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Equality and Diversity  
Policy 2013 - 2015

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Improvement and HR

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**ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**  
**EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

If you would like this document in another language or format, or if you require the services of an interpreter, please contact us.

Ma tha sibh ag iarraidh an sgrìobhainn seo ann an cànan no riochd eile, no ma tha sibh a' feumachdairn seirbheis eadar, feuch gun leig sibh fios thugainn.

Gaelic

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać ten dokument w innym języku lub w innym formacie albo jeżeli potrzebna jest pomoc tłumacza, to prosimy o kontakt z nami.

Polish

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

Hindi

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

Urdu

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਫਿੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੈਟਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Punjabi

本文件可以翻譯為另一語文版本，或製作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要傳譯員的協助，請與我們聯絡。

Cantonese

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Mandarin

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## INTRODUCTION

Our Council is forward looking and ambitious, continuously improving our relationship with our partners, customers and employees to ensure that we deliver the right services, by the best people, in the best way.

Our vision is 'Realising our Potential Together' and this is underpinned by our values:

- We involve and listen to our customers and communities
- We take pride in delivering best value services
- We are open, honest, fair and inclusive
- We respect and value everyone

We recognise that individuals are different and we need to ensure there is equality among our diverse communities. Achieving equality is a driver for improving services to all members of the community and is integral to the Council's overall performance. Equality is about people having equal life chances, equal dignity and worth, and equal participation. We continue to strive to achieve this.

As the major employer in the area, we recognise the need for an Equality and Diversity Policy. We are committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity amongst our workforce. Our aim is that our workforce will be truly representative of all sections of society and each employee feels respected and able to give of their best.

We carry out equality impact assessments for policy and service delivery to make sure no-one is adversely impacted.

This Equality and Diversity Policy describes how the council will better-address the needs of all its employees and all members of the communities it serves.

As part of the council's commitment to equality we continue to welcome your views on how we are doing and how we can improve.

**Council Leader**

**Chief Executive**

**ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**

**EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

## **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all employees of Argyll and Bute Council. The overall intention is to create a working environment where all forms of discrimination or oppressive behaviour are unacceptable.

The council's equality and diversity policy is underpinned by key principles, focused on equality, stated in our corporate plan.

Our key equality principles are that:

- no-one is disadvantaged because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation
- the differences between people are valued and good relations between groups are promoted
- people are treated fairly and with equal respect
- informed assessments are made on the impact of policies and services
- people are involved in the decisions that affect them and encouraged to participate in public life.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

- The policy will promote equality and improve customer service, to make sure that no-one is disadvantaged because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. We will involve people in the decisions that affect them and not make assumptions about their needs.

- The policy will provide equity and fairness for all employees in our employment. No employee should suffer discrimination because of their age, disability, gender including sex and gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin, religion or belief.
- The Council will endeavour to ensure that no employees are disadvantaged in any way by the imposition of conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable.
- We will ensure that all elected members, employees, customers and service users are treated equally and fairly, with respect, without victimisation, prejudice or discrimination to ensure that no individual receives less favourable treatment than any other individual on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation
- All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
- If any employee or customer considers that he/she is suffering or has suffered unequal treatment on the grounds stated above, he/she can make a complaint which will be dealt with in accordance with the agreed procedures.
- This statement has been prepared in consultation with the recognised trade unions in order to outline the standards that should be applied to and expected of all employees regarding the implementation of equality and diversity within the Council.

The Council offers services through a range of methods to ensure that we meet the needs of all our customers.

The Policy will be applied across the organisation and with others who deliver services in partnership or on our behalf. Our Corporate Plan emphasises the commitment we have to promoting

equality and this is reflected in both our equality principles and within our corporate objectives.

## **POSITIVE BENEFITS OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

- **Improving our ability to deliver appropriate services and meeting different needs:** A diverse team understands diverse customers and communities. Argyll and Bute Council is a provider of services and, as such, is committed to equality of provision, access and benefit in the delivery of those services irrespective of age, disability, gender including sex and gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief.
- **Social justice and responsibility:** The policy will allow the organisation to take greater responsibility for the welfare of employees as well as the customers and communities we serve.
- **Attraction, retention and development of staff:** The policy can give job applicants and employees confidence they will be treated with dignity and respect;
- **Enhanced individual and organisational performance:** The policy will aid the motivation of employees which in turn should enhance individual and overall performance.
- **Helping to reduce complaints of discrimination:** The policy is key to helping employees and the organisation comply with minimum standards of behaviour;
- **Managing risk and reputation:** The Policy can help minimise the risk of legal action being taken against employees and/or the organisation by demonstrating that complaints of discrimination are taken seriously and that all reasonable steps have been taken to prevent it.



