

Appendix 2 – Equality Objectives (2019 to 2023)

Public Sector Equality Duty

The Public Sector Equality Duty, which is known as the General Equality Duty in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 is a key lever for ensuring that public sector organisations, like Birmingham City Council, embed equality across its policies and services.

Under this Duty, the council must, in exercising our functions, have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
3. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

It's important that the council considers how its decisions advance equality, inclusion and diversity by removing or minimising disadvantages experienced by people because of their protected characteristics.

The protected characteristic' covered by the Equality Act 2010 are: age, race, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex, sexual orientation.

Equality Objectives

Public authorities are legally required to set at least one equality objective every four years to help focus attention on priority equality issues. For 2019 to 2023, the council is proposing five equality objectives to help drive equality and inclusion across all areas of the council's work, as well as demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The proposed equality objectives, set out below, have been developed by drawing on the council's current policies together with an equality gap analysis and workforce equality data.

Objective 1:

Understand our diverse communities and embed that understanding in how we shape policy and practice across the Council

How we will do this:

- Improve the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative information to inform and shape decisions on different equality groups.
- Work with our citizens and partner organisations, including the voluntary, community and faith sectors, to ensure we use our community intelligence, data, and knowledge to deliver joined up policies and practice.

Objective 2:

Demonstrate inclusive leadership, partnership and a clear organisational commitment to be a leader in equality, diversity and inclusion in the City

How we will do this:

- Measure and share our progress and achievements.
- Establish a senior equalities leadership group, led by the Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, Community Safety and Equalities to challenge and drive improvement.
- Assess the impact of our decisions on socio-economic inequality as well as protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010.
- Having visible leadership that ensures equality is reflected in corporate reporting, strategic plans and target setting. Additionally, adopt and promote a zero-tolerance approach to discriminatory behaviour.
- Establish corporate equality champions, drawn from the council's senior management team, with specific responsibilities to raise awareness on equality issues and promote good practice.

Objective 3:

Involve and enable our diverse communities to play an active role in civic society and put the citizens' voice at the heart of decision making

How we will do this:

- Promote and review civic participation and the involvement of diverse communities in the decision-making processes of the council.

Objective 4:

Deliver responsive services and customer care that is accessible and inclusive to individual's needs and respects faith, beliefs and cultural differences

What we will do:

- Ensure comprehensive equality impact assessments are completed for all decisions impacting on services users and wider community.
- Promote tolerance and mutual respect across people of all faiths and none, including the adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliances working definition of anti-Semitism (formally adopted by the council in 2017).

Objective 5:

Encourage and enable a skilled and diverse workforce to build a culture of equality and inclusion in everything we do

What we will do:

- Provide training on Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit to all council senior management teams.
- Reduce the proportion of 'unknown' equality data we hold on our employees.
- Review the diversity at all levels of our workforce to help identify areas for improvement.
- Take part in national benchmarking diversity schemes.
- Work with our staff networks and equality champions to reduce the numbers of grievances related to discrimination issues, particularly from black, Asian and minority ethnic and disabled employees.
- Work towards achieving the national Disability Confident Employer scheme at Level 2.

Our equality objectives align with the principles of Birmingham's Community Cohesion Strategy. We will annually review and report progress on these objectives to Cabinet.