

St Helens Borough Council Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy



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INTRODUCTION

This Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Policy, sets out how St Helens Borough Council meets its duties and responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

Equality means ensuring people are treated fairly, giving them equal access to information, opportunities, services, and employment.

Diversity is about recognising, acknowledging, and respecting differences within our community, and that people have different needs based on characteristics they share with others, and that each person also has a unique background and identity, as an individual.

Inclusion is about considering the different needs of individuals and groups within our diverse community, when carrying out our statutory functions, and through our responsibilities as an employer, service provider, and the lead organisation in the community; to ensure that all people experience equality of opportunity from St Helens Borough Council.

Wherever possible, members and officers must use the practice of “co-production” to ensure that people who share different protected characteristics feel they have participated fully in processes to advance equality of opportunity in employment, and to inform the design of welcoming, safe, and inclusive services.

EDI POLICY COMMITMENTS

St Helens Borough Council is committed to creating a more welcoming, safe, and inclusive work environment, based on the vision that everyone is included, has a voice, and is empowered to influence, through the values of trust, integrity, collaboration, innovation.

Our vision and values create a workforce culture of mutual respect, inclusion, and dignity, which is crucial to ensure we have the capability to meet the needs of our increasingly diverse community.

We will work together with partners in the Borough to actively identify and remove barriers for under-represented groups, advance equity by recognising and meeting people’s different needs, practise inclusion in all we do, and ensure the council’s workforce and service providers are equipped to deliver accessible, safe, and inclusive services to our diverse community.

We will work together with our partners in the Liverpool City Region, demonstrating that our positive actions working together will deliver change that benefits everyone in our city region.

LEGAL DUTIES COVERED BY THE EDI POLICY

Equality Act 2010, General Public Sector Equality Duty

The General Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies, in the exercise of their functions and decisions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The Equality Act 2010 identifies nine protected characteristics. They are as follows:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Detailed legal definitions of each protected characteristic can be found on the [Equality and Human Rights Commission Website](#)

“Due regard” means a substantial, rigorous, and open-minded consideration, of the needs of people who share different protected characteristics, within the Council’s decision making and policy processes, and in the delivery of its statutory functions, and its employment, and service delivery arrangements.

To meet the General Public Sector Equality Duty, St Helens Borough Council will

- Maintain an Equality Impact Assessment process, to demonstrate due regard to the three aims of the general duty, within Council decision-making meeting (Cabinet, Full Council, and Delegated Council Decisions), and in the delivery of its statutory functions.
- Through the Equality Impact Assessment process, ensure that appropriate steps are taken to address or justify any discriminatory or potentially discriminatory impact identified within proposed decisions.
- Ensure Equality Impact Assessments are attached as appendices of reports going through the Council’s decision-making processes, (Delegated Executive Decisions, Cabinet, Full Council, etc.), and that decision makers and decision-making bodies are made fully aware of any potentially discriminatory outcome.
- Collect appropriate information and carry out sufficient analysis to assess the impact that its decisions, policies, service, and contract delivery arrangements will have on people with characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010.
- Provide appropriate guidance and training to Members and Officers to meet the General Public Sector Equality Duty.

Further information on how we meet the General Public Sector Equality Duty is set out in “The Council as a Service Provider and Lead organisation in the Community” section of this policy

Equality Act 2010, Employment Duties

Equality Act 2010, Part 5 Work, Chapter 1 Employment, etc. sets out the Council’s duties as an employer.

These require the Council as an employer not to discriminate against, harass or victimise employees and applicants for employment who share protected characteristics when carrying out the following arrangements

- In deciding to whom to offer employment
- In terms of employment
- Access to opportunities for promotion, transfer, or training or for receiving any other benefit, facility, or service.
- Dismissal
- By subjection to any other detriment
- By not making reasonable adjustments for disabled employees and applicants

The Council also has duties towards contract workers. A contract worker is a worker who is contracted to work by the council, who is either (i) employed by another person or (ii) supplied to the Council under contract.

These duties require the Council not to discriminate against, harass, or victimise contract workers who share different protected characteristics, in relation to the following arrangements

- The terms on which the Council allows the contract worker to do the contract work
- By not allowing the contract worker to do, or to continue to do, the contract work
- In affording access to opportunities for receiving a benefit, facility, or service
- By subjecting the contract worker to any other detriment
- By not making reasonable adjustments for disabled contract workers

Equality Act 2010, Part 5, Chapter 3 Equality of term, sets out Council’s “Equal Pay” duties.

These require the Council

- not to discriminate in relation to the protected characteristics of sex, against employees or holders of personal or public office, in terms of rates of pay for equal work, and in terms of maternity pay and occupational pensions
- to publish gender pay gap information

How we meet our Employment Duties is set out under, “The Council as an Employer” section of this policy

Equality Act 2010, Official Business of Members

Section 58 of the Equality Act 2010, sets a duty on the council not to discriminate against, harass, or victimise Elected Members (Councillors) who share different protected

characteristics, in relation to the following arrangements for Members when carrying out official business:

- Affording the member access to opportunities for training or for receiving any other facility
- In appointments, nominations or elections to an office, committee or subcommittee of the authority, or to an external body.
- By not making reasonable adjustments for a disabled member
- By subjecting the member to any other detriment

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017

The Specific Public Sector Equality Regulations require public authorities to set measurable equality objectives and to publish information about their performance on equality, so that the public can hold them to account.

To meet the Specific Public Sector Equality Duty, St Helens Borough Council will:

- Set Measurable Equality Objectives, and review at least every 4 years.
- Maintain an Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy, through which to deliver its Measurable Equality Objectives.
- Provide appropriate guidance and training to Members and Officers to support their progress against achieving Measurable Equality Objectives, and in meeting EDI Strategy Commitments.
- Publish an Annual EDI Monitoring Report that includes progress against Measurable Equality Objectives and EDI Strategy Commitments.

Further information about how we meet the Specific Public Sector Equality Regulations is set out in St Helens Borough Council's [Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy](#)

Equality Act 2010, Education Accessibility Strategy Statement

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, requires Local Authorities to prepare and maintain an Education Accessibility Strategy Statement, that helps to improve the following outcomes for disabled pupils and students:

- a) Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the schools' curriculums
- b) Improving the physical environment of the schools for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the schools
- c) Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled. The delivery of information must be:
 1. within a reasonable time
 2. in ways which are determined after taking account of the pupils' disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents.

