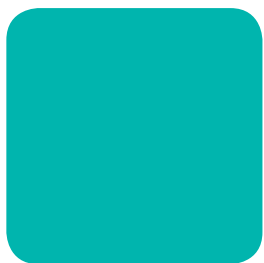
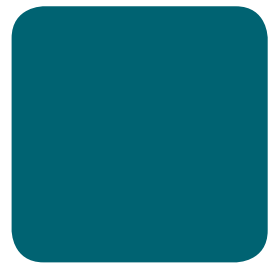




# Equality Policy

Carlisle City Council



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# Why we need an Equality Policy

Under the Equalities Act (2010), Carlisle City Council must adhere to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The PSED covers the relevant protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination also covers marriage and civil partnerships.

We must also:

- Publish information to demonstrate our compliance with the equality duty, at least annually.
- Set equality objectives, at least every four years.

We must publish information about the protected characteristics of our employees and people affected by our policies and practices. We should also provide information about how equality is considered in decision making, policy development, consultation and procurement.

This policy sets out how we will adhere to our duties and requirements of the Equality Act. Our aim is to improve the information we collect to help us identify areas for development. We will continue to embed equality in our services and show we are committed to promoting diversity. We welcome our responsibilities as an employer, as a provider of services and as a community leader, and value the legislation that supports our commitment to equality and fairness.

## Our responsibilities

Our Equality Policy applies to:

- Service users
- Councillors
- Employees
- Volunteers
- Contractors, sub-contractors and partners

The Executive makes decisions in line with Carlisle City Council's policy and budgetary framework. These decisions must always be informed with an assessment of equality impacts.

The Chief Executive is responsible for making sure our Equality Policy is applied consistently throughout the organisation.

Senior management are responsible for making sure that departmental procedures and service plans reflect the Equality Policy and deliver the required outcomes.

We expect all staff and councillors to show commitment to ensuring that this policy is implemented, and to abide by the Code of Conduct and our Dignity and Respect Policy in the performance of their duties.

Similarly, our employees, councillors and any other people providing services to the public are entitled to be treated fairly and with respect. Where they face discrimination or harassment from service users, we will take action to stop this happening again. In some circumstances this may include the withdrawal or refusal of the service.

## Equality Statement

The Equality Statement sets out our commitment to promote equality of opportunity in all our services:

**Carlisle is home to a wide range of people who make different and valuable contributions to life in the area. We believe that everyone should be treated fairly and with respect, and are committed to challenging inequality, discrimination and disadvantage. Our commitment applies whether the Council is acting as an employer, providing services, or commissioning services from other organisations.**

**Working closely with all our statutory partners, including social enterprise, business and voluntary sectors, we aim to achieve the highest possible standard of service delivery and employment practice. We also seek to build closer links with all communities across the district to promote equality.**

**All employees and councillors have responsibility for equality and ensuring that we meet our duties.**

# How we will deliver equality in our services

## Consultation and engagement

We are committed to listening to people's views and to working with communities to help us make informed decisions. This means talking and listening to everyone in the community, not only those who regularly use our services or actively offer their views.

We recognise that a targeted approach may be required to engage successfully with some members of local communities, to ensure that their views are properly taken into account. We will engage with representative groups to meet our duties, and we will encourage these groups to work with us to improve our services.

We will gather customer information in a number of ways that will include Carlisle Focus surveys, online surveys, face to face interviews, road shows, and consultation events. The development of our social media tools help improve communication with customers and encourage feedback on our services.

## Equality impact assessment

Equality impact assessments are about making sure that our services and policies are fair and to identify the impacts of these on groups of people within our community.

There are two stages to impact assessment:

- initial screening - an overview to assess if there are any equality issues and to see if any action can be taken to change the likely impact of a decision on a particular group.
- full impact assessment - a longer piece of work which relies on the findings of the initial screening to research and take action where impacts are judged to be unknown or are considered to be major.

An impact assessment should be proportionate to the proposed change and the potential impact on equality. We will undertake impact assessments of our policies and services to help inform our decision making. We will ensure that any potential negative consequences are removed or balanced out by either changing the policy or service, or introducing other measures alongside it.

## Procurement and commissioning

We recognise our responsibility as a major procurer of goods and services in the Cumbrian area. We need to ensure that the suppliers and contractors that we work with do not operate in a way that contradicts legislation or our Equality Policy.

Our Procurement and Commissioning Strategy (2014-2016) sets out a clear framework for procurement activity and enables us to promote a positive approach to equality.

