



Aberdeen City Council

Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report 2021- 2025

Foreword

I am proud to present Aberdeen City Council's Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming report for 2021-2025. The report identifies progress we have made on the previous objectives, and details how we will continue to put equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of how we operate as a service provider, as an employer and in our collaborative work with partners.

The pandemic has had a major impact on the economy and health of residents and communities across the City. We continue to face the challenge of responding, mitigating and anticipating the impact of Covid-19. A crucial aspect of this is responding to the burgeoning evidence that the pandemic has increased inequality to individuals and communities who may already be vulnerable and marginalised.

In this context, through this report we affirm and demonstrate our commitment to equality and will make every effort to be vigilant to safeguard the human rights laws and international treaties which protect every one of us.

As a service provider, our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion will help us to deliver first class services tailored to customer needs whilst striving to achieve vision for Aberdeen as a place where all people can prosper.

As an employer, we remain committed to promoting equality and diversity amongst our workforce. We also aim to foster a culture that promotes wellbeing and mental health and provides support to enable all our colleagues from all backgrounds to thrive, feel valued, able to be themselves and perform at their very best.

As a partner, we will continue working to ensure that collaborative work is underpinned by the same values. This includes Community Planning partners, commissioned services, and suppliers we contract with.

In developing our renewed Equality Outcomes, we engaged internally and with communities to identify priority inequalities that are deep rooted and long standing.

The Outcomes demonstrate our commitment to improving over the next four years, building upon our previous successes and lessons learned.

Our Equality Outcomes for 2021 to 2025 will focus on the following themes:

- improve physical and social access to our services,
- increase the sense of safety and belonging in our communities, and,
- removing barriers for people with protected characteristics to engage in all civic, cultural, and social activities to ensure equality is mainstreamed and diversity is celebrated.

Our Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming report 2021-2025 is a working document and will be monitored regularly to make sure it achieves the desired outcomes for our City.



Philip Bell

Councillor Philip Bell

Convener – Operational Delivery Committee

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Introduction

This document presents the Council's plan for mainstreaming equality within the organisation and sets out our intended actions for 2021 – 2025 to pay due regard to the Equality Act 2010 and its General Duties of eliminating discrimination; advancing equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

The protected characteristics as [defined](#) by the Equality Act 2010 are:

Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Chapter 1- The context for equalities mainstreaming in 2021.

In this chapter we will consider current national and local equality issues which affects peoples' lives. We will also reflect on the approaches and strategies the Council has pursued in its journey to meet its legal equalities duties. This will contribute to framing the equality work and setting a new set of Equality Outcomes for the next 4 years.

The COVID-19 pandemic

The **COVID-19 pandemic** has had an unprecedented impact on communities across the world. Every life has been affected, however, there is clear evidence that COVID-19 does not affect all population groups [equally](#). Whether it is the virus itself or the restrictions set as a response to its spread, early national and local research has shown the extra layer of disadvantage equality groups are enduring:

- Research shows older age and being a member of an ethnic minority community, for example, are associated with a higher risk of catching the infection and higher rates of death.
- Bereavement, isolation, loss of income and fear are triggering mental health conditions or exacerbating existing ones. Many people may be facing increased levels of alcohol and drug use, insomnia, and anxiety.
- There is concern that rates of domestic abuse are increasing during periods of lockdown and restricted measures. The [joint statement](#) issued by the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) services across the UK reports that perpetrators will use infection control measures as a tool of coercive and controlling behaviour
- Long-standing structural inequalities and discrimination that deaf and disabled people experience appear to be heightened. Nationally, the wide disparities are reflected in the [data](#) released by the Office for National Statistics, which shows Disabled people are about twice as likely to die from COVID-19.

In developing these Equality Outcomes, we were mindful of the coronavirus pandemic and the disproportionate impact on communities. Some of these impacts have already been identified but others are still to be seen. It is important that the

increasing disadvantage triggered by the pandemic is considered throughout our process to developing and implementing our equality outcomes.

The recently published report of the [Social Renewal Advisory Board](#) includes ‘calls to action’ on many aspects of life that have equality factors and considerations, including housing, food accessibility, the incorporation of human rights law into Scots law to ensure protection for those with protected characteristics, and realising disabled person’s rights in full. As this work develops, we will ensure that this mainstreaming plan accounts for any measures being introduced to advance equalities issues.

The Black Lives Matter

The circumstances of George Floyd’s death in the US mobilised people to protest throughout the world in support of the Black Lives Matter movement and race inequality.

In Aberdeen, residents organised a well-attended peaceful protest to mark their support for the movement, calling for change to eliminate systematic injustices and racial inequalities against black people.

In our engagement process, our local communities have reiterated the importance for the Council to continue to demonstrate leadership on equality issues and support to such causes.

Such events have been reminders and triggers for us to continually review the way we work and think about what we need to put in place, to better understand how people’s lives are affected.

In Aberdeen City Council, we understand that it is during difficult times that equality matters the most.

Local Context

Facts about Aberdeen:

Aberdeen is the 3rd largest city in Scotland and the 37th most populous urban area in the United Kingdom.

Aberdeen has been named as one of the top [60 liveable global cities](#), one of the top 5 liveable cities in Britain by Mercer and one of the top eight cities leading the United Kingdom's economy.

In 2018, Aberdeen was confirmed as Scotland's most international city, with nearly a fifth of residents born outside the UK.

