



Gender Equality Scheme

2007 - 2010

DRAFT

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1. Introduction and Context

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA) offers protection to both men and women against discrimination and makes discrimination unlawful in employment, vocational training, the provision of goods, services and facilities, the management and letting of premises and the exercise of public functions. It also covers discrimination on the grounds of a person being married, in a civil partnership or on the grounds of gender reassignment. In 1999, the Sex Discrimination Act (Gender Reassignment) Regulations came into force, which protects the rights of transsexual and transgender people.

The Gender Equality Duty was introduced through the Equality Act 2006 and aims to make gender equality a priority amongst all public authorities in the UK. The duty requires that public authorities are legally required to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

South Cambridgeshire District Council is fully committed to eliminating gender inequality and promoting equality between women and men. We recognise that there are gender differences in people's life chances, what services they gain access to and the types of jobs they do. We also know that other equality issues such as race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age also affect people's lives and that a "one size fits all" approach is not the answer. The Council's gender equality scheme will show how we intend to fulfill the specific duties relating to the Gender Equality Duty and will outline our gender equality objectives.

The scheme will help transform our services and policies and make sure that the different needs of men and women are better understood and that transgender issues are also taken into account. It will help to ensure that our services are better targeted and will lead to improved customer satisfaction and better staff recruitment and retention.

2. About South Cambridgeshire

2.1 Population

South Cambridgeshire covers approximately 90,168 hectares and is the second largest district in Cambridgeshire. It consists of 102 villages and has a total population of 130,108 (Census 2001). The district completely surrounds Cambridge City.

It shares its boundaries with Huntingdonshire, Fenland and East Cambridgeshire on the northern part of its boundaries. In the south the district has boundaries with Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Essex and Suffolk. Three rivers: the River Cam, the River Granta and the River Rhee run through the district. It is relatively rural with all the population living in villages or rural area – there are no towns in South Cambridgeshire. Sawston is the largest village with approximately 7,000 people.

	South Cambridgeshire	East of England	England
2001 Population: all people (persons)	130,108	5,388,140	49,138,831
2001 Population: Males (persons)	64,454 (49.54%)	2,638,335 (48.97%)	23,922,144 (48.68%)
2002 Population: Females (persons)	65,654 (50.46%)	2,749,805 (51.03%)	25,216,687 (51.32%)

As reflected in the national figures South Cambridgeshire has a slightly higher female population than male. The difference in populations is however smaller in South Cambridgeshire than across the region or nationally.

2.2 Employment (*Statistics needed from HR*)

2.3 Life Expectancy

South Cambridgeshire has a higher than average life expectancy for both men and women compared to the rest of the UK.

The life expectancy for a man in South Cambridgeshire is 79.2 years and for a woman it is 84.2 years.

2.4 Transgender Community

No local data is available on the Transgender community in South Cambridgeshire. However, a national survey was carried out in 2001 (Employment Discrimination and Transsexual People Survey) and the results highlighted just how little had been done to raise the profile of Transgender issues.

The Survey revealed that the majority of employers were failing to include gender in their anti-discriminatory policies and no training was being provided to staff on the issues surrounding gender identity.

Many transsexual employees found that they were often victims of abuse and even physical violence from other employees and were often discriminated against during recruitment, promotion, remuneration and in respect to other company benefits. Many companies failed to inform employees that discrimination against transsexual people would not be tolerated and as such many transsexual employees had been forced to leave their jobs due to difficult working conditions.

As well as being afforded protection from discrimination and harassment in employment and vocational training, a further change to the law on 21st December 2007 ensures that people who identify as transsexual will also have their rights protected in the provision of goods and services.

3. Aims of the Scheme

3.1 The Purpose of the Gender Equality Scheme

The Equality Act 2006 created the Gender Equality Duty for the public sector. The Gender Equality Duty has two parts to it, the “general” duty and the “specific” duty. The general duty places a legal duty on the Council:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- To promote equality of opportunity between men and women

To help meet its general duty, the Council, like most other public bodies covered by the duty, has a specific duty to:

- Produce a Gender Equality Scheme identifying its gender equality goals and actions to meet them, in consultation with employers and stakeholders
- Monitor and review progress
- Review the Scheme every three years
- Develop, publish and regularly review an equal pay policy, including measures to address promotion, development and occupational segregation
- Conduct and publish equality impact assessments of all major policy developments, and publish its criteria for conducting such impact assessments

The purpose of this Scheme is therefore to:

