



# SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME 2011

## - Executive Summary

Equal Opportunities



Cyfle Cyfartal

This scheme is available in other languages or formats on request.  
Mae'r cynllun hwn ar gael mewn ieithoedd neu fformatau eraill ar gais.

## INTRODUCTION

Caerphilly County Borough Council is committed to equality of opportunity for all within the county borough of Caerphilly. Everyone should be treated equally and fairly and with respect in terms of education, employment and in all aspects of everyday life. This is the Council's first Single Equality Scheme and it outlines the commitment to achieving equality within all aspects of the Council's service delivery and in its employment practices.

Respect for diversity is a key issue as communities change and develop in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; respect for the old and the new and respect for every individual who lives or works in, or visits the area, or represents the county borough in any way. Council services must reflect these diverse needs and Caerphilly County Borough Council already has a strong background in delivering accessible services in a sensible, measured and cost-effective way.

The Council's motto is "**Working together for the good of all**" and nowhere is this a more appropriate motto than in terms of our first Single Equality Scheme.

This Scheme explains to members of the public, elected members, staff and partner organisations how Caerphilly County Borough Council intends to deliver its Equalities commitments and continue to be a tolerant organisation that does not accept discrimination of any kind.

It builds on previous Equalities schemes that have been in place for many years and brings together the Council's relevant statutory obligations as required within a Race Equality Scheme, Disability Equality Scheme and Gender Equality Scheme. It also directly covers a far wider commitment to many other Equalities issues and the protection and promotion of human rights, some for the first time in a Council policy due to the introduction of the Equality Act 2010.

The Council's equalities statement makes its commitment clear:-

***This council recognises that people have different needs, requirements and goals and we will work actively against all forms of discrimination by promoting good relations and mutual respect within and between our communities, residents, elected members, job applicants and workforce.***

***We will also work to create equal access for everyone to our services, irrespective of ethnic origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious beliefs or non-belief, language, nationality, responsibility for any dependents or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified.***

The Single Equality Scheme commits the Council to the following:-

- To exercise its community leadership role to promote equality and good relations within and between all communities in the area so that all residents of, workers in and visitors to the area feel confident they are in an environment that is free of any prejudice and discrimination;
- To ensure that the Community Strategy is implemented in order to promote and achieve equalities outcomes and to ensure that it promotes community cohesion and good relations between different communities;
- To promote fair and equal bilingual access to services for all citizens on the basis of their need, in a manner that is sensitive to that individual need and in the language or format of their choice;
- To ensure that all Council policies, processes, assumptions and practices that may lead to discrimination have been eliminated;
- To carry out comprehensive Equality Assessments on all corporate policies that form part of the Council's policy framework. (The policy framework list can be found on the Council's website at [www.caerphilly.gov.uk/equalities](http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/equalities) or provided as hard copy on request).
- To ensure that the consequences of all new and updated policies and initiatives on specific groups are considered during the Council's consultation and decision-making processes.
- To ensure that for the Council to meet its legal duties, all service areas must develop and implement Equality Actions and targets in line with the agreed corporate objectives;
- To work in partnership with stakeholders and communities to ensure that all consultation exercises undertaken support the Council's equality objectives;
- To promote equality of opportunity and fair treatment in employment and training and to ensure equal pay for work of equal value;
- To have a workforce that reflects the diversity of its communities;
- To support staff members to be who they are in the workplace and provide them with working environment in which they can develop professionally;
- To help and support members of the public and staff who face harassment and to take appropriate action against perpetrators where possible.

## **DISCRIMINATION**

In order to understand the scope of the Single Equality Scheme, in terms of the protected characteristics and wider Equalities and Human Rights issues, elected members, managers and all staff members need to be aware of what actually constitutes discrimination, victimisation and harassment and Section 3 of the draft scheme contains definitions of what is meant by the following:-

- Direct Discrimination
- Indirect Discrimination
- Multiple Discrimination
- Associative Discrimination
- Harassment
- Victimisation
- Vicarious Liability
- Positive Action / Positive Discrimination

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

The Scheme also outlines internal processes on how the Council will implement the necessary actions in order to meet its statutory obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 - Section 4 of the Scheme therefore covers:-

- Strategic Responsibility
- Performance
- Employment Data
- Consultation
- Reporting and Publishing Information
- Personnel Policies
- Procurement
- Licensing
- Partnerships, Grants and Sponsorship
- Links to Other Strategies

## TRAINING

Training and Awareness Raising of the wide range of Equalities issues helps staff to deal with situations where they may have to deal with customers who have specific needs. In some cases, staff members may have no experience of dealing with such specific needs and it is in such instances that misunderstandings can happen.

The Policy Unit is responsible corporately for co-ordinating Equalities training provision and liaising with staff, tutors, training providers and examination bodies to provide a quality and cost-effective programme.

Details of the training can be found on the Council's website in the Equalities section, by visiting [www.caerphilly.gov.uk/equalities](http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/equalities).

## SPECIFIC EQUALITIES INFORMATION

The Equalities Act 2010 brings together a range of different Equalities legislation that existed previously but also harmonises the protection of the different strands, now referred to as "protected characteristics".

Section 6 of the draft scheme gives an explanation of each of the Equalities issues covered by the scope of the policy, in order to help managers, staff and elected members, as well as the Council's service users, with understanding what are each of the issues covered.

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment / Transgender
- Gypsies and Travellers
- Human Rights
- Linguistic Skills
- Marital Status
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Nationality
- Race
- Religion and Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Welsh Language

## **EQUALITIES ACTION PLAN**

The action plan has been developed from existing commitments in the Council's current Equalities policies that the Single Equality Scheme will replace, together with actions from the Welsh Language Scheme where there is crossover, and new actions and targets relating to the new protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010.

Individual Directorates, service areas and divisions are responsible for ensuring that their action plans cover the Equalities issues but advice and guidance can be sought from the Equalities team in the Policy Unit and it may be the case that rather than changing actions, re-wording current actions and framing them in Equalities terms is all that will be required.

The Action Plan has been completed with a progress report to date, which can form the basis of future annual reports.

## **APPENDICES**

The Appendices included are a copy of the Council's Equality Impact Assessment form, a copy of the section within Service Improvement Plans that requires Service Areas to note relevant actions and new targets and a list of Equalities legislation.