

## Equality Strategy

Pathfinder House  
St Mary's Street  
Huntingdon

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# Equality Strategy

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## Further information

For further information about the Council's Equality Strategy or if you would like to make any comments or clarify any statement please contact:

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## 1. Introduction

The Council is responsible for providing all members of our communities with high quality, value for money services in a fair way.

This comprehensive equality strategy formalises our commitment to quality, effectiveness and efficiency in our services underpinned by equality for users of those services and the employees who deliver them. We have enhanced our Equal Opportunities and Anti-discrimination Policy to reflect new government initiatives and legislation and our goal to seek continuous improvement in all our services. This strategy lays out how we intend to meet our commitment through action planning, consultation, assessment, monitoring needs and how we intend to evaluate and measure our performance.

Equal opportunities, fairness in the workplace, good quality services and the well being of our communities are all linked, and therefore this strategy looks at equalities in a number of ways - the council as an employer, the council as a provider of services and the council in its wider community leadership role.

This strategy provides a framework and common approach for dealing with equality issues, however it recognises that discrimination cannot always be dealt with as a single issue and different strands particularly those relating to race, disability, age and gender may require separate consideration.

## 2. Equality Standard for Local Government

The Equality Standard for Local Government is a framework that sets up a way of working within local authorities, which makes equality a central issue to all aspects of the council's activities.

Using five levels, the Council will introduce a comprehensive and systematic approach to dealing with equality which covers all aspects of service delivery, employment and community leadership.

By applying the standard the Council will:

- ❖ Develop a systematic framework for ensuring equality;
- ❖ Meet our obligations under the law;
- ❖ Integrate equalities policies and objectives with Best Value;
- ❖ Encourage the development of anti-discrimination practice appropriate to local circumstances;
- ❖ Provide a basis for tackling institutionalised discrimination;
- ❖ Provide a framework for improving performance over time.

The Council will be able to assess progress based on 5 levels:

- ❖ Level 1: Commitment to a comprehensive Equality Strategy

- ❖ Level 2: Assessment and Consultation
- ❖ Level 3: Setting equality objectives and targets
- ❖ Level 4: Information systems and monitoring against targets
- ❖ Level 5: Achieving and reviewing outcomes

### **3. Discrimination**

Discrimination can occur in many ways and the council considers discrimination to be broadly defined as:

*To discriminate is to treat a person more or less favourably on the basis of race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin, religion, culture, gender, marital, parental or property status, disability, age or sexual orientation, or other such category that is irrelevant to the individual's right to receive fair and equal treatment.*

Discrimination on the basis of race, nationality, colour, ethnic origin, gender, age and disability is unlawful. Discrimination can be direct or indirect. Direct discrimination is deliberate. Indirect discrimination is where an act or failure to act, intentionally or inadvertently, has a disproportionate impact on a particular group.

Institutional discrimination was highlighted in the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (Macpherson, 1999), the report found that institutional discrimination could affect the way organisations operate and the way services are provided. The report provided a definition of institutional racism, which has been expanded to include other forms of institutional discrimination, such as age, disability and gender.

The terms used here and elsewhere in this Policy are further detailed in the Glossary of Terms included at Appendix 1.

### **4. Statement of intent**

The Council is committed to providing equality in the way services are delivered and accessed, when determining future plans, policies and strategies and in the employment of staff. We are committed to listening to all sections of the community and will endeavour to provide services that meet the needs of all our communities.

The Council will establish, deliver and keep under review a programme of actions to achieve our commitments. The Action Plan is reproduced at Appendix 4.

#### **Our guiding principles**

Setting objectives, targets and goals:

The Council will seek to fully comply with the requirements of all relevant legislation (see Appendix 3 ).

Review, evaluation and improving:

National standards and good practice in equality, equal opportunities and anti-discrimination will guide the Council. This strategy and action plan will be reviewed as necessary and at least annually.

Compliance, measurement and performance:

The Council will measure the performance and outcomes of the Equalities Strategy by using national performance and develop our own internal performance measures that enable rigorous review and help to ensure continuous improvement.

Defining and understanding discrimination:

The Council recognises that it is important to be guided by national definitions of discrimination and harassment and seeks to achieve national performance targets.

The Council recognises that discrimination can be both direct and indirect.

Resources

Resources have been allocated and earmarked for improving equality practices.

## **5. Target Groups**

For each area where there is a statutory responsibility to tackle discrimination – race, disability and gender – we have produced a scheme outlining our approach for ensuring equality. Appendix 3 contains details of relevant legislation.

The Council has recognised the following key target groups:

### **Disability**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) aims to end the discrimination which many disabled people face. The act gives disabled people rights in the areas of:

- ❖ Employment
- ❖ Access to goods, facilities and services
- ❖ Buying or renting land or property

The council recognises that disabled people are one of the most disadvantaged groups in society and that there is a common misconception that disabled people are only those with mobility difficulties or sensory

impairments, such as deafness or blindness. In reality, people with a wide range of impairments or recurring health conditions can be disabled.

The Council is committed to its obligations under the DDA and will take reasonable steps to provide and adapt premises, facilities, equipment and services wherever possible to meet the needs of disabled people.