- Show how we intend to mainstream gender equality in all areas of the Council’s work
- Meet and go beyond our legal duties in making gender equality a reality
- Set out our priorities on how we intend to tackle gender inequality, eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity between women and men and for individuals undergoing or who have undergone gender reassignment

3.2 South Cambridgeshire District Council Priorities

3.2.1 Eliminate Unlawful discrimination and harassment

South Cambridgeshire District Council aims to eliminate discrimination and prevent harassment to any employee or service user on the grounds of gender or gender reassignment in the following way:

- We will seek to encourage applications from male, female, transgender and transsexual members of the population when we are recruiting
- We will educate our staff in gender and transgender issues to eliminate discrimination and harassment.
- We will ensure that women, men and transgender employees feel supported and are confident in our procedures and policies.
- We will ensure that all service users have an equal access to our services and facilities.

3.2.2 Promote Equality of Opportunity

South Cambridgeshire District Council aims to promote equality of opportunity to male, female and transgender service users and employees in the following way:

- We will carry out Equality Impact assessments in all new and existing policies, functions and services.
- We will embed gender equality in our corporate aims, approaches and actions.
- We will ensure that all employees receive equal pay for equal responsibilities

4. Achieving Gender Equality through Service Delivery

Equality and diversity are seen as central to the provision of all Council services. In order to ensure that services are accessible to women and men the Council will:

- Monitor the satisfaction and take up levels of services by gender
- Assess whether there is an adverse impact by gender in the provision of a service or planned service
- Take positive action to address any inequality, disadvantage or discrimination
- Encourage women and/or men to use our services where evidence shows that either gender have a low level of take up of particular services
- Regularly communicate information to the public
- Consult on service changes, developments and initiatives

5. Consultation and Engagement

5.1 Collection of data

One of the duties that must be carried out by any public sector authority is the gathering of information on the effects of its current policies and practices on men and women in employment, those that use its services and also its general performance.

The Council will gather this information in the following ways:

- Staff surveys
- Customer Satisfaction surveys
- Equality Impact Assessments
- Staff Workshops
- External Stakeholder workshops
- Complaints and Compliments forms
- Equal Opportunities Steering Group
- Staff Statistics and Recruitment Monitoring Forms

5.1.1 Staff Surveys

A staff survey is carried out every two years and asks a range of equality and diversity questions as well as employees general opinions and experiences about their jobs and feelings towards the Council as an employer.

The last staff survey was carried out in April 2008. The main concerns raised by this survey in terms of gender equality was the fact that 47% of women felt that not all employees were treated fairly compared to only 35% of men. Any impact as a result of the gender equality scheme will hopefully be reflected in the staff survey due to be carried out again in two years time.

5.1.2 Customer Satisfaction Surveys

Most services within the Council carry out regular customer satisfaction surveys. It is important that these surveys are analysed in terms of gender equality and any results are actioned upon accordingly.

5.1.3. Equality Impact Assessment

As part of the Council's continuing commitment to Equality and Diversity we are carrying out Equality Impact Assessments on all our new and existing policies and procedures. We aim to reach Level 2 of the Local Government Equalities Standard by June 2009. This requires us to carry out Equality Impact Assessments on all policies, taking account of all six equality strands.

5.1.4 Staff and External Stakeholders Workshops

We will run a series of workshops for both staff and external stakeholders to consult on our current policies and procedures. This will enable us to get opinions about existing practices and ensure that any gender equality scheme takes these opinions into account.

5.4.5 Complaints and Compliments

Complaints will be monitored to make sure that there are no complaints based on gender discrimination. If gender inequality issues are picked up through the monitoring of complaints forms these issues will inform the scheme and subsequent action planning, with a view to reducing and eliminating the need for complaints on the grounds of gender inequality.

Monitoring Compliments forms may provide valuable feedback on progress and actions taken to eliminate gender inequality or gender discrimination. These findings will inform the schemes review process.

5.4.6 Equal Opportunities Steering Group

South Cambridgeshire District Council has a very active Equal Opportunities Steering Group that is helping to shape the Council's policies on equality and diversity. The Steering Group will be heavily involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the scheme to ensure that it continues to reflect the Gender Equality Duty and provides up to date guidelines for staff and service providers to follow.

