



**MANCHESTER  
CITY COUNCIL**

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**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN EMPLOYMENT POLICY STATEMENT**

**JANUARY 2011**

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This document is Manchester City Council's equality policy, which relates to all Council employment practices. The policy promotes equality of opportunity for all persons, and promoting a working environment in which all persons are treated with respect.
- 1.2 It is through people that we will realise our ambitions to be a world-class city and deliver our priorities for the people of Manchester. We have made significant progress in regenerating the city and in improving services. Our challenge is to continue and sustain the city's economic growth, to connect that wealth to our most disadvantaged communities and to build truly sustainable communities where people prosper and to choose to live.
- 1.3 We will only achieve these challenging goals through our people. We value the diverse communities across Manchester, and recognise that in order to fully understand and deliver what citizens need and want, the Council needs a diverse workforce that is representative of the residents we serve, at all levels.
- 1.4 Our refreshed Corporate Values – People. Pride. Place. - will influence the culture of the organisation, greater accessibility to opportunities, as well as behaviour, thereby leading to those values becoming part of our daily working lives. We continue to listen to our workforce and diverse communities.
- 1.5 The Council is committed to broad principles of social justice. Equal opportunity extends into all of the services we provide, as well as our employment policies and practices. The Council has been driving forward with policies that promote equality and tackle discrimination for over twenty years. The Council has actively promoted programmes of positive action, with targets to ensure equality of opportunity in employment.
- 1.6 We undertake our responsibilities under equality legislation seriously and aim to achieve equality of opportunity in employment in compliance with this.
- 1.7 The policy is reviewed regularly to ensure it is fair and up to date with current legislation. The policy reaffirms the Council's commitment to fulfil all its legal obligations under equality legislation and associated codes of practice.

## **2 THE FRAMEWORK OF THIS POLICY STATEMENT**

- 2.1 The Council fully recognises that our own employment practices are a major influence on the community at large and intends that our equal opportunities policies should reach out into the community we serve.
- 2.2 All sections of the population have equal access to jobs offered by the Council and all applicants and employees receive equal treatment, regardless of age, carer responsibility, disability, ethnic or national origin, gender or gender identity, marital status, religion or belief, sexuality or trade union activity.

2.3 The Equality Act introduces a consistent approach to most of the concepts which apply to the different equality strands, and which the Act calls 'protected characteristics'. The Act harmonises and replaces previous legislation (such as the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995) and ensures consistency in what employers need to do to make the workplace a fair environment and to comply with the law. The protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- sex
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion and belief, or lack of religion or belief
- sexual orientation

2.4 The Council is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. This includes:

- (i) Direct discrimination
- (ii) Discrimination by Association
- (iii) Discrimination by Perception
- (iv) Indirect discrimination
- (v) Harassment
- (vi) Third Party harassment
- (vii) Victimisation

2.5 The Policy Statement applies to advertising, recruitment and selection procedures and relates to all aspects of employment, including:

- Communication
- Grievance and disciplinary procedures
- Pay
- Promotion
- Recruitment
- Service change and restructure
- Terms and conditions of service
- Training and career development, including the new m people pathway
- Transfer
- Job Evaluation
- Attendance

2.6 The Policy Statement is communicated to all employees and applicants for jobs in an appropriate manner including using new starter packs, the internet and intranet and is reinforced through Equality and Diversity training.

### **3 IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY STATEMENT**

The Council supports and encourages positive, non-discriminatory behaviour. The Council does not tolerate harassment and bullying, whether verbal or physical, by employees or the public. In implementing the Equal Opportunities Policy Statement, with the intention of achieving equality of opportunity in employment, the Council especially recognises the different and special needs of the following groups of employees.

#### **3.1 Age**

3.1.1 The Council appreciates the benefits of attracting and retaining a mixed-age workforce, which has a wide range of skills and experience and provides Equality and Diversity training to support this position. The Council supports employment initiatives for young people, the Government's aim to extend working life and the Government's commitment to re-assess the whole concept of retirement driven by the need to deal with demographic change.

#### **3.2 Employees with Caring Responsibilities**

3.2.1 The Council's employment practices acknowledge the needs of people with caring responsibilities. A carer is someone who looks after a relative, partner, friend or neighbour who could not manage without their help due to illness, age, disability, or substance misuse.

