



Delivering a Diverse and Inclusive Workforce:

A strategy for promoting equality and diversity
(2018 – 2021)



Introduction

Delivering a diverse and inclusive organisation that supports staff is fundamental to who we are and what we are trying to do. It also ensures that we have the right people, working in the right way to deliver good quality services to Dacorum residents.

This strategy therefore outlines how we will continue to develop and support equality and diversity across the organisation.

In particular, it will focus on how we build a shared understanding and commitment from officers at all levels. We will also consider how our approach to recruiting and retaining staff can promote this.

The strategy will also detail how we will meet the requirements set out within legislation such as the Equality Act 2010 as well detailing we can utilise the knowledge and insight held by our organisation to continue raising our standards.

Delivering a diverse and inclusive workforce is a challenge, but it one that we need to meet if we are going to unlock everyone's potential and provide the high quality services that our residents expect.

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Our Vision

Our vision is to “create a diverse and inclusive workforce, underpinned by a culture of fairness and mutual respect. In doing so, we will enable all staff to deliver the high quality service that residents want”.

Having a diverse workforce ensures that we can take advantage of the widest pool of talent while also promoting a culture of new ideas and embracing new ways of working. It also ensures that we can better reflect the residents in our borough and create a positive and engaging relationship officers and the public.

Through an inclusive working environment, we also can draw on the skills, knowledge and passion of staff to help deliver our overarching vision of “*working in partnership to create a borough that enables Dacorum’s communities to thrive and prosper.*”

Our Commitments

To deliver our vision we have identified five key commitments that will underpin our focus over the lifetime of this strategy.

To develop the commitments, we completed a workforce profiling exercise and undertook an internal survey to explore officers’ perceptions and experiences of equality and diversity within the council.

- We have the right information to understand levels of diversity and how our officers can and do contribute to a culture of inclusion
- We actively encourage diversity across the council
- Our behaviours, policies and procedures ensure consistent support and fairness for all officers within the organisation
- Our officers are treated fairly and have the opportunity to fulfil their potential.
- We will promote the Council as an employer committed to equality and diversity



National legislation and guidance

This strategy ensures that we will meet all relevant statutory legislation and best practice guidance.

As an employer we believe everyone should work in an environment that supports them to do a job to the best of their ability regardless of; age, gender, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, disability, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership (Equality Act 2010).

Using the Equalities Framework for Local Government – A Skilled and Committed Workforce, as set out by the Local Government Association, this strategy will outline five outcome-based commitments detailing how we, as an employer, intend to deliver our vision.

Local context

To underpin this strategy we have built up an internal demographic profile of the Council's existing workforce.

Based on this analysis, Dacorum's staff profile broadly reflects the borough's population but there are areas where we could go further.

Gender

In 2017, our workforce profile showed that 49% of officers are female and 51% are male which is broadly similar to the resident profile. However, there are roles within the council that are more likely to attract one particular gender. For example, more males take up refuse and recycling roles whereas the housing department is mostly staffed by females. If you look at the ratio of male to female in senior roles (pay band 11 and above), the split shows that 54% of roles are held by females and 46% by males.

Ethnicity

Some 66% of our workforce identify as White British, 2% Black or Black British and 2% Asian or Asian British compared to 86% White British, 2% Black and 6% Asian residents in the borough. This suggests that the council's workforce includes a higher proportion of other ethnicities in comparison to the borough's demographics. Just over a quarter of the workforce have not specified their ethnicity.



Disability

Around 3% of officers consider themselves to have a disability, although 29% of officers chose not to disclose this information. As a Disability Confident employer, we guarantee to interview all applicants with a disability who meet the essential criteria required for a role.

Age

The ages of officers range from 16 to over 65, with the highest proportion of staff in the 46-50 and 51-55 age groups. The lowest proportion of staff is in the 16-20 age group, which comprises just 1% of all officers. This is not likely to remain consistently low as the council seeks to create more apprentice and paid internship opportunities. In the 2016-17 financial year, the council employed 67 people under the age of 35, which equates to around 39% of new starters; and 106 people aged 35 or over, which is equivalent to around 61%.



Dacorum's Values and Behaviours

We believe getting the foundations right in any organisation's culture is essential to developing a workforce that is inclusive, fair and values mutual respect. Dacorum's approach describes the behaviours we expect of all officers. These behaviours are;

- Be positive
- Take responsibility
- Be reliable
- Work with others to deliver a great service

The behaviours that underpin Dacorum's approach play a key role in shaping our day-to-day experiences within the workplace. Officers are encouraged to be positive by celebrating the different skills, knowledge and experience held across the organisation.

By taking responsibility, all officers are equally accountable for working in a way that is fair, inclusive and respectful and supports the delivery of this strategy. Being reliable is ensuring that we are consistent in the decisions we make, how we treat people, the support we offer and the services we deliver. We also commit to working with others to deliver a great service by encouraging officers to value each other's differences, experiences and contributions.

These behaviours form a significant part in our recruitment and selection programme as well as our performance appraisals.



Commitment one – We have the right information to understand levels of diversity and how our officers can and do contribute to a culture of inclusion

Commitment one recognises the importance of getting the foundations right for building a culture of inclusion. A key factor in achieving this is empowering staff to understand what this means and recognise their role in shaping the overall culture. Investment in our officers' understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion will also mean it becomes everyone's responsibility.

We also recognise to achieve this we, as an organisation must set out our expectations for equality and diversity and make sure that the data is right so we understand the areas for improvement and can target our resources in a way that maximises impact.