Demographics

In June 2019, Aberdeen City had an estimated population of **228,670**. This equates to 4.2% of Scotland's total population. In terms of population size, Aberdeen City is the 8th largest local authority in Scotland.

There are slightly more females (114,873) than males (113,797) in the city with females making up 50.2% of the population.

Compared to the rest of Scotland, Aberdeen has a relatively young population. The median age in Aberdeen is 38 years compared to 43.4 years for Scotland.

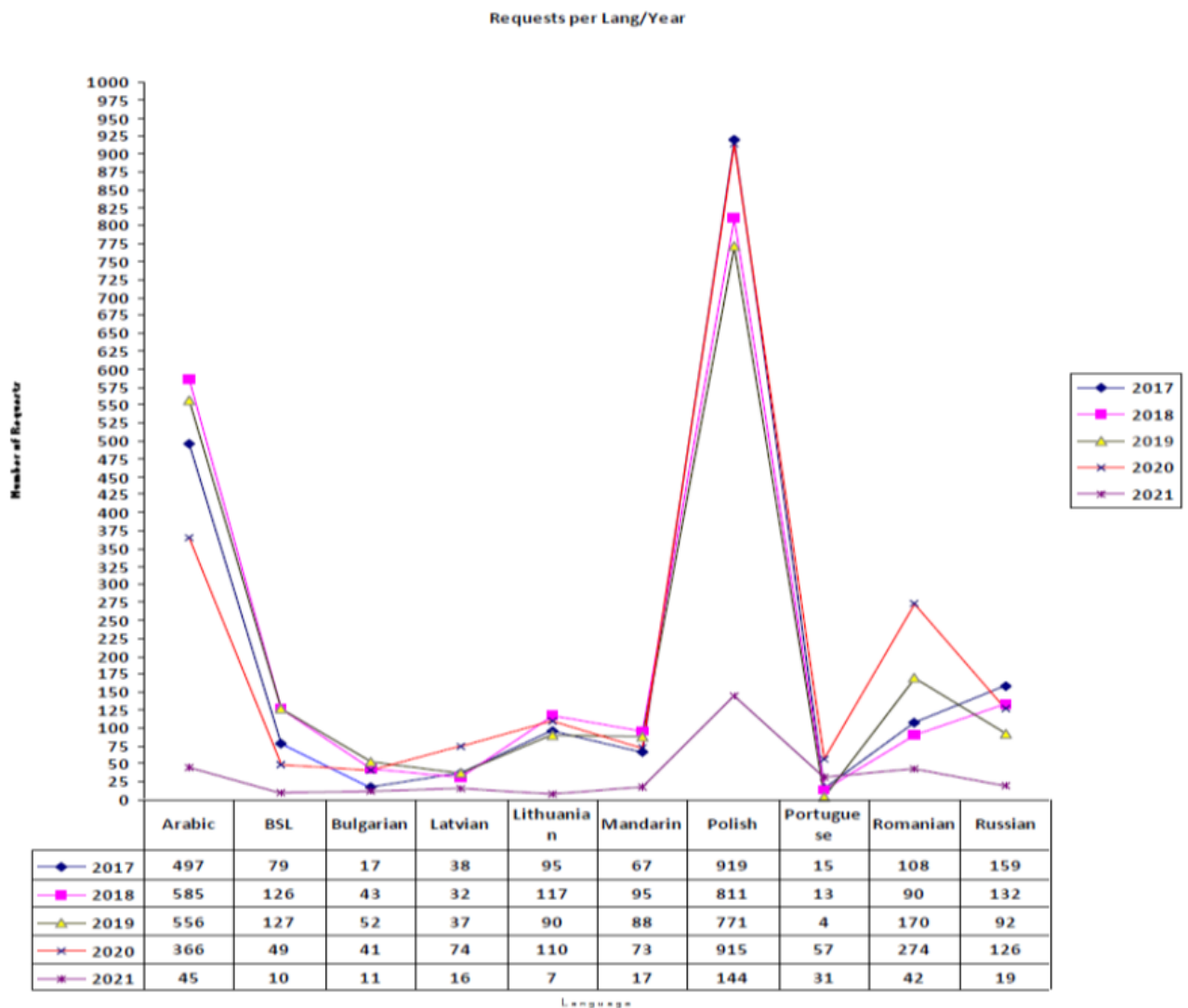
Aberdeen City has a diverse population. Recent figures (Jan-Dec 2019) from the National Records of Scotland, estimate that 22% of the City's population was born outside the UK compared to 9% for the rest of Scotland. It is estimated that of those born outside the UK, 50% are from EU countries and 50% from non-EU countries. At the time of the 2011 Census, Aberdeen City had the third highest proportion of non-white ethnic minority people in Scotland at 15.6%. This was more than double the average for Scotland (7.6%).

Aberdeen City has a slightly higher rate of people (known to the local authority) with learning disabilities at 5.5 per 1000, compared to 5.2 for Scotland as a whole. In the Scottish Health Survey (2016-19), 24% reported having a limiting long-term illness in Aberdeen City compared to 33% in Scotland. This proportion was higher in females (28%) than males (19%).

The 2011 census found that the primary religion in Aberdeen is Christianity at 31% of the population (compared to the national average of 54%). The largest denominations are the Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church. There are also several Protestant, Baptist, and Evangelical congregations as well as two meeting houses for the Latter-Day Saints Church.

Aberdeen has the highest proportion of non-religious people in the country with about 43% of residents claiming no religion.

The following graph shows the interpreting requests for the 10 most used languages over the last four years, as provided by InterTrans, our in-house interpreting and translation service.