Further information about how we meet the Schedule 10 Duty is set out in St Helens Borough Council's [Education Accessibility Strategy Statement](#)

Equality Act 2010, Taxi Accessibility Regulations

Part 12 of the Equality Act 2010: Disabled Persons Transport; Chapter One, Taxis, Etc. requires designated taxi and private hire vehicle drivers to assist disabled passengers, including passengers seated in a wheelchair, and to transport a disabled person's assistance dog; without making any additional charge.

The Council as a Licensing Authority must

- maintain and publish a list of wheelchair accessible vehicles
- issue Medical Exemption Certificates to taxi drivers who are medically unfit to meet Taxi Accessibility Regulations

Further information about how we meet Equality Act 2010, Taxi Accessibility Regulations is set out in St Helens Borough Council's List of [Designated Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles](#), and our [Taxi Medical Exemptions Process](#)

SCOPE OF THE EDI POLICY

Under this Policy, the terms 'St Helens Borough Council' and 'the Council' means Council Members, officers, staff, employees, contract workers, agents, candidates for employment, and any organisations delivering goods, works, services or carrying out public functions on behalf of the Council.

This Policy covers all of St Helens Borough Council functions (commissioning, procurement, employment, service delivery, events, programmes, projects, processes, and practices) and policies (policy documents, strategies, plans, decisions, guidelines, standards, regulations, and rules).

The EDI Policy provides a clear framework within which Council Members, officers, staff, contract workers, agents, partners, contract providers, and trade unions must work.

THE COUNCIL AS AN EMPLOYER

St Helens Borough Council's workforce and employment policies and functions will be informed by impact assessment when developed or reviewed. All workforce and employment policies and functions will conform to the Equality and Human Rights Commission Statutory Codes of Practice documents for Employment and Equal Pay.

Within this section

- Recruitment
- Training and Development
- Equal Pay
- Benefits and Annual Leave
- Religious Beliefs and Practice
- Dress Code
- Flexible Working
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Parental, Carer, and Adoption Leave
- Staff Communications
- Staff EDI Network
- Values and Behaviour
- Preventing Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation
- Employee Dispute Resolution
- The Dismissal of Staff
- Redundancy
- Workforce Monitoring

Recruitment

In relation to recruitment and selection, St Helens Borough Council will:

- Ensure that publicity for vacancies:
 - Demonstrates the council's visions and values.
 - Refers to current EDI employment quality marks, awards, and standards.
 - Is representative of our diverse community.
 - Reaches a wide range of people from different backgrounds.
 - Welcomes applications from anyone who believes they meet the essential requirements of the job.
 - Welcomes applicants from diverse backgrounds, who share our values, our commitment to inclusion, and who will help us on our journey to transform our organisation.
- Produce a standard range of application forms and job descriptions that are clear and explicit.
- Ensure all job descriptions and specifications are reviewed to ensure that they do not include criteria that would discriminate against a candidate on the grounds of their protected characteristics.
- Promote its vision and values, awards, and achievements as an 'equal opportunities' employer.

- Ensure managers responsible for recruitment and selection are trained on skills that help them to meet their equality responsibilities when recruiting.
- use 'positive action' to address under representation of people who share different protected characteristics within the workforce.

The council is a Disability Confident Employer, which means we:

- guarantee interviews for disabled job applicants who meet all essential requirements within the job specification.
- provide Supported Internship placements for disabled people.
- use flexible working, assistive technology, and other reasonable adjustments to support disabled staff.

Training and development

St Helens Borough Council uses training and development as a key element to integrate equality, diversity, and inclusion within the organisation.

Equality training and development is based on the vision that everyone is included, has a voice, and is empowered to influence, through the values of trust, integrity, collaboration, and innovation.

Our vision and values create a culture of mutual respect, inclusion, and dignity, which is crucial to ensuring our organisational capability meets the needs of our increasingly diverse community.

St Helens Borough Council will maintain a programme of equality, diversity, and inclusion training to ensure the workforce is equipped to deliver accessible, safe, and inclusive services to our diverse community.

The Council will ensure that all training programmes are designed to be reflective of our diverse community, and, where possible incorporate challenge of generalised stereotypical beliefs, bias, ignorance, prejudice, and discriminatory attitudes by the use of non-discriminatory language, inclusive images, and factual information.

The Council will ensure appraisal mechanisms support the inclusion of specific equality diversity and inclusion objectives and tasks, where relevant to an individual's post

Equal pay

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on employers to eliminate discrimination between women and men in the same employment in pay and other terms and conditions of their contracts of employment such as holidays and sickness procedures.

St Helens Borough Council is committed to equal pay across all departments through its free from bias pay structure, and terms and conditions of employment.

St Helens Borough Council's pay and grading structure follows the National Single Status Agreement negotiated between the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services and Local Government Trades Unions.

The Council understands that equal pay law is aimed at equal pay for men and women doing equal work. But also acknowledges that pay discrimination claims could be made for any protected characteristic, for example age, disability, race, or religion.

Benefits and Annual Leave

In general, entitlement to benefit and annual leave are not based on service criteria that extend beyond the 5-year continuous service criteria that are permissible under law.

Exemptions to this rule are allowed where it is possible to show that the exemption fulfils a reasonable business need, e.g. encouraging loyalty.

Under this exemption, St Helens Borough Council retains a Long Service Award, open to any employee when leaving the Council after completing 20 years continuous service with St Helens Borough Council, subject to relevant criteria.

Religious beliefs and practice

St Helens Borough Council will work towards enabling employees at all levels in the workforce to feel safe in being open about their faith, religion, or belief systems.

St Helens Borough Council ensures that all employees are treated fairly, regardless of their beliefs or lack of belief, and will address any issues raised by an employee regarding religious observance as soon as possible.

The council understands and acknowledges that there are times when employees' religious observances require fasting and prayer during working hours.

Where reasonable and practically possible in relation to delivery of council services and functions, managers are expected to agree to employees' requests for time off for religious festivals and to pray at work.

Employees are also encouraged to be respectful of individuals who are fasting during periods of religious observance such as Lent, Ramadan, or Yom Kippur.

Dress code

St Helens Borough Council does not discriminate against any protected characteristics in relation to dress code.

The Council will address any issues of discrimination raised by an employee regarding dress code as soon as possible.

Flexible working

St Helens Borough Council understands that flexible and agile working arrangements can be essential in relation to equality of opportunity for disabled staff, parents and carers and can support staff in educational attainment and development or in keeping their religious observances.

St Helens Borough Council's flexible working arrangements are available to employees of all grades and include all recognised best practice types of flexible working solutions.

Pregnancy and Maternity

Unfavourable treatment of a woman because of her pregnancy or maternity leave during 'the protected period' is unlawful pregnancy and maternity discrimination.

