

East Devon District Council

Draft Gender Equality Scheme and Policy

Reviewed

January 2007

Policy Number

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Policy Approval

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Policy Statement

East Devon District Council aspires to improving its performance against the Local Authority Equality Standard (it currently achieves Level 1). It has an Equalities Policy setting out its approach and basic stance. As part of its approach it will of course embrace the Gender Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2006.

The Council values people of both genders in its employ, its community, and as visitors to the area. 52.83% of our East Devon population are female, reflecting the older profile of our residents. 49% of our employees are female, 29% of Corporate Management Team are female.

We must ensure that people of both genders have their needs met equally. Where it is proportionate and reasonable to do so we must make particular arrangements for people of either gender to ensure this equality.

We must of course ensure that any unlawful Discrimination against people of either gender is eliminated within the Council (and where possible within the community), similarly we must not tolerate harassment or violence relating to gender and look to this being eliminated. We must ensure we promote positive attitudes towards both genders.

Evidently people of either gender may also suffer other forms of discrimination or prejudice (eg relating to their sexuality, disability, age, race or religion). The Council's Equality policy seeks to address such multiple issues.

Whilst they may not be 'gender specific' we must consider the unequal gender effects of our policies and services (e.g. relating to public transport, full-time working, carers, meetings times etc.)

Gender is one of the many diversity issues for the Council. In this respect it reflects our ambition and commitment to deal with every customer and employee as an individual with their own particular needs.

The Council's Commitment

East Devon District Council does not, and will not, tolerate gender prejudice in any form and will strive to eliminate this and any inequalities that arise from gender differences and imposed or chosen gender roles. The Gender Equality scheme and policy applies to every Member and officer of the Council and to everyone contracted or commissioned to provide services on the Council's behalf.

How we will tackle the issue

Context –

Involving people of both genders drawing up the scheme and policy

The Council actively seeks the views of people of both genders and has sought to recognise these in developing the scheme and policy.

Recent consultation and research seeking, or identifying, gender differences in service, or views from people of both genders, about Council services and approaches, include:-

- Gender split of staff, by occupational group
- Diversity questionnaire at reception
- Gender differences in tenant survey results
- Review of domestic violence information
- Common Ground – review
- Gender split of Members
- Request for gender issues via householder newsletter and in staff newsletter
- Gender review of training update
- Gender review through 'social inclusion checklist'
- Gender information from Devon Equality groups
- Gender differences in General Survey responses
- Gender information from Census
- Gender split on 'Speak Now' panel
- Gender split on housing register

Impact Assessment of policies and practices

- The Council has carried out a self-assessment of impacts and service accessibility for people of both genders via its Social Inclusion Checklist process
- The Council's draft policy impact assessment tool (embedded in the Committee template) seeks to anticipate impacts of decisions on people of both genders
- Recruitment impact is assessed by the Human Resources team

Gathering further information

- The Council will seek to continue to work to identify shortfalls in good practice
- The Council will further use information at its disposal including data on employment, housing needs and census data to help inform its approach
- We will actively seek customer satisfaction survey data, and review formal complaints relating to people with gender related problems
- We will be continuing work as part of a Devon wide equalities consortium

Using the information gathered

The Council's Equalities Steering Group (all Council services, chaired by a nominated Member) will consider the information gathered, and impact assessment information, in order to shape and challenge current practice, future policy, and thus create the next Gender Equalities Scheme Statement and Policy (due January 2009).

This body will also produce an annual review. This review will be published on the Council's website.

Outcomes

The action plan at Appendix A will be delivered.

Who is responsible for delivery?

All staff.

Performance Monitoring

The Corporate Equalities Steering Group will monitor.

Policy Review

January 2009

Related Policies and Strategies

Equality and Diversity Policy
Consultation Strategy