

**Policy on Equal Opportunities in
Recruitment, Employment and
Training covering Gender, Marital
Status, Race, Ethnic Origins,
Nationality, Religion and Belief**



**Produced by Personnel Services
January 1997
(Revised February 2006)**

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

1. Introduction

Carlisle City Council has adopted, and is actively pursuing, a policy of equal opportunities.

This document covers the policy and supporting practices designed to promote equal opportunities and prevent discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race, ethnic origins, nationality, religion or belief. A separate policy document covers equal opportunities for employees and applicants with disabilities.

This policy covers all employees and applicants.

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1 The Council believes that treating people on merit rather than any other consideration such as gender, marital status, racial, religion or belief is valuable in maximising the effective use of its people, as well as being in the employees' best interests.
- 2.2 All employees and applicants will be treated equally, irrespective of their sex, sexual orientation, marital status, race, ethnic origin, nationality, religion or belief. The only exception will be where a genuine occupational qualification can be justified in requiring a person of a particular sex or racial type.
- 2.3 The Council is committed not only to the letter of the law, but also to the promotion of equality of opportunity in all fields.
- 2.4 Application of Collective Agreements and the operation of recruitment, training and promotion policies to all individuals are on the basis of job requirements, and the individual's ability and fitness for the work.
- 2.5 Staff employed by the Council are made aware of the provisions of this policy, through advertisements, job descriptions, application forms, training course and handbooks for appropriate managerial and supervisory staff.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 In this policy "discrimination" means discrimination where a person is treated less favourably on grounds of sex or marital status, (as defined in the Sex Discrimination Act 1975), sexual orientation (as defined in the Sex Discrimination Gender Reassignment Regulations 1999), or race, ethnic origin or nationality (as defined in the Race Relations Act 1976) and any subsequent legislation.

- 3.2 In this policy "indirect discrimination" means the imposition of a requirement or condition which is applied or would be applied equally to persons but;
- i. which is such that the proportion of persons of the one specific group cannot comply with it ,or those who can are of a considerably smaller than the proportion of persons not of that group who can comply with it;
 - ii. which the Council cannot show to be justifiable irrespective of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race, ethnic origin, nationality, religion or belief of the person to whom it is applied;
 - iii. which is to the detriment of the individual concerned because he / she cannot comply with it.
- 3.3 "Genuine Occupational qualification" is where for reasons of authenticity or privacy it is essential to have someone of particular sex or racial origin. This will be rare in the Council and advice **must** be sought from the Personnel Section before applying this criteria.

4. Possible Pre-conceptions

- 4.1 In the application of the equal opportunity policy, it is essential that managers guard against discrimination on the basis of possible presumptions that individuals possess characteristics, which would make them unsuitable for employment, promotion or training. Examples of such assumptions might be:-
- i) Lack of commitment to work.
 - ii) Have outside commitments which would interfere with work.
 - iii) Possess poor mental / physical ability.
 - iv) Produce an anticipated unfavourable reaction of other staff and members of the public.
 - v) Be unsuitable for the job because of a feeling that certain types of work are only suitable for a member of a particular sex or of single status.
 - vi) Be unable to supervise.
 - vii) Possess limited career intentions.
 - viii) Be unwilling to undertake training.
 - ix) Have poor standards of behaviour / conduct.
 - x) Have limitations imposed by so-called traditional interests and experience.

Discrimination based on these, or any other pre-conceptions is unacceptable.

5. Recruitment and Promotion

- 5.1 Applicants for posts shall be given as much clear and accurate information about posts through advertisements, job descriptions and interviews in order to enable them to assess their own suitability for a post
- 5.2 Recruitment literature shall not imply that there is a preference for one group of applicants (e.g. by use of photographs of only members of one sex or race), unless there is genuine occupational qualification, which limits a post, in which case this must be clearly stated. However, in accordance with Section 48 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Council may encourage persons of one group only to apply for vacancies where, during the previous 12 months, the number of persons of that group employed on particular work is small, in comparison with the number of persons in other groups employed on that work by the Council. However, after encouraging such applications, each candidate must be considered on his / her merits and suitability for the post and their membership of an under-represented group shall not influence the appointment.

Advertisements and recruitment drives shall be circulated where they will be seen by suitably qualified and experienced people.

- 5.3 All person specifications for posts include only requirements that are necessary and justifiable for the effective performance of the job.
- 5.4 Interviews are thorough, conducted objectively and deal only with the applicant's suitability for the job and the ability to fulfil job requirements. Selection is made on the same basis. A record of the selection decision and reasons for choice is kept.
- 5.5 All involved in interviewing are trained to Council standards, including awareness of issues related to discrimination.
- 5.6 Vacancies are circulated internally to staff likely to possess appropriate qualifications or have relevant experience. The only exception to this is where the post is suitable for a potential redeployee, or there is an obvious successor.

6. Training

- 6.1 It is the policy of the Council that it will not discriminate in the provision of training courses.
- 6.2 Appropriate training shall be provided to enable staff to perform their jobs effectively. Such training will make provisions where necessary for individuals returning to work following a break for domestic reasons, and any

other subjects required by individuals, as appropriate.

- 6.3 Age limits for entry to training schemes will not be unnecessarily restrictive to exclude certain groups of staff.
- 6.4 All staff are given an opportunity to discuss their career prospects and training needs with their manager during personal development interviews.

7. Terms and Conditions of Service and Facilities

- 7.1 The Council will not discriminate on the basis of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race, ethnic origin, nationality, religion or belief in the provision of general staff facilities and benefits.
- 7.2 Allocation of duties or shifts will be made on objective, non-discriminatory grounds.

8. Responsibilities and Monitoring

- 8.1 Overall responsibility for this policy lies with the Town Clerk and Chief Executive. The Head of Personnel and Development Services is responsible for monitoring all personnel policies, including this one, to ensure they do not operate against equal opportunities.
- 8.2 The composition of the workforce will be monitored and statistics reported. Where possible this will be measured against the general population of the area.
- 8.3 Managers are responsible for ensuring that their staff are fully aware of equal opportunities requirements and its impact on their work.
- 8.4 It is the responsibility of everyone involved with any aspect of employment issues to adhere to this policy and supporting practices. Failure to do so will be regarded as a disciplinary offence.

9. Grievances and Victimisation

- 9.1 Any complaints of discrimination against employees will be pursued through the Dignity and Respect Policy.

10. Links with other policies

- 10.1 The Council's policy on "Equal Opportunities in Recruitment, Employment and Training covering People with Disabilities" operates in tandem with this policy.

11. Further Advice

This is available from the Personnel Section.