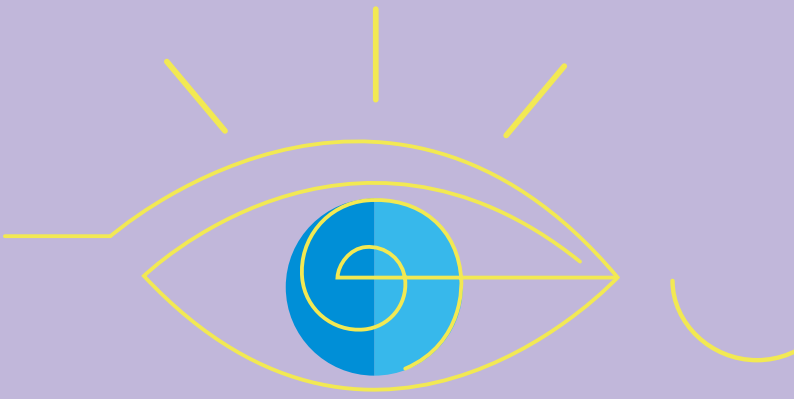


Nottinghamshire
County Council

Challenging Inequality

promoting equality and valuing diversity

equality and diversity policy



Achieving the Equality and Diversity Policy

This is not just another policy. It underpins the work of the Council in removing inequality from all of its procedures.

The diversity agenda, including policies and procedures to remove inequality, is driven by the Corporate Equality Group. The group is made up of senior managers representing service delivery and employment from each department along with the Chairs of the Council's self managed staff groups eg. Corporate Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Group, Corporate Disabled Workers' Group, various Black Workers' Groups and the Trade Unions.

Corporate Equality Plan

This annual action plan complements all departmental business and equality plans and includes the actions listed in the Race Equality Scheme. It incorporates all the requirements of new equality legislation and Best Value equality indicators. It is published on the County Council website in April each year - www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk

Equality and Diversity Policy

The policy is in two parts – Equality in Service Delivery and Summary of Equal Opportunity Policies in Employment, including the Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy Statement.

Equality in Service Delivery

Nottinghamshire County Council is committed to providing quality services with equality of access for all people in Nottinghamshire.

The County Council's Strategic Plan has 'reducing inequality' as one of its core values. Equality in service provision underpins the six corporate priority themes:

- Learning
- Social Care and Health
- Regeneration
- Culture
- Environment
- Community

Some groups, communities and individuals suffer direct or indirect discrimination. This can be made worse where services and facilities are inappropriate, insensitive or inaccessible.

The County Council aims to act positively to reduce inequality, to work against discrimination and to promote and create access to services by everyone, irrespective of their age, disability, race, gender, sexuality, cultural or social background, religion or belief.



The County Council will ensure that all of its councillors and staff, the organisations that it supports and its partners in service delivery, are aware of this policy and that appropriate steps are taken to put it into practice in the day-to-day delivery of services.

Principles

The County Council recognises that:

- everyone should have access to the resources and facilities which the County Council provides
- full account should be taken of people's views and expectations when designing delivery and reviewing services
- different groups have different experiences of inequality and discrimination as service users. Training and staff development programmes must support staff in understanding the different and common needs
- resources should be distributed in such a way as to ensure that equality of access and opportunity is maintained as a priority and a right
- the County Council will actively promote services and when necessary, will target delivery of services to individuals and groups.

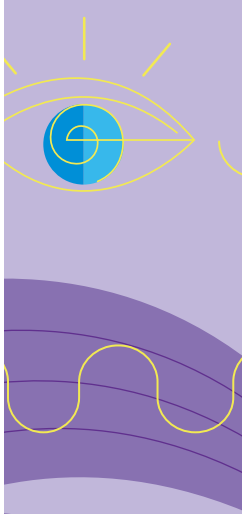
Implementation and Monitoring

In order to ensure that Nottinghamshire County Council's services are provided equally to all of its communities, the County Council is committed to continually modifying existing services and developing new ones where necessary and through changing working practices.

