

# **Surrey Heath Borough Council Human Resources**

## **Equality Strategy 2021-2023**



**Great Place • Great Community • Great Future**

Feb 21

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## INTRODUCTION

### 1. SURREY HEATH'S VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Underpinning our vision is the Five-Year Strategy which is grouped under four themes with objectives as follows:

**Place** – We want to make Surrey Heath an even better place where people are happy to live

**Prosperity** – We will support and promote our local economy so that people can work and do business across Surrey Heath

**People** – We will build and encourage communities where people can live happily and healthily.

**Performance** – We will deliver effective and efficient services better and faster.

**Delivery of Equality Objectives under the Five-Year Strategy** demonstrates our commitment to embedding equality in everything we do.

**Corporate Objective** - *'We will build and encourage communities where people can live happily and healthily'.*

We will do this by:

- 'Helping **older and vulnerable people** to live independently and remain in their homes for as long as possible',
- 'Using our **green space** to deliver a programme of sport and leisure activities which will support our community engagement with the citizens of Surrey Heath'.
- 'Working with our partners to improve the **health and well-being** of our community'.

Equality also comprises a vital element of the Council's internal CORE Values, specifically encompassed within the core value **Respect for All**. Defined as 'treating people in a fair, equitable and non-discriminatory manner that promotes trust, openness and honesty'. Staff are required to adopt linked behaviours while undertaking their duties to demonstrate the Council's commitment to equality.

## **2. APPROACH TO EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

The Council takes responsibility to ensure that equality is integrated into both the service delivery and employment practices of the authority. Recognising equality and accessibility is an integral part of our working approach.

The Council complies with the legal framework set out by the Equality Act 2010. We use the Local Government Equality Framework to measure our progress on mainstreaming equality and diversity into service delivery and employment and to adopt an equal life chances approach. The Council gained the 'Achieving' level of the Equality Framework in 2010.

This Strategy demonstrates our commitment to continue to embed equality and diversity in our employment practices and service delivery. The Council is also committed to work with partners to set equality objectives.

The Council and partners work to prevent discrimination, harassment, and victimisation and to recognise the diversity of need within the local community and the need to ensure fair and equitable treatment.

We also work to

- deliver accessible and responsive services to customers and residents in the community including those from protected characteristics
- employ a workforce that reflects the diversity of Surrey Heath
- provide equality of opportunity for all staff
- meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty

## **3. HOW OUR SERVICES ARE DELIVERED**

Surrey Heath Borough Council is composed of 35 Members representing 16 Wards elected for a 4-year term and works with a Leader and Executive for decision making, including policy.

The Chief Executive and the Corporate Management Team have the overall responsibility for delivery of services and are tasked with effective implementation of the decisions and policies agreed by Council or the Executive, ensuring that services are provided efficiently within identified resources, and to meet the needs of the service users.

The Council has a 5 Year Strategy from 2021-26. It produces an annual plan every year which sets out our corporate objectives and key priorities. All current and future Council key strategies and policies will take account of equalities issues and aim to be fair to all.

#### 4. **OUR ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY AND WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP**

The Council's approach to equality and accessibility is reflected in our work within and for the community, in all our partnerships and wherever we work with contractors.

The **Sustainable Community Strategy** sets out the strategic direction for the Council by committing to improve matters like climate change and regeneration to increase the borough's quality of life. The Surrey Heath Partnership seeks to embed equality for all and to recognise and celebrate diversity and to promote equality of opportunity to all parts of the borough'.

#### 5. **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Individuals have a responsibility to adhere to the organisations policy and strategy.

The Council have the responsibility (a 'duty') to ensure that the objectives of the Equality Strategy are reflected in the design of the organisation's policies and the delivery of services, including internal policies, and for these issues to be kept under review.

However, some individuals and groups have additional duties under the Equality Strategy, as described below:

##### **Equality Champions**

The Leader of the Council and the Support and Safeguarding Portfolio Holder, champion equality, and diversity for the Council. The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that the Equality Strategy and legislation are integrated into both service delivery and employment.

##### **Councillors**

Council members have an important role to play in championing equal opportunities and promoting cohesion and fostering good relations within their constituencies.

They are responsible for paying due regard to equality and human rights in all their constituency work. Councillors are encouraged to engage with their constituents on equality and human rights issues for the purposes of representing the views of their constituents relating to Council policy or service provision.

Councillors also have a responsibility to ensure that they are operating in a manner that supports the objectives of the Equality Strategy, e.g. attending relevant training that may support their understanding and knowledge of equality and human rights issues.

### **Equality Working Group (EWG)**

The councillor Equality Working Group has been set up to demonstrate high level commitment to equality from the Council members.

### **Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee Members**

Members of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee are responsible for challenging Council members, officers and others about decisions impacting on equality and human rights issues.

