

Equality Policy

Version: 1.4

Our Staff Values
Focus. Passion. Inspiration.



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

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Related documents	None

Version Number	Effective Date	Details of Last Revision
1.3	07/05/19	Some updates as a result of peer review Youth Services
1.4	15/09/20	Updated designations and hyperlinks.

Equality Impact Assessment	08/01/14
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy updates the provisions in North Ayrshire Council's Equalities Policy to ensure that the Council complies with the provisions in the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equalities Duties (Scotland).

2. Our Commitment

- 2.1. North Ayrshire Council is committed to upholding the principle of equality of opportunity and to promoting measures to reduce inequalities. It is committed to tackling discrimination on the basis of a person's age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. In addition, we will promote initiatives and take action to encourage equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination on the basis of employment status, caring responsibilities or trade union activity. Equality is a core value of the Council governing the actions of its elected Members and its employees.
- 2.2. The Council, through its Single Outcome Agreement and Corporate Plans, sets out its aim to promote measures to tackle discrimination and reduce inequalities. Its vision is to achieve a socially inclusive community where everyone can achieve their full potential and being an equal opportunities employer is integral to achieving this vision.
- 2.3. The Council will also achieve this by integrating an equality perspective into all of its activities, strategies, policies and service planning. This mainstreaming of equalities issues will ensure that they are fully taken into account when developing and reviewing services. New policies and initiatives will be assessed in terms of their impact on all of the Council's communities. In this way the Council will fulfil its commitment to deliver its services in a fair and equitable way to all. The Council in leading the community planning process will ensure that equality of opportunity underpins all community planning activities.
- 2.4. Equality of opportunity will be integrated into all of the Council's Human Resources and Organisational Development policies and practices, ensuring there is fairness and equity in its treatment of its employees and prospective employees. Equality of opportunity means that appointments, promotions, training and development will be based on individual merit and the requirements

of the job. Employees are encouraged and given the opportunity to develop their full potential.

- 2.5. North Ayrshire Council connects, and as a major employer, it is the Council's aim to reflect the composition and diversity of its communities within its workforce. In doing this, the Council recognises the importance that equality of opportunity has in improving the retention of employees and improving motivation and performance. This can stimulate a healthy and productive working environment and can broaden the range of talent and the diversity of its workforce.

3. Working Together

- 3.1. The Council recognises that North Ayrshire is made up of a diverse mix of different communities of interest (e.g. race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity), and that there is need to give particular attention to involving individuals and groups which are often excluded from the decision making and the democratic process. The Council will work together with local community groups to challenge discrimination and tackle disadvantage, for example through the British Sign Language Plan, Black and Ethnic Minority Groups, etc.
- 3.2. The Council also recognises that everyone must work together to uphold the principle of equality and to eliminate discriminatory and other unacceptable practices in the workplace.
- 3.3. Our Education & Youth Employment Inclusion Policy makes clear that an inclusive approach to education supports an ethos of achievement and high expectation, recognises and respects difference, and sees differences between learners as opportunities for learning.

4. Our Aims

4.1. The main aims of this Equality Policy are:

- To re-affirm the Council's commitment to equalities as a core value in all of its work.
- To indicate the Council's intentions to promote equality as a service provider and as an employer.
- To advise on the structures and framework to be developed in future to take forward this work within the Council and in partnership with its communities.

5. Implementation of Policy - Responsibilities

- 5.1 **The Corporate Equalities Group** is responsible for the initiation, development and review of equal opportunities strategies and this group will oversee the implementation and review of this Equalities Policy
- 5.2 **The Corporate Equalities Group** is responsible for the monitoring of the performance of Services in implementing the Council's policies on equalities in employment.
- 5.3 **The Head of People & ICT** implements, maintains, monitors and reviews the policy in relation to equalities in employment. The Head of People & ICT also has responsibility for providing training and guidance on the effective operation of the policy in this regard.
- 5.4 **Executive Directors and Heads of Service** will be responsible for ensuring equality of opportunity is applied and practised within their Service in relation to employment matters and service provision. They will be responsible for ensuring that their employees are aware of the implications of the Policy, their obligations under the law, and to ensure that their managers, supervisors and staff are given the relevant training to ensure the Council and policy aims are met.
- 5.5 **Employees** have a duty to comply with the Council's Equality Policy, to deliver Council services in a fair and equitable way and to assist in making the working environment free from discrimination.

