

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Resources Committee
01 Dec 2010

Agenda Item	19
Report No	RES/165/10

Equal Opportunities update Report by Assistant Chief Executive

Summary

The Council's Programme aims to build a fairer and healthier Highland. This report updates members on: the Council's progress in meeting its statutory public sector equality duties; the implementation of the Equality Act 2010; a Scottish Government consultation on proposed new specific duties on the public sector; and the Council's response to recommendations relating to BV2 and equalities.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Highland Council aims to create sustainable communities with more balanced population growth and economic development across the Highlands and to build a fairer and healthier Highland. The Corporate Plan and Single Outcome Agreement reflect these aims and identify Equal Opportunities as a corporate priority, including targets to tackle discrimination, and to promote equality, participation and good relations.
- 1.2 The main provisions of the Equality Act 2010 came into force in October 2010, however new duties on the public sector are proposed to come into force from April 2011 onwards. Until then, the requirements to meet equality duties on the public sector continue to apply to Race, Disability and Gender. Each has a statutory 3 year review cycle and an annual reporting requirement. From April 2011, the scope of a single equality duty in public authorities is due to extend to include age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment.
- 1.3 This is the latest six monthly report on progress to meet the public sector equality duties and the objectives set out in the Council's Equality Scheme. The Equality Scheme brings together three previous separate schemes and begins to identify equality objectives for the extended list of protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010. The Scheme is working draft which will be developed in-line with the new duty due into force in April 2011 and will take account of new guidance and codes of practice being developed by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.
- 1.3 Compliance with the public sector duties is enforced by a single Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) which was established in 2007 and replaces three previous commissions.

2 National Context: The Equality Act 2010

- 2.1 The main provisions of the Equality Act 2010 Act have harmonised previous discrimination law and apply to the 'protected characteristics' of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. It will also extend the scope of

duties on the public sector and will introduce a Single Equality Duty designed to help public authorities promote equality and tackle discrimination. Some areas still under consideration in terms of implementation. In summary, the new general duty will require public authorities to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful conduct
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations across all protected characteristics.

2.2 A [briefing paper](#) has been prepared outlining the key changes of the Equality Act 2010. This has been circulated to managers for information and uploaded on the Equal Opportunities pages of the Council intranet. There will be ongoing work to amend references to previous equality legislation in other documents, and to ensure specific issues are addressed when appropriate

4 Best Value (BV) 2 and equality governance

4.1 In June 2010, Members had considered an Action Plan to address improvement areas identified in the Best Value 2 Audit of the Council. In this regard, the report provided information on the introduction of a cross party Equalities Working Group to improve governance and engagement with equalities issues. The first meeting of the group is due to take place in January 2011.

5 Progress on implementing the draft Single Equality Scheme

5.1 The Council's single equality scheme is implemented as a working draft in preparation for the integrated equality duty on the public sector in April 2011. It sets out the arrangements we put in place to meet the existing race, disability and gender General and Specific duties and starts to plan for the extended duties. Significant work is being undertaken to update available data on equalities at local level and a separate document will complement the scheme. It is proposed that until further guidance is available that the five key objectives remain in place for 2010 – 2011. The revised action plan builds on and continues earlier activities. Where there are common activities across all or some of the protected characteristics these have been combined.

The actions in the Scheme are based on:

- Data on equalities groups and their needs
- Identified gaps through equality impact assessments and self-assessments
- Consultation and involvement of equality groups
- Actions arising from the BV2 audit
- The requirements of the equalities legislation and statutory and non-statutory guidance.

Relevant actions from the previous separate schemes will be rolled forward. A final scheme will be in place by April 2011.

5.2 Progress on equalities is reported in the revised action plan in Appendix 1. Performance is identified using the "RAG" system. Most actions are on track or complete (Green) or showing some slippage but no immediate concern (Amber). There is one item of concern in rolling out and electronic monitoring system for Equality Impact Assessments and the revision of associated guidance, however, work is ongoing to ensure that it will be available for the assessment of Council

budget proposals. Taking account that there are likely to be further adjustments to the action plan, there are a small number of actions “to be confirmed”. Further narrative on progress to promote equality is provided in Appendix 2.

