

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Putting equal opportunities into practice depends on every individual being sensitive to different beliefs, outlooks, circumstances and backgrounds of others. Policy can only be implemented effectively if you treat everyone with the respect and dignity that you would expect from others.

To help the Council promote equality and make discrimination a thing of the past, you have a responsibility to:

- challenge others if you witness discriminatory practices.
- strive to ensure everyone is offered the same level of service.
- be aware of your responsibilities in the service you offer.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Equality legislation has been in place since the 1970's and is continually developing. Key equalities legislation includes:

- The Race Relations Act 1976 (amended 2000)
- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- The Equal Pay Act 1970
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- By 2006, legislation against age discrimination will be introduced

HELP AND WHERE TO FIND IT

The Highland Council wishes to make all staff aware that conduct and behaviour contrary to equal opportunities legislation and policy will not be acceptable. Council policies aim to promote an open approach, encouraging individuals to come forward if they are concerned equality of opportunity is not available.

If you wish to discuss an issue relating to Equal Opportunities, please contact:

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES OFFICER

Telephone: 01463 702094
equal.opportunities@highland.gov.uk

PERSONNEL ADVISERS

Inverness / Nairn / Badenoch & Strathspey

01463 724234

Ross & Cromarty / Skye & Lochalsh

01349 868588

Lochaber

01397 707220

Caithness / Sutherland

01955 607716

Headquarters

01463 702070

Information on The Council's Equal Opportunities Policies is available on the Council website:

www.highland.gov.uk

To request this information in an alternative format, e.g. large print, Braille, computer disc, audio tape, or suitable language, please contact :

Equalities Opportunities Officer

Telephone: 01463 702094
equal.opportunities@highland.gov.uk



An Employee's Guide to

EQUAL



OPPORTUNITIES

ACCESS EQUALITY DIVERSITY

PUTTING EQUALITY INTO PRACTICE

Equal opportunities means recognising that there are barriers that can prevent some people from fully participating in community life, in employment and from having equal access to services.

The Highland Council recognises that genuine equal opportunities for all has yet to be achieved and has stated that equal opportunities and prevention of discrimination are fundamental to its goals and objectives. To achieve this, Council members and staff will work towards developing an environment in which all members of the public and employees enjoy equal opportunities in both employment and service delivery.

As such, the Council will integrate equal opportunities into all aspects of its activities and oppose discrimination in any form by:

- Ensuring that equal opportunities operates in employment practices.
- Ensuring that equal opportunities operates in provision of services.
- Influencing partner organisations, contractors and those in receipt of grant aid.
- Promoting equal opportunities within local organisations and the community as a whole.
- Promoting a culture that values diversity and social inclusion.

The Council believes that it is essential to employ people based on merit to run its Services and to strive for equal access to services. As such it will ensure that prejudice, stereotyping and irrelevant factors are not used to exclude potential candidates for jobs, or to stop people doing their jobs to the best of their ability, or to delivering a best value service to all who require it.

IT IS HIGHLAND COUNCIL'S POLICY TO:

- Ensure mainstreaming of equal opportunities issues making them central to service provision and part of everyday activities.
- Develop and foster consultation with communities of interest and ensure that it's partners and contractors are aware of its commitments to equal opportunities.
- Promote and raise awareness of equal opportunities and the unacceptability of discrimination by ensuring the workforce is actively involved in promoting a culture of equality.
- Provide appropriate training and awareness of equal opportunities for all Council staff and Members.

WHAT PRACTICAL ACTIONS WILL THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL UNDERTAKE TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICY?

In Employment:

The Council is committed to:

- Having an appropriate balance in its workforce which reflects the community it serves.
- Monitoring its workforce and acting on inequalities highlighted.
- Introducing flexible working practices.
- Fair pay and working conditions.
- Fair recruitment and promotion criteria.
- Ensuring reasonable adjustments are made for disabled candidates and employees.

In Service Delivery:

The Council is committed to:

- Making sure that Service Plans and reviews of service delivery incorporate and reflect its commitment to equal opportunities.
- Continually improving access to services, premises and information on services for all in its community.
- Improving community participation.