To achieve this we will:

- Ensure all new starters (including Members) receive an overview of Dacorum's approach to equality and diversity as part of their induction. This information can also be accessed by existing staff and Members to ensure they keep up-to-date with key changes
- Continue to promote a positive culture and encourage officers to display these behaviours throughout their work
- Improve officers' and Members' knowledge of equality and diversity with regular training and information delivered through a range of channels
- Improve the way we collect diversity-profiling data about our officers and report this regularly in line with best practise and legislation
- Provide equality and diversity reports to the corporate management team every six months



Commitment two - We actively encourage diversity across the council

Commitment two looks to not only accept peoples' differences within our workforce but recognise how these differences positively contribute to our way of working. We understand a diverse workforce means we draw on a wide range of skills, talents and perspectives to shape the services we deliver to local people. To ensure we fully benefit from this, we must actively encourage diversity among our officers not just with our culture but also by removing any barriers.

We also recognise a diverse approach to leadership within our organisation is key to delivering this commitment.

To achieve this we will:

- Continue our commitment to being a disability confident employer and ensure any person with a disability has the same opportunities within our workforce
- Where possible, continue to support officers to practice their religion either through the acknowledgement of holidays or daily rituals
- Offer a range of flexible working options for those with families or other caring responsibilities for all roles within the organisation
- Encourage all managers of people to provide strong leadership and positively recognise diversity within their teams
- Where possible use entry level jobs to encourage young people into the workforce
- Advertise employment opportunities through a wide range of channels to attract the most diverse candidates for each opportunity
- Be proactive in making reasonable adjustments to accommodate candidates selected for interview and anyone subsequently recruited
- Ensure job descriptions and person specifications are inclusive and allow any individual with the right skills to apply for a role



Commitment three - Our behaviours, policies and procedures ensure consistent support for all officers within the organisation

Commitment three acknowledges that equality and diversity needs to be underpinned by robust policies and procedures. These policies and procedures set out how we as an employer seek to not only meet, but exceed the expected requirements as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Our dedicated Human Resources team offer support to all officers within the council. Further support is then available through external resources such as the council's employee assistance programme. These are both vital as they ensure the right support is available to officers and can be accessed quickly, easily and discretely. To ensure all of the support already in place is in keeping with this strategy it is essential our policies and procedures reflect our commitment to equality and diversity and this is embedded.

To achieve this we will:

- Ensure that any new or updates policies, procedures or strategies reflect Dacorum's equality agenda and support the changing needs of our workforce
- Take a proactive approach to recognising groups within our workforce at risk of discrimination and ensure our behaviours, policies and procedures eliminate this
- Provide the right tools and equipment to meet our officers' needs so they can do their job effectively
- Actively challenge discriminatory behaviour and harassment which the council's policies and procedures
- Continue to invest in external support services so all officers can receive impartial advice on issues related to equality and diversity and explore whether any other support is necessary
- Ensure all officers are supported in a fair and consistent way when raising internal issues
- Equip managers with the skills to positively tackle performance issues whilst still maintaining an awareness of equality requirements



Commitment four - Our officers are treated fairly and have the opportunity to fulfil their potential

Commitment four builds on the use of our policies and procedures to create a consistent approach to managing our workforce that focuses on treating people fairly and ensuring they can fulfil their potential.

By ensuring that officers have a fair chance to access development opportunities we are enabling current officers to progress in their careers and increasing the diversity within our workforce.

To achieve this we will:

- Support officers with the right skills, experience and behaviours to develop within their roles and feel encouraged to access opportunities such as training or career development
- Ensure that we as an organisation continue to train and develop our staff in a fair and consistent way
- Utilise information collected through exit interviews to gain a better understanding of the opportunities that have been created in other organisations and what DBC could do better to retain and develop officers
- Ensure officers are aware of the processes and support available if they feel they are not treated fairly
- Ensure that our approach to appraisals enables officers of all backgrounds to access learning and development opportunities



Commitment five - We will promote the council as an employer committed to equality and diversity

Commitment five focuses on the way the council is perceived by partners, potential recruits and other similar organisations. By improving the public perception of the council as an organisation that promotes equality and diversity, we can attract and recruit a more diverse workforce and be truly representative of the residents in Dacorum.

To achieve this we will:

- Ensure that procurement and commissioning contracts include a commitment to Equality and Diversity so that current and future partners acting on behalf of the council are working to the same principles as us
- Review the information about the council as an employer that is presented in all job adverts to show a more proactive approach to Equality and Diversity
- Ensure that the website content related to Equality and Diversity is regularly monitored, reviewed and shows the council's approach
- Consider opportunities to actively promote the organisation as an organisation committed to equality and diversity



Monitoring and Delivery

We want to ensure every Dacorum Borough Council officer feels valued and supported in their work.

That is why this strategy will be governed and monitored by the Communities and Wellbeing Corporate Working Group. Once approved, the group will devise and take ownership of a programme of actions linked to the commitments in this strategy. This will ensure that the strategy is managed corporately and that all teams take responsibility for its success.

Using the actions devised by the Communities and Wellbeing Corporate Working Group and an annual delivery plan, a project board will work to deliver this strategy. The project board will report to the corporate working group regularly to monitor progress and provide an annual progress plan for CMT.

Based on the commitments in this strategy, and the programme of actions, we will continue to improve our approach to training, development, equality and diversity to ensure that Dacorum Borough Council attracts and retains high quality officers.

