

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement 2026 to 2028

Equality, diversity and inclusion is important to Sevenoaks District Council. [Our Council Priorities \(2026 – 2028\)](#), includes a commitment to '*continue to prioritise equality and diversity, ensuring services are inclusive and responsive to community need*'. This statement defines our approach to achieving that goal.

In April 2026 we published our final report for 'Closing the Gap: Working Towards Greater Equality for All'. This report is available [here](#) and also includes our population statistics and information on our gender pay gap data.

Our equality objectives set out within this document, have been developed to align with our Council Priorities and will run from 2026 to 2028.

### Rights and Responsibilities

The Council has a legal obligation to uphold **the Public Sector Equality Duty** which was introduced by the Equality Act 2010. This duty requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to:

- **eliminate** unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Public Sector Equality Duty;
- **advance** equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- **foster** good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

This duty applies to the **nine** protected characteristics of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership (as applies to employment), pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

We will design and deliver all services to ensure they are accessible and inclusive for people with protected characteristics, eliminating discrimination and advancing equality of opportunity.

In adopting this policy statement, and assessing the impact on race, religion or belief, the Council has adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism.

### The Armed Forces

The Armed Forces Covenant was enshrined in law by the Armed Forces Act 2021 to help prevent service personnel, veterans and their family members being disadvantaged when accessing public services. The Act includes:

- recognition of the unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the armed forces and their families;

- the desirability of removing disadvantages arising for service people and their families from membership of the armed forces;
- that special provision for service people and their families may be justified by the effects on personnel and family from being in the armed forces.

Sevenoaks District Council will ensure that the Armed Forces community is considered when assessing equality impacts as part of our decision-making processes, and this is included within our Equality Impact Assessment template.

## **Equality Objectives**

The Council sets the following equality objectives which align to our Council Priorities.

### **Objective 1: Housing, economic growth and infrastructure**

To reduce barriers experienced by residents facing financial pressure by improving access to council services and tailoring support to groups disproportionately affected by low income, such as disabled people, lone parents, and older residents.

### **Objective 2: Protecting our health, wellbeing and environment**

To increase opportunities for residents at risk of social isolation to engage with and participate in community life, including older people, disabled residents, and unpaid carers.

### **Objective 3: Protecting our health, wellbeing and environment**

To support our communities to feel safe, inclusive, connected and healthy for all regardless of their age, sex, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity

### **Objective 4: Care and quality at the centre of all we do**

To strengthen workforce equity and inclusion across all protected characteristics by ensuring fair access to opportunities through recruitment processes, development opportunities, and fostering a culture where all staff feel respected, valued, and able to reach their potential.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

The Assistant Chief Executive supported by the Senior Management Team, has overall responsibility for implementing this policy statement.

Implementation will be monitored by the Senior Management Team.

An action plan with defined measurements will be maintained by the Policy and Performance team, and an annual report will be published each year on progress against these measurements.