As part of implementing equality in service delivery, the County Council will:

- strive to achieve Level 5 of the Local Government Association Equality Standard
- consult as widely as possible, especially with people not using our services, as well as with the community and user groups, about service provision relevant to their needs, seeking greater involvement from them in the decision making process
- encourage and support community and self-help initiatives in ensuring that equality objectives are met
- work with other bodies who are responsible for providing services in partnership with the County Council or which are grant aided, to encourage them to eradicate inequality and discrimination in their particular fields
- encourage feedback which will be evaluated to identify:
 - gaps in the service
 - shortfalls in service design
 - any omissions in service planning
 - the quality of performance
 - discriminatory aspects





and to influence and guide future planning and delivery of County Council services

- strive to ensure that our workforce reflects the diversity of the communities we serve

The County Council will ensure that all departments offering direct or indirect services to the public:

- set standards using appropriate legislation and codes of practice and have departmental action plans and strategies for promoting equality and diversity in service delivery
- monitor the outcomes of the action plans and strategies by:
 - analysing the take up of services
 - evaluating the quality of service, including the reduction of discriminatory practices
- reporting on the implementation of equality policies to their select committees on an annual basis

In order to ensure that there is ownership of equality in service delivery by service departments, responsibility for developing and implementing equality policies and anti-discriminatory practices lies with Chief Officers/Departmental Directors and Assistant Directors. They will be responsible for ensuring that their departments:

- implement corporate equality policies and strategies effectively
- identify departmental equality objectives and the inclusion of these in business plans and service reviews and plans
- review existing services in terms of their accessibility, availability and appropriateness
- train all staff appropriately to enable services to be provided equally
- have regular monitoring of services by customers
- ensure that consultation takes place with user groups in respect of departmental action plans, policies and procedures
- ensure information and publicity materials aimed at the public are:
 - clear and understandable
 - non-offensive in their use of language and images
 - available in other formats and whenever appropriate in other languages, including British Sign Language; all videos will have closed captions
- meet the needs of all customers when:
 - drawing up specifications for 'best value'
 - using external service providers
 - making collaborative arrangements, agreements, contracts and partnerships with voluntary or statutory agencies and the private sector

- demonstrate the County Council's commitment to equality in services when determining all forms of grant aid, to ensure that:
 - grant application processes are clear, accessible and well publicised to all communities in the County
 - all grant aid procedures ask for evidence of a commitment to equality of opportunity from grant aided bodies
 - monitoring systems are in place to assess the achievement of, and improvement in, equalities policy and practice by funded organisations
 - that there is evidence of a positive change over time in the support of previously excluded or under-represented groups
- maximise the effective use of equality legislation to enhance equality and quality in service delivery
- identify lead officers and staff groups to co-ordinate departmental implementation programmes and maintain momentum of equality initiatives in service delivery

The County Council recognises that all departments will need additional expertise, advice on standards and practices, training and guidance for implementing equal opportunities policies and strategies in service delivery and, therefore, it will consult as widely as possible amongst communities, user groups and specialist organisations to ensure that this support, experience and knowledge is available.

Summary of Equal Opportunity Policies in Employment

January 2002

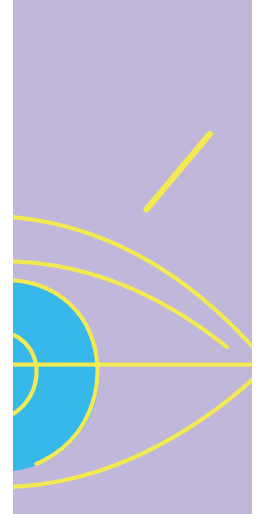
Nottinghamshire County Council's Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy Statement

"Nottinghamshire County Council, together with the recognised trade unions, is committed to the development of positive policies to promote equality in employment and in the delivery of our service regardless of race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, trade union membership status. This commitment will apply to recruitment and selection practices, training, promotion and in the application of national and local agreements in respect of pay and conditions of service."

The operation of this policy is monitored and reviewed periodically through the established joint consultative machinery. If any employee considers that she or he is the subject of unequal treatment on any of the above grounds, a complaint may be made through the agreed procedures for dealing with grievances".

The County Council undertakes to inform all employees of this policy statement. (This policy was adopted in 1982.)

This summary was compiled by Corporate Human Resources, Resources Department.



Introduction

This document presents a summary of current equality policies in employment in Nottinghamshire County Council.

These have been introduced as part of the Council's ongoing commitment to taking equality forward through the management of diversity. Equality issues are integrated into all employment policies and working practices.

Outline Policies

Equality Objectives in Employment

All departments are expected to set and meet equality objectives for the employment of targeted groups, including women, people from black and ethnic minority communities, older workers, disabled people, gay, lesbian and bisexual people and people with religious or other beliefs.

This policy was introduced by the County Council to measure the effectiveness of its equal opportunities employment policies in redressing under-representation in its workforce.

Recruitment and Selection and Workforce Trends Monitoring

The County Council monitors the countywide recruitment and selection process and workforce in terms of full-time/part-time working, ethnic origin, religion, belief, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation and reports on the findings at regular intervals. This information is an integral part of the overall evaluation of the progress made in the achievement of equality objectives.