The Gypsy/Travellers Community

A total of 13 unauthorised encampments visited Aberdeen in 2020.

The authorised traveller site at Clinterty is a permanent site and currently has 19 families living there, consisting of 34 adults and 24 children. Some of the families travel throughout the year, however due to COVID-19 all the families have remained on site throughout the year.

COVID-19 deaths: As of 14^h February, there were [224 deaths](#) in Aberdeen City where COVID-19. Analysis by National Records of Scotland also shows that deaths among people in the South Asian ethnic group were more than twice as likely to involve COVID-19 as the White ethnic group. [Aberdeen City Population Needs Assessment (Draft 18 December 2020)]

Hate Crime:

Hate Crime is recorded under the following categories:

- Race
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion/Faith
- Disability
- Transgender/gender identity.

The following table provided by Police Scotland shows the number of hate crimes reported in Aberdeen across a 3 - year period from 2017-2020. It shows a marked increase in the number of crimes reported between 2019 and 2020 with crimes relating to Race by far the most reported, followed by sexual orientation.

Aggravator	1st July 2017 - 30th June 2018	1st July 2018 - 30th June 2019	1st July 2019 - 30th June 2020
Race	186	166	201

Religion	9	13	5
Race & Religion	7	1	1
Other Multi Aggravator (incl. Race or Religion)	2	6	9
Disability	5	8	7
Sexual Orientation	44	34	70
Transgender	2	1	8
Other Multiple Aggravators (excl. Race or Religion)	2	2	4
Total	257	231	305

Please note: All statistics are provisional and should be treated as management information.

All data have been extracted from Police Scotland internal systems and are correct as at 19/8/2020.

1. As there can be multiple aggravators attached to a hate crime, the total number of aggravators will not reflect the number of unique hate crimes.

Legislative Context

Equality Act 2010

Aberdeen City Council, like all public authorities are required to publish equality information by 30 April 2021 under the Scottish specific duties . This information includes:

- a new set of equality outcomes,
- reports on their progress on achieving their equality outcomes and on mainstreaming equality by this date and
- pay gap information and equal pay statements.

The Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act 1998 sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the UK is entitled to. It incorporates the rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into domestic British law. [The Human Rights Act 1998](#) came into force in the UK in October 2000 and requires all public bodies (including local authorities) and other bodies carrying out public functions to respect and protect people's human rights.

Chapter 2- Mainstreaming equality

This chapter reflects on the approaches and strategies we have in place to mainstream our equalities duties. Mainstreaming equality simply means integrating equality into the Council's day-to-day working.

This requires taking equality into account and paying due regard to the General Duties as defined by the Equalities Act 2010 in the way we exercise all our functions.

By mainstreaming the equality duty, we will ensure that equality becomes part of our structures, behaviours and culture that contributes to continuous improvement and better performance.

To assess and review the work we do to mainstream equality, we have asked ourselves the following questions:

About our communities:

How much do we know and understand our diverse communities? How effective are we in engaging with our communities and understanding inequality issues affecting them?

About our Governance:

How committed are our leaders and organisation? How are our priorities and working in partnership taking into account equalities work? How do we assess equality impact on policies and decision-taking?

About our services:

How fair and responsive are our services? What are our mainstreaming principles?

About our workforce:

How diverse is our workforce? How much are we investing to have an engaged workforce?

1. About our communities

Equality data

High quality equality evidence and analysis is vital to ensure effective and inclusive services and decision making in Aberdeen.

We use a series of data sources, including,

- a. Scotland's Census, National Records of Scotland for specific [data on Aberdeen](#) to plan and allocate resources.
- b. National inequality data sources, including: '[Is Scotland Fairer](#) , [Equality Evidence Finder](#) and other additional national sources like the [Scottish Household Survey](#).

To understand the profile and needs of our diverse communities we work in partnership with customers and services. Examples include:

- We consult extensively with D/deaf and Deafblind BSL users and colleagues in the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) to better understand the BSL users community's needs to enable their participation in civic life and to ensure our services were accessible. Details are within our [British Sign Language Plan \(BSL\) 2018-24](#).
- Working closely with the third sector and specialist organisations to engage and reach out to the diverse communities, including:
 - North East Sensory Services (NESS) and the British Deaf Association (BDA) to engage with BSL users.
 - We funded Grampian Regional Equality Council (GREC) to carry out community engagement in preparation for our Equality Outcomes.
 - Disability Equity Partnership (DEP): As a constituted part of the Council's governance structure, DEP is used as a sounding board for consultation and advice especially for infrastructure projects and accessibility in civic spaces and as a strategic advisory group. The Partnership has been a driving force for positive social change. The Partnership which exists to bring about improvements to the lives of

people in Aberdeen who experience exclusion because of their disability, through the promotion of a rights-based approach to disability equality have supported various successful projects. Recently they fed into the accessibility of the newly refurbished Music Hall. Other projects undertaken were also reported in our progress [report](#) 2017-19

- Our Gypsy/ Travellers Liaison Officer provides information and facilitates engagement activities with the Gypsy/ Travellers Community in Aberdeen.
- **Equality Ambassador's Network:** The Equality Ambassadors Network was launched in May 2018 and remains a vital part of our networking with staff on equality issues. EAN's most recent presentation on the Impact of COVID-19 on equalities can be viewed [here](#).
- Our in-house interpreting and translation service – InterTrans, provides reports on the usage of language and communication support requested indicating the diverse needs of the population. Please see chart provided on page 8.
- Data is also collected regularly as part of our process to consult and assess equality impacts on new policies and proposals.
- We work closely with Police Scotland, GREC and our Community Safety Partnership to collect data on hate crime and prejudice incidents in the City. The graph in page 9 shows the numbers and types of hate crime reported to the Police for the period 2017-2020.
- Other sources of data and equality information include:
 - Consultations that services carry out for specific projects.
 - Community consultation groups/platforms, including tenant participation groups.
 - Councillor enquiries relating to equalities, complaints, and customer feedback.
 - Council social media platforms

Through our process of preparing the EO, there were visible gaps in the lack of systematic and quality data available on equality issues. This lack of relevant data is preventing us to understand the extent equality has been mainstreamed.

