



Uttlesford District Council

Comprehensive Equality Policy



October 2009

Contents

	Page
Foreword by the Leader and the Chief Executive	3
Introduction	4
Policy Statement	4
Equality In Delivery of Services	5
Equality in Employment	6
Consultation and Community Development and Scrutiny	8
Responsibility and Implementation	9
Annex A - Summary of current legislation and associated equalities duties	11
Appendix 1 – Accessible Information	18
Appendix 2 – Terms of Reference	20
Appendix 3 – Strategic Group	22

Foreword by the Leader and the Chief Executive

The council is committed to the highest standards regarding Equalities and Diversity. This new policy has been drawn up by staff and members and is a measure of the enthusiasm and commitment that we show.

We commend it to you.

Councillor Jim Ketteridge	John Mitchell
Leader of the Council	Chief Executive

If you require further information or would like this scheme in another format or language please contact:

Equality and Diversity Group
Uttlesford District Council
Council Offices
London Road
Saffron Walden

☎: 01799 510510

Textphone 18001

📠: 01799 510550

✉: uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk

Web: www.uttlesford.gov.uk

COMPREHENSIVE EQUALITY POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

As a service provider and major employer, Uttlesford District Council is committed to promoting equal opportunities and ensuring social inclusion in everything we do.

The council recognises its statutory equality duties under legislation in terms of service provision and employment and is committed to meet them by complying with this policy statement. A summary of the current legislation and equalities duties is provided in Annex A. The council is also committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all in extending this policy to cover areas currently not covered by legislation.

At the same time the council is committed to demonstrating Best Value by providing evidence that the needs of service users in Uttlesford and of our employees are being addressed. There is also a commitment to demonstrating improvement in equality of opportunity for the service users of Uttlesford in the services that they are receiving and for employees in equality of opportunity during their employment with us. The council is committed to achieving Level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government, and implementation of this policy must be included in all service plans.

Specifically the council recognises the requirements regarding race under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and has, therefore, produced and will continuously develop a Race Equality Scheme. The same applies to disability and gender. The authority will also recognise the requirements of the Single Equality Act when it is introduced. The council will continuously review its approach to inclusiveness and equality of opportunity for its service users.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

Uttlesford District Council is committed to equal opportunities and action to ensure that our employees and the people we serve are not discriminated against on the basis of their:

- age
- disability
- employment status
- occupation
- ethnic, national or regional origins; race or colour
- marital status
- religious or political beliefs
- responsibilities for children or dependants
- gender/gender reassignment
- sexuality
- trade union activities
- social class
- unrelated criminal convictions
- or any other basis

The council is committed to helping those who are disadvantaged and to reducing inequality within the resources available to us. We will ensure that we are a fair and equal employer at all times.

3. EQUALITY IN DELIVERY OF SERVICES

Uttlesford District Council will ensure equal access and opportunity to quality services designed to meet the needs of all those in the community without prejudice and discrimination.

We will:

- provide appropriate, accessible and effective services and facilities to all sections of the community without prejudice or bias
- provide clear information about our services in a variety of formats on request (Appendix 1)
- identify appropriate representative groups of residents within Uttlesford and strive to work in partnership through consultation with and involvement of these community representatives in decisions we make
- through systematic reviews ensure that our policies and practices address any potential or actual discrimination and disadvantage and monitor our services to ensure that they do not discriminate and identify where improvements can be made
- achieve greater consistency in the council's approach to equality in the delivery of our services
- ensure that action is taken to identify groups within the community who have specific needs in relation to council services
- ensure that all employees understand what equality in service provision means
- ensure that equality considerations are addressed within all fundamental service reviews and service audits
- monitor the provision of services against performance indicators
- ensure, through our procurement strategy, that contractors, suppliers, volunteers and partners are aware of the council's position on equality and will fulfil their obligations to provide services that are in line with that position
- act promptly and appropriately if we receive any complaints about the way we provide services by ensuring that customer complaints are dealt with sensitively and fairly

Monitoring

The council has a statutory obligation to provide information about provision and use of services. Formal monitoring arrangements will be introduced to monitor the provision of services against specified performance indicators (eg increased take up of service by previously excluded groups) which measure how the service is being used by black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups, different gender groups, people with disabilities, etc.

