

# **EQUALITY SCHEME 2019-23**

**JULY 2019**

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# **1 BACKGROUND**

## **1.1 The Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) consolidated nine pieces of legislation and over 100 pieces of secondary legislation covering issues of inequality in society, including the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, and Race Relations Act 1976. The Act brought together the various pieces of legislation with the aim of making the law easier to understand and apply, and also introduced new duties.

## **1.2 Public Sector Equality Duty**

The Public Sector Equality Duty places both general and specific duties on public bodies, such as the Council. The general duty requires all public bodies to have 'due regard' to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, 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.

The Act further explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

The nine 'protected characteristics' covered by the Act are:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender reassignment;
- Marriage and civil partnership;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality;
- Religion or belief – this includes lack of belief;
- Sex;
- Sexual orientation.

The Council must publish information at least annually to show that it has consciously thought about the three aims of the duty in its decision making process. In addition, the Council is required to publish one or more equality objectives and review them at least once every four years. The objectives published must be specific and measurable. This information is made available on the Council's website, [www.broxbourne.gov.uk](http://www.broxbourne.gov.uk).

Through publishing an Equality Scheme, the Council aims to embed equalities into the business planning, performance management, service delivery and employment

policies of the Council, and to use its influence to promote good community relations for those who live, work or visit the Borough.

## **2 EQUALITY SCHEME 2019-2023**

This builds on previous equality schemes and is presented in the same format. An action plan supplements the scheme and translates the commitments in the scheme into activities and targets.

The Council has integrated equality issues into its policy development, implementation, evaluation and review processes. The Council uses self-assessment as the main method of determining progress, with independent validation to be provided by engaging with residents and local community groups.

### **2.1 Policy statement**

The Council has adopted the following equalities policy statement:

The Council is committed to equal opportunities, and aims to prevent unlawful and unjustified discrimination against employees and service users on the grounds of:

- age;
- disability;
- employment status;
- ethnic or national origins, race or colour;
- gender;
- gender reassignment;
- marital or civil partnership status;
- religious beliefs or lack of belief;
- responsibility for children or dependants;
- sexual orientation;
- social class;
- trade union activities;
- unrelated criminal convictions;
- pregnancy and maternity.