This has resulted in our key action to continue to improve our data recording around equality issues ensuring services will better integrate this into their operations.

2. About our governance

The Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP)

The City has a vision: “..for 2026 for Aberdeen is a place where all people can prosper. This means all people being able to access the opportunities available in our great City, regardless of their background or circumstances. This reflects our desire to help all people, families, businesses and communities to do well, succeed and flourish in every aspect. To achieve this vision we are committed to tackling the issues that exist in our society which prevent equal opportunity for all to lead a happy and fulfilling life.” LOIP 16-26.

Council reporting

Each Council report must include consideration of equalities issues through the Integrated Impact Assessment. This ensures that officers are considering such issues when requesting decisions are made on policy and strategy and provides assurance to the Chief Executive and Elected Members that decisions they make will not impact adversely on those with protected characteristics. This is an important step in raising awareness across the organisation of the importance of equality, and ultimately assuring those with protected characteristics that their rights are considered.

Leadership

Our Diversity and Equality policy indicates that:

- The Corporate Management Team (CMT) has responsibility to provide leadership in relation to equality and diversity and to oversee the operation of the policy.
- Elected members have the role to provide leadership and encourage organisational compliance with the policy. They

will engage with community groups on equality and diversity matters as required. In addition, they have a scrutinizing responsibility to ensure that reports before committees identify any relevant equality implications and indicate how these will be addressed.

Elected Members sit on Boards or Partnerships that embrace equalities such as Grampian Regional Equality Council, and the Disability Equity Partnership. The Equality Team runs annual Equality training for the Elected Members raising awareness of the legal duties and inequalities faced by the diverse communities.

Aberdeen City Council supports many charities, events and good causes.

One way of expressing our support is through lighting up the Council’s headquarter: Marischal College.

In October 2020, a special rainbow light was displayed to thank key workers in Aberdeen during the pandemic, including NHS Grampian staff, the Scottish Ambulance Service, Police Scotland, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, and Aberdeen City Council staff were thanked for their efforts with a special rainbow light display .

Other lightings approved by Lord provost for the year 2021 in support of equalities matters include:

Holocaust Memorial Day	27-Jan-21	Purple/Violet
Captain Sir Tom Moore tribute	03/04-Feb-21	Blue (for the NHS)
National Care Day	19-Feb-21	Red
LGBTQ Fostering & Adoption Week	02/03-Mar-21	Rainbow (Dynamic)
International Women’s day	08-Mar-21	Purple



Holocaust Memorial Day commemorated with violet and purple lighting – 27 /01/2021



Key workers are thanked with rainbow lighting – October 2020

Example of leadership commitment: The BLM protests in June led to a motion from an elected member in the June committee for the City Council to:

- acknowledge there is a problem with racial inequality and prejudice in Scotland and the wider UK, and
- agree to work with the organisers of the Black Lives Matter poster protest and other race equality organisations in the city to mount an exhibition on the antislavery abolition movement in Aberdeen when public health restrictions are lifted

Example of leadership commitment: Adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of Anti-Semitism. A motion was raised by the Lord Provost stating that:

- Aberdeen City Council is proud of its efforts to tackle discrimination in all its forms, we celebrate our diverse community and we condemn racism and anti-Semitism wherever it is found. As part of the Council's ongoing equalities work we resolve to join with the UK and Scottish Government's and the major political parties in the UK in signing up to the internationally recognised International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance guidelines on anti-Semitism.

Updates on Equality Outcomes 2019-2021 at appendix 1, lists all activities to support the previous equality outcome: **We have engaged and committed leaders, with the council and partners working together to reduce inequality, remove barriers and promote a culture of respect.**

Diversity and Equality Policy

Our [Diversity and Equality](#) policy outlines the Council's commitment to equality and diversity as an employer, and as a front line service provider.

The policy helps to ensure the Council is legally compliant in relation to the Equality Act 2010, including the general and specific equality duties applying to listed public authorities in Scotland. It also helps ensure that the organisation applies good practice in respect of equality and diversity.

Integrated Impact Assessments

We continue to measure the impact of any changes to existing or new policies or strategies using our digitalised Integrated Impact Assessments.

We measure the impact on Protected Characteristics as per the Equality Act 2010, Human Rights, the Socio Economic and Fairer Scotland duty requirement as well as Children's Rights.

Chief Officers are responsible for ensuring the Integrated Impact Assessments are carried out. Training and guidance on the use and application of IIAs has been delivered.

All our Integrated Impact Assessments are published and made public on our [website](#).

Aberdeen as a Child Friendly City

Aberdeen City Council, alongside Community Planning Partners, are committed to achieving UNICEF accreditation as a '[Child Friendly City](#)' (CFC).