The use and impact of services will be monitored to:

- improve the opportunity for service take up
- identify gaps in services
- better target resources to meet needs
- feed equality data analysis into the departmental service planning process
- demonstrate continuous improvement.

Complaints Process

If members of the community feel that the council is in breach of its commitment to equalities they may make a complaint using the council's complaints procedure. Any complaint will be dealt with in the same way as any other form of complaint. The complaints procedure will be actively promoted through a variety of media including day to day service delivery.

4. EQUALITY IN EMPLOYMENT

The council is committed to ensuring that we provide equality of opportunity to all in employment. The aim is to ensure that we do not unfairly discriminate against any job applicant or employee for any reason.

Job Applicants

We will:

- ensure vacancies are advertised in line with legislation
- ensure that we do not discriminate when we decide who to employ so that the best people are appointed to deliver our services
- ensure the council's recruitment and selection guidelines are adhered to
- only consider applicants for jobs on the basis of their relevant experience, qualifications, skills and abilities unless a Genuine Occupational Qualification (GOQ) exists for particular posts. This is in instances where there is an exception under the relevant legislation where an employer can recruit, train, promote or transfer a person of a particular gender or racial group if it can demonstrate that a particular gender or race amounts to a GOQ for the post in question under the Race Relation Act 1976 c74
- aim to create a workforce which is representative of the population of Uttlesford
- We will take all measures possible to make reasonable adjustments where appropriate in order to provide employment to applicants with disabilities who meet the minimum requirements for the post and prove to be the best candidate for the post

Employees

We will:

- ensure that all employees receive fair and equal treatment in relation to their employment, regardless of whether they are part time, full time, permanent or temporary and what level or occupation they are within the authority
- promote a working environment where every employee is treated with respect regardless of occupation or level within the organisation
- ensure that promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability
- encourage and help all our employees to reach their full potential, within the resources available to us
- treat our employees fairly in relation to transfers, redundancy and the operation of the grievance and disciplinary procedures
- ensure that the workplace is free from discrimination and harassment and will act promptly on any complaints of discrimination or harassment in an appropriate manner
- develop and adhere to an equal pay policy
- wherever possible, make reasonable adjustments and retain, in suitable employment, employees who become disabled or unable to undertake their duties due to illness
- ensure that all employees are aware of their personal responsibility to follow and support the Equal Opportunity Policy

Monitoring

The council has a legal responsibility to monitor job applicants and employees according to ethnicity. Extending this legal responsibility, the council monitors on the basis of age, disability and gender in relation to applications for employment, current workforce profiles and leavers. Additionally, the council will monitor the following areas:

- training (requests and those who have received training)
- promotion
- outcome of performance assessments
- those involved in disciplinaries and grievances
- those leaving the council's employment

Complaints

- any employee who has a concern regarding the application of this policy should normally make use of the council's grievance procedure.
- any prospective employee wishing to raise a complaint should do so using the council's complaints procedure, which can be obtained from the HR service.
- in instances of personal harassment, employees should make use of the council's harassment policy.

5. CONSULTATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY

The council will involve and work in consultation with all communities using methods and resources appropriately to enable an inclusive approach to be adopted and to work towards developing and strengthening such communities with a view to enhancing quality of life and choice. In addition, the council will encourage its partners and others with whom it works to adopt and implement such best practices in promoting equality of opportunity and in eliminating discrimination.