Our Disability Equality Scheme is appended.

## **Gender**

The Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 and 1986 makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of sex or marriage.

The Council recognises that people can be discriminated against on the basis of their gender or care responsibilities and that this discrimination can occur in the workplace and in service delivery; and may hold back women and men from fulfilling their potential.

The Council is committed to ensuring that women and men are encouraged to apply for all jobs equally and we will not unfairly discriminate against either sex with regards to access to employment, promotion and development opportunities. We are committed to developing and implementing family friendly employment practices and worklife balance initiatives.

The Council is committed to its obligations under the Sex Discrimination Acts, which cover employment matters, unlawful discrimination, the provision of goods, facilities and services to the public. The Council also recognises its obligations under the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999.

Our Gender Equality Scheme is appended.

## **Race**

The Race Relations Act 1976 as amended gives the Council a duty to promote race equality, eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity.

The Council recognises that people can be discriminated against because of their race, ethnicity, colour or nationality and that this can lead to reduced opportunities and life chances.

The Council also recognises that there is a small Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) community within Huntingdonshire, approximately 2.3% of the total population, but understands that the issues faced by these communities will be the same as those faced by similar communities elsewhere. The Council accepts the need for greater engagement with these communities to ensure that services and opportunities are readily available to all residents.



The Council acknowledges the recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and has adopted definitions of a racist incident and institutional racism. Our Race Equality Scheme is appended.

## **6. The Council as an employer**

The Council is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity for all our employees throughout their employment cycle – from application, selection, training and development and promotion. We seek to maintain an environment where no employee or prospective employee is subject to discrimination or harassment.

### **Our commitments to you:**

We will:

- ❖ monitor personnel and employment procedures to ensure they are fair
- ❖ seek to attract a wide range of applicants from our local community for posts at all levels in the organisation
- ❖ endeavour to ensure our workplace is free from discrimination and harassment
- ❖ offer flexible working arrangements (flexitime/home-working where appropriate)
- ❖ strive to provide an accessible environment for people with disabilities
- ❖ offer relevant training and development for employees on a fair and equal basis
- ❖ ensure employees are fully aware of our Equality Strategy, what it means for them and what responsibilities it entails
- ❖ ensure new employees are briefed on the Equalities Strategy at their induction.
  
- ❖ provide training on Equality

### **Measuring our progress:**

As part of our commitment to maintaining and improving our performance we will:

- ❖ record and annually report upon the composition of all council employees by grade, age, gender, disability and ethnic group.
- ❖ monitor, record and annually report upon the composition of all applicants for council vacancies by age, gender, disability and ethnic group.
- ❖ record and annually report upon the take up of council run training courses by grade, age, gender, disability and ethnic group.

- ❖ evaluate the level of satisfaction with training courses by grade, age, gender, disability and ethnic group.
- ❖ record and annually report upon the level of flexible working by number of full time, part time, job sharers and those able to work from home in terms of grade, age, gender, disability and ethnic group.
- ❖ record and annually report upon internal promotion (including increments given at appraisals) by grade, age, gender, disability and ethnic group.
- ❖ record formal complaints by employees.
- ❖ keep records of advertisements for vacancies by date advertised, place advertised and whether the vacancy was advertised internally and externally at the same time.
- ❖ provide equal opportunities training and measure take up and evaluation by grade, age, gender, disability and ethnic group.
- ❖ introduce exit questionnaires.

## 7. Council as a Provider of Services

The Council recognises the need to provide an equal and fair service to all. We recognise and value diversity and seek to deliver services that reflect the requirements and needs of local communities.

### **Our commitments to you:**

We will:

- ❖ make services available to all that need them and deliver them in an appropriate way.
- ❖ seek to avoid discrimination when designing, delivering or charging for services.
- ❖ seek to ensure that information about services is published as widely as possible and in such formats as will encourage awareness in all customers and residents.
- ❖ frequently review arrangements for access to Council premises.
- ❖ assess and review alternative ways of making service delivery more accessible.
- ❖ ensure that equality issues are considered as part of the Service Planning process.
- ❖ seek to ensure that when working with others, our partners adopt the same approach to equality.
- ❖ incorporate equal opportunities into our procurement arrangements when not expressly prevented by legislation or statutory guidance.

### **Measuring our progress:**

- ❖ review and report upon on our communications activities annually.
- ❖ complete a review of access to all Council premises and information points, report on and publish our performance and improvement plan on a five yearly basis.
- ❖ ensure that equality issues are evaluated as part of the Best Value and Service Review programme.

## **8. The Council as a Community Leader**

The Council is committed to ensuring that no Council policy discriminates directly or indirectly against any groups in our community. We will review our policies, strategies and plans to ensure that they are fair.

### **Our commitments to you:**

We will:

- ❖ consider equal opportunities as part of each policy deliberation and service strategy.
- ❖ consult with relevant sections and groups within the community to ensure that a policy or strategy does not have a discriminatory impact on that group.
- ❖ carry out impact analysis where a reasonable request is made.
- ❖ we will promote and contribute to improving the awareness of equal opportunities in the community as part of our community governance.
- ❖ use national guidelines and definitions to inform our practices.