6 Duties on the Education Authority

- 6.1** There are similar specific duties on the Council as an Education Authority and a similar approach will be taken to bring together and streamline equality objectives in Education and to prepare a Single Equality Scheme for Education. This will be prepared, implemented and monitored by a working group of Education staff

7 Areas for future development for Highland Council

- 7.1** Equal Opportunities remain a corporate priority for Highland Council in terms of compliance with the public sector duties. To meet the requirements of the duties the following future developments have been identified:
- Further consultation will be carried out on the Single Equality Scheme which could involve the use of the Citizen’s Panel.
 - A Single Equality Scheme to be developed by the Education Service.
 - Further progress to ensure that equalities monitoring and profiling is carried out, where relevant, in the delivery of services.
 - Continued progress is required across the Council to evidence that our policies, functions and practices are being assessed for their impact on equality issues.

8 Resource implications

- 8.1** There are no resource implications arising from this report.

9 Legal implications

- 9.1** This report addresses the Council’s equality duties to report on progress and review its equality objectives and to comply with legislation.

10 Equality implications

- 10.1** This report is provided to meet the reporting requirement of the current public sector duties to report on progress.

11 Climate Change implications

- 11.1** There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

Recommendation:

Members are asked to:

1. Note the implementation of the Equality Act 2010
2. Note the introduction of a cross party working group for equality
3. Note the progress in delivering current equality objectives and action plan in Appendix 1 and 2.

Signature:

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive

Author: Rosemary Mackinnon, Equal Opportunities Officer, Policy and Performance Team

Date:

Appendix 1

G	Complete or on track
A	Some slippage but not concern
R	Significant slippage, or cause for concern
A	Amended or removed

Single Equality Scheme: Draft Action Plan 2010 – 2011, summary of progress December 2010

It is proposed that, until further guidance is available on the new public sector duties, the five key objectives from the previous three schemes will remain in place for 2010 – 2011. The revised action plan builds on and continues earlier activities. Where there are common activities across all or some of the protected characteristics these have been combined. Further work will be undertaken to streamline and prioritise actions and relevant actions from the previous separate schemes will be rolled forward.

Key Objective 1: Deliver accessible services and to treat customers fairly and with dignity and respect

	Measure or action	Equality Strand	Lead Service	Lead Officer	TYPE: Action, Indicator, Report	R A G	Frequency of collection/next update
	Policy development ensures that equality issues are considered						
1.1	100% of all new and reviewed Council policies, functions and practices are screened for relevance to equalities (and full assessment done where relevant)	All	CEXO	HoPP	PI	A	quarterly

1.2	Complete adaptation of accessibility guidance material for use by Council staff on good practice and procedures to meet language and accessibility needs	D,R	CEXO	HoP&P	Action	A	Dec-10
1.3	Develop Equalities monitoring guidance for staff.	All	CEXO	HoP&P	Action	R	Dec-10
1.4	Develop a system to gather evidence to provide an equality analysis of service use and customer experience	All	CEXO	HoPP	Action	G	Dec 2010
1.5	Collate and benchmark national and local demographic information relevant to equality.	All	CEXO	HoPP	Action	G	April 2011 then annually
	Services provided directly and service procured, commissioned and grant-aided are accessible and treat our customers with dignity and respect						
1.6	Relevant procurement contracts and grant awards include with an equal opportunities statement	All	Finance	Procurement Manager	PI	G	ongoing
1.7	Review of voluntary sector funding (service level agreements and grant awards) to take account of equality duties and appropriate statements included.	All	CEXO	HoP&P	Action	G	Dec-10
1.8	Aim to increase the number of disabled people represented in national sports squads.	D	ECS	Disability Sports Officer	Action		Ongoing
	Ensure our premises, facilities, services and information are accessible						
1.9	Review options to ensure services are accessible. Adjustments (other than physical) are identified and acted upon using checklist/guidance to be developed for Service Managers.	R, D		Service Managers	Action		Action TBC
1.10	Approach to land use planning should be deployed through new development plans - accessibility and suitability of sites and design standards and housing mix; approach includes consultation.	Disability, Age	P & D	Head of Planning & Building Standards		G	Dec 10

