

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL – 21 JUNE 2007**

**GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME**

**Report by the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to recommend to Council the Gender Equality Scheme.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 At the meeting on 27 March 2007 the Policy and Resources Committee noted a report which outlined the Council's statutory obligations in terms of the Equalities Act 2006 which amends the Sex Discrimination Act 1975.
- 2.2 In particular the Committee noted the requirement for the Council to produce a Gender Equality Scheme by 29 June 2007 in terms of the Specific Duties contained in the legislation.

**3. GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME**

- 3.1 As required by the Equalities Act 2006 and as defined in the Specific Duties, a Gender Equality Scheme has been developed and is attached as an Appendix to this report.
- 3.2 The Gender Equality Scheme lays out:-
- a. The Council's gender equality objectives and what evidence has been used to develop these objectives;
  - b. How the Council consulted staff and service users in setting objectives;
  - c. How the Council will assess the impact of policies and practices on gender equality;
  - d. the Council's arrangements for gathering information in relation to employment and service delivery;
  - e. what action the Council will take to meet its objectives over the next three years

3.3 Also attached to the Gender Equality Scheme is an Action Plan which sets out the steps which the Council will take to ensure that it meets its statutory obligations contained in the General Duty. These obligations are that the Council in carrying out its functions will have due regard to the need to:-

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; and
- Promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

#### **4. POLICY AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The approval of the Gender Equality Scheme will enable the Council to meet its statutory obligations and its policy objectives in relation to the promotion of equality for all its citizens.

#### **5. CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM**

5.1 The proposals contained in this report have been agreed by the Corporate Management Team.

#### **6. COMMUNITY PLAN**

6.1 The Gender Equality Scheme and its related Action Plan will contribute to the achievement of all aspects of the Community Plan.

#### **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no financial implications arising at this time from the Gender Equality Duty. Any future financial implications arising from actions taken under the Gender Equality Scheme and related Action Plan will require to be considered in accordance with the Council's agreed budgetary arrangements either from departmental budgets or by specific consideration by the relevant Committee.

#### **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

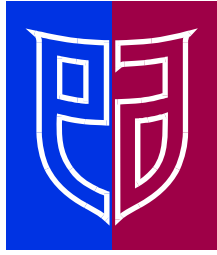
8.1 The Council is recommended to approve the Gender Equality Scheme attached to this report.

**Depute Chief Executive/  
Executive Director of Corporate Support  
13 June 2007**

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Report of 5 March 2007 on the Gender Equality Duty by the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support approved by the Policy and Resources Committee on 27 March 2007.

Anyone wishing further information should contact the Head of Personnel (tel: 01563 576092).



**East Ayrshire**  
COUNCIL

# **Gender Equality Scheme**

**2007 - 2010**

# Gender Equality Scheme

## Forward

We are both pleased to introduce East Ayrshire Council's Gender Equality Scheme. The Scheme outlines how the Council will ensure that in carrying out its various functions it will do so having due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

The task of promoting social inclusion, tackling discrimination and encouraging equal opportunities has been a key issue for East Ayrshire Council and we are committed to eliminating gender inequality and promoting equality between women and men (girls and boys). We recognise there are gender differences in people's life chances, what services they gain access to, the types of jobs they do and how well pupils achieve at school. We also know that other equality issues such as race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age also affect people's lives and a 'one size fits all' approach is not the answer.

The Community Plan seeks to ensure that all of East Ayrshire's citizens can contribute to the life of the community free from barriers both structural and organisational. Also, the Council seeks to ensure that the needs and wishes of women and men are taken account of in all aspects of service delivery.

Although the Council has done much to promote gender equality, it is acknowledged that there is more work to be done. The Gender Equality Scheme will be regularly monitored, reviewed, and developed in line with our core values, user feedback, best practice and legislation.

Leader of the Council \_\_\_\_\_

Chief Executive \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Introduction	3
2. East Ayrshire Profile	5
3. Our Guiding Principles	6
4. The Community Plan	8
5. National Gender Profile	10
6. Gender Equality in Education	13
7. Gender Equality in Service Delivery	15
8. Employment – Improving Diversity and Increasing Representation	19
9. Responsibility for the Scheme	22
10. Assessing & Consulting	23
11. Action Plan	24
12. Gender Impact Assessment	25
13. Publishing the Results	26
14. Reviewing the Gender Equality Scheme	27
15. Comments and Complaints	28

Appendix 1 – Objectives and Action Plan

# 1. Introduction to the Gender Equality Scheme

## The Equality Act 2006

This Gender Equality Scheme has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2006 which amended the Sex Discrimination Act 1975.

The Gender Equality Duty [GED] comes into force in April 2007 and it requires public authorities to promote gender equality and eliminate sex discrimination. Instead of depending on individuals making complaints about sex discrimination, the duty places the legal responsibility on public authorities to demonstrate that they treat men and women fairly. The duty will affect policy making, public services, such as transport, and employment practices such as recruitment and flexible working.

The legislation carries both General and Specific Duties.

## The General Duty

The General Duty requires that every public authority in carrying out its functions should:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, taking active steps to comply with both the Sex Discrimination Act and Equal Pay Act
- Take Active steps to promote equality of opportunity between men and women when carrying out their functions and activities.

