Commitment to Equality & Diversity
Commitment to Equality & Diversity

1. Introduction
London Borough of Bexley is committed to the principle of equality of opportunity for all in employment and service delivery. We take pride in our increasingly diverse community and all the cultural richness that it brings with it. This statement outlines our commitment to the Equality Framework for Local Government. It sets out our intention to create an environment in which everyone in Bexley can take full part in the social, cultural and economic wealth of the Borough. It also sets out our commitment to promote equality and diversity among our residents and staff.

2. Statement of Intent
The Council recognises that certain groups in the society have historically been disadvantaged on account of unlawful discrimination they have faced on the basis of their race, gender, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation or age. We will put in place a range of actions to eliminate prejudice, unlawful discrimination and victimisation within the communities we serve and our workforce.

The Council intends to achieve all its targets in respect of the equalities agenda and become recognised as a leader on equalities.

3. Our aim
We want to see a strong sustainable and cohesive community in Bexley. We will continue to develop and promote policies and systems that make sure that the Borough’s communities and our workforce are not unlawfully discriminated against.

Our aims are to:
- promote equality of opportunity
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, and
- promote good relations between people from different backgrounds

4. How will we deliver our commitment?
In looking to the future we have formally adopted the Equality Framework for Local Government. This is a nationally recognised framework which we will use to measure our progress in achieving equality and diversity in our community and workforce.

- We recognise the value of diversity within the community and our workforce and the contribution made by people from different backgrounds.
- We are committed to ensuring that our services meet the varied and complex needs of people living and working in the Borough.
- We will make sure our employment is accessible to everyone and that we actively value and celebrate the wide variety of lifestyles and cultures within the borough.
- We are committed to providing high quality services that everyone can access.

Our commitment is supported by a legal duty to provide all services and employment opportunities fairly, without unlawful discrimination. We believe we have a strong moral and social duty to recognise any unlawful discrimination, take steps to challenge prejudice and discrimination and promote equality.
5. Objectives

Accessible services and partnerships:
Where appropriate we will work through the Partnership for Bexley, with other organisations and local voluntary and community groups to provide services which promote equal opportunities to all by:

- Building on good practice;
- Consulting with and involving all sectors of our community;
- Providing accessible information and ways people can comment on our services;
- Carrying out equality impact assessments of new and existing policies and practices to make sure that they do not unlawfully discriminate against anyone;
- Delivering services which are appropriate to the needs of the community;
- Removing barriers which deny people access to our services;
- Using our powers to make sure that organisations providing services on our behalf work in line with this statement;
- Promoting an environment which gives all residents an equal chance to learn, work and live free of unlawful discrimination and prejudice;
- Take steps to build an inclusive and cohesive community in the Borough.

Equal and appropriate treatment in employment, training and recruitment opportunities:
We will put in place a range of actions aimed at tackling prejudice and celebrating diversity within our workforce. This will be achieved by:

- Developing a workforce which reflects the community at all levels;
- Making sure that all employees understand their responsibilities under this statement;
- Making sure that all employees know about their rights of protection from unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation;
- Developing and promoting policies which give everyone equal access to employment and opportunities;
- Setting performance targets so we can measure our progress.

6. Responsibilities

London Borough of Bexley is an equal opportunities employer and service provider. In order to support this public commitment managers and staff play a key role in ensuring that our services and practices do not give rise to unlawful discrimination of any kind and that we have a shared understanding of the relevant issues and how best to deal with them.

All employees of the Council are expected to comply with our values of promoting equality and diversity and treat colleagues and service users with dignity and respect at all times. This commitment must be evidenced in practice. Any behaviour that falls below these standards is unacceptable to the Council and potentially constitutes misconduct.

Managers are expected to:

- Be at the forefront of best practice on equalities within their respective areas
- Mainstream equalities within their respective service areas
• Set equality targets, monitor outcomes and develop relevant action plans
• Review all service functions to ensure elimination of unequal treatment of staff and services users
• Raise equality-related issues with their staff and senior colleagues
• Encourage leadership on equalities amongst their staff and service users
• Call for regular in-service reports from team leaders
• Establish system for service monitoring
• Publish the results of assessments, consultations and monitoring
• Train staff on equalities issues
• Consider making local changes to improve the at-work experience for staff e.g. better access for people with disabilities
• Monitor service provided on our behalf by contractors and other parties
• Evidence consultation carried out with staff and service users
• Make guidance readily available to staff

The mainstreaming of equalities is part of a pro-active agenda. This demands proactive thinking, planning and action.

7. Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

The commitment will be implemented through our Corporate Equalities Action Plan. The Plan sets out the arrangements for taking action on individual tasks that will help deliver the broad aims set out in this statement. We will set clear deadlines and give responsibility to named officers who will be accountable for implementation of the given tasks.

With the help of feedback from our community groups, service users and employees, we will continue to develop arrangements to monitor, review and evaluate the effectiveness of our employment and service delivery policies. If our monitoring reveals any gaps in our policies, we will take necessary action.

In order to support our diverse workforce, the Council has set up a Black Workers’ Group and Disability Support Group. These Groups make valuable contributions to the development of Council policies & procedures in order to help make services more responsive to the needs of all communities.