



# **Equality and Diversity Position Statement 2017**

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## Introduction

Welcome to Ashfield District Council's Equality and Diversity Position Statement for 2017.

Ashfield District Council is committed to eliminating inequality on the basis of the protected characteristics. The Council recognises that there are differences in life situations and experiences for people representative of the protected characteristics and strives to ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all people taking into account their individual needs.

The Authority self-assessed against the Achieving Level of the Equality Framework for Local Government **and the Local Government Social Housing Equality Framework** in 2016 and continues to improve service provision and working practices to embrace diversity and promote equality of opportunity for everyone.

## The Equality Act

Ashfield District Council believes that equality is one of the key values of the organisation and must be embedded within all services provided ensuring that services are community and customer focussed and putting people first. The Authority will therefore treat everyone as individuals with the same courtesy attention and respect to ensure that people feel valued and respected and have equality of opportunity regardless of their:

- Race
- Sex
- Disability
- Age
- Gender reassignment
- Marital status
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

The Public Sector Equality Duty is made up of a general duty supported by specific duties. The general duty requires public authorities, such as local councils to have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment and victimisation
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share protected characteristics and people who do not
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

Having due regard means that the Authority must consider these three aims and ensure that equality issues inform the decision making process throughout the organisation to ensure that the organisation will strive to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Meet the needs of people with protected characteristics
- Encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life and in other activities where participation is low
- Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty, at least annually
- Set and publish equality objectives at least every four years

There are a number of specific duties in place which support public bodies in meeting their requirements under the general duty. These specific duties require public bodies to set specific and measurable equality objectives and to publish information that will demonstrate how they are performing.

### **Meeting our Equality Objectives for 2012 - 2016**

The Authority was committed to meeting its equality objectives for 2012 -2016. Valuing its workforce and ensuring that employees are treated fairly and respectfully and placing residents at the heart of its services.

- **To develop a modern and diverse workforce that is reflective of the local community and whose employees feel valued and treated fairly**
- **To ensure that community engagement and consultation is effective**
- **To ensure that vulnerable people have access to the services and support they need**
- **To improve customer contact and access**
- **To embed equality and diversity throughout the organisation**
- **To help make Ashfield a district where visitors and residents from all backgrounds feel safe and secure**

There are a number of examples from across the organisation demonstrating how the Authority met those aspirations.

### **An Inclusive and supported Workforce**

A recruitment and selection strategy collates work to provide a modern and diverse workforce. In 2016/17:

- Significant increase in employment of young people as % of total workforce plus significant increase in applications from young people
- Significant increase in number of employees appointed from BME groups

**Priorities identified for 2017 include:**

- Increase further % of BME employees
- Increase % of young people including apprentices

**Enterprising Schools Project**

Work with Ashfield secondary schools to support students and develop the skills employers expect of them for example problem solving, leadership, teamwork, creativity. Local employers are also engaged on the programme to participate and lead on group activities or act as guest speakers.

**Job Fair**

The Ashfield jobs fair brought together local people looking for employment, starting a business, training, volunteering, advice and support with local employers, recruitment agencies with vacancies, training providers as well as support organisations

**Wellbeing at work**

The Authority has signed up to the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Wellbeing at Work: Workplace Health Award Scheme and has achieved the Silver Accreditation. The scheme invests in the wellbeing of employees to promote:

- Better mental health
- Better work life balance increased sense of self value and efficacy
- Increased awareness and ability to improve health
- Improved levels of wellbeing

**Mindful Employer Charter**

The Authority has signed up to the Mindful Employer Charter which supports employers in achieving a positive working environment for people with mental ill health through the following:

- Application and recruitment process
- Providing support for employees disclosing their mental ill health
- Not making assumptions about people with mental ill health
- Providing non-judgemental and proactive support to individual staff who experience mental health issues
- Ensuring that managers are equipped with the right information and training to manage mental health in the workplace

**Disability Confident**

Ashfield District Council is a Level 2 Disability Confident Employer. This scheme run by the Government encourages businesses to recruit and retain disabled people and people with health conditions for their skills and talent.

**Graduate Scheme**

In 2016 the placement scheme organised by Mansfield and Ashfield councils helped place 2 graduates within the Authority for 6 months and 1 undergraduate. One graduate has been successful in securing additional work beyond the end of their graduate placement. The external programme funded by Nottinghamshire County Council also achieved 7 graduates placed in local businesses. This year there is funding for 4 graduates or undergraduate placements within the Authority.