## The Specific Duties

The General Duty is the first positive step towards ensuring that women and men (girls & boys) receive services and are offered employment and development opportunities that meet more closely their needs, abilities and aspirations. To support progress in delivering the General Duty, there are also a number of Specific Duties with which the Council must comply. These are:-

- To produce and publish a Gender Equality Scheme (GES) identifying Gender Equality goals and actions to meet those goals
- To consult with employees and stakeholders in the development of the GES
- To publish an annual report on progress with the Action Plan
- To develop and publish an equal pay policy including measures to address promotion, development and occupational segregation
- To conduct and publish gender impact assessment of all legislation and major policy development and publish their criteria for conducting such assessments

## **Benefits of the Scheme**

The new duty aims to make gender equality central to the way that the Council works in order to create:

- A better informed decision making and policy development
- A clearer understanding of the needs of service users
- A better quality of services which meet varied needs
- A more effective targeting of policy and resources
- A more effective use of talent in the workforce
- Better results and greater confidence in public services

Women are frequently disadvantaged by policies and practices that do not recognise their greater caring responsibilities, the different pattern of their working lives, their more limited access to resources and their greater vulnerability to domestic violence and sexual assault.

Men are also disadvantaged by workplace cultures that do not support their family or childcare responsibilities, by family services that assume they have little or no role in parenting, or by health services which do not recognise their different health needs.

Both sexes suffer from stereotyping of their roles and needs. The Gender Equality Duty should help the public sector, and those working with it, to identify and respond to stereotyping, sex discrimination and sexism resulting in improvements for all.

## 2. East Ayrshire Profile



East Ayrshire is situated in West Central Scotland, approximately thirty miles south of Glasgow

The authority covers an area of four hundred and ninety square miles. East Ayrshire has a population of approximately 119,400 \* of which 57,550 are male (48%) and 61,850 female (52%) living in a total of 50,346 households. There are twenty three main communities and settlements in a diverse geographical area, embracing both rural and urban settlement. The main population centres are Kilmarnock, Cumnock, Stewarton, Galston, Hurlford & Crookedholm, Mauchline and Auchinleck.

East Ayrshire has a high quality environment with good quality services, including health, education, social services and a strong community spirit, however, East Ayrshire as a whole has significantly higher levels of poverty than the Scottish average and compared to other authorities in Scotland, as a proportion of the relevant population, for example East Ayrshire has the:

- third highest proportion of unemployed people claiming benefit
- sixth highest proportion of children of families claiming benefit
- fourth highest proportion of lone parents claiming benefit
- the highest proportion of carers claiming carers allowance

East Ayrshire Council is the largest employer in the area with a workforce of around 6,800 comprising 70.8% females with 34.1% working part-time.

It is estimated that the overall population in East Ayrshire is likely to decline by 0.98% up to the year 2014. This will be an uneven decline with the decline of the population of people aged 30-49 years declining as much as 12% with an estimated growth in the relative percentage of people in the 65 to 74 years group to increase as much as 17.23%.

\* Source: General Register Office for Scotland (2005 Mid Year Estimates of Population) 2006

### **3. Our Guiding Principles**

East Ayrshire's guiding principles which are detailed in the Community Plan will direct how we identify and prioritise what needs to be done and plan, co-ordinate and deliver action to meet identified priorities. By planning together, working together and achieving together East Ayrshire Council will:

#### **Promote social justice and social inclusion**

The Social Justice principles of equality and social inclusion are about making sure that women, men, people with a disability, or from a minority ethnic group, no matter what their life circumstances, have opportunities and choices.

#### **Build sustainability**

East Ayrshire Council is committed to making sure that the outcomes of social, economic and environmental improvements are sustainable and will stand the test of time. A sustainable community is one which makes sure today's decisions do not have a negative effect on the future and where actions will have a long-lasting effect.

#### **Succeed in joint working and involving people**

East Ayrshire Council acknowledges that the major problems facing the area cannot be dealt with by public agencies working in isolation within their own limited budgets. We need to work together and involve communities, voluntary organisations and the private sector more effectively to get the best value from the public money that is invested in the area and to deliver real and lasting change for women and men.

#### **Ensure effective engagement in the planning of local services**

East Ayrshire recognises the importance effective engagement in the planning and development of local services. By working together and consulting with communities, we will plan and develop services tailored to the needs of women and men living and working in East Ayrshire.

#### **Ensure quality and accessibility**

East Ayrshire Council recognises many women and men who use public services need access to more than one agency at a given time. Making sure our services are high quality, efficient and effective involves joining up our services to meet all of the needs a person might have rather than sending people from one agency to another which is how services have traditionally been offered. By listening to women and men receiving services and using what they tell us to influence how we develop services, we will make their needs the focus of policy making to tailor services to the needs of users.

#### **Deliver continuous improvement and best value**

East Ayrshire Council will develop a set of standards against which we can measure our performance; women and men will be able to see how we are achieving the targets set out in the action plans which form part of the community plan. We will track our progress

by monitoring a range of socio-economic measures, for example, the levels of reported crime or the levels of unemployment. By comparing these with our starting position, we will know whether we are making a real difference. We will report regularly to the people of East Ayrshire on how well we are doing and the progress we are making towards meeting our targets.

