

Three Rivers District Council

Comprehensive Equality Policy

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Comprehensive Equality Policy

1. Forward

The Three Rivers' vision is that the District should be a better place for everyone, their neighbourhoods, health, employment and access to services.

The Council recognises that prejudice and discrimination can affect the lives of people in Three Rivers. Some people face unfair treatment due to negative stereotyping, assumptions, ignorance or intolerance. As a result people are not provided with the same opportunities as others, or are not treated with dignity and respect.

Discrimination can occur when a policy or service is developed based on the needs, bias or values of an individual, or when a service fails to consider the changing and diverse needs of service users.

The Council is dedicated to the promotion of equal opportunities and to removing any discrimination in service delivery, procurement and employment. The Council is committed to advancing equality and community cohesion in partnership with other organisations and local communities.

This *Comprehensive Equality Policy* updates the Council's existing commitment to equal opportunities.

2. Legislation and Responsibilities

The Equality Act 2010 sets out the Council's legal duties to have due regard to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a **protected characteristic** and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a **protected characteristic** and those who do not.

The **protected characteristics** are:

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

The act also requires the council to annually publish relevant, proportionate, information to demonstrate its compliance with the Equality Duty and to publish its equalities objectives at least every four years.

The Council acknowledges and welcomes its legal duties. It also recognises that some groups do not benefit from the protection of legislation, but will ensure good practice in equal opportunities towards these groups through the policy. In addition to the nine protected characteristics we recognise that being a carer and income deprivation can also have a significant impact on people's use of services and employment.

The Council also has duties under the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Equality Act 2010
- Mental Health Act 1983
- Children Act 1989
- NHS and Community Care Act 1990
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Asylum and Immigration Act 1999
- Care Standards Act 2000
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Children Act 2004
- Care Act 2014
- Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004
- The National Prevent Strategy
- Modern Slavery Act 2015

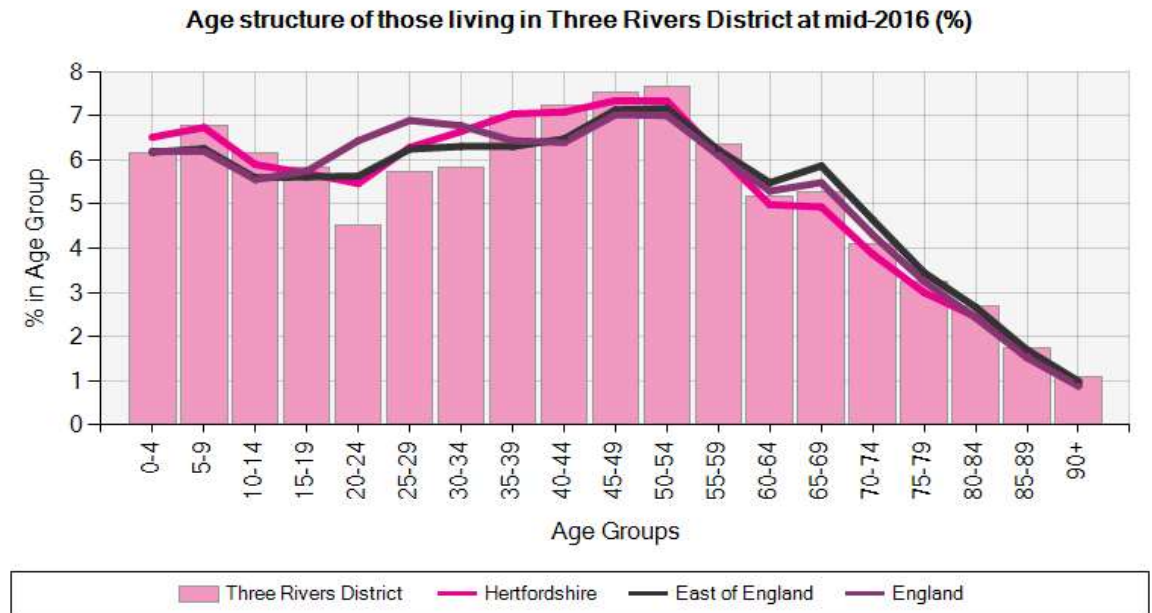
The Council is also committed to meeting its duties under this legislation.