1.11	Develop protocols for prioritising applications for people with disabilities and to ensure that contact with disabled people making applications is appropriate to their needs and that applications for consent for urgent adaptations are processed quickly.	D	P & D	Head of Planning & Building Standards	Action	G	Dec-11
1.12	1. Web site will strive to maintain a minimum of Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) AA standard and work towards AAA standard. Site is reviewed regularly for accessibility. 2. The Council will seek accreditation from the Shaw Trust. Any accessibility issues identified and considered for action	D	CEXO	Public Relations Manager	Action	G	1. Report to QPR 2. Dec 2010
1.13	Sustain the service provided through bi-lingual Community-Based Language Assistants (CBLAs) to work with families who do not have English as a first language.	R	ECS	Head of CLL	Action	G	Dec 10
1.14	Bids successful for EU funding for a range of work-streams related to migration.	R	CEXO	Head of P & P	Action	G	Dec 10
1.15	Monitor and review provision of T & I services on a regular basis through quarterly reports.	R	CEXO	Head of P & P	Report	G	Quarterly
1.16	Monitor and report on the multi-agency Gypsy/Traveller Action Plan	R	H & P	Director	Report	G	Annually
1.17	More accessible premises will be selected as Polling Places and a targeted improvement plan will be drawn up following a physical inspection of all polling places by Ward Managers and will involve consultation with groups representing the interests of people with a disability.	D	CEXO	Elections Officer	Action	G	Dec-10
1.18	Implement the Disabled Persons Parking Act	D	TEC	HoR&CW	Action		Oct-10
1.19	Improve accessible transport facilities	D	TEC	HoT&I	Action	G	ongoing
	Addressing disadvantage						
1.20	Increase the number of customers reached with money advice and welfare rights	All	CEXO	HoP	PI	G	Dec 2010

1.21	Increase the number of older people (and others in care) who can be supported in their own homes	A, D	SW	HoCC	PI	G	Dec 2010
1.22	We will enable people with Learning Disabilities to progress through personal development, training and education to careers and volunteering opportunities by working together with our colleagues in Education to improve access to Further Education and Training	D	SW	Learning Disability Network			Ongoing
1.23	Increase in the number of buildings that meet the Audit Scotland Statutory Performance Indicator "percentage of public service buildings that are suitable and accessible to disabled people".	D	H & P	Director	SPI	G	annual
1.24	Increase the number of new learners supported with English language tuition	R	ECS	HoCLL	PI	G	annual
1.25	Increase the number of inward migrants and their families, who have limited English language, to settle in to the Highlands - CBLAs.	R	ECS	HoCLL	PI	G	annual
1.26	Increase the number of houses suitable for older people and disabled people	A, D	H & P	HoH	PI	G	Dec 10
1.27	Women and men are supported through Early Years activities as identified in the Children's Service Plan (FHC3).	G	ECS		Action	G	Dec 10
	We will reduce isolation for people with sensory impairment by: 1. supporting 150 people to access signing classes in Highland in each of the next three years 2 increasing the numbers of interpreters trained in Highland over the next three years 3 providing deaf awareness training aimed at employers and service providers 4 providing improved access to low vision aids and services.	D	SW	HoO, CJS and Central Services,	Action		Annual review

	We will increase numbers of adults in need into jobs in each of the next three years.	D	P&D	Linked to National Employability Outcome			Action TBC
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Key Objective 2: Ensure that our employment practices and policies are fair and accessible

	Measure or action	Equality Strand	Lead Service	Lead Officer	TYPE: Action, Performance Indicator, Report/	R A G	Frequency of collection/next collection
	Review current employment Policies and amend to ensure they meet the new Act	All	CEXO	HoP			
2.1	Review the Council's equal pay policy statement and report on progress	Gender	CEXO	HoP	Action	G	every 3 years
2.2	Review relevant personnel policies in relation to the requirements of the Equalities Act and identify changes required	All	CEXO	HoP	Action	G	Dec 2010
2.3	Maintain Double Tick symbol and monitor implementation	Disability	CEXO	HoP	Action	G	annual
	Ensure that equalities are included in PDP, management and induction training	All	CEXO				
2.4	Review equal opportunities training and recruitment and selection training to reflect and address issues raised by employees and the Equality Act 2010	All	CEXO	ED manager	Action	G	Dec 2010
2.5	All lead officers should be trained in R & S before undertaking lead officer role	All	CEXO	ED manager	PI		Action tbc
2.6	Design and introduce network meetings for HC and partner employees	Sexual orientation, Disability	CEXO	RM/KZ	Action	G	at least one event per year