### **Measuring our progress:**

As part of our commitment we will report upon our performance in the following ways:

- ❖ the consultation strategy will have an equal opportunities statement and all consultation undertaken will comply with the equal opportunity statement contained in this strategy. The representativeness of consultation will be considered in all survey reports.
- ❖ service strategies will be reviewed on an annual basis. Equality will be included as a key element of our service planning process and will be part of Best Value and service reviews.

- ❖ corporate, cross-cutting and multi-agency strategies will contain a statement to demonstrate that consideration has been given to equality.
- ❖ we will maintain a glossary of terms and definitions, informed by national guidelines as part of our Equality Strategy. The Strategy will be reviewed annually and amendments will be submitted to the Cabinet.

## 9. Communicating the Equality Strategy

All new employees will be given a copy of the Equalities Strategy on commencing employment. Existing employees will have a copy of the policy with their Personal Development Record, copies of the policy should be freely available throughout Council facilities, including policy statements on relevant notice boards, the Intranet and the Council's website. Furthermore, reference to the Strategy will be made in relevant documents, such as recruitment packs and advertisements.

- ❖ The Equalities Strategy will be considered as a fundamental part of the Council's communications and consultation strategy.
- ❖ A training programme is currently in place, all members of staff will be required to attend at least one equalities training course.

## 10. Monitoring, review and evaluation

The Council will report performance annually in the form prescribed by the Audit Commission. The definitions of the Audit Commission Performance Indicators for 2002/03 relating to equal opportunities are reproduced at Appendix 5.

Equal opportunity and anti-discrimination policies will be considered on each occasion where service strategy, standards and delivery are reviewed. In addition the Council will keep itself informed of best practice in equal opportunities and anti-discrimination policy. It will seek to implement a policy that corresponds with national standards as well as working with other interested groups, be they employees, community or national.

## 11. Responsibility for the Equalities Strategy

All Councillors, employees and others who work on behalf of The Council have a duty to carry out the requirements and responsibilities outlined in this strategy. Particular responsibilities include:

- ❖ **Members** of the Council support this strategy and will work towards the promotion of equal opportunities in all Council activities and other community activities.

#### ❖ **Chief Executive**

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Equality Strategy for the council as a whole.

#### ❖ **Directors**

Have a duty to promote the Equality Strategy throughout their directorates. They also have responsibility for the implementation, review, monitoring and performance of any equality schemes or requirements specific to a service that falls within their directorate.

#### ❖ **Services**

Heads of Service, Activity managers and Team leaders are responsible for overseeing the implementation of equalities in the day to day delivery of their service, and will have a duty to ensure that equalities performance data is collected and provided to the Head of Policy.

#### ❖ **Employees**

All employees have a responsibility to implement the policy and work towards the provision of services that meet the goals and objectives of the policy, subject to appropriate training which will be provided as necessary.

#### ❖ **Head of Policy**

The Head of Policy will ensure that the Strategy is regularly reviewed and maintained, and will evaluate and verify performance data that has been provided.

## **12. Making a complaint:**

### **Employees of the District Council:**

- ❖ Employees should discuss concerns informally with their team leader, Head of Service or a member of the Personnel Division, or they can make a formal complaint using the Council's Grievances Procedure. For a copy of the procedure you can contact the Personnel Division or look on the Intranet site.

### **Customers, residents and members of the community:**

- ❖ The Council has an established procedure for dealing with formal complaints and this is available to all members of the public. In certain circumstances members of the public can take their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.



# APPENDIX 1: Policy Statements

## Disability Equality Scheme

### Huntingdonshire District Council Disability Equality Scheme

#### Introduction

The Council recognises that discrimination against people with disabilities can take many forms and can result in people not having access to the services they require. The Council is therefore committed to its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and will take reasonable steps to adapt premises, facilities or equipment wherever possible to meet the needs of disabled people. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) aims to end the discrimination which many disabled people face. This Act gives disabled people rights in the areas of:

- ❖ Employment
- ❖ Access to goods, facilities and services
- ❖ Buying or renting land or property

#### Functions and Policies

The act defines a disabled person as someone with 'a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. The Council recognises that disabilities can be wide ranging and will include sensory and mental impairment as well as mobility difficulties.

#### Strategic Aims for Equality

Our Equalities Strategy formalises our commitment to quality, effectiveness and efficiency in our services, underpinned by equality for users of those services and our employees who deliver them.

Our corporate plan – Huntingdonshire 2000 plus – and our community strategy –Shaping the Future of Huntingdonshire – both express the importance we place on equality. This commitment will be reinforced as we revise our plans and, with others, develop a Community Strategy for Huntingdonshire.

The Council's Medium Term Objectives complement our work to promote equality for people with disabilities specifically –

- ❖ MTO-01: to identify and remove barriers which prevent access or take-up of services
- ❖ MTO-03: providing services effectively, efficiently and economically to meet local needs
- ❖ MTO-14: developing communities to which people feel they belong
- ❖ MTO-15: increased participation in electoral processes
- ❖ MTO-16: improved representation of local people and local interests.

