

# Equality & Human Rights Policy 2011 - 2014



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**East Dunbartonshire Council**

[www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk](http://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk)

**equality &  
Human rights**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

This policy sets out East Dunbartonshire Council's commitment to the principles of equality, diversity and human rights for all. It covers all of our functions and policies, both in the provision of our services and in employment.

East Dunbartonshire is a diverse area with diverse communities. We wish to create an environment in which the services we provide and our workplace is free from unfair discrimination and where human rights principles are upheld. We also want our workforce and our service provision to reflect the communities we serve.

We will consistently challenge inequality, discrimination and disadvantage and will seek to work to achieve the highest standards of service delivery and employment practices.

We will work to ensure that equality; diversity and human rights principles are owned, valued and maintained by everyone within the organisation – Elected Members, employees and those who provide services on our behalf.

## **2. Links to Council Plans**

All policies, functions and services delivered by the Council sit within a strategic planning context.

### 2.1 Single Outcome Agreement

The main strategic planning document for East Dunbartonshire Council is the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA). The SOA reflects the needs of our communities and represents an Agreement between the Community Planning Partners to deliver outcomes and set challenging targets that will deliver significant improvement for people and communities across East Dunbartonshire.

This Equality and Human Rights Policy cuts across all of the 15 national outcomes, but has greater relevance to outcome 7: "We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society." For further information on the SOA please go to [www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk](http://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk).

### 2.2 Strategic Improvement Plan

The Council's Strategic Improvement Plan for 2011-14 underpins the delivery of local priorities set out in the East Dunbartonshire Single Outcome Agreement. The Plan (to be submitted to Council in June 2011) identifies:

- How the Council will work with partners to ensure more effective strategic resource use; and
- How the council will implement enhanced arrangements for customer focussed delivery.

- How we support our employees to embed a culture of improvement within the organisation.

A key area of work in the strategic improvement plan will relate to the Equality and Human Rights Policy by ensuring that all actions seek to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between communities.

### 2.3 Equality Policies and Action Plans

There are a range of policies and action plans in place in relation to the promotion of equality and elimination of discrimination. This Policy acts as an overarching document, setting out the council's commitment to Equality and Human Rights and thus setting out a framework for other documents.

The current Equality and Diversity Scheme (June 2010-Dec 2011) sets out the detailed arrangements that East Dunbartonshire Council will take to meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duties around race, gender and disability. This is the second Equality and Diversity Scheme developed by East Dunbartonshire Council and replaces the Scheme 2006-09.

A new Scheme will be developed in order to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the new Single Public Sector duty. Timescales and content of the new Scheme will be subject to the requirements as set out by the Specific Equality Duties, which will be agreed by the Scottish Government in late 2011.

### **3. Aims and Objectives of the Equality and Human Rights Policy**

This policy aims to identify the range of work being undertaken across the organisation on equality and human rights and provide clear information on how the Council's approach to mainstreaming equalities is implemented.

As such, the main objectives of the policy are as follows:

- To provide a 'statement of intent' with regard to Equality and Human Rights;
- To provide information on the legislative framework with regard to Equality and Human Rights;
- To provide information on the range of work undertaken across the council with regard to equality and human rights, including consultation and engagement activity;
- To set out information on the key groups and those who share protected characteristics within East Dunbartonshire as an area;
- To set out the responsibility and accountability for equality and human rights in East Dunbartonshire Council; and
- To provide information on how our work on equality and human rights is implemented and reviewed.

## 4. Definitions

There are a wide range of terms often used when considering Equality and Human Rights. Definitions of the most commonly used terms are provided here.

- **Equality** - This is about creating a fair society where everyone can participate and has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. It is supported by legislation designed to address unfair discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation. It is not about everyone being treated the same –it is recognition that individuals have different needs, which may need to be met in different ways to achieve equality of outcome.
- **Diversity** – refers to the recognition of the difference of groups and the wide range of groups in the community. It is about creating a culture and practices that recognise, respect, value and harness difference for the benefit of the organisation, its employees and partners and customers.
- **Human Rights** – These are the basic rights and freedoms which everyone is entitled to in order to live with dignity. Human rights demand recognition and respect for the inherent dignity and value of every human being, and provide the shared values and the legal basis to ensure that everyone is protected against abuses which undermine their dignity. Human Rights give the opportunities that people need to realise their full potential, free from discrimination.

