



A summary of our equal opportunities policies and guidance notes

We are committed to treating our staff, and the people of Leeds, fairly. We will make sure that we do not discriminate against people because of age, impairment, colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality, race, religious belief, social class, gender, sexuality, gender reassignment, marital status, responsibility for dependants, trade union or political activity, and any other disadvantaged group.

Our aim is:

“To improve the quality of life for the people of Leeds, especially disadvantaged people.”

We want to make sure that we take equal opportunities into account, in a positive way, at every stage of the ALMO's work. We try to make sure that we follow equal opportunities policies in how we:

- **recruit and treat our staff**
- **consult with the people of Leeds**
- **deliver our services**
- **work with other organisations**

Our policies focus on tackling discrimination against black and minority ethnic groups, disabled people and women. We also follow all anti-discriminatory laws. For example:

- **Sex Discrimination Act 1975**
- **Equal Pay Act 1970**
- **Race Relations Act 1976**
- **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**
- **Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000**
- **Data Protection Act 1998**
- **Disability Discrimination Act 1995**
- **Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1982**
- **Crime and Disorder Act 1998**
- **Protection from Harassment Act 1997**
- **Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994**
- **Human Rights Act 1998**

To help us listen to the views of people in Leeds we have set up various groups. On these, representatives from different communities can give their views and ask us to take action on various issues. These include:

- **Community Involvement Teams**
- **Citizen's Panel**
- **Women's Advisory Group**
- **Disabled People's Access Advisory Group**
- **Race Equality Advisory Forum**
- **Young Disabled People's Advisory Group**
- **Tenant Involvement Groups**
- **Youth Forums**

Some examples of how we put equal opportunities into practice:

Policies:

- **Recruiting staff**
- *Birth and domestic leave*
- **Complaints**
- *Equality Action Plans*
- **Job-sharing**
- *Domestic violence*

Practical action:

- **Braille, Tape and Large Print Service**
- *Women's Safe Transport Service*
- **Job Training for Black and Minority Ethnic People**
- *Sexual Harassment Network*
- **Disabled Jobseekers' Service**
- *Consulting with disadvantaged groups*
- **Improving all communications and publications**
- *Trying to make sure that disabled children can use mainstream schools*
- **Increasing nursery provision**
- *Employing staff who can speak more than one language*
- **Sign Language Interpreting Service**
- *Access improvements for disabled people*
- **More licences for taxis which wheelchair-users can use without help**
- *Shop Mobility and Leisure Mobility schemes*
- **Dropped kerbs and tactile paving**
- *Leeds Access Guide for disabled people*
- **Racial Harassment Project**
- *Leeds Inter Agency Project providing services for women who are experiencing violence from men they know*
- **Grants for community groups**
- *Funding for events*
- **Working with the Commission for Racial Equality**
- *Making sure we meet the recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry.*

Disability Discrimination Act

Definition of disability

Who is a disabled person?

In most cases there will be no doubt about who is a disabled person. However, the Government has written the DDA's definition so that many conditions, not usually considered to be impairments, are included. To qualify as disabled under the DDA, a person will have to show that each of the four conditions here are met.

1 A disabled person is someone who has a **physical or mental impairment**.

Physical impairment includes hearing and visual impairments and conditions such as diabetes, dyslexia, severe disfigurement, heart conditions and epilepsy. It also includes anyone who has an impairment which is likely to develop over time such as cancer, multiple sclerosis, or someone living with HIV or AIDS.

Mental impairment includes learning disabilities and clinically well-recognised mental illnesses. That is, illnesses recognised by a respected body of medical opinion such as the World Health Organisation's International Classification of Diseases.

People whose impairments are controlled, corrected or adjusted by medication or appliances are covered by the DDA, as are those who are treated unfavourably because of an impairment they have had in the past.

2 The impairment has to last, or be expected to last, **at least 12 months**.

- A person with a broken leg who is only temporarily disabled would not be covered.
- A person who has had an impairment, which may happen again, is also covered.
- A person who has arthritis, or who gets depression, which only affects them now and again, is still covered by the DDA.

3 The impairment must have a **substantial** adverse effect. This may be obvious in the time it takes someone to carry out a task or in the way they carry out the task.

4 The impairment must affect the person's ability to carry out **normal day-to-day activities**. These include mobility; manual dexterity; physical co-ordination; continence; ability to lift or carry everyday objects; speech, hearing or sight; memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand.

West North West Homes Leeds

Guidance Notes on Completing the Application Form

You are advised to read the following notes carefully as, unless other pre-selection techniques are used, the decision to shortlist you for the interview will be based solely on the information you provide in the application form. This advice is designed to help you complete the application form as thoroughly as possible. Information you provide in the application form will be treated as confidential.

Examine the Job Pack

All Job Information packs for posts with West North West Homes Leeds contain application form, Job Description and Employee Specification, Equal Opportunity Policy Statement and, where applicable, Removal and Relocation Schemes.