3.2.2 An increasing number of people with caring responsibilities wish to work and many do not wish to give up their careers as a result of these responsibilities. The Council recognises the needs experienced by those responsible for children and dependants and the need to respond positively where possible to requests for flexible working arrangements to enable them to be with their dependants.

3.2.3 The Council is improving its provisions regarding people with responsibilities for dependants. Childcare facilities for those who need it are regarded as an important means of support for Council employees. We therefore ensure that people with childcare responsibilities have access to information about the services available to them, for example services on offer to support them and Carers Network meetings. We also provide Equality and Diversity training to support this position.

#### **3.3 Disabled People**

- 3.3.1 The Council works to eliminate unlawful discrimination against disabled people. It promotes equality of opportunity for all disabled people in both employment and service provision. Disabled applicants are enabled for selection and employment Either alone, or in co-operation with the Government's 'Access to Work' Scheme, the Council provides and/or adapts premises, facilities, or equipment wherever possible. Reasonable adjustments regarding employees' working practices (i.e. flexible working, home working, temporary amendment of working hours etc.) will also be considered and, where possible, implemented to remove disabling barriers to employment. Equality and Diversity training is provided to support this position.
- 3.3.2 Positive steps are also taken to attract disabled people to Council jobs, and the Council has set equality targets towards achieving a fair representation of disabled people at all grades. The Council adopts the social model of disability, which "includes people with physical, mental or sensory impairments who experience, or have experienced, restrictions or discrimination in taking part fully in mainstream society". Any disabled person who demonstrates they meet the requirements of the Person Specification of any job for which they apply are guaranteed to go through to the first stage of the recruitment process.
- 3.3.3 Disabled people are given equal opportunities for training and career development - including additional training where necessary. Newly disabled employees who cannot continue their current duties will be retrained or flexibly deployed, where circumstances permit.
- 3.3.4 Managers of disabled staff will engage with the member of staff at the earliest opportunity to identify what aids, adaptations or other adjustments they may require, working with Access to Work to obtain them where appropriate. The Council's intranet contains information on how assistance can be obtained. Managers should also sensitively raise with the employee from time to time whether the adjustments applied are still effective and appropriate.
- 3.3.5 The Council supports the disability hate crimes initiative of Greater Manchester Police and will support any member of staff who genuinely feels they have been bullied due to their disability.

#### **3.4 Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) People**

- 3.4.1 The Council works to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity for all racial groups in both employment and service provision.
- 3.4.2 The Council welcomes the fact that the United Kingdom is a multi-racial and multi-cultural society, and that Manchester's communities reflect this. In employment, the Council's view is that, irrespective of the

colour of one's skin, or ethnic or national origin, individuals either bring, or can be provided with, skills and knowledge, which will enhance the services provided by the Council.

3.4.3 The Council's advertising procedures are used to encourage BME people to apply for Council vacancies. We also institute programmes of positive action in training, for example, Equality and Diversity training and set equality targets towards achieving a workforce, which reflects at all grades, the multi-racial composition of Manchester.

3.4.4 The Council fully endorses the recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and will meet its duty in responding to reported racist incidents in line with these recommendations.

## **3.5 Gender**

### **3.5.1 Women**

This policy aims to improve the opportunities available to women and includes recognition of the skills and experiences which women can bring to the workplace. Our Equality and Diversity training supports this position. Women are encouraged to apply for all jobs unless there is a Genuine Occupational Requirement (see item 4). Opportunities for career coaching are available.

### **3.5.2 Men**

Men are encouraged to apply for all jobs, unless there is a Genuine Occupational Requirement (see item 4). The Council's Equality and Diversity training supports this position. Opportunities for career coaching are available.

### **3.5.3 Transsexuals and people undergoing gender reassignment**

The Council will support any employee who intends to, is undergoing or who has undergone gender reassignment in consultation with the individual concerned.

The Council is committed to preventing discrimination against transgender people. We actively intervene in cases of discrimination, harassment and bullying or other detrimental treatment.

We recognise that fear of discrimination is the major factor which forces transgender people to conceal their gender identity, or not to apply for jobs, which they are capable of doing. We welcome job applications from transgender people and ensure that their right to be open about their gender identity is respected.

An important step in removing discrimination on the grounds of gender identity is supporting the right of transgender people to be open about whom they are. We aim to create an atmosphere and environment where it is safe for them to do so. Equality and Diversity training includes the development of an open culture.

