Make all Council buildings accessible where practicable;
- Make all Council communications accessible, and provide interpretation and translation where appropriate;
- Provide relevant equality, diversity and inclusion training to all our employees to improve the way in which services are delivered to our diverse communities;
- Monitor and review services and policies to prevent unlawful or unjustified discrimination and aim to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relationships with our diverse communities.

OUR WORKFORCE

We will recruit, develop and retain a workforce that reflects the diversity of our residents, and we will leverage that rich diversity to grow the skills, talent and innovative thinking needed to continuously improve the quality and delivery of our services. To do this, we will:

- Develop an inclusive and flexible working culture that values and respects difference;
- Work to build a workforce that at every level more closely reflects diverse service users and residents;
- Provide a safe and accessible workplace where differing needs are actively anticipated;
- Take action to ensure a working environment that is free from unlawful discrimination and harassment;
- Provide equal access to learning and development opportunities for all employees;
- Encourage and support all employees to be involved and reach their full potential;
- Establish recruitment processes that are fair, transparent and fully accessible;
- Establish an open and transparent equal pay policy.

PROCUREMENT, COMMISSIONING AND SUPPLY CHAIN

We will commission high quality services that respond effectively and sensitively to differing needs and, where possible, are provided by those who understand and reflect our service user demographics. To do this, we will:

- Set expectations through our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Procurement Policy, that contractors, suppliers and funded service providers abide by the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty by providing an effective and appropriate service to all communities on our behalf;
- Encourage locally owned and run businesses to bid for work, through market engagement, when advertising a contract.

MONITORING IMPACT

We will continuously check and review the services we provide, learning from data and information we gather, alongside what our residents and employees tell us. To do this, we will:

- Monitor equality data to ensure that our services and employment opportunities are accessible to all;
- Use evidence to help us to design our services and ensure our workforce reflects the people we serve;
- Complete Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) to consider the impact that our policies and decisions may have on different groups;
- Where possible, collect diversity information about our residents and service users to inform our policies and services to effectively meet service user needs;
- Collect diversity information about our employees and use it to check that our employment policies and practices are fair, open and transparent and to help us build an accessible and inclusive working environment;
- Share best practice with our partners so that we can collaborate, learn from others and improve.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

This strategy sets out what we will put our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion into practice. We are committed to being a learning organisation, working to improve our practice and seeking to address inequality in Kensington and Chelsea.

We will publish information on an annual basis as part of the update to the Council Plan 2019-2023 explaining the progress we are making towards achieving our equality objectives and review how we are doing. We will also seek to listen to and understand the diverse needs of communities and improve how we collect information across different services so we can understand impact.

Everyone working for or representing the Council has a part to play in achieving the aims of this strategy. We want to be open and transparent about our progress, sharing information and learning from experience. We will review our equality objectives in line with the renewal of the Council Plan or more regularly where there has been a clear change of needs or significant new data.

Information from this document can be made available in alternative formats and in different languages. If you require further assistance, please use the contact details below.

Arabic

يمكن توفير المعلومات
التي وردت
في هذا المستند بصيغ بديلة ولغات أخرى. إذا كنت
في حاجة إلى مزيد من
المساعدة، الرجاء استخدام بيانات الاتصال الواردة أدناه.

Farsi

اطلاعات حاوی در این مدارک به صورتهای دیگر و به زبانهای مختلف در دس یس می باشد. در صورت نیاز به
کمک بیش یلطفاً از جزئیات تماس ذکر شده در ذیل استفاده کنید.

French

Les informations présentées dans ce document peuvent vous être fournies dans d'autres formats et d'autres langues. Si vous avez besoin d'une aide complémentaire, veuillez utiliser les coordonnées ci-dessous.

Portuguese

A informação presente neste documento pode ser disponibilizada em formatos alternativos e em línguas diferentes. Se desejar mais assistência, use por favor os contactos fornecidos abaixo.

Somali

Macluumaadka dokumentigan waxaa lagu heli karaa qaabab kale iyo luuqado kala duwan. Haddii aad u baahan tahay caawinaad intaas dhaafsiisan fadlan isticmaal xiriirka faahfaahinta hoose.

Spanish

La información en este documento puede facilitarse en formatos alternativos y en diferentes idiomas. Si necesita más ayuda por favor utilice la siguiente información de contacto.

Additional Assistance

If you require information in a different format or need additional assistance, please email us at consult@rbkc.gov.uk