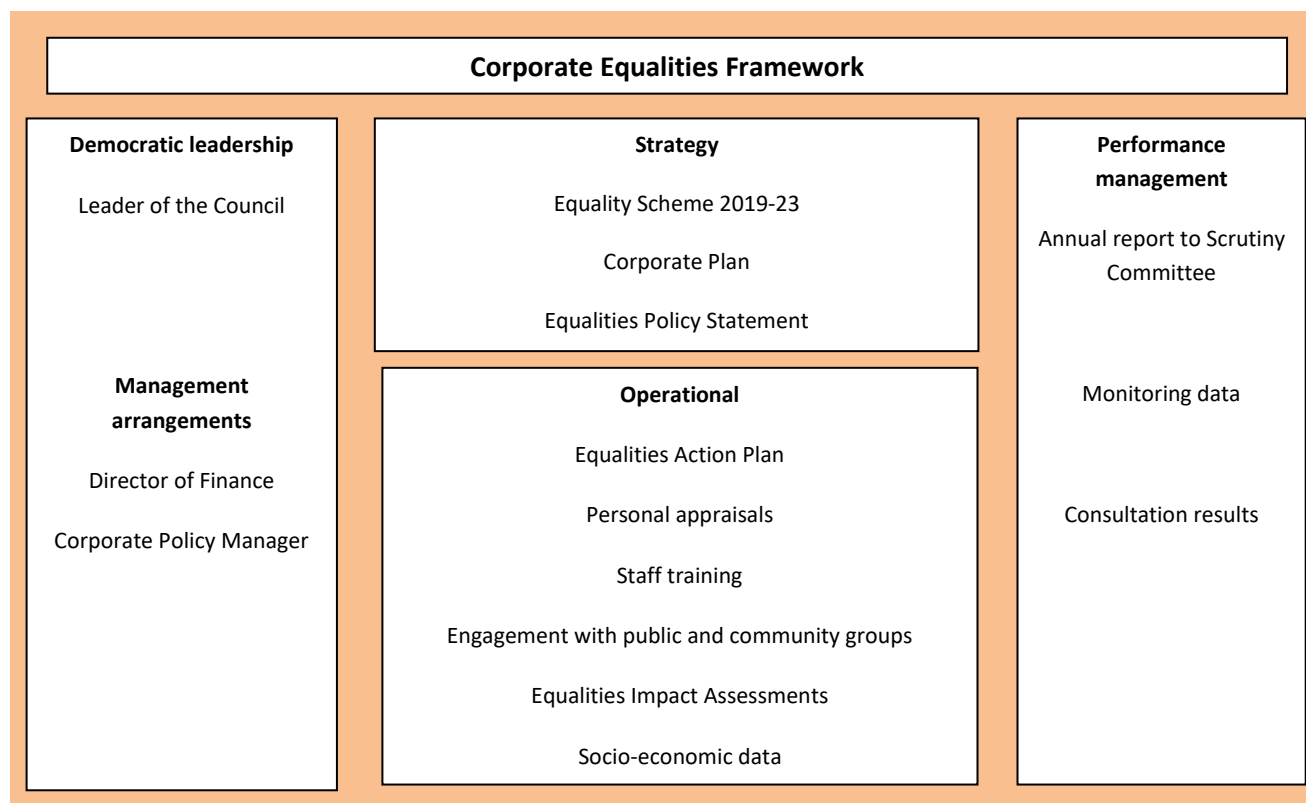
### **2.2 General commitments**

The Council will:

- meet its statutory equality duties
- provide resources for improving equality practice.
- provide services fairly to all sectors of the community.
- identify groups within the community and seek to provide services according to need.
- undertake community and workforce profiling.
- recruit, employ, and pay people fairly.
- undertake equality action planning and equality target setting
- undertake systematic consultation with staff and service users
- monitor, and where necessary revise targets in the following areas:

- service and delivery usage,
  - recruitment,
  - pay and grade
  - exit from the organisation data
- influence other organisations to adopt good practice.

### 3 EQUALITIES FRAMEWORK



### 4 RESPONSIBILITIES

Within the Cabinet, the Leader holds the equality portfolio. The officer holding corporate responsibility for equalities issues is the Director of Finance. Corporate implementation of the Council's equalities policies is coordinated by the Corporate Policy Manager, but every member of staff has responsibility for promoting equality and respecting diversity.

The Council is committed to using its position of influence to encourage others to take action to tackle unlawful discrimination and to improve equality of opportunities and good community relations. This is promoted particularly through recruitment policies, partnership working, grant funding, and procurement of goods and services.

### 5 EQUALITIES VISION

The Council aspires to create a community where everyone has equality of opportunity in employment, and access to services which are sensitive to their needs and aspirations.

## **6 EQUALITY OBJECTIVES**

The Council has identified five equality objectives which are the focus for its work on equality.

<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>REASONS</b>
1. Ensure services meet the changing needs of all service users.	The Council is committed to providing fair access to services that meet the needs of a varied population.
2. Help address economic inequalities in partnership with other organisations.	By working in partnership with others the Council can reduce economic inequalities which have a negative impact on residents.
3. Engage effectively with local residents.	All local people should have the opportunity to influence local decision making and many do, but the Council recognises that some communities are harder to reach than others.
4. Ensure the Council's workforce is committed to equality.	It is vital that staff are properly trained and supported to deliver the Council's services fairly to all sectors of its community.
5. Promote community cohesion and equality through partnership working, procurement activity and when commissioning services.	The Council will further equality and good relations between communities by sharing its equality objectives when working with partners, suppliers, contractors and their agents and by ensuring they help deliver these to the community.

