



Equality and Diversity Policy



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1. Introduction

This policy is an integral part of the Council's mission to put Service and People First in North Lanarkshire to deliver quality services which provide best value and create prosperity, achieve social justice and meet local needs.

It reflects our organisational values of:-

Respect - we are open and honest, involving and listening to others, and we demonstrate respect for our citizens, our partners and each other.

Commitment – we are committed to our communities, our citizens and our colleagues, and we seek to meet people's needs and deliver a quality service.

Pride in the job - we are proud of the job we do for the people and the communities of North Lanarkshire.

Listening and learning - we continually learn and improve, transforming our organisation through the knowledge, capability and initiative of our workforce

2. Aims

We believe our responsibility for equality is wider than those areas covered by the Equality Act 2010. We are committed to achieving equality for all by eliminating all forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation that cannot be justified on the grounds of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender and transgender identity
- Health
- Income, employment status or housing circumstance
- Marital status, civil partnership status, family circumstance, or caring responsibilities
- Membership or non-membership of trade unions, or involvement or non-involvement in trade union activity
- Race, colour, nationality, national or ethnic origin, including Gypsies and Travellers
- Religious belief or non-belief or other beliefs
- Sexual orientation
- Or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

We will do this by:-

- Promoting equality of opportunity
- Fostering good relations between different groups of people
- Promoting financial inclusion and ensuring that people and communities have access to affordable financial services and the incomes they are entitled to
- Targeting services to support the most vulnerable people
- Taking a human rights based approach to our work
- Taking positive action measures where appropriate and permissible by legislation
- Removing barriers that disadvantage people

This policy is based on the key principles of social justice - fairness, equality, empowerment, inclusion, engagement, partnership, visibility and shared responsibility.

3. Legislation

This policy was created taking into account and incorporating the Equality Act 2010 the Public Sector Equality Duty, stemming from the Act, and the Human Rights Act 1998. This policy contains principles that are underpinned by other Council policies, guidance and codes of practice and in particular the Equality of Opportunity in Employment Policy, Equality Strategy and the codes of conduct for Elected Members, Chief Officers and local government workers.

4. Scope of the policy

- 4.1 Like most Local Authorities in Scotland, we provide services and undertake duties through a range of services. In North Lanarkshire, our services and management structures are led by the chief executive, with executive directors heading up Corporate Services, Finance and Customer Services, Housing and Social Work Services, Learning and Leisure Services and Regeneration and Environmental Services.
- 4.2 Every employee and Elected Member has a personal responsibility for ensuring that his or her behaviour is acceptable within the terms of the Equality and Diversity Policy. However, we acknowledge that specific responsibilities fall upon managers, supervisors and those individuals involved in recruitment and personnel administration or who receive requests for service provision. The Council recognises its responsibility to train and support employees and elected members in their respective roles.
- 4.3 Managers will be responsible for implementing the policy within their service and for ensuring that employees are familiar with, and act in accordance with the policy, and that adequate monitoring arrangements are in place.

5. Management and Governance

The Council has six key functions:

- Provider and commissioner of services
- Employer
- Regulator
- Influencer
- Planner
- Key player in partnerships

- 5.1 Our overall democratic decision making process is the committee system. This is regulated to meet the Council's objectives and is the way in which we can effectively, lawfully and democratically discharge our functions.
- 5.2 As part of the wider community planning process, we are committed to community engagement which is set out in our corporate strategy on community engagement.
- 5.3 We will do all in our power to address inequality and take every opportunity to raise issues at a national level and where appropriate. We are well aware that achieving real equality in North Lanarkshire is a long-term aim and requires wider social change.

6. Council position

- 6.1 In driving forward equality and diversity issues we will incorporate diversity and equality and challenge discrimination and inequality within all of our core activities and corporate initiatives. We will do this when delivering services, when employing others to deliver services on our behalf and when providing funding to others and procure contracts to provide services to the people of North Lanarkshire. We will make equality a mainstream part of our work. This means ensuring that all aspects of what we do such as our policies, plans, practices and procedures reflect and incorporate equality objectives and targets.
- 6.2 We seek to ensure that employment opportunities with the Council are open and accessible to all and that every employee is treated fairly during the whole of their working life. This is at the heart of the council's equality and diversity in employment policy.
- 6.3 We will assess and monitor the impact of our policies, procedures, services and functions on communities and make changes to them should they impact unfairly or adversely on any group(s) and publicly report on progress.
- 6.4 We will use the "Social Model of Disability" as the basis for our work to promote equality and deliver services for disabled people. This Model describes how it is the way society is constructed that disables people rather than their impairment - attitudinal, environmental, institutional, information and communication barriers prevent disabled people from participating fully in society.
- 6.5 We will train our employees to implement this policy. We are committed to making available appropriate training and development resources to equip employees with the necessary aptitude, skills, knowledge and qualifications to effectively perform the

duties and responsibilities of their posts. We recognise the significant contribution employee training and development can make to:

- Improving the quality and standard of services it delivers
- Meeting the challenges of change and adaptation
- Achieving the organisation's corporate and service objectives
- Meeting the needs of individual employees

6.6 We will consider the needs of all communities in the methods we use for communicating with customers, employees and residents to ensure access to all our services for all. This means ensuring that our communications are accessible and understandable for everyone. We recognise that providing good information in the right way is important in raising awareness of our services and in helping people to use them to maximum benefit.

6.7 We will consult with and engage people from all the diverse communities in North Lanarkshire to help shape our policies, practices and the services we deliver and seek to make it possible for everyone to participate fully in the life of North Lanarkshire.