### **Corporate Management Team (CMT)**

Members of the Corporate Management Team are responsible for ensuring that the Equality Strategy is adopted across the council and integrated into all aspects of service planning and delivery.

Their role is to ensure that the new strategy is robust, represents a shared vision and meets the needs of the local area. Their responsibility lies in ensuring that measures are in place to monitor, challenge and review the progress of the Equality Strategy for their service area.

Working in conjunction with their team managers, all CMT members should be able to demonstrate that they have oversight of the strategy in their service area and are managing how information about the impact of their services on equality and human rights is gathered, made available and evaluated.

### **Managers**

Managers across all Council services are responsible for ensuring that the objectives of the Equality Strategy are pursued appropriately through the work undertaken by their teams. They are responsible for gathering and making information about the impact of their work on different communities available for evaluation.

Managers also have an individual responsibility to ensure that individual staff members understand their specific roles and responsibilities regarding implementing the Equality Strategy and working in a manner that is accordant with the Council's approach to equality and human rights.

### **All Council Staff**

All staff (i.e. employees, casual workers, contractors, and volunteers) are responsible for conducting their work in a way that supports delivery of the

strategy and which demonstrates the Council's CORE values (in, Respect for All). They also have a responsibility to attend any mandatory training that supports the objectives of the Equality Strategy.

### **Equality Action Group**

The Equality Action Group, overseen by the Executive Head of Transformation/ 'Interim' HR Manager, is responsible for the operational management of the Equality Strategy and its monitoring and review. The EAG leads on Council wide equality impact assessment of functions and policies.

The Council Officer group membership comprises a number of Service and minority representatives, who serve as 'Equality Champions'. The Equality Champions form a link between the EAG and individual Council Services, working to promote good practice on equality and human rights across all functions of the council.

The Equality Action Group members and supporting officers are responsible for disseminating equalities and human rights information across the Council and co-ordinating the production of evaluative reports on progress of projects to be made available to the EWG and CMT.

### **Trade Unions**

Recognised trade union representatives within the Council are responsible for supporting their members on matters including equality, diversity, and human rights.

## **6. LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality duty**

The Equality Act 2010 brought together over 116 separate pieces of legislation affecting many different equality groups into one single Act.

As a public sector organisation, the Council has certain duties under the Equality Act 2010. We must have due regard to these when going about our business.

These are:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

A summary of the legal framework under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty is attached as Annex A.

## **7. PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS**

The Equality Duty covers nine protected characteristics which are:

### **Race**

Race refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

### **Disability**

A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment and this impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

### **Sex**

This is in relation to gender equality between men and women and to eliminating sex discrimination.

### **Gender Re-assignment**

Gender re-assignment includes anyone who is proposing to undergo or has undergone a process (or part of a process) to reassign their sex.

### **Pregnancy and Maternity**

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context.

### **Age**

Discrimination on the grounds of age in relation to goods and services, employment and vocational training is unlawful.

### **Religion or Belief**

Religion has the meaning usually given to it, but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

### **Sexual Orientation**

Sexual orientation refers to a person's sexual attraction whether this is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

## **Marriage and Civil Partnerships**

Marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman but now includes a marriage between same-sex couples in England and Wales (see Section 1, Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013). This was brought into force in Scotland under The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014.

Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).

*N.B. Marriage and civil partnerships are only covered for the first aim of the duty, i.e. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.*

## **8. OUR OBJECTIVES FOR EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ARE:**

### **Understanding and working with our communities**

1. To ensure equality and diversity is met within our policies, it is imperative that sound equality analysis is conducted to understand the needs of the community. This is in terms of outcomes and opportunities of individuals and where they occur in different parts of the area.

### **Leadership, Partnership and Organisational Commitment**

2. Within Surrey, there are 11 districts layered beneath the County Council. Multiple local governments in an area requires efficient partnerships that will work together against a common threat - inequality. It is this vision that needs to be backed up by organisational commitment.

### **Responsive Services and Customer Care**

3. It is fundamentally important that all users of the local authority's services are treated with respect and have their human rights protected. It is further essential that the individual needs of the community are understood so the services are targeted at the most vulnerable.

### **Diverse and Engaged Workforce**

4. As well as HR policies and procedures reflecting the importance of equality and diversity within the workplace, it is essential that the recruitment phase treats all applicants with equal chance and base decisions by ability and expertise.

## **9. HOW WE DELIVER OUR EQUALITY OBJECTIVES**

Set out below is how the Council incorporates equality into services and employment and meets our equality objectives and the requirements of the legislation.

### **i) ACTION PLAN**

The equality objectives are delivered via the Annual Equality Action Plan and are therefore specific and measurable. The Annual Equality Action Plan forms a key part of the performance management and monitoring process, see annex D for further information.

### **ii) EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND ACTIONS**

The Council uses equality impact assessments on its services, policies (including HR policies) etc to demonstrate that equality is considered in the decision-making process. Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) are conducted in relation to all the protected characteristics.

