

Equality Policy Statement

Incorporating Equality Objectives 2017-21

June 2017

MVDC Equality Policy Statement

At Mole Valley District Council we aim to be fair and accessible when we deliver, design and evaluate services, buy services from others, develop policies, and when we consider the needs of our employees.

We are committed to adhering to equality legislation requirements. Mole Valley District Council, and any organisations that have been contracted to carry out public functions on our behalf, must have 'due regard' to the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty, as set out in the Equality Act 2010:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including:
 - Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
 - Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people.
 - Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race and ethnicity, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership.

- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

To demonstrate that we, as an employer and as a service provider, have considered the three aims of the equality duty as part of our decision making processes, we publish Equality Impact Assessments. These impact assessments are undertaken when policies and services are being introduced or reviewed. They are published online with the relevant committee reports and on the equality page of our website.

Our commitment to equality is enhanced by our Customer Promise:

- We will listen to you and help you to find a solution
- You can trust us to be honest and open with you, and to be professional at all times
- We will be sensitive to your enquiry and will treat it with care. We will explain our decisions and be clear about how we can help
- We will treat you with respect and ask you to do the same
- We will take the lead on making improvements to our services based on your feedback

Equality Objectives 2017-21

Every four years we publish one or more equality objectives we want to achieve in relation to the Public Sector Equality Duty. We are focussing our efforts on two equality objectives for 2017-21 as set out below. Annual work plans set out what we will be doing to deliver these objectives.

1. We will promote equality and diversity

Everyone who represents or works for Mole Valley District Council is expected to behave in a manner which creates constructive relationships and treats others in a respectful way.

From time to time, equality and diversity awareness campaigns and training can be a useful way of ensuring that these behaviours are truly embedded. For example, disability equality training to ensure that staff have positive attitudes towards disabled people, are confident in interacting with disabled customers and understand our responsibilities towards disabled people.

Sharing best practice within the organisation and with our partners is another important way of raising awareness of equality and diversity issues. This helps inform those responsible for designing, developing and adjusting existing or new services, buildings and surrounding spaces, to ensure they meet specific needs.

We also expect our members of staff to be treated with respect, as set out in our Customer Promise. Reviews of our policies and procedures help ensure that there are robust mechanisms in place for supporting members of staff if faced with aggressive or abusive behaviour, which may be linked to protected characteristics.

2. We will mainstream equality considerations in our procurement and contract management processes

The Public Sector Equality Duty is non-delegable. This means that the duty always remains the responsibility of the organisation subject to the duty i.e. MVDC. In practice, this may mean that we need to ask our contractors to take certain steps in order to enable us to meet our continuing legal obligation to comply with the duty.

Potential equality issues should be considered at all stages of the procurement cycle. Relevance and proportionality are the key guiding principles. Where it is clear that a product or service is likely to have little or no relevance in terms of equality, it may not be necessary to do anything more than include some standard clauses in the terms and conditions. Equality needs should be evaluated as a part of any product selection or purchase.

The relevance of equality to the subject matter of the contract will help determine whether it forms part of the specification. Where equality considerations are central to the service they are normally regarded as a core requirement e.g. the provision of transport for elderly or disabled people is a service where equality issues will form part of the core requirements.

Equality considerations may also be relevant where they are not the main requirement of the contract. For example, a contract for providing a web-based service may also specify that the service caters for people who are visually impaired. This type of issue can be dealt with through contract conditions. These need to relate to the performance of the contract and be proportionate and, where relevant, adhere to legal requirements such as those for website design.

Equality Profile of Mole Valley

Ethnicity and religion

Mole Valley is the second least diverse district in Surrey with a 90.1% white British population and 97% of the district's population speaking English as their main language. Approximately 400 residents (0.46%) speak Polish as their main language.

64% of Mole Valley residents are Christian and a quarter has no religion. All non-Christian religions make up 2.6% of the district, including 0.8% Muslim (approximately 680 residents) and 0.7% Hindu (approximately 600 residents).

Age

Most of the district's population of approximately 86,000 residents is aged 25-64 but a significant proportion is over 65. Mole Valley has the third highest proportion of 16 to 17 year olds in Surrey but the second lowest proportion of 18 to 24 year olds.

Mole Valley ranks fourth best out of 11 Surrey authorities for adults with qualifications. 63.5% of pupils achieve 5+ A* to C in GCSEs including English and Maths (Surrey average is 61.4%) Mole Valley has lowest proportion in Surrey of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Estimates for population change between 2013 and 2020 predict a 12.7% increase in 65+ year olds and a 25% increase in 85+ year olds. 2011 Census data shows that when compared with the rest of Surrey, Mole Valley has the:

- Highest proportion of people aged 65+ (21%) and second highest 85+ (3%)
- Highest proportion of households with people aged 65+ only (26%)
- Highest proportion of one person households aged 65+ (15%)
- Highest proportion of unpaid carers (10%)

Particularly high proportions of households with people aged 65+ are in Bookham North (40.6%) and Fetcham East (37.6%). 26.4% of one person households in Dorking North are aged over 65.

Disability

The district has the third highest proportion of people with day-to-day activities limited by long term illness or disability (15%) in Surrey.

Day-to-day activities are things people do on a regular basis such as shopping, reading and writing, having a conversation or using the telephone, watching television, getting washed and dressed, preparing and eating food, carrying out household tasks, walking and travelling by various forms of transport, and taking part in social activities.

Data source: 2011 census