

GENDER EQUALITY ANNUAL REPORT 2008

The total population of Moray at the 2001 Census was 86,940 with an almost 50% division between men and women. There are more females than males throughout Scotland in every Council area other than Shetland and Moray. The higher than average proportion of males in Moray is due primarily to the presence of two Royal Air Force bases in the area. This also has some impact on the age distribution of the population, increasing the numbers of young families and single people.

Ultimately, the Gender Equality Duty can be seen as recognition that despite thirty years of sex equality legislation too little has been achieved in eradicating sex discrimination and sexual harassment, unequal pay, pregnancy discrimination, occupational segregation and other gender inequalities. Women and men continue to experience disadvantage in the workplace, and boys' and girls' experiences in childhood can be very different due in part to persistent gender stereotyping and unequal treatment of the sexes.

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 was amended by the Equality Act 2006 so that it now places a general duty on all public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

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

The Council can make a significant contribution towards improving gender equality by focussing on services provided to the public and occupational segregation within the Council.

The Gender Equality Scheme has 6 actions within its action plan. These are:-

- Managers to consider family-friendly working requests
- Introduce childcare voucher scheme
- Impact assess policies and procedures against gender equality and recommend actions
- Investigate refuse collection policies and procedures against gender equality requirement
- Develop equality performance indicators to monitor recruitment into non-stereotypical positions
- Carry out surveys regarding use of services by gender

The progress to date is as follows:-

Managers are to consider all family-friendly working requests as an ongoing action. The Council operates a range of family-friendly working measures, including a flexible hours system, job-sharing, 9-3 patterns of working, term-time working and home-working. To date there are:-

- 2011 women working part-time
- 157 men working part-time

- 82 women doing job-share
- 5 men doing job –share

We have put in place further measures to investigate gender with regard to employment.

The childcare voucher scheme was felt to offer a considerable saving to parents as the purchase of the vouchers is tax free, therefore creating a considerable saving. The childcare voucher scheme has been available since October 2007, with 23 staff participating in the scheme to date.

Women and men, and boys and girls have different needs from public services and access them in different ways. Those delivering services need to recognise and be flexible enough to meet these different needs. We intend to identify differing needs through impact assessing our policies and procedures against gender equality and recommend actions. A framework for identifying, prioritising and impact assessing policies and procedures has been produced and distributed to departments. Through assessments we will begin to identify ways to make improvements to our services, however this is in early stages. These assessments will ensure that equality issues are considered:-

- in the formulation and design of all new policies
- in service delivery and provision and
- when decisions are made

Environmental protection has carried out impact assessment on refuse collection due to some service users reporting that fortnightly collection of green bins is causing a problem in some areas as rubbish accumulates. The Bulky Uplift service caused problems for some, particularly single women with little family support. These women reported having to move heavy items out of the house onto the street without assistance.

The assessments highlighted that households experiencing difficulties with volume of waste being produced on the grounds of large families or nappies can be provided with a larger bin on a temporary basis. With regard to Bulky Uplift service arrangements can be made to uplift the item from the house.

Equality performance indicators have been developed to monitor recruitment into non-stereotypical positions. This will be ready for reporting on next year once the data has been collected.

The final action within the action plan is to carry out surveys regarding the use of services by gender, however the completion date for this is not until June 2009.

In addition to the actions within the scheme, the Council has undertaken their second stage of equalities training this year. It was carried out with partners from the public and voluntary sector with participation across our Community Planning partners. Two sessions were run last year focussing specifically on gender. This year we delivered two sessions focussing on all the equality strands. Over the two-year period we attracted participation from approximately 300 staff.

The Community Planning Partnership has carried out its first meeting to establish an Equalities Forum for consultation purposes. Representatives attended from local and national organisations covering all equality strands. Equalities impact assessments carried out by partner agencies on their policies and activities require formal consultation. This is to give consideration as to whether there is, or likely to be, a different impact whether direct or indirect on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age. This group will be expected to comment and make recommendations on assessments of existing and proposed policies and activities.

There are a number of monitoring processes in place. The impact of existing policies are monitored through:-

- grievance procedure
- complaints procedure
- impact assessments

Equal Pay

The Council is committed to the principle of equal opportunities in employment and believes as part of that principle that male and female employees should receive equal pay for the same or broadly similar work, for work rated as equivalent and for work of equal value. The Council has already reached an agreement on Single Status, which was implemented in December of 2006.

Progress updates are as follows:-

A review schedule has been put in place for the forthcoming year to continue carrying out impact assessments, as detailed within the Personnel Services Service Plan.

A plan on longer-term pay equality is currently in the early stages of development. The Authority is continuing to apply job-sizing arrangements for the nationally agreed arrangements for teaching staff where the requirement arises. Work has also begun on the review of pay and conditions of service for craft operatives. Early discussions have taken place with recognised trade unions.

All Job Evaluation appeals were completed in December 2007. All appellants were advised of the outcome and amended salary grades implemented as appropriate early in 2008. The Moray Council is one of the first Councils in Scotland to complete this project. The council continues to deal with any grievances and complaints regarding equal pay through recognised procedures.

The Corporate Equalities Strategy which is being reviewed at the moment links with the Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes to address issues that cross over between these equality strands. The Corporate Equality

Strategy and Action Plan sets out how the Council promotes fairness, equality and opportunity for all.

Summary

The Council's Gender Equality Scheme was produced in June 2007 and identified 6 actions to be carried out. Of those actions three are complete, two are ongoing, one is not due until June 2009. The Council will continue to progress the outstanding actions within the scheme. A non-discriminatory grading structure has been implemented in the council, which ensures equal pay for work of equal value. In addition the Council along with partner agencies, will continue to establish an equalities forum to ensure that the views of all service users are taken into consideration during the planning, development and implementation of our policies. The Equalities agenda within the Council is an emerging service which it is hoped will inform all Council services in the future.