

Plean Gníomhaíochta um Chomhionannas 2020-2023
Equality Action Plan 2020-2023



Comhairle Ceantair
**an Iúir, Mhúrn
agus an Dúin**

**Newry, Mourne
and Down**
District Council

Foreword

Welcome to the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Equality Action Plan 2020-2023. This plan sets out the Council's commitment to ensuring it fulfils its statutory obligation regarding Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

Section 75 (1) states that public authorities in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity

- Between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, material status or sexual orientation;
- Between men and women generally;
- Between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- Between persons with dependents and person without.

Section 75 (2) states that public authorities in carrying out its functions relation to Northern Ireland have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion and racial groups.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is committed to the fulfilment of its Equality duties in all parts of its organisation and this action plan sets out how it intends to do so.

Councillor Laura Devlin
Chairperson of Newry, Mourne
and Down District Council

Marie Ward
Chief Executive of Newry,
Mourne and Down District Council

Equality and Diversity Framework

The Equality and Diversity Framework details Newry, Mourne and Down District Councils statement of intent and approach to ensure equality and diversity is delivered across Council.

The framework outlines 5 key principles which assists Council to meet its equality and diversity obligations.

The 5 principles are as follows:

Principle 1: Ensuring we work in a non- discriminatory environment, promote equality, and model best practice in equality and good relations

It is everyone's responsibility to:

- Treat everyone equality and with dignity and respect
- Think about how our actions affect others
- Help people change for the better through example by challenging unacceptable behaviour and language
- Be knowledgeable by taking personal responsibility for training around equality and diversity and good relations (mandatory training for all elected members, Council staff and managers in place)

Principle 2: Ensuring all our decisions are based on evidence to assess the likely impact of a policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations

We will:

- Ensure that all policies, projects and programmes of work are screened and where appropriate, impact assessed
- Publish all screening outcomes including any mitigation or alternative policies considered
- Involve the customers of the council, trade unions, business sector and voluntary and community sector on an on- basis to assist us in the review and development of existing and new policies

Principle 3: Providing access to services, facilities and information

We will take steps to improve access to services, facilities and information and to be open about what we can and cannot do:

We will:

- Involve customers and stakeholders in the design, prioritisation and review of services

- Monitor and review services regularly to identify any under-representation or discrimination
- Make sure information is accessible using Plain English and other accessibility standards
- Provide alternative formats, translations and interpreters when needed
- Make sure buildings are accessible and welcoming to all
- Make sure meetings and events are easy to access

Principle 4: Recruiting and employing people fairly

The Council will make sure that we provide equality of opportunity to all in employment.

We will:

- Use non- discriminatory job criteria
- Take positive action to ensure a diverse workforce
- Apply fair selection procedures
- Monitor and review employment practice
- Make reasonable adjustments
- Support staff through appropriate networks

Principle 5: Responding to and learning from complaints and incidents in a positive and proactive way

Everyone has a right to complain about discrimination and harassment in good faith, without being victimised at any time.

We will:

- Handle complaints and grievances properly
- Resolve matters positively
- Respond to incidents of prejudice or hate crime

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Principle 1: Ensuring we work in a non – discriminatory environment, promote equality and model of best practice in equality and good relations

Issue	Objective	Positive Action	Measure	Responsibility	Timeframe
Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations Statutory Duty Compliance	To continue to develop an understanding of the council's duty to promote Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations	<p>Develop an Equality and Good Relations training programme for staff and elected members to embed an Equality and Good Relations culture and ethos across the organisation</p> <p>Examples of training programmes will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equality Screening, - Policy Development, - Cultural Awareness, - Every Customer Counts, - Rural Needs, - Disability Awareness 	<p>Number of training sessions/programmes delivered.</p> <p>Attendance figures of elected members participating in Equality and Good Relations training programmes</p> <p>Attendance figures of staff participating in Equality and Good Relations training programmes</p> <p>Evaluation and feedback from staff and elected members</p>	<p>Corporate Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate Policy - Learning and Development 	April 2020- March 2023

		To integrate objectives and targets relating to the Section 75 statutory duties into Council's strategic and operational business plans.	<p>Council has considered all s75 categories in the development of Corporate Strategic and Operational business plans</p> <p>Review of Corporate Reporting template which will map Officers consideration of Section 75 in Council decision making</p>	<p>Chief Executive Office / Corporate Planning and Policy</p> <p>Corporate Policy</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Annually</p>
		To continue to utilise the Equality and Good Relations Reference Group as a discussion forum for elected members to address contentious and sensitive issues	Number of meetings of the Councillors' Equality and Good Relations Reference Group held	Corporate Policy	Ongoing
		Information on Equality and Good Relations for new staff	Number of induction sessions held	Corporate Policy	Ongoing

