

August 2021

Workforce Equality, Diversity and Inclusion statement

Southwark Stands Together



Our workforce Equality, Diversity and Inclusion statement



"Southwark Council celebrates the richness of our diverse communities and we are proud of our borough.

We commit to paying special attention to the needs of all our diverse communities with particular focus on our most vulnerable residents and will be inclusive in the ways we co-create and co-design services with our residents.

We recognise that we may not have always got this right in the past but we are dedicated to intensifying our commitments to strengthen engagement with staff, residents, businesses and the wider community in order to shape and deliver on the promise of a fairer future for all."

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) statement sets out Southwark Council's ambition for tackling inequalities and promoting equality in our workforce and our communities.

We are committed to promoting strategies to become an inclusive organisation that stands against all forms of discrimination.

This statement applies to all council employees; contractors; consultants and any other third parties who carry out work on behalf of the council.



Equality Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty

Discrimination is wrong in all its forms; and that is why we are giving focused attention to overcoming the challenges faced by people with characteristics protected under the law. These cover:

- Age,
- Disability,
- Gender reassignment,
- Race,
- Religion or belief,
- Sex,
- Sexual orientation,
- Pregnancy and maternity; and
- Marriage and civil partnership.

We also recognise that characteristics interconnect and people are often disadvantaged by multiple and overlapping sources of discrimination.

This intersectionality of identities and characteristics is important and will inform the way we address inequalities and promote equality within the council and our local communities.

The council made a commitment to move beyond the confines of the law and to fully embrace the spirit behind the Public Sector Equality Duty.

We strive to make Southwark a fairer place to work, live, and do business. The Borough Plan presents a set of commitments which advances this vision and can be accessed here:

<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/fairer-future/council-plan>

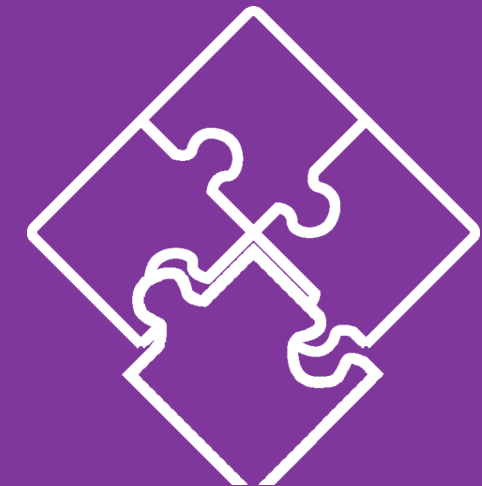
"To demonstrate our commitment we have expanded our values to embed two specific values dedicated to equality, diversity and inclusion:

- Treating residents as if they were a valued member of our own family
- Being open, honest and accountable
- Spending money as if it were from our own pockets
- Working for everyone to realise their own potential
- Making Southwark a place to be proud of
- Always work to make Southwark more equal and just
- Stand against all forms of discrimination and racism

Our values can be accessed here:

<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/fairer-future/council-plan>

Our Council values



Our EDI pledges

The council will follow the pledges for SST and apply this to our whole workforce ensuring that we:

- Have an open and transparent culture where employees who experience/ see discrimination can raise it and expect to see it dealt with;
- Listen and amplify diverse voices that are inclusive, fair and representative of our workforce;
- Address and prevent structural racism and inequalities;
- Champion and become an organisation that addresses equality, diversity and inclusion through positive action; and
- Ensure that people of all groups and cultures can rise to the top of the organisation and that the top of or organisation is sufficiently diverse to meet the needs of our residents and the communities we serve.





Our commitment to tackling racism and all forms of inequality and injustice

We embarked on an ambitious journey to rid the borough of racism and the historical injustices experienced by Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. The murder of George Floyd in America and the resulting wave of action around the world through the Black Lives Matter movement, has brought these injustices into sharp focus.

We stand with these communities and face the challenge of making a change they can feel by amplifying their voices to make sustainable change and become an anti-racist organisation. Southwark Stands Together (SST) is our long-term programme of positive action, education and raising awareness which is aimed at tackling racism, injustice and inequality.

An important part of this is the council's commitment to ensure the top of the council's workforce is proportionately representative of Southwark's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic population by 2030.

Our commitment to tackling racism and all forms of inequality and injustice cont....

Zero Tolerance



We will not accept any form of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation of employees or third parties who work on the council's behalf and make a firm commitment to take action where this comes to light.

Leadership commitment



Our leaders understand that EDI is a business-critical issue. For us, tackling discrimination is the right thing to do, is a moral imperative and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion makes good business sense and will be of benefit to all employees, stakeholders and the diverse communities we serve.

That is why EDI is being purposefully embedded into the DNA of our council as a core part of the 'Southwark Way of Working' and the Southwark Equality Framework. Our leadership also recognise their responsibilities in upholding our council values to ensure we live and breathe our EDI values. They will be held to account for delivering on our pledges and for delivering excellent services to our residents by leading through our people.



How we are engaging our workforce

Southwark is committed to creating an inclusive working environment that provides the opportunity for all employees in order for them to reach their full potential. We will tackle unlawful discrimination at work by challenging poor behaviours and practices that undermine our Council Values.

Our values have been forged as a result of robust engagement with our employees and residents. Everything we do as a council is to achieve our vision of a fairer future for all in Southwark. This places a responsibility on all our employees and stakeholders to stand firm against all forms of discrimination and racism; and to treat residents as if they were valued members of our own family.

We will not tolerate discrimination in our workforce and will adopt a zero tolerance approach to eradicate all forms of discrimination so that employees and workers feel safe and free from discrimination during the course of their duties in the workplace and in our communities.

Our Commitment to Positive Action



"Our commitment to embedding a positive action approach to EDI will enable us to move at pace to make progress and enhance EDI at a strategic level.

This will be supported by our clear intention to address the mistakes of the past and deliver tangible progress as set out in our Southwark Stands Together (SST) programme of change.

In effect, the council will take positive action as informed by the law to address disparities and to meet the needs of groups with protected characteristics.

This will lessen any disadvantage they might experience, and increase their participation and engagement in employment policy development that ensures that the diverse voices of our employees are heard and included to achieve positive outcomes for our workforce.



How this will be monitored

"The annual workforce equalities, diversity and inclusion plan will deliver key projects and initiatives to ensure we strive towards becoming an inclusive organisation that stands against all forms of discrimination.

This action plan will be monitored and reviewed by the Chief Executive and Members on a quarterly basis to ensure delivery and our ability to meet our Borough Plan workforce commitments