

## **EQUALITIES STATEMENT 2018**

Watford Borough Council is committed to championing equality and embracing diversity across the full range of our services, whether we deliver the service ourselves or through partnership, and in our role as an employer.

We see this commitment as not only meeting our statutory duty but also reinforcing our objective as an organisation to ensure equality and diversity are at the heart of everything we do, for our workforce and the customers and communities we serve.

The council considers equality issues when making decisions as employers; when developing, evaluating and reviewing policy; when designing, delivering and evaluating services, and when we commission and procure from others.

### **Equality**

Equality is about fair treatment

- It means treating everyone with fairness and respect and recognising the needs of individuals
- It does not mean treating everybody the same, as some people may need further support to have the same chance to participate in our community or use the council's services

### **Diversity**

Diversity is about respecting differences

- It is about valuing and respecting people regardless of who they are and any defining characteristic they may have
- It acknowledges that a community is made up of individuals and groups with varying backgrounds, experiences, styles, perceptions, values and beliefs
- Everybody is different – where there are two people there is diversity

### **Equality and diversity working together**

- We will endeavour to treat people according to their different needs without being unfair to them or others

### **Our commitments**

We want to encourage a culture within the council and across the borough where people of all backgrounds and experience feel appreciated, valued, fairly -treated without discrimination.

To achieve this, we will:

- *meet all our legal, organisational and personal equality responsibilities*
- *promote equalities*
- *ensure that equality analysis is part of our policy and strategy development*
- *challenge discrimination and address inequality when we deliver services*
- *make our services easy for everyone to use*
- *encourage people from protected groups to participate in society*
- *engage people from all communities to help shape our services*
- *insist that anyone providing services on our behalf complies with our commitments*
- *aim to have a workforce which reflects the diverse community we serve*

- *treat all employees fairly*
- *tackle bullying, harassment and victimisation in the workplace when they arise*
- *provide employees and elected members with appropriate training*

## **The Equality Act 2010**

To fulfil the council's legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 we will have 'due regard' to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a **protected characteristic** and those who do not
- foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

The **protected characteristics** are:

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

Having due regard involves considering the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics;
- meet the needs of people with protected characteristics
- encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low

Fostering good relations involves:

- tackling prejudice and
- promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and others

To comply with the Equality Duty some people may be treated better than others, as far as this is allowed by discrimination law. This may involve making use of an exception or a positive action in order to provide a service in a way which is appropriate for people who share a protected characteristic.

Disabled people's needs may be different from those of non-disabled people. The council is required to take account of disabled people's impairments when making decisions about policies or services. This might mean making reasonable adjustments or treating disabled people better than non-disabled people in order to meet their needs.

### **Understanding our communities**

We know a great deal of general information about Watford residents from our analysis of a range of published information, such as the Census 2011 and mid-year estimates, various Office for National Statistics (ONS) reports and Mosaic (customer segmentation)

The latest summary of this information is given in the appendix, "Our population."

However, we recognise that, in many cases, the council has more limited information and evidence about how our services take account of all the protected characteristics and will undertake to improve this as part of our ongoing consultation and engagement work with service users.

Consulting and involving Watford's diverse communities is important; to build a better understanding of what really matters to residents, service users, stakeholders and employees when we shape our services and to support our equality objectives.

We will encourage active engagement from all parts of the Watford community, giving everyone the opportunity to participate; including those who feel they are not always heard and those who need extra help to access our services.

We will explain why we are collecting personal information and how it will help us make our services accessible to everyone. The monitoring data we gather will be in proportion to the nature of the policy or service and any potential impact on the public.

### **Delivery of Services**

When we introduce or improve services we will:

- aim to make them accessible for all users, avoiding unequal outcomes or potentially unfair impacts of decisions and policies
- carry out an Equality Impact Analysis (EIA) for new or significantly changed policies or services
- provide services fairly and without discrimination
- make reasonable adjustments where possible so services are accessible to everyone who needs them
- monitor how our services are used by all sections of the community
- use the data collected to assist our service planning and delivery

### **Working with other organisations**

We require all contractors and council-funded voluntary sector organisations providing services on our behalf to comply with their statutory equality obligations and the council's equalities policies and practices. We:-

- include a commitment to equality in our tender specification
- include specific equality clauses in contracts
- monitor contractor/provider performance where relevant

### **Watford Borough Council as an employer**

Watford Borough Council believes in a working environment free from bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination; promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.