#### Access to Information and Services

We will ensure that information about the Council and our services is available to all sections of our communities and that services are accessible to everyone. To do this we will –

- ❖ consider access to information and services when assessing and monitoring services
- ❖ make sure our staff have the necessary skills, information and understanding to provide services and information equally and fairly

- ❖ ask local communities what services and information they need and how they want them provided.

## Assessment

In a three year cycle we will make a detailed assessment of all our functions and policies, both formal and informal, to ensure that, where relevant, the way that we carry out those functions –

- ❖ eliminates discrimination on the grounds of disability;
- ❖ promotes equality of opportunity

Specifically, we will examine each function and policy in detail according to the priority given to it to identify whether there is evidence that they are affecting groups differently. To do this we will –

- ❖ use monitoring to collect and analyse information about disability to assess fair access to and use of services
- ❖ use national guidance and definitions to inform our assessments
- ❖ use historical data, including any available evidence, complaints or public concerns, survey and research findings,
- ❖ compare our policies and the way we carry out our functions with other local authorities and public bodies.

## Consultation

We will assess and consult on the likely impact of new or revised policies.

Specifically, we will undertake clear, representative and proportionate consultation, using a range of appropriate methods, which effectively engage disabled customers, staff and disability organisations.

## Monitoring Arrangements

We will monitor and analyse our policies and functions for any adverse impact on the promotion of equality. We will use a range of methods to do this –

- ❖ statistical analysis
- ❖ satisfaction surveys
- ❖ random or targeted surveys
- ❖ qualitative research

We will incorporate consideration of the duty into review programmes, including Best Value reviews, service planning processes and performance management systems. In accordance with the Best Value Performance Indicators we will collect and publish data on how we conform to the Equality Standard for Local Government.

An annual review of the effectiveness this scheme and our progress will be undertaken and reported to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery and Resources) and Cabinet and included in our Best Value Performance Plan.

## Using the Results

We will use the results of assessment, consultation and monitoring to ensure we avoid disability discrimination. The information will be used to understand and meet the needs of people with disabilities.



## Publishing Results

The results of our assessments, consultation and monitoring and reviews of this scheme will be published in a manner that is appropriate, accessible and proportionate.

We will use existing publication methods to publish a summary of our assessments, consultations, and monitoring exercises, including Council newsletters, our Website and Best Value Performance Plan.

A copy of the report compiled after each assessment will be available in full on our Website ([www.huntsdc.gov.uk](http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk)) or on request from the Policy Division, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN 01480 388032.

## Disability Equality in service delivery

The Council will take reasonable steps to:

- ❖ change practices, policies or procedures which make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of our services
- ❖ provide a reasonable alternative method of making services available to disabled people where a physical feature makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of them;
- ❖ provide an auxiliary aid or service if it would enable, (or make easier for) disabled people to make use of its services.

In order to ensure that services effectively meet the needs of disabled customers, the Council will:

- ❖ regularly review whether facilities and services are accessible and effective, and take appropriate action;
- ❖ encourage consideration of the accessibility of services to disabled people as an integral part of the design stage.

## Disability Equality in employment

The Council will make reasonable adjustments if their employment arrangements or premises place disabled people at a substantial disadvantage compared with non-disabled people. These reasonable adjustments may include some of the following:

- ❖ making adjustments to premises

For example, structural or other physical changes such as: widening a doorway, providing a ramp or moving furniture for a wheelchair user; relocating light switches, door handles or shelves for someone who has difficulty in reaching; providing appropriate contrast in decor to help the safe mobility of a visually impaired person.

- ❖ altering the person's working hours

For example, this could include allowing the disabled person to work flexible hours to enable additional breaks to overcome fatigue arising from the disability, or changing the disabled person's hours to fit with the availability of a carer.

- ❖ allowing the person to be absent during working hours for rehabilitation, assessment or treatment

For example, if a person were to become disabled, the employer might have to allow the person more time off during work, than would be allowed to non-disabled employees, to receive physiotherapy or psychoanalysis or undertake employment rehabilitation.

- ❖ acquiring or modifying equipment

For example, an employer might have to provide special equipment (such as an adapted keyboard for a visually impaired person or someone with arthritis), or an adapted telephone for someone with a hearing impairment or modified equipment

- ❖ providing a reader or interpreter

For example, this could involve a colleague reading mail to a person with a visual impairment at particular times during the working day or, in appropriate circumstances, the hiring of a reader or sign language interpreter.

- ❖ providing supervision

For example, this could involve the provision of a support worker, or help from a colleague, in appropriate circumstances, for someone whose disability leads to uncertainty or lack of confidence.

### **Recruitment**

The council will not discriminate against a disabled person, for example:

- ❖ in the arrangements made for determining who should be offered employment;
- ❖ in the terms on which the disabled person is offered employment; or
- ❖ by refusing to offer, or deliberately not offering, the disabled person employment.

The council will avoid discrimination in, for example, specifying the job, advertising the job, and the processes of selection, including the location and timing of interviews, assessment techniques, interviewing, and selection criteria.

### **Arrangements for Training**

The Council has commissioned a training and development programme for its employees to promote an understanding of equality and its implications for meeting the Council's goals and objectives. The Council will communicate to all staff on the provision of services, which ensures the inclusion of disabled people, this will address both the business opportunities with regard to disabled customers as well as the legal obligation of individuals and the organisation as a whole. Disability awareness training will be provided for staff.

