

# Huntingdonshire District Council

## Gender Equality Scheme

### Introduction

To ensure we are providing high quality services and effective community leadership the Council is committed to achieving equality of opportunity both as an employer and provider of services.

The Equality Act 2006 amends the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) to place a statutory duty on the Council when carrying out its functions. The first of these is a general duty to have due regard to the need to :

- eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

This requires us to give due regard to promoting equality of opportunity between men and women, which may require additional, dedicated resources or activity to enable men and women to access services on equitable terms.

Secondly, the Council has a specific duty to publish a Gender Equality Scheme (GES), describing how we intend to fulfil this general duty. In this scheme we state which of our functions and policies are relevant to the general duty and describe our arrangements for:

- Assessing, consulting and monitoring our functions and policies for likely impact on the promotion of gender equality;
- Publishing the results of this assessment, consultation and monitoring;
- Making sure the public have access to our services, and;
- Training and developing employees so that they can respond positively to these duties

### Definition

Unlawful discrimination on the grounds of gender includes:

- Direct and indirect discrimination against women and men, in employment; education; in the provision of goods, facilities and services and in the exercise of public functions;
- Harassment, sexual harassment and discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity/paternity leave;
- Discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment in employment and vocational training;
- Direct and indirect discrimination in the employment field on the grounds that a person is married or a civil partner; and
- Victimisation.

### Our commitment

A commitment to equality and inclusion underpins the Councils' approach to promoting gender equality. The Council recognises that some people do not have equal access to our services or information about them. To ensure fairness and equity in the provision of our services, some services may need to be developed to meet different needs. The Council also recognises that discrimination or exclusion cannot always be dealt with as a single issue. Different strands, particularly those relating to race, disability, age, religious beliefs, sexuality, isolation, gender and deprivation, may combine to cause inequality and social exclusion.

### About Huntingdonshire

Huntingdonshire is a large rural district, which covers an area of approximately 910 square kilometres (approximately 350 square miles). Nearly 162,000 people live in the district, with about 45% of the population living in the 4 market towns of Huntingdon, Ramsey, St Ives and St Neots.

The gender split in the district is similar to the national average (49.7% male and 50.3% female (Census 2001). However, there are gender differences with life expectancy with males expecting to live more than a year and half longer than the average for England (78.5 compared to 76.92) and females expecting to live two thirds of a year longer than the average (81.8 compared to 81.14). Females can expect to live more than three years longer than males in Huntingdonshire (source - life expectancy at birth 2003-2005, ONS).

Gender difference are noticeable in the workplace where traditional roles are well entrenched. The following table outlines some of the economic disparities between men and women.

	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
Percentage of those aged 16-74 that are economically inactive (Census 2001)	17.8%	32.9%
Percentage of those aged 16-74 that are economically active (Census 2001)	82.2%	67.1%
Average full time gross weekly wages 2006 (Residence Median ASHA 2006)	£534.99	£371.20

Differences in the occupations that men and women undertake are marked. Women are more likely than men to undertake lower paid occupations, often in a part-time capacity. The most notable differences exist in the following occupations

Census 2001	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
Managers and senior officials	23.1%	11.9%
Administrative and secretarial	5.1%	23.9%
Skilled trades	18.2%	2.4%
Personal services (healthcare, caring and leisure occupations)	1.3%	12.3%
Sales and customer services	2.9%	10.7%
Process, plant and machine operatives	13%	3.6%

## **Huntingdonshire's constitution**

Huntingdonshire operates a Leader and Cabinet model of decision making. The Cabinet consists of 9 Members; each Cabinet member is responsible for a number of Council services. The Executive Councillor for Resources & Policy has a specific responsibility for leading on equality issues. The Cabinet meetings are held in public, the Agenda, Reports and Minutes are publicly available. Further information is available on the council's website [www.huntsdc.gov.uk](http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk) or from Democratic Services.