## **RESPONSIBILITY OF THE AUTHORITY AS AN EMPLOYER**

All elected members, senior management, line managers and employees share the responsibility to create an environment where we can make measurable progress on equality and diversity and where we genuinely respect each individual's differences.

### **Council Commitment**

To ensure the equality and diversity policy is effective, the council makes the following commitments:

- To make equalities a part of everyday working practice.
- To promote the objectives of the policy for the benefit of all employees, job applicants, and the overall population of the Argyll and Bute Council area.
- To make available or provide training and guidance for all employees and line managers to ensure an understanding of their responsibilities under the law and the benefits of equality and diversity under the council's equality and diversity policy.
- To monitor, on a regular basis, the composition of the workforce and job applicants in order to evaluate the progress of the policy.
- To monitor, on a regular basis, customer information including perceptions, satisfaction and complaints, in order to evaluate the progress of the policy.
- To examine and regularly review procedures and criteria and make appropriate changes where they are found to be actually, or potentially, discriminating.

## **INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Each individual has a responsibility for this commitment when engaging with elected members, employees and service users. Individual roles are outlined below:

### **Elected Members, the Chief Executive, Executive Directors and Heads of Service are responsible for:**

- answering to the public for what the council does and achieves in terms of equality and diversity
- providing leadership direction and support to ensure that the council's equality and diversity policy is fully implemented by managers and employees through service planning
- ensuring all managers and staff participate in learning and development on how to operate the policy
- ensuring that equality impact assessments are completed for all new and revised policies and functions to minimise or eliminate negative impacts on people
- working with partners to help deliver the policy
- involving the local community in the decision-making process
- providing a scrutiny role to ensure compliance with the equality and diversity policy

### **Line Managers are responsible for:**

- ensuring all staff are made aware of the policy
- ensuring all staff participate in learning and development on how to implement the policy
- promoting the aims of the policy
- ensuring their own working practices reflect the principles of the policy
- taking prompt action to stop any discriminatory behaviour
- not discriminating, for example, as line managers or as persons responsible for selection decisions in recruitment,

promotion, redeployment, redundancy or training or when deciding the outcome of disciplinary/grievance hearings

- completing equality impact assessments for all new and revised policies and functions to minimise or eliminate negative impacts on people
- working with partners to help deliver the policy, for example by planning joint training events
- ensuring the principles of equality and diversity are applied in all dealings with members of the public
- gathering and using employee and customer information, as appropriate, to ensure that the policy is complied with and any necessary improvements made.

**Employees are responsible for:**

- being familiar with the content of the policy and its procedures and that they behave in accordance with this policy
- treating each other with dignity and respect
- not harassing, victimising, or intimidating colleagues, other employees and job applicants on any grounds
- challenging any discriminatory behaviour
- not inducing or attempting to induce other employees or unions or management to practice discrimination, for example, by refusing to work with a person who has a disability or has undergone gender reassignment
- ensuring the principles of equality and diversity are applied in all dealings with members of the public
- participating in learning and development associated with these policies
- participating in equality impact assessments to minimise or eliminate negative impacts on people
- co-operating with measures introduced by management to ensure there is equal opportunity and non-discrimination including providing personal information in regard to age, disability, gender including sex and gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national

origin, religion or belief. This will enable the Council to monitor the workforce profile and to identify and address any issues which may be related to discrimination.

Employees must help to ensure equality, assist in preventing discrimination and help to protect themselves and the council from allegations of discrimination. All employees should understand that any discriminatory behaviour is likely to be regarded as serious misconduct which will normally result in disciplinary action being taken.

**Trades Union Representatives are responsible for:**

- working with the council to raise awareness of and promote the importance of the principles of this policy
- offer support and advice to their members regarding this policy

The Council recognises that trade unions, in representing employees, make a valuable contribution to equality. We will continue to work closely with trade unions to develop our equality and diversity policy and action plans.

**Providers of goods and services to and for the council are responsible for:**

- complying with the equality and diversity policy
- complying with the legal duties

**MONITORING AND REVIEWING THE POLICY**

Measures relating to the policy / the action plan will be monitored by {corporate scorecard} {service scorecard} {equality scorecard} by the {HR Board} {SMT} {Council}

Equality issues identified in self-assessments will be included as areas for improvement in service improvement plans.

It is important to review our equality and diversity policy to measure our progress in achieving our agreed aims. We will keep

the policy under review to ensure that it meets the needs of the council as an employer and service provider. The policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years.

## **RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

This policy relates to policies and procedures for:

- Recruitment and Selection
- Learning and Development
- Disciplinary and Grievance
- Dismissal and Redundancies
- Equality Impact Assessment
- Complaints

All of these related documents are on the Hub.

Further information about the Equality Act 2010 is available from:  
Scottish Government: [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)  
Equality and Human Rights Commission:  
[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)