In practice, a CFC it is a city, town or community in which the voices, needs, priorities and rights of children, are an integral part of public policies, programmes and decisions. This is an important step in ensuring generational influence in plans for the City, and that age is not a barrier to participation.

British Sign Language (BSL) action plan

Aberdeen City Councils launched their first BSL action plan in partnership with Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership in 2018. [The plan](#) sets out our commitment to improving services and information for the BSL user community.

Aberdeen Gaelic Language Plan (GLP)

Work is ongoing to develop our second edition of the Aberdeen City Council's Gaelic Language Plan 2021-2025 in October 2021.

The [GLP 2016-2021](#) sets out our aims and ambitions for Gaelic in the local authority, our schools and communities.

Aberdeen City Council is committed to supporting the aspirations and objectives included in the [National Plan for Gaelic](#) and the [Gaelic Language \(Scotland\) Act 2005](#). This plan explains the reasoning behind the creation of national and local Gaelic Language Plans and what the intentions of our individual plan are. It sets out to what extent we aim to increase the attainment, usage and visibility of Gaelic in Aberdeen and how we will endeavour to achieve these objectives.

We CARE Customer Charter

Aberdeen City Council, through the 'We CARE customer charter', are committed to providing the best service we can to our customers. Our We CARE Charter and commitments outline what good customer service should look like across all our

services. It is our pledge to our customers about what they can expect when interacting with us.

Our commitments

Connected

- We will support and encourage you to use our online services.
- We will connect you with other services and groups across the city who can also help you and offer the best support.

Accessible

- We will make sure our communication with you is easy to understand and recognise that sometimes people need information provided in different ways.
- We will always be approachable, empathetic and keen to listen and understand your needs.

Responsive

- We will aim to be open and honest with you about what we can and can't do and the reasons for this.
- We will aim to deliver the best services possible and support our most vulnerable customers.

Empowered

- We will involve you in helping us to design and test the ways we deliver our services.
- We will listen and act upon your feedback, whether it's a complaint, comment or a compliment.

THE WE CARE CHARTER AND COMMITMENTS TO OUR CUSTOMERS



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RESPONSIVE

- We will be open and honest with you about what we can and can't do, and the reasons for this
- We will aim to deliver the best services possible and support our most vulnerable customers



EMPOWERED

- We will involve you in helping us to design and test the ways we deliver our services
- We will listen and act upon your feedback, whether it's a complaint, comment or a compliment



Human Rights Action Plan

Work is ongoing to deliver a [human right- based](#) culture across Aberdeen.

In carrying out public functions, Aberdeen City Council is required to respect and protect its citizens' human rights.

Aberdeen City Council will work to ensure that new policies and procedures are within the rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights and provide mitigation where this may not be possible.

Human rights considerations are embedded in our Integrated Impact Assessments and encourages users to think through the various articles and the impacts their proposals may have in relation to Human Rights.

We are members of the Scottish Council of Equality Networks (SCEN) , and together with equality officers from other Scottish Local authorities, we engage with the National Taskforce for Human Rights Leadership whose purpose is to design a new human rights framework that can improve everyday life in Scotland. The taskforce will also design an associated programme for capacity-building to support duty-bearers (and rights-holders) to implement the new framework.

Reporting on Leadership and Governance

We received some good feedback regarding our leaders, additionally some communities expressed concern that ACC should have stronger, more visible leadership on equality issues and actively promote tolerance, diversity, and fairness.

“I think Council doing very good job trying to reach out to as many ethnic minorities as possible and providing opportunities to be engaged. I think sometimes the lack of information, or not enough advertisement on the events and activities can get unnoticed and people miss out on news and possibilities available..” Page 3- 2020 Survey Report Appendix 5.

To address this concern, work has begun to set up an internal strategic equality partnership with senior representation from across the Council services to oversee the equalities’ agenda and provide strategic oversight and direction.

We are also proposing actions as part of supporting the achievement of our new Equalities Outcomes to ensure our leaders are visible and actively supporting the equalities’ agenda.

3. About our services

To ensure our services are inclusive and responsive, we identified the following mainstreamed principles in our 2017/2021 Plan.

- **An engaged community**

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act (2015) provides communities with the right to make participation requests of public organisations and places a duty on the latter to meet these.

Along with our partners, Aberdeen City Council contributed to the development of the [Engagement, Participation and Empowerment Strategy](#) as part of a consistent

approach by community planning partners to help staff and public develop a shared understanding of participation.

One of the main strategic objectives is that all communities' views will be equally valuable. "every community will be equally heard and listened to." To ensure efficient engagement with communities, our IIAs require evidence to show the consultation that has taken place in the decision-making process. We have service level agreements with organisations who support and represent various community groups to ensure our engagement with communities is current and efficient:

- Grampian Regional Equality Council
- Shopmobility Aberdeen
- Deaf Blind Scotland

A recent example, Grampian Regional Equality Council led on the statutory requirement of community engagement that led to the proposal of our Equality Outcomes for 2021-2025.

- **An informed community**

Accessible information remains a key element for all communities and this has been evident through all our efforts through COVID-19.

Various efforts were made to provide information on safety, national facts, sources of information and support in various community languages and formats. Where possible, BSL information was also produced in a timely manner.

Some of the platforms used to share this information were our [website](#), our social media platforms, the Equality and Community Justice [news bulletin](#), partnership websites, mailing lists and through the support of 3rd sector and volunteers who were in direct contact with communities.