3. Our Community

Three Rivers is a diverse, multi-cultural district:

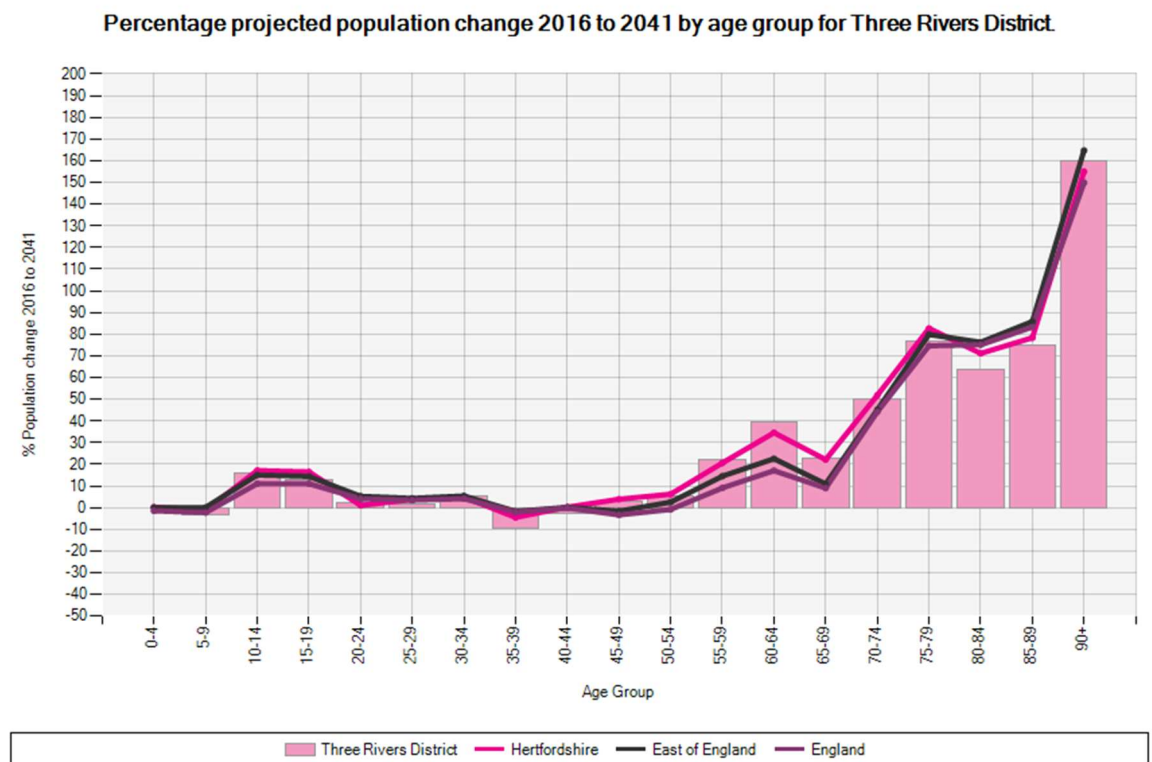
Age

- The Mid 2016 population estimates show the following breakdown of the District population by age band.



Source: Office for National Statistics, Mid Year Population Estimates. Figures rounded to the nearest 100 have been used to calculate these percentages.

The age profile of the District population is projection to change as follows:



Source: Office for National Statistics, 2016-based population projections. Crown copyright

Disability

- The 2011 Census found 14.5% of the resident population (12,625 residents) to be living with a long-term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities.