Equality impact assessments scheduled for the year and actions resulting from previous assessments are fed into the Annual Plan for implementation.

### **iii) PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING**

Surrey Heath's performance management system is used to monitor equality performance indicators and equality impact assessments.

Executive reports include an 'equality impact heading' ensuring that consideration is given to this area.

The Executive, the Corporate Management Team and the Policy and Audit Scrutiny Committee receive an annual update report on moving forward with equality and diversity and reaching the Levels of the Equality Framework.

### **iv) RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT**

The Council ensures that all relevant Human Resources documents and policies comply with the Equality Act 2010 and reflect the standards in this Equality Strategy. The Council is committed to investing in and developing its staff.

The Council's People Strategy 2015 - 2020 drives Organisational Development so that Surrey Heath Borough Council becomes a sustainable organisation, employer of choice and an excellent place to work.

Policies and procedures are in place to ensure that concerns over discrimination, harassment and victimisation from staff are addressed and that staff are treated equally and fairly (these can be found in the Policies and Procedures page on the Council's Intranet).

If a member of staff feels they or another member of staff has been discriminated harassed or victimised then they should challenge this, report it to their manager or alternatively seek advice from HR.

#### **v) KNOWING OUR COMMUNITY**

Monitoring the latest Census and demographic information relating to Surrey Heath.

The Council currently publishes annual performance indicator information of overall staff figures broken down by race, disability, and gender. The Council undertakes more in-depth equality monitoring through a staff survey, the latest information is attached in annex C.

#### **vi) TRAINING**

The Council is committed to providing all staff and Members with up-to-date training on equality, diversity, and human rights. Equality and diversity training is a mandatory part of the induction process for new staff and Members.

The Council offers further training on specific aspects of equality, diversity and human rights where deemed appropriate or relevant for roles. Refresher training is required for both staff and elected members every three years, this can also be available via e-learning modules provided by the Council.

#### **vii) SERVICE DELIVERY**

In delivering services, the Council is aware of its responsibilities to be fair to all in the provision of those services and the ability to access services.

Data relating to the profile of service users is collected e.g. through satisfaction surveys.

## **10. PROCUREMENT AND GRANTS**

An organisation which is not a public authority, but which conducts public functions must, in the exercise of those functions, have due regard to the 3 aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Equality is embedded in our Procurement Strategy and procedures. Contractors are required to meet best practise equality standards developed as part of the Procurement Toolkit. The EIA template also includes a section on procurement. As part of the contract review process for major contracts, contractors are now required to confirm that they comply with our equality criteria in the Toolkit.

## **11. COMPLAINTS**

We are committed to high standards of service delivery, but we recognise that mistakes are made and would wish to learn from our mistakes. Members of the public can use the Council's Complaints procedure available on the web site to raise any equality issues.

## **12. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Council's Consultation Strategy demonstrates the Council's commitment to ensure that consultation conducted is representative of the community and that consideration is given on how to consult hard to reach groups, to develop services and policies that are fair to all.

The Council has a consultative approach with staff on service delivery and policy development in terms of equality and diversity.

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how the Local Planning Authority intends to achieve continuous community involvement in the preparation of the Local Development Framework (LDF) and determination of planning applications within Surrey Heath. The SCI outlines the Council's methods of involving all Borough residents in consultations as outlined above.

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**ANNEXES**

Annex A      Legal Framework  
Annex B      Equality Framework for Local Government  
Annex C      Equality and Diversity Summary (staff Survey 2020)  
Annex D      Annual Plan 21/22

## **Annex A**

### **Legal Framework**

#### **Summary of the Requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty**

1. The Equality Act 2010 came into force on 1 October 2010 and replaces the separate pieces of legislation relating to the different equality groups.
- 2a. The public sector equality duty consists of a general equality duty, which is set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, and specific duties which are imposed by secondary legislation. The general equality duty came into force on 5 April 2011. The specific duties came into force in September 2011. It applies to all public listed bodies in Schedule 19 across Great Britain as well as other organisations when carrying out public functions.
- 2b. A new modular design (2020) allows the Council to self-assess practices to identify areas of activity that need improving but also what they succeed in to support organisations to become more inclusive employers. This is further achieved through the addition of an LGA Equality Peer Challenge.

#### **Protected Characteristics**

3. The general equality duty covers nine legally protected characteristics which are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage, and civil partnership (only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination), pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. It also encourages Councils to consider other issues that might be affecting staff such as caring responsibilities as well as issues affecting communities such as rural isolation.

#### **Equality Act 2010**

4. The Equality Act 2010 provides a new cross-cutting legislative framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. It legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society by replacing previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthen protection.