The Council recognises that many transgender people are parents and confirm that our employment practices must be geared to the needs of transgender people responsible for children and dependants. All rights and benefits such as special leave accorded to working parents are the same for transgender people and/or their partners.

### **3.6 Employees with a particular religion or belief**

3.6.1 The Council aims to eliminate unlawful discrimination on grounds of religion or belief in all of our functions, service provision, decisionmaking and employment procedures and promote equality of opportunity for all groups.

3.6.2 The Council makes every possible effort to accommodate employees who require access to a quiet place in which to pray, or who request that their rest break coincides with their religious obligations to pray, subject to impact on service provision or on other employees. Applications for annual leave, including leave to be taken in blocks, will be accommodated where possible, where this does not conflict with legitimate business needs and is explicitly balanced with service provision requirements.

### **3.7 Sexuality**

#### 3.7.1 Lesbians and bisexual women

A person's sexuality is not a matter which the Council will take into account in determining suitability for recruitment, promotion, training or transfer for any Council post and will not be grounds for dismissal from any Council job. The Council provides Equality and Diversity training to support this position. We welcome job applications from lesbians and bisexual women.

An important step in removing discrimination on the grounds of sexuality is supporting the right of lesbians and bisexual women to be open about who they are.

All rights and benefits accorded to working parents, such as special leave, maternity support leave and parental leave, are the same for lesbians and bisexual women and/or their partners.

### 3.7.2 Gay Men and Bisexual Men

A person's sexuality is not a matter which the Council takes into account in determining suitability for recruitment, promotion, training or transfer for any Council post, and will not be grounds for dismissal from any Council job. The Council provides Equality and Diversity training to support this position. We welcome job applications from gay and bisexual men and ensure that their right to be open about their sexuality is respected.

An important step in removing discrimination on the grounds of sexuality is supporting the right of gay and bisexual men to be open about who they are.

The Council recognises that many gay and bisexual men are fathers and confirm that our employment practices must be geared to the needs of gay and bisexual fathers and gay and bisexual men responsible for children and dependants. All rights and benefits accorded to working parents are the same for gay and bisexual men and/or their partners.

### 3.7.3 Bisexual men and women

The Council recognises that bisexual people may be the target of specific discrimination and that their experiences often differ from those of lesbians and gay men. The Council recognises that fear of discrimination is the major factor which forces bisexual people to conceal their sexuality and to present themselves as heterosexual, lesbian or gay depending on the situation.

We aim to do this by removing barriers to this, creating an atmosphere and environment where it is safe for them to do so and by not assuming that employees or users of our services are heterosexual, lesbian or gay.

## **4 GENUINE OCCUPATIONAL REQUIREMENT**

- 4.1 Some jobs with the Council will be subject to a Genuine Occupational Requirement (GOR). Direct discrimination is lawful where a GOR exists. A GOR may directly prevent or enable the recruitment of people with certain protected characteristics dependant on the requirements of the role. There is no definitive list of situations where a GOR will be applicable, but the Council will seek thorough legal advice before applying the condition.

## **5 CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The Council consults with representatives of the groups outlined and with our Trade Unions, to ensure that our employment policies reflect the true needs of groups that experience discrimination and disadvantage.



## 6 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

- 6.1 Job requirements are reviewed to ensure that they do not discriminate directly or indirectly against any individual. The detailed policies promoting equality of opportunity in the recruitment and selection process are contained in a separate Recruitment and Selection Best Practice Guide (available to download from [www.manchester.gov.uk](http://www.manchester.gov.uk)) and must be adhered to at all times.
- 6.2 The selection process is of crucial importance to this policy, and every stage of the process must be carried out by people who fully understand and are committed to the principles of the policy. The Council provides training to employees or Councillors involved in the recruitment process to ensure they are thoroughly briefed in the provisions of this policy.