Ethnic Origin

- The 2011 census data showed that the minority ethnic population of the district increased from 12.9% in 2001 to 20.4% in 2011. The breakdown is shown in the table below:

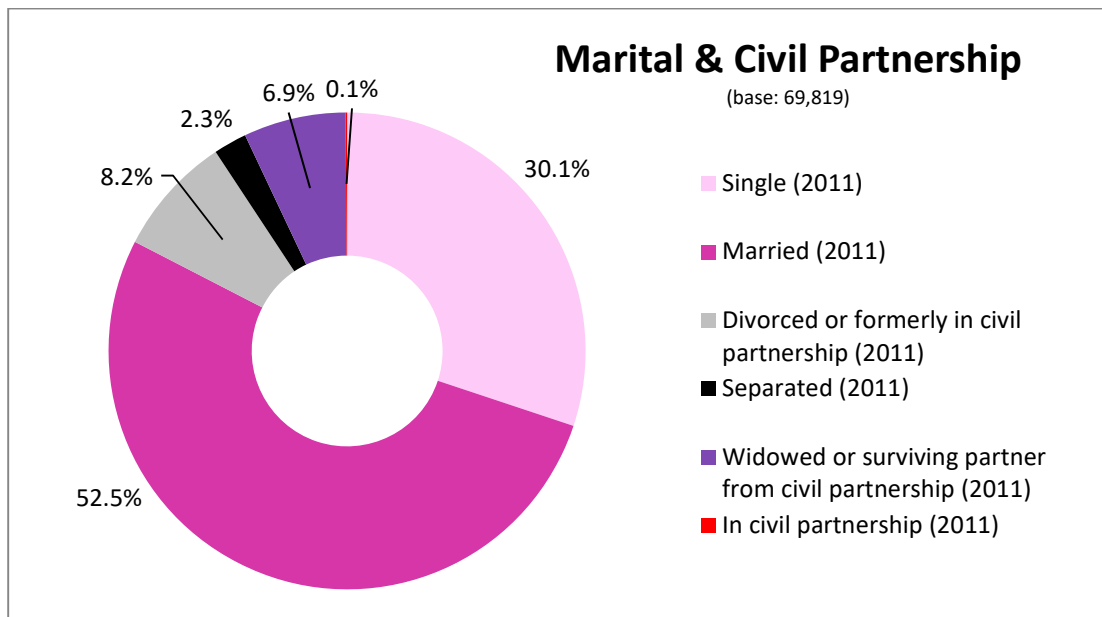
Ethnic Group	Count	%
Arab	128	0.15
Asian Bangladeshi	158	0.18
Asian Chinese	590	0.68
Asian Indian	5231	5.99
Asian Other	1409	1.61
Asian Pakistani	605	0.69
Black African	864	0.99
Black Caribbean	598	0.68
Black Other	148	0.17
Gypsy or Traveller	79	0.09
Mixed: Other	530	0.61
Mixed: White and Asian	775	0.89
Mixed: White and Black African	181	0.21
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	516	0.59
White British	69550	79.65
White Irish	1747	2.00
White Other	3918	4.49
Any other Group	290	0.33
Total	87317	

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2011 Census, Table KS201EW.

- There are 109 languages and dialects spoken in schools in Three Rivers according to the school census 2017. The most frequently spoken after English are Gujarati, Polish, Romanian, Urdu, Portuguese and Tamil.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

- The latest data on marriage and civil partnership status is from the 2011 Census.



Source: Office for National Statistics, 2011 Census, Table KS103EW

Pregnancy and Maternity

- Live birth data for 2016 showed there to be 1069 live births to mothers resident in Three Rivers.

Religion and Belief

- The 2011 Census data showed the stated religion of residents to be:

Christian	59.9%
Buddhist	0.4%
Hindu	4.5%
Jewish	1.9%
Muslim	2.2%
Sikh	0.5%
Other religion	0.7%
No religion	22.8%
Not stated	7.0%

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2011 Census, Table KS209EW

Sex

- The latest mid-2017 population estimates put the population of Three Rivers at 47,500 (51.3%) females and 45,100 (48.7%) males.

Sexual Orientation

- Census data on sexual identity is not available at District level. The office of national statistics has published estimates at a County level based on 2013-15 data. This suggests that approximately 1.5% of the population identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual.