Senior management and employees who will be directly responsible for this Scheme will receive additional specific training.

The Council's induction programme for new employees will include initial training on the importance of equality

### **Complaints**

*Complaints about how we are meeting our duties or other complaints about equality will be dealt with through our established complaints procedure, which is available to all members of the public.*

## **Gender Equality Scheme**

**Huntingdonshire District Council**

### **Gender Equality Scheme**

#### **Introduction**

To meet the duty to promote sex equality, both in the provision of services and as an employer, we have produced this scheme, which describes how we intend to fulfil our commitment. The 'one-size-fits-all' approach to the provision of public services does not always reflect the diversity and the needs and requirements of all communities. The council will consult communities to identify the different needs of men and women.

#### **Functions and Policies**

Promoting sex equality has an immediate impact on the provision of the whole range of our functions and policies.

## Strategic Aims for Equality

Our Comprehensive Equality Strategy formalises our commitment to quality, effectiveness and efficiency in our services, underpinned by equality for users of those services and our employees who deliver them.

Our corporate plan – Huntingdonshire 2000 plus – and our community plan – Shaping the Future of Huntingdonshire – both express the importance we place on equality. This commitment will be reinforced as we revise our plans and, with others, develop a Community Strategy for Huntingdonshire.

The Council's Medium Term Objectives complement our work to promote gender equality, specifically –

- ❖ MTO-01: to identify and remove barriers which prevent access or take-up of services
- ❖ MTO-03: providing services effectively, efficiently and economically to meet local needs
- ❖ MTO-14: developing communities to which people feel they belong
- ❖ MTO-15: increased participation in electoral processes
- ❖ MTO-16: improved representation of local people and local interests.

## Access to Information and Services

We will ensure that information about the Council and our services is available to all sections of our communities and that services are accessible to everyone. To do this we will –

- ❖ consider access to information and services when assessing and monitoring services
- ❖ make sure our staff have the necessary skills, information and understanding to provide services and information equally and fairly
- ❖ ask local communities what services and information they need and how they want them provided.

## Assessment

We will need to make a detailed assessment of all our functions and policies, both formal and informal, to ensure that, where relevant, the way that we carry out those functions – eliminates sex discrimination  
promotes equality of opportunity

Specifically, we will examine each function and policy in detail according to the priority given to it to identify whether there is evidence that they are discriminating on the grounds of gender. To do this we will –

- ❖ use monitoring to collect and analyse information about gender to assess fair access to and use of services.
- ❖ use national guidance and definitions to inform our assessments.
- ❖ use historical data, including any available evidence, complaints or public concerns, survey and research findings, ethnic data and census results or general or specific research to assess the effectiveness of our services in promoting sex equality.
- ❖ compare our policies and the way we carry out our functions with other local authorities and public bodies.

## Consultation

We will assess and consult on the likely impact of new or revised policies.

Specifically, we will undertake clear, representative and proportionate consultation, using a range of appropriate methods, which effectively engage both men and women to ensure that any new policy does not discriminate on the grounds of gender.

## Monitoring Arrangements

We will monitor and analyse our policies and functions for any adverse impact on the promotion of gender equality. We will use a range of methods to do this -

- ❖ statistical analysis
- ❖ satisfaction surveys analysed by gender
- ❖ random or targeted surveys
- ❖ qualitative research

We will incorporate consideration of the duty into review programmes, including Best Value reviews, service planning processes and performance management systems. In accordance with the Best Value Performance Indicators we will collect and publish data on how we conform to the Equality Standard for Local Government.

An annual review of the effectiveness this scheme and our progress will be undertaken and reported to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery and Resources) and Cabinet and included in our Best Value Performance Plan.

## Using the Results

We will use the results of assessment, consultation and monitoring to ensure we avoid or minimise adverse impacts on gender equality. The information will be used to understand and meet the needs of men and women.

## Publishing Results

The results of our assessments, consultation and monitoring and reviews of this scheme will be published in a manner that is appropriate, accessible and proportionate.

We will use existing publication methods to publish a summary of our assessments, consultations, and monitoring exercises, including Council newsletters, our Website and Best Value Performance Plan.

A copy of the report compiled after each assessment will be available in full on our Website ([www.huntsdc.gov.uk](http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk)) or on request from the Policy Division, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN 01480 388032.

## Gender Equality in Service Delivery

The Council is committed to providing quality services equitably to all people with differing needs because of gender, we will take action to ensure that our services are equally accessible to all people in the district.

We will work with the community , other agencies and the voluntary sector in order to achieve this aim.

Specifically, we will –

- ❖ we will provide services free from unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation
- ❖ we will expect each employee to promote gender equality in service delivery, each employee has a duty not to discriminate as embodied in the Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- ❖ under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, we have a responsibility to ensure when we provide goods, facilities or services to the public or a section of the public, we do not unlawfully discriminate against a person who seeks to obtain or use those goods, facilities or services:
  - by refusing or deliberately omitting to provide them with goods, facilities or services; or
  - by refusing or deliberately omitting to provide him/her with goods, facilities or services of the same quality, in the same manner and on the same terms as would normally be provided to other members of the public in the same circumstances
- ❖ any breaches of this duty will be taken seriously and if appropriate will be fully investigated under the Council's disciplinary procedure.
- ❖ Each service will develop, monitor and review appropriate service delivery practices, which will help to avoid direct and indirect discrimination where these are not already in place.
- ❖ Our corporate procurement strategy and monitoring will reflect the Council's commitments to equality and fairness.

