

# **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

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# **EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL**

## **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

### **1. FOREWORD**

- 1.1. East Lothian Council's Equal Opportunities policy: "Towards a Fair and Diverse East Lothian" is a key Council policy. It defines the council's Best Value approach to equalities in all aspects of its operations.
- 1.2. As a modern employer of choice, the Council strives to be an equal opportunities employer. "Towards a Fair and Diverse East Lothian" has two employment-related strategic aims:
  - Strategic Aim (4): Building a diverse workforce;
  - Strategic Aim (5): Monitoring Progress, Continuous Improvement and Improving quality of life for our employees.
- 1.3. The Council has already developed a range of policies - e.g. Recruitment and Selection Policy - which support these strategic aims. The Council now seeks to emphasise its commitment to equal opportunities and diversity within all its employment practices and procedures. The Council will endeavour to ensure that all employees and potential employees are treated with respect and in accordance with the principles of equal opportunities and human dignity and quality of working life. The Council wishes to encourage harmonious and positive working relations in addition to affording its employees the statutory legal entitlements due to them.

### **2. INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1. The Council recognises that equal opportunities' practice needs to be embedded in all aspects of its operations and that this will improve the quality of working life for its employees and also support its business objectives.
- 2.2. Decisions on all aspects of employment will be based solely on job-related criteria and the Council will prevent discrimination particularly on the grounds of sex, marital status, disability, race, colour, sexual orientation, trade union activity, religious belief, political belief, nationality, ethnic origin, age, responsibility for dependants or employment status.

### **3. SCOPE OF THE POLICY**

- 3.1. The Council's policy aims to ensure:
  - that all employees have equal access to jobs at every level within the organisation
  - that all employees have equal access to relevant training, career development and promotion

- that all job applicants are treated with dignity and respect at every stage of their contact with the Council during the recruitment and selection process and in the terms and conditions of employment.
  - that employment policies are put in place in which all employees are treated equally and fairly in all aspects of their work.
  - that all forms of discrimination, which prevent equality of opportunity, are challenged.
  - that the Council will seek to achieve pay equality for all employees, in accordance with the provisions of relevant local and national agreements and the associated codes of employment practice or legislation.
- 3.2 The Council will endeavour to promote equal opportunities throughout all its employment practices and will, where appropriate, introduce positive action measures to assist disadvantaged groups where this is provided for under relevant legislation.

#### **4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COUNCIL AS AN EMPLOYER**

- 4.1 The Council's Cabinet and Equal Opportunities Sub Committee, the Chief Executive and the Directors will have overall responsibility for ensuring the full implementation of the Equal Employment Opportunities Policy.
- 4.2 The Head of Personnel in conjunction with Directors has responsibility for co-ordinating and monitoring the policy and reviewing and developing associated guidance procedures and resources e.g. recruitment and employment procedures, audits, training courses etc.
- 4.3 The Council will consult with Trade Unions on the implementation of the policy through established joint consultative arrangements. It will ensure the policy is communicated to employees and job applicants and that employees are given appropriate training and guidance to implement the policy.
- 4.4 The Council will ensure equality of opportunity for disabled applicants and staff by ensuring that reasonable adjustments under the Disability Discrimination Act are made, where possible, to enable them to take up or remain in employment.

#### **5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEES OF THE COUNCIL**

- 5.1 Individual Council employees also have responsibilities under this policy. They must not discriminate against other employees or job applicants or induce others to do so.
- 5.2 They must co-operate with measures introduced by the Council to promote equal opportunities and eliminate discrimination.
- 5.3 They must advise management of any suspected discriminatory acts or practices.
- 5.4 They must not harass, abuse or intimidate other employees.

- 5.5 They must not victimise individuals because they have made complaints or provided information about discrimination or harassment.
- 5.6 They must ensure that no actions are discriminatory in dealing with client groups or members of the public.

## **6. CONSEQUENCES OF DISCRIMINATORY ACTS**

- 6.1 Any discriminatory acts or omissions by Council employees will be viewed seriously and will normally result in disciplinary action being taken, which may include dismissal.

## **7. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

- 7.1 The Council in consultation with the Trade Unions will develop and maintain procedures for collecting relevant information and statistics to monitor the progress of this policy in practice.
- 7.2 Information gathered will seek to ensure the requirements of the policy are being met. It will also help identify practices which need to be improved.
- 7.3 The Council will develop and maintain a database of workforce and job applicants, which will allow positive action programmes to be undertaken to achieve equality objectives.
- 7.4 The Head of Personnel Services will be responsible for reviewing the policy from time to time in consultation with the Chief Executive's Management Team, the Joint Consultative Committee/Equal Opportunities Sub-Committee and the Trade Unions.

Head of Personnel Services  
January 2005