Trans*

- Whilst there has been work on estimating the number of trans* people in the UK there are no publically available statistical data. Some estimates suggest gender reassignment rates to be 20 per 100,000 people in the UK. There is no reliable information on how many people identify as trans*. The number of people presenting for gender reassignment increases by 15% each year. Using the figure of 20 per 100,000 would mean there were around 18 trans* people in Three Rivers.

The council recognises that understanding the needs of different sections of the community is essential if it is to effectively deliver services.

4. Policy Statement

Three Rivers District Council is committed to identify and eradicate any form of discrimination, direct or indirect, institutional or other, both in employment and in the procurement and delivery of services. This policy commits the Council:

- To eliminate discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation;
- To promote equality of opportunity and fair treatment for all our communities;
- To promote fair and equal access to services by all citizens on the basis of need and to provide services in a manner which is sensitive to the individual;
- To help and support members of the public and staff who face harassment and to take action against perpetrators where possible;
- To have a staff complement that reflects the diversity of our communities;
- To promote equality of opportunity and fair treatment in employment and training and to ensure equal pay for work of equal value;
- To exercise its community leadership role to promote equality;
- To work in partnership with stakeholders and communities to ensure effective consultation to support our equality objectives;
- To ensure that the Community Strategy promotes and achieves equalities outcomes and to ensure that it promotes community cohesion and good relations between different communities;
- To ensure that all relevant services maintain, develop and implement an Equality Action Plan;
- To monitor and evaluate all relevant aspects of service delivery and employment and to eliminate differences demonstrated by unfair outcomes;
- To publish all relevant equalities information.

5. Strategic Equalities and Diversity Objectives – what the Council will do.

The Council's Equalities commitments will be promoted by a number of key actions. These are grouped under five equality themes.

Actions

a. Promoting Community Leadership and Community Cohesion

Three Rivers Community Strategy

The Council will continue to ensure that its Community Strategy responds to the needs of all local communities through consultation with key groups and the use of equality impact assessments.

Three Rivers Strategic Plan

The Council will ensure that the strategic plan sets targets to measure progress towards relevant equality objectives.

Three Rivers Community Safety Strategy

The Council will ensure that any adverse impact of crime within the community is addressed through the annual action plans that are developed by the Community Safety Partnership.

b. Consultation / Community Engagement and Communication

The Council will continue to develop its consultation and communication strategies in order to ensure that the public has access to information and services provided and are engaged in their development.

Consultation / Community Engagement

The Council will:

- Engage with relevant users, community groups, staff and stakeholder groups on its service delivery and priorities in order to increase the appropriateness and responsiveness of services to all sections of the community.
- Analyse consultation findings to increase the understanding and needs assessment of minority communities, disadvantaged groups and those who are socially excluded.

Communication

The Council will:

- Publish this policy, our Equality Objectives, our Equality Impact Assessments and all relevant equality information;
- Ensure that if needed information on key Council services can be made available in other languages and formats for non-English speakers and disabled people;
- Ensure that if needed a professional interpreting service is available for service users whose first language is not English;
- Ensure that communication responds to differing levels of literacy and comprehension;
- Ensure that all services address the access requirements of disabled people;
- Ensure that the complaints procedure is accessible to all.

c. Promoting Equality in Service Delivery

Assess Functions and Policies

The Council will

- Assess the relevance of its policies and functions to equalities legislation and commitments;
- Undertake equality relevance tests and impact assessments of relevant functions, policies and proposed policies and publish the results.

Service Delivery

The Council will

- Ensure that all services produce an Equality Action Plan that identify targets for each service to deliver this policy;
- Ensure that all council services, delivered directly or through contractors, take forward the Council's equalities and diversity commitments;
- Ensure that procedures for commissioning and awarding of tenders are free from all institutional discrimination;
- Promote the social model of disability in the design and delivery of services in order to reduce the environmental and cultural barriers encountered by disabled people due to other people's attitudes towards them;
- Identify groups within the community whose needs / requirements are not being met or are less well met by the Council;
- Ensure that all our services are flexible and respond to the needs of different groups within the community;
- Promote customer care.

