



CORPORATE EQUALITIES POLICY

Revised and updated March 2025

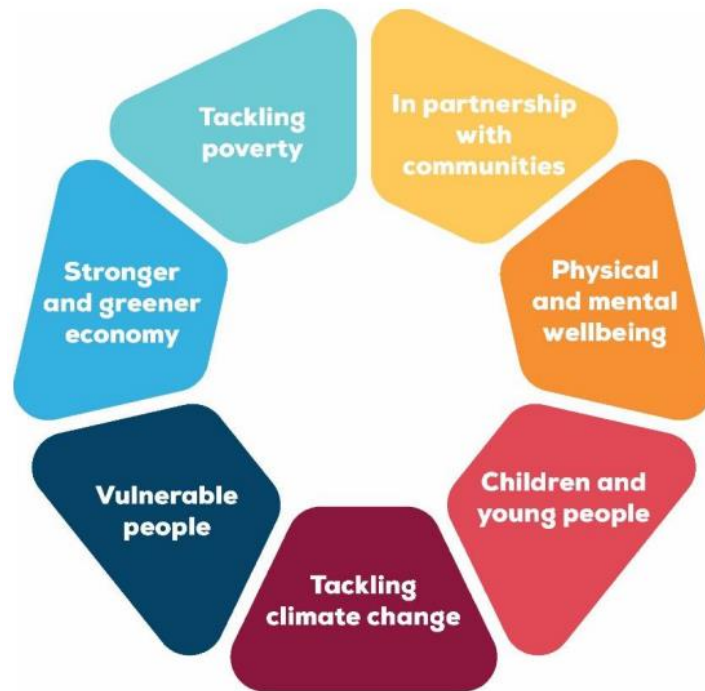
1. Introduction

This Policy is an integral part of the Council's vision for a Perth and Kinross, where everyone can live life well, free from poverty and inequality. It proposes several key priorities. It also reflects the principles of what was previously known as the Perth and Kinross Offer - our commitment to better engage with people and communities and ensure that you have your say and are involved at an earlier stage in our strategic planning discussions. Through our objectives we aim to maximise the opportunities available to our citizens to achieve their potential.

Our **vision** is for a Perth and Kinross where everyone can **live life well, free from poverty and inequality**.

To achieve this, we will work with and within our communities to ensure that:

- Children and young people grow up safe, respected, well-educated and confident in their ability to realise their full potential
- People and businesses are increasingly able to prosper in a local economy which supports low carbon ambitions and offers opportunities for all
- People can achieve their best physical and mental health and have access to quality care and support when they need it
- Communities are resilient and physically, digitally and socially connected
- Perth and Kinross is a safe and vibrant place, mitigating the impact of climate and environmental change for this and future generations
- The seven priorities shown in the diagram below are those which we think the Council can directly influence and have the most impact on, and those which are most important to delivering our vision of Perth and Kinross as a place where everyone can live life well, free from poverty and inequality.
- As Council resources are limited our priorities will also act as a guide when making difficult decisions about where to invest our funding and staff time and how to make best use of other assets.



2. Equalities Policy Statement

Perth & Kinross Council is committed to equality of opportunity both as a service provider and as an employer. The Council values the diversity of the communities in its area and works towards providing services which are inclusive and accessible. The Council recognises that social inclusion and promoting equality of opportunity and good relations between different groups can only be achieved by incorporating equalities into the planning, implementation and monitoring processes for all our Council Services. This Council, with all other Scottish public authorities, is legally obliged by the Equality Act 2010 to pay 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment; to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between those people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

By working in partnership to promote equality this Council believes that we will make better use of all available resources. This in turn can lead to increased satisfaction by service users and service providers.

We recognise that discrimination, victimisation and harassment is unlawful and unacceptable, and we will take action to prevent this occurring. If this does occur, we will take agreed and appropriate action to deal with it.

This Council also recognises that, when used legally and appropriately, positive action strategies can help to counteract the adverse impact of past discrimination or

other causes of disadvantage. We will therefore implement positive action strategies to make our services more inclusive. This is required by the Equality Act 2010 which require the Council to have due regards to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Take steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encourage people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

This policy has been revised following the introduction of the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. It remains compliant with predecessor legislation as unamended and takes account of the Public Sector Equality Duty, stemming from the Act and the Human Rights Act 1998.

The policy should be considered alongside other relevant Council policies, guidance and codes of practice where appropriate but in particular those relating to our duties as an employer.

The council is committed to delivering services which are fair and inclusive for all of our citizens, and we work to ensure we pay due regard to eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation or any other prohibited conduct. We want to advance equality of opportunity by removing and minimising disadvantage, meeting the needs of groups that are different from others and encourage participation in public life and to foster social inclusion and good relations. The aim is to promote a culture that's respects and upholds human rights, working alongside partners to raise awareness and understanding within the workforce and communities.