## Gender Equality in Employment

To help us achieve our commitments and duty we will carry out monitoring of our employees throughout their employment cycle – from application to leaving. This monitoring will ensure that the Council maintains equal opportunities for applicants and employees in the workplace and will enable us to measure the progress in promoting equality of opportunity and achieving a representative workforce.

Specifically, we will –

- ❖ monitor personnel and employment procedures to ensure they are fair;
- ❖ seek to attract a wide range of applicants from our local community for posts at all levels in the organisation;
- ❖ endeavour to ensure our workplace is free from unfair discrimination and harassment
- ❖ offer flexible working arrangements (flexitime/home-working where appropriate);
- ❖ offer relevant training and development for employees on a fair and equal basis;
- ❖ ensure employees are fully aware of our comprehensive Equalities Strategy, what it means for them and what responsibilities it entails
- ❖ ensure that employees are briefed on the comprehensive Equalities Strategy at their induction

The gender monitoring of employees will be combined with the monitoring of other data in our information systems to builds on current practices to promote equal opportunity. In accordance with the Best Value Performance Indicators we will collect and publish data on the top 5% of earners that are women.

The gender monitoring of employees will be reported annually to the Council's Employment Panel and included in our Best Value Performance Plan.

## **Arrangements for Training**

The Council has commissioned a training and development programme for its employees to promote an understanding of equality and its implications for meeting the Council's goals and objectives. The programme will incorporate the requirements and benefits of meeting the duty and our commitment to promoting gender equality.

Senior management and employees who will be directly responsible for this Scheme will receive additional specific training.

The Council's induction programme for new employees will include initial training on the importance of equality and specifically promoting gender equality to meeting the Council's objectives.

## **Complaints**

*Complaints about how we are meeting our duties or other complaints about gender equality will be dealt with through our established complaints procedure, which is available to all members of the public.*

## **Race Equality Scheme**

### **Huntingdonshire District Council Race Equality Scheme**

#### **Introduction**

The Council has a duty to promote race equality. We are also committed to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and good race relations. This scheme describes how we intend to fulfil this positive commitment and to meet our duty.

#### **Functions and Policies**

We have identified our functions and formal policies and given them a priority depending on their relevance to race equality. We will use this review (appended) as a programme to assess all our functions over the next three years, as follows –

<b>Year</b>	<b>Priority</b>
2002/03	1
2003/04	2
2004/05	3

By functions we mean the full range of the Council's activities and services provided in accordance with our duties and powers. By policies we mean formal and informal decisions, procedures, plans, strategies and objectives about how we carry out our duties and use our powers.

## Strategic Aims for Equality

Our Equal Opportunities and Anti Discrimination Policy formalises our commitment to quality, effectiveness and efficiency in our services, underpinned by equality for users of those services and our employees who deliver them. In 2002/03 it is proposed to enhance this policy into a comprehensive equalities strategy, which will embrace race equality.

Our corporate plan – Huntingdonshire 2000 plus – and our community strategy – Shaping the Future of Huntingdonshire – both express the importance we place on equality. This commitment will be reinforced as we revise our plans and, with others, develop a Community Strategy for Huntingdonshire.

The Council's Medium Term Objectives complement our work to promote equality and good race relations, specifically –

- ❖ MTO-01: to identify and remove barriers which prevent access or take-up of services
- ❖ MTO-03: providing services effectively, efficiently and economically to meet local needs
- ❖ MTO-14: developing communities to which people feel they belong
- ❖ MTO-15: increased participation in electoral processes
- ❖ MTO-16: improved representation of local people and local interests.

## Access to Information and Services

We will ensure that information about the Council and our services is available to all sections of our communities and that services are accessible to everyone. To do this we will –

- ❖ consider access to information and services when assessing and monitoring services
- ❖ make sure our staff have the necessary skills, information and understanding to provide services and information equally and fairly
- ❖ ask local communities what services and information they need and how they want them provided.

## Assessment

In a three year cycle we will make a detailed assessment of all our functions and policies, both formal and informal, to ensure that, where relevant, the way that we carry out those functions –

- ❖ eliminates racial discrimination
- ❖ promotes equality of opportunity; and
- ❖ promotes good relations between persons of different racial groups.

Specifically, we will examine each function and policy in detail according to the priority given to it to identify whether there is evidence that they are affecting racial groups differently. To do this we will –

- ❖ use ethnic monitoring to collect and analyse information about people's racial and ethnic origins to assess fair access to and use of services
- ❖ use national guidance and definitions to inform our assessments
- ❖ use historical data, including any available evidence, complaints or public concerns, survey and research findings, ethnic data and census results or general or specific research to assess the effectiveness of our services in promoting race equality
- ❖ compare our policies and the way we carry out our functions with other local authorities and public bodies.