- **An accessible City:**

Physical access remains an important factor to ensure people with wide range of impairments and different needs are considered.

Our integrated impact assessments ensure proposals and development projects are assessed for physical access.

The Disability Equity Partnership's (DEP) role has also been pivotal in supporting officers to ensure there is physical accessibility through the city. Some of their input has resulted in fixed benches in cemeteries, media campaigns to alert people on the impacts of overgrown hedges on people with disability and carers, and an accessible refurbishment of the Music Hall.

- **A safe community:**

We continue to work closely with Police Scotland, GREC, our Community Safety Partnership and other third sector relevant organisation to address safety issues facing equality groups, including:

- Prejudice and Hate Crime reporting
- Support to Violence against Women Partnership
- Domestic Abuse
- Ensuring that Gypsy/ Travellers are safe when on an unauthorised encampment.

- **Equality and Diversity welcomed and celebrated.**

We continue to support some community led events to celebrate diversity and mark important days in the equality calendar.

From March 2020, however, a significant number of events were cancelled or postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and resources were diverted to supporting the critical response to our communities.

In our progress report 19 -21 in Appendix1 we reported on work done to celebrate and welcome Equality and diversity.

A list of events can be found [here](#).

- **Services understand and take into consideration Protected Characteristics.**

We continue to offer equality induction training to all new staff. Induction training includes understanding the legislation and how it applies to our work, the council's duty under the legislation, understanding the General Duties of the Equality Act and a reference to the Equality Outcomes and available services/ consideration to take into account to ensure equality is embedded in everything we do and that our services are inclusive.

The Equality team also offers advice and support to all officers in considering equality issues – for example: assistance to assess impact of new proposals or policies, liaising with community groups for consultations and guidance on policy.

Our Equality Ambassador Network offers myth busting and training sessions related to equality issues.

Reporting on our Services

Physical and social access is still being reported as an issue facing our diverse communities. An Equality Outcome has been developed to address this inequality and many actions have been identified.

By setting up a systematic data collection mechanism and ensuring meaningful engagement with community representative groups and partnerships we will be able to establish baseline data to measure progress, evaluate the impact of our actions and better plan for services and allocation of resources.

Our Procurement Service:

Policies and procedures relating to procurement activity have a strong emphasis on the Public Sector Equality Duty.

As a shared service, Commercial & Procurement Shared Services (C&PSS) has formed strong strategic partnerships with equalities teams in Aberdeenshire Council and The Highland Council. Good practice and common approaches to new national policy or case law can be shared as a result of these connections.

The approach to community benefits provides procurers and suppliers with a clear, compliant, ideas-driven framework to work consistently within. A diverse range of community benefit types have been developed to ensure meaningful, proportionate and relevant community benefit outcomes are incorporated and maximised.

Equalities is a standalone community benefits theme but can positively impact on many other benefit types e.g. potential to focus opportunities for underrepresented groups in the community or educational priority groups (e.g. younger, older or disabled persons, women returning to work, long term unemployed etc). Specific measures can be taken to promote employment opportunities for disabled persons (including involving supported businesses in the supply chain).

Fair Work Practices covers Real Living Wage (to the extent permitted by law in public procurement). It covers all protected characteristics but it also addresses equal pay, gender representation, gender pay gaps and opportunities for disabled persons. This is an extremely meaningful way for a local authority to help to alleviate various forms of poverty, unfairness and disadvantage.

4. Our Workforce

As per the specific duties' requirement, we gather and publish yearly information on the composition of the authority's employees and information on the recruitment, development and retention of people as employees of the authority with respect to the number and relevant protected characteristics of such people.

We use this information to better perform the general equality duty.

Appendix 2 presents information on

- Work we do as employers to mainstream equality.
- a progress report on the previous set of employment specific Equality Outcomes and,
- Employee data as requested by the specific duties.

Chapter 3- Evidence Gathering - Understanding and identifying the main inequalities.

This chapter includes outcomes from the literature review, the review of our previous equality outcomes and the community engagement process undertaken to understand the specific and key inequalities and challenges in Aberdeen.

This process informed the development of our new set of Equality Outcomes.

Research and Community Engagement

To understand the key inequalities in Aberdeen, we worked in partnership with Grampian Regional Equality Council (GREC) to reach out to communities and carry out a robust evidence collection and analysis. Our work included:

- national and local literature reviews and research around equalities issues – for example the Equality and Human Right Commission (EHRC) research and findings in [‘Is Scotland Fairer \(2018\)’](#).
- engagement with colleagues from different services across the Council to see how national data compared with local data and research.
- a survey promoted to reach out to diverse communities - almost 200 people participated. A report with detailed findings appears in Appendix 5.
- online discussion workshops with community groups from diverse background and sharing protected characteristics including: members from the Disability Equity Partnership, people with disabilities, BSL users, members from the Muslim community, members from the Jewish community, a group with African backgrounds a group of EU nationals, a group from the LGBTQ+ communities (as well as a specific session with Trans individuals), older and younger people, and members of Aberdeen Women’s Alliance. Details are in Appendix 5.
- **Updates on our previous Equality Outcomes**

Our previous equality outcomes were developed and published in April 2017.

As required by the specific duties, the first progress report 2017-2019 was published in April 2019. The second progress report is due for April 2021 and has been completed and presented in Appendix 1 of this main report. Our survey and community group discussions included questions to seek peoples' views on the work we did to achieve these equality outcomes. Details are in Appendix 5.