3. Scope of the document

The purpose of this document is to set out the statutory and legal requirements placed on this Council by the relevant and related legislation. This policy also identifies the strategies we will employ to meet these duties whether we are fulfilling our role as a service provider (or commissioner of services); an employer; a regulator; a planner or a strategic partner. The document ensures the promotion of fairness, diversity and inclusion within the council and the services provided. The document also outlines how our local authority will address issues related to these topics to ensure no one is unfairly treated because of their personal characteristics.

The policy applies to Elected Members, employees [and volunteers] including staff representatives. Trade Union representatives are encouraged to support and comply with this policy.

This policy will also inform members of the public and relevant regulatory bodies about this Council's commitment to equality of opportunity and set out its roles and responsibilities.

Partners, contractors and all those in the private, public and voluntary sector who carry out Council functions or work, including all those organisations and individuals who supply goods or services to, on behalf of, or in partnership with the Council - will be informed that the Council intends to work in line with the principles stated in this policy. It is intended that they also will adopt these principles as governing principles for the work they carry out with or on behalf of the Council. Compliance with equality of opportunity is compatible with our obligations under European Union (or successor) rules and regulations, Best Value, Value for Money and other national or local policies and strategies.

This policy enables the Council to put a framework in place to manage the implementation of the policy and related strategies, review progress, monitor outcomes and report on progress. It will also enable the Council to respond to regulatory assessment, for example, from the Scottish Government, Audit Scotland, the Scottish Housing Regulator, Education Scotland, Care Inspectorate and other statutory bodies.

The corporate equalities policy will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changes, legal updates and best practices.

4. Equalities Policy Aims

4.1 Principles

The Equalities policy is key to ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded within the organisations operations and service delivery. This will also set out expectations and consequences regarding discrimination or harassment in the workplace.

The main aim of the policy is to enable the Council to comply with our legal duties, and to create a foundation for the management of equality of opportunity at a corporate and service level. Specifically, this includes the General Equality duty from the Equality Act 2010 'to have due regard to the need to':

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.'

The 'protected characteristics' are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage/civil partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

However, the Council believes that our responsibility for equality is wider than just those protected characteristics. Issues such as health, income, gender identity, employment status or housing circumstance can impact on people's life chances and should be considered when tackling inequalities.

The Council recognises the importance of promoting equality to keep people safe in the workplace and in our communities. There is, for example, a link between women's labour market inequality, wider gender inequality and violence against women. As well as working with partner agencies as part of the Perth & Kinross Violence Against Women Partnership (PKVAWP) to tackle a range of issues, the Council believes in the importance of primary prevention by eliminating systemic gender inequality through addressing the attitudes, practices and structures that sustain it. As part of this work, the Council published its Equal Pay Policy Statement in January 2020 stating the commitment to address occupational segregation in its workforce. It raises awareness and understanding of the problems of sexism and gender stereotyping through the staff induction process and a range of training and development opportunities.

The Council acknowledges that a combination of protected characteristics, along with other issues such as health and socioeconomic status, will mean that people experience discrimination and inequalities in different ways. The council want to ensure that all groups/individuals, particularly those who are vulnerable or marginalised can fully participate in society. With this in mind we are proud to be recognised as the first Council of Sanctuary in Scotland for our work in supporting those people in the area fleeing war, persecution or other troubles in their homeland. We are also committed to the HIV Fast Track Cities international initiative to get to zero new cases of HIV, zero preventable deaths, zero stigma and discrimination and a better quality of life for people living with HIV.

It is important to take an open and intersectional approach to ensure that people's experiences are understood that they do not face discrimination and that they feel safe as valued members of the workplace and the community.

4.2 Assessment of Impact

All existing functions, policies, procedures and strategies that will affect people as service users, members of the public or employees, should be assessed for impact. Assessment for impact is to ensure that the Council understands how a policy will impact on the needs of the general equality duty. This ensures that policies are inclusive and do not cause detriment to people with protected characteristics.

This Council has put in place an easily accessible recording system for its assessments of impact, consultations and monitoring and of any changes made to policies as a result of assessment and consultation.

Our Impact and Value Assessment is used and has been constructed to allow all aspects of Impact Assessment to be readily considered using an online approach. This integrated approach has produced a more accessible, electronic tool which allows an assessment of impact more widely at the point of origin of policies and allows the equality and fairness impact to be measured at the same time and in the same way as other areas being considered. The Equality and Fairness Impact Assessment (EFIA) Process was revised again in 2024/25 and guidance is in place for all staff.