The protected period starts when a woman becomes pregnant and continues until the end of her maternity leave, or until she returns to work if that is earlier.

Pregnancy and maternity are not protected directly under the harassment provisions. However, pregnancy and maternity harassment would amount to harassment related to sex

The Council supports a woman's right to breastfeed. It operates a Baby Welcome Policy, which fosters a supportive environment for nursing parents that is safe and comfortable for mother and child.

The Baby Welcome Policy also sets out arrangements for staff who wish to continue to breastfeed on their return to work.

Parental, Carer and Adoption Leave

Decisions on applications for Parental, Carer, or Adoption leave are based on clear, fair, and justifiable criteria set out within St Helens Borough Council's Employment Policy.

Parental, carer, and adoption leave decisions and arrangements are free from bias linked to sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

Staff Communications

St Helens Borough Council uses its staff communication processes to promote awareness of equality issues, celebrations of diversity, and events and activities that promote representative inclusion.

Staff EDI Network

The council uses its Staff EDI network to:

- check on staffs' experience of equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace.

- Include staff in the development of EDI strategies, the setting of measurable equality objectives, and activities to improve representation and inclusion.

Values and Behaviour

Staff are expected to treat all people with respect for wellbeing and dignity. The Council's workforce culture is based on the vision that everyone is included, has a voice, and is empowered to influence, through the values of trust, integrity, collaboration, and innovation.

Our vision and values create a culture of mutual respect, inclusion, and dignity, which is crucial in ensuring a welcoming, safe, and inclusive work environment, and in the delivery of services, information, and support to meet the needs of our increasingly diverse community.

Preventing Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation

St Helens Borough Council will take all possible reasonable steps to eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.

This includes training staff and Members on the duties and responsibilities of the Equality Act 2010, and informing staff and service users of the Council's relevant policies and procedures:

- Codes of Conduct
- Assaults at Work Policy
- Employee Dispute Resolution Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Hate Crime Procedures
- Domestic Violence and Domestic Abuse Policies
- Safeguarding Policies
- Prevention of Terrorism (Prevent) Procedures
- EDI Policy

Employee Dispute Resolution

All discrimination, harassment and victimisation incidents should be reported through the council's [Employee Dispute Resolution](#) process.

- Informal procedure: Employees should aim to settle most grievances with their line manager or if the issues relate to the line manager to a more senior manager.
- Formal procedure: The formal stage requires the employee to provide signed, written notification of their grievance setting out the reasons they remain dissatisfied as soon as possible or within 10 working days of notification of the outcome if it has previously been raised informally.

Discrimination, harassment, or victimisation of staff from someone outside of the Council e.g. a service user, resident, or member of the public, should be reported using the Health and Safety [Incident Reporting Form](#), and will be dealt with under the Council's Assaults at Work Policy.

Discrimination, harassment, or victimisation of Service Users will be dealt with under the Council's Complaints Policy.

Discrimination, harassment, or victimisation by staff may result in disciplinary proceedings.

Discrimination, harassment, and victimisation by an elected member should be [reported to the Monitoring Officer](#), and where upheld may result in conduct proceedings.

Discrimination, harassment, and victimisation against staff, elected members or the public may be reported to the Police, which may lead to prosecution.

Dismissal of Staff

Decisions on dismissals are based on clear, fair, and justifiable criteria, set out within the Disciplinary Policy. Members and Officers making decisions on dismissal must ensure that their decisions are free from the influence of discrimination or prejudicial bias because of protected characteristics.

Redundancy

Selection for redundancy is based on clear, fair, and justifiable criteria set out within St Helens Borough Council's Redundancy Policy. Redundancy is not based on age related criteria.

Members and Officers making decisions on redundancy must ensure that their decisions are free from the influence of discrimination or prejudicial bias because of protected characteristics.

St Helens Borough Council's redundancy payments are based on age and length of service criteria. This is not 'unlawful' as the criteria mirror the payments that are set out in a statutory scheme and are therefore exempt from age discrimination legislation.

Workforce Monitoring

The Council will monitor its workforce using an equality profile based on protected characteristics to help it promote equality of opportunity in employment policies and functions.

The Council as an employer will:

- analyse the information for any significant differences between groups based on protected characteristics.
- where there is under-representation of people who share a protected characteristic within the workforce, the council will set targets, supported by action plans, to improve representation.
- report on the outcomes of workforce monitoring annually.

THE COUNCIL AS A SERVICE PROVIDER AND LEAD ORGANISATION IN THE COMMUNITY

St Helens Borough Council will work with partners in the borough to actively identify and remove barriers for under-represented groups, advance equity by recognising and meeting people's different needs, practise inclusion in all we do, and ensure the council's workforce and service providers are equipped to deliver accessible, safe, and inclusive services to our diverse community.

We will also work with partners in the Liverpool City Region, demonstrating that our positive actions working together, will deliver change that benefits everyone in our city region.

St Helens Borough Council uses the following mechanisms through which to implement equality duties, measurable equality objectives, and equality strategy commitments, within its decision, business, and service management processes.

1. Equality Impact Assessments

The primary function of an Equality Impact Assessment is to assist the Council officer developing a draft proposal, (i.e., a proposed decision), to assess the potential risk of discrimination or breach of the General Public Sector Equality Duty, within the proposal they are drafting.

Where a draft proposal will have an actual or potential discriminatory impact on people who share different protected characteristics, the officer drafting the proposal must identify mitigation to lessen or remove the impact. Any mitigation identified must be recorded within the Equality Impact Assessment and must be implemented following the decision.

When the draft proposal is ready to go through the Council's decision-making processes, the Equality Impact Assessment must be attached as an appendix to the report which the decision-making body receives, thus informing them of the equality implications of the proposal and the decision they are being asked to consider. This is because the decision-making body has a legal requirement, when making a decision, to do so in the full knowledge of the equality implications of that decision, at the point when the decision is made.

The Council may decide to include other Equality, Diversity, or Inclusion related factors into its Equality Impact Assessment processes, such as socio-economic disadvantage, modern slavery, or hate crime, where required, in line with wider Policy commitments.

2. Equality Monitoring and Positive Action

Using diversity profiles, such as sex, race, and disability, within service and employment consultation and monitoring processes, can help to identify issues and outcomes for people who share different protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

Using diversity profiles enables consultation and monitoring outcomes to be disaggregated by different protected characteristics. Disaggregated data can demonstrate equality of opportunity in access, quality, and outcome, or evidence disadvantage, unmet need, and disproportionate outcomes for people who share different protected characteristics. Where there is evidence of disadvantage, unmet need, and disproportionate outcomes the Council can use “positive action” to remove the disadvantage, meet the unmet need, and improve representation.