		Council continue to 'light up' civic buildings on recognised days which support and raise awareness of disability	Number of times civic building is 'lit'	Chief Executive Office	2 events per year
		To undertake a PR campaign internally and externally to promote the role of and assistance given by the Councils Diversity Champions	Number of people who engage with Diversity Champions on issues	Corporate Policy	October 2020
		Implementation of the Council's Good Relations Action Plan	<p>Number of participants in Good Relations funded programmes</p> <p>Quarterly and annual reports to The Executive Office</p> <p>Number of people accessing the services of the Ethnic Minority Support Centre</p>	Active and Healthy Communities	Ongoing

Principle 2 Ensuring all our decisions are based on evidence to assess the likely impact of a policy on the promotion of equality and good relations

Issue	Objective	Positive Action	Measure	Responsibility	Timeframe
Equality Screening	To ensure that all policies and procedures are equality screened, i.e. to assess the likely impact of the policy on the promotion of Equality of Opportunity and/or Good Relations	All current and new policies are screened before council approval and implementation	Quarterly policy screening reports tabled at SPR Committee Annual report produced for Equality Commission NI Reports uploaded to council website and forwarded to equality consultee listing	Relevant officers	Ongoing
		Training provided for staff on the policy screening process	Number of screening training sessions provided per year	Corporate Policy	October 2020 March 2022

		To review Council's Policy Development Framework	Production of a Policy Development Guide	Corporate Policy	June 2020
Effective Consultation	To embed Council's Consultation & Engagement Framework	Continue to promote and raise awareness of the Councils Corporate Consultation and Engagement toolkit within Council	Number of times the toolkit is accessed by Officers	Corporate Planning and Policy	Ongoing
		Provide training to employees on the Corporate Consultation and Engagement toolkit	Number of training sessions delivered Number of staff in attendance at training	Corporate Planning and Policy	February 2021
		Continue to utilise the mechanism created to record corporate consultation	Number of consultations Type of consultation	Chief Executive Office Corporate Policy	Ongoing
		Review and update Equality consultee list annually		Corporate Policy	September (annually)

Principle 3 Providing access to services, facilities and information					
Issue	Objective	Positive Action	Measure	Responsibility	Timescale
Monitoring	To have relevant Section 75 data available	Each service to introduce a system to gather relevant Section 75 data Engagement between Corporate Policy officials and relevant directorates to identify gaps in monitoring information	Appropriate and relevant up to date data available to determine effectiveness of service provision	Corporate Policy / All Directorates	Ongoing
Access to information	Information on council services is accessible to all parts of the community	Production of a corporate 'Making Information Accessible' Guide for staff	Number of council publications available in a variety of formats Number of requests for information in alternative formats	Corporate Policy	June 2021
		'Making Information Accessible' training sessions to be delivered across Council	Number of Council officials participating in 'Making Information Accessible' training sessions	Corporate Policy	October 2021

		Develop the corporate website ensuring it meets all accessibility requirements	Availability of an accessible corporate website	Corporate Services - Corporate Communications and Marketing	March 2021
Access to services and facilities	Services and facilities are accessible all parts of the community	Review of council facilities to ensure they are accessible to all members of the community Council to sign up to the Equality Commissions 'Every Customer Counts' Charter	Percentage of Council owned facilities meeting the requirements of the 'Every Customer Counts' accessibility checklist	All Directorates	March (annually)
		Investigate the possibility of extending the Shop Mobility scheme which currently operates in the Mourne DEA across other towns in the district	Numbers of people using service Number of towns introducing the Shop Mobility Scheme	Economic Regeneration and Tourism Directorate / Active and Healthy Communities Directorate	Ongoing

Principle 4 Recruiting and employing people fairly

Issue	Objective	Positive Action	Measure	Responsibility	Timescale
Workforce diversity	To ensure that Council provides Equality of Opportunity to all in employment	Integration of Section 75 statutory duties within job descriptions		Corporate Services - HR	Ongoing
		Workforce monitoring related to Article 55 Reviews	Submission of three yearly Article 55 Report to ECNI	Corporate Services - HR	Ongoing / Submission of report every 3 years
		Engagement between Corporate Policy and HR to develop a Section 75 workforce profile and identify under representation of Section 75 categories within workplace	Relevant section 75 workforce data	Corporate Services – HR and Corporate Policy	December 2020
		Continue to facilitate requests for reasonable adjustments within the workplace	Number and type of requests for reasonable adjustments	All Directorates in conjunction with Health & Safety Section	Ongoing

Principle 5 Responding to and learning from complaints and incidents in a positive and proactive way

Issue	Objective	Positive Action	Measure	Responsibility	Timescale
Support, advice, guidance and assistance	Complaints are addressed in a positive manner and realistic timeframe	Implementation of Council's Complaint Processes	Number of complaints Number of Section 75 complaints	Corporate Services – Administration and Customer Services Corporate Policy	Ongoing Annually
	Ensure people with a disability can access the Council's complaints/ comments procedure	Provide a range of accessible formats for people to forward complaints/comments to Council	Number of requests for accessible formats	Corporate Services – Administration and Customer Services Corporate Policy	Ongoing

4 How the Equality Action Plan will be published

Following consultation and submission to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, this plan will be available by contacting:

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The plan will be available in alternative formats upon request.

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