2.7	Introduce reporting system to Directors on management module undertaken by all members of "All Council Managers" list	All	CEXO	Cathy Christie	Action	Action tbc
2.8	Continue with Women in Management programme, review activities and amend as appropriate	Gender	CEXO	Cathy Christie	Action	G Dec 10
	Measure, understand and learn from current outcomes in employment practice	All	CEXO			
2.9	Analyse equalities workforce information in all occupational groups in the Council and review priority objectives	Age, disability, gender, ethnicity	CEXO	John Batchelor	Action	A Apr-11
2.10	Publish annual report on Equal Opportunities Monitoring in the workplace	Age, disability, gender, ethnicity	CEXO	John Batchelor	Report	A Dec 10
2.11	Annual increase in the number and proportion of women in management in the Council: a) Increase % of head and depute head teachers who are women in secondary schools b) Increase % of head and depute head teachers who are women in primary schools c) Increase % of highest paid 2% earners among Council employees that are women d) Increase % of highest paid 5% earners among Council employees that are women	Gender	CEXO	John Batchelor	PI	G annual
2.12	1. Collect relevant equality monitoring data from bi-annual employee survey. 2. Collect relevant data relating to employees' attitudes to equality 3. Analyse relevant data to allow action points to be identified	Gender, disability, age, ethnicity	CEXO	Cathy Christie	Action	G 2010 then biannual

	Monitor use of Child Care Vouchers scheme	Gender			report	annual
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Key Objective 3: Increase engagement, involvement and representation of equality groups

	Measure or action	Equality Strand	Lead Service	Lead Officer	TYPE: Action, Performance Indicator, Report	R A G	Frequency of collection/next update
	Review our practices against the standards of engagement for all consultation and involvement						
3.1	Template will be introduced for Community Engagement will measure compliance with Standard of National Engagement.	all	CEXO	Corporate Managers CEXO	action	G	From March 2010
3.2	Ensure all relevant staff are trained in the Standards of Community Engagement	All	CEXO	Corporate Mangers	action	G	Review annually
3.4	The Council's Public Performance Survey continues to ask about facilities for disabled people. Aim to increase public satisfaction	D	CEXO	CEXO Head of Policy and Performance	action	A	Removed due to Citizen's Panel approach
3.5	Continue to monitor and analyse the Public Performance Survey by age, disability, gender and ethnicity	A,D, G, R	CEXO	HoP&P	action	G	Annually
	Ensure all policy development offers opportunities for equality groups to contribute						
3.7	Agree and develop range of methods for reaching equality groups and individuals in the Citizen's Panel methodology to gauge their	All	CEXO	Head of P & P	action	G	Dec-10

	views on services.						
3.8	Refresh and maintain database of local equality organisations on behalf of the Council and Community Planning Partners	All	CEXO	Head of P & P	action	G	Apr-11
3.9	Equality groups are involved in policy development where appropriate and where indicated by EQIAs.	age	ECS	HYV	action	A	Ongoing
3.10	Youth Voice and Pupil Councils to encourage a representative balance in their structures which will promote future public participation.	All	ECS	Director ECS	action	G	Ongoing
3.11	Undertake involvement of equality groups in partnership activities as appropriate	All	CEXO	EOO & HCCP Equality and Diversity group	action	G	Annually

Key Objective 4: Create a culture in the Council that promotes equality, and demonstrates that discrimination and harassment on equality grounds will not be tolerated

	Measure	Equality Strand	Lead Service	Lead Officer	TYPE: Action, Performance Indicator, Report	R A G	Frequency of collection/next update
	Awareness raising and training for staff and members						
4.1	Raise awareness of the requirements of our equality duties and to promote the cultural change required through training and awareness raising.	All	CEXO	ACE	Action	G	Dec 2010
4.2	Year on Year increase in the number of staff attending Equal Opportunities and Diversity training and Disability awareness	all	CEXO	ED manager	PI	G	twice yearly