#### **Further Principles - 2020**

- The EFLG is part of the LGA's sector led improvement offer to the local government sector and as such engagement with the Framework is voluntary.
- The EFLG is supportive of the EHRC's six selected domains of equality measurement which it has identified as the areas of life that are important

to people and that enable them to flourish. They are: Education, Work, Living standards, Health, Justice, and personal security, and Participation

- The modular design of the Framework reflects the fact that Councils come in all shapes and sizes with different resources, communities, and priorities. It recognises that action on all equality issues at once is not always possible
- The Framework supports the LGA's Equality Peer Challenge

**Prohibited Conduct: Discrimination, Harassment, and Victimisation.**

5. The Equality Act 2010 introduces a basic framework of protection against direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation in services and public functions etc.

Direct Discrimination

This occurs when someone is treated less well than someone else in the same situation because of a protected characteristic.

Harassment

This occurs when unwanted behaviour towards someone causes them to feel intimidated, degraded humiliated or offended

Victimisation

This occurs when a person treats another badly because they have or intend to make a complaint against them in relation to being discriminated against or harassed

Indirect discrimination

This occurs when a policy which applies in the same way for everyone has an effect which particularly disadvantages people from an equality group

Discrimination by Association

This occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of their association with a person who has a protected characteristic; this can be a husband, wife, partner, friend, child, or primary carer.

Discrimination due to Perception

This occurs if someone is treated less favourably because another person thought that they had a protected characteristic even though they did not.

Discrimination Arising from Disability

A new concept of 'discrimination arising from disability' has been introduced by the Equality Act. There is a requirement to make reasonable

adjustments for people with disabilities. It occurs when the disability is known and as such the person is treated unfavourably and disproportionately to the individual achieving an aim.

### Restrictions on Pay Secrecy Clauses

A contractual term which restricts a person from disclosing their pay is unenforceable in certain circumstances.

### Employment – Health Related Questions

6. Employers will only be able to ask prospective candidate's health related questions to enable a decision to be made as to whether reasonable adjustments are needed for the person in the selection process and whether an applicant can carry out an essential function of the job. It is unlawful to ask a candidate or referee verbal or written questions about the health of a candidate prior to an offer being made.

### Public Sector Equality Duty

This duty came into force on 5 April 2011 meaning that public bodies consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work (shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees).

### The Aims of the General Equality Duty

7. In summary, those subject to the equality duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
  - **Eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
  - **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
  - **Foster good relations** between different people (with/without a protected characteristic) when carrying out their activities.
8. The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:
  - Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
  - Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.

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- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.
9. The Act states that meeting different needs involves taking steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities. It describes fostering good relations as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups. It states that compliance with the duty may involve treating some people more favourably than others.
10. The general equality duty therefore requires equality considerations to be reflected into the design of organisation's policies and the delivery of services, including internal policies, and for these issues to be kept under review.

### **The Specific Duties:**

11. In summary, a public authority covered by the specific duties (listed body) is required to:

#### Publish information

- Publish sufficient information to demonstrate its compliance with the general equality duty across its functions. This must be done by 31 December 2011, and at least annually after that, from the first date of publication. (The general duty to have due regard requires local authorities to have an adequate evidence base for its decision making).

This information must include, in particular:

- Information on the effect that its policies and practices have had on people who share a relevant protected characteristic, to demonstrate the extent to which it furthered the aims of the general equality duty for its employees and for others with an interest in the way it performs its functions.
- Evidence of analysis that they have undertaken to establish whether their policies and practices have (or would) further the aims of the general equality duty. (Case law demonstrates that the analysis must include consideration as to whether there is any detrimental impact and how this can be mitigated. This should be in a written format before a decision is made.)
- Details of the information that they considered in carrying out this analysis.

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- Details of engagement that they undertook with people whom they consider having an interest in furthering the aims of the general equality duty.

#### Prepare and Publish Equality Objectives

12. A public authority covered by the specific duties (listed body) is also required to:
  - Prepare and publish one or more objectives detailed in the aims of the general equality duty, by 6 April 2012, and at least every four years thereafter
  - Ensure that those objectives are specific and measurable.
  - Publish those objectives in such a manner that they are accessible to the public
13. The following principles from **case law** on the previous equality duties will, however, continue to apply for the new duty. To comply with the general equality duty, a public authority must ensure that:
  - Those who exercise its functions (for example, its staff and leadership) are aware of the duty's requirements. Compliance involves 'a conscious approach and state of mind'. This means that decision-makers must be fully aware of the implications of the duty when making decisions about their policies and practices.
  - The duty is complied with before and at the time that a policy is under consideration and a decision is taken. A public authority cannot satisfy the duty by justifying a decision after it has been taken.
  - Consideration of the need to advance equality forms an integral part of the decision-making process. The duty must be exercised in such a way that it influences the final decision.
  - Any third parties exercising public functions on its behalf are required to comply with the duty, and that they do so in practice. This is because the duty rests with the public authority even if they have delegated any functions to a third party.
  - Regard is given to the need to advance equality when a policy is implemented and reviewed.