## **Council Organisation and Structure**

The Council is currently organised into 3 Directorates each of which is headed by a Director, these are:

- Central Services (e.g. electoral registration, licensing, personnel, leisure centres and economic development)
- Operational Services (e.g. planning, environmental and public health, housing services and parks countryside)
- Commerce and Technology (e.g. financial services, council and housing tax benefit)

## **Strategic Aims for Equality**

Some of the strategic initiatives set out below are specific to gender equality; others reflect the broader diversity agenda. Our policy framework is set out in our corporate plan *Growing Success* (a copy is available on the council's website or from the Policy and Strategic Services Division) it has been developed to provide the context for our strategies, policies and plans.

## Growing Success

The vision in our Community Strategy is:-

Huntingdonshire should be a place where current and future generations have a good quality of life and enjoy:

- Continued economic success
- Opportunities for all
- An environment that is protected and improved

To support this, the Council will strive to:

- Make the most of the opportunities that come from growth by promoting the development of sustainable communities
- Enable people to realise their full potential and have access to suitable homes, jobs and services
- Work towards achieving a balance between social, economic and environmental needs
- Maintain excellent standards

One of our objectives is to:

Strengthen our commitment and capacity to achieve equality, diversity and inclusion

We intend to do this by:

- maintaining or establishing equality schemes which consider gender, race and disability equality issues and the needs of disadvantaged groups at all levels of services, policies and practices
- ensuring that our employment practices provide equality of opportunity and do not discriminate against any individual

To ensure that the above *aspects* are taken into account in the things that we do, the Council is committed to achieving the Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government.

## Corporate Equality Policy

Our Corporate Equality Policy formalises our commitment to gender equality in providing high quality services and effective community leadership.

We intend to do this through the way we -

- plan and deliver appropriate services
- monitor and evaluate our performance
- consult and engage with our communities
- develop & support employees and Councillors
- support our communities

To contribute towards meeting these priorities our Corporate Equality Policy has identified two outcomes that we need to achieve

- That our services are provided in ways that meet the diverse needs of local people
- That the Council is recognised for promoting equality and inclusion in communities

The two measures that will tell us how successful we are:

- % of local people who believe that Council services meet their needs
- % of local people who believe that the Council promotes equality and inclusion in their community

## How we developed our Gender Equality Scheme?

We have established an equality steering group, comprising senior officers who have assisted Chief Officers in developing the scheme and action plan. In recognising the benefits of consultation; we have used the results of recent consultation with the public. Analysis from these surveys does not show any significant disparities between men and women's satisfaction with

Council services. We have also analysed employee data and found some disparities in pay and grade between men and women, we have included an action in our action plan to investigate this further.

This information is available upon request from the Policy and Strategic Services Division.

## **Responsibility for the Gender Equality Scheme**

### **Councillors**

Councillors will support this scheme and work towards the promotion of equality and inclusion in all Council and community activities.

### **Chief Executive**

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the implementation of this scheme for the council as a whole.

### **Directors**

Directors have a duty to promote the scheme throughout their directorates. They also have responsibility for implementing relevant review, monitoring and performance procedures.

### **Services**

Heads of service, activity managers and team leaders are responsible for implementing the scheme in the day-to-day delivery of their service, including the collection of data.

### **Employees**

All employees have a responsibility to implement the scheme and work towards the provision of services that meet the goals and objectives of the scheme. Appropriate training will be provided to help employees achieve this.

### **Head of Policy**

The Head of Policy will ensure that the scheme is reviewed and maintained on a yearly basis, and will evaluate and verify performance data that has been provided.

## **Equality Steering Group**

This group will lead on the implementation of this scheme, help co-ordinate different activities, including

- producing guidance and information
- co-ordination of impact assessments
- production of annual report on progress

Membership of this group comprises representative from each directorate, an employee representative, representatives from Human Resources and Policy and Strategic Services Division. The group will report the results from this scheme's 3 year action plan/annual report on progress to Chief Officers and Cabinet.