Equal Opportunities

West North West Homes Leeds is committed to offering equality of opportunity in employment regardless of race, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or age. To monitor the effectiveness of Equal Opportunities policies, we need to monitor the number of applications by sex, race and disability. You are therefore requested to provide this information on the application form.

Disabled Applicants

A disability or health problem does not preclude prospective applicants from consideration for a job and applications are encouraged from disabled people. Disabled applicants whose impairment prevents them from carrying out any aspects of a post are still encouraged to apply since it may be possible to make reasonable adjustments to the duties of the post. You are asked to indicate in the 'Additional Information' section of the application form whether your disability prevents you from undertaking any of the duties of the post and why. There is provision for information to be provided in large print, Braille or on tape. If because of a disability you have difficulty completing the application form, you may alternatively submit a C.V., though this should still follow the same format as the application form. For posts carrying an essential car users allowance, alternative arrangements can be made for people whose disability prevents them from driving. Disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria of a vacant post are guaranteed an interview. You are asked to indicate in the 'Additional Information' section of the application form any arrangements which will need to be made in order for you to attend an interview.

Canvassing

You must not canvass Members of the Council in relation to your application. This means you must not seek the support of an Elected Member or attempt to ask them to influence the decision - if you do you will be disqualified.

Criminal Convictions

Under the terms of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, certain jobs are classed as those for which applicants must declare criminal convictions/cautions regardless of whether or not they are spent. If the post comes within this category, it will be clearly indicated elsewhere in this pack. In order to protect the users of our services, particularly children and young people, we may need to carry out detailed criminal record checks before we confirm offers of appointment to some jobs. These checks will only be carried out with your permission but the appointment will not be confirmed if you do not give your permission for the checks or if an unsatisfactory report is obtained.

These checks are carried out through the Criminal Records Bureau who have a strict Code of Practice relating to the information which they provide. We will comply with the Code of Practice at all times to ensure confidentiality and fair treatment.

Presentation

- Use black pen or type your application form so it can be photocopied
- Check that you have answered every question
- Remember to sign the application form to declare that the information you have provided is accurate
- Always keep a copy of the application form for reference
- Make sure that your application form arrives before the closing date. It is not the West North West Homes Leeds policy to accept late applications (although exceptions may be allowed in the case of disabled applicants who receive information in a different format, or who have difficulty in completing an application form).

Completing the application form

General - Make sure that you read the application form fully before you write anything. Write out your application form in rough first to help organise your thoughts. Ensure the information you provide is accurate. Applicants who conceal or misrepresent relevant information at any stage during the recruitment process are liable to disqualification.

Employment Experience – Complete this section as fully as possible, giving exact dates. Where you cannot remember specific dates, provide as good an indication of the time involved as possible.

Qualifications - Where specific qualifications are required for the position, this will be included in the Job Description and Employee Specification. You should complete this section giving details of relevant examination results and grades. If your application is successful, you will be required to provide verification of these qualifications. Make sure you include any NVQs which you are working towards or have obtained.

References - If you object to your references being sought at this stage you may indicate so on the application form.

CV's WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED, with the exception of disabled applicants who have difficulty completing the standard Application Form.

Information in Support of Application

- Please read the Job Description and Employee Specification carefully, so that you understand what the position involves.
- Ask yourself why you are interested in the position; for example, would it be promotion or alternatively a good career move sideways to broaden your experience?
- Do not simply repeat your career history. Pick out skills, knowledge and experience required by the Job Description and Employee Specification and provide evidence in the appropriate sections of the application form that you possess them.

Under these sections, be as concise as possible; any additional information included should relate specifically to the post applied for. You may attach additional information in support of your application form (**please ensure you write your name and the job you are applying for on each additional sheet you submit**) but **in no circumstances should this exceed two sides of A4 paper.**

This restriction does not apply to those applicants who declare a disability and, therefore, who provide additional information in order that consideration may be given to reasonable adjustments.

Please note that applicants will only be shortlisted if they demonstrate that they meet those essential requirements of the Employee Specification that can be assessed from the application form.

You must therefore give evidence which shows how you meet the specification. If the specification states “able to use initiative and work unsupervised” it will not be sufficient to say “I can work unsupervised and show initiative” you must quote examples of your work/life which demonstrates these attributes.

Mention any relevant experience you have acquired outside work, such as community, voluntary or leisure interests.

Above all, gear your application to this specific job.

Internal applicants must not assume any prior knowledge by the shortlist and interview panel, and must give full details.

Smoking Policy

West North West Homes Leeds operates a ‘No smoking Policy’ at the majority of its indoor working areas. However in certain cases, for operational reasons, the Authority has agreed that services users and other non-employees may be permitted to smoke. If the post you are considering applying for is based at such a location this will be reflected in the Job Description and Employee Specification.

Job Sharing

West North West Homes Leeds supports job sharing as a means of creating job opportunities, offering more flexible working arrangements and retaining experienced trained staff. Most jobs with the City Council are available for job sharing. Applications from single job share applicants will be accepted and they will be treated in the same way as full time applicants. Where a single job share applicant is regarded as being the most suitable applicant for a job, they will be offered the position.