#### Publishing Employee Equality Monitoring Information

14. Listed bodies with 150 staff or more also need to publish information in relation to their employees.

Bodies with 150 staff or more are expected to publish the below information:

- the race, disability, gender, age breakdown and distribution within your workforce
  - indication of likely representation on sexual orientation and religion or belief, provided that no individuals can be identified as a result
  - an indication of any issues for staff who are proposing to undergo or have undergone a process (or part of a process) to reassign their sex based on your engagement with staff or voluntary groups
15. In relation to services, the Equality and Human Rights Commission would normally expect to see the information that you routinely publish broken down by protected group. This will obviously depend on what services you deliver but would usually include:
- performance information relating to functions relevant to furthering the aims of the duty
  - access to services
  - satisfaction with services, and
  - Complaints (broken down by protected group, with an indication of reasons for complaints).

### **Procurement and Grants**

16. The general equality duty applies to other organisations who exercise public functions. This will include private bodies or voluntary organisations which are carrying out public functions on behalf of a public authority. The duty therefore applies to where the Council has contracted out a service or is considering contracting out or is decommissioning a service. It also applies to the allocation or withdrawal of grants.
17. The specific duty on information requires listed bodies to publish information about their compliance with the duty across all their functions, including contracted-out functions. Where a function is contracted out, there may be a need to specify in the tender documentation what information the contractor should collect and report on, for the Council to meet the General Equality Duty.

## Annex B

### The Equality Framework for Local Government

The Equality Framework (originally the Equality Standard) provides guidance for local authorities to mainstream equality and diversity into Council policy, services, and employment. The Framework also advocates an equal life approach to provide fair opportunities for the whole community.

The Framework has four module areas:

- Understanding and working with your communities
- Leadership and Organisational Commitment
- Responsive Services and Customer Care
- Diverse and Engaged Workforce

Each module is broken down into key themes: (to aid self-assessment)

<b>Understanding and Working with your Communities</b>	<b>Leadership and Organisational Commitment</b>
Collecting and sharing information	Leadership
Analysing and using data and information	Priorities and working in partnership
Effective community engagement	Assessing equality impact in policy and decision taking
Fostering good community relations	Equality objectives and annual reporting
Participation in public life	Performance monitoring and scrutiny
<b>Responsive Services and Customer Care</b>	<b>Diverse and Engaged Workforce</b>
Commissioning and procuring services	Workforce diversity
Integration of equality objectives into service planning	Inclusive strategies and policies
Service delivery	Collecting, analysing and publishing workforce data
	Learning and development
	Health and wellbeing

The Equality Framework has three levels:

<b>Levels</b>	<b>Description</b>
Developing	The developing level criteria contain the basic building blocks for each priority. An organisation at the Developing level has made an organisational commitment to improving equality. It is putting in place processes to deliver on equality issues and is working towards meeting and exceeding the statutory requirements.
Achieving	An organisation at the Achieving level has policies, processes and procedures in place and is delivering some good equality outcomes. It is not only meeting, but can demonstrate exceeding statutory requirements
Excellent	An organisation at the Excellent level has mainstreamed equality throughout the organisation and can demonstrate that it is delivering significant outcomes across its services that are making a difference in its communities. The organisation not only exceeds statutory requirements, and it is an

	exemplar council for equality and diversity in the local government and wider public sector.
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### **Measuring our Equality Performance**

The Council achieved Level 1 of the Equality Standard in January 2007 and Level 2 in October 2008.

In September 2010 after undertaking a self-assessment, creating a narrative of our equality journey, and undertaking a Diversity Peer Challenge by external assessors involving interviews with staff, members, and stakeholders the **Council was awarded the 'Achieving' Level of the Framework**. The Council has been working towards implementing the recommendations made in the Diversity Peer Challenge report.

## Annex C

## Equality and Diversity Summary (Staff Survey 2020)

The response rate for the staff survey was of 60% in 2020 (excl. JWS staff).

Where possible the results have been compared to the 2015 Staff Equalities Survey (which was carried out separately from the main staff survey) and had a response rate of 44%.

### RESPONSES SPLIT INTO AGE CATEGORIES

2020 Survey (146 responses)

Age Group	No of Respondents	%
16-34	25	17.12%
35-54	84	57.53%
55+	37	25.34%

2015 Survey

Age Groups	% of Respondents
25-30	1.90%
31-40	6.50%
41-50	23.40%
51-60	20.60%
61+	2.80%
Unknown	38.30
Prefer not to say	6.50%

### EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

*“If I had an issue with equality or diversity in the workplace, I feel confident I would receive sufficient support”.*

2020 Survey	16-34 years %	16-34 years (count)	35-54 %	35-54 (count)	55+ years %	55+ years (count)
Strongly Agree	52.00%	13	20.24%	17	10.81%	4
Agree	36.00%	9	67.86%	57	72.97%	27
Disagree	12.00%	3	11.90%	10	10.81%	4

The percentage of staff who felt they would feel confident receiving support was over **80%** for all age groups ('Strongly Agree' and 'agree').