The council:

- will support the development of strong, secure, self-reliant, self-confident communities, free from unlawful discrimination
- through the community strategy and corporate strategies and service plans and policies, we will reflect the needs and views of and work with, diverse and ethnic minority communities
- will actively seek to consult and liaise with communities and will ensure that this is an integral part of the council's Consultation Strategy
- will continue to work with community safety partners to ensure that reporting of racial harassment incidents is encouraged and should be channelled to the relevant organisations by means of a predetermined protocol
- will promote the Comprehensive Equality Policy through service delivery
- will provide feedback on internal equality audits to staff and councillors through internal communication methods. The results of external surveys or audits will be made available to the general public through appropriate media and directly to specific groups participating in such surveys
- will use the services of the Equality and Human Rights Commission and disability organisations to obtain advice and examples of best practice and where possible to publicise and implement that best practice throughout the council
- will publicise its commitment to equality amongst its partner organisations, contractors, agents and suppliers, making it clear in the first instance that the council expects the people with whom it enjoys a formal relationship to also adhere to the spirit of the council's equality policies.
- will ensure promotional material published by the council will accurately reflect the diverse nature of the district
- will ensure that all service reviews specifically address equalities issues, including: assessing the contribution currently made to the council's corporate equality policies and objectives. Such reviews will also assess what further contribution the service might make in the area of equalities
- will determine target dates for implementing the actions arising from the implementation of the corporate equality plans and monitor through the Equalities Working Group and the Strategic Equalities Group.
- will ensure that the Strategic Equalities Group reports progress against equality plan targets to the Scrutiny Committee each year. That report will also make proposals to amend the policy and plan, where appropriate, in the light of experience or changes to guidance and/or legislation.
- will apply a system of equality self-assessment, external scrutiny and audit to achieve the attainment of the Equality Framework for Local Government as an "Achieving Authority".
- will consult relevant organisations on policies and what actions could usefully be taken to ensure that the policies are implemented effectively.

The council will implement its Comprehensive Equality Policy through the Corporate Equality Action Plan, which will be monitored regularly through the working group and the strategic group and the Equalities Action Plan.

6. RESPONSIBILITY AND IMPLEMENTATION

To demonstrate our commitment to ensuring that equality is at the core of all our activities, the council has adopted the Equality Framework for Local Government. The development of this comprehensive equality policy is part of the process of attaining the “Achieving Authority” Level 1 of this framework.

In order to deliver the service delivery and employment equality objectives specified in this policy, we will develop a Corporate Equality Action Plan (CEAP).

To support the process of adopting the Equality Standard, developing this policy and the CEAP, the key responsibilities in respect of equalities has been defined and a structure to support progress in respect of equalities has been established.

Councillors will have overall responsibility for the direction and scrutiny of this policy and will ensure that the principles of fairness and equality guide the decision making process. There are councillor champions for equality issues from each political group.

The chief executive is responsible for providing leadership in the implementation of this policy and for ensuring that service planning and performance management systems incorporate the specific equality objectives in terms of service and employment.

Heads of division are responsible for delivering the equality objectives in relation to delivery of services and employment. They are responsible for ensuring that employees are adequately informed, trained and supported to ensure that their duties are carried out in accordance with the equality principles and outcomes that underpin all the council's activities.

All managers are responsible for implementing equality in service provision and employment and for providing support for employees to work together to achieve equality. Managers and all employees with supervisory responsibility have departmental and local responsibility for implementing, monitoring and promoting this policy. They will also have responsibility for contributing to achieving relevant equality objectives in line with the Equality Impact Assessment checklist and reviewing the effectiveness of this policy and other relevant action plans to communicate their views to senior management.

All employees are responsible for ensuring that they assist in implementing this policy. They are also responsible for taking advantage of opportunities to improve their awareness of the barriers to equality in service provision and employment, for working towards the elimination of these barriers and for performing their duties in accordance with the equality principles and outcome that underpin all the council's activities.

All employees must:

- co-operate with any measures introduced to ensure equal opportunity
- treat everyone with respect, consideration and courtesy
- report any suspected discriminatory acts or practices
- not persuade or attempt to persuade others to practice unlawful discrimination
- not victimise anyone as a result of them having reported or provided evidence of discrimination
- not harass, abuse, intimidate others on account of their race, gender, disability, age, faith or sexual orientation
- not lobby job applicants in an attempt to discourage them from applying or taking up a post.

Any breach of the Equal Opportunities Policy will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure. Serious offences, such as harassment, will be treated as gross misconduct and may lead to dismissal.