## Consultation

We will assess and consult on the likely impact of new or revised policies.

Specifically, we will undertake clear, representative and proportionate consultation, using a range of appropriate methods, which effectively engage people from different racial or ethnic communities to ensure that any new policy does not discriminate or harm good race relations.

## Monitoring Arrangements

We will monitor and analyse our policies and functions for any adverse impact on the promotion of race equality. We will use a range of methods to do this -

- ❖ statistical analysis of ethnic data
- ❖ satisfaction surveys analysed by racial group
- ❖ random or targeted surveys
- ❖ qualitative research

We will use the same ethnic classification system for ethnic monitoring as that used in the 2001 Census, except where research is targeted at specific communities where more detailed information might be required.

We will incorporate consideration of the duty into review programmes, including Best Value reviews, service planning processes and performance management systems. In accordance with the Best Value Performance Indicators we will collect and publish data on how we conform to the Equality Standard for Local Government.

An annual review of the effectiveness this scheme and our progress will be undertaken and reported to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery and Resources) and Cabinet and included in our Best Value Performance Plan.

## Using the Results

We will use the results of assessment, consultation and monitoring to ensure we avoid or minimise adverse impacts on race equality and race relations. The information will be used to understand and meet the needs of different racial groups and to make new arrangements or change arrangements so that our policies and the way we carry out our functions promote race equality. Any new arrangements or changes we make will be relevant to the nature of the policy or function and its possible effect on the public, particularly any racial group.

## Publishing Results

The results of our assessments, consultation and monitoring and reviews of this scheme will be published in a manner that is appropriate, accessible and proportionate.

We will use existing publication methods to publish a summary of our assessments, consultations, and monitoring exercises, including Council newsletters, our Website and Best Value Performance Plan.

A copy of the report compiled after each assessment will be available in full on our Website ([www.huntsdc.gov.uk](http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk)) or on request from the Policy Division, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN 01480 388032.

Where appropriate the Council will consider using or commissioning new methods of publication which are proportionate to achieving race equality.



## Employment

To help us achieve our commitments and duty we will carry out monitoring of our employees throughout their employment cycle – from application to leaving. This monitoring will enable us to measure the progress in promoting equality of opportunity and achieving a representative workforce.

Specifically, we will –

- ❖ collect ethnic monitoring data for existing employees, applicants for employment, for training, promotion, performance assessment, for staff involved in grievance or disciplinary procedures and for employees who leave
- ❖ analyse the data to find any patterns of inequality or practices which might harm race relations
- ❖ take any action necessary to remove barriers or discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good race relations
- ❖ publish the results of our monitoring each year.

The ethnic monitoring of employees will be combined with the monitoring of other data in our information systems to build on current practices to promote equal opportunity. In accordance with the Best Value Performance Indicators we will collect and publish data on the percentage of our employees from minority ethnic communities compared with the percentage of the economically active minority ethnic community population in Huntingdonshire.

The ethnic monitoring of employees will be reported annually to the Council's Employment Panel and included in our Best Value Performance Plan.

## Arrangements for Training

The Council has commissioned a training and development programme for its employees to promote an understanding of equality and its implications for meeting the Council's goals and objectives. The programme will incorporate the requirements and benefits of meeting the duty and our commitment to promoting race equality.

Senior management and employees who will be directly responsible for this Scheme will receive additional specific training.

The Council's induction programme for new employees will include initial training on the importance of equality and specifically promoting race equality to meeting the Council's objectives.

## Complaints

Complaints about how we are meeting our duties or other complaints about race equality will be dealt with through our established complaints procedure, which is available to all members of the public.



## APPENDIX 2: Glossary of Terms

### General Definition of Harassment

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 is the main legislation dealing with harassment. Section 1 of the Act states that:

- ‘ A person must not pursue a course of conduct
- (a) which amounts to harassment of another, and
  - (b) which he/she knows or ought to know amounts to harassment of the other’.

Section 7 defines ‘harassment’ as including a ‘course of conduct’ causing alarm or distress and states that this must involve conduct of this nature on at least two occasions.

### Definition of Direct Discrimination

Means treating one person less favourably than another on racial grounds. Direct discrimination is unlawful under the Race Relations Act 1976. This definition can be expanded to include other forms of discrimination such as age, disability and gender.

### Definition of Indirect Discrimination

Means that a rule or condition which is applied equally to everyone can be met by a considerably smaller proportion of people from a particular racial group; the rule is to their disadvantage; and the condition or rule cannot be justified on non-racial grounds. All three conditions must apply. Again this definition can be expanded to include other forms of discrimination such as age, disability and gender.

### Definition of Racial Harassment:

The European Commission has a Code of Practice on Sexual Harassment, there is however no equivalent for racial harassment but the Code of Practice on Sexual Harassment can be usefully extended to racial harassment.

- ❖ Racial harassment is unwanted conduct of a racial nature, or other conduct based on race affecting the dignity of women and men at work.

### Definition of a Racist Incident:

Recommendation 12 of the Stephen Lawrence enquiry defines a racist incident as;

- ❖ any incident, which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.