## 4. The Community Plan

The Gender Equality Scheme takes account of and will contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Community Plan which sets out the overall vision:

**“East Ayrshire will be a place with strong, vibrant communities where everyone has a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices and high quality services which are sustainable, accessible and meet people’s needs.”**

The six key themes of the Community Plan which have been developed with our partners are:-

### **Promoting community learning**

Community learning offers the chance to develop potential and improve the quality of lives for men and women. It also offers an opportunity for people to take an active part in local community life and in making decisions which affect their lives.

### **Improving opportunities**

East Ayrshire aims to improve opportunities for women and men by growing existing business and supporting inward investment, making sure that education providers and businesses work together to give the best start to young people.

### **Improving community safety**

East Ayrshire is committed to creating safe places for women and men in which to live, work and play by reducing crime, improving public safety in neighbourhoods and homes.

### **Improving health**

East Ayrshire Council is committed to improving the health and well-being of women and men by reducing risk bringing about change to tackle the worst health problems, making sure that services are fully accessible, helping men and women of all ages live healthy lifestyles.

### **Eliminating poverty**

East Ayrshire Council will work to tackle poverty by working to attract good quality jobs, increasing employment rates of men and women in relatively disadvantaged in the economy, supporting carers, tackling links between poor housing and ill health etc.

### **Improving the environment**

East Ayrshire Council is committed to protecting, improving and using our natural and built environment in an environmentally friendly way that will benefit women and men, girls and boys.

The Community Plan seeks to ensure that all of East Ayrshire's citizens can contribute to the life of the community free from barriers both structural and organisational.

The Council in seeking to meet the aims of the Community Plan is keen to ensure that the needs and wishes of men and women are taken account of in all aspects of its service delivery.

The Council and its Community Planning Partners have recently reviewed the Community Plan which is underpinned by measurable Action Plans. This can be viewed on [www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk](http://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk)

Our Community Planning Partners will also be producing their own Gender Equality Schemes, and together we aim to provide equality of opportunity and equitable outcomes throughout East Ayrshire.

## 5. National Gender Profile

In order to gain an improved understanding of the different service and employment needs of women and men and how they may access these in distinct ways as a result of their gender, it is beneficial to analyse existing data that has been disaggregated by sex.

According to the latest figures produced by the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) the population of Scotland was 5.08 million in 2004. The gender breakdown of the population is shown in Table 1.

### Resident population 2004

**Table 1**

Age Group	Females		Males	
	thousands	%	thousands	%
Under 16	457	17	479	20
16 – 64	1,690	64	1,627	67
65 and over	486	18	341	14
All ages	2,632	100	2,446	100

*Source: GROS (2005) Mid-2004 population estimates Scotland*

Women play an important part in the overall employment market but as the data in Table 2 shows there is a high level of part-time working by women. The table also shows different employment patterns between men and women.

### Employment by age 2005

People aged 16 or over

**Table 2**

Women	In employment (1)		Employment rate	Unemployment rate
	% full-time	% part-time		
16 – 24	56	44	60	11.7
25 – 44	61	39	76	5.4
45 – 64	60	40	62	2.0*
65 or over	--	--	3	--
All aged 16 – 64	60	40	68	5.2

## Men

16 – 24	70	30	63	15.8
25 – 44	96	4	86	5.0
45 – 64	93	7	76	3.6
65 or over	39	61	9	--
All aged 16 – 64	91	9	78	6.3

(1) Employees and self-employed

-- not shown as based on small sample

\* high relative standard error, estimate may be unreliable

Source: ONS (2005) Labour Force Survey Spring 2005 dataset

Statistics published by the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) and detailed in Table 3 show the convergence in average hourly earnings: in 2005 women working full-time earned on average £11.37 an hour whereas men earned £12.91, resulting in gender pay gap of 11.9%. This compares with a pay gap of 31% in 1975.

## Full-time & Part-time earnings 2005

Mean earnings of employees on adult rates\*

Table 3	Women	Men	Gender pay gap %**
<b>Hourly earnings (£ per hour)</b>			
Full-time	11.37	12.91	11.9
Part-time	8.57	9.22	33.6***
<b>Weekly earnings (£ per week)</b>			
Full-time	423.8	522.9	19.0
<b>Annual earnings (£k per year)</b>			
Full-time	21.5	27.8	22.5

\* Hourly earnings exclude overtime. Total weekly earnings include basic, overtime, payment by results, shift pay etc. Annual earnings are for employees who have been with the same employer for at least a year.

\*\* 100 – (women's earnings as a percentage of men's full-time earnings\_.

\*\*\* The part-time gender pay gap is the difference between the average hourly earnings of part-time women and full-time men.

*Source: ONS (2005) Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2005, revised December 2005.*

There is evidence of continuing occupational segregation in Scotland. Data published by the EOC shows that women held four fifths of personal service and administrative and secretarial jobs, while over 90% of trades people and process; plant and machine operators are men. Similarly, 93% of workers in the construction industry are men.

## 6. Gender Equality in Education

The Council, as an Education Authority, is required to produce a Gender Equality Scheme. In addition the responsibility is placed on Education Service to ensure that schools:

- gather information on the effects of their policies and practices on gender equality
- assess the impact of those policies and practices on gender equality
- carry out steps to meet the duty in line with the education authority scheme
- report on these activities

The major priorities for education in East Ayrshire are to:

- raise attainment in numeracy
- raise attainment in literacy
- improve attendance and levels of inclusion
- promote health and wellbeing
- ensure sustainable development

These five arrears are directly linked to the themes of the Community Plan. There are a number of key areas which will be a particular focus in relation to gender.