## 7 TRAINING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

- 7.1 We aim to train all employees, giving priority to key supervisory and management decision makers, and for all those dealing directly with the public, to promote equal opportunities, ensure the consistency and transparency in applying the policy and combat all forms of discrimination.
- 7.2 The Council ensures that training and development activities and programmes are accessible to employees from all backgrounds and are not organised or delivered in such a way as to exclude or limit participation or cause offence.
- 7.3. The new ***m people*** pathway is a new approach to developing the skills of staff and enabling deployment of skills to organisational need. As part of the development of ***m people*** an equality impact assessment has been undertaken.
- 7.4 This inclusive process aims to develop skills and support all employees to participate positively within a changing working environment. Support provided includes activities such as career coaches, skill audits and change workshops.
- 7.5 Positive action programmes are delivered to promote training for disadvantaged groups to assist them to enter areas of employment where they are under-represented.
- 7.6 We offer programmes to managers and staff on Equality and Diversity in Practice training. These classroom based programmes are advertised on our Corporate Learning and Development intranet site, with staff being encouraged to attend following completion of an Equality and Diversity in Practice e-learning module.
- 7.7 Employee equality groups

7.7.1 Assisting employees in identifying plans for their own training and development needs. Encouragement is given to identifying career paths and all staff will be briefed on the m people pathway as it is rolled out across the City Council to support their involvement in the process.

## **8 COMMUNICATION**

8.1 We commit to communicating with our employees in a non-discriminatory way that recognises the different needs of employees from different backgrounds.

8.2 It is every employee's responsibility to ensure that all communication, whether verbal, written or graphic, is clear, accessible and non-discriminatory. The Council's 'Manchester Brand' guidelines, set out the standards that must be met.

## **9 CONDITIONS OF SERVICE**

9.1 It is a condition of service that all Council workers must carry out all duties with full regard to the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy. All Service Conditions are regularly reviewed, in consultation with the Trade Unions, to ensure that they adequately provide for the needs of employees in the groups outlined in this policy.

9.2 All employees are responsible for ensuring that their actions comply with this policy statement. Breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

9.3 Display of material offensive or denigrating to groups covered by the policy is contrary to the policy. Propagation and/or circulation of such material, including the failure to remove such material when requested, is regarded as a disciplinary offence which could, if deemed as gross misconduct, lead to summary dismissal.

9.4 Council employees will follow dress and appearance guidance in accordance with the Council's Customer Care Standards and individual service/departmental guidance where applicable. Where appropriate due to Health and Safety, security, or where standard issue clothing is required, the Council will provide an appropriate form of clothing or allowance.

## **10 RESPONSIBILITY**

10.1 This Policy Statement applies to all Council Directorates and all employees of the Council. Strategic Directors and Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring the implementation and monitoring of the effectiveness of the policy.

10.2 The Council does not accept discrimination by any of our employees against fellow workers or members of the public.

## **11 MONITORING**

11.1 The Council uses a monitoring system to collect data and allow assessment to be made regarding the effectiveness of its policies. Impact assessments are also used to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

11.2 All employees and job applicants are asked to indicate their gender, ethnic origin, whether they are disabled, their sexuality and age on a selfclassification basis as part of their conditions of service.

The Council is required by law to publish an annual equality action plan for the Council and to monitor progress. The collection of monitoring data, therefore, is essential for this purpose.

11.3 The Council is required by law to give certain information about our employees to government departments and agencies principally in relation to tax and national insurance matters (e.g. gender, address, type and dates of employment; make-up of earnings and expenses such as allowances for clothing and equipment and use of cars; and reasons for leaving employment). For some jobs which are subject to Central Government approval, information about the person whom the Council proposes to appoint is required to be given to the appropriate Government Department before an appointment can be made.

11.4 The Council gives an assurance that no information obtained as part of the monitoring of equal opportunity in employment by which an individual could be identified will be given to any government department or agency or organisation outside the Council (without their prior consent).

11.5 The Council expects improvements to be made (and targets met where appropriate) in the employment position of young and old people, disabled people, BME people, women and men, lesbians, gay men, and bisexual men and women, and the Council will consult with Trade Unions and the groups covered by the policy to determine measurable and attainable equality targets (where appropriate), which will be regularly reviewed, in all areas of underrepresentation.

11.6 In addition, all hate crime incidents will be monitored by the Council and reported to the police in accordance with guidelines set out in the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry.

## **12 COMPLAINTS**

12.1 Information regarding 'Dealing with Complaints' is available to staff on the Council's intranet.

12.2 The process for people not employed by the Council to make complaints is available on the Council's Internet site, where online complaints forms and contact numbers are given by Service.

### **13 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS**

13.1 The City Council carries out Equality Impact Assessments and reviews its policies, services and functions in order to minimise any possibility of outcomes from those policies, services and functions having a negative impact on its employees and/or Manchester residents.

### **14 RESOURCES**

14.1 Manchester City Council is an equal opportunity employer and devotes resources to achieve the aims set out in this policy.