## 5. Equality and Diversity Legislation

Over the past 40 years, over 100 pieces of legislation and statutory instruments have been enacted in order to promote equality and reduce discrimination. These include:

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- The Equality Act 2006 (Gender Equality Duty)

The Equality Act 2010, which came into force on 1 October 2010, harmonises and replaces this legislation. The Equality Act covers the same groups of individuals that were protected by the previous legislation. However, the categories of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity are now to be known as 'protected characteristics'.

The Equality Act also provides for new Public Sector Equality Duties, under which most public authorities are bound. The General Duty has been agreed by Westminster Government and came into force on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011. Under the new general duty, public authorities are required to pay due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, victimisation, harassment or other unlawful conduct that is prohibited under the Equality Act 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic and those who do not; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

These three requirements apply across the 'protected characteristics' of age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex and sexual orientation. Only the requirement to eliminate discrimination etc. applies to the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership.

The purpose of the general duty is to require authorities to proactively consider equality when carrying out their work. The duty encourages the mainstreaming of equality into authorities' core business so it is not a marginal activity but a key component of what authorities do.

The new duty is similar to the three previous equality duties relating to race, disability and gender equality, in terms of structure and intention, so it is considered that authorities will have gained significant experience in promoting equality, which will be valuable in working towards the new duty

### • **Specific Duties**

In Scotland, Scottish Ministers have the power to introduce 'specific duties' which set out the particular steps that authorities in Scotland should take to help meet the general duty. The Scottish Government has indicated that it expects to develop proposals for specific duties with a view to making Regulations in late 2011.

Once the requirements of the specific duties have been developed, the Equality and Human Rights Commission will prepare a code of practice and appropriate non-statutory guidance to support Scottish public authorities in meeting these requirements. East Dunbartonshire Council will be proactive in seeking to meet and exceed those specific duties.

## **6. Protected Characteristics**

As set out by the Equality Act 2010, there are nine recognised 'protected characteristics'. This section provides information on each of these, and on how the Council seeks to promote equality for each protected characteristic.

## 6.1 Age

The Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for younger and older people. Age refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 21 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 60-75 year olds).

We recognise that society can have negative attitudes, stereotypes and myths about youth, ageing, younger and older people. We also recognise that these attitudes and beliefs can lead to both younger and older people being socially and economically disadvantaged, excluded and marginalised. We believe that people have the right to equality of opportunity and can make a significant and valuable contribution to the community at large, regardless of age.

The demographic breakdown of East Dunbartonshire continues to change. According to most recent population projections (2008), the number of people over 60 will continue to rise with a marked increase in those aged over 75. Conversely, in accordance with the national trend, the percentage of children aged 0-15 is projected to fall.

The East Dunbartonshire Equality Engagement Group<sup>1</sup>, supported by the Council has been undertaking a wide range of work on the category of age discrimination, and has pledged support for the 'Changing Age' Campaign. The campaign seeks to change perceptions of older people and to highlight the positive contributions that older people can bring to the community.<sup>2</sup> The Equality Scheme 2012-15 will set out detailed actions as to how we will meet the new public sector equality duty with regard to age.<sup>3</sup>

## 6.2 Disability

East Dunbartonshire Council opposes discrimination on the basis of disability and embraces the requirements of disability legislation. Arrangements for promoting disability equality and eliminating discrimination are set out in the EDC Equality and Diversity Scheme 2010-11<sup>4</sup>.

A person is a disabled person (someone who has the protected characteristic of disability) if they have a physical and/or mental impairment which has what the law calls 'a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. There is no need for a person to have a medically diagnosed cause for their impairment; what matters is the effect of the impairment not the cause.

Disability can be caused by physical and/or mental impairment. Physical impairment covers conditions that affect the body such as arthritis, hearing or sight impairment (unless this is correctable by glasses or contact lenses), diabetes, asthma, epilepsy, conditions such as HIV infection, cancer and multiple sclerosis, loss of limbs or the use of limbs.

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<sup>1</sup> See section ?? for more information on the Equality Engagement Group

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/about/changingage/>

<sup>3</sup> EDC Equality Scheme 2012-15 will be published in April 2010- The requirement does not take effect until April 2012

<sup>4</sup> See [www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/equality](http://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/equality) for further information on the Equality & Diversity Scheme

Mental impairment includes conditions such as dyslexia and autism as well as learning disabilities such as Down's syndrome and mental health conditions such as depression and schizophrenia.