### **Attainment and Achievement**

The Gender Equality Duty provides a focus for evaluating learning, teaching and assessment methods for gender bias. Information in relation to achievement and attainment will be analysed in relation to gender to determine specific action which may be required at both Authority and school level

### **Attendance and Level of Inclusion**

Current monitoring would indicate that there are gender differences in relation to attendance and levels of inclusion. These in turn potentially impact on educational outcomes for children and young people. This information will be analysed on an annual basis as part of the departments overall performance management arrangements

### **Promote Health and Wellbeing**

All schools deliver services within the context of the Health Promoting Schools Framework. This encompasses lifestyles and social and personal development. Gender differences will be monitored across key indicators.

### **Impact Assessment**

Impact Assessment will ensure that policies and their implementation will not discriminate against girls and boys. A model policy is being produced which will ensure that policies are impact assessed.

## **Monitoring and reporting on progress**

There will be an annual progress report on the gender equality scheme. There will be an expectation that all educational establishments monitor key performance data as part of its improvement planning process.

## **Responsibilities**

The responsibility for gender equality in education lies with the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services. Head Teachers and staff in schools are responsible for ensuring gender equality in education within their establishments.

## 7. Gender Equality in Service Delivery

East Ayrshire Council will ensure that information about Council services is available to all women and men and services are accessible to everyone. To achieve this we will:

- Consider the implications of access to information and services when assessing how we monitor our services
- Assess whether there is an adverse impact by gender in the provision of a service or planned services
- Take positive action to address any inequality, disadvantage or discrimination
- Encourage women and /or men to use our services where evidence shows that either gender have a low take up of particular services

As a service provider we aim to:

- Provide a safe, welcoming and inclusive access for women and men using our services
- Treat everyone with dignity, politeness and respect
- Train employees to provide appropriate services according to individual needs
- Work with partner agencies and community groups to promote equality of opportunity and raise awareness of equality issues

The services listed below are some of the 'gender equality headline indicators' as identified by the Equal Opportunities Commission. However, the list should not be considered exhaustive

### **Improve the Accessibility of Transport Services**

Transport is increasingly recognised as a key element of ensuring equality and social inclusion, because it is a means by which people get to work, access public services and participate in community life. East Ayrshire Council is aware that for many women and men, ethnic backgrounds and disabilities access to transport is extremely important.

The Council will therefore, continue to strive to ensure equalities in transport by actively listening, consulting and involving women and men, boys and girls living and working in East Ayrshire and by lobbying the relevant transport providers.

### **Increase Community Safety**

East Ayrshire's Community Safety Partnership is made up of representatives from a wide range of services, which have an impact on, or contribution to make towards improving community safety.

The Partnership recently published their Action Plan for 2007-2011 which focuses on:

- crime, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime
- to work with young people to reduce the likelihood of them getting involved in crime and anti-social behaviour
- to improve community safety in neighbourhoods and homes
- to improve child protection and the safety of vulnerable adults

Statistical evidence over a 5 year period has been analysed to inform the 2007-2011 Action plan and it has been noted that in East Ayrshire total crime is 12% below the Scottish average over the last 5 years and 18% below in 2006.

## **Domestic Abuse**

Domestic abuse is essentially a pattern of behaviour characterised by the exercise of control and the misuse of power by one person over another within the context of an intimate relationship. It is manifested in various ways, which include but are not limited to, physical, sexual, emotional, financial abuse, the imposition of social isolation and is most commonly a combination of them all.

Research shows that a majority of the victims of domestic abuse are women and the perpetrators predominately men. The British Crime Survey (2001) suggests that one in four women and one in six men will be a victim of domestic violence in their lifetime. Such acts of violence can also take place in lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transsexual relationships.

East Ayrshire Council works closely with a number of local organisations who assist the victims of domestic abuse and their families. The Council are also part of East Ayrshire Domestic Abuse Forum which is a multi-agency partnership comprising representatives of all the agencies working with women and children in East Ayrshire.

The Forum was established to take forward the National Strategy to address Domestic Abuse in Scotland (2000) and provides an opportunity to improve services across agencies, share information about developments in individual agency responses to domestic abuse as well as working together to take forward the East Ayrshire Abuse Strategy.

All the agencies in the Forum recognise that responding to domestic abuse is not the responsibility of any one agency but is a collective responsibility on all agencies. Accordingly, the Forum is committed to working co-operatively to develop consistent, quality responses to challenge domestic abuse in East Ayrshire.

## **Fear of Crime**

Men and women's fear and experience of crime are very different. For example, Home Office statistics show that men most worry about car theft while women worry most about rape and attack. Data shows that men are slightly more likely to be a victim of crime than

women but men are far more likely to be a victim of a stranger, whereas women are more likely to be a victim of someone known to them.

## **Support for Parents, Carers & Families**

Based on evidence from consultation with employees and the community, women are significantly more likely to have childcare and other caring responsibilities. The following are current Council initiatives to support families and carers:

- Information to enable parents and carers to make informed choices about services they need is available through a wide range of agencies
- Information to enable parents and carers to support children and young people in making their own informed choices, especially through key transition points, is made available through a wide range of services
- We have web based information through our award winning web site
- Childcare is available through a range of childcare providers who provide choice and flexibility to parents and carers, e.g. Childminders, Full Day Care, Seasonal Childcare and Before and After School Provision.
- There is a range of local family support services across East Ayrshire delivered through Sure Start, Family and Children's Centre and Social Work services, a wide variety of voluntary and community sector organisations and some schools

East Ayrshire Council will continue to work with employees, and the community (men and women, boys and girls) to ensure that childcare needs are regularly reviewed and updated through consultation and involvement mechanisms developed through the Council.

