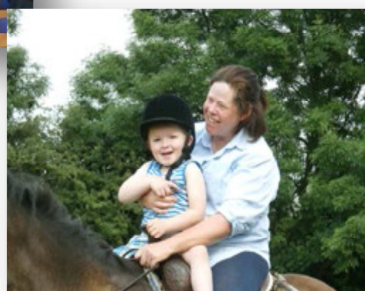


Equality and Human Rights Policy

Version 1: published July 2015



1. Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1 This Equality and Human Rights Policy explains how Blaby District Council aims to advance equality of opportunity, foster good relations and challenge discrimination, harassment and victimisation in the local area, in delivering services and as an employer.
- 1.2 As a Local Authority we aim to meet both our legal and moral duty to show fairness, equality and respect to our residents, our service users and our employees. We know that the population of our District is becoming more diverse and that people have very different backgrounds and life experiences. As a result of this we want to make sure that we continue to provide services that meet the varying needs of our residents by communicating, consulting and involving people across the District. As an employer, we constantly aim to have fair and equitable recruitment and selection processes and a welcoming and inclusive working environment, with respect for all.
- 1.3 The policy aims to promote long-term and continuous improvement, for all employees, job applicants, customers, suppliers and visitors. The responsibility for implementing it lies with all members of Blaby District Council whether they are elected councillors or employees. Our policy recognises the importance of ensuring that the principles of equality and human rights inform key decision-making at every level and builds on the consultation, action plans, our People Strategy and the equality schemes we have produced previously.
- 1.4 This policy supports our Vision and Values which highlights the Council's commitment to ensuring that all staff and service users are treated fairly and equally. These Visions and Values can be found in the Blaby Plan which sets out the Council's ambitions and how we will deliver our priorities.
- 1.5 We also recognise that we have a moral duty to challenge discrimination and harassment as we believe that our purpose is to play our part in protecting the well being of residents and employees.

1.6. In light of the importance attached to this policy, the Council will ensure that all employees and councillors attend equality, diversity and inclusion workshops at regular intervals and complete the e-learning Equality and Diversity induction module.

1.7. We also ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are integral and fully reflected in all the Councils practices, policies and procedures relating to service provision, recruitment and employment.

2. What is Equality and Human Rights?

2.1 Equality , Diversity and Inclusion

Equality is about creating a fairer society where everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. Diversity is about recognising and valuing difference in its broadest sense. Inclusion is about an individual's experience within the workplace and in wider society and, the extent to which they feel valued and included.

2.2 Human Rights

Human Rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world. They are based on core principles like dignity, fairness, equality, respect and autonomy. They are relevant to day-to-day life and protect individual's freedom to control their own life, effectively take part in decisions made by public authorities which impact upon their rights and get fair and equal services from public authorities.

3. What the law says

3.1 The Equality Act 2010 including the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Human Right Act 1998 are the main pieces of legislation which focus on the rights of people not to be discriminated against and safeguard the fundamental freedoms of everyone.

3.2 The Equality Act 2010 is about making sure that people are treated fairly and equally. The law talks about the different 'protected characteristics', and

guards people in these groups from discrimination because of who or what makes them different from other people.

3.3 It is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of any of these 'protected characteristics'. This applies whether the discrimination is actual or perceived and if it occurs directly, indirectly or by association. The details of these protected characteristics can be found in Appendix 1.

3.4 The Public Sector Equality Duty requires organisations such as district councils, schools and hospitals to think about how they can make things better for people from the different groups. Public authorities must ensure that everyone has equal opportunities and do not suffer discrimination when they carry out their functions and must seek 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 people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

3.5 The Human Rights Act 1998 obliges public authorities to treat everyone with dignity, respect and fairness. It gives people the right to a voice, and protects from excessive action which could result in loss of life, liberty or intrude into people's lives.

3.6 All councillors and everyone who works for public authorities must act in a way that is compatible with the Act. By providing services in this way it not only meets the act but makes a positive difference to people's lives.

4. Implementation

4.1 This policy applies to the Council members, all employees, as well as potential employees, service users, secondees, agency workers, contractors, volunteers, work experience and student placements.