We request equality compliance in our tender documents and expect all potential providers to be committed to equality and diversity in their employment practices and service provision. Our aim is to ensure that suppliers, contractors and their agents provide goods, supplies and services that do not discriminate against people in any way. We will, if appropriate, monitor the successful provider's compliance throughout the term of the contract.

## Service delivery

We are committed to providing services that are responsive and accessible to all. People who use our services are entitled to do so free from discrimination and harassment.

Managing service delivery is about providing appropriate services, according to need, for everyone in the district. We continually look for ways to increase the flexibility of the services we provide so that they are more responsive and inclusive. We are encouraging residents to register for online services where possible and we also continue to work with partners to improve services in the community (for example using community centres as hubs).

We will continue to ensure our customers' experiences are of the highest possible standard and they can confidently and easily access the Council services they need. Key to this is developing customer information to shape service delivery around our customers' needs.

We regularly measure customer satisfaction with our services and monitor other information such as complaints and customer contact data. We will apply a consistent approach to recording equality information across our services and improve data quality.

## **Communications and accessibility**

Our website has been redesigned so that information is easily accessible in a friendly, intuitive structure. Our content will be clear and present our service in a confident way so that our customers know what they can expect from us and our commitment to their service.

We will continue to develop our services and ensure that they are accessible to all customers. This means that we will make information about our services accessible by:

- Using “Plain English” (language that an English speaking audience can understand and act upon from a single reading).
- Providing appropriate translation and interpretation for non-English speakers on request.
- Providing appropriate options for people with disabilities.
- Reviewing the way we publicise our services, to reach people not already using them.

We will review our communications guidance to ensure that the images and language we use help to promote equality.

## **Complaints and feedback**

We value feedback and recognise the right of all our customers to complain, compliment or make a suggestion about any of our activities or services. We are committed to ensuring that we use customer feedback to help improve services and to focus on the needs of our customers. The Complaints and Feedback Policy contains further details on how any type of feedback concerning our functions and services is considered.

We encourage those submitting written complaints to provide equality information in order to establish if there are specific issues relating to one of the equality strands. All equality data collected remains confidential and anonymous.

## How we will deliver equality as an employer

### Employment

We will continue to develop our most important asset, our employees, to deliver our priorities and respond to the needs of our customers. Staff health and wellbeing is promoted in the workplace and we undertake a range of actions and initiatives to support this. We will continue to monitor and develop our workforce profile to ensure that we fulfil our equality reporting requirements. This will also help us to identify areas where we can support our employees.

We have achieved the Two Ticks symbol to show that we encourage applications from disabled people and are looking for ways to continue to improve support for staff.

### Recruitment and selection

Our workforce should reflect the diversity of the population of the district. We will achieve this by positively encouraging applications from those sections of the community that are currently under-represented in our workforce. As a major employer, we will aim to be a positive example of good practice to other employers in the district and Cumbria. Where a particular group is under-represented in an area of work and there is evidence of discrimination positive action may be taken. Our Recruitment and Selection procedures contain further information about this.

### Learning and development

We will provide appropriate learning and information resources to ensure that all employees and councillors understand and fulfil the organisation's commitment to equality. We will continue to work in partnership with other local authorities and organisations in Cumbria to develop best practice across the county by sharing information, developing training and procuring services to support equality work.

## Reporting equality information

We must provide information about how equality is considered in decision making, policy development and engagement. This information will be published within an annual equality report that includes progress of the following:

- equality objectives
- equality impact assessments
- workforce profile
- customer satisfaction
- complaints
- consultation and engagement

We will use this information to identify equality issues and develop areas for action or improvement. We will publish information in an accessible format and ensure it follows the principles of our Data Quality Policy, giving confidence to the users of the information. We will give details as to what we publish and why, explaining how the information is used. We will also acknowledge gaps in our data and explain how we can improve this.

Progress will be reported to Senior Management Team, the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny through the annual report and published on our website.

## Our equality objectives 2016-2019

Our equality objectives have been updated to develop the work of the previous objectives. Progress will be reported as part of the annual equality report.