## **Black and Minority Ethnic Communities (BME)**

Consultation took place between the Council and women from the BME community. As a result of the consultation, however, many of the women felt that there were no immediate issues that directly affected them in respect of their gender.

East Ayrshire Council acknowledges the barriers that some groups face during consultation and will continue to examine alternatives to ensure that appropriate consultative mechanisms can be implemented and supported. In this connection, the Council will seek to ensure that the Gender Equality Scheme and the Race Equality Scheme are aligned where appropriate.

## **Disability**

East Ayrshire Council consulted with various disability groups within the locality, including:

- Kilmarnock Access Panel
- Cumnock Access Panel
- Virtually Inclusive Partners
- Keeping Included (KIN)
- East Ayrshire Council Disabled Employee Forum

From the consultation a number of key issues were identified by disabled people:

- women are more than likely to face discrimination in employment due to both disability and gender
- disabled people face widespread prejudice and environmental barriers that exclude them from the labour market
- access to services can still be difficult

The Council will continue to consult to ensure that service delivery impacts on women and men with disabilities equally and the above issues are addressed. This consultation will link both the Gender Equality Scheme and the Disability Equality Scheme.

## **Men's Health**

East Ayrshire Council recognises that fewer men than women seek medical advice and access their GP and as a result identified a need to offer the opportunity for men to seek advice and information at their workplace. As a part of the council's commitment to encourage men's involvement in looking after their health, East Ayrshire Council holds the Gold Award, under Scotland's Health at Work Scheme (SHAW) which is now part of our continuing commitment to provide equal access to both female and male employees East Ayrshire actively promoted 'Men's Health Week' as the Council recognised that men are less likely than women to access Health Services. The sessions have been extremely successful.

## **Transsexual People**

The duty requires local authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment against transsexual people. The EOC Code of Practice on the Gender Equality Duty defines a transsexual person as someone who intends to undergo, is currently undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment.

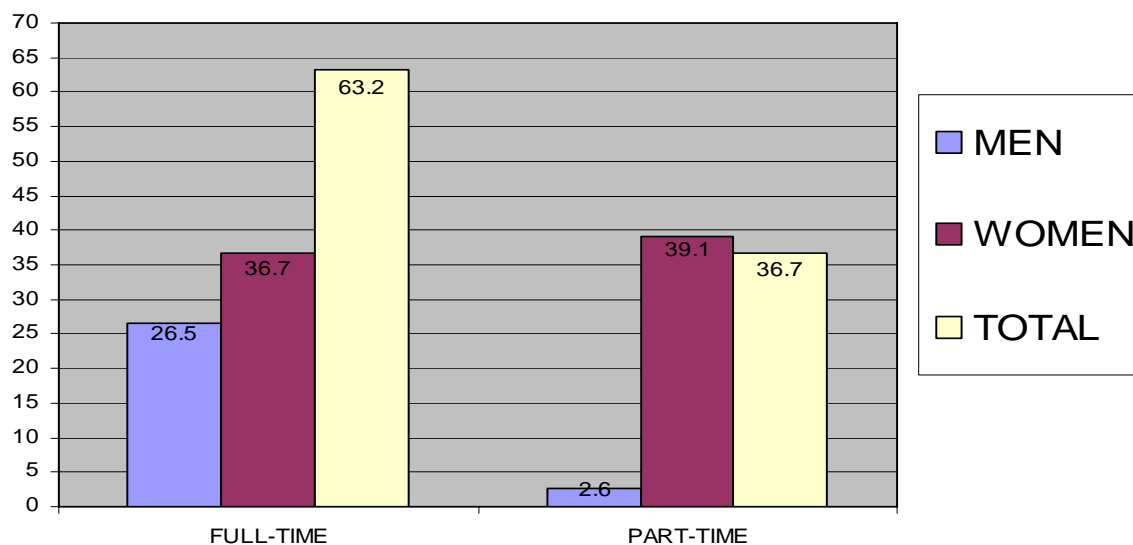
Currently the duty only protects transsexual people against discrimination in the fields of employment and vocational training. By December 2007 protection will be extended to the provision of goods and services.

## 8. Employment

### Improving Diversity and Increasing Representation

#### East Ayrshire Council Gender Profile

Within its overall workforce of around 6,800 the Council employs approximately 29.2% men and 70.8% women on a permanent contractual basis. This figure is not indicative of the national average figure in that the Council employs significantly more women.



Of these totals 26.5% of men and 36.7% of women work full-time and 2% of men and 39.1% of women work part-time.

In 2005/06 the 37.6% were women in the top 5% of highest paid in the Council

#### Breaking Down Gender Stereotypes and Promoting Positive Role Models

Employment information from monitoring between 1 April 2005 – 31 March 2006 shows that 70.8% of the workforce is female. The Services with the greatest concentration of females are Education 62.8% followed by Social Work 35.5%. The lowest proportions of women were in the former Department of Development and Property Services with 20.8%. The departments where women have less representation are those which have the greatest number of technical and engineering based occupations. The Council's workforce reflects trends in wider society where females and males are more likely to work in areas that are considered to be stereotypical, for example 100% of apprentices entering plastering were male.