The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry of institutional racism has been amended to include other forms of institutional discrimination:

*‘the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, ethnic origin, gender, disability or age. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination though unwitting prejudice, ignorance,*

*thoughtlessness and stereotyping which disadvantage on the grounds of ethnicity, gender, disability or age.'*

**Victimisation:**

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another person because he/she has referred to or has asserted their rights under the Sex Discrimination Act, the Race Relations Act or the Equal Opportunities Policy. This would cover both those bringing cases under the legislation/policy or acting as a witness in any investigation of a complaint.

**Ethnic Monitoring**

Means the process of collecting and analysing information about people's racial or ethnic origin to see whether all groups are fairly represented.

**Racial Group**

Means a group of people defined by their race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins.

## Appendix 3: Equalities Legislation

### **Equal Pay Act:**

The Equal Pay Act 1970 makes it unlawful for any individual to be treated less favourably than a person of the opposite sex who works for the same employer. This is in relation to pay and other terms and conditions of employment, where they are employed in work that has been rated as equivalent under a job evaluation scheme.

### **The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 exists to protect people from discrimination due to past convictions. A person convicted of a criminal offence can become rehabilitated after a defined period of time, through a conviction becoming 'spent', which allows the person to be treated for most purposes as if the conviction never occurred.

Convictions involving custodial sentences of over 30 months cannot become 'spent'. For some professions and areas of employment the law requires disclosure of all convictions including those deemed to be spent.

### **Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay Acts:**

The Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) came into force in 1965; it was amended and broadened in 1986. The SDA makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of sex. Specifically, sex discrimination is not allowed in employment, education, advertising or when providing housing, goods, services or facilities.

The SDA applies to two kinds of discrimination:

- Discrimination means treating someone unfairly because of their sex
- Indirect discrimination means setting unjustifiable condition that appear to apply to everyone, but in fact discriminate against one sex.

The Equal Pay Act (EPA) applies to pay and other contractual matters where a woman and a man are doing:

- Like work
- Work which has been rated as equivalent
- Work which is of equal value.

### **The Race Relations Act 1976, The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000**

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 came into force in April 2001 and strengthens the 1976 Act. It arose in part due to the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and has been targeted at the public sector. It places a new duty on all public authorities to eliminate discrimination, promote racial equality and promote good race relations.

### **The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA)**

The DDA introduces measures aimed at ending discrimination on the grounds of disability. The Act's provisions include employment, access to goods, services and facilities, and the buying and renting of land or property. The Act is being introduced on a staggered basis.

### **The Human Rights Act 1998**

The Human Rights Act came into force in October 2000. The Act allows people to claim their rights under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), in all UK courts and tribunals instead of going to the European Court in Strasbourg. The Act requires all

public authorities in the UK to act in compliance with the Convention rights and has many implications for local government activity.

## **APPENDIX 4 – Action Plan 2002/2003**

- ❖ Produce guidance notes for other (currently) non-statutory areas such as age and rural access
- ❖ Implement the Race Equality Scheme Assessment process
- ❖ Achieve Level 1 of the Equality Standard for Local government
- ❖ Complete Race and Equality training
- ❖ Publish a communication/consultation strategy





## APPENDIX 5: Audit Commission Performance Indicators 2002/2003

**Indicator - Ref No 002** Amended for 02/03 (Responsible Officer: Ian Leatherbarrow)

- The level (if any) of the Equality Standard for Local Government to which the authority conforms.

<b>Actual 01/02</b> Level 1	<b>Target 2002/03</b> Level 1	<b>Actual 2002/03</b> Level 1	<b>Target 2003/04</b> Level 1
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**Indicator - Ref No 011a** Amended for 02/03 (Responsible Officer: Phil Duerden)

- The percentage of top 5 % of earners that are women.

<b>Actual 01/02</b> Not applicable	<b>Target 2002/03</b> Not applicable	<b>Actual 2002/03</b> 11.1%	<b>2003/04 Target</b> 15%
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**Indicator - Ref No 011b** New PI (Responsible Officer: Phil Duerden)

- The percentage of top 5 % of earners from black and minority ethnic communities.

<b>Actual 01/02</b> Not Applicable	<b>Target 2002/03</b> N/A	<b>Actual 2002/03</b> 0%	<b>2003/04 Target</b> N/A
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**Indicator - Ref No 016** (Responsible Officer: Phil Duerden)

- The percentage of local authority employees declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 disability definition compared with the percentage of economically active disabled people in the authority area

<b>Actual 01/02</b> 1.9%	<b>Target 2002/03</b> 2%	<b>Actual 2002/03</b> 2.0%	<b>2003/04 Target</b> 2%
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Ref No <b>016b</b> – Economically active disabled people in the area	10.5%
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**Indicator - Ref No 017** (Responsible Officer: Phil Duerden)

- The percentage of local authority employees from minority ethnic communities compared with the percentage of the economically active minority ethnic community population in the authority area.

<b>Actual 01/02</b> 1.7%	<b>Target 2002/03</b> 1.7%	<b>Actual 2002/03</b> 1.7%	<b>2003/04 Target</b> 2%
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Ref No <b>017</b> – Economically active minority ethnic population in the area	2.6%
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