

24th July 2024

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL - STATEMENT ON ANTI-DISCRIMINATION & EDI 2024:

This is an important statement for the avoidance of doubt, to make sure everyone in the council has clarity about what we mean, and have committed to, as an organisation that fully supports, and will act upon, any act of discrimination. It builds on previous communications and emphasises the behaviours we can all expect of each other at work, as well as potential consequences of inappropriate behaviour.

This statement aligns with our focus on equality, diversity and inclusion and our stated values.

We expect all colleagues to be enabled to Be Their Best, respecting each other, and treating each other fairly. There is no room for discrimination in Leeds City Council. To that end:

- The council reaffirms its commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), emphasizing fair treatment and respect for all, and a strong response to inappropriate behaviours that discriminate or victimise anyone.
- **We value difference:** acknowledging that, although people in our workforce have things in common with each other, they are also different, and in these differences there is strength which enables an inclusive approach.
- **We will make Leeds the best place to work:** creating a diverse workforce, which reflects the growing diversity and cultural cohesion of its communities.
- **We promote healthy working practices,** cultures, and behaviours in our workplaces, where everyone feels supported, engaged, and included, where they can “be their best” and thrive.
- **We are proud to be an anti-discriminatory organisation in all its forms:** while acknowledging challenges posed by world events, financial pressures, and the need for cultural change.
- **We will challenge inappropriate behaviour:** supporting colleagues to speak out about any inequality or unfair treatment and not hesitate to take the appropriate action, as necessary.
- **We promote equality of opportunity:** by taking positive action and removing barriers people experience, with our commitment to provide training and support.
- **We will create inclusive workplaces:** where anyone who comes to work for us to feel welcome, where they feel safe and respected to express who they are; where they feel appreciated for what they contribute to their team.
- **We will listen and learn:** hearing from the lived experiences of those who have faced discrimination, inequality or been overlooked, ensuring we do not repeat mistakes of the past.
- **We are committed to tackling inequality:** encouraging all colleagues to speak out about unfair treatment and discrimination. We will actively promote all accessible routes to speaking up.
- **We will actively support work colleagues and managers:** Ensuring those who raise concerns feel heard, and taking action where needed, with a focus on creating a workplace where everyone can be their best and thrive.
- **We value the role and contribution of our staff networks:** in promoting equality based on their lived experiences.
- **We foster a multigenerational workforce:** removing barriers to career progression and tackling age bias in the workplace.
- **We are Disability Confident:** promoting the social model of disability, by tackling ableism, and removing barriers disabled people face in employment and career progression.

- **We are a Mindful Employer:** removing the stigma associated with mental ill health, and offering compassion, support, and a healthy work environment.
- **We are actively anti-racist:** we all have a responsibility to call out racism, discrimination, and bias in work, promoting a fair and equitable approach to recruitment, for a more representative workforce.
- **We champion women's equality:** addressing sexual discrimination, harassment, and misogyny - making gender equality everyone's business; improving managers and colleagues understanding of women's health and wellbeing ensuring they are not a barrier to women's participation or experience in the workplace; enabling people of all genders to share care, rather than reinforcing the idea that caring is for women.
- **We uphold LGBT+ inclusive culture:** where people feel safe and welcome to identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans +, representing the spectrum of identities, and as straight allies in work and can associate without fear of harassment or discrimination.
- **We are Carer Friendly employer:** recognising the challenges working carers face and help them access the support they deserve.
- **We are a speaking up and listening up organisation:** where all employees have a voice, and we value what they say. We will listen, learn, and take action where needed to bring about positive change.
- **We are a proud Multi-Faith Employer:** Our workforce can trust that we will continue to take a zero tolerance to all forms of discrimination and hatred, including discrimination based on religion. such as anti-muslim prejudice, antisemitism, or any other religious prejudice.
- Our commitment to tackling inequality extends to all council colleagues, and speaking out about unfair treatment, inappropriate behaviour, and discrimination, wherever it exists is at the heart of the support provided by our Freedom to Speak-up Guardian to all our workforce.

To all colleagues:

- We encourage you to come forward if you have concerns. We will support you when you do.
- We know it can be difficult to raise concerns, especially if it's about your own team and colleagues or more senior managers, but it's still important that you do.
- We will act where needed.

To all managers:

- You must act if you see or hear something that is not right.
- You cannot be a bystander and let discrimination and poor behaviour go unchallenged.
- You must seek support if unsure what to do.

And as a clear indication of our intent:

- We will discipline colleagues and managers where this is necessary.
- Where there has been a proven serious breach of our code of conduct, values or legislation, dismissal is likely. This includes hate crimes and hate incidents.

All colleagues must adhere to the direction set out in this statement and must seek clarification if in any doubt.

Tom Riordan CBE, Chief Executive

Councillor James Lewis, Leader of Leeds City Council