4.2 The Equality Objectives action plan details how we plan to deliver our improvements in relation this policy and it also covers other equality areas that are not specifically mentioned as individual protected characteristics, but are equally significant in their own right. These include socio-economic status and groups such as carers, asylum seekers and gypsies and travellers. This plan will also help us to meet the requirements of current and future equality and human rights related legislation. Progress of these objectives are reported annually and reviewed every four years.

Click on the link to view the Equalities Objectives: [Equality Objectives](#)

4.3 The effectiveness of this policy and objectives will be monitored through the collation of statistics relating to service performance, satisfaction, employment. This data will be available on the Equalities pages of our web site along with other appropriate equalities documents.

Click on the link to view the Equalities Information: [Equalities Information](#)

How does this policy relate to the strategic priorities of the Council?

5.1 This policy cannot be delivered in isolation. In order to successfully embed equality, diversity and human rights in all that we do, this policy will link closely with other council policies, strategies and strategic priorities as defined in the following:

- Blaby Plan 2015-2018
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- People Strategy

5.2 In 2013, the Council achieved the Customer Service Excellence Award. The assessors recognised that we have an in-depth understanding of our customer groups and are committed to raising awareness about diversity.

5.3 This Equality and Human Rights Policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

6 Engaging and consulting with our communities

6.1 We engage and consult with our communities regularly so that we understand our customer's views and can ensure that the services we design and deliver are appropriate and meet the needs of all. We recognise that different groups of people may need to be engaged in different ways and have put in place guidance to assist in ensuring equal and fair access for all.

6.2 All policies, strategies and processes within the council are subject to Equality and Impact Assessments as appropriate to ensure that they take into consideration the effect they may have on different protected characteristics.

7 Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 We expect staff and councillors to treat everyone they come into contact with dignity and respect and have an expectation that customers, stakeholders, partners and suppliers will afford the same treatment to those who carry out duties in service of the Council.

7.2 **All staff and Council members**, all share responsibility for promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion and ensuring that this policy is implemented in practice, with any breaches reported. It is the responsibility of all to ensure that all mandatory equality related training is completed.

7.3 **The Chief Executive, Directors and all Managers** have a responsibility to ensure that staff have read and understood the policy and that they are encouraged to complete equalities related training. In addition managers

must ensure that the policy is complied with and deal with any issues or complaints arising, seriously, speedily, sensitively and confidentially.

7.4 The Performance Manager is responsible for implementing, reviewing and monitoring progress of the policy and objectives. Additionally they are responsible for providing advice on equality and human rights policy

7.5 Breaches of this policy will be dealt with under the Councils internal Disciplinary and Grievance procedures or our external Acceptable Behaviour Statement.

8 Procurement

8.1 In order to be compliant with the Public Sector Equality Act, the Council is obliged to ensure that the goods and services they procure are fit for purpose and meet the needs of the user. The Duty highlights a number of factors that managers should take 'due regard' to when making decisions about procurement. The Council must ensure the procurement processes include consideration of equality issues and clarify areas of responsibilities.

Document Control Table

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Date Document modified	
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Protected Characteristics

Age, relates to a person belonging to a particular age group (e.g. 32 year olds) or a range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).

Disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long term' negative impact on a person's ability to do normal daily activities.

Gender Reassignment is the process of transitioning from one gender to another. This 'characteristic' covers a person who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning their gender by changing physiological or other attributes of gender.

Marriage and Civil Partnership, legislation relating to marriage was amended on 13th March 2014 and from 29th March 2014 same sex marriages could take place. Currently same sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters.

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. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

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

Religion or Belief, religion refers to any religion or no religion. Belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including no 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.

Sex (Gender), covers the 'characteristic' of being a man or of being a woman.

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

About the residents of Blaby District

Blaby District Profile

Blaby District Council is in the East Midlands of England. The Council covers an area of 13,000 hectares or 129 km² to the south west of Leicester, part of which borders Leicester City Council. The district contains the M1/M69 junction which is close to the major shopping centre of Fosse Park.

The area is classified as urban by Natural England although is part rural and includes a number of villages.

