

This policy explains the Council's vision and commitment to equality of opportunity and respect for diversity in its role as a provider of quality services to the people who live, invest and bring up families in South Tyneside, as a significant employer in the local economy and in its community leadership role. We recognise that South Tyneside is a diverse place and this policy seeks to promote this by valuing the uniqueness of each individual.

South Tyneside will be an outstanding place to live, invest and bring up families.

The overall aim of this policy is to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination; Promote equality of opportunity; Promote equality of access; and Promote good relations between diverse communities in the Council's employment policies and practices, in our service delivery and in our engagement with partners and communities in the borough.

The Council will integrate equality of opportunity and respect for diversity into all aspects of its activity. To achieve our aims we will:

- Positively promote equality of opportunity and respect for diversity within South Tyneside as part of the Council's community leadership role;
- Challenge all forms of unfair discrimination, whether intentional, unintentional, institutional or otherwise;
- Profile the make up of the community in order to inform our priorities;
- Develop a Single Equalities Scheme and Action Plan to implement this policy;
- Undertake Equality Checks on service provision and employment and take appropriate action;
- Establish clear local targets for improvement within service areas and employment (equality objectives);
- Engage with and listen to the views of our communities and service users, to assist in the

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- Provide appropriate training and development in equality and diversity issues for our Elected Members and employees;
- Review, self-assess, audit and report progress annually on our equalities work;
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The Council is one of the major local employers, and as such recognises that a representative workforce provides greater sensitivity to the needs of our community.

Therefore we have a key role to play in tackling inequalities and discrimination in the workplace. In order to ensure that equality underpins all aspects of our employment policies, procedures and practices, we aim to:

- Ensure that our employment, training and development policies, procedures and practices comply with this policy and do not discriminate intentionally or unintentionally against any group or individual;
- Monitor our employment processes by age, disability, gender and racial group and take action to address any inequalities that are apparent;
- Recruit employees in a manner which is fair and open;
- Ensure employees are aware of their personal responsibility to apply this policy;
- Eliminate discrimination in the provision of training and development to ensure that all employees can realise their full potential and contribute to the development of the Council;
- Ensure that all Elected Members are offered relevant training and that all employees undertake relevant training in equal opportunity issues to raise their awareness, understanding and importance of equal opportunities in the work place and in service delivery;
- Ensure that the content of all training and development activities reflect our commitment to equality of opportunity and diversity;
- Promote a culture of fairness and respect in all employment policies, procedures and practices;
- Provide appropriate training and development opportunities to all employees;
- Take positive action to encourage under-represented groups to apply for posts or specific training;
- Ensure pay structures reward all employees fairly;
- Recognise that employees have the right to work in a supportive, safe and harassment-free environment and all complaints are dealt with robustly;
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