The Equalities Action Plan sets time-limited tasks related to these equalities objectives, but most of the implementation is mainstreamed into Council policymaking, service design and delivery, and human resources policies, by continually using the procedures described below.

## **7 PROCEDURES**

### **7.1 Equality impact assessments**

The purpose of equality impact assessments is to obtain a profile of how the policy, service or function affects people with protected characteristics, and then to take action to eliminate or mitigate any potential disadvantage. The Council uses Equality Impact Assessments to assist in implementation of the Public Sector Equality Duty when formulating or changing policy and taking major decisions, and reports the results to Cabinet and Council as applicable.

### **7.2 Monitoring**

The Council will use monitoring to:

- highlight possible inequalities;
- investigate underlying causes; and
- remove any unfairness or disadvantage
- measure performance against targets
- measure whether the Council is offering equality of opportunity and treatment to all
- know whether the Council's Equality Policy and Corporate Equalities Scheme are making a positive difference;

To ensure consistency, the Council has agreed corporate monitoring categories to ensure there is consistency in the way that information is gathered and held. These include categories for sex, and age when requesting monitoring information. Questions regarding ethnic origin, disability, faith or sexual orientation will be asked where relevant and appropriate.

Use of the same categories by partner organisations, contractors and voluntary and community organisations is strongly encouraged to enable meaningful comparisons to be drawn. Where relevant and practical, voluntary organisations receiving funding from the Council for are required to provide monitoring information about residents benefitting from the funding. The Council is mindful of the resource implications for local voluntary and community organisations, as well as the Council, and will help organisations to make this practical.

The Council continue to monitor the number of people it employs by race, sex, age and disability status, but only reports on gender differences in pay. The workforce is small and it is not possible to draw statistically valid conclusions about trends from year to year, but reports are produced when the data can be relevant, for example, to assist succession planning.

The Council improves employment prospects for disadvantaged groups by encouraging applications from all parts of the community, providing apprenticeships, and by supporting existing employees to fulfil their potential.

The Council monitors incidents of harassment or discrimination in relation to its services or functions. This enables appropriate action to be taken or advice to be given. There is a simple reporting system in operation and both the public and staff are encouraged to use this if necessary.

The Council welcomes all comments and complaints. The existing Council procedures will be used to investigate and respond to complaints (external) and grievances (internal) made in relation to this Scheme.

### **7.3 Consultation and engagement**

The Council's Communications section, in partnership with services, is responsible for ensuring consultation is appropriate and high quality. The Council places great importance on consultation and engaging with individuals, organisations and partner agencies for corporate decision-making. Consultation is a continuous process, not a one-off activity, and the Council will compare results received over time and identify if results vary between different groups within the Borough's population, to inform its work.

The Council will consult with relevant parties as part of equality impact assessments and, where appropriate, prior to the introduction of new policies and services. Through consultation the Council will seek to gain a better understanding of how all sections of the community view Council policies and services. This information can then be used to help shape and develop services to meet public expectations.

The methods used will depend on the needs of specific groups and on the service or policy being reviewed. Attention will be given to seeking the views of people in traditionally hard to reach groups. The Council recognises the need to communicate in different ways with people in these groups:

- people with sensory and learning disabilities;
- people whose first language is not English;

### **7.4 Training**

The Council will provide training and briefings to staff and Members on equality and diversity issues. These include:

- ensuring information on the Council's approach to equalities is included as part of the induction of new employees;
- ensuring all staff attend equality and diversity training;
- offering all managers diversity training, including advice on carrying out equality impact assessments; action planning to improve service delivery and performance monitoring;
- ensuring all managers responsible for recruitment receive relevant training in respect of equalities;
- providing Councillors with learning and development opportunities in respect of equalities;
- involving local voluntary and community organisations where appropriate in the planning, design and delivery of learning and development opportunities.

### **7.5 Procurement**

The Council aims to promote good practice to its contractors. Officers responsible for contracting will consider equalities throughout the procurement process, so far as this is compatible with national regulations and, at time of publication, European Union regulations.