	training						
4.3	Equal opportunities training is included in training for all elected members.	All	CEXO	ED manager	Action	A	Dec 10
4.4	Equalities issues included a minimum of twice per year in the Big Picture	All	CEXO	PR manager	action	G	twice a year
4.5	Twice yearly partnership equality and diversity newsletter circulated round local agencies, organisations and community groups.	all	CEXO	RM	Action	G	Nov 2010, then twice yearly
4.6	Awareness raising through publications, campaigns and other media	All	CEXO	HoP&P	Action	G	Dec 10
	Continue to contribute to the Highland Community Planning Partnership Equality and Diversity group and work with other partners						
4.7	Liaise with the Equality and Human Rights Commission, other local authorities and community planning partners to identify good practice		CEXO	HoP&P	Action	G	ongoing
4.8	Continue to attend Scottish Councils Equalities Network meetings.		CEXO	HoP&P	Action	G	4 times per year
4.9	To meet the Equal Opportunities requirements of Community Planning, partner agencies to work together where appropriate to create efficiencies, share good practice and mainstream equality in Community Planning.	All	CEXO & partners	HoP&P	objective	G	4 times per year
	Continue to work with partners to improve the recording of hate incidents						
4.11	Continue to work with partners to raise awareness of the occurrence and impact of hate incidents and to encourage and improve the recording of hate incidents	All	CEXO	HoP&P	Action	G	Dec 2010
4.12	Ultimately, reduce the number of recorded hate crimes. Racist incidents (forms recorded - reported to PF as crime) Other hate crimes (incident forms recorded - reported to PF as crime)	All	CEXO	HoP&P	PI	G	Monthly NC
4.13	Monitor reported incidents and analyse information to identify	All	Partners	HoP&P	Action	A	Dec 2010

	trends and improve practice in responding to incidents						
	Implement the Violence Against Women Strategy						
4.14	Continue to play an active role in the Highland Public Services partnership Violence Against Women Training Consortium and to work with partners to tackle and address violence against women and to raise awareness of gender based violence and the impact on women, children and families through training and guidance	G	SW	HoOCJ	objective	G	Dec 2010
4.15	Actions to protect children and young people from the effects of violence against women including domestic abuse are monitored through FHC3	G	SW	HoOCJ		G	Dec 2010
4.16	Increased numbers of Council staff participating in partnership VAW training and awareness raising	Gender	SW	HoOCJ	PI	G	Dec 2010
4.17	Implement the Council's policy for staff affected by gender based violence	G	CEXO	HoP	action	G	Dec 2010
4.18	Examine funding sources and mechanisms for ensuring long term sustainability of training and wider VAW work in Highland	G	HPSP		Action		Action TBC
4.19	Develop approaches for capturing feedback from staff and service users who have experienced violence and harassment.	Gender	SW	HoOCJ	Action	A	Action TBC

Key Objective 5: Demonstrate that the Council continues to meet its public sector duties

	Measure or action	Equality Strand	Lead Service	Lead Officer	TYPE: Action, Indicator, Report	R A G	Frequency of collection/next update
	Produce single equality scheme and review monitoring and reporting mechanisms in line with new duties						

5.1	Prepare for the introduction and requirements of the Equality Bill and the single equality duty on the public sector.		CEXO		objective	G	April 2011
5.2	Single Equality Scheme developed, published and implemented with targets reviewed					A	Dec 2010
5.3	Council to agree mechanism for members to more fully engage with the equalities agenda	All	CEXO	ACE	action	G	Dec 2010
	Revise all policies and equality impact assessment (EQIA) process in line with the new duties and embed action planning within Service Plan process						
5.4	EQIA processes to be reviewed and developed to work with new impact assessment process	All	CEXO	HoP & P	Action	R	Dec 2010
5.5	Ensure that all Services embed equalities in service and corporate priorities within service planning process	All	All	Directors	Action	A	April 2011
5.6	Ensure that CP partnership work programmes reflect and respond to equality issues by supporting EQIA across SOA local outcomes work	All	CEXO & partners	CPP E & D group	Action	A	Dec 2010
5.7	Ensure all relevant procurement contracts comply with an equal opportunities statement.	All	Finance	Head of Procurement	PI	G	Dec 2010
5.8	Produce single equality scheme for the Education Authority and review monitoring and reporting mechanisms in line with new duties	All	ECS			A	April 2011
	Dissemination of information to support the single equality scheme internally, externally to continue to work with partners. Investigate mechanisms to more fully engage with members on equality issues.	All	CEXO				
5.9	Progress Report at Senior Management Team and Council		CEXO	CE	Action	G	Dec 2010
5.10	Produce robust baseline information on equality in Highland using a range of sources	all	CEXO	HoP&P	Action	A	April 2011

5.11	Review equalities information on Council and Highland Life website		CEXO	HoP&P		G	Dec 2010
	Develop performance framework for the single equality scheme						
5.12	Introduce new electronic system to record, monitor and support annual progress report at Senior Management Team and Council		CEXO	HoP&P		A	TBC
5.13	Develop workplan for the Equalities Working group	All	CEXO	ACE	Action	A	quarterly
5.14	Regular meetings of the partnership Equality and Diversity Group and actions agreed and reported to HPSP performance board.	All	CEXO & partners	NHSH	Action	G	Dec 2010