Analysis of disaggregated consultation and monitoring data can be used to support equality impact assessments, and help to inform the impact that decisions, policies, and service arrangements have on people who share different protected characteristics.

3. Reasonable Adjustments

Under the Equality Act 2010, a failure to make a reasonable adjustment cannot be justified. The failure to make a reasonable adjustment is defined as discrimination.

A reasonable adjustment is one which removes or avoids as far as possible, by reasonable means, the substantial disadvantage which disabled persons experience because of their disability, where one or more of the following conditions is shown to put disabled people at a substantial disadvantage compared with non-disabled people:

- A provision, criterion, or practice.
- A physical feature.
- The lack of an auxiliary aid or service.
- The lack of accessible information on how to access Council employment or services.

The duty applies to the council as a service provider and as an employer. The Council will make reasonable adjustments for:

- disabled service users and disabled people seeking to use services.
- disabled employees, contract workers, and potential disabled employees.
- disabled Members.

In relation to the provision of services and council functions, the duty is anticipatory in the sense that it requires consideration of, and action in relation to, barriers that impede people with one or more kinds of disability, prior to an individual disabled person seeking to use the service.

In meeting the duty to make reasonable adjustments, the Council will not take any steps that are beyond its powers to take, or would fundamentally alter the nature of a service, or a job description.

4. The provision of Language Services

The Council provides language services, (i.e., translation and interpretation services), to support access to council information, service provision, and employment opportunities. Language services cover the use of translation, transcription, and telephone, video, and

face to face interpretation. They are used to communicate with, and provide information for, people who do not have written or spoken English as their first language.

Language Services must cover all first languages spoken in the community, including British Sign Language, BRAILLE, and provision of information in alternative formats such as Easy Read, or Pictorial Formats.

5. Involving and Consulting

In order to ensure our services are inclusive and responsive to the needs of our diverse community, we will involve and consult staff, staff networks, elected members, trade unions, adults and children who use our services, and communities and organisations who represent people who share different protected characteristics.

Wherever possible, “co-production” will be used to ensure that people who share different protected characteristics, feel they have participated fully in processes to identify community need, inform the setting of objectives and priorities, and inform the design of welcoming, safe, and inclusive services that meet the needs of our diverse community.

6. Equality Training and Development

The Council uses equality training, briefings, and guidance documents to ensure that officers and elected members understand their roles and responsibilities under the EDI Policy.

Equality training and development is based on our vision that everyone is included, has a voice, and is empowered to influence, through the values of trust, integrity, collaboration, and innovation.

Our vision and values create a culture of mutual respect, inclusion, and dignity, which is crucial to ensuring we have the organisational capability to meet the needs of our increasingly diverse community.

7. Promoting good community relations

The Council is committed to fostering good community relations by:

- Continuing to promote the value of diversity, equality, and inclusion in the borough.
- Working with all our partners to support the most vulnerable people in our community.
- Delivering services on a locality-based model to ensure local needs are met.
- Bringing people from different backgrounds together to celebrate diversity.
- Making St Helens a welcoming, safe, and inclusive environment for all.
- Encouraging people to report hate crime and hate incidents.
- Working with agencies to support victims of hate crimes and educate perpetrators.
- Working with agencies to support the perpetrators of hate crime.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION POLICY IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITIES

Elected Members

All Council Members must comply with the Council's EDI Policy whilst acting on behalf of St Helens Borough Council. Members must

- Attend appropriate equality training.
- Treat all persons fairly and with respect.
- Promote equalities and not discriminate unlawfully against any person.
- Maintain a respectful and professional relationship with Council Officers.
- Maintain a respectful relationship with other Council Members, and not discriminate against, harass, or victimise any Member, in relation to that Member's carrying out of official business.
- Consider all matters with an open mind and make decisions based upon weighing the best evidence, fairly, and on merit.
- Raise any issues related to unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation with the Council's Monitoring Officer.

Specific Elected Member Responsibilities (in addition to the above)

Council Leader

The Leader will nominate the Council's Member Equalities Champion.

Member Equalities Champion

Member Equality Champion will encourage communication and positive action in order to:

- raise the profile of people who share different protected characteristics, especially those in the minority in the Borough, and signal to the communities of the Borough the Council's commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- make the Council aware of good equality, diversity, and inclusion practice.
- ask questions about equality, diversity, and inclusion performance and resourcing.
- foster the engagement of a wider range of councillors and officers in issues related to equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- promote effective communication and positive working relationships both within the Council and amongst partners, stakeholders, and community groups.
- promote the positive equality, diversity, and inclusion work that is being undertaken within the Borough, both at a regional and national level
- provide positive support and constructive challenge when required, to officers and councillors in driving forward the Council's agenda related to equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Members of Decision-Making Bodies

Members who sit on public decision-making bodies, (e.g., Cabinet, Committees, Integrated Care Boards, Liverpool City Region Boards etc.), have the legal responsibility under 'due regard', to be aware of the equality implications of each decision they make. Before making a decision, Members on decision-making bodies must demonstrate that:

- They fully understand the equality implications from the Equality Impact Assessment used to inform the proposed decision they are considering.

- If the Equality Impact Assessment identifies that the proposed decision would discriminate, or potentially discriminate in relation to the Public Sector Equality Duty, then the decision-making body must deliberate on the issue, and discuss any mitigation identified within the proposed decision, this must be done before making the decision.
- The decision maker(s) must be clear precisely what the equality implications are, and they must recognise the desirability of achieving the most equitable and inclusive outcome. They must demonstrate they have a proper appreciation of the potential impact of the decision, but ultimately it is for the decision maker to decide what weight they should give to the equality implications, in the light of all relevant factors.

Council Staff

All staff must comply with the Council's EDI Policy whilst acting on behalf of the Council. Staff must

- treat all persons fairly and with respect.
- promote equalities and not discriminate unlawfully against any person.
- maintain a respectful, impartial, and professional relationship when supporting Councillors, and not discriminate against, harass, or victimise any Councillor, in relation to that Councillor's carrying out of official business.
- use the commissioned translation and interpretation services, to ensure equality of access to services and information, for people who do not have written or spoken English as their first language.
- attend equality training and engage in reflective practice on equality issues.
- raise any issues related to unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation with their line manager or, if the issue relates to their line manager, to a more senior manager.

Specific Officer Responsibilities (in addition to the above)

The Chief Executive

Has ultimate responsibility for equality, diversity, and inclusion within St Helens Borough Council, and will ensure that adequate resources and leadership challenge are available to fully implement the EDI Policy.

