

BEING EQUAL

A VALUING DIVERSITY POLICY

- = Provide equality of opportunity for all its staff by ensuring its employment policies and practices, (concerning recruitment, retention, promotion, training and discipline), are designed to reflect and attract the communities that Woking serves
- = Promote valuing diversity through its work with other agencies in the voluntary, community and private sectors
- = Develop environments where people are valued and respected, ensuring all its staff are fully aware both of the meaning of the valuing diversity agenda and of their individual responsibility to make it happen
- = Take very seriously any complaints about inequality and set up effective systems of quality and equality monitoring, to ensure that action on valuing diversity is continuously evaluated and improved
- = Ensure that the community as a whole recognises the contributions made by Woking's diverse communities to the Borough's economic, social and cultural well-being

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The Vision for Woking

The Community Strategy describes the sort of place Woking aspires to be in the future. It is based on what local people have said are their key concerns and priorities, and is the over-arching strategy for the Borough. Four of the six Community Aims focus on fairness, inclusion and accessibility:

- = A strong community spirit with a clear sense of belonging and responsibility
- = Access to quality and affordable housing for local people and key workers
- = A community which values personal health and well-being
- = Integrated and accessible local facilities and services

Local people said they wanted the Council to work to improve the quality of life for everybody in Woking regardless of any differences. This "Being Equal" - A Valuing Diversity Policy describes how the Council intends to deliver on this important priority.

We are, however, on a learning curve and do not have a complete understanding of all the issues involved. We therefore want input from our employees, service users and communities; so please get involved and let us know your experiences. Only you can make what is on paper a reality.



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Take a look around you...



Does the person next to you have the same hairstyle? Are they the same height and weight as you? Do they like the same music or share the same taste in clothes? The answer is probably not. That's because we're all different and in many ways. And it's these differences that make the world such an interesting place to live.

In Woking our community benefits from our cosmopolitan make-up. The many different people in our Borough make it an interesting place to live. Wouldn't life be boring if we were all the same?

Woking Borough Council also values diversity. It recognises that a thriving, dynamic and modern organisation and the community it serves is made up of different people. That is why it has produced a Valuing Diversity Policy. Valuing diversity means that any form of discrimination must not be tolerated and that differences should be celebrated and welcomed; whether in the workplace or the community at large.



This policy aims to enhance both the quality and effectiveness of Woking's services in meeting the needs of everyone within the Borough by:

- Recognising that there are great gains, both social and economic, to be made from positively embracing the diversity of a community
- Providing a common policy framework to address the needs of socially excluded groups
- Developing co-ordinated equality plans and monitoring systems for both employment practices and service delivery
- Ensuring that all managers and service providers take responsibility for equality.



The Policy Statement

Woking Borough Council recognises that:

- There are many forms of discrimination which affect vulnerable sections of the community:

Direct discrimination - where an individual or group receives less favourable treatment because of such things as gender, sexuality, race, religion or disability.

Indirect discrimination - where a condition or requirement, although applied equally to all people, has the effect that proportionately, one group of people will be less able to comply

Institutional discrimination - where an organisation collectively fails to provide an appropriate and professional service to a group of people because of such things as their sex, race or disability.

- All members of Woking's diverse communities have a right to enjoy the highest possible quality of life
- A healthy community requires that all of its members feel they are included and that their contribution is valued
- The Council must embed the concept of valuing diversity in all its policies and practices
- Woking Borough Council's accountability and leadership role within the democratic process give it additional responsibilities for championing the concept of valuing diversity both locally and beyond

To deliver on equality the Council will:

- Ensure that it builds fairness in to all that it does, and will not tolerate any forms of prejudicial discrimination
- Work in partnership with all sections of the community to remove barriers that prevent their maximum involvement in the democratic process
- Ensure that through listening, responding and working together with its community, service users, carers and employees, its services are designed to meet identified needs, are available and accessible to all, and are delivered fairly in terms of quantity, quality and timing

