

Stage 1 Equality Impact Assessment

Directorate: Strategy & Resources

Service: Governance, Performance and Risk

Accountable Officer: Gavin Edwards

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Date of assessment: 31st March 2025

Names & job titles of people carrying out the assessment: Gavin Edwards, Senior Performance Officer

Name of policy: **Equality and Diversity Policy 2025-29**

Existing Policy

Stage 1: Screening Stage

1. Briefly describe its aims & objectives

The Equality and Diversity Policy formalises the council's commitment to supporting and promoting Equality and Diversity and ensures that to that end the council will strive to:

- *Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people because of their protected characteristics;*
- *Take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of others;*
- *Encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where they are under-represented*

2. Are there external considerations? (legislation/government directive etc.)

- **Equality Act 2010** which defines general duties for all public organisations and other specific duties to listed public organisations (including local authorities).
- **Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) 2011** made up of a general equality duty which is supported by specific duties. The 'public sector equality duty' is the formal title of the legislation, the 'general equality duty' is the overarching requirement or substance of the duty, and the 'specific duties' are intended to help performance on the general equality duty¹.

The general equality duty requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct

¹ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com>

that is prohibited by or under the Act.

- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

3. Who are the stakeholders and what are their interests?

- *Residents/Individuals who use or access services that the council provides.*
- *Tenants who reside in housing stock that is managed and maintained by the council.*
- *Council Employees who work to provide and shape council services for residents and individuals.*

4. What outcomes do we want to achieve and for whom?

In line with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (2011), the Equality and Diversity policy aims to ensure that the Council strives to:

- *Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people because of their protected characteristics;*
- *Take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of others;*
- *Encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where they are under-represented*

5. Has any consultation/research been carried out or relied upon?

Yes

Following the public consultation on the Council's new Corporate Plan 2025-30: 'Our District, Our World' the following commitments were included in relation to equality and diversity:

Under [Guiding principle]: '**Being open, democratic and building trust in all we do we do'**

- *We will Set a good example as an employer, treating employees fairly and ensuring equality of opportunity.*

Under [Guiding principle]: '**Celebrating Diversity'**

- *We will: Work with voluntary organisations to bring people together, celebrate our diversity and enable residents to play an active role in their communities.*

6. Are there any concerns at this stage which indicate the possibility of inequalities/negative impacts? (Consider and identify any evidence you have - equality data relating to usage and satisfaction levels, complaints, comments, research, outcomes of review, feedback and issues raised at previous consultations, known inequalities) If so please provide details.

No - There are no negative impacts associated with the Equality and Diversity Policy as its aims are to act in positive way and eliminate inequality and disadvantage in line with statutory legislation to:

- *Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people because of their protected characteristics;*
- *Take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of others;*
- *Encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where they are under-represented*

7. Could a particular protected characteristic be affected differently in either a negative or positive way? (Positive – it could benefit, Negative – it could disadvantage, Neutral – neither positive nor negative impact or Not sure?)

	Type of impact, reason & any evidence
Disability	<i>Positive – The policy includes an objective the council work towards as part of its Customer Access Strategy – ‘To ensure that all of our services are accessible to people with disabilities; consideration to be given to screen reader compatibility, hearing loop systems’</i>
Race (including Gypsy & Traveller)	<i>Positive – The policy sets out: The council will not tolerate any form of discrimination and will continue to seek to eradicate racism, Islamophobia, sexual orientation discrimination, Anti-Semitism and hate crime across the district through our work with our partners, developing initiatives that are actively inclusive and anti-racist.</i>
Age	<i>Positive - The policy includes an objective the council work towards as part of its Customer Access Strategy – ‘Increase options for customers to connect and transact with us online to help focus resources on supporting customers who are not able to go online’</i>
Gender	Positive – The policy will positive support, Gender, Transgender and Sexual orientation as its designed to:
Transgender	
Sexual Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people because of their protected characteristics;</i> • <i>Take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of others;</i> • <i>Encourage people from protected groups to participate in public</i>

APPENDIX 3

	<i>life or in other activities where they are under-represented</i>
Religion/Belief	Positive – The policy sets out: <i>The council will not tolerate any form of discrimination and will continue to seek to eradicate racism, Islamophobia, sexual orientation discrimination, Anti-Semitism and hate crime across the district through our work with our partners, developing initiatives that are actively inclusive and anti-racist.</i>
Pregnancy & Maternity	Positive - The policy will positively support those who are pregnant or Maternity or Marriage/Civil Partnership Status, as its designed to:
Marriage/ Civil Partnership Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people because of their protected characteristics;</i> • <i>Take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of others;</i> • <i>Encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where they are under-represented</i> <p>The protected characteristics like others set out in this assessment are also considered as part of the council's own employment and recruitment practices to ensure reasonable adjustments can be made where appropriate.</p>

8. Could other socio-economic groups be affected e.g. carers, ex-offenders, low incomes?

None – The policy is designed to be inclusive for all groups and not put barriers in the way of anyone who has a protected characteristic defined by the equality act.

9. Are there any human rights implications?

No the policy has no human rights implications as its designed to support statutory legislation defined within Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty 2011.

10. Is there an opportunity to promote equality and/or good community relations?

Yes

The policy is in line with the council's new corporate plan that ensures defines guiding principles around equality and diversity:

Under [Guiding principle]: '**Being open, democratic and building trust in all we do we do'**

- **We will Set a good example as an employer, treating employees fairly and ensuring equality of opportunity.**

Under [Guiding principle]: '**Celebrating Diversity'**

- **We will: Work with voluntary organisations to bring people together, celebrate our diversity and enable residents to play an active role in their communities.**

The objectives developed as part of the policy include the following:

- Community Engagement through consultation
- Working with Partners to celebrate diversity
- Supporting Equality and Diversity in our workforce

11. If you have indicated a negative impact for any group is that impact legal? (not discriminatory under anti-discrimination legislation)

No – The Equality and Diversity policy and the statutory legislation underpinning it is designed to act as positive way.

12. Is any part of this policy/service to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors?

Yes – The policy states the following:

The policy covers council staff, Members, contractors and others working directly on the council's behalf.

Please note that normally you should proceed to a Stage 2: Full Equality Impact Assessment Report if you have identified actual, or the potential to cause, adverse impact or discrimination against different groups in the community. (Refer to Quick Guidance Notes at front of template document)

13. Is a Stage 2: Full Equality Impact Assessment Report required?

No - The revised Equality and Diversity Policy is designed to have a positive impact on those who access council services and those who work for the council. The policy is not designed to discriminate anyone with a protected characteristic defined by the Equality Act 2010 and ensures people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where they are under-represented, therefore no Stage 2 assessment is required.

14. Date by which Stage 2 is to be completed and actions

N/A

APPENDIX 3

Please complete

We are satisfied that an initial screening has been carried out and a full impact **is not required**

Completed by: Gavin Edwards
Role: Senior Performance Officer

Date: 31/03/2025

Countersigned by: Michelle Farrow
Role: Head of Corporate Policy

Date: 01/04/2025



Please keep the signed hard copy with your team for auditing purposes and forward an electronic copy to policy@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk so that it can be published.