We will:

- Aim to employ a workforce which reflects Watford's diverse community
- Review and publish a profile of the current employees and job applicants and how they match local population statistics each year
- Encourage equalities disclosure on recruitment and staff monitoring surveys
- Take steps so that no-one is unfairly discriminated against when applying for a job or during the course of their employment with the council
- Promote that we are a 'disability confident employer' to help us recruit and retain disabled people and people with health conditions for their skills and talent. This commitment means we will:
  - ensure inclusive and accessible recruitment
  - communicate vacancies
  - offer an interview to disabled people if they meet the criteria
  - provide reasonable adjustments
  - support existing employees



- Make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of employees with a disability are made in accordance with our 'Disability in Employment' policy
- Hold an Employee Disability Forum twice a year
- Policies are in place to oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination, including in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities (for information about these policies contact [humanresources@watford.gov.uk](mailto:humanresources@watford.gov.uk))
- Run regular training for staff and elected members in equality and diversity issues
- Make clear that all employees are required to behave in ways that promote equality and are non-discriminatory in their dealings with members of the public and other employees

## Our population

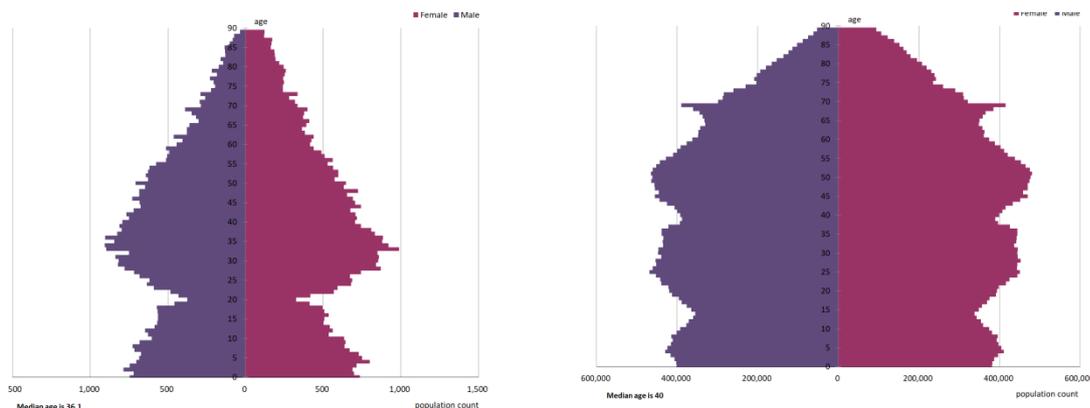
Watford is predominantly an urban borough with a population of 96,800 (ONS mid-year 2016). Given the area of the borough, this size of population means it is the most densely-populated district authority area within England.

The profile of Watford’s population differs significantly from the rest of the county. It is highly diverse and, more in line with London authority areas, saw a substantial increase in diversity between Census returns in 2001 and 2011 when the non-White British population rose from 21% to 38%. The town continues to welcome a diverse range of nationalities and community cohesion remains one of our key strengths, with new arrivals establishing themselves alongside longer-standing communities. Around 150 languages are spoken as the main language in Watford homes (Hertfordshire County Council’s annual school census 2016). This diversity is also reflected in national insurance registrations to adult overseas nationals (Department of Work and Pensions statistics), which consistently show new arrivals to Watford remain high with the greatest number of people currently coming from Eastern Europe and the Asian sub-continent

Watford is also a young town. Like most areas its residents are living longer but, unlike the rest of Hertfordshire and the majority of the Eastern region, it has a high birth rate and continues to be somewhere that is predominantly made up of younger families and households. Watford has the fourth highest percentage population of 0-4 year olds in the Eastern region and the sixth highest 0-14 year olds. In comparison, Watford has the third lowest percentage population of 65+ in the region. The figure below shows how the distribution of Watford’s population across age ranges differs from the profile of the UK, particularly in terms of a concentration of population below 45 years.

**Watford population distribution mid-2016**

**UK population distribution mid-2016**



**Watford’s population distribution mid-2016**

The borough’s population has increased by around 7% since the 2011 Census compared with just under 4% for Great Britain overall and around 5% for the Eastern region. This growth is projected to continue. Government projections show that Watford will reach a population of 100,000 by the end of 2017 (ONS sub-national projections) and just under

110,000 by 2024. This increase represents a 14.7% increase in population from 2014-2024, higher than the projection for England overall (10%) and more in line with projections for London authority areas.

Our MOSAIC profiling of the borough enhances our understanding of our population and provides valuable context for our future plans and decision-making. Watford's MOSAIC profile reinforces our understanding of the diversity of our population, its overall youth and also reflects the significance of the private sector rental sector in our housing market.

MOSAIC GROUP	Group/Type Name	MOSAIC DESCRIPTION	Number of households in Watford	Watford Percentage	UK Percentage
1 J40	<b>Career Builders</b>	Singles and couples in their 20s and 30s progressing in their field of work from commutable properties	4508	<b>11.69%</b>	1.59%
2 J44	<b>Flexible Workforce</b>	Young renters ready to move to follow worthwhile incomes from service sector jobs	3123	<b>8.10%</b>	1.26%
3 D14	<b>Cafés and Catchments</b>	Affluent families with growing children living in upmarket housing in city environs	2837	<b>7.35%</b>	1.31%
4 I36	<b>Cultural Comfort</b>	Thriving families with good incomes in multi-cultural urban communities	2794	<b>7.24%</b>	1.37%
5 H35	<b>Primary Ambitions</b>	Forward-thinking younger families who sought affordable homes in good suburbs which they may now be out-growing	2391	<b>6.20%</b>	1.96%

***Watford's MOSAIC profile (2016)***