Director of Policy & Transformation

Has lead Officer responsibility for equality, diversity, and inclusion within St Helens Borough Council. The Director of Policy & Transformation will support the Member Equality Champion, and ensure delivery of the Council's EDI Strategy Commitments, Measurable Equality Objectives, and that the Council EDI Policy is maintained, and integrated within Council decision-making, strategic, and operational processes.

Executive Directors, Directors, and Assistant Directors

Executive Directors, Directors, and Assistant Directors are responsible and accountable for:

- Ensuring their workforce and service providers are equipped to deliver accessible, safe, and inclusive services to our diverse community.

- Ensuring their Directorate has an appropriate equality, diversity, and inclusion champion at a senior level, who can speak up for under-represented groups and flag any issues that need addressing
- Identifying signs of discrimination, inequality, and exclusion, and addressing them as soon as possible
- Ensuring that Officers within their Directorate, use equality impact assessments to inform all proposed decisions, in line with the Council's Equality Impact Assessment process and guidance.
- Ensuring their Directorate, sets and achieves agreed levels against nationally recognised equality standards, required to meet Council Measurable Equality Objectives and EDI Strategy Commitments.
- Ensuring that their Directorate develops inclusive consultation and community engagement processes to support portfolio and service delivery requirements.
- Ensuring Heads of Service and Managers identify and implement reasonable adjustments for disabled staff and service users

Heads of Service

Heads of Service must ensure that:

- Staff have received appropriate equality, diversity, and inclusion training to ensure they can deliver services and functions to a diverse community.
- Their Teams are supported to foster a welcoming, safe, and inclusive work environment of mutual respect for individual dignity; based on the Council's vision and values.
- Equality Impact Assessments are used to inform all developing proposals, in line with the Council's Equality Impact Assessment process and guidance.
- Diversity Profiles are included within all relevant service consultation and monitoring processes, in line with the Council's Equality Monitoring and Positive Action Guidance.
- Appropriate service equality monitoring information is included in Management Reports
- Where there is evidence of disadvantage, unmet need, and disproportionate outcomes for people who share different protected characteristics, use positive action to remove the disadvantage, meet unmet needs, and improve representation, in line with the Council's Equality Monitoring and Positive Action Guidance.
- Service information, facilities and buildings, and service provision are accessible, safe, and inclusive, and meet the needs of a diverse community.
- Language service arrangements are in place for each public facing Team under their responsibility, and that Staff know how to access and use the commissioned translation and interpretation services.
- Customer complaints, linked to (i) unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, (ii) equality of opportunity, and (iii) community cohesion, are investigated and resolved in line with the council's agreed customer complaint policy and process.

Line Managers

Line Managers in their responsibilities towards staff that they line manage, must ensure that:

- They act as role models for inclusive behaviour, encouraging staff to improve awareness and understanding of equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Staff receive appropriate equality, diversity, and inclusion training, to be able to deliver services and carry out their roles and responsibilities in line with the Council's EDI Policy

- Staff are supported to foster a welcoming, safe, and inclusive work environment. One which is based on the Council's vision and values, so that all people experience respect for their individual identity, wellbeing, and dignity.
- Reasonable adjustments for disabled staff, are identified in consultation with the respective disabled member of staff and put in place as soon as practically possible.
- The following requests are prioritised and agreed wherever practically possible in relation to service delivery commitments:
 - Flexible Working requests linked to issues relating to protected characteristics.
 - Requests for time off for religious observances, and for time to pray at work.
 - Parental, carer, and adoption leave requests.
 - Requests for time off in relation to attending NHS appointments arising from pregnancy, disability, or gender reassignment.
- Staff who are away from work because of relevant circumstances relating to protected characteristics, do not miss out on job or training opportunities and are kept up to date on information about employment related benefits, facilities, and services, or any important matters and changes in their workplace. Relevant circumstances include those who are away from work because of:
 - antenatal appointments
 - pregnancy
 - maternity leave
 - paternity leave
 - adoption leave
 - shared parental leave
 - caring for children
 - caring for a disabled adult
 - gender reassignment procedures
- Employee grievances linked to discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, are investigated without prejudice or bias, and resolved in line with the council's agreed employee dispute resolution policy and processes, as soon as possible.

Head of S.E.N.D. and Inclusion

The Head of S.E.N.D. and Inclusion is responsible for preparing and maintaining the Council's Education Accessibility Strategy Statement.

Head Of Regulation Services

The Head of Regulation Services has the responsibility for ensuring the Council meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, Taxi Accessibility Regulations

Head of Organisational Design & Development

The Head of Organisational Design & Development must:

- Promote the council's vision and values, awards, and achievements as an 'equal opportunities' employer.
- Ensure that recruitment and selection training, supports staff to make recruitment and selection decisions in line with the requirements of the EDI Policy, including:
 - Following the Council's disability confident employer commitments.
 - Assessing applicants against job description and person specification requirements.

- Removing judgments based on discriminatory bias, i.e., what they think or believe about a person because of their protected characteristics.
- Ensure all Council training programmes are designed to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion, factual information, and, where possible, incorporates inclusive language and representative images.
- Ensure that appraisal mechanisms support the inclusion of specific equality diversity and inclusion objectives and tasks, where relevant to individual post.
- Support line managers to communicate training opportunities and important changes in organisational development or design related employment or workplace benefits, facilities, and services, to staff away from work because of relevant circumstances relating to protected characteristics.
- Ensure the Council's training and appraisal monitoring systems, record staff protected characteristics (in line with data protection requirements).
- Produce disaggregated training and appraisal reports to identify any significant differences between groups who share different protected characteristics.