## **Work Experience**

A range of work experience placements for schools and college students have been provided. An innovative, pioneering, collaboration with Vision West Nottinghamshire has seen over 120 work experience placements who have undertaken, media, PR, design and social media projects. These have been beneficial to students development, curriculum teaching and real live experience of communications work for the Council

## **Reactive 8**

Reactiv8 is a partnership programme which aims to engage people with newly acquired disabilities into sport and physical activity. The target of a minimum of 12 referrals over the year of the programme (Oct 15 - Oct 16) was achieved. All those referred have either accessed the gym, swimming or stroke ability classes within local leisure centres including some at Festival Hall. The programme is now ongoing.

## **Breastfeeding Friendly Scheme**

Mothers have the legal right to breastfeed anywhere (2010 Equality Act) but many do not feel confident in doing so. The Urban Office has been successfully accredited as part of the Breastfeeding friendly scheme. This scheme aims to improve the health of both mother and baby and provides a comfortable and supportive environment to normalise breastfeeding in local communities.

## **Leisure Centres**

Following the success of Walking Football, 'Walking Cricket' has been introduced at Hucknall leisure Centre. This activity is aimed at participants aged 50 plus and now has a core of regular attendees with both men and women being involved in exercise and meeting socially.

Lammas Leisure Centre implemented a Dementia support group meeting on Tuesday afternoons at the centre and on 17th May 2017 will be supporting the Ashfield Dementia Alliance by encouraging people to take part in walking 23.5 miles during National Walk to Work week and promoting Ashfield as a Dementia Friendly District.

Following a successful funding bid to Sportivate, Lammas Leisure Centre introduced a six week course of ladies only ice skating on Friday's 2pm – 3pm. The intention is that this will become a sustainable project providing exercise, training and a social outlet for women.

Encouraged by Sport England, "This girl can" campaign of taking #sweatyselfies to promote role models to other women and girls and encourage participation in Sports.

In participation with Framework, a disco style dance class similar to Zumba was trialled at Lammas Leisure Centre to entertain and provide activity for people with learning difficulties. The Sport Nottinghamshire – Sportivate funded project encouraged 11-25 year old service users to exercise with their friends in a class that other people with learning difficulties were encouraged to access.

Despite achieving high participation for a pilot project, it was not sustainable however, participants have been using the leisure centre more regularly than prior to the classes and feel confident in doing so.

Over the last 12 months four Leisure centres with fitness suites have successfully undergone an inclusive Fitness Initiative Assessment review with a focus on all aspects of inclusive service provision

## **Grants**

Grants have been awarded to a number of organisations to support the work that they do to promote community cohesion including:

- Salvation Army and local church groups.
- A number of foodbanks and associated outreach projects
- Youth clubs, holiday clubs and free activities for children on parks and open spaces
- Outings and activities for older people's groups and community transport

## **Parks and Recreation Grounds**

### **Acacia Recreation Ground Improvements**

The Authority secured a £20,000 grant from Nottinghamshire County Council's supporting Local Communities scheme for the installation of a scooter park in 2017. Extensive public consultation took place with local community groups who use the facility, schools, colleges and parent and toddler groups. The consultation also involved an activity day on the Recreation Ground and desk based activities with pupils. £50,000 was secured from WREN and with Section 106 contributions from housing developers is being used to provide a new play area, footpaths and entrance features.



### **Recreation grounds.**

A number of parks and recreation grounds have undergone improvements through community partnerships including Butlers Hill Recreation ground, Titchfield Park and Milton Rise Play area in Hucknall and Sutton Lawn. Community groups have been involved in the design and improvement of these areas to include wildlife areas, under 6 years play area, new footpaths, gate and signage improvements, tree and flower bed planting.

### **Active Ashfield Games**

Around 6,000 people took part in the 2016 Active Ashfield Games activities and events from April to June.

## **Community Support**

### **Working with Vulnerable Adults**

In partnership with voluntary sector organisations, Community Action Officers continue to provide information and signposting services to a range of local opportunities, support and advice networks across the district. This includes the Sutton food banks and the Let's All Eat weekly community eating events, both of which provide invaluable information on volunteering, education and employment opportunities as well Citizens Advice. Community Protection work closely with partner agencies to understand the issues facing the most vulnerable people in the community. A multi-agency team that includes Nottinghamshire Police, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service, Victim Support, Probation and other key partners, allows specific focus and understanding to be channelled into solving complex matters.