There is limited information on the number of people who have a disability within East Dunbartonshire. National Statistics from the Equality and Human Rights Commission suggest that over 10 million people in the UK have some form of disability. The Census 2001 asked the question:

“Do you have any long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits your daily activities or the work you can do?”

The figures in 2001 reported that 16.57% of the population, which amounts to almost 18,000 members of the community, perceive themselves to having a limiting long-term illness health problem or disability which limits their daily activities or the work they can do, including problems due to old age.<sup>5</sup> An updated figure will be available following analysis of the results of Census 2011, which will be published in 2012.

Over the past few decades, there has been an important change in the way disability is understood. The focus is no longer on what is wrong with the person. Instead, disability is recognised as the consequence of the interaction of the individual with an environment that does not accommodate that individual's differences and limits or impedes the individual's participation in society. This approach is referred to as the social model of disability.

The United Nations Convention on the rights of Disabled People came into effect in May 2008 and marked the beginning of a new era in the efforts “to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity” (art. 1). Although persons with disabilities have always been entitled to the same rights as everyone else, it is the first time that their rights are set out comprehensively in a binding international instrument. The Convention also endorses the social model of disability and takes it forward by explicitly recognising disability as a human rights issue. East Dunbartonshire Council recognises the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People and will be undertaking work to ensure that all obligations are met.

### **6.3 Gender Reassignment**

East Dunbartonshire Council welcomes the introduction of Gender Reassignment as a Protected Characteristic. In line with the General Duty of the Equality Act 2010, all of our policies will seek to ensure that any actual or perceived discrimination, harassment or victimisation in this area is eliminated. We will also seek to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who consider themselves as transsexuals and those who do not.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission helpfully provides information on this Protected Characteristic.<sup>6</sup> Gender reassignment is a personal process

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<sup>5</sup> Scottish Census Results Online [www.scrol.gov.uk](http://www.scrol.gov.uk)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/guidance-for-education-providers-schools/protected-characteristics/>

(rather than a medical process) which involves a person expressing their gender in a way that differs from or is inconsistent with the physical sex they were born with.

This personal process may include undergoing medical procedures or, it may simply include choosing to dress in a different way as part of the personal process of change. A person will be protected because of gender reassignment where they:

- make their intention known to someone – it does not matter who this is, whether it is someone at work or at home or someone like a doctor:
  - once they have proposed to undergo gender reassignment they are protected, even if they take no further steps or they decide to stop later on
  - they do not have to have reached an irrevocable decision that they will undergo gender reassignment, but as soon as there is a manifestation of this intention they are protected
- start or continue to dress, behave or live (full-time or part-time) according to the gender they identify with as a person
- undergo treatment related to gender reassignment, such as surgery or hormone therapy, or
- have received gender recognition under the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

It does not matter which of these applies to a person for them to be protected because of the characteristic of gender reassignment.

#### **6.4 Marriage and civil partnership**

East Dunbartonshire Council is committed to the elimination of discrimination in terms of marriage and civil partnership. This is another new 'protected characteristic introduced by the Equality Act 2010 is that of Marriage and Civil Partnership.

Marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman'. Same-sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters.

This protected characteristic only protects people if they are married or in a civil partnership. It does not apply to those not married or in a civil partnership, i.e. single.

## 6.5 Pregnancy and Maternity

Pregnancy and maternity has been set out as a separate protected characteristic from sex. This is due to the widespread discrimination caused specifically due to a woman's pregnancy or maternity period. The EHRC sets out that pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

East Dunbartonshire Council is committed to the elimination of pregnancy and maternity discrimination.

## 6.6 Race

East Dunbartonshire Council is fully committed to the elimination of discrimination in relation to Race. Race refers to a person's:

- colour, and/or
- nationality (including citizenship), and/or
- ethnic or national origin

A racial group is composed of people who have or share a colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins. As such a person has the protected characteristic of race if they belong to a particular racial group, such as 'British people'. Racial groups can also comprise two or more racial groups such as 'British Asians'.

Around 3.1 per cent of the East Dunbartonshire population has identified themselves as being from a Black or Minority Ethnic community (BME). The largest percentage of the BME population is currently from the Indian community. However, we recognise that as with the rest of Scotland, our population is continually changing, and now includes a number of migrants from the new European Union Accession States, such as Poland and Slovakia.

The Council recognises that Black and Minority Ethnic people may experience discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, religion and ethnic origin. The Council has invested in consultation and engagement with the black and minority ethnic communities to establish any differences in the provision of services to these minority groups.