The **35-54's** age group came in the highest at **88.10%** ('Strongly Agree and 'Agree'). The **16-34's** were very slightly lower with **88%** and then the **55+** with **83.78%**.

#### 2020 vs 2015 Survey Results

Are you aware that the Council has the following?	2020	2020	2015	2015
	YES	NO	YES	NO
An equality strategy	91.72%	2.76%	89.90%	10.10%
Policies on harassment and bullying	93.79%	0.69%	78.50%	6.30%
An Equality Action Group	73.79%	20.69%	67.10%	26.60%

## FAIRNESS

Fairness was ranked highly within all areas of the 2020 survey compared to 2015.

I believe that the Council's policies and procedures promote fairness and equal treatment of staff across the Council?		
	2015	2020
Yes	62.67%	86.99%
No	17.33%	13.01%
Prefer not to say...		

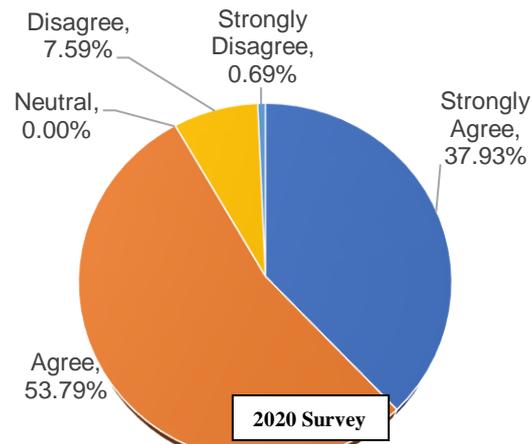
How would you rank the following groups on how they support/promote fairness and equal treatment of staff across the Council?		
	2015	2020
	(Combined "Very Well"/"Well")	(Combined "Great/Adequate")
Human Resources	63.89%	91.10%
Work Colleagues	58.91%	91.78%
Line Managers	48.65%	91.78%
Executive Heads/Heads of Service	40.28%	91.10%
Other Staff	30.44%	93.84%

**How would you rank the following groups on how they support/promote fairness and equal treatment of staff across the Council?  
(Split by age)**

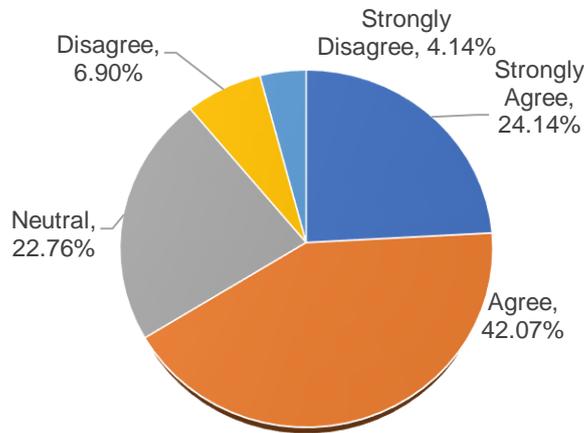
2020 Survey results



**My colleagues promote fairness and equal treatment of staff**



**I believe that the organisation treats all staff fairly**



**Are you aware that all staff have a duty not to discriminate based on: Age, Race, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage & Civil Partnership, Pregnancy & Maternity, Religion & Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation?**

**2020**    **Yes 98.62%**  
              **No 1.38%**

## PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

Protected Characteristics 2020 compared to 2015 *(Ranked highest to lowest)*

Currently Ranked	Protected Characteristic	2020 %	Previous Position	2015 %
1	Age	6.21%	(1) →	27.27%
2	Disability	4.14%	(=4) ↑	3.41%
3	Pregnancy & Maternity	2.76%	(=6) é	2.27%
4	Race	2.07%	(=4) →	3.41%
5	Sex	1.38%	(2) ↓	5.68%
6	Religion & Belief	0.69%	(3) ê	4.55%
■	Sexual Orientation	0.00%	(=6) ■	2.27%
■	Marriage & Civil Partnership	0.00%	(8) ■	1.14%
■	Gender Reassignment	0.00%	(0) ■	0.00%
■	Other	0.00%	(0) ■	0.00%
	<b>No</b>	58.62%		54.55%
	<b>I Don't Know</b>	29.66%		10.23%
	<b>Prefer not to say...</b>	0.00%		3.41%

Over **50%** in each of the Age Categories felt *none* of the eight Protected Characteristics were a barrier to career progression. Only '**Disability**' and '**Pregnancy & Maternity**' scored higher than in the 2015 survey, although only marginally (< 1%).