### **Connecting Communities (C2) Initiative**

Based in the heart of the New Cross community in Sutton-In-Ashfield, the New Cross Support Team works with individuals and families in the area supporting residents to live a self-sufficient and balanced life. Consisting of officers from agencies such as Ashfield District Council, Nottinghamshire Police, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service, Jobcentre plus and Nottinghamshire County Council, the team works closely with residents to build trusting relationships that lead to sustainable solutions. Since January 2016, the team has worked with over 150 residents in the area, assisting residents with issues such as finances, anti-social behaviour, housing disrepair, environment, community and fire safety.

The group have developed a very successful youth club with a regular attendance of around 25 children. They are working in partnership with a local allotment group on a garden project and are also involved in resolving resident parking issues.

One of the key volunteers from the group recently commented:

“I feel a great sense of pride in the achievements that we have made as a group. It just goes to show what volunteering can do for you and for your community, it has certainly made a difference for me personally and a difference in my community”.

Funding for the C2 Initiative has now come to an end. The group formed from this initiative has become a fully constituted and independent community group. Run by volunteers in the New Cross Area and supported by Community Action Officers now called the 'New Cross Community Links' group.

### **Broomhill project**

The Council also supported the Clinical Commissioning Group's Connecting Communities (C2) pilot project in the Broomhill Area of Hucknall which aimed to support community led improvements through local problem solving and empowering community action proven to result in improved health and wellbeing. This initiative has supported the introduction of the Broomhill support Team to mirror and further develop the successful work through the new Cross initiative.

## Housing

### Brook Street and Darlison Court



The award winning housing scheme at Brook Street resulted in the building of 25 new social housing units for the over 55's. A further scheme at Darlison Court provides extra care housing. Willmott Dixon (WD) was appointed as the main contractor on the Darlison Court development in Hucknall. They are committed to working with schools and colleges to offer training, work experience opportunities and initiatives to support the local community. Activities supported to date include:

- Work experience placements through Vision West Nottinghamshire and Work Pays
- Hucknall National students visits to site periodically to write articles for their school newsletter on progress of the development
- Willmott Dixon staff assisted with mock interviews at Holgate School in March
- Open doors weekend with 40 local people attending
- Numerous visits to the site for local children's groups
- Support to community group projects and events i.e. Bee Garden Group, Surestart and Reachout Residents
- Darlison Court has formed a tenants group to help support activities for the tenants. These will focus on activities, which so far have included a regular coffee morning, games nights, sharing of books and providing support to each other.
- Working with the National Academy and the tenants to provide art work for the building.

#### **First 4 Support Call Monitoring Service**

The Council provides support and assistance to enable the District's elderly and vulnerable residents to remain independent in their home through the delivery of a Call Monitoring (lifeline) service from a dedicated Support Centre. The Call Monitoring service is a 24/7/365 day telephone response service. Service users with a need for immediate assistance, for example as a result of a fall, activate the lifeline alarm and our Support Centre Officer arranges an appropriate response. The service works in partnership with various agencies including Nottinghamshire Police, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue, Nottinghamshire Ambulance Service, Social Services and the MASH Safeguarding team.

### **Tenancy Sustainment Service**

Based in the Housing Services Directorate, the Tenancy Sustainment Service provides a short term support service to support vulnerable tenants whose tenancy is (or could be) at risk due to mental health issues, local anti-social behaviour, a history of homelessness or other complex needs. This service aims to enable tenants to sustain a tenancy and live independently. This service is also designed specifically to help new tenants establish a tenancy and settle into their home. The service works with a number of local support services and partner agencies in the District to ensure that long term support is provided where necessary.

### **Refugees**

Since April 2016 the Council have provided refuge accommodation utilising housing stock, and in partnership with Women's Aid Integrated Services has provided intensive support to women and children escaping domestic abuse. In February 2017 the Council were successful in their bid to DCLG for additional grant funding to continue the scheme with enhanced services and a dedicated children's worker. The refuge units have been fully utilised by women from across the County and this scheme has delivered many positive outcomes for victims of domestic abuse.

In March 2017 the Council has accommodated x 2 Syrian families within social housing stock through the SVPR programme. The two families are supported within the home and partner agencies are involved to assist their integration and ensure their educational, health and support needs are met.

### **Disability Facilities Grants and Prevention Measures**

Following a service review, a new approach has been adopted to significantly increase performance and outcomes delivered in processing and provision of adaptations including house extensions, wet rooms, stair lifts, and access improvements. Resources also allocated to supporting Warm Homes on Prescription Scheme in partnership with GP's targeting vulnerable adults to address fuel poverty, cold and improve health and wellbeing. Other schemes include handy person to provide adaptations to reduce trips and falls.

### **Equality Objectives 2017 - 2021**

The Authority reviewed its' equality objectives in 2017 to reflect the ambitions within the Forward Plan. Performance indicators will be developed to ensure that progress is measured against these objectives.