Chapter 4- Equality Outcomes 2021-25

An equality outcome is a result which we aim to achieve in order to further one or more of the needs mentioned in the general equality duty. In other words, an equality outcome should further one or more of the following needs: eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and/or foster good relations.

Equality Outcomes aim to bring practical improvements in the life chances of those who experience discrimination and disadvantage.

Note: The actions presented in this table are examples of what we can do to achieve our Equality Outcomes. A detailed action plan with measuring indicators, responsibilities and timeframes for completion is currently being developed through consultation with communities.

Equality Outcome 1	
All people with protected characteristics will access information, goods and services knowing that social* and physical barriers are identified and removed, with a focus on Age, Gender reassignment and Disability	
Identified Inequalities	<p>Digital exclusion: Older and disabled people are less likely to have access to digital services.</p> <p>Disabled and Trans communities expressed negative experience attending cultural events.</p> <p>Inter-sectional barriers, with the example of being disabled and a Trans person.</p> <p>Mental health due to COVID-19 pandemic and triggered restrictions.</p> <p>Information on Aberdeen City Council website needs to be easily accessible (BSL videos).</p>
	* social barriers can be created by people's beliefs, attitude and behaviour towards another person / group.

Link to the General Duties	This Equality Outcome will help to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity for disabled people, older people, and Trans people.
Example of actions to achieve the Equality Outcome	<p>Work in partnership with the third sector to improve access to digital inclusion.</p> <p>Explore recruiting community digital champions.</p> <p>Aberdeen City Council website improved for accessibility.</p> <p>Diversity training improved to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding social barriers - Promotion of inclusive language <p>Work with disability groups to improve physical access in the City.</p>
How will we measure progress?	<p>Establish baseline data to measure progress.</p> <p>Evaluate the impact of our actions and identify any changes or improvements needed.</p> <p>Satisfaction Survey to measure change and positive impact of our training.</p>
<p>Equality Outcome 2</p> <p>Diverse communities in Aberdeen will have an increased sense of safety and belonging within their neighbourhood and City, with a focus on Race (including Gypsy/Travellers), Religion and Sexual Orientation.</p>	
Identified Inequalities	Young people and people from ethnic minority groups reported lower levels of trust and belonging in their neighbourhood.

	<p>People who had no religion or belief were less likely to feel they belonged to their neighbourhood.</p> <p>Many LGBT people do not believe there are enough safe spaces where they can socialise safely.</p> <p>Lack of support to community events,</p> <p>Council to lead and support activities to promote good relations and bring diverse groups together.</p> <p>Gypsy/Travellers face some of the highest levels of prejudicial attitudes.</p>
Link to the General Duties	<p>Work to achieve this outcome will help us to eliminate race discrimination and discrimination based on religion and sexual orientation. This will also help us foster good relations between different groups.</p>
Example of actions to achieve the Equality Outcome	<p>Agree an equality calendar, develop a media strategy and ensure celebratory messages from leaders are delivered.</p> <p>Complete a review into how the council can offer sustainable in-kind or other support to key events that celebrate and advance equality in Aberdeen.</p> <p>Strengthen the prejudice hate incident reporting mechanism to increase reporting and improve support for victims of prejudice incidents and crime. ~</p> <p>Establish all existing inclusive places (for example: family friendly places) and engage with communities to promote and identify gaps.</p>
How will we measure progress?	<p>Satisfaction surveys</p> <p>Increase in prejudice incidents reporting.</p> <p>Mechanisms for supporting victims are available and victims of hate incidents are accessing them.</p>

	Key events are supported.
Equality outcome 3 Representation in civic participation of people with protected characteristics will be improved by ensuring our leaders, staff and organisation champion the equality agenda in the City, with a focus on Disability, Race and Sex.	
Identified Inequalities	Women, people from ethnic minority groups and disabled people are under-represented in civic activities. A refreshed approach to community empowerment and involvement is needed to ensure people's views and lived experience influences decision making
Link to the General Duties	This Equality Outcome will help to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity.
Example of actions to achieve the Equality Outcome	Barriers to diversity in civic activities and community engagement are identified and work is done to address them. Ensure meaningful engagement with community representative groups and partnerships (for example the Disability Equity Partnership) to ensure people's views and lived experience influences decision making. Commitment to equality in the City Council is embedded at a strategic level and leaders are visible and explicit in their support of the equality agenda. Our events are culturally sensitive and reflect the City's diversity
How will we measure progress?	Baseline data for representation is established and progress is achieved. Satisfaction surveys

Equality Outcome 4 – Employment

Improve the diversity of our workforce and address any areas of underrepresentation, ensuring that there are equal opportunities for all protected groups (with consideration for both internal employees and external applicants), with a particular and prioritised focus on Age, Disability, Race and Sex

Identified Inequalities

Responses from the joint Aberdeen City Council and GREC survey of Aberdeen City residents highlighted issues including:

- Two thirds of participants feeling that their protected characteristic restricted access to their employment of choice – particularly those who have a disability, those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who identified as trans or non-binary. Age was also highlighted as a factor in this.
- Invisible disabilities affecting interview performance
- Overseas qualifications being devalued
- Frustration over frequent rejections and setbacks
- Being overlooked for jobs & opportunities

The main points to consider from the Equality and Human Rights Commission report, 'Is Scotland Fairer' (2018) were:

- Disabled people were less likely to be in employment and more likely to be unemployed.
- Women were less likely than men to be in employment and more likely to be in part-time work.
- Young people were most likely to be unemployed and many were in insecure jobs.