Appendix 2

Highland Council: Summary of progress to promote Equality

The Council has five key equality objectives, based on information gathered during the implementation and review of its previous three individual schemes (Race, Disability and gender) and from stakeholder involvement. These are to:

- **Deliver accessible services and to treat customers fairly and with dignity and respect**
- **Ensure that our employment practices and policies are fair and accessible**
- **Increase engagement, involvement and representation of equality groups**
- **Create a culture in the Council that promotes equality, and demonstrates that discrimination and harassment on equality grounds will not be tolerated**
- **Demonstrate the continued progress of the Council to meet its public sector duties.**

Areas of progress to highlight against the action plan of the working draft scheme include:

Deliver accessible services and to treat customers fairly and with dignity and respect

- The Council has a target to ensure its public caller premises are accessible for disabled people as defined under the Audit Scotland Statutory Performance Indicator. In November 2010, 90.5% of premises were accessible, an improvement from 24.9% in 2006. This work is supported by identified resources and a continued programme of audits and planned improvements, and involves the local Disability Access Panels.
- The Council continues to provide and improve communication support for people who are Deaf and hard of hearing through its work with Deaf Action, the Deaf Communication Project and Deaf Services in Social Work
- The contract for provision of interpretation services for community languages was renewed in March 2009 and use of services continues to be monitored. Both use and costs of services have increased annually since provision was put in place in 2006:

Interpretation Services	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11 (Sept)
No of requests	108	232	329	608	226
Costs (£)	5,325	10,633	18,303	30,805	9913

- [Protocols](#) have been developed for prioritising applications for people with disabilities and to ensure that contact with disabled people making applications is appropriate to their needs and that applications for consent for urgent adaptations are processed quickly.
- The number of new learners supported with English Language tuition was sustained at 1412 in 2009/10 compared to a baseline of 758 in 2007/8 (1539 in 2008/9).
- Inward migrant families, who have limited English supported by Community Based Language Assistants increased from 285 in 2007/8 to 391 in 2009/10.
- The Council's Programme is committed to secure an increase of 600 houses suitable for older people and people with disabilities. 372 completions and a further 130 on site during 2009/10. This brings the cumulative total to 618 completions since 2007/8 exceeding the target set for 2010/11 of 600.
- The Council regularly monitors the accessibility of its website. Currently, Sitemorse have placed us 5 out of 429 Councils in relation to our accessibility.
- The Council has monitored and reported on the multi-agency Gypsy/Traveller Action Plan
- The number of buses with low floor access for vulnerable persons has increased from 112 in 2007/8 to 120 in 2008/9 and remains at 120 in 2009/10

Ensure that our employment practices and policies are fair and accessible

- The Council has retained its award of the Positive About Disabled People "Two Ticks" symbol.
- Information collected from the Employee Survey has been analysed by age, disability, ethnicity and gender. Additionally, the Employee Surveys in 2007 and 2010 asked about perceptions of the Council as a fair employer and experiences of discrimination. Analysis in 2010 compared to 2007, shows that a smaller proportion of staff perceive that there are barriers to employment on equality grounds, and also that a smaller proportion report have felt disadvantaged at work on equality grounds.
- Since 2004, over 700 lead staff have attended Recruitment and Selection Training which includes equality requirements.
- Highland Council supports the Highland Diversity Awards organised by the Highland Employers Network and is a partner in the network
- An event for disabled employees and line managers was held with partner agencies to raise awareness of disability in the workplace and investigate interest in establishing a disabled employee's network. An initial meeting has taken place of a proposed network.

Equal Pay

The Council has successfully implemented a revised pay strategy for employees covered by the Scottish Joint Council for Local Government