The chief executive has lead responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy.

Role of Trade Unions

The trade unions are key partners in promoting and helping to ensure adherence to the equal opportunities policy and the involvement, support and participation of employees and their trade unions is essential.

Trade unions associated with the council are committed to a full and active role in promoting the aims and objectives of this policy.

For further information

If you would like more information concerning the equality process within the authority or comment on this Corporate Equality Plan please contact the chief executive.

ANNEX A – Summary of current legislation and associated equalities duties

Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA) & Race Relations Act 1976 (RRA)

These acts both outlaw certain kinds of discrimination. They have similar and often corresponding provisions and are specifically designed to work towards the elimination of discrimination in employment on the grounds of sex, marital status and race.

The SDA prohibits direct and indirect sex and marital status discrimination against men or women in respect of such matters as selection for appointment, promotion, transfer or training. For its part, the RRA also prohibits direct and indirect discrimination on racial grounds. Racial grounds means grounds of colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin. Both the SDA and the RRA apply to job applicants and employees and their scope extends to self employed and casual workers and workers supplied by employment businesses doing work for an employer.

Supporting these acts are codes of practice prepared respectively by the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) and the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) and approved by Parliament.

Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations

These extend the SDA 1975 to cover discrimination in employment and vocational training on the grounds of gender reassignment.

Equal Pay Act 1970

This act is associated with the SDA 1975 and they complement each other, with infringement of the rights in one not giving rise to proceedings in the other. Whilst the objective of the SDA is to promote equality of opportunity between men and women generally, the Equal Pay Act is designed to prevent discrimination between men and women in respect of their terms and conditions of employment, including pay. It applies to complaints that less favourable terms are being applied under the contracts of employment of employees of the opposite sex in the same employment who are, or have been, doing the same or broadly similar work, or whose posts have been evaluated equally or – where job evaluation has not been carried out – who are doing work of equal value to a person of the opposite sex in the same employment.

Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

This act extends the RRA 1976 and places a general duty on public authorities to promote race equality as well as specific duties for local authorities (and other public authorities) to fulfil including production of a race equality scheme and employment related duties in terms of monitoring ethnicity of job applicants and employees.

Equal Treatment Directive (EC Directive 76/207/EEC)

This provides that there will be no discrimination either directly or indirectly whatsoever on grounds of sex, by reference in particular to marital or family status. Similar provisions exclude discrimination on grounds of sex in the conditions for

access to all jobs or posts, whatever the sector or branch of activity and to training. The principle of equal treatment with regard to working conditions, including dismissal, has the effect of guaranteeing men and women 'the same conditions without discrimination on the grounds of sex. The directive can be directly relied upon by employees within the public sector regardless of whether or not its provisions have been incorporated into UK law.

Directive on Racial and Ethnic Discrimination

The Council of Ministers agreed this directive on 6 June 2000 which will provide a minimum level of protection against racial discrimination common to all member states. It prohibits racial discrimination not only in employment but also in education, social security, healthcare, access to goods and services and ensures that victims will have the right of redress in all member states. Member states have three years from the entry into force of the directive in which to take the necessary measures to implement it.

Anti Discrimination Directive

The member states of the EU reached agreement on this directive aimed at combating discrimination in the employment field, including age discrimination, in Autumn 2000. It requires member states to prohibit direct and indirect discrimination in employment and extends to recruitment, promotion, vocational training and working conditions, including dismissal and pay. The directive does provide a defence to direct discrimination on grounds of age: differences of treatment will not constitute direct age discrimination if they are "objectively and reasonably justified by a legitimate aim" and "the means to achieve it are appropriate and necessary". Member states are required to implement legislation prohibiting discrimination on grounds of religion and sexual orientation by late 2003 and on grounds of age by late 2006.

