

OD/HR	19th April 2016
Corporate Policy and Resources Committee	For Information

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Leader and Champion
Outcome	Successful implementation of Equality Of Opportunity
Lead Officer	Brid Lofthouse
Cost: (If applicable)	n/a

1. Context and Background

The attached Equal Opportunities Policy (Appendix 1) for Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council follows the statutory code of Procedures developed by Local Government Staff Commission.

The draft policy will have been approved both by the Senior Management Team and the Trade Unions through the Joint Consultative and Negotiating Committee (JCNC).

In accordance with Council's duty under Section 75 Equality Legislation, the policy has been screened and the result is that it was screened "out".

The Policy covers the following areas

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- 2 To who does the policy apply
- 3 Equality Commitments
- 4 Implementation
- 5 Monitoring and Review
- 6 Complaints

For Information

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

1. Statement of Policy

The aim of this policy is to communicate the Commitment of the elected Members, Chief Executive and Senior Management Team to the promotion of equality of opportunity in Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.

It is our policy to provide employment equality to all, irrespective of:

- Gender, including gender reassignment
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Having or not having dependents
- Religious belief or political opinion
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, being an Irish traveller)
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Trade union membership or non-membership

We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All job applicants, employees and others who work for us will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any of the above grounds. Decisions about recruitment and selection, promotion, training or any other benefit will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination.

We recognise that the provision of equal opportunities in the workplace is not only good management practice, it also makes sound business sense. Our equal opportunities policy will help all those who work for us to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be utilised fully to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

2. To whom does the policy apply?

The Equal Opportunities policy applies to all those who work for (or apply to work for) the Council, including:

- Job applicants and potential applicants
- Employees
- Contract Workers
- Agency workers
- Trainee workers and students on work experience or placements
- Volunteer workers
- Former employees

3. Equality Commitments

We are committed to:

- Promoting equality of opportunity for all persons
- Promoting a good and harmonious working environment in which all persons are treated with respect
- Preventing occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Fulfilling all our legal obligations under the equality legislation and associated codes of practice
- Complying with our own equal opportunities policy and associated policies
- Taking lawful affirmative or positive action, where appropriate
- Regarding all breaches of equal opportunities policy as misconduct which could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

This policy is fully supported by the Elected Members, Chief Executive and Senior Management Team and has been agreed with the recognised Trade Unions.

4. Implementation

The Chief Executive has specific responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. Each director, manager and supervisor also has responsibilities and we expect all our employees to abide by the policy and help create the equality environment which is its objective.

In order to implement this policy we shall:

- Communicate the policy to employees, job applicants and others (such as contract or agency workers)
- Incorporate specific and appropriate duties in respect of implementing the equal opportunities policy into job descriptions and work objectives for all staff
- Provide equality training and guidance as appropriate, including training on induction and management courses.
- Ensure that those who are involved in assessing candidates for recruitment or promotion will be trained in non-discriminatory selection techniques
- Incorporate equal opportunities notices into general communications practices (e.g., staff newsletters, intranet)

- Obtain commitments from other persons or organisations such as subcontractors or agencies that they too will comply with the policy in their dealings with our organisation and our workforce
- Ensure that the adequate resources are made available to fulfil the objectives of the policy.

5. Monitoring and Review

We will establish appropriate information and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of our equal opportunity policy.

The effectiveness of our equal opportunities policy will be reviewed regularly, in consultation with the recognised trade unions, if appropriate and action taken as necessary. For example, where monitoring identifies an under-representation of a particular group or groups, we shall develop an action plan to address the imbalance.

6. Complaints

Employees who believe that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through the agreed procedures. A copy of these procedures is available from the Human Resources Manager. All complaints of discrimination will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.

In addition to our internal procedures, employees have the right to pursue complaints of discrimination to an industrial tribunal or the Fair Employment Tribunal under the following anti-discrimination legislation:

- Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976, as amended
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended
- Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997, as amended
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003
- Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, as amended
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006
- Equal Pay Act (Northern Ireland) 1970, as amended.

However, employees wishing to make a complaint to a tribunal will normally be required to raise their complaint under our internal grievance procedures first.

Every effort will be made to ensure that employees who make complaints will not be victimised. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. Victimisation will result in disciplinary action and may warrant dismissal.