An impact assessment allows the council to identify areas of strength, recognise challenges and make necessary adjustments to improve.

5. Management of this Policy

5.1 Implementation of the Policy

The Corporate Equalities Policy will be published and made available for the public, Elected Members, employees, volunteers, partners and those who carry out work, or supply goods and services for or on behalf of the Council.

Statutory Equality Outcomes have been prepared and published, which will set corporate targets for how the statutory equality measures will be achieved. Equality outcomes were first published by April 2013 and have been regularly reviewed thereafter.

Mainstreaming is part of our legal requirements. This means integrating the work on equality into the Council's day-to-day work. A revised mainstreaming report has just been produced at the same time as this revised policy.

Every significant policy or service change should be accompanied by an Equality and Fairness Impact Assessment (EFIA) to ensure that the impacts on different equality groups are considered and addresses. EFIA's ensure that decisions made do not disadvantage or negatively impact any specific groups. This ensures that the council can foster a more inclusive society where all individuals have equal opportunities to thrive and access resources and services.

5.2 Roles and Responsibilities

Everyone working for or with Perth & Kinross Council has responsibilities in relation to promoting equality of opportunity. We will do all in our power to address inequalities locally and take every opportunity to raise issues nationally where appropriate. We will do this in our day-to-day service delivery, our strategic planning, our service support or our partnership work.

Successful implementation of the Equalities Policy will depend on a partnership between the Council and the community and should involve:

a) **Elected Members** - to comply with the Equalities Policy and to provide leadership and support; to engage with the local community and to provide a scrutiny role. As part of their Scrutiny role for equalities, Elected Members have responsibility for ensuring that reports before Committee identify any relevant equalities implications and clearly indicate how the equalities implications will be addressed.

Briefing/training will continue to be provided for Elected Members to enable them to provide leadership and support to encourage compliance with the Corporate Equalities Policy and enable them to develop their engagement with all groups in the local community. An Elected Member continues to have a lead role as a champion for Equalities.

b) **Senior Leadership Team/ Strategic Leads** - to comply with the Equalities Policy; to provide leadership and training to staff and support to Members and to enable Services to comply with the Equalities Policy; to oversee and monitor compliance. The Senior Leadership Team has the lead responsibility for ensuring the equalities policy, legislation and related duties are complied with both in service delivery and employment matters. Strategic Leads have responsibility to ensure that the Equalities Policy and related strategies are effectively implemented throughout their Service.

c) **Human Resources** – The HR service are responsible for ensuring that all recruitment and selection practices are fair and non-discriminatory and promote a diverse workforce. This includes ensuring that all job adverts, and interview processes are inclusive. HR must ensure that workplace policies accommodate the needs of individuals from the protected characteristics groups.

d) **Employees, Staff Representatives, Contractors and Volunteers** - to comply with the Equalities Policy, to undertake training where appropriate and to challenge unhelpful cultures and traditions and to engage with the community. All employees have responsibilities as well as rights in relation to implementing the Corporate Equalities Policy. Training will be provided for employees, together with guidance

and information to enable everyone to positively promote equality of opportunity and good relations between different groups.

e) **Partners, Contractors and Suppliers** - We will work with partners to ensure good equalities practice is shared and that they adopt the principles of equality to enable them to comply with the law. This will include organisations in receipt of Council funding.

5.3 Communication and Consultation

Communication

All internal and external communication media will be checked to ensure they comply with the commitments expressed in the Corporate Equalities policy. We will communicate the outcomes we are working towards and progress made to achieve those outcomes. This will include publishing monitoring and mainstreaming information and data as required by law.

Effective communication is central to a successful Corporate Equalities Policy to ensure that the principles of equality are consistently implemented throughout the council and will include facing head on the challenges of any inappropriate posts in relation to equality protected groups on our social media channels.

Consultation

Consultation will be carried out with the public and employees including Trade Unions as relevant, including in relation to the likely impact of proposed policies. Consultation mechanisms will continue to be monitored to ensure that our arrangements for ensuring access to information and services are effective. It also ensures that the voices of diverse individuals and groups are heard to help shape change.

5.4 Training and Development

Regular assessments will be carried out to ensure everyone who requires it will receive appropriate levels of briefing/training to enable them to carry out their roles effectively and deliver their legal responsibilities in relation to equality. Specific learning opportunities in relation to equalities will consider different methods of training delivery. Training opportunities help staff to understand the expectations at work and ensure that they support the equalities agenda in their day-to-day roles.

6. Policy Review

The Corporate Equalities Policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it reflects changes to legislation and case law and as otherwise required ensuring it reflects good equalities practice.

The Corporate Equalities Policy is a vital resource for ensuring that employment practices are inclusive, fair and compliant with The Equalities Act 2010.