Fair Treatment

The Council will

- Keep under review and respond to customer complaints and reports of harassment, hate incidents and hate crime;
- Provide appropriate support for the victims of harassment, hate incidents and hate crime; including those motivated by prejudice or hate towards disability, gender identity, race, religion or sexual orientation.

d. Promoting Equality of Opportunity in Employment and Training

Recruitment, Selection and Retention

- The Council will recruit and treat applicants for jobs or promotion on objective criteria, having regard to relevant experience, potential, skills and abilities. No applicant or employee will be placed at a disadvantage by requirements or conditions which are not necessary to the job, or which constitute direct or indirect discrimination;
- The Council will ensure that all employees understand their responsibility for implementing the Comprehensive Equality Policy and review this through the staff appraisal process.

Training

The Council will

- Ensure that staff will be trained to carry out all duties in line with equalities legislation and the implementation of the Council's commitments in the Comprehensive Equality Policy;
- Provide a training plan which integrates diversity and equal opportunities.

Review

The Council will

- Ensure that all employment policies and procedures are consistent with current legislation and all relevant Codes of Practice;
- Ensure that proactive measures are put in place to identify and address areas of inequality in all areas of human resource management.

Workforce Monitoring

The Council will

- Undertake Workforce Profiling by age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation, analyse implications of such profiling against community profiling, and publish the results;
- Monitor by age, disability, race, religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation applicants for jobs, staff promotion and training, grievances, harassment, bullying, disciplinary action, performance appraisals, training and dismissals and report on findings;
- Undertake exit interviews to monitor reasons for staff leaving or transferring post.

Fair Treatment

The Council will

- Act on the Comprehensive Equality Policy and harassment policy, which promote every employee's right to be treated with respect, by challenging ageist, disablist, homophobic, racist, sexist, transphobic and other discriminatory behaviour;
- Provide clear employment policies and procedures which promote equal opportunities and family friendly employment practice;
- Monitor complaints from staff against harassment, victimisation and bullying and any other discriminatory behaviour.

Equal Pay

The Council will monitor and publish data on equal pay. Where relevant it will identify actions to address inequalities in pay.

Complaints

The Council will safeguard the individual rights of any employee who wishes to complain.

e. Evaluating The Success Of Our Equalities Commitments

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Council will

- Monitor the progress of the Equality Objectives, revising targets and publishing the results;
- Sensitively collect and analyse data on the background of service users, complainants, perpetrators and victims of harassment and publish results;
- Protect complainants against victimisation;
- Promote the use of customer feedback, service delivery feedback and information gathered from user satisfaction surveys to provide further monitoring information;
- Ensure that monitoring and consultation feedback is used to inform best practice;
- Review this policy every three years, or when new legislation requires it to be reassessed.

6. Roles And Responsibilities

Council

The Council is responsible for setting policy.

The Policy and Resources committee is responsible for the performance management of this Policy and will make recommendations to Council on the development of policy.

Management Board

The lead officer for equalities in the Council is the Chief Executive.

The Chief Executive, Directors and Officers who make up the Council's Management Board are directly responsible for the implementation of this policy.

They are also responsible for ensuring that all staff are aware of their respective responsibilities under this policy and are given appropriate training and support.

Directors will be required to lead and direct its implementation corporately and within their own departments.

Community Partnerships Unit

The Community Partnerships Unit will support the Management Board by guiding the implementation of the policy and developing monitoring, evaluation, equality service planning, equality relevance test and impact assessment procedures and guidance. It will also co-ordinate the publication of equality information and equality objectives.

Heads of Service

Within directorates, implementation of this policy and the development of Service Equality Plans will be managed by Heads of Service.

Heads of Service will be responsible for ensuring that staff are aware of the policy and able to implement it.

Staff

All staff are responsible for complying with this Policy and its associated procedures and guidance. All staff are responsible for challenging breaches of this policy and can make use of the grievance procedure, harassment policy and whistle-blowing policy where needed.

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