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, provided a new framework for public authorities in order to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination. Since 2002, East Dunbartonshire Council has had action plans in place in order to implement the specific requirements of this legislation. From this, a whole host of work has taken place, including specific engagement with BME groups, equality impact assessments, equality monitoring and ensuring that our publications can be published in accessible formats including translations.

The Equality Act 2010 enhances the focus on race equality and so the Council will be working hard to ensure that we actively eliminate racial discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good community relations.

Detailed information on our continuing actions can be found on the Council's website at [www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/equality](http://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/equality).

## **6.7 Scottish Gypsies/Travellers**

The Council recognises that Gypsies/Travellers are a disadvantaged group in society. Although legislation to protect Gypsies/Travellers from discrimination is covered by the Equality Act 2010 under Race, it is important to highlight this group as distinct due to the levels of discrimination faced.

Gypsies/Travellers are, in terms of health, one of the most deprived groups in the Britain.

- Life expectancy for Gypsy and Traveller men and women is 10 years lower than the national average.
- Gypsy and Traveller mothers are 20 times more likely than the rest of the population to have experienced the death of a child.

The current population of Gypsies/Travellers in Scotland is unknown. The most recent Scottish Government estimate is 1,547 people, but this is acknowledged to be a severe underestimate as it excludes the thousands of Gypsies/Travellers living in housing for some or all of the year. Many people are afraid to identify themselves as a Gypsy/Traveller because of the extreme discrimination and prejudice they have experienced in the past. Consequently, Gypsies/Travellers estimate that their community actually includes more than 15,000 people.

The Council welcomes and will take account of Census data collected, which will provide an official source of information. Many Gypsy/Traveller families guard their Traveller identity while maintaining aspects of their traditional Gypsy/Traveller lifestyles, particularly the centrality of the family in their everyday lives.

Some Gypsy/Traveller families travel all the time, living in caravans or trailers, on local authority or privately owned sites and by the roadside. Others may live on the same site for most of the year. Many Gypsy/Traveller families live in houses for part of the year.

There is no estimate of the numbers of Gypsies/Travellers living in housing in Scotland. Many Gypsies/Travellers choose to live in a house for significant periods of time, to look after young children or to care for older members of the community. Others feel that they are forced to do so, either because they are unable to find a suitable pitch or because it is the only way to avoid the discrimination which they would otherwise experience at work, at school or in the provision of services, such as access to a GP. Studies have shown that Gypsies/Travellers who move into houses suffer poorer health than those who are living on a site or on the road. However by choosing, or simply having to

live in a house, Gypsies/Travellers do not give up aspects of their cultural or legal identity.

In order to eliminate potential discrimination and improve access to services, the Council has established a working group to ensure that joined up and effective services are provided in this area to the Gypsies/Traveller community. Further information can be found on [www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/equality](http://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/equality).

## **6.8 Religion and Belief (including non belief)**

Religious practices and beliefs practiced in East Dunbartonshire cover the full range from Buddhism to Christianity. According to information from the Census 2001, Christianity is the highest grouping followed by those who follow no religion.<sup>7</sup>

East Dunbartonshire Council is committed to operating in an environment where the religious and non-religious beliefs of all individuals are respected. The Council demonstrates this commitment by ensuring the following:

- Individuals are not treated less favourably than others because of their actual or perceived religion or belief or non-belief;
- Practices or provisions apply equally to persons of all religious beliefs or non-belief;
- Practices or provisions do not put people of the same religion or belief at a disadvantage when compared to other persons.

In developing any new policies or services, the Council will ensure that faith communities are involved and their specific needs considered in any consultation processes.

In the provision of services, all religious beliefs and backgrounds will be taken into account and reasonable adjustments provided. In terms of employment, the Council will also consider any reasonable adjustments to allow for religious observance.

## **6.9 Sex**

Around 52% of the population in East Dunbartonshire are female, and the Council recognises that they often experience discrimination, social and economic disadvantage, lack of recognition, inferior status and negative attitudes. The Council is aware that employees with caring responsibilities may need to work part-time or flexible hours. As such we have adopted a Flexible Working Hours Scheme which provides for employees to seek to organise their working hours so that they may have some measure of freedom as to the hours they work.

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<sup>7</sup> The figures will be updated following analysis of the results of 2011 Census.

The Council is also committed to ensuring that policies are in place which recognise the requirements of employees at different stages of their lives and continue to review the approach in this regard.

