



## Highland Council Gender Equality Scheme 2007 - 2010

### Summary

This is a summary of the Highland Council's first Gender Equality Scheme which will be a central part of the Council's wider Corporate Equality strategy.

The Council recognises that promoting equality will improve public services and employment opportunities and aims to ensure that:

- Equal opportunities is central to service provision and employment, and that equal opportunities objectives are included in all its corporate and service plans, and
- That these objectives will be reflected in policies and procedures. Services will be required to integrate equality into the service planning process, putting it at the heart of policy making, service delivery, and employment practices. A planned approach to equality and reports on progress will result in delivering quality services that respond to the needs of communities and individuals.

### The Gender Equality Duty

The Equalities Act 2006 introduced new duties on the public sector to promote gender equality. When carrying out their functions this new duty requires public bodies to pay regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination on the grounds of sex, and
- promote equality of opportunity between men and women

There are additional duties on many public bodies which include the need to publish a Gender Equality Scheme by 29<sup>th</sup> June 2007 and an Equal Pay Policy Statement by 28<sup>th</sup> September 2007. The Council is expected to show in the scheme how it has:

- Consulted with stakeholders in the development of the scheme;
- Taken into account any information it has gathered, for example in relation to employment and education; and
- Considered the need to have objectives to address the cause of any gender pay gap.

## **Highland Council Gender Equality Scheme**

We are committed to work towards gender equality in our service provision and our responsibilities as an employer. Our Gender Equality Scheme sets out how we will meet this commitment and contains outcomes and objectives accompanied by a plan for action. The scheme has been developed involving council services, community planning partners, service users, and voluntary and community organisations. The Scheme also ensures that we continuously monitor and improve the ways in which we deliver services and that the needs and views of women and men and boys and girls are taken into account.

The Council's first Gender Equality Scheme has a number of key objectives that aim to:

- Develop a culture to promote equality between men and women, girls and boys;
- Challenge gender stereotypes;
- Ensure gender equality is considered in all its activities;
- Tackle the potential for unlawful gender discrimination and harassment.

## **Achieving Equality**

The Highland Council's Gender Equality Scheme will help us to meet the requirements of legislation and sets out our plans to improve gender equality for men and women in employment and services delivery. It is about taking steps to promote gender equality for all and ultimately about providing better services for all.

## **Further Information, comments and contact details**

The Council would welcome any comments and feedback on this Scheme. If you wish to comment, or would like a full copy of the Scheme, or to request information in another format or language, please contact:

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