Head of People Management

The Head of People Management must:

- Ensure that all workforce and employment policies and functions conform to the Equality and Human Rights Commission Statutory Codes of Practice documents for (i) Employment and (ii) Equal Pay.
- Support line managers to:
 - identify and implement reasonable adjustments for disabled staff
 - communicate job opportunities and important changes in People Management related employment or workplace benefits, facilities, and services, to staff away from work because of relevant circumstances relating to protected characteristics.
 - investigate grievances linked to discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, and resolved them as soon as possible.
 - facilitate requests for time off in relation to attending NHS appointments arising from pregnancy, disability, or gender reassignment.
- Support line managers, wherever practically possible in relation to service delivery commitments, to:
 - facilitate requests of time off for religious observances and to pray at work.
 - facilitate employee parental, carer, and adoption leave requests.
 - facilitate flexible working requests linked to issues relating to protected characteristics, such as disability, pregnancy, caring for a child or disabled adult.
- Ensure the Council's Workforce data monitoring systems record staff protected characteristics (in line with data protection requirements).
- Produce disaggregated reports to identify any significant differences between groups based on protected characteristics for key areas of employment, including:
 - Recruitment
 - pay and remuneration.
 - grievances
 - disciplinary action
 - dismissals and other reasons for leaving.
- Where there is under-representation of people who share a protected characteristic within the workforce, including the hierarchical structure and senior management

positions of council directorates, then work with directorates and senior management to set targets, supported by action plans, to improve representation.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Officer

The Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Officer must:

- Develop, maintain, and co-ordinate implementation of the Council's EDI Policy, corporate EDI strategies, and measurable equality objectives.
- Develop and maintain an equality impact assessment process.
- Develop and maintain equality monitoring and positive action guidance.
- Provide input and advice for all Council strategies, policies, and contracts to ensure that equality impact assessments have been completed and equality duties are accurately reflected within the documentation.
- Mainstream equality duties within existing Council practices, mechanisms, and structures.
- Assist directorates and departments to develop effective and inclusive consultation and community engagement in terms of portfolios and service delivery.
- Support directorates and departments in setting and achieving agreed levels against nationally recognised equality, diversity, and inclusion standards.
- Assist Members and Chief Officers in the investigation and resolution of difficulties or complaints in terms of equal opportunities by members of the public, arising out of service delivery issues.
- Assist Council departments and the Head of People Management as necessary in the investigation and resolution of employee's complaints, freedom of information requests or issues surrounding equal opportunities.
- Provide and coordinate tailored training to disseminate good practice and raise awareness.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Definitions of the General Public Sector Equality Duty

Eliminating Discrimination

Discrimination in its simplest terms means being subject to “less favourable treatment”.

Discrimination under the Equality Act 2010:

- Direct discrimination
- Discrimination by association
- Discrimination by perception
- Combined discrimination: dual discrimination, intersectional discrimination
- Gender reassignment discrimination: cases of absence from work
- Pregnancy and maternity discrimination: non-work cases
- Pregnancy and maternity discrimination: work cases
- Indirect discrimination
- Discrimination arising from disability.
- Failure to make a reasonable adjustment.

Unlawful discrimination is unacceptable to St Helens Borough Council, and it is our policy to eliminate it whether it occurs in relation to policy, functions, service delivery or employment.

All discrimination is unlawful unless there is a justified reason for it; based on legal, moral or health and safety requirements; like a genuine occupational requirement in employment.

For example, it is justifiable to restrict applications for a Ladies Toilet Attendant’s job to women, on the grounds of decency, even though this directly discriminates against men.

Likewise, it is justifiable to add “proficient British Sign Language Skills” to a job description for a member of staff who is likely to deal with deaf customers, even though this prevents a larger proportion of people from applying.

Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when a person treats another less favourably than they treat (or would treat) others, and this treatment is because of a protected characteristic, e.g., age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership or pregnancy and maternity.

Under the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, it is not discrimination to treat a disabled person more favourably than a non-disabled person. Under certain circumstances, the Council may provide services on terms that are more favourable to a disabled person compared to a non-disabled person, e.g., guaranteed job interviews for disabled people who meet the minimum job specification requirements.

St Helens Borough Council will not discriminate by deliberately segregating employees or service users by race or ethnicity. To be discriminatory, racial segregation must be a deliberate act or policy rather than a situation that has occurred inadvertently.

Discrimination by association

The Council will not discriminate against a person because of their association with another person who possesses a protected characteristic. NB pregnancy and maternity is not protected from discrimination by association.

Discrimination by perception

St Helens Borough Council will not tolerate or ignore discrimination against an individual because of a perception or assumption that the individual possesses particular protected characteristics. NB pregnancy and maternity is not protected from discrimination by perception.

Combined discrimination: dual discrimination (Intersectionality)

The Council will not discriminate against an individual because of a combination of two or more protected characteristics. NB marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity, are not protected from dual discrimination.

Gender reassignment discrimination: cases of absence from work

St Helens Borough Council will not discriminate against trans* staff in relation to work absence that arises because they propose to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone the process (or part of the process) of gender reassignment.

Pregnancy and maternity discrimination: non-work cases

St Helens Borough Council, will not treat any woman less favourably because:

- She is, or has been, pregnant
- She has given birth, and the unfavourable treatment occurs within a period of 26 weeks beginning with the day on which she gave birth; or
- She is breastfeeding, and the unfavourable treatment occurs within the period of 26 weeks beginning with the day on which she gave birth.

Pregnancy and maternity discrimination: work cases

The Council will not discriminate against a female member of staff because:

- Of a pregnancy of hers
- Of illness suffered by her as a result of it.
- She is on compulsory maternity leave,
- She is exercising or seeking to exercise, or has exercised or sought to exercise, the right to ordinary or additional maternity leave.

St Helens Borough Council will not discriminate against a female member of staff during the protected period of her pregnancy and maternity, through taking or implementing a decision that has a less favourable outcome for that member of staff.

St Helens Borough Council will not discriminate against a female member of staff by taking into account any period of absence due to pregnancy-related illness when making a decision about her employment.

NB The protected period, in relation to a woman's pregnancy, begins when the pregnancy begins, and ends:

- (i) if she has the right to ordinary and additional maternity leave, at the end of the additional maternity leave period or (if earlier) when she returns to work after the pregnancy, or
- (ii) if she does not have that right, at the end of the period of 2 weeks beginning with the end of the pregnancy.

Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination is unacceptable to St Helens Borough Council.

Indirect Discrimination occurs when a rule, provision, criterion, practice or condition that is applied equally to everyone.

- Puts or would put people who share a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage when compared with people who do not have that characteristic
- Is or would be to the disadvantage of that group
- Cannot be justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

An example of indirect discrimination: A blanket policy requiring all job applicants to hold a full driving licence, even jobs where no driving is required, will result in an indirect discrimination against disabled people. This is because:

1. A considerably smaller proportion of disabled people hold driving licences compared to non-disabled people,
2. It is to the disadvantage of disabled people as they cannot apply for employment, and
3. It cannot be justified if there is not a genuine occupational requirement to hold a driving licence for a particular job.

Examples of legitimate aims include:

- Ensuring that services and benefits are targeted at those who most need them.
- The fair exercise of powers.
- To maintain a standard, such as an academic, musical, sporting or other standard, merited given the circumstances.
- Ensuring the health and safety of those using the service provider's service or

others, provided risks are clearly specified.