Protection from Harassment Act 1997

This legislation was predominantly aimed at "stalking" but it has implications for employers and employee behaviour in the work place. The act states that a person must not pursue a course of conduct which amounts to harassment and which he or she knows or ought to know amounts to harassment. Such harassment is defined as "alarming the person or causing the person distress". A "course of conduct" must involve conduct on at least two occasions. The test is whether a reasonable person in possession of the same information would have thought that the behaviour constituted harassment. The act also makes it a criminal offence to pursue a "course of conduct" including speech, which causes someone else to fear that violence will be used against them. Again this conduct must take place at least twice. The criminal penalty for this harassment is six months imprisonment or a maximum fine of £5000 and/or being made subject to a restraining order. Employees who are victims of harassment may sue for damages for stress and anxiety and for financial loss. The act provides employees with both a criminal and a civil remedy for bullying at work which comes within the statutory definition of harassment.

EC Code of Practice on measures to combat sexual harassment

This was adopted by the Council of Ministers in 1990. Its status is that of a recommendation of the European Parliament that member states and their institutions and organisations should develop “positive measures designed to create a climate at work in which women and men respect one another’s human integrity” and as a recommendation it has no binding force in law. As with codes of practice developed as part of UK law, however, the code is likely to be of persuasive value if cited in proceedings before the UK tribunals and courts. Although the EC’s code makes no reference to harassment on racial grounds, in general its recommendations are equally applicable to that type of harassment.

Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (the DDA)

This requires employers and providers of goods and services to eliminate discrimination against disabled people at all levels. The employment measures make it unlawful to treat a person less favourably, without good reason, because of that person’s disability. In addition the DDA introduced a new definition of “disability” and “disabled person”. In addition to two sets of regulations, which are legally binding and deal with three key areas (the definition of disability; justification; and the duty to make reasonable adjustments), the Government published the code of practice “for the elimination of discrimination in the field of employment against disabled persons or persons who have a disability”. The code is written in terms of “disabled” people although it also applies to people who no longer have a disability but who have had one in the past. It seeks to explain the act and to offer practical guidance to employers and others in eliminating discrimination. The code is admissible in evidence and must be taken into account by courts and tribunals where its provisions appear to be relevant to the determination of any question arising in proceedings under the act. The Government has issued guidance “Definition of Disability Guidance Notes” which must be taken into account by an employment tribunal where it appears to be relevant.

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (the 2005 Act)

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 makes substantial amendments to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, which contained provisions making it unlawful to discriminate against a disabled person in relation to employment, the provision of goods, facilities and services, and the disposal and management of premises.

General Duty

The 2005 act takes forward the Government’s remaining proposals, including the introduction of a new general duty on public authorities requiring them, when exercising their functions,

Disability Discrimination Act 2005 c. 13
Public authorities

3 Duties of public authorities

In the 1995 Act, after section 49 there is inserted:-

Part 5A Public Authorities

49A General duty

- (1) Every public authority shall in carrying out its functions have due regard to-
 - (a) the need to eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under this Act;
 - (b) the need to eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities
 - (c) the need to promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
 - (d) the need to take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons;
 - (e) the need to promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons; and
 - (f) the need to encourage participation by disabled persons in public life.
- (2) Subsection (1) is without prejudice to any obligation of a public authority to comply with any other provision of this Act.

49B Meaning of "public authority" in Part 5A

- (1) In this Part "public authority"-
 - (a) includes any person certain of whose functions are functions of a public nature, but
 - (b) does not include-
 - (i) any person mentioned in section 21B(3)
 - (ii) the Scottish Parliament, or
 - (iii) a person other than the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, exercising functions in connection with proceedings in the Scottish Parliament.
- (2) In relation to a particular act, a person is not a public authority by virtue only of subsection (1) (a) if the nature of the act is private.
- (3) Regulations may provide for a person of a prescribed description to be treated as not being a public authority for the purposes of this.
 - to have due regard to the need to eliminate harassment of and unlawful discrimination against disabled persons;
 - to promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons;
 - to encourage participation by disabled persons in public life; and
 - to promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons

This new general duty on public authorities brings the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 in line with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, although the main difference is that the definition of discrimination is more extensive in the 2005 act as discrimination can include not making a reasonable adjustment to the way the public authority function is carried out. All of the authorities listed in schedule 1a of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 will also be covered by the DDA 2005.