The Council has an important contribution to make towards breaking down the barriers which stop boys and girls, men and women entering into non-traditional occupations. The Council will therefore:

- work closely with schools and colleges to promote the idea that girls and boys can do jobs traditionally dominated by the opposite sex.
- promote positive gender role models such as female engineers and technicians and male care workers

## **Work-Life Balance**

The Council through its Work-Life Balance policies and working practices including Career Break Scheme, Homeworking Scheme, Flexible Working Hours Scheme and reduced and compressed hours working patterns seeks to ensure that its employment practices do not build in barriers to employment or career progression.

## **Support and Advice for Carers**

East Ayrshire Council has a number of policies in place to support employees who are carers which include:

- A flexible working hours scheme
- Special leave for carers of sick relatives
- A Child Care Benefit Scheme

The 2005 Employee Attitude Survey carried out indicated that the majority of Council employees were familiar with above policies.

## **Monitoring Employment**

The Council will monitor by gender its workforce and employment activities in the following areas:-

- Total workforce profile
- Recruitment and Selection
- Discipline
- Grievance, Harassment and Bullying
- Training
- Leavers and exit interviews

The collation and monitoring of this data will allow the tailoring of actions and initiatives to improve recruitment, development and retention of a more gender balanced workforce. The results of the monitoring will be published in the annual report on the Gender Equality Scheme.

## **Transsexual Staff**

Under the Gender Duty we are required to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment against transsexual people (that is, those who

have undergone, are undergoing, or intend to undergo gender reassignment) in fields of employment and training.

East Ayrshire Council acknowledges the sensitivity and importance of monitoring transsexual staff and will respect the individual rights to disclosure and is aware that there has been a lack of feedback from transgender people in the development of our Gender Equality Scheme. It is therefore the intention develop further work in this area by undertaking consultation specifically with transgender people, and organisations who support transsexual people. This will allow individuals to contribute to the monitoring and review of the Scheme.

## **Equal Pay Review**

In accordance with the requirements of the Specific Duty, the Council will develop and publish an equal pay policy including measures to address promotion, development and occupational segregation. The Trade Unions will be involved in both the development and application of the Equal Pay Policy.

Under the terms of the 1997 Single Status Agreement the Council has with effect from 1 April 2006 implemented a single Pay and Grading Scheme which removed the previous separate pay arrangements for the former APT&C and Manual Worker employee groups. This revised pay and grading scheme was subjected to an external and independent Equality Impact Assessment.

## **Training Employees on Equality and Diversity**

Over the next three years, the Council will deliver a programme of mandatory training in support of the Equalities Agenda and its responsibilities laid out in our Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes. Different methods of training will be considered to meet the differing needs of elected members and employees in delivering on this work. This will draw together existing policies, training programmes and good practice to increase skills and confidence.

Equal Opportunities issues will continue to be addressed in mainstream training for line managers and front line staff in service areas at a local level. Equal Opportunities training is also delivered as part of the Induction programme for all new employees.

Service areas will continue to provide specific equality training to enhance their own gender equality performance and respond to specific service requirements.

The overall equality and diversity training programme will be reviewed on an annual basis and the findings will be reported in our annual review of the Gender Equality Scheme.

## 9. Responsibility for the Scheme

The following levels of responsibility for the Gender Equality Scheme and its related Action Plan are in place:-

- East Ayrshire Council through Cabinet has responsibility for approving and maintaining the scheme
- The Chief Executive and Executive Directors are responsible for ensuring the Scheme is implemented effectively throughout the Council's Services
- The Governance and Scrutiny Committee will be responsible for ensuring that Services meet their obligations as laid down in the Scheme and its accompanying Action Plan
- The Equalities Strategy Group, which is chaired by the Chief Executive and includes all Executive Directors, will ensure that Elected Members and Chief Officers receive current advice on best practice relating to gender issues

## 10. Assessing and Consulting

East Ayrshire Council values the role that consultation plays in formulating and delivering appropriate services and improving public confidence and trust. We are constantly striving to develop and improve services to meet the needs of the people we serve. We provide information, consult about existing and developing services and engage in active partnership with local people. We use a range of methods, including our community planning forums, residents' panels, newsletters, engagement with community groups etc. The Council has also endorsed the National Standards for Community Involvement.

In producing the Gender Equality Scheme, a number of meetings were organised with different groups to ensure meaningful consultation particularly with hard to reach groups.

Consultations involved:

- East Ayrshire Women's Forum
- Asian Women's Group
- Access Panels
- Women's Aid
- East Ayrshire Council employees through the intranet
- Trade Unions
- East Ayrshire Council's Employee Disability Group
- Members of the public through Council Website questionnaire

Information was also published on the internet with a questionnaire and on the internal intranet for Council employees.

# 11. Action Plan

An Action Plan, which is contained in to the Scheme (Appendix 1) detail the steps which the Council will take to ensure that it meets its General Duty.

Each Department will produce individual Action Plans and identify the priorities of women and men through established consultation arrangements.