- Preventing fraud or other forms of abuse or inappropriate use of services provided by the service provider.
- Ensuring the wellbeing or dignity of those using the service

Discrimination Arising From Disability

Discrimination arising from disability is unacceptable to St Helens Borough Council.

Discrimination arising from disability occurs when:

- A disabled person is treated unfavourably.
- That treatment is because of something arising in consequence of the disabled person's disability, and
- It cannot be shown that the treatment is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
...unless the employer or service provider does not know, and could not reasonably be expected to know, that the person has the disability.

St Helens Borough Council will not deliberately treat disabled employees or service users unfavourably because of something arising in consequence of their disability.

If St Helens Borough Council knows that a service user or employee is disabled, then it will make reasonable adjustments to eliminate the risk of discrimination arising from a disability.

Reasonable Adjustments

A reasonable adjustment removes or avoids as far as possible, by reasonable means, the substantial disadvantage which

a disabled person experiences because of their disability where:

- A provision, criterion, or practice; or
- A physical feature; or
- The lack of an auxiliary aid or service, or
- The lack of accessible information on how to access Council employment or services.

...is shown to put disabled people at a substantial disadvantage compared with non-disabled people.

In meeting this duty, the Council will:

- Make changes to a provision, criterion, or practice.
 - This applies to Council policies and rules as well as the way in which services, information and other Council functions are delivered.
 - Provide translation and interpretation in different formats for the purpose of promoting access to employment and services for disabled people.
 - Promote a positive attitude towards disability or disabled people, through such means as staff training and staff/service user awareness-raising.
- Provide extra aids, adaptations, and services.
 - This includes equipment and support, such as a specific piece of computer software, or extra staff assistance.
 - Ensuring that any auxiliary aid provided is properly maintained.
 - Where reasonable, make contingency arrangements in case of an unexpected failure of an auxiliary aid.
- Make changes to overcome barriers created by the physical features of the service environment.
 - This applies to entrances, exits, fixtures, fittings, furnishings,

furniture, equipment, and material in the Council's premises, in any extended grounds and carparks, and open spaces such as cemeteries, parks and leisure areas.

- Seek written consent from the Landlord if the duty requires it to make reasonable adjustment to a building leased from a third party.

In meeting the duty to make reasonable adjustments the Council will not take any steps that are beyond its powers to take, or would fundamentally alter the nature of a service, or a job description.

Discrimination through a failure to make a Reasonable Adjustment

A failure to comply with a duty to make reasonable adjustments is discrimination against a disabled person requiring it

Under the Equality Act 2010, a failure to make a reasonable adjustment cannot be justified.

If an adjustment is reasonable, then it must be made and there can be no justification for why it is not made.

Harassment

Harassment in its simplest terms means being subject to "unwanted behaviour".

Unlawful harassment is unacceptable to St Helens Borough Council. It is our policy to eliminate harassment whether it occurs in policy, service delivery or employment.

Harassment occurs when a person is subject to unwanted conduct that is related to a relevant protected characteristic, and which has the purpose or the effect of:

- Violating the person's dignity; or

- Creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person.

Unwanted conduct covers a wide range of behaviour, including spoken or written words or abuse, imagery, graffiti, physical gestures, facial expressions, mimicry, micro-aggressions, jokes, pranks, acts affecting a person's surroundings or other physical behaviour.

The unwanted conduct does not have to be directed at any particular person and a person does not have to share the protected characteristic, in order to find the unwanted conduct intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive.

'Unwanted' does not mean that an express objection must be made in relation to the conduct before it is deemed unwanted.

It is the impact of the action or behaviour on the feelings of another individual, that makes it unwanted, not the perception of the person exhibiting the action or behaviour.

Although Harassment can include incidents of a repetitive nature, a serious one-off incident can amount to harassment.

Age, religion and belief, race, sex, sexual orientation, disability, and gender reassignment are protected from harassment.

Marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity are not protected directly under the harassment provisions. However, pregnancy and maternity harassment would amount to harassment related to sex.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment, where a person engages in unwanted conduct that is of a sexual nature, which is related to sex or gender reassignment, and the unwanted conduct creates intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated by St Helens Borough Council. Conduct 'of a sexual nature' can cover verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct including unwelcome sexual advances, touching, forms of sexual assault, sexual jokes, displaying pornographic photographs or drawings, or sending emails with material of a sexual nature.

Victimisation

Victimisation in the simplest terms means subjecting another person to detrimental treatment because they have made allegations or given evidence in relation to unlawful discrimination or harassment.

Victimisation also covers the situation where no allegation or evidence has been given, but a person is subject to detrimental treatment because it is believed they have done so or may do so in the future.

Under this Policy an individual need not have a particular protected characteristic in order to be protected against victimisation. However, to be unlawful, victimisation must be linked to a "protected act" as stated in the Equality Act 2010.

A "protected act" is any of the following:

- Bringing proceedings under the 2010 Equality Act.
- Giving evidence or information in connection with proceedings brought under the 2010 Equality Act.

- Doing anything which is related to the provisions of the 2010 Equality Act.
- Making an allegation (whether expressed or not) that another person has done something in breach of the 2010 Equality Act.

Instructing, Aiding, Causing or Inducing Discrimination

St Helens Borough Council will not tolerate any circumstances where elected members, employees or service users instruct, aid or help, induce or persuade a person or persons, to discriminate, harass or victimise another because of a protected characteristic. Nor to instruct, aid or help induce or persuade a person to help another person to do an unlawful act. Such an instruction would be unlawful even if it were not acted on.

Preventing Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation

St Helens Borough Council will take all possible reasonable steps to eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.

This includes training staff and members on the duties and responsibilities of the Equality Act 2010 and informing staff and service users of the Council's relevant policies.

- Codes of Conduct
- Assaults at Work Policy
- Employee Dispute Resolution Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Hate Crime Policy
- EDI Policy

Discrimination, harassment, and victimisation of employees by other employees will be dealt with under the Council's Employee Dispute Resolution Policy.

Discrimination, harassment, or victimisation of Service Users will be dealt with under the Council's Complaints Policy.

Discrimination, harassment, or victimisation of staff from someone outside of the Council, e.g., a service user, resident, or member of the public, will be dealt with under the Council's Assault at Work Policy.

Discrimination, harassment, or victimisation by staff, may result in disciplinary proceedings.

Discrimination, harassment, and victimisation by elected members, may result in conduct proceedings.