'**Age**' was still seen as the highest barrier to career progression in all three Age Categories although was **down by 21%** to **6.21%** as opposed to **27.27%** in **2015**. The highest group was the **16-34** age group with **11%**. **Both the 35-54 and 55+** came in at **3%** with the **35-54's** also citing that '**Race**' and '**Pregnancy & Maternity**' were equally a barrier.

Out of the eight protected characteristics the **55+** felt that only two characteristics were a barrier to career progression - '**Age**' with **8%** and '**Sex**' with **3%**.

'**Sexual Orientation**', '**Marriage & Civil Partnership**', and '**Gender Reassignment**' all scored **0%** for the **2020** survey.

## CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

The **35-54** age group had the highest percentage of caring responsibilities, **42.86%** were the '**Primary Carer of a Child / Children (under 18)**', next **16-34's** with **16%** and lastly the **55+** with **2.70%**

Of the **35-54** age group **4.76%** were the '**Primary Carer of an Older Person**' and for the **55+'s** the percentage was **5.51%**. Also **5.41%** of the **55+'s** was the '**Primary Carer of Disabled Adult (18 and over)**'.

For '**Secondary Carer (Another Person Carries out the Caring Role)**' there were **1.19%** of the **35-54's** and **10.81%** of the **55+**

## DISABILITY

**Disability - 'A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment and this impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities'. Equality Act 2010**

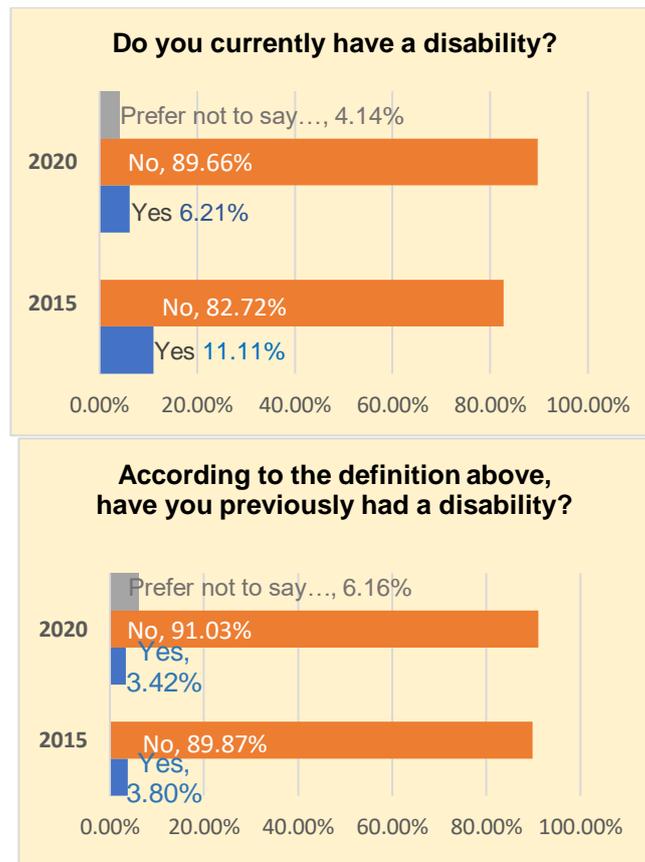
**According to the definition above do you currently have a disability?**

Do you currently have a disability?	2015	2020
Yes	11.11%	6.21%
No	82.72%	89.66%
Prefer not to say...		4.14%

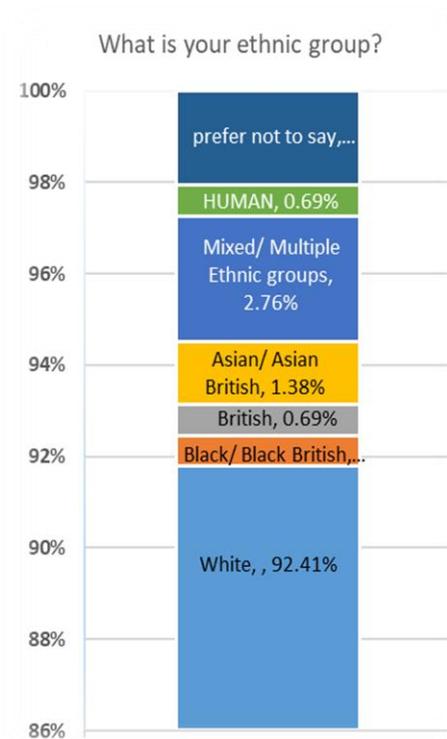
Disability Comparison 2015 /2020 Survey

**Disability** 'a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment and this impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.' Equality Act 2010 According to the definition above, do you currently have a disability?

Only **6.21%** of staff currently had a disability compared to **11.11%** in **2015**.