Specific Duty

In addition to the general duty outlined above, the 2005 act also places specific duties on some public authorities which are key to improving disability equality. The specific duties will provide those listed bodies with a clear framework for meeting the

general duty and includes the requirement to produce a disability equality scheme by December 2006.

An important aspect of the specific duty is that the disability equality scheme must show how disabled people have been involved in producing the scheme and action plan. Consultation and engagement with disabled people is an essential element of the new disability equality public sector duty.

Human Rights Act 1998

This incorporates the European Convention of Human Rights into UK law. As a result the positive rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention have become directly enforceable in UK courts and tribunals. From 2 October 2000 courts and tribunals have to interpret discrimination law in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights. Areas of UK law where there is not already a remedy for discrimination (eg on grounds of sexual orientation) are likely areas for challenge under the Human Rights Act.

EC Equal Treatment 'Framework' Directive

This directive requires member states to introduce legislation to outlaw unfair discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, disability, age and religion or belief in the fields of employment and training. Relevant legislation in relation to sexual orientation and religion or belief must be implemented by December 2003 with further legislation in relation to age and disability required by December 2006.

Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

These regulations provide that it is unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation in the employment of job applicants or employees.

Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003

Part 1 of these regulations define religion/belief, direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of religion/belief and victimisation and harassment on the grounds of religion/belief. Part 2 provides that it is unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of religion/belief in the employment of job applicants and employees.

Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

The Government's Coming of Age consultation on draft age discrimination legislation ended on 17 October 2005. They aim to publish their analysis of responses to the consultation in the first quarter of 2006, when the regulations are scheduled to be laid before Parliament. Subject to Parliamentary approval the legislation is due to come into force on 1 October 2006 and will implement the age strand of the EU Employment Directive 2000/78/EC. They will outlaw age discrimination in employment and vocational training. The age regulations will apply to all workers and to people who apply for work, and in addition, they will cover access to vocational training. The age regulations will prohibit direct and indirect age discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Those with new obligations under the impending age regulations include:

- Employers
- Trade unions, professional associations and employer's organisations in relation to their membership as well as their role as employers
- Trustees and managers of occupational pension schemes and
- Providers of vocational training (including adult, further and higher education)

The draft regulations:

- prohibit unjustified age discrimination in employment and vocational training
- require employers who set their retirement age below the default age of 65 to justify or change it
- introduce a new duty on employers to consider an employee's request to continue working beyond retirement
- require employers to inform employees in writing, and at least 6 months in advance, of their intended retirement date. This will allow people to plan for their retirement
- remove the upper age limit for unfair dismissal and redundancy rights, giving older workers the same rights to claim unfair dismissal or receive a redundancy payment as younger workers, unless there is a genuine retirement
- include provisions relating to service related benefits and occupational pensions

The regulations also remove the age limits for statutory sick pay, statutory maternity pay, statutory adoption pay and statutory paternity pay.

The final regulations will also include provisions relating to the statutory redundancy payments scheme following the steps we have taken to gauge stakeholder opinion on this issue.

Unlike other forms of discrimination such as sex and race which provides for only very limited possibilities of justifying direct discrimination, the age regulations will enable those with obligations to justify treating people differently on grounds of age, but only by reference to specific aims and only if it is appropriate and necessary in the particular circumstances. Supporting evidence will have to be provided if challenged.

Gender Equality Public Sector Duty – April 2007

The Equality Act received Royal Assent on 16 February 2006.

Part 3 of the act creates a duty on public authorities to promote equality of opportunity between women and men, and to prohibit sex discrimination in the exercise of public functions. Public authorities will therefore have to treat men and women equally and fairly. This is referred to as the "gender duty".

Regulations allowing for the creation of a Public Sector Gender Equality Duty, with both general and specific duties, will be laid before Parliament, after completion of consultation on the specific duties.