Recruitment and Selection Procedure

The Recruitment and Selection Guidelines on Good Practice help managers to avoid unfair discrimination in recruitment and selection procedures. The document is backed up by recruitment and selection training for appointing officers, which is available in departments.

Recruitment Appeals Procedure

This procedure enables the applicant to appeal if they consider that they have been discriminated against on the grounds of race, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation, religion or belief.

Disabled People

a) Affirmative Action Employment Strategy

This strategy was introduced to promote opportunities for disabled people through the following measures:

- Adoption of a Policy Statement of Intent
- Establishment of a Corporate Disabled Workers' Group (CDWG)
- Interview guarantee for disabled applicants who meet a job's essential shortlisting requirements
- Disabled employees and potential disabled employees may contract out taxi-hire in lieu of their essential user car allowances

b) Supported Employment Programme

This scheme, which is managed by the Social Services Department, aims to part-fund job opportunities for disabled people in the private/public/community sectors.

Flexible Working Arrangements

a) Job Share

The job share scheme is an arrangement, whereby two or more people share the responsibility of one full-time job, and pay and benefits are divided between them according to the time they work. The main aim of the scheme is to open up a wide range of part-time opportunities including posts at higher responsibility levels and in professional areas where traditionally such opportunities have been limited. Job sharing allows employees who wish to combine work with family responsibilities to do so.

b) Flexible Working Hours (Flexitime)

The aim of the scheme is to provide employees with flexibility in working, which enables them to balance their home life and working time more effectively. The flexibility in working hours includes starting times of 7.30 am to 10.00 am and finishing times between 3.30 pm and 6.30 pm.

c) Career Break Scheme

This scheme enables permanent employees (men and women) with caring responsibilities to apply for a break in their career of up to five years. The scheme also affords employees the opportunity to maintain their work skills and knowledge whilst on a career break.

Harassment Complaints Procedure

The procedure provides a mechanism for dealing quickly and effectively with complaints of harassment. Employee Complaints Advisers are available to advise and support any employee who is experiencing harassment.

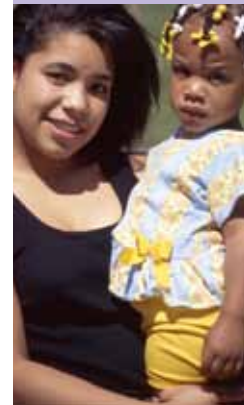
Training

Provisions within the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 for taking positive action in the provision of training opportunities for women and black and minority ethnic groups have been in place since 1982. The Race Relations Act 2000 and the Council's Race Equality Scheme sets out objectives relating to training opportunities. A number of positive action initiatives have been made which provide support for employees in overcoming the barriers to career development (eg. Springboard Women's Development Programme).

Leave Provisions

a) Maternity Leave

Allows new mothers up to 52 weeks leave, including up to 26 weeks with pay. Provisions may differ depending upon an individual's length of employment and conditions of service.



b) Maternity Support/Paternity Leave

Allows for nominated carers of expectant mothers one or two weeks leave, dependent on eligibility criteria.

c) Adoption Leave

Covers the arrangements for the adopting parents.

d) Parental Leave

Allows up to 13 weeks unpaid leave, per child, for parents up to the child's eighth birthday.

e) Leave for Religious Observance

Up to four days leave in a year can be taken by those employees whose religious festivals and observances are not included as national holidays.

f) Special and Compassionate Leave Provisions

Under this scheme employees may be granted leave for periods of up to five days in total to allow for a period of adjustment and other arrangements to be made in respect of:

- Sudden illness of a dependent partner, parent, child or relative;
- Normal care arrangements breaking down;
- A serious accident;
- Urgent domestic business.

Self-Managed Staff Groups

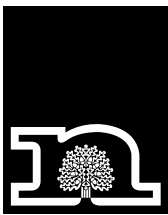
Employees are allowed three hours a month to attend self-managed staff groups of which they are members. Examples are: Corporate Disabled Workers' Group, Corporate Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Group and several departmental groups including Black Workers' Groups.

Note

If you would like further information on any of these policies, please contact:

- if you are an employee
 - Your Departmental Human Resources Team.
- if you are not a council employee
 - Corporate Human Resources
Nottinghamshire County Council, Resources Department,
County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7QP
- Visit the County Council website: www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk





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If you would like further information on any of the issues contained in this document please contact Maggie Else / Margaret Radford details above.