The Council has undertaken a programme of work in order to promote sex and gender equality. This has included actions in relation to the prevention of violence and domestic abuse and reviewing our policies to ensure that any adverse impact on sex/gender can be mitigated.

The Council recognises that there may be specific issues relating to gender. The Council is committed to a policy of zero tolerance on domestic abuse and its Prevention of Violence against Women Strategy seeks to raise awareness of domestic abuse issues within the community. The policy aims to improve services for women and children seeking help and to end domestic abuse in East Dunbartonshire by stimulating discussion around social attitudes and working with young people.

Information on specific actions undertaken to prevent sex discrimination, including work on the public sector equality duty can be found on the website at [www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/equality](http://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/equality).

## **6.10 Sexual Orientation**

East Dunbartonshire Council is committed to the elimination of discrimination due to actual or perceived sexual orientation. The Public Sector Equality Duty which came into force in April 2011 provides a new focus on this protected characteristic. Previously, discrimination due to actual or perceived sexual orientation was only banned in the field of employment, education and training; however the Equality Act 2011 extends this protection to the provision of goods and services.

It is estimated that at least 10% of the Scottish population are from a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender group, and on that basis it can be estimated that the figure in East Dunbartonshire is broadly similar. The Census 2011 asks questions around same sex civil partnerships, so there should be a better indication of numbers in 2012.

A number of areas of work are undertaken across the council in order to eliminate discrimination and to promote equality around sexual orientation. LGBT Month takes place in February each year and this is widely publicised across East Dunbartonshire. International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia, which takes place on 17th May each year, is also promoted.

Our Education service has also been working closely with LGBT Youth Scotland in order to provide resources and support to pupils. This work will continue.

East Dunbartonshire Council will continue to ensure that any discrimination is eliminated across service provision and ensure that a person's actual or

perceived sexual orientation has no bearing on the service received or in employment.

## 7. Human Rights

Every governmental institution and public service provider has a role to play in achieving human rights. It remains commonplace to think that specialised human rights laws and agencies will suffice to ensure that human rights are broadly respected. Unless all government agencies and departments make human rights a priority in their functions and policies, full realisation of human rights will be difficult to achieve.

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms which everyone is entitled to. We are all entitled to human rights in order to live with dignity.

<p><b>Human rights include civil and political rights, such as:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The right to freedom of expression</li><li>• The right to freedom of religion or conscience</li><li>• The right to property</li><li>• The right to freedom of assembly</li><li>• The right to privacy</li><li>• The right to vote.</li></ul>	<p><b>Human rights also cover economic and social rights, such as:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The right to an adequate standard of living</li><li>• The right to adequate food, housing, water and sanitation</li><li>• The rights you have at work</li><li>• The right to education.</li></ul>
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Human rights belong to everyone, everywhere, regardless of nationality, sexuality, gender, race, religion or age. The foundation of modern human rights is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The 30 articles of the Declaration were adopted in 1948 by the United Nations General Assembly, and over time these have been integrated into national laws and international treaties. The core values of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) - human dignity, fairness, equality, non-discrimination - apply to everyone, everywhere.

The Human Rights Act gives people in Scotland the opportunity to have their human rights legal case heard in a Scottish court. The Human Rights Act contains the rights which are included in the European Convention on Human Rights. The Human Rights Act makes it unlawful for a public authority (such as a local authority or a court) to act, or fail to act, in a way that is incompatible with a Convention right - all public authorities must look through a lens of human rights when they are interpreting the law. If you feel that one or more of your rights have been breached by a public authority, you can raise the matter in a court. If you are unhappy with the decision and have pursued the issue as far as it can go in the UK, you can take your complaint to the European Court of Human Rights.

The Scottish Human Rights Commission promotes and protects the human rights guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights, which form part of the law of Scotland through the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Scotland Act 1998. The Commission also promotes and protects other human rights which have been guaranteed by international conventions ratified by the UK.

East Dunbartonshire Council will seek to ensure that all requirements and needs are met, and that services are delivered with a focus on human rights. Work will also take place to ensure that all employees have an awareness of the Human Rights approach.

Information and resources on Human Rights can be found on our website at [www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/equality](http://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/equality)

## **8. Mainstreaming Equality and Human Rights**

Our approach to equality and human rights focuses on embedding equality into strategic frameworks for Services in order to achieve improved outcomes for both employees and customers. Requests for information and updates on progress in relation to equality go directly to Directorate Management Teams.

