

## Inclusion and Diversity Policy Statement

### **From equality to inclusion: our Kirklees approach**

#### **Fairness, understanding and valuing people**

**Positive and inclusive approach: we will give equality, diversity and inclusion a higher priority by having a positive approach, going beyond minimum legal requirements and ensuring diversity and inclusion is in everything we do in Kirklees and improves performance and service delivery.**

A more strategic approach to equality, diversity and inclusion means viewing diversity as a business strategy, not simply a management issue. This recognises compelling evidence that managing equality and diversity well and developing a culture of inclusion leads to improved business outcomes – both internally (increased diversity improves problem solving, innovation, productivity and other outcomes) and externally (we will deliver better services and outcomes for residents if we better understand and are more representative and inclusive of the communities we serve).

**The way we do things in Kirklees: we will demonstrate our commitment to diversity and inclusion through our actions and behaviours by raising awareness, understanding and knowledge within the workforce and communities around diversity and inclusion through education and training.**

There is a clear argument for actively managing diversity and inclusion rather than assuming we will naturally derive the benefits. This means staff at all levels demonstrating inclusive behaviours, respecting diverse opinions and actively championing diversity and inclusion. Our six Kirklees behaviours (Positive-Respectful-Supportive-Honest-Flexible-Communicate) reflect this approach. Whilst education, training and awareness are important, we must go beyond this to: develop a culture of inclusion; acknowledge diversity and inclusion as an essential component of effective leadership; and better understand and mitigate conscious and unconscious biases. Inclusion and diversity will be at the heart of how the Council and communities themselves work together and understand each other better.

**A committed and diverse workforce: we recognise that our diverse workforce is our biggest asset and we will take all opportunities to try to achieve a diverse workforce that represents all communities in Kirklees.**

Building an inclusive culture requires a long-term, strategic effort. A culture, where everyone feels valued and respected and where different characteristics (both visible and invisible), backgrounds and perspectives are recognised and valued, is key to improving organisational

performance. Diversity can increase flexibility, creativity and problem-solving by providing a wider range of perspectives. At a time when the council is striving to support and enable communities to do more for themselves and each other, a representative workforce with a greater understanding of different sections of society is best placed to deliver better outcomes for all of Kirklees' residents.

**Spread the word – that Kirklees represents and values everyone by sharing stories and experiences.**

Our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion needs to be a conscious and proactive one. We will spread the word that Kirklees represents and values everyone, by sharing stories and experiences, encouraging role models and champions and actively celebrating diversity.

**Inclusive policies – we will routinely review our policies and practices to ensure they are inclusive.**

Our policies, including our internal, people policies, should support inclusion. We will ensure this happens through regular review and reflection.

**Zero tolerance on abuse, harassment, bullying and violence – taking action, taking all cases seriously and making it safe to speak out.**

Taking action, taking all cases seriously and making it safe to speak out are essential to delivering an inclusive culture and to generate increased trust. The Council will have an anti-bullying champion at senior level and appropriate procedures to support taking a zero tolerance approach.

**Listen and act – we will listen to staff and citizens to make things better.**

In a climate in which councils are being asked to do more with less, insight into the real needs of citizens is essential. Citizen insight means gaining a deep understanding about our customers – based on their behaviours, experiences, beliefs and needs. A strong staff voice and ethos of cooperation and inclusivity is also essential.

We need to be able to evaluate the effectiveness of our approaches to equality, diversity and inclusion through our intelligence, data and broader insight.