

**Corporate Equalities Policy**  
**February 2005**  
**DRAFT**

## **1. Policy Statement**

Oxford City Council acknowledges and values the diversity of people who live in, work in and visit the city. Oxford City Council is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity for all and the eradication of discrimination and harassment. Oxford City Council aims to promote equal opportunities both internally and when working with others to contribute towards a fair and socially inclusive city.

The Council will not tolerate less favourable treatment on any grounds, such as: age, class, culture, disability, faith, gender identity, sex or sexual orientation, HIV status, marital status, nationality, race, religion or beliefs, trade union or political activities.

Oxford City Council recognises that institutional discrimination may exist in any public organisation and will act to ensure that all forms of discrimination are eradicated from the Council's policies and practices.

This policy statement applies to service delivery, employment and community participation.

### **1.1 Service Delivery**

Oxford City Council recognises the importance of delivering services and running facilities that are accessible to all, and where these are managed by the Council directly, the authority aims to ensure that no-one will be prevented from accessing services and facilities.

The Council also recognises that there is much that it can do to promote equalities in the wider community through its work with partner organisations. The Council will work through its partnerships to enhance the promotion of equalities throughout the City.

The Council accepts that it has a major role to play in ensuring that equalities are promoted through its contracted services and tendering and procurement arrangements, and aims to ensure that these arrangements maintain and promote equalities.

### **1.2 Employment**

The Council recognises that its employment practices are a major influence on the organisation and the community at large and intends that its equality policies should reach out into the community.

The policy applies to potential as well as existing employees and relates to all aspects of employment including recruitment, pay, terms and conditions of service, promotion, development and training, grievance and disciplinary procedures. The policy will be made known to all employees and applicants for jobs.

All sections of the population will have equal access to jobs offered by the Council and no applicant or employee will receive less favourable treatment because of: age, class, culture, disability, faith, gender identity, sex or sexual orientation, HIV status, marital

status, nationality, race, religion or beliefs, trade union or political activities or responsibility for dependants unless Genuine Occupational Qualification (GOQ) applies.

In order to combat indirect discrimination, conditions or requirements will only be applied to any Council job or employment practice, if they can be shown to be relevant to the performance and demands of the job.

### **1.3 Community Participation**

Oxford City Council is committed to community participation in all aspects of its work and aims to promote equality of access and representation by engaging with all communities on issues that affect them and by running decision-making processes that are fair and accessible.

Oxford City Council recognises that by working with different communities at a local level, strong relationships can be built up which will help to enhance community cohesion.

The Council also acknowledges that much work can be done in partnership with local voluntary organisations and community groups to help promote equalities to a wider audience. We will identify communities that lack community structure and provide expertise and resources for community development.

## **2. Protection from Abuse**

All people have the right to protection and redress under the law in accordance with their human rights as outlined in The Human Rights Act 1998. Oxford City Council supports and promotes this right and will take all reasonable actions to protect staff, service users and the public from abuse, exploitation and/or mistreatment. We will work with others to safeguard people from harm.

## **3. Implementation**

Oxford City Council will use the Equalities Standards and The Race Equality Standard as a framework for implementing and monitoring the Corporate Equalities policy and practices.

The Council has developed an Equalities Action Plan which provides the timetable and framework for implementation of the Corporate Equalities Policy. The implementation is led by the Equalities Steering group and applies to all Councillors and council employees. Training will be available for key stakeholders to enable the implementation of this policy. Central to the implementation of the Action Plan and improvement in equalities issues within Council services is the process of Equalities Impact Assessments. These assessments identify aspects of Council services which may be accessible to a greater or lesser degree to people of different communities. They also assess the severity of such issues and highlight options for resolving them. Managers are then responsible for ensuring that steps are taken to address any inequalities arising from the nature of service provision and eradicating them wherever possible.

## **4. Monitoring**

The Corporate Equalities Policy is a public document and open to comments from local people. The policy and associated action plan will be formally reviewed every six months

by the Community Scrutiny Committee. Local people can be involved in the monitoring of the action plan and its implementation by getting involved in the Scrutiny process.

## **Appendix 1                      Legislative Framework**

Legislation designed to eliminate unfair discrimination and improve equality of opportunity has been in place for many years and continues to be developed. Current legislation includes:

- Employment Act 2002
- Equal Pay Act 1970  
(Amendment) Regulations 2003
- Race Relations Act 1976  
(Amendment) Regulations 2003
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995  
(Amendment) Regulations 2003
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995  
(Pensions) Regulations 2003
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Human Rights Act 1998

Direct Discrimination – treating one person less favourably than another on the grounds of: age, class, culture, disability, faith, gender identity, sex or sexual orientation, HIV status, marital status, nationality, race, religion or beliefs, trade union or political activities.

Indirect Discrimination – Indirect Discrimination - occurs when a provision, criterion or practice is applied equally to everyone and disadvantages people from a particular racial, gender or disability or other group (as listed above) and which is not justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

## **Appendix 2                      Other related documents**

The Equalities Action Plan  
The Equalities Standards and the Race Equality Scheme  
The Access Policy  
Workforce Monitoring procedures  
Special Leave (Employee Handbook)  
Maternity Rights  
Flexible Working Policy  
Recognition of Trade Union  
Tackling Harassment and Bullying at Work (Code of Practice)  
Monitoring procedures  
The Corporate Plan and business plans  
Best Value Performance Plan  
Procurement Strategy  
Customer Contact Strategy

Corporate Complaints Policy and procedures  
Consultation Strategy  
Community Safety Strategy  
Safeguarding Children from Harm

All of these documents will be made available on the Council's website,  
[www.oxford.gov.uk](http://www.oxford.gov.uk).