The strategic priorities of the Council including business milestones and major projects to be implemented over the timescales of the Scheme;

Evidence of where problems and priorities lie;

Specific outcomes which the Council wishes to achieve to promote gender equality set against a realistic timetable.

## 12. Gender Impact Assessments

The Council will implement a system for carrying out Impact Assessments. The system will allow policies, procedures and proposed changes to be assessed to ensure that the Council's decisions and activities do not disadvantage women and men. It will allow the Council to identify where it might better promote equality of opportunity for women and men and where different parts of the gender equality duty might be built into these policies and practices.

Lead staff operating in each service area will carry out impact assessments on relevant policies. Each service area will prioritise its functions and policies for review and indicate in which year the review will be completed. That is, year one, high priority, to be completed 2007/8, year two medium priority, to be completed 2008/9 and low priority to be completed 2009/10.

The findings from the assessments will be reported to the relevant Head of Service for information and remedial action by the lead policy officer. The results of gender impact assessments will be published.

## 13. Publishing the Results

East Ayrshire Council is committed to governance undertaken with integrity and in the public's interest. Our decision – making processes are open, honest and accountable, involving and extending awareness of our activities.

The Council will use existing methods of disseminating information on assessments, consultation and monitoring. Full reports of individual Gender Impact Assessments or consultations will be available on request from relevant service areas. Summaries of these results will be available on request from relevant service areas and will be published within three months of the full impact assessment and annually as part of the review of the Gender Equality Scheme. Information on equality impact assessments, consultations and monitoring results and actions will be published widely in a variety of Council publications:

Headlines Newsletter  
Newsletters  
Annual Reports  
Local Media  
Internet and Intranet

Information will be put into various accessible formats on request, for example:

- Braille
- Audio-tape
- Translations into community languages

All service areas will also update the internet and intranet to keep our customers and employees informed of the outcomes of the gender impact assessments undertaken.

## 14. Reviewing the Gender Equality Scheme

The Equalities Strategy Group and the Equality & Diversity Officer will be responsible for driving forward the Gender Equality Scheme and monitoring progress. Reports from the Equalities Strategy Group will go to Cabinet and will be subject to scrutiny by the Governance and Scrutiny Committee. As part of its review of political management arrangements the Council is currently considering the establishment of a range of Forums including those with an Equalities focus.

The Scheme will be reviewed annually using the EOC framework standards and guidance.

Staff and members of the public will be kept up to date on progress made in promoting gender equality through newsletters, the internet, intranet, annual reports etc.

The Gender Equality Scheme will be achieved through the six core objectives. These will form the action-planning framework which will build on standards and focus on the action that needs to be taken. The six objectives are:

1. Developing the scheme
2. Employment duties
3. Identifying relevant functions and policies
4. Monitoring Council policies for adverse impact
5. Assessing involving & consulting
6. Communicating the results of assessment, consultation and monitoring

These will also be supported by individual service area action plans to ensure the Council drives forward the gender equality agenda.

## 15. Comments and Complaints

Comments or complaints relating to the gender equality issues in either employment or service delivery will be dealt with under the Council's existing arrangements.

Reporting on how complaints have been dealt with will form part of the annual review of the Gender Equality Scheme. The Equalities Strategy Group and service area equality groups will also consider individual complaints where appropriate to identify areas of improvement.

Complaints by employees will be dealt with under the Council's Grievance Procedures.

If anyone has comments on the Gender Equality Scheme please contact the Council's Equality and Diversity Officer at:

East Ayrshire Council  
Council Headquarters  
London Road  
Kilmarnock  
KA3 7BU  
Tel: 01563 576244  
E-mail: [alyia.zaheed@east-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:alyia.zaheed@east-ayrshire.gov.uk)

Appendix 1



# **East Ayrshire Council**

## **Gender Equality Scheme**

### **Objectives and Action Plan**

## 1. Developing the Scheme

**Purpose: To mainstream compliance with our duty to promote equality of opportunity for all by ensuring gender equality is mainstreamed into all policies, functions and procedures of the council**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
To implement the Gender Equality Scheme	Prepare service action plan to review functions, policies and procedures, and all other elements of the scheme	Completion of action plans	Ongoing from March 2007	Equalities Strategy Group Heads of Service Equality & Diversity Officer
Identification of managers' responsibility regarding the implementation of the Gender Equality Scheme	The requirement to promote gender equality as part of generic managers' competencies	Increased emphasis given to gender within all decision making across the council	Ongoing from June 2007	Heads of Service
To provide assistance in the implementation of the scheme at a corporate level	Guideline and advice to be developed and disseminated via the Equalities Strategy Group	Increased awareness of gender equality and implementation of the Gender Equality Scheme	By February 2008	Equalities Strategy Group Equality & Diversity Officer
Raise the standard of Gender Equality across the Council	The Scheme will be reviewed every 3 years	Revised Scheme  Continued updates to the scheme	Annual assessment with full review in 2010	Equalities Strategy Group Equality & Diversity Officer
To raise public awareness of the scheme	Scheme made available via the Council's website and summary information published via the Council's publication	Increased awareness of the Council's commitment to eliminate discrimination	Ongoing from March 2007	Equalities Strategy Group Equality & Diversity Officer

## 2. Employment Duties – monitoring employment and supporting employees

**Purpose: Information from monitoring will be used to develop schemes.**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
To produce an Equal Pay Policy	Develop & publish a policy on developing equal pay arrangements between men and women – including measures to promote equal pay, ensure fair development opportunities and tackle occupational segregation	A fair Equal Pay policy is developed	September 2007	Head of Personnel
To monitor employment annually	Create annual reporting and dissemination of monitoring information	Produce annual employment trends and develop action plans arising from trend analysis	Annual assessment and reporting to Cabinet	Head of Personnel
To eliminate any possible discrimination in the workforce	Augment existing monitoring practices by including: Training applications Harassment and discrimination complaints Grievances Disciplinary proceedings Exit Interviews	Greater employee confidence in the fairness of the Council's employment policies and procedures	Ongoing from May 2007	Head of Personnel Equality & Diversity Officer

Contd./

## 2. Employment Duties – monitoring employment and supporting employees

Purpose: Information from monitoring will be used to develop schemes.

