

## Equal Opportunities policy

### 1 Statement of policy

The aim of this policy is to communicate the commitment of Newry and Mourne District Council; the Clerk and Chief Executive (the Clerk) and the management team, to the promotion of equality of opportunity in Newry and Mourne District Council.

It is our policy to provide employment equality to all, irrespective of:

- gender, including gender reassignment;
- marital or civil partnership status;
- having or not having dependants;
- religious belief or political opinion;
- race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, being an Irish Traveller);
- disability;
- sexual orientation;
- age.

We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All job applicants, employees and others who work for us will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any of the above grounds. Decisions about recruitment and selection, promotion, training or any other benefit will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination.

We recognise that the provision of equal opportunities in the workplace is not only good management practice, it also makes sound business sense. Our equal opportunities policy will help all those who work for us to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be utilised fully to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

### 2 To whom does the policy apply?

This Equal Opportunities policy applies to all those who work for (or apply to work for) Newry and Mourne District Council:

This will include:

Potential and actual job applicants, employees, agency workers, contractors, volunteers, trainees and students on work placements.

### 3 Equality commitments

We are committed to:

- promoting equality of opportunity for all persons;
- promoting a good and harmonious working environment in which all persons are treated with respect;
- preventing occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimization;
- fulfilling all our legal obligations under the equality legislation and associated codes of practice;
- complying with our own equal opportunities policy and associated policies;
- taking lawful affirmative or positive action, where appropriate;
- regarding all breaches of equal opportunities policy as misconduct which could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

This policy is fully supported by Council, the Chief Executive, the management team and has been agreed with the following trade union(s) as noted in

### 4 Implementation

The Clerk has specific responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. Each director, manager and supervisor also has responsibilities and we expect all our employees to abide by the policy and help create the equality environment which is its objective.

In order to implement this policy we shall:

- communicate the policy to employees, job applicants and

relevant others, such as contract or agency workers;

- incorporate specific and appropriate duties in respect of implementing the equal opportunities policy into job descriptions and work objectives of all staff;
- provide equality training and guidance as appropriate, including training on induction and management courses;
- ensure that those who are involved in assessing candidates for recruitment will be trained in non-discriminatory selection techniques;
- incorporate equal opportunities notices into general communications practices (eg, staff newsletters, intranet);
- obtain commitments from other persons or organisations such as subcontractors or agencies that they too will comply with the policy in their dealings with our organisation and our workforce;
- Ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfil the objectives of the policy.

## 5 Monitoring and review

We will establish appropriate information and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of our equal opportunities policy.

The effectiveness of our equal opportunities policy will be reviewed regularly and at least every two years, in consultation with the recognised trade unions and action taken as necessary. For example, where monitoring identifies an under-representation of a particular group or groups, we shall develop an action plan to address the imbalance.

## 6 Complaints

Employees who believe that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through the agreed procedures, namely the Dignity at Work and Harassment Complaints Procedure or Mediation Procedure as appropriate. A copy of these procedures is available from HR and on the Council's website. All complaints of discrimination will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.

In addition to our internal procedures, employees have the right to pursue complaints of discrimination to an Industrial Tribunal or the Fair Employment Tribunal under the following anti-discrimination legislation:

- Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976, as amended;
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended;
- Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997, as amended;
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003;
- Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, as amended;
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006
- Equal Pay Act (Northern Ireland) 1970, as amended.

However, employees wishing to make a complaint to a tribunal will normally be required to raise their complaint under our internal grievance procedures first – ie the Dignity at Work and Harassment Complaints Procedure.

Every effort will be made to ensure that employees who make complaints will not be victimised. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. Victimisation will result in disciplinary action and may warrant dismissal.

## 7 Agreement and date of review

<b>Signatory</b>	<b>On behalf of</b>	<b>Date</b>
	Newry and Mourne District Council	
Clerk and Chief Executive		
	NIPSA	
	AMICUS	
	UCATT	
	SIPTU	
	GMB	



## Further information

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland can provide advice and guidance on promoting equality of opportunity in the workplace and further information on a range of equality issues. Their information and advice to is free and confidential.

For further information please contact us:

Enquiry Line: 028 90 890 890 (for all information & advice enquiries) Equality Commission for Northern Ireland  
Equality House  
7-9 Shaftesbury Square  
Belfast BT2 7DP

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