The duty contains the following:

General Duty

- have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- and to the need to promote equality of opportunity between men and women

Specific Duty: Equality Goals & Schemes

- Draw up a scheme identifying gender equality goals and showing the action it will take to implement them
- Consult employees and stakeholders as appropriate in drawing up their gender equality schemes
- Publish their gender equality schemes setting out goals and planned outcomes
- Monitor progress and publish annual reports on progress and
- Review their gender equality scheme every three years

Specific Duty: Gender Impact Assessment

1. Conduct and publish gender impact assessments, consulting appropriate stakeholders, covering:
 - All primary legislation and significant secondary legislation; and
 - All major proposed developments in employment/policy/services
2. Develop and publish arrangements for identifying developments that justify conducting a formal gender impact assessment

Specific Duty: Equal Pay

Develop and publish a policy on developing equal pay arrangements between men and women including:

- Measure to promote equal pay, ensure fair promotion and
- Development opportunities & tackle occupational segregation – between men and women
- To be reviewed at regular intervals

The Department of Health has been working closely with the Department of Trade and Industry's (DTI) Women and Equality Unit on the detail of the specific duties.

The Equality Act also outlaws discrimination in the provision of goods, facilities and services on the grounds of religion or belief and sexual orientation.

APPENDIX 1

ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION

Uttlesford District Council is committed to providing equal access to services and employment opportunities for all citizens and visitors of Uttlesford. The council is also committed to creating a meaningful dialogue with all communities.

All officers and members need to know how to make meetings and information accessible to our customers. This summary gives basic information on what must be in place.

Along with our customer service standards, there are some other points that staff should be aware of, in order to provide an excellent level of customer service. We can provide or have the means to provide a number of facilities, which help our customers access our services, no matter what their requirements.

Sight Impairments

It is now policy to include a message at the bottom of all leaflets and forms, informing the customer of the availability of obtaining their correspondence in other formats such as large print version or in Braille.

The council's magazine, Uttlesford Life is available in an audio version on request and to provide audio versions of other material.

We work with Support4Sight to provide Braille copies where required.

The council's website supports Browsealoud screen reader software and is compliant with accessibility requirements including variable text size and contrast options.

Hearing Impairments

If a customer has a hearing impairment, they will tell you if any adjustments need to be made.

In our main reception area all the desks are supplied with induction loops. There is also a portable induction loop, available for general use, at both the main and Planning reception areas. The customer will make any adjustments to their hearing aid, so there is no action an officer needs to make.

There are also induction loops in the council chamber and committee room in Saffron Walden.

A customer should inform you if they practice lip reading. If this happens please remember to:

- speak clearly and not too fast;
- be in a well lit area, but avoid having a direct light source behind you;
- do not cover or obstruct vision to your face

British Sign Language Interpreters

Some Customers may ask for a BSL interpreter. There are some members of staff who can perform BSL, please contact Claire Croft on 01799 510424 if one is required.

The Phone

RNID Tynetalk is a national telephone relay service for people who are deaf, deafened, hard of hearing, deafblind and have speech-impairments.

It lets people who are deaf and hard of hearing use a textphone to access any services that are available on standard telephone systems.

Tynetalk provides a link between any textphone user and a hearing person. The link is a RNID Tynetalk operator who provides a discreet and confidential service. This service is available to all members of the community. Please contact Claire Croft on 01799 510424 for further information.

Visitors to the Offices Who Use a Wheelchair

There are two clearly hatched parking bays, which are designated for the use of visitors with disabilities, in the car parks at the front of the building. There are further spaces around the perimeter for those with mobility impairments

There is level access from the car park to our reception areas.

Once in both the main and planning reception areas, the reception desks are at a lower level, so are accessible for wheelchair users.

The interview rooms do not have hearing loops, but a portable loop and magnifying equipment can be provided simply and quickly. Interview room number 1 allows wider access for wheelchair and pushchair access.

There is also a wheelchair available for use in the glazed link. There is a lift to access the council chamber and committee room.

Community Languages

The council has the use of interpreting services if any customers have a language other than English as their first language.

If you need to translate a letter or any other document, please liaise with Claire Croft on 01799 510424 who will arrange for this to be carried out, but the invoice will be paid from your budget.