Our objectives for 2017 - 2021 are as follows:

- **To maintain a modern and diverse workforce that is reflective of the local community and whose employees feel valued and treated fairly**
- **To ensure that community engagement and consultation is effective**
- **To recognise the needs of different customers and make reasonable adjustments**
- **To support individuals and communities to achieve a better quality of life particularly targeting resources at areas of most need**

The Authority will continue to consult with its employees and customers to enable them to be involved in the decision making process and to influence the way things are done within the Authority.

## Actions to achieve these objectives

<b>To maintain a modern and diverse workforce that is reflective of the local community and whose staff feel valued and treated fairly</b>	
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Year</b>
To continue to improve the representation of the workforce profile against the local labour market profile for those underrepresented groups like the 16-29 year olds and black and minority ethnic groups	Ongoing
Continue to review recruitment and retention practices to ensure that they are fully inclusive and meet the latest legislation	Ongoing
Review and work towards the objectives contained within the People Strategy and monitor progress	2016 -2019
Ongoing review of HR policies for example Bullying and Harassment policy	Ongoing
Increase the number of young people appointed supported by the apprenticeship Levy introduced from April 2017	2017
Promote opportunities for flexible working and developing as an Agile Council	Ongoing
Raise awareness of the support for employees through the Mindful Employer Charter and the Disability Confident Scheme. Meet the criteria of these initiatives	2017
Implementation of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy and the work towards becoming a more attractive employer for young people	Jan 18

<b>To ensure that community engagement and consultation is effective</b>	
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Year</b>
Continue to develop alternative means of public participation and measure the outcomes of effective engagement with wider groups	Ongoing
Publicise and promote to tenants and residents how their input shapes future service provision	Ongoing
Publicise and promote to tenants and residents how complaints have led to a change in service provision	Ongoing
To improve the percentage of residents who feel the Council engages effectively with its communities	Ongoing yearly
To improve the percentage of residents who feel that they are well informed about the services provided by the Authority	2018
To understand issues with community cohesion through Citizens Panel focus groups	Ongoing
To undertake ongoing review of current consultation programme/approaches and identify any gaps and corporately agree/implement changes to address	Ongoing

<b>To recognise the needs of different customers and make reasonable adjustments</b>	
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Year</b>
Establish robust monitoring and scheduled consultation with marginalised groups within the district	Ongoing
Housing to adopt the procurement equality risk matrix to ensure that contractors provide services to the public that meet equality standards	June 17
To increase the number of people with a disability participating in	Ongoing

community and volunteering programmes	
To increase the number of people with a disability participating in sports development programmes Locality Plan	Ongoing
Address outcomes/research findings of Older Persons Housing Needs report	2018
Link EIA's to more robust impact of services changes on communities, especially impact on protected characteristics	Ongoing
Address outcomes from the learning Difficulties and Care study & Disabled Housing Needs research	2018

<b>To support individuals and communities to achieve a better quality of life particularly targeting resources at areas of most need</b>	
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Year</b>
Undertake monitoring of completed EIA's for key policy changes on community, especially impact on protected characteristics	Ongoing
Collate and review customer feedback on equality across all services to determine trends and improve service delivery and feed into the Customer Services Review	Ongoing
To influence and support targeting of commissioning of health and wellbeing contracts/work programmes to areas of greatest need to address health	Ongoing
Integrate Quality of Life policy and targeting of services and support within the 5 geographical areas into strategic thinking and service planning	Ongoing
To improve the percentage of residents who agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together	2018
To improve the percentage of residents satisfied with the way the Council runs things	2018
To improve the percentage of residents that agree they can influence decisions affecting their local area	2018
Harassment and hate crimes are monitored and analysed regularly to ensure that appropriate action is taken to address the issues that have been identified	Ongoing

### **Our future projects to include:**

- Programme of work experience, graduate, undergraduate placements
- Ashfield Job Fair 2017
- Increase in employment of young people through apprentices/apprenticeships/traineeships
- Enhance provision of work placements for pupils and students
- Identify and develop volunteering opportunities
- Development of Support Teams to add to New Cross and Broomhill projects
- Support to DWP – unemployed back into work project
- Publication of Gender Pay Gap assessment
- Assessment for Gold and Platinum levels of Workplace Health Award
- Support housing provision and support services for refugees

- Targeting of actions via Recruitment and Selection strategy to promote applications and appointment from young people and BME groups
- Quality of Life Initiative – targeting resources and support to 5 geographical areas identified as having greatest health, social and economic needs
- Active Ashfield Programme