- Women continued to earn less than men on average, and the gender pay gap changed very little in recent years.
- Disabled people continued to earn less than non-disabled people, and the disability pay gap widened.
- Women continued to be under-represented in senior positions, even where women accounted for most of the workforce, such as education and health.
- Women, people from ethnic minority groups and disabled people remains underrepresented in modern apprenticeships.
- Reflecting the labour market, modern apprenticeships continue to show strong gender segregation within sectors.

The impact of Covid-19 on equality groups is worth highlighting as this may forecast future need and demand for equality, diversity and inclusion provisions. Research from the Scottish Government in 2020 as well as research by Youth Link Scotland have highlighted some key points to consider: These are:

- There has been a rise in unemployment, particularly felt amongst 16-24-year olds
- 96% of young people who were surveyed felt worried about the impact of coronavirus on their future
- Older people and those with long-term disabilities and health conditions may have missed healthcare during this period which may have long-term impacts on their health and ultimately work and attendance
- Disruption to schooling and ultimately employability may impact more significantly on gypsy / traveller groups
- In many of the sectors 'shut down' because of Covid-19, women make up a higher proportion of the workforce
- With women still having primary caring responsibilities in society, the additional caring / childcare / home-schooling because of Covid-19 could have a significant impact on women's working lives and employment

	<p>The Fawcett Society, in their Equal Pay Day 2020 report, found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 43% of working women and 50% of working black and minority ethnic (BAME) women worried about jobs or promotion • 1 in 3 working mothers have lost work or hours due to childcare <p>Our 2020 workforce diversity data also suggests a need to progress this outcome with a prioritised focus on age, disability, race and sex. This data can be found in the section called ‘Employee Information’ further in this report.</p>
<p>Link to the General Duties</p>	<p>This outcome will support our duty to advance equality of opportunity for protected groups, particularly those within under-represented age groups such as those under 24 and those over 60, people from minority ethnic backgrounds, people with disabilities, and men and women in certain professions or management and leadership levels. It will also support our duty to eliminate any discrimination in employment with regards to recruitment, selection, access to opportunity and pay.</p>
<p>Example of actions to achieve the Equality Outcome</p>	<p>A full action plan will be developed and brought to Staff Governance Committee. The intention is that the action plan would undergo employee engagement and involvement. Some actions could include (though are subject to further review and development):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of the recruitment and selection process • A review of job profiles and working patterns.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internships for protected groups • Targeted wellbeing programmes • Leadership programmes and occupational segregation work • Targeted coaching and mentoring programmes • Employability programmes • Improvement to diversity data analysis • Ongoing pay gap reporting, and introduction of ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting.
How will we measure progress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce diversity statistics overall • Workforce diversity statistics at Function, Cluster, Team and Capability Framework levels • Pay Equality data • Recruitment and Selection Data • Data on uptake of leave provisions and working patterns. • Specific data sources and measurements may be identified through the more detailed action plan
<p>Equality Outcome 5 – Employment</p> <p>Ensure that all of our employees who have protected characteristics feel fully valued, safe and included at work, with a particular and prioritised focus on Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Race, Sex and Sexual orientation</p>	
Identified Inequalities	<p>Some people with protected characteristics feel that they are treated differently at work according to the Aberdeen City Council and Grampian Regional Equalities Council survey of Aberdeen in 2020. This includes those from minority ethnic backgrounds, those with disabilities, those who are LGBT+, and those within the youngest and oldest age groups.</p>

	<p>Particular mention from the survey included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of institutional hierarchies • Subtle and overt racism, sexism and disablism • Malicious gossip • Stereotypes used to judge work <p>The Equality and Human Rights Commission report, 'Is Scotland Fairer' (2018) states that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women continued to experience sexual harassment and discrimination related to pregnancy and maternity in the workplace <p>The impact of Covid-19 on equality groups is worth highlighting as this may forecast future need and demand for equality, diversity and inclusion provisions. Research from the Scottish Government in 2020 as well as research by Youth Link Scotland have highlighted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been an increase in hate crime incidents in the UK directed towards people who are perceived to be from Asian – Chinese, South Asian or East Asian ethnicities since the beginning of the pandemic <p>Our 2020 workforce diversity data has also supported this outcome and its prioritised focus. This data can be found in the section called 'Employee Information' further in this report.</p>
<p>Link to the General Duties</p>	<p>This outcome will support our duty to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and also foster good relations between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, particularly for those protected groups outlined in the outcome.</p>

<p>Example of actions to achieve the Equality Outcome</p>	<p>A full action plan will be developed and brought to Staff Governance Committee in April. The intention is that the action plan would undergo employee engagement and involvement. Some actions could include (though are subject to further review and development):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved and more accessible equality, diversity and inclusion training and support for employees and managers. • Increased number of employee network groups for protected characteristics including a group specifically working on anti-racism. • Diversity and inclusions days and moments to celebrate diversity. • Creation of an internal equality and diversity calendar to improve celebration of diversity. • Campaigns to celebrate diversity and address equalities topics. • A review of the reporting procedure for equalities incidents
<p>How will we measure progress?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce diversity statistics overall • Workforce diversity statistics at Function, Cluster, Team and Capability Framework levels • Leavers Data • Uptake of equality and diversity training and development • Staff surveys to determine satisfaction & perceived value of initiatives or to receive ongoing feedback. • Case work data and incident data • Specific data sources and measurements may be identified through the more detailed action plan