Uttlesford District Council

APPENDIX 2

TERMS OF REFERENCE

PURPOSE

The Equality Standard Working Group is responsible for the monitoring of progress and the assessment of the attainment of the various outcomes of the equality framework. It is also responsible for ensuring that the council adheres to its statutory obligations under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Children's Act 2004 with a particular emphasis on Section 11 (Safeguarding Children and Young People). The group will consist of representatives from each service plus a lead officer from the Strategic Management Board.

OBJECTIVES

1. The group will meet monthly.
2. The group will be responsible for reviewing, evaluating, developing and monitoring the Councils Comprehensive Equality Policy, Corporate Equality Action Plan, the Race, Gender and Disability Equality Schemes, and all other equality schemes as introduced
3. The group will be responsible for providing a clear focus to drive the equalities agenda within the council forward, encouraging collaboration, communications and cooperation between departments and their service areas in promoting equality of opportunity using the Local Government Equality Framework as a guide
4. The group will be responsible for driving the agenda within the council forward, encouraging collaboration, communication and cooperation between departments and their service areas
5. The group will identify improvements which need to be made to current procedures and practices in order to meet the various levels of the Equality Framework
6. The group will consult and work with other public, private and voluntary sector partners, outside agencies and relevant interest groups to ensure the council's approach accurately reflects the diverse nature of the community we serve
7. The group will identify through service impact needs/requirement assessments what should be addressed, who should be consulted and by whom action should be taken and this will be reflected through the council's Corporate Equality Action Plan
8. The group will develop an information, support and training programme for staff and members that will improve understanding and raise awareness of equality issues

9. The group will advise on the levels of resources needed to ensure the promotion of equalities in order to achieve the council's objectives and that through individual departments service plans equality issues are recognised and addressed
10. The group will provide a forum for discussion and exploration of equalities issues at a strategic level as they affect employees, councillors and service users
11. The group will undertake the policy and function reviews of the council and will along with the External Equalities Consulting Group be responsible for diversity-proofing the councils strategies, policies and procedures
12. The group will be responsible for collecting and reviewing the evidence against each objective of the Equality Framework before advising the Corporate Management Team, the council's equalities member champions and the Scrutiny Committee that each outcome has, in its opinion, been achieved.

APPENDIX 3

STRATEGIC GROUP

PURPOSE

The Equality Standard Strategic Group is responsible for the setting of strategic targets and the monitoring of progress towards the achievement of the various outcome of the equality framework. It is also responsible for ensuring that the council adheres to its statutory obligations under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, and any other legislation introduced. The group will consist of a member champion from each political party represented on the council, the chief executive and key officers from frontline services.

OBJECTIVES

1. The group will meet six times a year.
2. The group will be responsible for reviewing, evaluating, developing and monitoring the council's Comprehensive Equality Policy, Corporate Equality Action Plan, the Race Equality Scheme, Disability, Gender Equality Schemes and all other equality schemes as introduced
3. The group will be responsible for providing a clear focus to drive the equalities and safeguarding agenda within the council forward, encouraging collaboration, communications and cooperation between departments and their service areas in promoting equality of opportunity using the Local Government Equality Framework as a guide
4. The group will identify improvements which need to be made to current procedures and practices in order to meet the various levels of the Equality Standard and equalities legislation
5. The group will identify improvements which need to be made to embed equality within the organisation
6. The group will consult and work with other public, private and voluntary sector partners, outside agencies and relevant interest groups to ensure the council's approach accurately reflects the diverse nature of the community we serve
7. The group will identify through service impact needs/requirement assessments what should be addressed, who should be consulted and by whom action should be taken and this will be reflected through the council's Corporate Equality Action Plan
8. The group will ensure that adequate levels of resources are allocated to ensure the promotion of equalities in order to achieve the council's objectives and that through individual departments service plans equality issues are recognised and addressed
9. The group will provide a forum for discussion and exploration of equalities and safeguarding issues at a strategic level as they affect employees, councillors and service users.