Equality objective	Rationale behind objective and link to the Public Sector Equality Duty	Outcome or improvement sought by 2019	Baseline	Lead team(s)
a) Improve health, wellbeing and economic prosperity in Carlisle	Our vision is to improve the health, wellbeing and economic prosperity of the people of Carlisle. We have a key role in addressing health and wellbeing inequalities on a daily basis and have a positive impact on the lives of some of the most vulnerable residents in Carlisle. This links to the work being undertaken by the Carlisle Partnership to deliver the Healthy City programme. Health inequalities are the unjust differences in health between persons of different social groups and can be linked to forms of disadvantage such as poverty, discrimination and lack of access to services and goods. This links to the duty to advance equality of opportunity.	Health inequality can be measured through observing differences in subgroups of a population  Prevent the health inequalities gap between the most and least affluent areas in Carlisle from growing  Improved economic prosperity through increased economic activity and reduced unemployment	Approximately 13 years difference in life expectancy in females when comparing the most and least affluent areas in Carlisle and 12 years in males. <sup>1</sup>  Carlisle Economic activity rate 78% (i.e. % 16-64 year olds who are economically active) July 2013-June 2014 <sup>2</sup>  Carlisle Youth unemployment rate 1.6% (16-24 year olds) September 2014 <sup>3</sup>  13.9 % of Carlisle households with an annual median income of less than £10k 2015 <sup>4</sup>  12.3 Carlisle Benefit Claimants rate (working age client group (16-64years) Department for Work & Pensions, November 2014 <sup>5</sup>  15.3% Carlisle children in poverty – All Children (0-19 years) 2012 <sup>6</sup>	All Council Services

1. Cumbria Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Health Inequalities, July 2015
2. Carlisle Economic Partnership, Economic Review of Carlisle, July 2015
3. Carlisle Economic Partnership, Economic Review of Carlisle, July 2015
4. Responding to Welfare Reform - Carlisle Summary, July 2015, Cumbria Intelligence Observatory

5. Responding to Welfare Reform - Carlisle Summary, July 2015, Cumbria Intelligence Observatory
6. Responding to Welfare Reform - Carlisle Summary, July 2015, Cumbria Intelligence Observatory

Equality objective	Rationale behind objective and link to the Public Sector Equality Duty	Outcome or improvement sought by 2019	Baseline	Lead team(s)
b) Improve quality of workforce profile and report recruitment and selection data	The workforce profile and recruitment and selection information show inaccuracies due to missing or undeclared information, and systems duplicating data and not integrating effectively. These issues are being addressed through the development of the Council's Human Resources system, iTrent, to capture employee data. This links to the duties to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to advance equality of opportunity.	Increased data for all equality characteristics within the workforce profile  Report recruitment and selection data	Workforce profile in annual equality report 2014/15  Not currently reported due to inaccurate data	Policy and Communications, Human Resources, Personnel and Payroll
c) Ensure people have appropriate access to the services they need	The Customer Access Strategy aims to use customer information to shape service delivery around our customers' needs so that they are delivered responsibly, accurately and cost effectively. All residents of Carlisle should be able to confidently and easily access all the Council services they need. This should be in a timely and appropriate manner, irrespective of where they live, their skills, knowledge and ability. This links to the duty to advance equality of opportunity.	Improved satisfaction with our services  Improved internal processes, leading to clearer information for our customers. Further progress of Smarter Service Delivery Programme  Increased number of corporate complaints completed at stage one	Overall satisfaction with Council Services in 2014/15 was 61.25% very or fairly satisfied <sup>7</sup>  7 Smarter Service Delivery Reviews completed between early 2014 and October 2015, new website launched September 2015  88% of corporate complaints completed at stage one 2014/15 <sup>8</sup>	All Council Services, Policy and Communications

7. End of year Performance report 2014/15 - Baseline report, Executive July 2015

8. End of year Performance report 2014/15 - Baseline report, Executive July 2015



Equality objective	Rationale behind objective and link to the Public Sector Equality Duty	Outcome or improvement sought by 2019	Baseline	Lead team(s)
d) Foster good relations between different people by celebrating communities	This builds on the previous equality objective to tackle prejudice and promote understanding. It supports our Carlisle Plan priority to develop sports, arts and cultural facilities to support the health and wellbeing of our residents and our events programme. This links to the duty to foster good relations.	Improved satisfaction with community based projects and events, working in partnership with others  Increased reporting of hate crime	83.7% very or fairly satisfied with the programme of events in Carlisle <sup>9</sup>  113 hate crimes in Carlisle June 2014 - May 2015 <sup>10</sup>	All Council Services, Policy and Communications

9. Carlisle Focus Events Survey Winter / Spring 2013/2014

10. Crime and Policing dashboard - May 2015

## Further information and feedback

We welcome feedback on our Equality Policy. If you have any comments or questions about how this policy affects you, please contact the Policy Team at:

**Email: [policy@carlisle.gov.uk](mailto:policy@carlisle.gov.uk)**

**Telephone: 01228 817258**

**Post: Policy Team**

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If you require this guide in an alternative format or language please contact us to discuss your needs.

For further information about our equality and diversity work please visit our website **[www.carlisle.gov.uk/Council/More-about-the-Council/Equality-and-Diversity](http://www.carlisle.gov.uk/Council/More-about-the-Council/Equality-and-Diversity)**