

Waltham Forest Parent Forum



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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Plan

Agreed by Steering Group April 2026

Review Date: April 2027

1. Purpose

Waltham Forest Parent Forum (WFPF) is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of its work.

The forum aims to ensure that all parent carers of children and young people with SEND feel welcomed, respected and able to participate, regardless of their background or circumstances.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Steering Group members
- Staff (paid or unpaid)
- Volunteers and representatives
- All activities and services delivered by WFPF

3. Our Commitment

WFPF will:

- Treat all individuals with dignity and respect
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Value diversity within the community
- Challenge discrimination and exclusion where it arises
- Ensure that participation is open and accessible to all

4. Protected Characteristics

WFPF recognises the Equality Act 2010 and is committed to ensuring no one is treated unfairly on the basis of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including ethnicity and nationality)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

5. Inclusive Practice

WFPF will:

- Provide a range of ways for parent carers to engage (online and in person)
- Use clear and accessible communication
- Consider barriers to participation and take steps to reduce them

- Ensure activities and events are welcoming and inclusive
- Promote a safe and respectful environment for all

6. Representation and Engagement

WFPF aims to reflect the diversity of the local community and will:

- Monitor who is engaging with the forum
- Identify underrepresented groups
- Take steps to improve outreach and engagement
- Work with partners to reach a wider range of families

7. Responsibilities

All Steering Group members, staff and volunteers are responsible for:

- Acting in line with this policy
- Promoting inclusive behaviour
- Challenging inappropriate behaviour where necessary

8. Concerns and Complaints

Any concerns about discrimination, exclusion or unfair treatment should be raised with the Participation Director or a member of the Steering Group.

All concerns will be taken seriously and addressed appropriately in line with the forum's governance processes.

9. Review of 2025/26

During 2025/26 the forum focused on better understanding its membership, improving data collection and strengthening outreach.

This has helped identify where engagement is strong and where there are gaps. While the forum has good representation across many communities, gaps remain, particularly in relation to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, some Black communities and adoptive and foster families.

This learning is now informing the forum's priorities for 2026/27

10. Understanding Our Membership

The forum will:

- Continue to collect and review data on membership, including postcode, ethnicity and referral routes
- Use this data to identify gaps in engagement
- Monitor participation across events and activities

11. Outreach and Engagement

The forum will:

- Strengthen outreach through schools, Early Help, community organisations and local services
- Build on existing partnerships and develop new connections
- Use social media, newsletters and website to increase reach
- Explore different approaches where communities are harder to reach

12. Priority Groups for 2026/27

The forum will focus on strengthening engagement with:

- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities
- Black communities
- Adoptive and foster families
- Families in parts of the south of the borough

13. Participation and Inclusion

The forum will:

- Provide accessible opportunities for engagement
- Support parent carers to take part in participation and representation roles
- Ensure a wide range of voices inform local SEND services

14. Working with Partners

The forum will:

- Work with community organisations and local services
- Learn from partners already working with underrepresented groups
- Develop joint approaches to engagement

15. Training and Awareness

The forum will:

Support Steering Group members and representatives to develop awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion

Promote inclusive practice across all areas of work

16. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as needed.

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