

THE MORAY COUNCIL
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy sets out the Moray Council's commitment to equality and diversity in employment. The Council recognises its responsibilities as an employer to ensure equality and fair treatment of all employees and job applicants, the benefits this brings to the Council and its employees, and to value the uniqueness of individuals.
- 1.2 Within an employment context, equality means making sure that people are treated fairly and given equal access to employment opportunities and training. Diversity is about recognising that people are individuals and valuing differences. Using a generic approach that treats everyone the same is not going to achieve equality – a flexible and inclusive approach that recognises the different needs and expectations of people is required to enable the Council to achieve fairness and equality of opportunity for all. The Council aims to have excellent employment practices in order that employees feel valued, respected and ultimately engaged with their work.

2.0 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out the Council's position relating to equalities and diversity in employment to enable the Council to meet its obligations in relation to the relevant employment legislation. Supporting information is contained within Appendices 1 and 2 and this may be expanded upon as further guidance is developed.
- 2.2 The policy applies to all managers, employees and prospective employees of the Council as well as contractors and agents acting on behalf of the Moray Council and is fully supported and endorsed by both the elected members and Chief Executive.

3.0 POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1 The Moray Council value the people who work for us and recognise and respect individual differences. People are different in all sorts of ways and the Council believes in and is committed to appreciating the diversity of the local community and workforce to ensure equality of opportunity for all. This includes the responsibility as an employer to encourage the fair treatment of all employees and job applicants and the benefits this brings to the Council and its employees.
- 3.2 We are committed to ensuring the fair and inclusive treatment of all employees and job applicants to ensure equality of opportunity.

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3.3 We aim to ensure:

- No-one receives less favourable treatment on the protected grounds stipulated in the Equality Act 2010 which are: race, disability, gender reassignment, sex, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, sexual orientation and age (see Appendix 2).
- There is no discrimination in employment and that decisions on recruitment, promotion, training and development, and terms and conditions are based solely on job related ability and merit.
- All managers and employees accept their responsibilities for good employment practices and work together to achieve a positive approach and a culture of fair and inclusive treatment for all.

3.4 We oppose all forms of discrimination, direct or indirect, and aim to eliminate discriminatory practice and promote measures to combat its effects. All employees of the Council have a responsibility to report any form of discrimination witnessed or reported to them. The form and guidance can be found on <http://intranet.moray.gov.uk/CEOffice/equalities.htm>.

3.5 We aspire to have a workforce that is representative of the local community, where this aligns with the Councils key priorities and Single Outcome Agreement commitments.

3.6 We aim to create a working environment based on trust and mutual respect, ensuring that the effective management of diversity helps achieve equal opportunities. Differences in personal backgrounds and characteristics will not prejudice decisions about the suitability of individuals for employment or training opportunities.

3.7 The Council will apply all anti-discriminatory legislation, codes of practice and the Equality Act 2010 in a proactive manner.

4.0 MONITOR AND REVIEW

4.1 In order for the Council to ensure that there is no discrimination, and to accurately assess how well we are performing in terms of equality and diversity, the Council actively monitors equality and diversity:

- Confidential information is captured at the start of employment and through ad hoc research questionnaires to keep the information up to date. Employees are encouraged to provide as much information as possible.
- Equality statistics on the workforce are produced and analysed on a six-monthly basis. All information used in reports is anonymous.
- Monitoring statistics are captured annually and published on the external website, in accordance with our Public Sector Equality Duties. These can be found on http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_86092.html.

- Discriminatory incidents must be reported using the Equality Incident Reporting Form (Appendix 3) and reported incidents will be monitored on an ongoing basis.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 The Council as an employer will:

- Promote equal opportunities in all aspects of employment;
- Ensure that all managers and employees are trained in their responsibilities regarding equal opportunities;
- Fully investigate all complaints of discrimination;
- Monitor the effectiveness of the policy and identify practices that maybe discriminatory.

5.2 Employees of the Council must:

- Report all discriminatory incidents using the form in Appendix 3.
- Adhere to the Council commitment to equality of opportunity in their work;
- Work together towards a culture of fairness and equal treatment for all;
- Not themselves or encourage others to practice discrimination;
- Advise management if they suspect that discrimination is taking place;
- Not victimise anyone who makes a complaint or aids a complainant.

6.0 CLAIMS OF DISCRIMINATION

6.1 The Council will deal promptly and effectively with all allegations of discrimination in employment. All complaints must be addressed to the Head of Human Resources & ICT using the Moray Council Employee Equality Incident Monitoring Form. Assistance may also be available from a Trade Union Official or the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

6.2 All complaints of discrimination will be taken very seriously and disciplinary action may be taken against any participant.

7.0 PRACTICAL SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEES

7.1 As an employer, the Moray Council recognises its success depends on creating a working environment which supports the principles of equality and diversity. There are a range of employment policies and procedures that enable managers and employees to embody these principles in their everyday work and practice which can be accessed on the HR pages of the Council's intranet or through the administration teams of Departments.

8.0 FURTHER GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS

8.1 The Council aims to enshrine the principles of equality and diversity into all their employment practice policy and procedures. On that basis, this policy sets out the Council's purpose, scope and aims together with its policy statement within this document, and sets out more specific guidance for related activities within the following guidance sections which may be expanded as further guidance is developed:

Appendix 1 Disability Equality in Employment

Appendix 2 Types of Discrimination, Protected Characteristics and Relevant Legislation

Appendix 3 Equality Incident Monitoring Form