Objective	Action	Outcome	Timescale	Responsibility
<p>Review the following high-priority policies under the EIA procedure including consultations with all levels of staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment</li> <li>• Managing leave for parent and carers</li> <li>• Paternity/Maternity support leave including parenting</li> <li>• Adoption</li> <li>• Managing pregnancy and return from maternity leave</li> <li>• Grievance and disciplinary procedure</li> <li>• Retirement</li> </ul>	<p>Review the functions and policies</p> <p>Qualitative research identifies likely impact on gender equality</p>	<p>Impact of council policy identified and results fed into policy revision</p> <p>Ongoing improvement of councils gender equality activity</p>	<p>September 2007 onwards</p>	<p>Head of Personnel</p>

### 3. Identifying Relevant Functions and Policies – Assessing and consulting on the likely impact of proposed policies

**Purpose: To give appropriate priority to the promotion of gender equality when carrying out function and policies**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
To meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2006	Review all functions and policies of the Council according to our duty to promote gender equality	All functions and policies reviewed as per the Scheme	Ongoing from August 2007 over the three year period of the Scheme	Executive Directors Equalities Strategy Group Heads of Service Equality & Diversity Officer
To assess the likely impact of proposed policies on promotion of gender equality	Services undertaken Impact Assessment	Qualitative research is provided to identify likely and existing impact on gender equality	Annual assessment reporting	Equalities Strategy Group Managers
To monitor adverse impacts	Annual monitoring of adverse impacts identified in gender equality impact assessment and other feedback mechanisms (Equality Strategy Group, Women's Forum, employees)	Collection of adverse impact information considered by each service across the council  Annual monitoring report	Ongoing annual assessment and reporting	Equalities Strategy Group Managers

#### 4. Monitoring council policies for adverse impact

**Purpose: To build gender equality into the policy-making process and to make that process clear open and inclusive**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
To assess the likely impact or proposed policies on the promotion of gender duty	Services undertake gender equality impact assessments  Qualitative research identifies likely impact on gender	Impact of policy identified and results fed into policy revision	Annual assessment and reporting	Service Equality Groups Equalities Strategy Group Equality & Diversity Officer
To support ongoing additions and improvements to policies	Develop guidelines for drawing out gender equality issues as part of the impact assessments	Guidelines developed and training available	By September 2007	Service Equality Groups Equalities Strategy Group Equality & Diversity Officer
To monitor annually adverse impacts identified in Gender Equality Impacts Assessments	Adverse impact information considered by each service across the authority	Ongoing improvement of council gender equality activity	Ongoing assessment and reporting	Service Equality Groups Equalities Strategy Group Equality & Diversity Officer

### 5. Assessing, Consulting and Involving

**Purpose: To ensure compliance with our duty to not only consult but involve people in the development of the scheme**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
To meet the specific duty of the Gender Duty	Establish a forum for women and men from different backgrounds to ensure meaningful involvement of the Gender Duty	Women and men are involved throughout the process	Ongoing from March 2007	Equalities Strategy Group East Ayrshire Women's Forum Equality & Diversity Officer
To ensure meaningful involvement with appropriate support mechanisms with a cross section of people	Establish a timetable of meetings  Ensure different methods of involvement are used such as direct mailing, e-mailing, meetings etc.	Structures are in place for planned consultation and involvement  Men and women are represented at all levels in the decision making process	Ongoing from March 2007	Equality & Diversity Officer  East Ayrshire Women's Forum
Ensure that guidance is in place for Managers	To provide guidance to managers on the Gender Duty	Managers are equipped to support employees	September 2007	Head of Personnel

## 6. Communicating the results of assessment, consultation and monitoring

**Purpose: To ensure that monitoring, assessment and consultation activities, and their results are clear and plain to our customers and employees**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
To identify arrangements for publishing results and monitoring in accordance with the relevant statutes and the Public Performance Reporting arrangements	Results published using a variety of media and formats: interne, intranet, special reports and newsletters	Publicly available record of progress	By June 2009	Equalities Strategy Group Service Equality Groups Equality & Diversity Officer
To develop accessible communication channels	The identification of appropriate communication channels for different community groups and employees through various consultations mechanisms	Maintenance and development of communication channels between the public and the council	Ongoing from August 2007	Equalities Strategy Group Service Equality Groups Equality & Diversity Officer
To monitor user satisfaction	Monitoring of representative on effectiveness of communication channels and accessibility of information	Increased accessibility of information across the council	Annual assessment and monitoring	Equalities Strategy Group Service Equality Groups Equality & Diversity Officer