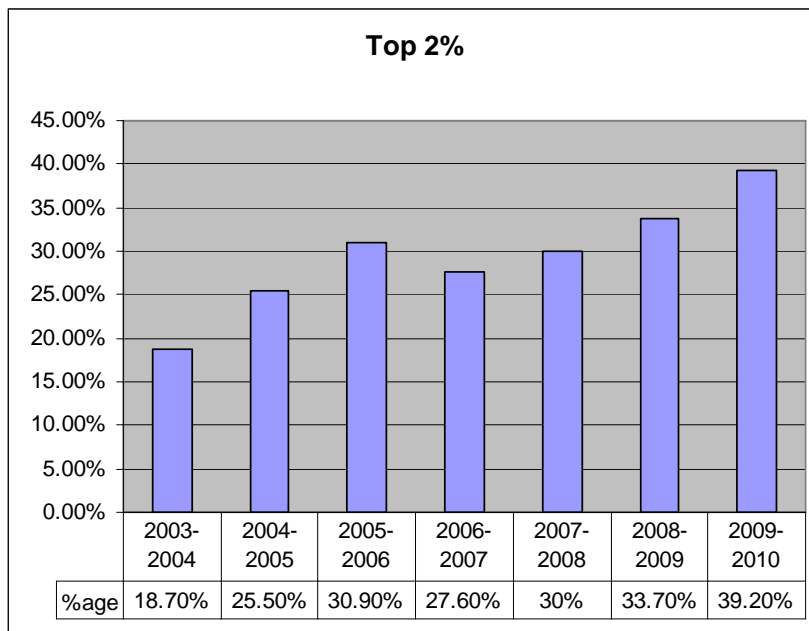
Employees conditions of service that ensures equal pay for work of equal value and Harmonised and Non-Discriminatory Terms and Conditions for employees covered by the Scottish Joint Council for Local Government Employees conditions of service

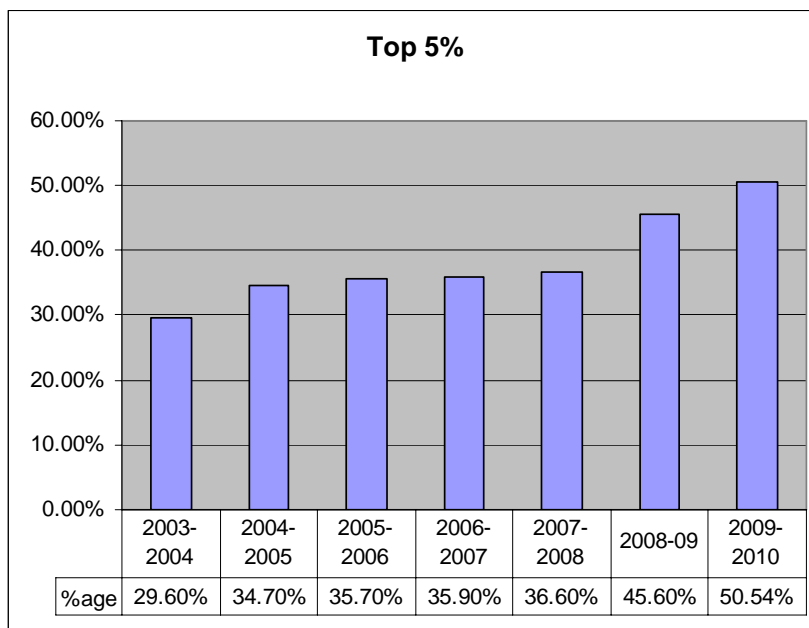
There will be ongoing equal pay work to

- Apply the agreed job sizing arrangements for the grades and pay of teachers
- Harmonise and implement the pay and conditions of service for craft operatives
- Respond to equal pay claims against the Council
- Monitor pay statistics and review progress

Women Managers:

The SPI shows a continues increase in the proportion of women in the highest paid posts in the Council. There has also been an improvement in the comparative ranking against other authorities.





The number of women manager in the top 2% of earners within the Council has increased from 27.6% in 2006/7 to 39.2% in 2009/10. Significant improvement has been made for the top 5% earners where women represent 50.54% in 2009/10 (38.8% in 2008/9) compared with 35.9% in 2006/7.

Increase engagement, involvement and representation of equality groups

- Ward Forums are held in accessible venues
- A review has been undertaken of Polling stations towards ensuring accessible venues are used in elections.
- Highland Youth Voice continues to be the main vehicle for engagement with young people in Highland.
- Ongoing commitment by Highland Council policy-makers to enter into dialogue with a range of equality groups in developing a strategy in the area of Community Care – Stakeholder Forums
- Development in Social Work of “[Good Practice Guide – Enabling Service User and Carer Participation](#)”
- Streetscape works in Inverness, Dingwall and Nairn have involved local Disability Access Panels.
- The annual public performance survey carried out by The Highland Council in June/July of this year attracted a 67% response rate from the new Citizens’ Panel, the majority of whom are satisfied with Council services. Having screened the survey approach and questionnaire for its impact on equalities groups, improvements were made to the questionnaire and an analysis by equalities group was commissioned. Far more information is available on the responses by different group within the community especially around satisfaction with services, as noted in the appendix to the attached report. Too few responses were received from ethnic minority groups to enable separate analysis; however notable differences are:

- People unable to work, with disabilities or not owning their home had more contact with the Council over the past year compared to the survey population as a whole.
- As their most recent contact a higher proportion of men than women contacted the Council to make a complaint.
- People aged over 75 years and people with disabilities are more likely to make contact by visiting an office or Service Point and are least likely to contact by using computer. They are also less likely to favour using more telephony and internet services instead of face to face contact.
- Older people (75 years+) place greater importance on library services and pavement maintenance.
- Older people (75years+) and women rate contact with the Council more positively in terms of helpfulness of staff, staff understanding what is wanted and overall satisfaction with service given.
- Treating all residents fairly is a quality more highly valued for people with disabilities, while providing value for money is less important.
- People resident for less than 5 years in the area tend to have higher levels of satisfaction.

A culture that will promote equality and tackle discrimination and harassment

- The 2008 and 2009 Public Performance Surveys have made much more detailed analysis of data by age, gender and disability and noted throughout the report where there are significant differences.
- With Community Planning Partners, development of an on-line reporting system and associated support to report and record Hate Incidents. Supporting activities included a branded campaign; involvement of disability and other equality groups; and recruitment, guidance and training of third party reporting organisations. This action was a direct result of feedback during the development of the first disability equality scheme. There has been a decrease in the number of reported hate crimes and incidents in 2009/10 to 75 reported crimes and 104 reported incidents. However while there has been a slight reduction between 2008/9 and 2009/10 there remains an expectation that figures will increase until a confidence level in reporting is reached.
- Training is an area of activity that cuts across all equality strands. The Council offers a range of training related to Equality and Diversity. A one day Equality and Diversity training course delivered by the Council's Employee Development team is central to this work. There is currently a target of 300 staff a year, and over 2000 staff have attended the training since 2004. Since April 2010, 130 staff have attended equalities training.
- The Council hosted the first local celebration of LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) History month in February 2010 organised by a group of older LGBT people and supported by Age Scotland and

Terrence Higgins Trust. As a direct result the Rainbow group has developed and delivered training sessions for care staff in Highland.

- The Council has supported the development of a local inter faith group in the Inverness areas. The group is involved with the Scottish Inter Faith Council in the launch of Scottish Inter faith week 2010 which takes place in the Council Chamber on 28th November.
- A newsletter promoting equality and diversity activities in Highland has been produced by the Council on behalf of community planning partners and circulated widely to community groups and within agencies.
- On 23rd November Highland Child Protection Committee is organising their annual conference with a key focus on diversity.
- The levels of community acceptance of new residents were not surveyed in the 2009/10 Public Performance Survey due to the budget consultation exercise. In 2008/9, 82% of respondents reported that they were accepting of people coming to live in the Highland to some or a great extent.

Partnership Violence Against Women Strategy: *Progress update – Nov 2010*

The Highland Community Planning Partnership is continuing to make significant progress in fulfilling the commitments set out in the “Highland Violence Against Women Strategy, 2008-11”. The following provides a brief update of progress:

- Multi-agency guidance on working with women & children affected by Violence Against Women (VAW) has been developed and will be launched shortly.
- A Directory of Support Services for Women in Highland has been produced and will be published on the web.
- A policy to support staff respond to Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse has been adopted by NHS Highland and The Highland Council.
- The model for training in Highland has been highlighted in the national VAW training strategy as a very positive approach that reflects excellent practice.
- Work on involving women and children in the further development and implementation of the strategy and related service delivery is developing well.
- There are good working links between the VAW partnership and with homelessness services and Child Protection services. Highland Council Housing Services are in the process of updating their assessment forms to include enquiry of domestic abuse, to ensure they are providing appropriate support for those women experiencing domestic abuse.
- Funding was secured from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission to produce promotional materials for the VAW services across Highland in the most commonly spoken community languages.
- VAW curricular programmes have been developed for Highland schools to further prevention work at younger ages.

Demonstrate that the Council continues to meet its public sector duties.

- Twice yearly reports are made to Resources Committee on progress with equalities; in addition activities are reported in the strategic documents including SOA2 and the Corporate Plan.
- The Council has commissioned a database to record monitor and report on Equality Impact Assessments being undertaken.