## **Review of Gender Equality Scheme**

The equality steering group will keep under review an action plan which sets out the key actions we will take to promote gender equality. The group will also prepare annually a report detailing progress of this scheme. This report will be considered by Chief Officers and the Cabinet and will also be published on our website.

The Council will conduct a comprehensive review of this scheme every three years (next in 2009/10). This will include an assessment of how the Council has complied with its obligations under the Act and compliance with the general and specific duties. The process of assessing policies and functions for relevance, degree of relevance and prioritisation will be repeated every 3 years.

## **Assessment of relevant functions and policies to promoting gender equality**

'Functions' means the full range of the Council's duties, powers and services.

'Policies' means the full range of formal and informal decisions, procedures, plans, strategies, and objectives about how we carry out our duties and use our powers.

'Relevant' means having implications for (or affecting) gender equality.

'Proportionality' means greater consideration be given to gender equality in relation to functions and policies that have the most effect on disabled people.

We have identified our functions and policies to determine their relevance to the general duty and given them a priority depending on their relevance to gender equality. The priority determines our 3 year assessment plan e.g. those functions and policies that have been given a higher priority will be addressed in year one of the assessment plan. A table showing the prioritisation of functions and policies can be found at appendix 1.

## **Assessing the impact of functions and proposed policies on the promotion of gender equality**

The list of functions and policies determined to be relevant to the general duty will be subject to equality impact assessments between April 2007 – 2010. We may combine some functions/policies within one impact assessment in order to make best use of resources. The equality impact assessment will be an integral part of achieving Level 3 of the Equality Standard and will also be monitored through our comprehensive performance management process.

Specifically, we will continue to examine each function and policy to identify whether there is evidence that they are affecting men and women differently. To do this we will gather information in the following ways –

- use gender monitoring to collect and analyse information about 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, gender data and census results or general or specific research to assess the effectiveness of our services in promoting gender equality
- compare our policies and the way we carry out our functions with other local authorities and public bodies.

## **Monitoring and evaluation**

Without gender monitoring data there is no way of knowing whether discrimination is taking place or if we are doing things that promote gender equality. We will establish and improve systems to monitor the impact of functions/policies on our communities; however we will need to take into account, resource implications, sensitivity of information and willingness of people to supply it.

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 of gender data
- satisfaction surveys analysed by gender group
- random or targeted surveys
- qualitative research

We will use a range of information to help us monitor and evaluate, for example the 2001 Census and other data provided by the Office of National Statistics.

We will use the same classification system for gender 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 service reviews and performance management systems.

We will use this information to determine future priorities, e.g. if evidence suggests an adverse impact we will take remedial action. We will report the findings of any monitoring and evaluation to Chief Officers and Councillors.

## **Consultation and engagement**

We will undertake clear, representative and proportionate consultation, using a range of appropriate methods. Specifically we will try to engage all communities to ensure that any new policy does not discriminate or harm good gender relations. We will work with the representative gender groups to remove barriers to consultation with people and to try to establish effective mechanisms for effective consultation.

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 people and to make new arrangements or change arrangements so that our policies and the way we carry out our functions promote gender 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.

## **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
- provide information in appropriate formats upon request.

## **Employment**

The Council is a large employer, with over 1,200 employees. In order to meet the employment specific duty in the Sex Discrimination Act (1975), the Council will monitor diversity and will publish the results of its monitoring annually. Reports on monitoring will be prepared for the Corporate Equality Steering Group, senior management and Councillors on the following areas:

- employees in post
- applicants for employment, training and promotion
- those who receive training
- those who benefit or suffer detriment as a result of performance assessment procedures
- those involved in grievance procedures
- those who are the subject of disciplinary procedures
- those who leave the council's employment

## **Training**

In order to deliver our responsibilities, we will ensure that all employees and Councillors are aware of relevant legislation and how this impacts upon their work. Over the last 3 years 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.

