

# Company Handbook



Guidance on council processes and policies

## Equality and inclusion and the companies

An overview of the council's approach to equality and inclusion and what this may mean for the companies



## Introduction

1. Bristol City Council's (the **council**) current **E&I Strategy**, [Bristol City Council Equality and Inclusion Policy and Strategic Framework 23-27](#) runs from 2023 – 2027.
2. As well as setting out the council's own ambitions in respect of equality and inclusion, and how it can fulfil, and go beyond, its Public Sector Equality Duty (**PSED**), the E&I Strategy also sets out how the council expects its partners to contribute to its success.
3. The purpose of this Guidance Note is to help you understand the council's E&I Strategy, the extent to which the council expects it to apply to its companies and whether, in the council's view, they should comply with the PSED.

## The E&I Strategy and the council's companies

4. The E&I Strategy sets out the council's own ambitions in respect of equality and inclusion, and how the council expects its partners, which includes the council's wholly-owned companies, to contribute to its success.
5. In particular, the E&I Strategy sets out that:
  - a) contractors and organisations that are funded by the council are expected to abide by all equality legislation that applies to them and to assist the council in upholding the council's obligations under the PSED (see Public Sector Equality Duty below);
  - b) the council will promote good equality and inclusion practice amongst its partners in the city and in the region; and
  - c) the council takes all possible opportunities to ensure its suppliers and contractors take an active approach to contributing to the council's equalities and inclusion goals.
6. The E&I Strategy also sets out the following expectations of joint working:
  - a) partners are to work with the council to make the E&I Strategy a success by forming safer, accessible and inclusive communities;
  - b) partners are to design and deliver effective services by making best use of resources; and
  - c) partners should share best practice with the council and the wider partnership.
7. The council therefore expects its companies to read, understand and, to the extent relevant to them as partners of the council, apply, the E&I Strategy. On a day to day basis, the council expects the companies to consider equality and inclusion in all of the work they do, to develop a policy or strategy to reflect it, and to align, wherever possible, with the council's ambitions in this area.
8. In particular, the companies should ensure they are collating relevant diversity data to ensure they are able to address any gaps that arise. Diverse recruiters should be used in respect of every recruitment.

## Bristol Equality Charter

9. [Bristol Equality Charter](#) is a city-wide initiative which has been co-designed by 20+ private, public and voluntary sector organisations in conjunction with Bristol City Council.
10. The council expects its companies to become signatories to the Bristol Equality Charter.

## **Public Sector Equality Duty**

11. The 'Public Sector Equality Duty' (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) applies to the council. The council is of the view that the PSED should also apply to the council's companies and that the council's companies should demonstrate how they are complying with that duty.
12. Where the PSED applies to a body, that body must have due regard to the need to:
  - a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
  - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
13. To ensure transparency and to assist in the performance of this duty, bodies to whom the PSED applies are required to publish:
  - a) equality objectives, at least every four years; and
  - b) information to demonstrate their compliance with the PSED.

## **Considering Equality and Inclusion in Committee Reports**

14. When the companies write their business plans it is expected that they contribute to an Equalities Impact Assessment (**EqIA**). This will be submitted to the relevant Committee as part of the Report seeking approval of the business plans. For further information, please refer to the Guidance Note: Business Planning.

## **Further Information**

15. For further information on this topic, please contact the Shareholder Liaison Service:  
[ShareholderLiaison@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:ShareholderLiaison@bristol.gov.uk)

*Table 1: Version Control Table*

<b>Version</b>	<b>Summary of Edits</b>	<b>Editor</b>	<b>Date of Version</b>
<b>V 1</b>	<b>First version for publishing</b>	<b>Shareholder Liaison Service</b>	<b>November 2021</b>
<b>V 2</b>	<b>Second version for publication</b>	<b>Shareholder Liaison Service</b>	<b>October 2023</b>
<b>V 3</b>	<b>Updated version for committee system</b>	<b>Shareholder Liaison Service</b>	<b>April 2024</b>