5.4.7 Staff Statistics and Recruitment Monitoring Forms

In order to monitor the impact of its employment practices in gender equality the council will regularly monitor the following information:

- Recruitment / retention and development (promotion & training) of men and women
- Proportion of men and women in posts at all grades
- Proportion of men and women who leave
- Proportion of men and women who benefit or suffer detrimentally as a result of their appraisal
- Men and women involved in grievance and disciplinary procedures

5.2 Consultation

The Council is committed to carry out consultation on the scheme with both employees and service users. South Cambridgeshire District Council has an Equal Opportunities Steering Group, the membership of which is made up of employees from all levels and all service areas around the Council. Any scheme will be passed to this group for consultation and comment before it is released. External consultation will take place with relevant organisations, community groups and agencies to gain meaningful input and feedback to the development and review of the scheme.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

This Scheme will be reviewed every three years. The Action Plan will be reviewed every year. Progress on the Scheme and Action Plan will be reported to the Equal Opportunities Steering Group, Chief Officers, Corporate Management Team and Cabinet on an annual basis.

7. A Gender Equality Vision – An outcome focused approach

For the Council to achieve its gender equality vision, actions need to be outcome focused. The list below of desired long term outcomes has helped to inform the development of the action plan:

- Men and women making better use of the service their gender had previously under-used.
- Service users feel they are receiving more accessible services that are better tailored to their needs
- Men and women feel effectively engaged in decision and policy making around issues that have a direct affect on them
- Barriers to access of appropriate and supportive services as well as recruitment and retention of transsexual staff have been identified and removed
- Men and women are represented at all levels of the work force and in all areas of work
- Staff are aware of the gender duty and understand how it affects their work
- The Council is aware of the needs of staff with caring responsibilities and the business case for flexible working policies.

8. Action Plan

This Action Plan will be implemented over a three-year period. During the first year of the plan the Council will consolidate and build on gender related information and raise awareness of the Scheme. During the second year of the plan we will focus on utilising gender related information to further develop the Action Plan. The third year of the plan will focus on implementation and the completion of an evaluation of the scheme.

Gender Equality Scheme 2007 - 2010		
Task	Timescale	Lead Officer
ACTION 1: Develop a greater understanding within the organisation of gender equality issues and the Gender Equality Scheme		
All staff to receive equality and diversity awareness training, including gender and transgender awareness and gender related issues		
All members to receive equality and diversity awareness training, including gender and transgender awareness and gender related issues.		
The Gender Equality Scheme to be included in equality and diversity training/induction for all staff		
The Gender Equality Scheme to be included in equality and diversity training/induction for all members		
Raise awareness of and participate in gender related events such as International Women's Day, March 8 th of each year.		
ACTION 2: Ensure improvements in performance by mainstreaming of gender equality		
All new and existing policies and procedures to incorporate an Equality Impact Assessment that will include gender		
Develop an action plan to address		

Gender Equality Scheme 2007 - 2010		
Task	Timescale	Lead Officer
any gender equality issues raised by the EqIA process		
ACTION 3: Complete the Equal Pay Review		
Conduct Equal Pay Review		
Develop a programme of actions to rectify any gender based pay gaps/s and grading arrangements		
Produce guidance to ensure improved recording of information on pay to enable effective comparison between jobs		
ACTION 4: Continue to develop the Council's performance management framework and develop meaningful indicators in respect of gender equality		
Develop targets and local performance indicators in respect of gender equality		
All Service Plans to include meaningful gender specific objectives and targets in respect of service delivery and employment		
ACTION 5: Contribute to a partnership approach to address gender equality in the District		
All key partnerships will include gender related objectives in business plans for all appropriate areas of work.		
Identify relevant local groups, organisations and agencies working with a gender equality focus		
ACTION 6: Develop good practice in relation to flexible working policies and work life balance.		
Review and develop flexible working policies		
Identify the barriers to part-time working and job sharing possibilities with a view to removing such barriers wherever possible.		

Gender Equality Scheme 2007 - 2010		
Task	Timescale	Lead Officer
ACTION 7:		
Ensure employment practices and policies identify and respond to all forms of gender stereotyping and discrimination including the identification of barriers to the retention and recruitment of transsexual staff		
Audit all HR policies to ensure that they cover the needs of transsexual and transgender employees		
Relevant employment policies identified for completion of Equality Impact Assessment		
Promote positive gender role models and 'non-traditional' jobs through the Councils website, targeted publications, job fairs etc (such as female engineers and technicians and male care workers)		
ACTION 8:		
All corporate mechanisms for consultation to include appropriate questions/analysis in relation to gender		
All forms of corporate consultation identified and a timeline for inclusion of appropriate gender related questions included		