All contracts opportunities above the value of £10,000 are advertised on a free web portal advertised throughout Hertfordshire and signposted on the Council's website. At the supplier pre-qualification stage for major contracts, the Council may use the opportunity to check that contractors are aware of their obligations under equalities legislation and have a good track record, where this is deemed relevant. Contractors that cannot meet this requirement will present a risk and may be excluded if the risk is a serious one. It is a requirement of Contract Standing Orders that every written contract incorporate a requirement that the contractor shall adopt and pursue an equal opportunities policy in compliance with statutory obligations.

## **7.6 Communicating progress**

The Council will publish the results of assessments, consultations and monitoring of adverse impact. Information will be available on the Council's website, and through the Freedom of Information Act Publication Scheme. Relevant material will be circulated to interested partners for information and consultation.

The Council will publish an annual report of monitoring data and progress against the Equality Scheme and the Equality Action Plan. This progress is subject to inspection by the Council's Scrutiny Committee.

## **8 FEEDBACK**

Broxbourne Borough Council welcomes comments or views on any aspect of this Corporate Equality Scheme. Please use the online form at: <https://www.broxbourne.gov.uk/contact-us> or telephone: 01992 785555.

Any complaints about the way the Council is meeting the duties under the Equality Act 2010, or other equality complaints will be dealt with through the standard corporate complaints procedure available at: [www.broxbourne.gov.uk](http://www.broxbourne.gov.uk).

## 9 ANNEX: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF BROXBOURNE

Broxbourne lies in the southeast of Hertfordshire, on the boundary with Greater London to the south, and Essex to the east. It encompasses the towns of Broxbourne, Cheshunt, Hoddesdon and Waltham Cross. The latest population estimates from the Office for National Statistics indicate that the population of Broxbourne reached 99,000 at the beginning of 2019 and will rise to 101,000 by 2023.

### 9.1 Age

The proportion of the population who are aged 60 or over has been increasing over the last twenty years, and reached 23.40% in 2019. As the population also increased overall, this means that there are now 6,000 more people aged over 60 living in the Borough, compared to 20 years ago. There are over 2,500 residents who are aged over 85, as compared to less than half that number twenty years ago. By 2023, it is expected that there will be approximately 2,900 residents aged over 85. By contrast, from 2019-23 the proportion of the population who are in their 20s will decline. (*Source: Office for National Statistics*)

	Mid-2016 actual		Mid-2019 projection		Mid-2023 projection	
Age Range	Number of people	% of population	Number of people	% of population	Number of people	% of population
Aged 0-4	6,425	6.63%	6,380	6.47%	6,397	6.33%
Aged 5-9	6,318	6.52%	6,512	6.61%	6,472	6.41%
Aged 10-14	5,585	5.76%	6,035	6.12%	6,496	6.43%
Aged 15-19	5,679	5.86%	5,293	5.37%	5,651	5.60%
Aged 20-24	5,179	5.35%	5,067	5.14%	4,698	4.65%
Aged 25-29	6,328	6.53%	6,236	6.33%	5,985	5.93%
Aged 30-34	6,282	6.48%	6,618	6.71%	6,732	6.67%
Aged 35-39	6,513	6.72%	6,772	6.87%	6,860	6.79%
Aged 40-44	6,292	6.49%	6,215	6.30%	6,946	6.88%
Aged 45-49	7,284	7.52%	6,671	6.77%	6,193	6.13%
Aged 50-54	7,040	7.27%	7,257	7.36%	6,703	6.64%
Aged 55-59	5,985	6.18%	6,465	6.56%	7,009	6.94%
Aged 60-64	4,781	4.93%	5,339	5.42%	6,004	5.95%
Aged 65-69	4,955	5.11%	4,360	4.42%	4,789	4.74%
Aged 70-74	4,035	4.16%	4,684	4.75%	4,152	4.11%