Discrimination, harassment, and victimisation against staff, elected members or the public, may be reported to the Police, which may lead to prosecution

Advancing Equality of Opportunity

Equality of opportunity is set out under the Equality Act 2010, as having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share. It involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- (a) Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic, that are connected to that characteristic
- (b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic, that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it
- (c) Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other

activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

Where necessary to advance equality of opportunity, St Helens Borough Council will provide assistance or make changes to policy and practice in order that people who share a relevant protected characteristic may achieve an equal level of service or employment opportunity. For example

- Making reasonable adjustments
- Providing translation and interpretation
- Providing service information in easy read or pictorial formats

The relevant protected characteristics for equality of opportunity are: age; disability, gender reassignment; sex, pregnancy and maternity; race; religion; and sexual orientation.

Monitoring outcomes with Diversity Profiles

St Helens Borough Council will monitor the following areas in order to demonstrate that its policies and practices advance equality of opportunity in employment and service delivery:

- Equality of access - can I get in?
- Equality of quality – once in, what will my experience be? will I be respected as an individual?
- Equality of outcome - will decision about me be based on merit or influenced by prejudicial bias towards my protected characteristics?

St Helens Borough Council monitors equality of opportunity in access, quality and outcome through the collection and analysis of diversity profiles within employment and service user monitoring processes.

The Council's Equality Monitoring and Positive Action guidance sets out the ways by which services successfully and effectively integrate and use diversity profiles in monitoring or consultation processes, to demonstrate equality of opportunity.

Equality of Opportunity does not necessarily mean that all individuals should or can be treated the same. It may be necessary for some people to receive information or support in a different way to others in order to achieve an equal level of service or employment opportunity.

Where there is evidence of disadvantage, unmet need, or disproportionate outcome for people who share a particular protected characteristic, the Council may use "positive action" provisions to improve outcomes, where appropriate to do so.

Fostering Good Relations – The Cohesion Objective

Good relations exist in a community where people from diverse and different backgrounds have a sense of belonging, are valued, appreciated, and have similar life opportunities.

St Helens Borough Council works with its partners to promote cohesion by identifying opportunities for people from different backgrounds, to develop strong and positive relationships; be it in the workplace, e.g., through a diverse workforce, or through inclusive education in schools and colleges, or through locality partnership working.

St Helens Borough Council Disability Charter (2015)

This Council is committed to the employment, retention, and advancement of disabled people within our workplace.

We undertake to work with Trade Union Disability Champions and disabled employees, in our workplaces to ensure that we maintain and maximise our commitment as a Disability Confident Employer.

We will actively involve our employees and their representatives in maintaining the goals of the Disability Confident Employer commitment.

We will encourage our entire workforce, using the appropriate training at all levels, to be supportive of disabled people.

We will seek to use suppliers and services that are also supportive of disabled people.

St Helens Borough Council Accessibility Charter (2018)

St Helens Borough Council recognises its obligations under the Equality Act 2010, which legally protects people from discrimination, harassment, and victimisation in the workplace and in wider society on the grounds of the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race including ethnic origin, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership. We also recognise that poverty, while not one of the protected characteristics, means that equality of access to basic human rights is not a given for some.

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires St Helens Borough Council when carrying out its functions and policies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- advance equality of opportunity, and
- foster good relations between different people.

This Accessibility Charter is a set of principles which St Helens Borough Council will adopt in recognition of the 150-year anniversary of this Borough (2018). It will act as a legacy to our commitment to establish an environment based on equality of access, fair entitlement, concern for the wellbeing of others, and respect for individual dignity. Council Members, people who work for the council and people who make use of council services should expect as a minimum standard:

- That the needs of the most vulnerable will come first.
- Access to clear and easy to follow information about council job opportunities, council services and service entitlements.
- The right to access the services to which they are entitled.
- ‘Reasonable adjustments’ to remove or lessen barriers for disabled people (i) in access to employment with the council, and (ii) in access to service information, and the services to which they are entitled.
- Individuals must behave with respect towards the protected characteristics of others.
- The right to be treated with respect in relation to protected characteristics.
- The right to experience an environment where dignity is valued.
- The right to experience an environment that is not harmful,

hostile, threatening, degrading, offensive or abusive.

- Action will be taken against those who do not respect the dignity of others.
- Action will be taken against those who exhibit harmful, hostile, threatening, degrading, offensive or abusive behaviour.
- To know that decisions will be based on merit and not influenced by prejudice or bias towards protected characteristics.
- The right to challenge decisions or make a complaint.
- Information is easily accessible on how to challenge a decision or make a complaint.

ensure that we as employers are 'Disability Confident'.

- Consult and engage with our disabled residents and disability community groups on how decisions impact them. Be open to their feedback and our continuous development.

St Helens Borough Council Disability Impact Pledge (2022)

As a Local Authority, we pledge to:

- Review the accessibility of our council buildings, so that all our venues are welcoming to our community.
- Improve accessibility in the way that people can contact us as a council, ensuring that there are several methods available for people with various needs.
- Review our website to ensure that it meets guidelines for best practice on accessibility.
- Make sure that our communications are provided in accessible formats.
- Appoint a designated Equality and Diversity Lead.
- Ensure our compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Host all of our public meetings in Accessible venues.
- Ensure our staff are trained in Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion.
- Promote flexible working, assistive technology, and other reasonable adjustments for our employees, to

St Helens Borough Council’s non-legally binding working definition of Islamophobia (2018)

“Anti-Muslim prejudice or hatred is a certain perception of Muslims, which may be expressed as hatred or outward hostility towards Muslims. Hatred may take the form of anti-Muslim rhetoric and physical manifestations that are targeted towards Muslims or non-Muslim individuals considered to be sympathetic to Muslims and/or their property, towards Muslim community institutions, religious and other related social institutions.” (The Tell MAMA Definition)

St Helens Borough Council’s non-legally binding working definition of Antisemitism (2018)

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.” (The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Definition)

St Helens Borough Council’s [Race Equality Declaration of Intent](#) (2021)

St Helens Borough Council is committed to creating a more welcoming, safe, and inclusive work environment, based on the value of mutual respect, trust, and dignity, which is critical to ensure the organisational capability meets the needs of our increasingly diverse community.

We want to ensure that our services and plans are inclusive and accessible, and delivered in a manner which is respectful of diversity, by staff that are aware of the

systemic and institutional barriers that have prevented race equality.

Institutional racism is bigger than any individual organisation. St Helens Borough Council is working with the Combined Authority and the other Liverpool City Region (LCR) Councils to develop and deliver a Race Equality Programme that seeks to meet the shared vision of “tackling systemic injustice and inequality and driving forward positive change for our BAME employees and residents - influencing the partners we work with to do the same”.