Where appropriate detailed training plans for achieving the Equality Standard for each directorate/division will be prepared to ensure that appropriate information and training is provided which takes account of individual's responsibilities. Senior management, Councillors 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 information on the importance of equality and specifically promoting gender equality in meeting the Council's objectives.

## **Publication of the Gender Equality Scheme and publishing results**

The scheme and/or summary will be made available to all employees and to all relevant community and voluntary groups, organisations, individuals and businesses via the Internet, Intranet or hard copy. A summary of the scheme will be made available in alternative formats upon request.

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 and Strategic Services Division, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN 01480 388032. Democratic Services can be contacted on 388388.

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

## **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.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Assessment timetable

Appendix 2 – Action Plan 2007-08

**Gender Equality Scheme (GES)**  
**Appendix 1 - Assessment timetable 2007 – 2010**

<b>Function</b>	<b>Priority</b>
<b>Electoral Services</b> The effective conduct of elections, production of an accurate register of electors and participation in boundary/electoral reviews	2007/08
<b>Licensing Services</b> Dealing with new and renewal applications, consultation and enforcement for a range of areas to ensure public protection	2007/08
<b>Local Land Charges</b> To maintain a register of local land charges and deal with local land charge searches	2009/10
<b>Political Management Structures &amp; Support</b> To manage political management systems and to support effective representation	2008/09
<b>Printing Services</b> To provide a high quality printing and reprographic service and enhance the Council's image	2009/10
<b>Leisure Centres</b> To offer a wide range of sport, recreational and social activities for all ages and abilities	2007/08
<b>Estates Service</b> The management of industrial/commercial properties and provision of advice and valuations	2008/09
<b>Asset Management Plan</b> A strategic planning document with the aim of ensuring efficient, effective and sustainable use of land and buildings	2009/10
<b>Legal Service</b> To ensure the Council acts within its statutory powers and its interests are properly protected	2009/10
<b>Health &amp; Safety</b> To promote a safe and healthy workforce and working environment	2008/09
<b>Human Resources</b> Responsible for pay & performance, recruitment & selection, good employment & foster a culture of innovation in service delivery	2007/08
<b>Training</b> To provide the delivery of training and development to employees	2007/08
<b>People Strategy</b> Strategy for ensuring the Council achieves its goals through its employees	2007/08
<b>Communication &amp; Information</b> To publicise the objectives, services and achievements of the Council and promote good practice in internal and external communication	2007/08
<b>Communication &amp; Marketing Strategy</b> To provide a framework for the council's communications and consultation activities on a structured, consistent and sustainable basis.	2007/08



<b>Economic Development</b> To encourage sustainable growth of local businesses and attract inward investment, including the Local Economy Strategy	2008/09
<b>Policy</b> Internal support services, performance management, external funding, consultation & research, equality & diversity.	2008/09
<b>Tourism Services</b> To ensure Huntingdonshire offers a good quality visitor experience, including the Tourism Strategy for Huntingdonshire	2008/09
<b>Information Communication Technology</b> Participate in the development of a corporate Information Strategy, provision of an IT service and ensure the Council makes best use of new technology	2009/10
<b>Customer First</b> This includes; Improving access to services for everyone; Improving the way we work with customers; building on the high level of customer service already offered local people; and improving efficiency of services through sharing of information.	2007/08
<b>Financial Services</b> Including creditor payments, financial management, financial strategy, income generation, insurance & risk management, internal audit, payroll, Procurement Strategy & treasury management.	2009/10
<b>Benefits</b> To process new Council tax benefit and Rent Allowance claims	2007/08
<b>Council Tax</b> Statutory duty as a designated "Billing authority" under the Local Government Finance Act 1992	2007/08
<b>Non Domestic Rates</b> Statutory duty as a designated "Billing authority" under the Local Government Finance Act 1992	2007/08
<b>Sundry Income</b> Collection of debts due to the Council	2008/09
<b>Cashiering Service</b> Assist in maximising cash flow	2007/08
<b>Air Quality</b> To review and assess local air quality	2009/10
<b>Animal Welfare</b> To promote welfare of animals in commercial establishments	2008/10
<b>Caravan &amp; Camping sites</b> To ensure that sites are suitable for occupation	2008/09
<b>Contaminated Land</b> To deal with land which is contaminated	2009/10
<b>Customer Satisfaction</b> Determine customers views of the service	2007/08

