

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Employment & Appeals Committee

DATE: 20 October 2020

CONTACT OFFICER: Surjit Nagra, Associate Director - Customer

AUTHOR:
For all enquiries Christine Ford, Diversity and Inclusion Manager,

WARDS: All

PART I

FOR DECISION

SBC POLICY AND GUIDANCE ON SUPPORTING TRANS EMPLOYEES

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides the Committee with an overview of the updated policy guidance for supporting transgender (trans) employees. The full draft policy is attached as Appendix A.

2. Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

- 2.1 The Committee is requested to review and approve the updated policy.

3. Supporting Information

- 3.1 Gender identity is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act (2010): under this all trans people are protected from discrimination in the workplace. However, despite this legal protection, trans people have been identified as a particularly vulnerable group. Research indicates a number of complex issues and negative experiences of trans employees within workplace environments. The council is committed to ensuring that no individual is subject to discrimination or victimisation as a result of the gender in which they present themselves.
- 3.2 SBC recognises that coming out as trans can be a very difficult and complex time for an individual and wishes to act in a sensitive and supportive way by having clear guidance in place. The decision to come out as trans or non-binary is not something a person undertakes lightly and the support of managers and colleagues is often vital. This policy and guidance is designed as a resource to support trans and non-binary employees. It can also be used to increase awareness of gender identity and expression, and what may constitute discrimination of trans or non-binary employees.

- 3.3 The development of a diverse and inclusive workforce – where every employee is valued and can achieve their maximum potential - is central to the council's aims. The council is proud to promote itself as a Stonewall Diversity Champion and understands that trans employees have a valuable role to play in furthering the aims and aspirations of its organisation.
- 3.4 This revised guidance has been developed in conjunction with best practice advice from Stonewall, the leading LGBT+ charity.
- 3.5 In September 2020, the government confirmed that it would not be significantly reforming the Gender Recognition Act (2004) following a public consultation.

4. Summary of key points:

- 4.1 The council's original policy dated back to 2007 and needed to be significantly reviewed to reflect emerging best practice to support trans and non-binary staff. The newly revised policy now has a:

- Full glossary of up to date terms and definitions with links to further reading and support
- Comprehensive sections on practical issues, including:
 - the importance of dignity and respect in the use of names and pronouns
 - the importance of confidentiality at all stages
 - clear statement on the council's policy regarding toilet facilities, including the provision of gender neutral facilities where possible in addition to male/female toilets.
 - procedures to protect confidentiality in recruitment including the taking up of references
 - the keeping and changing of personnel records
 - amending gender categories on Agresso
- Extensive FAQs on the process of supporting a staff member who is transitioning together with an example of an action plan; managing the reaction of colleagues and clients, communicating changes to teams etc.
- Key legislative background

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Consultation in respect of the revised policies and procedures has taken place with Trades Unions, LGBT+ Allies staff group, Stonewall, Employee Engagement Forum and Corporate Consultative Forum.

6. Implementation Process

- 6.1 The implementation process will include various methods of communication including;

- Newsround
- Information on Insite

7. Background Papers

None

8. Appendix

Appendix A – SBC Policy and Guidance on Supporting Trans Employees