Aged 75-79	3,319	3.43%	3,369	3.42%	4,230	4.19%
Aged 80-84	2,551	2.63%	2,755	2.79%	2,784	2.76%
Aged 85 and over	2,330	2.41%	2,566	2.60%	2,881	2.85%
<b>Total</b>	<b>96,881</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>98,591</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100,981</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 9.2 Disability

In the 2011 Census, 15.3% of Broxbourne's population identified themselves as having a long-term illness or a disability, which limited their day-to-day activities to some extent. In the November 2018, 2,230 Broxbourne residents were claiming disability living allowance and 60 were claiming incapacity benefit.

## 9.3 Ethnicity

<b>Ethnic group</b>	<b>2011 Census</b>
Asian or Asian British: Indian	0.85%
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	0.15%
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	0.17%
Asian or Asian British: Chinese	0.35%
Asian or Asian British: Other Asian	0.81%
Black or Black British: Black Caribbean	1.40%
Black or Black British: Black African	2.40%
Black or Black British: Other Black	0.43%
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	0.84%
Mixed: White and Black African	0.26%
Mixed: White and Asian	0.53%
Mixed: Other Mixed	0.65%
White: British	80.82%
White: Irish	1.40%
White: Other White	8.09%
Other	0.84%

The latest whole population information available is the 2011 Census, but this information is now getting out-of-date. The Borough has a long-established community of people of Italian origin, which is the largest minority ethnic group. The Census recorded that the Broxbourne population had become more diverse over the previous ten years, with a particular increase in people from Other White backgrounds, and a decrease in the proportion of residents who were White British. Electoral registration data appeared to show that most of this increase is in residents who come from other European countries, particularly Poland. There was also significant growth in the number of residents from Black and from Mixed ethnic groups, but overall, the numbers of residents from these groups were still comparatively low.

Limited information from the period since 2018, including electoral registration data, National Insurance applications and school registrations suggest that these trends have increased (though some pupils, particularly at the secondary level, do not live in the Borough). Among residents from European backgrounds, as well as the Irish and Polish communities there are now smaller communities of Lithuanians and Romanians.

#### **9.4 Religion and belief**

According to the 2011 Census, the majority of Borough residents are Christians (65%), whilst those who have no religion represent 24% of the population. 2.5% of residents are Muslim and just under 1% identify as Hindu. Approximately 1% of the population follow other religions. 7% of the population chose not to state whether they had any religious beliefs or not. These figures are now old and are likely to be inaccurate. In the past five years a community of Muslims has begun to hold Friday prayers in the Borough.

#### **9.5 Sexual orientation**

The Government estimates that 5%-7% of the national population is lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB). In Broxbourne, this would equate to around 5,700 adult LGB residents. The Council has only limited knowledge of the sexual orientation of residents, and no question on the subject was included in the 2011 Census.

#### **9.6 Gender reassignment**

In 2009 the Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES) published a report funded by the Home Office<sup>1</sup>. The Report estimated that, in 2007, the prevalence of people who had sought medical care for gender variance was 20 per 100,000. 80% were assigned as boys at birth (now trans women) and 20% as girls (now trans men). The report was updated with the advice that organisations should assume that 1% of their employees and service users may be experiencing some degree of gender variance<sup>2</sup>. At some stage, about 0.2% may undergo transition.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: <http://www.gires.org.uk/prevalence.php>

<sup>2</sup> Source: <http://www.gires.org.uk/Prevalence2011.pdf>

## **9.7 Deprivation**

Overall, Broxbourne is not considered a deprived area of the UK, but there are known pockets of deprivation that are among the worst in Hertfordshire, with two Lower Super Output Areas (part of Wormley, and the Holdbrook area of Waltham Cross) featuring in the ten most deprived out of 683 in Hertfordshire, according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation. In comparison with all of England, the Holdbrook area is in the second highest decile for deprivation, and part of Wormley is in the third highest decile for deprivation.