<b>Food Safety</b> To protect the public from unsafe or unwholesome food and drinking water	2007/08
<b>Health &amp; Safety</b> Reduce the number of accidents and incidents of ill health resulting from working conditions	2007/08
<b>Health Promotion</b>	2009/10?
<b>Infectious Diseases</b> Control the spread of infectious diseases	2009/10
<b>Pest Control</b> To prevent the potential for the spread of disease and nuisance by rodents and insects	2008/09
<b>Private Sector Housing</b> Maximise fitness for occupation of dwellings and regulate landlord tenant obligations	2008/09
<b>Statutory Nuisances</b> Resolve justifiable complaints of statutory nuisance	2007/08
<b>Travellers</b> Minimise long term illegal encampments that are a public health and nuisance problem	2007/08
<b>Arts</b> To promote and raise the profile of arts activities, to support and develop local voluntary arts organizations	2007/08
<b>Community Initiatives</b> To involve local people in decision making and encourage self help initiatives, to develop strategies for community development to tackle social exclusion	2007/08
<b>Leisure Development</b> To offer a wide range of sport, recreational and social activities for all ages and abilities, to support local voluntary organisations in the promotion and development of their activities	2007/08
<b>Community Safety/CCTV</b> To develop a multi agency approach to crime and disorder by involving communities and to help communities tackle local needs and issues	2007/08
<b>Emergency Planning</b> To secure effective joint-services planning arrangements and ensure the Council can respond to an emergency	2009/10
<b>Car Parks (strategy)</b> To compliment the Transportation Plan	2009/10
<b>Drainage</b> To advise on location of sewers, ensure sewerage maps are available and assess the need for sewerage schemes for unsewered villages	2009/10
<b>Professional Design Services</b> To assist in the completion of the Council's Capital Programme	2008/09
<b>Car Parks Management</b> To provide secure car parking spaces to meet demand and reduce crime and nuisance in car parks	2009/10
<b>Energy Efficiency</b>	2007/08

To improve energy efficiency in all tenures of the housing stock and reduce fuel poverty	
<b>Building Control</b> To ensure building work complies with building regulations and planning condition, and to ensure the public are protected in respect of dangerous structures	2008/09
<b>Grounds Maintenance</b> To keep amenity areas well maintained and safe	2009/10
<b>Refuse Collection/recycling</b> Provision of domestic refuse collection	2008/09
<b>Charter Markets</b> To ensure the viability of weekly markets	2008/09
<b>Street Cleaning</b> To keep the district clean and free from litter	2009/10
<b>Abandoned Vehicles</b> To remove abandoned vehicles from within the district	2008/09
<b>Countryside Services</b> To encourage the public's enjoyment and access to the countryside	2008/09
<b>Parks &amp; Open Spaces</b> To encourage the use of parks and open spaces, to promote a range of activities to encourage wide use and to encourage use by community groups and voluntary organisations	2008/09
<b>Refuse Collection (strategy)</b> Minimise waste and increase awareness of litter and recycling issues	2008/09
<b>Homelessness</b> Prevent or alleviate effects of homelessness	2007/08
<b>Housing Nominations</b> To make the best use of all housing resources and to assist applicants with special needs, to improve information to applicants	2007/08
<b>Housing Association Development</b> To enable development by Registered Social Landlords to help meet housing needs	2007/08
<b>Housing Strategy</b> Produce an annual Housing Strategy and plan for special needs groups and individuals	2007/08
<b>Home Improvement Agency</b> To enable elderly, disabled and people on low incomes to remain in their own homes using grants for repairs, disabled adaptations and other resources	2007/08
<b>Private Sector Housing</b> To ensure that private sector housing is fit for occupation and consider the housing conditions in the district	2007/08
<b>Administration</b> To provide administrative support and the provision of a housing reception	2007/08
<b>Housing Strategy 2002 – 2005</b> A 3 year plan of action to address identified needs in the District	2007/08