Population

- A population of 95,851 (estimate 2014 ONS) although this is predict to rise to 110,100 by 2033, a 17% change from 2011. This is lower than the expected rate of increase for Leicestershire and East Midlands but greater than that for the England.
- There are 40,345 households
- The district has higher population density than nationally, 737 persons per square kilometre as opposed to 315 persons per square kilometre across Leicestershire, and 411 nationally.

Age

- Blaby's under 19 population, at 23.35%, is similar to the East Midlands and England. However, Blaby's population of over 65's is slightly higher at 19.7% than the averages across the, East Midlands and England. The over 65 population is projected to rise to 21.6% by 2021 and 25.5% by 2033. 57% of the population is aged between 20 and 64 years.

Gender

- Females make 51% of the population of Blaby, this is the same as the East Midlands and England as a whole.

Source: ONS <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/snpp/sub-national-population-projections/Interim-2011-based/index.html> Crown copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO

Gender Reassignment

- There are no accurate statistics available regarding those who identify as trans or transgender within Blaby District, or the UK as a whole. Figures from Leicester LGBT Centre suggest approximately 1% of the population are transgender. This would equate to 958 residents within the District

Sexual Orientation

- There are no accurate statistics available regarding the lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) population within the District, or the UK as a whole. Sexual orientation is not incorporated into the census or other official statistics; however it is

acknowledged that approximately 6-10% of any population will be LGB. In Blaby District this would equate to between 5,750 and 9,585 residents.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

In the 2011 census, 15,086 households within the District declared that they were married or were in a registered same-sex civil partnership. There is a relatively equal balance of people who are married or in a registered same-sex civil partnership across all districts and boroughs within Leicestershire.

Ethnicity – (2011 Census)

- In 2011, in Blaby, 88.5% of residents were White British and 11.5% were from Minority Ethnic Groups.
- The largest Minority Ethnic Group is Asian or Asian British (6.1%), the same group in the East Midlands makes up a proportion of 6.5%.
- Since 2001 the population has grown by 4% with the largest change contributed by Asian or Asian British people with an increase of 2% or nearly 2,000 people.

(Source: ONS <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/index.html> reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO)

- 95.9% of the population has English as their first language
- 0.7% of Blaby residents state that they cannot speak English/cannot speak English well

Religion – (2011 Census)

58% of residents state their religion as 'Christian' and Those stating that they have no religion is the second largest group at 29% broadly similar to England as a whole. The Hindu (2.7%) and Sikh (2%) religions make up the next largest groups in the district which are higher than the England average.

Source: ONS <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/index.html>
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Health

- The percentage of people in Blaby with a long term limiting illness is higher than in Leicestershire, East Midlands and England at 15.7%.
- Nationally it is estimated that 1 in 4 people will be affected by mental health issues at some time in their life. This would equal nearly 24,000 currently in the district.
- People living in Blaby have a similar life expectancy to those living in the rest of Leicestershire, but higher than the East Midlands and England

	Measure	Blaby	England
Male	Years	80.7	79.4
Female	Years	84.6	83.1

Deprivation - (2010 Indices of Deprivation)

- Blaby district has low levels of deprivation. It is the 2nd least deprived district in Leicestershire.

- Blaby is the ranked 297 least deprived district in England (where 354 is the least deprived and 1 is the most deprived). This is a move from rank 326 in 2007, meaning there is **more** deprivation in the district.
- About 9.1% (1,500) children in the district live in poverty.

Source: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/indices2010>

Lone Parents

- In Blaby there are 2,324 lone parent households with dependent children. This is 6% of all households in the district, this is lower than the England figure of 7.1%, but higher than the average for Leicestershire of 5.6%.

Employment

- The district has low levels of unemployment at 1.0% (January 2015) and a high percentage of people employed in the service sector.

About the staff of Blaby District Council

The Council employs approximately 300 staff in a variety of roles.

Employees (as at 31 March 2015)	
Total number of employees: 303	
%	Category
55.45%	Females
44.22%	Males
2.64%	Employees with a disability
3.30%	Asian or Asian British - Indian
0.33%	Asian - other
0.33%	Black British
0.66%	Mixed – White and Black
4.62%	White – any other White background
0.33%	White and Asian
85.15%	White - British
0.66%	White - Irish
4.62%	Prefer not to specify

