

Equality policy

Camden is firmly anchored in the values of equity, social purpose, democracy, and human rights.

We have a radical history of being at the forefront of movements for equality and justice. Our [Building Equal Foundations One Year On](#) report details the equalities and disproportionality work that has been completed since August 2020, across the areas of education, health, adult social care, the voluntary and community sector, housing, and workforce. A lot has been achieved, and there is a desire and urgency for change; but much more needs to be done.

In 2023, Camden had a series of firsts. We launched the first ever Inclusion calendar for Camden, we committed as a council to becoming a 'Borough of Sanctuary' and we transformed how we report on Equalities in Camden through a refresh of our Equality Impact Assessments. As a local authority, it is both our public sector duty to fulfil these assessments to minimise any negative impacts on our communities, but most of all it is a moral duty and purpose to truly design, for our communities, services that are equitable for all.

Our Equalities service works to ensure that this Equality policy effects significant influence on all Camden's strategic and operational policies.

We are committed to championing fair and equitable treatment of communities, enhancing outcomes and benefits and generating strong partnership and engagement to promote shared problem solving and co-production.

Objectives

We are committed to ensuring Camden is:

- An accessible and inclusive borough for all
- An autism friendly borough
- A borough of sanctuary for all
- A borough free from modern slavery and exploitation in all its forms

We will achieve this by:

- Creating better governance and monitoring processes to continue with the work done to date
- Ensuring equitable funding and procurement with social value being also entwined with social justice drivers
- Increasing the standards of EqlAs to ensure even better results for communities, particularly those that are systemically impacted

Equality Act 2010

In April 2010 the Equality Act replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single act to make the law simpler.

The act covers nine equality groups (called 'protected characteristics'), which cannot be used as a reason to treat people unfairly. Every person has one or more of the protected characteristics, so the act protects everyone against unfair treatment.

The protected characteristics are:

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

Camden is also interested in some additional characteristics:

- Foster carers
- Care experienced young people
- Low-income households
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Parents (of any gender, with children aged under 18)
- People who are homeless
- Private rental tenants in deprived areas
- Single parent households
- Social housing tenants

Public Sector Equality Duty

The Public Sector Equality Duty is a part of the Equality Act which requires public bodies such as Camden to consider all individuals when deciding policy, delivering services, and as an employer.

It requires public bodies to have had 'due regard' to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Equality Act explains that having 'due regard' involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;

- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people; and
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Public bodies have specific obligations to publish equality information and to set equality objectives. The specific requirement that public bodies must publish information is to demonstrate that they have consciously thought about the Public Sector Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making.

Equality Impact Assessments

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is our chosen way for working out the impact our decisions or activities could potentially have on different equality groups, whether negative or positive. We use EqIAs to assess these potential impacts prior to deciding, so that we can change our approach to avoid unintended impacts, remove negative impacts or enhance positive ones.

Crucially, we seek to use EqIAs not just as a part of our governance but as an important service improvement tool and as a meaningful evaluation framework.

By undertaking EqIAs on our activities and decisions, as well as improving our policies and practices for our residents, our workforce and our other stakeholders, we can also practically demonstrate that we are taking proactive steps to fulfil our Public Sector Equality Duty.

It is the responsibility of all Camden Council services and all relevant Council officers to undertake EqIAs on activities and decisions they're responsible for. The Council's Equalities Service will coordinate guidance, support and resources to enable Council officers and services to consistently undertake robust, meaningful EqIAs.

If you would like further information on the EQIA process in Camden, please contact the Equalities service by emailing equalities@camden.gov.uk

Equality information

As a public body we must publish information to show how we are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty. You can access this information either on our main website, or on Camden Data (a website where we hold all our performance information and statistics). Examples of the type of data we hold include:

- 2021 Census Key Statistics and Quick Statistics: updated summary profiles for Camden and its wards.

- Camden Data dashboard: information on residents' age, ethnicity, disability, and other protected characteristics, alongside housing, health, and employment statistics.

Governance and oversight

Strategic oversight

The Council's Equalities policy provides the overarching framework for advancing equality, diversity and inclusion across all services and functions. It sets out the Council's statutory duties, strategic commitments and expectations for delivery, and is aligned with corporate priorities and decision-making processes.

Overall political oversight of equalities sits with the relevant Cabinet Member, who is responsible for championing equality considerations within Cabinet and ensuring that equalities performance and risks are appropriately reflected in the Council's reporting and governance rhythms.

Leadership oversight

Each DMT (Directorate Management team) has collective responsibility for embedding the Equalities Policy within its directorate. Progress, risks and priorities relating to equalities are reviewed through a standing quarterly Equalities item at DMT, providing a consistent forum for:

- Updates on delivery against equalities objectives and actions
- Consideration of equality impacts, risks and emerging issues
- Sharing learning, good practice and data insights
- Agreeing remedial actions where performance or compliance concerns are identified

This quarterly slot ensures equalities remain a core part of directorate governance rather than a standalone or ad-hoc consideration.

Camden operates several internal Programme Boards authorised to supervise delivery in specific strategic service areas. Equality objectives, measures and outcomes are central to operational plans and provide an effective structure for performance reporting and progress review.

Corporate reporting and accountability

Equalities performance and key issues are reported through established corporate reporting cycles, including updates to the relevant Cabinet Member as part of regular performance and assurance reporting. This ensures transparency, senior visibility and political accountability for progress against the Equalities policy.

Where appropriate, equalities matters may also be escalated to corporate boards or committees to support cross-council alignment, decision-making and assurance.

Policy ownership and review

The Equalities policy is owned at a corporate level and acts as the guiding framework for more detailed strategies, action plans and service-level activity. The policy will be kept under review to ensure it remains compliant with legislation, reflects best practice, and responds to emerging needs, with any substantive changes subject to appropriate governance and approval.

Other legislation

Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act incorporates provisions from the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law. While it does not provide a stand-alone right not to be discriminated against, *Article 14* enshrines the right to enjoy other Convention rights and freedoms without discrimination on grounds such as sex, race, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, or other status.

Further information can be found on the Equality and Human Rights Commission website: www.equalityhumanrights.com.

Gender Recognition Act 2004

This Act provides full legal recognition for a transgender person, allowing them to obtain a Gender Recognition Certificate.

More information can be found on the UK Government website: www.gov.uk/apply-gender-recognition-certificate.

Civil Partnership Act 2004 (as amended by the Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration etc.) Act 2019)

The Act allows same-sex couples to legally register their relationship. Since 2019, it has also enabled opposite-sex couples to enter into civil partnerships.

Further information can be found on the UK Government website: www.gov.uk/civil-partnerships.

Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013

This Act made provision for the marriage of same-sex couples in England and Wales, with the first ceremonies taking place in March 2014.

Further information can be found on the UK Government website: www.gov.uk/marriages-civil-partnerships.

Modern Slavery Act 2015

This act makes provision and guidance of the tools to fight modern slavery and enhance support and protection for victims.

Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017

These regulations set out additional requirements for public authorities, including duties around equality monitoring and reporting.

European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018

This Act is relevant to equality because it retained in UK law many protections that originated in European Union legislation, ensuring continuity after the UK's exit from the EU.

For more information on Equalities at Camden, please visit the Equalities and community strength webpage: <https://www.camden.gov.uk/equality>