<p><b>Conservation &amp; Design</b> To promote an understanding of the historic environment and engage the public in order to share the responsibility of stewardship of the historic environment</p>	2008/09
<p><b>Development Control</b> To determine planning applications and provide planning advice</p>	2007/08
<p><b>Policy &amp; Technical Support</b> To influence the future pattern of development in the district</p>	2009/10
<p><b>Transport</b> To assist in the completion of Cambridgeshire Transport Plan, to develop the Cycling Strategy and provide advice to Town Centre Initiatives</p>	2007/08

**Huntingdonshire District Council  
Gender Equality Scheme (GES)  
Appendix 2 - Draft Action Plan 2007 – 2010**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Who is responsible</b>	<b>progress</b>
<b>Year 1 May 2007 – April 2008</b>			
Initial listing and assessment of functions/policies for relevance to general duty		Equality steering group	Complete
Consultation on GES	January/February 2007	Policy and Strategic Services Division (PSSD)	Complete
Process of impact assessments to begin	By April 2007	Equality steering group	Training completed January 2007
Development of guidance for equality impact assessment of <b>proposed policies</b>	April 2007	PSSD & equality steering group	
Development of guidance for <b>monitoring</b> & assessment of <b>existing</b> policies	April 2007	PSSD & equality steering group	
Development of guidance for <b>consulting</b> on proposed policies	April 2007	PSSD & equality steering group	
Review of systems and procedures in relation to gender monitoring	April 2007	Equality steering group	
Report on GES to Chief Officers, Overview & Scrutiny & Cabinet	Annually	Equality steering group	
Publication of GES	April 2007	PSSD	
Establish departmental equality working arrangements	By April 2007	Equality steering group	
Development of training plans for employees (linked into equality standard training) e.g. for For equality steering group For managers/employees Members	By 2007	Equality steering group & HR	Steering group commenced training May 2006. EIA training to commence January 07 General training to commence after April 2007
Assessment and publication of results of equality impact assessments	From April 2008	Equality steering group & PSSD	
Examination of previous years employment (equality monitoring) data	Annually	HR	
Publication of employment monitoring information	Annually	HR	
Annual report on progress in achieving targets to Chief Officers, Overview & Scrutiny and		Equality steering group and Democratic Services	

Action	Target	Who is responsible	progress
<b>Year 1 May 2007 – April 2008</b>			
Cabinet			
Publication of annual report on website	Annually	PSSD	
Review of complaints procedure in relation to race, gender and disability		PSSD and Administration	
Consult with employees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct consultation with employees on gender equality as part of staff satisfaction survey</li> <li>Conduct consultation with ELAG./employees on Gender Equality Scheme</li> </ul>	Summer 2007  Summer 2007	PSSD  PSSD	
Further to analysis of employment monitoring data (05/06) more research in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pay gap</li> <li>Imported discrimination</li> <li>Encouraging more females into high grades</li> <li>Encouraging more males into position graded 8 – 13</li> </ul>	September 2007	HR	
Analysis of training take up by gender using ResourceLink	March 2008	HR	
Annual report on progress to date in achieving GES targets to Chief Officers, Overview & Scrutiny & Cabinet	A year from the date the GES adopted	Equality steering group & HR	
Review of complaints procedure in relation to race, gender & disability	April 2008	PSSD & Administration	
Monitor key employment and workforce profiles by gender	Annually	HR	
Raise general awareness/monitor/evaluate different working patterns and worklife balance options available to both male and female employees as part of mobile/flexible working project	March 2008	HR	
Ensure Consultation & Engagement strategy supports GES	Summer 2007	PSSD	