

# Dignity for all

## Islington Council's Equality and Diversity Policy

### Our Values and Priorities

The council's over-arching vision is to make Islington a fairer place by cutting the number of people living in poverty, narrowing the gap between rich and poor and making a difference to the lives of those who most need our help.

A clear commitment to equality and diversity is embedded throughout our stated corporate commitment to deliver a fairer Islington. Our corporate values are an integral part of this. They state that as an organisation:

- We put serving the public first
- We are open honest and fair
- We respect all people and communities

These values inform everything that we do to improve the quality of life for people living, working and studying in the borough.

The council has identified six key priorities that support our vision of making Islington fairer and that we are focusing on as an organisation. These are:

- decent, suitable and affordable homes
- lower crime and anti-social behaviour
- cycle of poverty broken
- best start in life for all children
- healthy, active and independent lives
- delivering basic services efficiently and well

## **Our commitment to equality**

As an employer and service provider, Islington Council is committed to eliminating discrimination and valuing diversity in all of our activities. We also recognise our community leadership role and will use this opportunity to promote our commitment to equality, diversity, community cohesion and fairness.

We will monitor and address unequal outcomes for different equality groups (including socio-economic status) in the six priority areas and ensure that the over-arching values of fairness and equality are integrated throughout our work.

Islington Council will ensure that Islington staff, residents and service users are treated equally, with dignity and respect, regardless of age; disability; race (including ethnic origin, colour, nationality and national origin); sexual orientation; sex/gender; religion and belief (including philosophical belief) gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity (the nine characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010).

In addition to these 'protected characteristics' we will ensure that socio-economic status will also be taken into consideration when carrying out our work.

## **Diverse Population**

One of Islington's strengths is its diverse population. Of the 200,000 residents of the borough, just over a quarter are from black and minority ethnic backgrounds and 70% of the total school population are from backgrounds other than White British. Approximately 10% of residents are of first generation refugee origin. Just over half of Islington residents declare themselves to be adherents of the Christian religion, while just over one third claim either no religious belief or make no statement regarding religion. After Christianity, the most commonly practiced religion is Islam, adhered to by over 8% of the resident population.

Around 17% of the population define themselves as disabled and Islington is estimated to have one of the highest percentages of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) residents of all London boroughs.

There is an unusually large proportion of young adults (when compared to the rest of London and England), but fewer older people and fewer school-aged children. Approximately 21% of the population are aged 0-19 and 9% are aged over 65.

Islington has high levels of income inequality. 15% of households have an income of less than £15,000 and just under half have an income of under £30,000. 1 in 6 households in the borough have an income of over £60,000. 43% of children in Islington live in poverty, which equates to 18,000 children and is the second highest in London.

## **Legal duties**

Our commitments are supported by a number of legal duties that require us to promote equality and eliminate discrimination. The Equality Act 2010 harmonises and replaces previous discrimination legislation (such as the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995). Under the Equality Act there are nine different characteristics, which are listed above, that are protected from discrimination. Islington is also bound by the 'public sector equality duty' which requires us to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

## **Policy into Practice**

The Council will engage in a range of activities in order to translate our commitment to Equality and Diversity into practice and to meet our legal duties. These activities are laid out in detail in our Corporate Equality Scheme which is supplemented by the individual Equality Schemes for Race, Gender, Disability, Sexual Orientation and Religion and Belief.

### *As a community leader we will:*

- Promote good relations between communities in our communications and address negative stereotyping of any groups.
- Organise and support a range of equality and diversity events throughout the year to promote understanding and awareness and foster community cohesion.

### *As a community leader we will:*

- Encourage councillors and senior managers to demonstrate personal leadership in equalities.
- Work with our key partners in the borough to implement the Charter for Fairness and Equality (a statement of principles which has been agreed by the Islington Partnership Board).

### *As a service provider we will:*

- Deliver services that are accessible to all and that are tailored to the diverse and individual needs of our community.
- Obtain up to date equality information and data on Islington residents and use it intelligently to inform priorities and policies.
- Ensure that equality is embedded in our procurement process by monitoring the policies and practices of our suppliers.
- Consult and engage all groups in our community and ensure that feedback from residents, particularly those from marginalised or disadvantaged groups, is reflected in our work.
- Ensure that all residents have equal opportunity to participate in the democratic process.
- Monitor and respond to outcomes for all equality groups (including socio-economic status) in each of the Council's priority areas of work.
- Continue to use Equality Impact Assessments when introducing any new policies practices and functions.

*As an employer we will:*

- Reflect the diverse nature of the borough in our workforce.
- Continue to review and develop all of our human resources policies and practices (including recruitment, retention, learning and development, promotion, grievance, disciplinary and retirement) to ensure that these are inclusive and accessible for all staff with 'protected characteristics'.
- Provide managers with the necessary training and support to manage a diverse workforce.
- Address any bullying and harassment in the workplace relating to any of the 'protected characteristics'.

*As an employer we will:*

- Continue to use Equality Impact Assessments when introducing any new policies practices and functions in the workplace (including restructures and organisational change).
- Recognise the contribution of the Equality Staff Forums and support their work.