The Council's Business and Improvement Planning Guidance provides guidance on the information required from services in relation to equality in developing their Business and Improvement Plans. In order to demonstrate that equality and human rights issues are actively promoted across the organisation, each Service is required to provide a clear statement within their plans, setting out a commitment to equality and human rights, providing information on work taking place.

## **9. Consultation and Engagement on Equality and Human Rights**

East Dunbartonshire Council is committed to consulting and involving groups on our approach to equality and human rights. All of our corporate consultations are analysed to find out if there are any differences between those from protected characteristics and the overall results. This takes place through our Stakeholder Engagement programmes and other consultation mechanisms. We recognise that it is not always possible to obtain information in relation to meeting the needs of those with protected characteristics in this way and so we have set up a specific group to consider equality issues.

### **9.1 Equality Engagement Group**

The Equality Engagement Group was established in late 2008, and subsumed the work of the former Ethnic Minority Liaison Committee and the Equality and Diversity Partnership. The Group, which meets on a quarterly basis, involves local equality groups such as the Ethnic Minority Forum and Access Panel; partners such as Strathclyde Police; as well as organisations such as LGBT Youth Scotland. The Group is the main engagement mechanism between

local equality groups and the Council and its partners. As such, information and advice from the group has greatly assisted the development of this policy.

Officers may be requested to attend the Equality Engagement Group in order to provide information on various processes or council services.

Further information on the work of this group can be found at [www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/equality](http://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/equality).

## **10. Responsibility and Accountability**

This policy sets out the council's statement of intent with regard to Equality and Human rights. As such we will ensure good equality and diversity practice towards groups from all equality strands and protected characteristics.

**It is the responsibility of every employee of East Dunbartonshire Council to observe equality and anti-discrimination legislation and practices.**

However, some groups and individuals have additional responsibilities.

- The Chief Executive along with the political leadership of the Council have responsibility for the Council's approach to the wider equalities agenda, and working with the Directors and their teams will ensure its effective implementation.
- The Director of Corporate and Customer Services has a role as lead officer on equality and diversity and is supported by the Corporate Planning and Performance Team with regard to implementation of equalities policies and legislation.
- The Customer Relations and Organisational Development Service has a specific remit around equality issues. This includes the following areas:
  - Develop and review Equality Scheme and Policy
  - Effective planning for implementation of the Equality Act 2010
  - Supporting the Equality Engagement Group in developing community relations across East Dunbartonshire
  - Reviewing the implementation of the Policy Development Framework to ensure corporate policies and action plans reflect equalities requirements
  - Reviewing existing employment policies to ensure consistency with the corporate approach to Equality & Human Rights
  - Workforce monitoring and seeking to ensure the council has a workforce representative of the communities it serves
  - Provision of learning and development activities to enhance awareness of equality issues in the workplace
  - Provision of accessible information for all stakeholders

## **11. Monitoring and Review**

This document can be translated into a wide number of community languages or can be made available in alternative formats such as Braille, audio cassette and large print.

This policy will be subject to scrutiny of the Corporate and Customer Services Scrutiny Panel. It will be reviewed on an annual basis and updated in light of any change in legislation or organisational responsibility.

It will be the responsibility of the Corporate Planning and Performance Team to ensure that reviews are carried out in good time. The Equality Engagement Group will be involved in the review of progress.

All reviews of progress will be made available on the 'Equality' page of East Dunbartonshire Council website, and offered to relevant groups in the community who have either been involved in the review, or have demonstrated an interest in receiving such reports. Reports will be made available in alternative formats on request.

## **12. Further information**

Further information on actions in relation to equality and human rights can be found on the council website at [www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/equality](http://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/equality). Information is also available from the Corporate Planning and Performance Team on 0141 578 8337 or by email via [equality@eastdunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:equality@eastdunbarton.gov.uk)

## Further information

For further information, please contact:

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## Other formats

This document can be provided in large print, braille or on audio cassette and can be translated into other community languages. Contact the Corporate Communications team at:

East Dunbartonshire Council, Tom Johnston House, Civic Way,  
Kirkintilloch, Glasgow, G66 4TJ, Tel: 0300 123 4510.

असुरोध करने पर यह दस्तावेज हिन्दी में भाषांतरित किया जा सकता है। कृपया 0300 123 4510 पर फोन कीजिए।

本文件可按要求翻譯成中文，如有此需要，請電 0300 123 4510。

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Gabhaidh an sgrìobhainn seo cur gu Gàidhlig ma tha sin a dhith oirbh. Cuiribh fòin gu 0300 123 4510

**equality &  
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