6. Achieving the aims of being an equal opportunities employer in employment and Service provision

The Council intends to achieve its equalities aims through a variety of methods. These include:-

- 6.1 **Action Planning** - to develop an implementation action plan to deliver our equal opportunities commitments and to review this plan at regular intervals.
- 6.2 **Service Planning** - to highlight equalities issues within all Council Service Plans. Advice is offered within the Guide to Service Planning on the mainstreaming of equalities.
- 6.3 **Communication and Publications** - to communicate with our employees on the Equalities Policy and its practical implementation in their everyday work and to keep up to date with equality developments and to apply best practice within the Council.
- 6.4 **Best Value Framework** - to mainstream equalities so that they are integrated into all Council activities. This will involve:-
 - Ensuring equality considerations are part of all strategic reviews and that the impact(s) of policy proposals on equal opportunities are assessed.

- That account is taken of equality requirements in all Council procurement and within its procurement strategy.
 - Ensuring equality performance information and targets in relation to Council services are identified and measured through public performance reporting.
- 6.5 **Accessibility** - to aim to provide services which are accessible to everyone and which meet the differing needs of all its service users. This recognises that equality does not mean providing the same service to all but involves adapting services to meet the different needs of groups of people. This will be reflected in the planning, design and improvement of services.
- 6.6 **Community Planning** – to work in partnership with our Community Planning partners in promoting equality. As part of this work a Community Planning Inequality Strategy is being developed.
- 6.7 **Strategic Links** – to link this policy with the Council’s other strategic equality documents such as:
- **Single Outcome Agreement** – the key strategic document of the Community Planning Partners.
 - **North Ayrshire Council Plan** – the Council’s framework for delivering its commitments
- 6.8 **Consultation** – to consult with and involve minority groups in discussing Council proposals to adapt services and make them more accessible for everyone.
- 6.9 **Working Groups and Committees** - to establish, where appropriate, specialist working groups to examine and recommend actions on specific equality issues.
- 6.10 **Training Strategy** – to ensure that all employees are aware of the Council’s commitment to equalities opportunities, its requirements and obligations in the workplace and when delivering services to support the mainstreaming of equalities throughout their work.
- 6.11 **Human Resources and Organisational Development procedures and practices** - to have procedures, associated guidance and codes of practice that address and implement equal opportunities within the Council, with particular reference to:
- Recruitment, selection and promotion procedures and practices
 - Harassment, bullying and aggression at work
 - Training and induction of new employees
 - Redeployment
 - Maximising Attendance
- 6.12 **Positive Action** - To use positive action as allowed by employment legislation e.g.: encouraging applications for employment from ethnic communities, and positive about disabled people double tick standard.

7. Monitoring and Reviewing

7.1. The Council will monitor the effectiveness of the policy in a number of ways. These are:

- Monitoring comments and complaints received through the Customer Service Centre
- Meetings of the Council's corporate Equality group and other forums, e.g. Multi Agency Diversity Incident Monitoring Group
- The publication of an annual report on Mainstreaming Equalities
- Completing and reviewing of Statutory Performance Indicators and Service Performance Indicators for Equal Opportunities
- The periodic monitoring of the workforce
- Producing and reviewing the statutory information required under the Equality Act, 2010
- Reviewing of Equal Opportunities monitoring forms completed by applicants
- Recording and review of applications for and delegates at training courses
- The number and protected characteristics of employees who have successful in applying for work life balance
- Recording of grievances

8. Dealing with Complaints

8.1. An employee who wishes to make a complaint that they have been discriminated against contrary to the policy can pursue the matter through the Council's Grievance Procedure or specialist complaints procedures detailed in Human Resources Policies and Procedures.

9. Legislative Framework

9.1. Equality of opportunity is regulated by Acts of Parliament and related Codes of Practice. These are detailed in Annex 1.

9.2. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) was created by the Equality Act 2010, and replaces the race, disability and gender equality duties. Technical Guidance is available from the Equality and Human Rights Commission to explain the needs of the PSED, outline the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, and the specific duty regulations and provide practical approaches to complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty in England, Scotland and Wales.

Appendix 1 - LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Acts of Parliament

- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, 1974
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, 1974 (Exemptions) Order, 1975
- Employment Rights Act, 1996
- Employment Relations Act, 1999
- Human Rights Act, 1998
- Part -Time Workers (Prevention of Unfavourable Treatment) Regulations, 2000
- Fixed Term Employees (Prevention of Unfavourable Treatment) Regulations, 2002
- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty (Scotland) 2011

Codes of Practice

- Equal Pay
- Employment
- Services, Public Functions and Associations
- Technical guidance on the PSED
- Schools Technical guidance