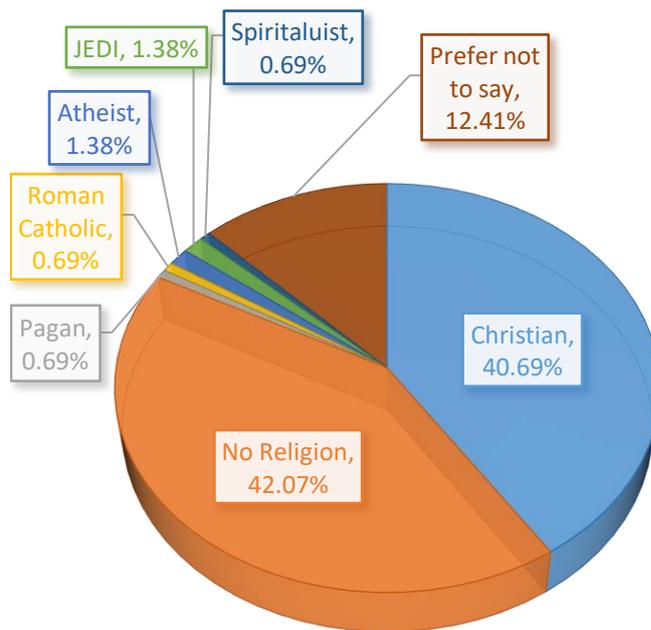


2020



2020

### What Is Your Religion Or Belief?



Feb 21

## **Summary**

The Staff Survey results for 2020 showed a noticeable change compared to 2015. There was a 16% increase in the number of staff who participated in the survey. We should be aware that the responses received for the 2020 Survey have been made during lockdown/Covid19 where working practices have been very different to any previous year. Most areas within Equality and Diversity compared favourably to the 2015 results.

Whilst all categories where staff were asked if they felt any protected characteristics could be a barrier to career progression came in below 7%, it has been noted that there is still some work to do around this especially amongst the 16-34 age group. Also, improvements need to be made in terms of 'Race' and 'Pregnancy and Maternity' being seen as a barrier.

There was a large increase in the ranking for 'policies and procedures promoting fairness and equal treatment' across all areas, with the largest increase being for Other Staff (30.44% to 93.84%) and Exec Heads/Heads of Service (40.28% to 91.10%).

Feb 21

**Annex D - Annual Plan 2021/22**

Action	Lead	Timescale	Progress	When Complete
Virtual Member Equality Training	Sarah Bainbridge	Spring 21	Approved by EWG on the 15/02	
Annual Events to be Supported 2021	Jayne Boitout	2021	See following page.	Ongoing
Work programme for the remainder of 2021/2022 (meeting, July Oct, and Feb)	Eddie Scott	2021		Ongoing
VSNS Presentation	Eddie Scott	Feb 2021		complete
To undertake a social media campaign tackling equalities, as part of a broader partnership agenda i.e. poverty	Jayne Boitout/ Comms team	Summer 2021		

**Outline Annual Plan 2022/23**

Work meeting programme 22/23,	Eddie Scott	2022		
Faith Forum Presentation	Eddie Scott	2022		

Equality Working Group Grid – Events to be supported 2021.

Category	No:	Event Title	Lead team	Month
1	Max 3 events to be nominated	Gay Pride	Community Development, transformation, Events Team Business, Comms	August 21
1	Max 3 events to be nominated	EWG to nominate	Teams here to manage the resources – can councillors help with this	
1	Max 3 events to be nominated	EWG to nominate	Teams here to manage the resources – can councillors help with this	
2	Heathscene articles max of 6 per year- events where possible to co-ordinate dates	Diwali	Community Development/Comms Teams here to manage the resources	4 <sup>th</sup> -9 <sup>th</sup> November 21
2	As above	Eid-al-Fitr (Ramadan)	Teams here to manage the resources – can councillors help with this	12 <sup>th</sup> April - 12 <sup>th</sup> May 21
2	As above	Passover	Teams here to manage the resources – can councillors help with this	27 <sup>th</sup> March- 4 <sup>th</sup> April 21
2	As above	Easter	Teams here to manage the resources – can councillors help with this	4 <sup>th</sup> April 21
2	As above	GRT week	Teams here to manage the resources – can councillors help with this	June 21
2	As above	National Holocaust Memorial Day	Teams here to manage the resources – can councillors help with this	January 2022

Feb 21

3	Themes to be suggested by the EWG for the comms team to follow during the year.	This would be managed by the Comms team and they will provide as much resource as possible, i.e. issue a supporting statement, to be released on social media, twitter etc.	Themes to be nominated by EWG in at the July 21 meeting	LGBTQ+ history month – February  Trans Awareness Week November 21  Gender re-assignment
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Existing Civic events fall outside of this remit, for example, Remembrance Sunday, Fly the Flag.

We could invite members to review this annually to ensure that we can align resource effectively.



Please contact us if you would like the Equality Strategy in another format.

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[www.surreyheath.gov.uk](http://www.surreyheath.gov.uk) - the Equality Strategy is also available on the web site.



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